

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Navigating gender in elite bargains: Women's movements and the quest for inclusive peace in Colombia

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Abstract

A growing body of scholarship connects the participation of women and the inclusion of gender provisions to the sustainability of peace settlements. But how do women's groups navigate gender power structures and gendered forms of violence within complex and fragile political bargaining processes aimed at ending large-scale conflict? The 2016 Colombian peace agreement, internationally applauded for its inclusion of strong gender provisions and women's participation as negotiators and peace advocates, is a significant case for examining these questions. Drawing on original case material, including interviews of key actors on different sides of the conflict – this article analyses the political bargaining dynamics within and among women's movements, the Santos government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*, FARC). We argue that the inclusion of women was pivotal in transforming the elite bargaining process and power structures of Colombian society enabling a gender-based approach to the substantive peace agenda addressing transitional gender justice for sexual violence survivors and gender-equal redistribution through land and rural reform programmes. The study suggests that deeply situated political bargaining analysis is essential to navigating gender in elite bargains rather than a one-size-fits-all approach to inclusive peace.

Keywords: Gender; Women; Peace Negotiations; Elite Bargains; Inclusive Peace; Peace Agreements; Colombia; FARC

Introduction

The 2016 Colombian peace agreement between the Santos administration (2010–18) and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*, now *Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común*, or FARC) serves as an example of elite bargaining in the context of peace negotiations, designed to stabilise competitive violence in the country's civil war. 'Elite bargains', defined as 'a discrete agreement, or series of agreements, that explicitly sets out to re-negotiate the distribution of power and allocation of resources between elites',¹ are often aimed at addressing and minimising challenges to state security while simultaneously building confidence in negotiated settlements. The 'bargain' that occurs between elites – for the purpose of this article, is the peace agreement between the Colombian government and FARC – can serve as a means to manage violence and achieve durable peace.² However, as previous research identifies, a common assumption in existing literature

¹Christine Cheng, Jonathan Goodhand, and Patrick Meehan, 'Synthesis paper: Securing and sustaining elite bargains that reduce violent conflict', *Elite Bargains and Political Deals* (London: UK Stabilisation Unit, April 2018), p. 11

²James Putzel and Jonathan Di John, 'Meeting the Challenges of Crisis States', Crisis States Research Centre report (London: The London School of Economics and Political Science, 2012).

on elite bargains and peace processes is that to actually reach a resolution to conflict, the process cannot be inclusive and that this is often a trade-off in achieving a final settlement. Yet, the degree to which a negotiated settlement is 'inclusive' plays a key role in determining its durability, particularly in terms of addressing the interests of less powerful and vulnerable groups within society and harnessing their agency for peace.³

One such group is women, who are frequently excluded from peace processes altogether. It is often the case that horizontal elite inclusion can actually marginalise or exclude the presence, voices, and interests of women, deeming such interests as 'not an important factor in how elites mobilise support and maintain legitimacy'.⁴ Despite evidence that women continue to be frequently excluded from peace processes,⁵ research demonstrates that women's presence in peace processes 'as witnesses, signatories, mediators and/or negotiators contributes to making it 20 per cent more likely that a peace agreement will last at least two years, and 35 per cent more likely that it will endure'.⁶ There is a robust relationship between women signatories and durable peace, and peace agreements signed by women tend to include a higher number of agreement provisions and provision implementation ten years after the agreement.⁷ Moreover, analysis of 110 peace agreements across 55 countries between 2000 and 2016, indicated that the presence, absence, and strength of gender provisions within peace agreements has a direct relationship with women's participation in postconflict societies.⁸ Specifically, the analysis found that 'peace agreements are significantly more likely to have gender provisions when women participate in elite peace processes', and that the 'likelihood of achieving a peace agreement with gender provisions increases when women's participation in national parliaments and women's civil society increases'.⁹ The same study also found that strong gender provisions are an exceptional achievement and overwhelmingly 'more likely to be present within major agreements within a peace agreement, such as constitutions or final agreements'.¹⁰ But how and why do women's groups navigate gender power structures to participate within elite bargaining processes aimed at ending large-scale conflict in the first place? And how are they able to negotiate sensitive gender issues, especially gendered violence, within these deeply political processes?

Colombia is a significant case for examining these questions. The 2016 peace agreement has been internationally applauded for its 'gender-based approach', and the inclusion of gender provisions that directly benefit women.¹¹ These provisions aimed at providing strategies to end the 53-year-old conflict and addressing deep-rooted gendered inequalities in conflict-affected areas, as well as promoting women's participation in postconflict and transitional justice institutions. Despite being the outcome of elite bargaining, the 2016 peace agreement between the Colombian government and FARC represents the most extensive and inclusive peace agreement

³See Cheng, Goodhand, and Meehan, 'Synthesis paper'; Putzel and Di John, 'Meeting the Challenges of Crisis States'; Stefan Lindemann, 'Inclusive elite bargains and the dilemma of unproductive peace: A Zambian case study', *Third World Quarterly*, 32:1010 (2011), pp. 1843–69.

⁴Cheng, Goodhand, and Meehan, 'Synthesis paper', p. 38.

⁵See Karin Aggestam and Isak Svensson, 'Where are the women in peace mediation?', in Karin Aggestam and Ann Towns (eds), *Gendering Diplomacy and International Negotiation* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2018), pp. 149–68.

⁶Marie O'Reilly, Andrea Ó Súilleabháin, and Thania Paffenholz, *Reimagining Peacemaking: Women's Roles in Peace Processes* (Washington, DC: International Peace Institute 2015), p. 1.

⁷Jana Krause, Werner Krause, and Piia Bränfors, 'Women's participation in peace negotiations and the durability of peace', *International Interactions*, 44:6 (2018), pp. 985–1016.

⁸Jacqui True and Yolanda Rivero-Morales, 'Towards inclusive peace: Analysing gender-sensitive peace agreements 2000–2016', *International Political Science Review*, 40:1 (2019), pp. 23–40.

⁹True and Rivero-Morales, 'Towards inclusive peace'. A similar finding was observed in Krause, Krause, and Bränfors, 'Women's participation in peace'.

¹⁰True and Rivero-Morales, 'Towards inclusive peace'.

¹¹See UN Women, 'Take Five: A Successful Peace Process Simply Demands the Active and Meaningful Participation of Women At All Levels' (30 October 2018), available at: {<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2018/10/take-five-jean-aurnault-on-peace-processes>}.

with regard to gender provisions. In a report on the Monitoring of the Gender Perspective in the Implementation of the Colombian Final Peace Accord,¹² 130 of 578 stipulations are identified to have a gender perspective. These stipulations commit both the government and FARC to implement affirmative actions that ensure the leadership and participation of women and LGBTI persons in the agreement's implementation. Furthermore, UN Women identified one hundred measures that included a gender perspective in the Agreement, specifically in terms of incorporating measures for legislative development.¹³ Moreover, in the Toward Inclusive Peace dataset,¹⁴ the strength of the gender provisions in the 2016 peace agreement scored the maximum ranking of '5' (or strong) across four types (human rights, development, postconflict issues, and the participation of women), and a ranking of '4' on violence against women. Analysis of the agreement also revealed far more gender provisions addressing structural, intersectional gender inequality than any other previous peace agreement globally.¹⁵

How do we explain this outcome of an elite peace agreement with over one hundred provisions relating to women's rights and gender equality when half of all agreements in 2000–16 had no such provisions at all?¹⁶ What are the factors that played a role in such a comprehensive, gender-inclusive, and far-reaching approach in the 2016 Colombian peace agreement with FARC? In particular, how and when do women push for gender inclusion in exclusionary contexts such as peace deals? The Colombian peace process shows how inclusive peace can be pursued as part of brokering an end to civil war, and that it is possible to pursue inclusivity for women in elite processes even during fragile bargaining between conflict parties. Elite bargains frequently fail as they are exclusionary by their very nature. However, the successful negotiation of the 2016 agreement involved the eventual presence of women representatives, when diverse groups of women politically mobilised across ethnic, indigenous, socioeconomic groups on a platform of common gender-related issues pertaining to their experiences of conflict. This cross-class and ethnic mobilisation of women brought these grievances, particularly affecting women and girls, at the heart of the conflict into the formal peace process. The Colombian process demonstrates that there are distinct elite and non-elite entry points that can facilitate inclusion of diverse groups and bring a gender perspective into an elite bargain to end conflict.

To understand how that gender-inclusive agreement outcome was achieved, we examine the political bargaining dynamics and agency within and between the Santos government, the FARC, and civil society that led to the adoption of the peace agreement. Drawing on original research involving analysis of key documents and interviews with major government, FARC and civil society actors on all sides of the agreement in Colombia, our analysis posits that a combination of women's involvement in elite processes and grassroots movements, advocating for

¹²See Kroc Institute, *Special Report of the Kroc Institute and the International Accompaniment Component, UN Women, Women's International Democratic Federation, and Sweden, on the Monitoring of the Gender Perspective in the Implementation of the Colombian Final Peace Accord* (2018), available at: {https://kroc.nd.edu/assets/297624/181113_gender_report_final.pdf}.

¹³See UN Women, 'Take Five', p. 5.

¹⁴The 'Toward Inclusive Peace' hosted by Monash Gender, Peace and Security Centre (Monash GPS) project dataset included five main types of gender provisions related to: (1) The participation of women the participation of women (that is, gender quotas, national women's machineries, in governmental bodies and postconflict governance); (2) Postconflict issues and transitional justice (accountability, consideration of the special needs of women during repatriation, rehabilitation, reintegration); (3) Violence against women (for example, sexual violence as a violation of ceasefire); (4) Women's economic empowerment and development (that is, land and inheritance rights, women's roles in implementation, education, capacity-building, special attention to female heads of households); and lastly, (5) Any reference to international women-specific legal or human rights mechanisms (such as Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW or UNSCR 1325). The dataset is available at: {https://monash.figshare.com/articles/Toward_Inclusive_Peace_Mapping_Gender_Provisions_of_Peace_Agreements/6948869}; see also True and Riveros-Morales, 'Towards inclusive peace'.

¹⁵See True and Riveros-Morales, 'Towards inclusive peace'.

¹⁶See the Monash GPS, 'Towards Inclusive Peace' dataset.

and supporting each other's position, pushed for an inclusive agreement that was able to influence both the government and FARC to formally secure women's representation, their human rights, and their access to resources. What is particularly striking in the Colombian case is how women's civil society was able to mobilise politically, agree on a common platform, but then compel both conflict parties – the Santos administration and FARC – to enhance women's representation in their negotiating teams and incorporate a 'gender-based approach' as a core issue for the legitimacy, credibility, and international status of the negotiations. As such, we argue that the Colombian peace agreement serves as an example of how gender inclusion can transform rather than threaten elite bargains. Unlike other peace processes, the Colombian agreement is not a case where women were merely added into an emergent elite bargain. Instead, as this article argues, it demonstrates how women's inclusion can influence the underlying power relations at stake in a peace settlement through the non-elite level mass mobilisation and brokering of ethnic and class differences across diverse women's social movements.¹⁷ After failed negotiations with FARC in previous peace process iterations under the Belisario Betancur (1982–6) and Andrés Pastrana Arango (1998–2002), it was a significant departure that an agreement was signed in 2016 after two summits where diverse groups of women came together with a common gender perspective to influence an alternative agenda for peace. While not the only factor contributing to a final settlement,¹⁸ the Colombian case demonstrates how elite bargains can be made more inclusive even while elite negotiations are taking place. The peace process leading to the 2016 accord created a 'window of opportunity' where strong, autonomous participation by women's civil society¹⁹ together with women's eventual representation at the negotiation table contributed not only to push for women's inclusion within the elite peace process itself but for the adoption of gender-sensitive text in the final agreement.

This article is in three main parts. First, we engage with how existing literature examines the exclusive nature of elite bargains and the nature of horizontal and vertical inclusion, as well as how it considers peace processes to be a 'window of opportunity' for women's representation and participation. We speak back to the debate by showing how and when women's civil society can influence horizontal elite bargaining during a fragile process. What is unique in the Colombian case is that women's civil society was instrumental in securing a significant gender-inclusive final agreement not seen to such a degree within other peace agreements. Second, we explore the political dynamics and incremental processes of women's civil society inclusion in peace negotiations between FARC and the Colombian government, highlighting the significance of the 2013 National Summit of Women and Peace. Finally, by examining FARC and the Colombian government's shift towards formalising gender inclusion in close detail, we suggest that deeply situated political bargaining analysis is essential to navigating sensitive gender power relations and gendered violence in any elite bargain or peace deal and therefore that there is not a one-size-fits-all approach to inclusive peace.

In order to understand how such a horizontal, elite peace agreement was reached with over one hundred provisions relating to women's rights and gender equality in the Colombian case, we employed a qualitative, gender analysis as our methodology. We conducted fieldwork in Colombia in 2017 and 2019, carrying out 56 semi-structured interviews with former and active FARC leaders/members, politicians, government stakeholders from various ministries, members of the government's negotiation team, women's organisations, and NGOs who had been directly

¹⁷See Cynthia Cockburn, *The Space Between Us: Negotiating Gender and National Identities in Conflict* (London, UK: Zed Books, 1998) and Aili Mari Tripp, *Women and Power in Post-Conflict Africa* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015) for other empirical examples of women's organising in Yugoslavia, Northern Ireland, and Africa, where ethnic and class divisions were overcome to promote peace.

¹⁸See Alexandra Phelan, 'Engaging insurgency: The impact of the 2016 Colombian peace agreement on FARC's political participation', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 42:9 (2019), pp. 836–52.

¹⁹See Mala Htun and Laurel S. Weldon, 'The civic origins of progressive policy change: Combating violence against women in global perspective, 1975–2005', *American Political Science Review*, 106:3 (2012), pp. 548–69.

involved in agitating for greater women's participation in the peace process, and/or involved in the elite negotiations themselves. We approached participants directly through their organisations' websites and social media or through personal contacts, obtaining additional participants through snowballing. During these interviews, we discussed how participants defined a gender-based approach, how this would be implemented in practice, the challenges faced in agitating for greater women's participation and representation in the process, and (in the case of FARC), the experiences of women and men combatants and how they saw and understood the role of *Mujeres Farianas* during the peace process and the postconflict phase. We triangulated our primary interview data with secondary documents, information, and key literature, and engaged with available data from the project 'Towards Inclusive Peace: Mapping Gender Provisions in Peace Agreements'²⁰ to incorporate both historical and comparative gender perspectives in peace processes globally.

A 'window of opportunity' for a women's inclusion in elite bargains

Extant literature on elite bargains and peace agreements suggest that they should be treated as 'one-off events that are part of the ongoing political settlement'²¹ and may occur in the context of more long-term, ongoing political settlement processes. Unlike political settlements however, elite bargains 'represent specific attempts to renegotiate the distribution of power between elites, which cumulatively shape and change the overarching political settlement'.²² Because these are often discreet events, such agreements can leave an exclusive political settlement in place that omits women's substantive representation,²³ inclusion, and consultation in the process itself. Elite bargaining processes often provide the first steps out of armed conflict. Often it is the case that they are male-dominated and women, and women's civil society more generally, tend to be largely excluded which further hinders their participation in the postconflict phase. Unfortunately, women can also be excluded in more inclusive elite bargains and peace processes depending on the gendered nature of 'elite inclusion' and especially where the gendered causes and impacts of armed conflict are ignored.²⁴

While inclusiveness is important to elite bargains generally and can secure prospects of peace and security,²⁵ this can be both understood in terms of 'horizontal inclusion' and 'vertical inclusion'. Whereas 'horizontal inclusion' refers to the participation of groups and individuals from the political, military, economic, social, or cultural elite, 'vertical inclusion' aims to 'include and empower marginalised groups more directly by giving larger segments of the population access to decision-making and strengthening the broader social contract between the rulers and the ruled'.²⁶ Christine Cheng, Jonathan Goodhand, and Patrick Meehan²⁷ argue for the necessity to analyse both horizontal inclusion in bargains between elites, and vertical inclusion

²⁰The dataset is available at: {https://monash.figshare.com/articles/Toward_Inclusive_Peace_Mapping_Gender_Provisions_of_Peace_Agreements/6948869}.

²¹Edward Laws, 'Political Settlements, Elite Pacts, and Governments of National Unity: A Conceptual Study', DLP Background Paper, No. 10 (2012), p. 2.

²²Cheng, Goodhand, and Meehan, 'Synthesis paper', p. 11.

²³'Substantive representation' can be understood as the representation of women's political interests and gendered perspectives forged through a process of organising around a common agenda. See Anne Phillips, *The Politics of Presence* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1995).

²⁴Jacqui True, 'Gender and Conflict: Making Elite Bargaining Processes More Inclusive', Stabilisation Unit, Her Majesty's Government of The United Kingdom (2020), available at: {<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gender-and-conflict-making-elite-bargaining-processes-more-inclusive>}.

²⁵Putzel and Di John, 'Meeting the Challenges of Crisis States'; Lindemann, 'Inclusive elite bargains'.

²⁶Andreas Schädel and Véronique Dudouet, 'Incremental Inclusivity: A Recipe for Effective Peace Processes?' (Berghof Foundation, 2020), p. 20, available at: {<https://www.cinep.org.co/Home2/images/2020Noticias/Incremental%20inclusivity%20-%20A%20recipe%20for%20effective%20peace%20processes.pdf>}.

²⁷See Cheng, Goodhand, and Meehan, 'Synthesis paper'.

between elites and wider society, or those they represent. Yet particularly in terms of horizontal inclusion, often these dynamics are highly gendered and where the political interests of women are deemed to not be as important or significant in brokering a political deal, attempts to stabilise ongoing conflict through horizontal inclusion can actually 're-entrench inequalities and conservative attitudes'.²⁸ For these scholars, 'horizontal relationships' between different elites and 'vertical relationships' between elites and their constituents shape patterns of elite authority. Specifically, 'vertical relationships between elites and their followers are extremely important in determining how elite behaviour impacts on society as a whole'.²⁹ As scholars such as Darren Kew and Anthony Wanis-St John³⁰ note, while excluding civil society in elite negotiations has the potential benefit of streamlining complex peace negotiations, the absence of such voices and interests can prove fatal in the postconflict peacebuilding phase.

However, Andreas Schädel and Véronique Dudouet³¹ examined the timing and modalities of both horizontal and vertical inclusion in Afghanistan, Colombia, Mali, and Myanmar, focusing specifically on non-signatory armed actors and sectoral social groups. They found that across the four cases, social inclusion was more the exception to the rule, and that incremental inclusion 'was more manifest in certain social sectors ... where the range of actors consulted increasingly expanded during the formal negotiations and post-agreement stage, along with the thematic expansion of the substantive scope of the agreement'.³² Importantly, however, the scholars found that inclusion 'was made possible by early public advocacy by these groups and also external actors' efforts to push for inclusion'.³³

Jana Krause, Werner Krause, and Piia Bränfors interrogated that relationship between the presence of woman signatories and the increase in quality and durability of peace in an empirical study of 130 peace agreements signed between 1990 and 2014. They found that peace processes with broad societal support, agreements with a high number of provisions that represent socio-political reform agenda, and high implementation rates for the provisions of the agreement are likely to contribute to durable peace.³⁴ However, they found that linkages between women signatories and women's civil society organisations improved both the content of the accord, and the implementation of its provisions. The study identified that 'linkages between female signatories and women civil society groups result in more accord provisions aimed at sociopolitical change and greater provision implementation rates due to sustained advocacy by well-informed groups'.³⁵ Therefore, unless women influence and inform elite bargaining processes stability and resilience will be limited and apply to only certain spaces, types of violence, and particular groups, undermining conditions for sustainable peace.

Like other select conflicts, the Colombian case supports the argument that peace negotiations can be used as 'windows of opportunity' for increasing women's participation in postconflict settings.³⁶ Women's inclusion does not necessarily have to be limited to direct participation in elite negotiations themselves. For example, Faiza Jama identified that in the context of the Somali civil war, women were able to use their position in the clan system to bridge clan divisions and 'to act as a first channel of dialogue between parties in conflict', despite being excluded from decision-making forums.³⁷

²⁸Ibid., p. 38.

²⁹Ibid., p. 24.

³⁰Darren Kew and Anthony Wanis-St John, 'Civil society and peace negotiations: Confronting exclusion', *International Negotiation*, 13:1 (2008), pp. 11–36.

³¹See Schädel and Dudouet, 'Incremental Inclusivity'.

³²Ibid., p. 7.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Krause, Krause, and Bränfors, 'Women's participation in peace negotiations', p. 989.

³⁵Ibid., p. 990.

³⁶See Miriam J. Anderson, *Windows of Opportunity: How Women Seize Peace Negotiations for Political Change* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2015).

³⁷Faiza Jama, 'Whose peace is it anyway? Connecting Somali and international peacemaking', *Conciliation Resources, Accord Issue 11* (2010), available at: {<https://www.c-r.org/accord/somalia/somali-women-and-peacebuilding>}.

Thania Paffenholz et al.³⁸ identify seven modalities of women's inclusion that can occur along several tracks and throughout the phases of different peace processes. These modalities are direct representation at the negotiation table, observer status, consultations, inclusive commissions, problem-solving workshops, public decision-making, and mass action. The research found that more than any other group, women have organised mass action campaigns favouring peace deals, pressuring conflict parties to start negotiations in pursuit of final settlements, and pushed their way into official processes that exclude them.³⁹ Moreover, in Miriam J. Anderson's seminal work,⁴⁰ examining the cases of Burundi, Northern Ireland, and Macedonia, it was revealed that in each case women were instrumental in advocating for greater inclusion in the peace process. Women's organisations have traditionally found it difficult to obtain a seat at the peace negotiation table or a presence in elite bargains. Despite this, recently there has been an increase in both the number and frequency of women's informal representation and participation, particularly through consultations between mediation teams and women's civil society to influence durable peace.⁴¹

Often the interplay between gender and politics tends to emphasise two enabling conditions for gender equality agenda-setting or policy change that can also affect peace processes. The first is that *women's voice and presence in positions of political power* is a key factor in introducing new issues informed by women's experiences into peace agendas.⁴² The second is that women's movements and civil society organisations are also crucial for *democratising agendas and achieving policy change that benefits women*.⁴³ Furthermore, Kara Ellerby⁴⁴ argues that a women's agenda, women's access to the process, and advocacy from parties to the conflict all serve as three jointly necessary conditions for more women-inclusive peace agreement. Women participating in peace processes does matter in incorporating more woman-centred provisions that reflect diverse women's needs and priorities, though this inclusion relies on more than just presence; it requires the active participation of women as well as institutional support for that participation.

Peace processes are not inherently 'windows of opportunity' for women's participation, as Anderson argues.⁴⁵ Yet this article maintains that the Colombian case demonstrates how 'windows of opportunity' during elite peace processes specifically can be harnessed by top-down representation and bottom-up political mobilisation simultaneously, allowing for greater inclusion amid negotiations taking place at the same time. There have indeed been 'windows of opportunity' for women's inclusion in elite bargains in various conflicts. For example, in negotiations between the *Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca* (Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity, URNG) and the government, Guatemalan women's civil society established regular contact

³⁸Thania Paffenholz, Nicholas Ross, Steven Dixon, Anna-Lena Schluchter, and Jacqui True, *Making Women Count – Not Just Counting Women: Assessing Women's Inclusion and Influence on Peace Negotiations* (Geneva: Inclusive Peace and Transition Initiative and UN Women, 2016), pp. 6–7.

³⁹*Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁴⁰See Anderson, *Windows of Opportunity*.

⁴¹See Christine Bell, 'Women, peace negotiations, and peace agreements', in *The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Conflict* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 417; Aili Mari Tripp, 'Women's organizations and peace initiatives', in *The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Conflict*; and Desirée Nilsson, 'Anchoring the peace: Civil society actors in peace accords and durable peace', *International Interactions*, 38:2 (2012), pp. 243–66.

⁴²See, for example, True and Rivero-Morales, 'Towards inclusive peace'; Tripp, *Women and Power in Post-Conflict Africa*; and Melanie M. Hughes and Aili Mari Tripp, 'Civil war and trajectories of change in women's political representation in Africa, 1985–2010', *Social Forces*, 93:4 (2015).

⁴³See, for example, True and Rivero-Morales, 'Towards inclusive peace'; Denise M. Walsh, *Women's Rights in Democratizing States: Just Debate and Gender Justice in the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010); and Mala Htun and S. Laurel Weldon, *The Logics of Gender Justice: State Action on Women's Rights around the World* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

⁴⁴Kara Ellerby, 'A seat at the table is not enough: Understanding women's substantive representation in peace processes', *Peacebuilding*, 4:2 (2016), pp. 136–50.

⁴⁵Anderson, *Windows of Opportunity*.

with Luz Mendez who brokered their concerns, providing them a voice, which played a key role in enhancing the legitimacy of the negotiations.⁴⁶ In El Salvador, many women's civil society groups had strong ties to the *Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional* (Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front, FLMN), and alerted female negotiators over reintegration and the discrimination women were experiencing. Women negotiators were able to rectify these grievances, which resulted in the inclusion of ex-combatants and civilian women.⁴⁷

This article extends existing research on elite bargaining by arguing that the inclusion of women was pivotal in transforming the elite bargaining process – in the middle of negotiations – and power structures within Colombian society by including specific gender provisions that fundamentally changed the substantive peace agenda through a gender-inclusive agreement. This is important for two key reasons: (1) it aided representational politics and allowed for greater participation for women in the postconflict stage; and (2) it resulted in the inclusion of gender perspectives in the actual peace agreement itself. In Colombia there was the demand for substantive inclusion and participation of women in the peace process, which resulted much more from a mass mobilisation of women's civil society organisations. While women have always been party to the conflict, this mass mobilisation was highly intersectional, and a common agenda was set among rural, indigenous, and Afro-Colombian groups, which is not often seen in all peace processes.

We maintain that women's civil society political mobilisation played a key role in agitating for both the Santos government and FARC to commit to formal steps in ensuring greater women's participation in both the elite process and postconflict phase. On the government side, President Santos's commitment to an inclusive agenda (including the participation of rural, indigenous, and Afro-descendent populations) that stressed structural transformation through the renegotiation of political settlement bolstered the momentum for the participation of women in the elite peace process and the postconflict phase. That participation was guaranteed by the creation of the 'Gender Sub-Commission' in 2014. On FARC's side, the formation of *Mujeres Farianas* under the framework of 'insurgent feminism' enabled women to secure high-level representation within the FARC and set in train incremental steps towards ensuring women's participation in the postconflict phase. Such women's participation secured the incorporation of a 'gender-based approach', provisions aimed at gender equality and socioeconomic development not only in the peace agreement itself, but with mechanisms for implementation in the postconflict phase.

Seizing fragile bargaining: The advocacy and participation of women's grassroots organisations

The initial framework of elite bargaining between FARC and the Santos administration did not suggest there would be any inclusion of women within the peace negotiations, nor was there an indication that a gender-perspective would ever feature in the prospective agreement itself. Evidence can be seen in the fact that the original *General Agreement for the Termination of the Conflict and the Construction of a Stable and Lasting Peace* signed on 26 August 2012, included no references to gender. Furthermore, a report by ABColombia states that 'women and women's civil society organisations (CSOs) were told for two years, when they tried to raise the situation of women and women's rights in peace processes: *now is not the time*'.⁴⁸

When formal talks between the government and FARC were moved to Cuba in November 2012, each side was permitted a team of up to thirty members and up to ten negotiators, including five 'plenipotentiaries' that held full negotiating power. All but one of the negotiators on both

⁴⁶See Krause, Krause, and Bränfors, 'Women's participation in peace negotiations', p. 1003.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸ABColombia, 'Towards Transformative Change: Women and the Implementation of the Colombian Peace Accord' (2019), p. 1, emphasis added.

sides were men. Tanja Nijmeijer, alias ‘Alexandra Nariño’, notoriously known as ‘the Dutch guerrilla’ who joined FARC in the early 2000s, joined her male FARC counterparts at the negotiation table during the beginning of talks. However, as she has been the subject of international attention and the subject of documentaries, books and news stories, it is regarded that her presence at the negotiation table was a deliberate move on FARC’s behalf to capitalise on her international notoriety.⁴⁹ Lina M. Céspedes-Báez and Felipe Jaramillo Ruiz⁵⁰ identified that almost all members of the government’s negotiation team had some kind of relationship with the Colombian armed forces and defence sector. Similarly, the majority of FARC negotiators were members of the organisation’s Secretariat or Central High Command. As a result, there is evidence to suggest that ‘the absence of women at the beginning of the peace conversations just mirrored the ingrained belief that war was a men’s affair, and that the negotiations to pave the way to its end only pertained to them’.⁵¹

The announcement of elite peace negotiations between the Santos administration and FARC resulted in various organisations uniting, mobilising politically, and to begin to demand women’s participation in the process. As Virginia Bouvier argues, ‘women’s minimal presence as lead negotiators is misleading. At the table, around the table, behind the table, and at side tables, women are having their say and shaping the path to peace.’⁵² Indeed, one *Casa de la Mujer* representative explained that what was achieved in the 2016 peace agreement was really the product of many years’ struggle by women’s civil society, experience in previous processes of constructing agendas for women victims of the armed conflict, and women’s rights. They maintained that ‘it is an agreement that includes a differential approach, a women’s human rights approach, and a gender approach. It does not only include the gender focus.’⁵³ In multiple interviews it was stressed that women’s organisations had successfully deployed Security Council Resolution 1325 and General Recommendation No. 19 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) to articulate how women are disproportionately affected by violence and specific types of gender-based violence such as sexual violence. These outline commitments that secure greater rights for women, secure their participation in peace processes and within the implementation phase. Reflecting on the women’s movement in Colombia, one representative from the government agency *Bienstar Familiar* explained that particularly since the end of the 1990s during the Pastrana administration, peace issues began to more significantly be ‘worked into the women’s movement’ when displacement was at its peak. CEDAW General Recommendation 19 was specifically deployed by women’s organisations to begin to highlight that violence and displacement from Colombia’s conflict was disproportionately affected women.⁵⁴

Furthermore, references were made to domestic Colombian laws on violence against women and gender equality, which are generally consistent with UN and Organisation of American States (OAS) international obligations. While Colombia has not implemented a National Action Plan (NAP) on women, peace, and security per se, it does have a normative framework for gender equality and formally adopted its National Policy for Comprehensive Gender Equity in 2013, that was enshrined in Santos’s National Development Plan (2010–14). This policy is composed of a series of guidelines, processes, agencies, and a comprehensive plan that ensures a life free of violence for women. Its implementation is in accordance with Law 1450 of 2011, which

⁴⁹Jessica Trisko Darden, Alexis Henshaw, and Ora Szekely, *Insurgent Women: Female Combatants in Civil Wars* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2019), p. 68.

⁵⁰Lina M. Céspedes-Báez and Felipe Jaramillo Ruiz, ‘“Peace without women does not go!” Women’s struggle for inclusion in Colombia’s peace process with the FARC’, *Colombia Internacional*, 94 (2018), p. 93.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Virginia Bouvier, ‘Gender and the Role of Women in Colombia’s Peace Process’, UN Women Background Paper (Washington, DC, 2016), p. 19.

⁵³Authors’ interview with Casa de la Mujer representative, Bogotá, 2017.

⁵⁴Authors’ interview with Bienstar Familiar representative, Bogotá, 2017.

prioritises the importance of a differential approach from a gender perspective, taking into account particularities that affect urban and rural, Afro-Colombian, indigenous, and peasant populations, and also the development of specific plans that guarantee displaced women's rights.⁵⁵ Moreover, although Colombia's increase in the descriptive political representation for women has been comparatively slow at the local, regional, and national levels of government, a series of political reforms played a key role in opening the political system for women. For example, Mónica Pachón Buitrago and María Paula Aroca⁵⁶ found that the 1991 constitutional reforms and the inclusion of gender quotas reduced barriers for women's recruitment and election, opening the system for women politicians, and incentivising political parties to incorporate women.

Civil society forums

These policies and normative frameworks formed the backbone of women's organisations' call for greater participation in the elite peace process and ensuring participation in the postconflict phase. It is important to note that women's organisations' advocacy efforts for greater women's rights began much earlier than the onset of negotiations in 2012, but the peace process with FARC provided a clear opportunity to push for greater inclusion by taking advantage of available mechanisms and participating in civil society forums, conferences, and workgroups. For example, in 2012 and 2013, women's organisations continued to hold meetings, events, and public demonstrations, and in October 2012, *Mujeres por la Paz* (Women for Peace) was created, which brought together forty NGOs on a common platform.⁵⁷ Women's organisations also participated in civil society forums established on the request of the parties in Havana, which dealt with topics on agrarian development policy, political participation, illicit crops and drug trafficking, and victims.⁵⁸ A former Colombia rapporteur who participated in these civil society forums not only spoke positively about how the demands of organisations were met in the forums, but also the coalitions that were formed within the process itself – including among women's organisations. They also shed light on the criteria and eligibility of civil society organisations' participation in the forums, saying that it was a contested issue but that there was a confidential formula that mapped organisations that should be visible and included, which was quite balanced. They explained that in their experience in the forums, it was the professors from the university as well as the heads from the United Nations deciding who got to attend the forums. The idea was to get representatives from all sectors of society from various regions – not just rural populations and victims. However, they noted that due to capacity and limited resources issues it was not possible to bring everyone, but that the civil society forum organisers managed quite well to get diverse representatives and organisations from multiple sectors.⁵⁹

Liliana Zambrano and Felipe Gómez Isa⁶⁰ argue that one of the main features of Colombia's civil society is its fragmented, regional composition, and as a result, peace requires the participation of various regions. These authors note that these dynamics explain 'recurring launches of regional participation mechanisms whose main challenge is to establish synergies, ranging from community

⁵⁵La República, 'Se adopta nueva política pública acerca de la igualdad de género' (17 September 2013), available at: <https://www.asuntoslegales.com.co/actualidad/se-adopta-nueva-politica-publica-acerca-de-la-igualdad-de-genero-2061586>.

⁵⁶Mónica Pachón Buitrago and María Paula Aroca, 'Effects of institutional reforms on women's representation in Colombia, 1960–2014', *Latin American Politics and Society*, 59:2 (2017), pp. 103–21.

⁵⁷Céspedes-Báez and Ruiz, "'Peace without women does not go!'", p. 85.

⁵⁸These forums were facilitated by the United Nations System in Colombia and the National University's Centre for Reflection and Monitoring the Peace Talks, and women participated in working groups throughout nine Colombian regions that were organised by the Peace Commissions of the House and Senate, with the support of the United Nations System. See Bouvier, 'Gender and the Role of Women', p. 20.

⁵⁹Authors' interview with former Colombian rapporteur, Oslo, 2017.

⁶⁰Liliana Zambrano and Felipe Gómez Isa, 'Participation of Civil Society in the Colombian Peace Process', Norwegian Peacebuilding Research Centre (2013), p. 4.

and local levels up to the national and international levels'.⁶¹ One of the earliest displays of success in grassroots organisations playing a key role in opening the peace process to Colombian women was the National Summit of Women for Peace, held between 23 and 25 October 2013.

At around same time, a joint effort between the Office of the High Commission for Peace, UN Women, and *Fundación Ideas para la Paz* (Ideas for Peace Foundation, FIP) was conducted through the Database for the Systematisation of Civil Society Contributions to analyse the proposals from diverse departmental, national, and international women's civil society organisations in the context of the peace negotiation's framework. A total of 301 organisations provided 7,172 contributions that contained about 20,000 references to different points of the Agreement between 2013 and 2015 from all over the country. These organisations included 92 departmental organisations, 42 national organisations, and seven international organisations.⁶² With the systematised information, FIP and UN women focused on understanding both participation of women and the LGBTI communities, and the issues that they prioritised in developing public policy recommendations that were sensitive to the different experiences of these groups. Combined with the National Summit of Women and Peace, this consultation process provides a striking example of 'vertical bargaining' where marginal and diverse women's organisations were able to gain access to the process.

The National Summit of Women and Peace

The summit itself was held in support of the peace process and served as a space to promote dialogue between territorial, national, and international peacebuilding experiences. The event provided an opportunity for 449 women representatives from different sectors at the regional and national levels⁶³ to share their views and experiences in line with the summit's three main objectives. A representative from UN Women in Colombia explained that for her, this was an incredibly important milestone in the peace process: She was not only struck by the 'diversity of voices' and that women were travelling from all over the country, but that they were then able 'to establish common goals and interact with the higher level'.⁶⁴ Reflecting on the summit, a representative from women's organisation *Ruta Pacífica* explained that when talks started, it was noted that the majority of negotiators were men and that this contributed to their organisation deciding to make alliances with other women's organisations throughout the country. She explained that they started to put pressure on having women at the table, and that the negotiation agenda should incorporate women's demands. When their organisation examined the early framework agreements on rural reform, they identified that they did not address women and only mentioned women when they were talking about lactation and gestation. She said that for *Ruta Pacífica*, they identified that the armed conflict has been overwhelmingly affecting Colombian women in the countryside generally, and not only pregnant women. As a result, they maintained that the 'subject of politics in that agenda should be rural, indigenous and afro-Colombian women', not just pregnant women, as they proposed in the first agreement on rural reform.⁶⁵

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²See ONU Mujeres, Oficina del Alto Comisionado para la Paz, FIP, Suecia, 'Participación de las organizaciones de mujeres que realizaron aportes en el marco del proceso de paz con las FARC' (2017), available at: {<https://colombia.unwomen.org/es/biblioteca/publicaciones/2017/05/cuadernillo-mujeres-fip>}.

⁶³This consisted of representatives from 132 feminist organisations, 43 national and territorial peace initiatives, 38 local experiences of women in peace construction, 33 peasant organisations, 36 victims organisations, 25 Afro-Colombian organisations, 18 student organisations, 21 indigenous organisations, 14 departmental, municipal and advisory councils, 14 human rights organisations, 7 community grassroots organisations, 6 environmental organisations, 6 LGBTI organisations, 6 churches, 6 educational and cultural organisations, 6 political parties, 6 academic sector, 7 universities and research centres, 6 union organisations, and 4 media and communications. See Cumbre Nacional de Mujeres y Paz, *Sistematización*, 23–5 October 2013, Bogotá (National Summit of Women and Peace, 2014), p. 18.

⁶⁴Authors' interview with UN Women in Colombia representative, Bogotá, 2017.

⁶⁵Authors' interview with Ruta Pacífica representative, Bogotá, 2017.

According to the proceedings, the first objective of the summit was to create a space of critical reflection to discuss the voice and role of women as political actors in the framework of the peace dialogue, the post-agreement, and preparation of the postconflict stage. This would be further designed to generate proposals and recommendations on the challenges and mechanisms of the implementation, verification and endorsement agenda item, and the implementation and verification of agreements that had already been made between the parties on points within the comprehensive rural reform, political participation, ending the conflict, solution to illicit drugs, and victim agenda items. The second objective was to outline agenda items from gender perspectives for the post agreement, positioning their ability to think of a country not only for women but also for society as a whole. Finally, the third objective was to promote a dialogue between territorial, national, and international experiences pertaining the peace construction, specifically within a framework that allows for the identification of challenges and lessons learned. By doing so, this will allow women to anticipate proposals and/or solutions of foreseeable problems in the implementation, verification, and endorsement of the agreement and identify strategies for effective participation in these processes.⁶⁶ Women agreed on three fundamental points at the summit. The first was complete support for the peace process between FARC and the Colombian government, and the demand that parties not leave the table until they reach an agreement. The second was to insist on a process that must have the presence and participation of women at all stages, including at the negotiation table. Finally, the need for the inclusion in the peace negotiation's agenda, of the needs, interests, and effects of the conflict in the lives of women.⁶⁷

The efforts of women's organisations demanding a greater focus on women's rights and participation succeeded when shortly after the 2013 summit, when the government decided to appoint two plenipotentiaries in November 2013, Nigéria Rentería and María Paulina Riveros. A government negotiator explained that her team had always had a team member responsible for incorporating a 'gender perspective' in the agreement, but in reality at the table there was definitely no systematic exercise of incorporating this into the agenda, neither by the government nor FARC. Understanding the demands made at the forums, she explained that although it was up to the president as to whether or not women were appointed as negotiators (on the government's side), they began to work on the idea of the 'Gender Sub-Commission' in order to incorporate the calls from civil society after the decision was made to appoint two women plenipotentiaries.⁶⁸

Dynamics within FARC

By the end of 2013, FARC also secured greater women's visibility and participation. When FARC commander Victoria Sandino joined their negotiation team in 2013, her participation gave women 20 per cent of seats in FARC team. By February 2015, FARC's delegation was made up of more than 40 per cent women, including seven female commanders, the composition of which closely reflected FARC's gender composition as a whole.⁶⁹ Céspedes-Báez and Ruiz⁷⁰ argue that women's organisations used three key tactics to challenge their exclusion from the elite peace process. The first tactic was to engage with the government from a normative and legal angle, particularly by arguing that women's presence was an international and national obligation of the state. This mirrors findings from our interviews that appeals to normative frameworks Resolution 1325 and CEDAW played a key role in agitating for greater women's

⁶⁶Cumbre Nacional de Mujeres y Paz, *Sistematización*, 23–5 October 2013, Bogotá (National Summit of Women for Peace, 2014), p. 17.

⁶⁷See Cumbre Nacional de Mujeres y Paz, *Sistematización* (National Summit of Women for Peace).

⁶⁸Authors' interview with former government negotiator, Bogotá, 2017.

⁶⁹Bouvier, 'Gender and the Role of Women', p. 20.

⁷⁰See Céspedes-Báez and Ruiz, "Peace without women does not go!"

participation in line with standards within the national community. The second tactic of appealing to the inclusion of women was necessary in order to protect women's rights, arguing that this can affect the strategies and design of transitional justice and peacebuilding process. Finally, the third tactic appealed to the inclusion of women as necessary to participating in all decisions that affect them, essentially serving as a principle of democratic accountability.

Yet what is remarkable about the Colombian case is that women's grassroots organisations were not only successful in demanding greater women's participation in the elite peace process but were so in the midst of a fragile bargaining process between the Santos administration and FARC, where conflict was ongoing. As the next section will demonstrate, such agitation incentivised both parties to incorporate greater women's representation and inclusion into their agendas. A combination of grassroots movements and later, the presence of women themselves in the elite process connected to the women's movements, worked to ensure an inclusive agreement incorporating a gender-based approach. This was further guaranteed when both the Colombian government and FARC saw it in their best interests to formally commit to securing women's representation and participation not only within the process itself, but also during the agreement's implementation by creating specific mechanisms.

How women's participation influenced the Santos administration's agenda

Cheng et al. argue that there can be three broad trajectories of outcomes to elite bargaining.⁷¹ The first is a 'return to violence', where elite bargains do not hold and there is a return to hostilities. The second is 'elite capture', where elite bargains secure a reduction in violence, but where 'elites monopolise the benefits of peace and leave little scope for sustained progressive change'.⁷² Finally, the third is 'developmental peace', where elite bargains 'sustain and facilitate a move towards a more stable and inclusive political settlement'.⁷³ Santos' administrations (2010–18) were marked by a clear determination to sign a peace agreement with FARC but were also pursued under 'developmental peace' where there was a commitment to overcoming structural inequalities, which included the participation of rural, indigenous, and Afro-descendent populations in line with his National Development Plan. The 2016 peace agreement in many ways provided a positive-sum outcome for both the Santos administration and FARC, with the government seeing the importance of structural reform based on the inclusion of all sectors of Colombian society.⁷⁴ Secret discussions with FARC through his Peace Commissioner, Sergio Jaramillo, commenced as early as 2011 when the first exploratory meeting took place near the Colombia/Venezuela border. Though these discussions were not made public at the time, Santos put forward a reform to the Colombian Congress on 31 July 2012 that set up the Legal Framework for Peace (*Marco Jurídico para la Paz*). It allowed for the government's legal ability to pursue negotiations with FARC, but also set up the framework for transitional justice that would clearly put victims first. Transient Article 66 specifically stipulated that:

The instruments of transitional justice will serve the prevalent purpose of facilitating the termination of the internal armed conflict, and the achievement of a stable and lasting peace, with guarantees of non-repetition and security for all Colombians; and will guarantee, at the highest possible level, the victims' rights to truth, justice and reparation.⁷⁵

⁷¹Cheng, Goodhand, and Meehan, 'Synthesis paper', p. 3.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Ibid., p. 30.

⁷⁴See Phelan, 'Engaging insurgency' and Alexandra Phelan, 'FARC's pursuit of "taking power": Insurgent social contracts, the drug trade and appeals to Eudaemonic legitimation', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* (2019), pp. 1–23.

⁷⁵Available at: {<http://www.altocomisionadoparalapaz.gov.co/desarrollos-legislativos-paz/marco-juridico-para-la-paz/Documentos%20compartmentados/Acto-Legislativo-N-01-del-31-de-julio-de-2012-4.pdf>}.

Gender mainstreaming technical support for the peace agenda

Jennifer Thomson⁷⁶ argues that political institutions can serve as an important piece of the puzzle when it comes to furthering women's rights in postconflict societies and implementing the WPS agenda more broadly. Although the Legal Framework for Peace can be seen as pursuing a horizontal elite bargain with FARC, it also signalled the potential renegotiation of political settlement from an early stage, stating the necessity of an inclusive process and putting victims' rights at the forefront. This was key in providing the 'window of opportunity' necessary for women's organisations to seize and influence the government's negotiation agenda, particularly by agitating for a need for such 'rights' to recognise discrimination on the basis of gender and the different needs and priorities of women. Specifically, Colombian women's rights NGOs, movements, and advocates drew on expertise they had developed during the 2000s, and 'the growing recognition that this knowledge had elicited from the Colombian Constitutional Court and the Colombian society in general'.⁷⁷ One of the clear successes that the mobilisation of women's organisations and civil society had was to ensure that there was a specific differentiation in terms of how the conflict impacted disproportionately on discrimination and violence against women. For example, Anne-Kathrin Kreft also found that differential treatment of conflict-related sexual violence in the agreement owed to strong pressure by diverse women's organisations unified on this issue.⁷⁸ The director of Transitional Justice at the Ministry of Justice explained that this was incorporated into transitional justice mechanisms, specifically in the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (*Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz*, JEP), which was a core priority for the Santos administration. Working in the context of both the Colombian constitution and legal apparatus, promoting the participation of women victims and a gender-based approach institutionalised within Colombia's transitional justice mechanism became a key objective for the government. She explained also that the gender-based approach in JEP included a specific team tasked with working on sexual violence with the prosecutorial unit. They also incorporated litigant measures for victims of sexual violence and made it very clear that sexual violence and other forms of gender-based violence are excluded from amnesty.⁷⁹

Although the government had included two women on its negotiation team, behind the scenes was a strong backbone of women ensuring that the gender approach was mainstreamed in all six agenda items being negotiated. For example, the government's team consisted of eight women from the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, including the Ministry of Defense's Director of the Human Rights Office, Elena Ambrosi, managing the thematic strategy, Marcela Durán managing the communications strategy, and Mónica Cifuentes managing the legal strategy. Furthermore, women comprise 80 per cent of staff in the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace.⁸⁰

The role of the Gender Sub-Commission

After both the Santos administration and FARC committed to incorporating women into the elite peace negotiations, one of the breakthroughs was the establishment of two commissions in 2014 – the Technical Sub-Commission on Ending the Conflict and the Gender Sub-Commission – that formally guaranteed women's participation in elite peace processes and the postconflict phase. The Technical Sub-Commission was established to deal with disarmament and demobilisation issues, such as monitoring the bilateral ceasefire, laying down of weapons, security guarantees,

⁷⁶See Jennifer Thomson, 'The women, peace, and security agenda and feminist institutionalism: A research agenda', *International Studies Review* (2018), pp. 1–16.

⁷⁷Céspedes-Báez and Ruiz, "'Peace without women does not go!'", p. 99.

⁷⁸See Anne-Kathrin Kreft, 'Responding to sexual violence: Women's mobilisation in war', *Journal of Peace Research*, 56:2 (2019), pp. 220–33.

⁷⁹Authors' interview with Director of Transitional Justice, Ministry of Justice, Bogotá, 2017.

⁸⁰Bouvier, 'Gender and the Role of Women', p. 21.

and the cases of FARC prisoners. Two women from government and three FARC women were included on the commission. Yet as one of the government women explained to us, being on the Technical Sub-Commission was 'very stressful because of the male dominated space'. She explained:

There were two rows of chairs, and women were always in the second unless you were on the computer. It was a very stressful scenario not only because of the topics and energy, but also you don't have a lot of chances to say what you have to say. I mean, they never say (specifically) that you cannot speak, it was not prohibited, but sometimes it was difficult for them to see you as being someone that has something to say, even though you know you are right ... I think that is not only because I was a woman over there, but also because of the hierarchy. On the contrary, in the Gender Sub-Commission, I think the hierarchy was very little. I was the only military (personnel) in the government team and in FARC, of course, they were all from FARC. But the interaction, the relationship between us was very different. It was very comfortable, polite and kind.⁸¹

The Gender Sub-Commission was established directly as a result of the strong advocacy of women's organisations and is exceptional in terms of global peace processes. Moreover, it provides a strong example of how women were able to influence and pursue inclusive peace in the midst of a fragile bargaining process. Formally installed on 7 September 2014, the commission was mandated to review and guarantee a gender-perspective in the partial agreements already agreed upon, as well as in the agreement that emerged from the dialogues. What is significant here is that this occurred while the elite peace process was taking place. A government negotiator explained that this was an incredibly complicated decision, because the government was finally coming close to closing an agreement with FARC. Reopening the agreement to incorporate a gender-based approach was a 'huge risk'. When they reviewed the agreement to incorporate the gender-based approach, FARC tried to add additional points that they had managed to already negotiate out. However, she reflected that it 'was a beautiful decision but not an easy one to make – to reopen what we had already closed after a year and a half'.⁸² It is important to note that despite the mandate given to the sub-commission, it had no formal decision-making authority and its recommendations were not binding. The sub-commission also had no authority to change agreements that had already been reached between the government and FARC. Despite this, the Gender Sub-Commission played a role in guaranteeing the incorporation of a gender-based approach and specific provisions securing women's participation in the agenda items pertaining to the Comprehensive Rural Reform, Political Participation, and Solution to Illicit Drugs agenda items.⁸³

The establishment of such a sub-commission was also in line with government commitments in Colombia's National Policy for Comprehensive Gender Equity, which women's organisations were also able to appeal to as a national obligation for institutional reform. Appealing to the state's commitment to strengthen Colombian democracy, women's organisations' advocacy played a key role in pressuring and promoting greater participation and strengthening of women's rights in the postconflict phase. By supporting women's participation in the elite peace process, not only at the negotiation table directly but also as part of the government team, the Santos administration acknowledged the necessity to secure greater women's participation and recognition of gender differences in postconflict processes. For example, in the point on political participation, the Gender Sub-Commission was instrumental in acknowledging the specific barriers that

⁸¹ Authors' interview with Technical Sub-Commission Government representative, Bogotá, 2017.

⁸² Authors' interview with former government negotiator, Bogotá, 2017.

⁸³ *El Espectador*, 'Los logros de la Subcomisión de Género en tres acuerdos de la Habana' (2016), available at: {<https://colombia2020.elespectador.com/politica/los-logros-de-la-subcomision-de-genero-en-tres-acuerdos-de-la-habana>}.

women faced in exercising politics. As a result, there was the introduction of specific provisions to overcome such challenges, including measures to protect women who participate in politics through the Integral Security System for Political Participation (*Sistema Integral de Seguridad para el Ejercicio de la Política*), and the further obligation of gathering and tracking information regarding threats and dangers women face in this context.⁸⁴

The role of international actors

The creation of the Gender Sub-Commission was inspired by UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), with both the Cuban and Norwegian governments each providing a gender expert to the commission. This was further combined with advice and expertise provided by women's organisations, and additional support from some governments (such as Sweden) and UN Women who 'recognised the importance of an intersectional approach to gender and ethnic inclusion'.⁸⁵ This support by both Norway and Cuba also played a key role in providing legitimacy to the inclusion of the agreement's gender-based approach. Reflecting on the role of women in the negotiations, a Norwegian mediator explained to us that both the government and FARC 'were criticised early on for not having women among their top representatives and that there were few women present at the table'. They explained that 'there was a growing recognition, in that this was something that international community expects, that Colombia expects and there was a push from Colombian civil society itself to have more emphasis on this'.⁸⁶ Both Norway and Cuba were asked by the government and FARC to each provide a national gender expert to accompany the sub-commission, and also provide an international expert to advise on request.⁸⁷ Norway recognised that it was not enough for the presence of women around the table in Colombia to make a difference, but rather women must be able to influence the decision-making process. Specifically, 'gender equality is not just a "women's concern": it is a responsibility of all individuals and society as a whole, and it requires the active involvement of both women and men. It is not sufficient to establish a gender commission where women meet to discuss issues of gender equality'.⁸⁸ In many ways the support of the international community – including the official guarantors, Norway and Cuba – facilitated the promotion of women's voices and provided the support to make them heard during the peace process. Norway, in particular, made gender equality in the peace agreement one of its three core issues to focus on among its mediation team. A Norwegian mediator involved in exploratory talks explained that Norway was central in calling for the establishment of a sub-committee, and that they closely coordinated the facilitation of such a mechanism with Cuba.⁸⁹

Camille Boutron paid attention to the importance of international actors, arguing that the creation and implementation of the Gender Sub-Commission resulted not so much from the expressed will of the government and FARC themselves, but from 'the strategic encounter between women's organisations of Colombian civil society and the international "champions" of the WPS agenda'.⁹⁰ While women's civil society seized the opportunity to advocate and influence the Santos administration to incorporate the inclusion of the gender-based approach as pivotal to an inclusive political settlement in Colombia, FARC also adopted reflective internal policies that

⁸⁴Céspedes-Báez and Ruiz, "Peace without women does not go!", p. 102.

⁸⁵ABColumbia, 'Towards Transformative Change', p. 9.

⁸⁶Authors' interview with former Norwegian mediator, Oslo, 2017.

⁸⁷Dag Nylander, Rita Sandberg, and Ivan Tvedt, *Designing Peace: The Colombian Peace Process*, report for Norwegian Centre for Conflict Resolution (NOREF) (5 February 2018).

⁸⁸Hilde Salvesson and Dag Nylander, *Towards an Inclusive Peace: Women and the Gender Approach in the Colombian Peace Process*, report for Norwegian Centre for Conflict Resolution (NOREF) (5 July 2017).

⁸⁹Authors' interview with former Norwegian mediator, Oslo, 2017.

⁹⁰Camille Boutron, 'Engendering peacebuilding: The international gender nomenclature of peace politics and women's participation in the Colombian peace process', *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*, 13:2 (2018), p. 118.

incorporated the fight for greater women's rights and participation as key to its political agenda in the postconflict phase.

How women's participation influenced FARC's agenda: Women's postconflict participation and 'insurgent feminism'

FARC, like the government, was also influenced by the advocacy of women's organisations after the 2013 National Summit and also committed to greater representation of women on and around the negotiation table. In 2013 FARC women established their official *Mujeres Farianas* website, which is devoted to the lives and work of FARC women, including a variety of literature, multimedia, and presentations. FARC had a composition of roughly forty per cent women in the organisation leading up until the movement's disarmament and demobilisation. Our interview data suggested that FARC was able to use greater women's representation and participation to their advantage, particularly in terms of enhancing the credibility and legitimacy of their negotiation agenda. One women's civil society representative argued that FARC never maintained an internal women's organisation, but after the 2013 National Summit 'began to wake up to the topic of women', after which they decided to name two FARC women as plenipotentiaries. In her opinion, women in FARC 'never asked themselves about a gender perspective because for them the first and most important thing is social class' and it was not until 'they were questioned by the media and the international community, that they were questioned about what role (women) had', which then encouraged FARC women to take a more forefront position.⁹¹ A former member of the government's technical team similarly argued that the commitment to a gender perspective came afterwards, when 'they realised that they were falling behind the agenda because FARC has been traditionally been a very patriarchal organisation, with very strong policies against women in terms of abortion or sexual relationships, etc., and even roles within the organisation'. He reflected that 'the Havana process had also allowed them to re-signify the role of women, particularly leaders and the ones that participated in the Gender Sub-Commission'.⁹²

On the other hand, after hearing experiences from former FARC combatants and active FARC members, we learned about the ways in which women have played roles in the organisation at both the local and regional levels. Active FARC members explained how they maintained close relationships between the group and with some women's organisations within the territories, where they would collaborate together to strategise how best to improve the lives of women.⁹³ In the views of participants we spoke to, it was also common to hear the argument made by both former and active FARC members that 'equality' between men and women had always been promoted throughout the organisation's ranks. Many spoke of implemented 'gender-sameness' among FARC ranks, explaining that 'if a man went to the frontline, a woman did too' and 'women were not discriminated against within FARC-EP'.⁹⁴

As a result, they mentioned that it was not uncommon to see many female commanders and squad leaders through FARC's organisational hierarchy. Yet in reality women were never represented in either the Secretariat or Central High Command, which were the top tiers of FARC leadership. Moreover, copious literature addresses how FARC was responsible for rape, sexual violence, forced abortions, and sterilisations.⁹⁵

⁹¹ Authors' interview with women's civil society representative, Bogotá, 2017.

⁹² Author's interview with former government technical team member, Bogotá, 2017.

⁹³ Authors' interview with FARC member. Icononzo, 2017.

⁹⁴ Authors' interview with former FARC combatants, Cajicá, 2017.

⁹⁵ See Kreft, 'Responding to sexual violence'; Francisco Gutiérrez Sanín and Francy Carranza Franco, 'Organizing women for combat: The experience of the FARC in the Colombian war', *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 17:4 (2017), pp. 770–8; Alexandra Mary Welsh, 'Women of the jungle: Guerrilleras on the front lines of the FARC-EP', *Glendon Journal of International Studies/Revue d'études internationales de Glendon*, 8:1–2 (2015); Julieta Lemaitre and Kristin Bergtora Sandvik, 'Beyond sexual violence in transitional justice: Political insecurity as a gendered harm', *Feminist Legal*

Mujeres Farianas and insurgent feminism

After attending a FARC workshop in June 2017, we learned that the organisation had devised a new policy framework for its transition to a formal political party. FARC's framework of 'insurgent feminism' formally sought to not only secure women's representation and participation during negotiations, but also their involvement in the postconflict phase. Specifically, 'insurgent feminism' was incorporated into the political agenda of FARC's new party that was formalised and legalised as part of the peace settlement. A former FARC commander and senator explained that she saw 'insurgent feminism' as a tool for both women *and* men to establish equity, equality, guarantee of rights, and norms for those within the organisation and now within the political party.⁹⁶ FARC's 'insurgent feminism'⁹⁷ at basic calls for rising against not only women's oppressions, but all kinds of oppression that have traditionally exacerbated grievances in Colombia. Also calling for structural reform throughout the country, 'insurgent feminism' seeks major transformations that is argued to be in favour of the vast majority of Colombians that have been historically excluded. Specifically, 'feminism for FARC-EP is emancipatory because it recognises that it is constituted from the need for wealth redistribution and is framed within the class struggle'.⁹⁸

Consistent with claims made in our interviews, the framework maintained that while women in the FARC-EP are subject to 'equal' understood as the 'same' conditions, opportunities, and capacities as men regardless of gender differences, the anti-patriarchal character of FARC's new political party must be reflected in this empowerment, and in the mass participation of women in all levels of the party. One FARC member explained that they now 'collect all of the historical struggles that *all* women have assumed through the battle for their demands, understanding that this is not only for the vindication of women but women being part of society'. She continued that it was her opinion that during '53 years of struggle, the FARC-EP had completely practised feminism' but 'in 2015 after a consultation meeting, the FARC-EP declared themselves both anti-imperialist and anti-patriarchal'.⁹⁹ The establishment of such an overt anti-patriarchal framework illustrates FARC's incentive to commit to greater women's political participation within its political party, which was given five seats in the House and five seats in the Senate for two terms as part of the peace agreement.

Yet one of the key differences between the government and FARC's conceptualisation of a gender-based approach, and how women's rights and participation will be implemented, is also specifically stated in the framework. The *Mujeres Farianas* explain the need for women's empowerment such that they can 'have presence in decision-making spaces and as a result have a real impact within the Party and in the masses'.¹⁰⁰ As a result, 'you cannot lose sight of the fact that while this (necessitates) a change of the economic and political system, changes in daily life have to be made to combat the consequences of patriarchal culture'.¹⁰¹ To do this, *Mujeres Farianas* posit that 'since the term "empowerment" has been used by liberal feminism to denominate the emergence of individual women in representation positions to reproduce exploitation, we use the concept of "collective empowerment" to refer to the processes of joint struggles for emancipation and women's participation in public spaces'.¹⁰²

FARC saw an opportunity after women's advocacy during the 2013 National Summit to formally organise their *Mujeres Farianas* division, not only through the establishment of a website and internal doctrine but also in guaranteeing the role of women FARC members

Studies, 22:3 (2014), pp. 243–61; Natalia Herrera and Douglas Porch "Like going to a fiesta": The role of female fighters in Colombia's FARC-EP', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 19:4 (2008), pp. 609–34; among others.

⁹⁶ Authors' interview with FARC leader No. 1, Bogotá, 2017.

⁹⁷ FARC-EP, *Tesis de mujer y género FARC-EP: Congreso Constitutivo del Partido, Feminismo Insurgente* (2017).

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁹⁹ Authors' interview with FARC member, Icononzo, 2017.

¹⁰⁰ FARC-EP, *Tesis de mujer y género*, p. 4

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

after the organisation transitioned to legal political party. FARC also created a formal political platform and agenda that could act as a mobilisation tool and implemented an internal framework that would frame the ideological rationale for their calls for greater women's empowerment in the postconflict phase. Strong advocacy from women's civil society organisations was a key driver in triggering this commitment overtly, and also provided an opportunity for female FARC leaders to at the same time not only push for a place in FARC's negotiation team, but also a key role for the *Mujeres Farianas* in overseeing the implementation of the peace. For example, a FARC leader¹⁰³ explained to us that she will be specifically ensuring that the gender-based approach is appropriately implemented through the Commission for Monitoring and Verification of the Peace Agreement (CSIVI). This is a consultative body that is tasked with following up the fulfilment of the agreement, which also includes guaranteeing that the gender approach is incorporated into each of the agreement's implementation points and demonstrates consistency and gender equality. She explained that shortly before FARC formally demobilised in 2017 that FARC was putting measures in place to ensure this, including the 'technical table for gender' as an advisory body. They would invite different departments involved in implementing the gender provisions and clarifying what the gender-based approach should be, and how to turn this into reality.¹⁰⁴ This would complement to Special Instance for Gender, which was a group of seven women from civil society (three from territorial organisations, one from a victim's organisation, two from national organisation, and one LGBTI organisation representative).¹⁰⁵ The Special Instance is again a demonstration of how women's organisations pushed for greater civil society representation and is responsible for also aiding in monitoring and holding to account the gender-based approach's implementation. Just as women's civil society mobilisation was able to seize the 'window of opportunity' to influence the Santos administration's negotiation agenda, FARC similarly was incentivised to strengthen its commitment to greater women's representation and participation in both elite bargaining and the postconflict phase. A combination of agitation by women's organisations, and commitment by both sides of the elite bargain, resulted in the adoption of a 'gender-based approach' designed to vertically – linking elites and social constituencies to address structural and intersectional gender inequality during the post-conflict phase.

The 2016 peace agreement and its 'gender-based approach'

The 2016 peace agreement with FARC is a novelty in global politics, with no other agreement including such substantial gender-inclusive provisions and a 'gender-based approach' mainstreamed into the entirety of its' final text, across all six points: Comprehensive Rural Reform, Political Participation, Ending the Conflict, Solution to the Illicit Drug Problem, Victims, and the Implementation, Verification and Endorsement. It is demonstrative of how an inclusive peace can be pursued in the midst of fragile, ongoing elite bargaining, with women's organisations pressuring horizontal elite bargains from the bottom-up. It is important to note however, that the original agreement between the Colombian government and FARC was narrowly rejected in a plebiscite on 2 October 2016. Although the timeframe after the plebiscite sits outside the period under examination for this article, a key reason for the agreement's rejection was the politicisation of the 'gender ideology'. An argument gained traction in Colombia (especially amongst Colombia's conservative political circle and Evangelical Christian community) that the included gender provisions dismantled traditional mores, 'such as the biological difference between men

¹⁰³ Authors' interview with FARC leader No. 1, Bogotá, 2017.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ *El Espectador*, 'Conozca las sietes mujeres que velarán porque el enfoque de género del acuerdo sea una realidad' (2017), available at: {<https://colombia2020.elespectador.com/pais/conozca-las-siete-mujeres-que-velaran-porque-el-enfoque-de-genero-del-acuerdo-sea-una-realidad>}.

and women, the importance of a heterosexual family, and the place of religion in public life'.¹⁰⁶ Yet the agreement's consequent renegotiation allowed for a more precise and stringent language on gender that was integrated into the final settlement. Moreover, the final agreement maintained an explicitly formulated, gender mainstreaming approach that provided women's organisations in Colombian civil society 'with an institutional and political frame for their demands and mobilisations in each of the six points of the peace agreement'.¹⁰⁷ Although the gender-based approach was retained, the initial rejection of the peace agreement indicates substantial politicisation¹⁰⁸ and contestation of gender, which has had implications for its implementation, including both commitment and financing.¹⁰⁹

In explaining the outcome of how women were able to mobilise politically and so strikingly agitate for inclusion in the Colombian peace negotiations, which in turn resulted in the most gender-sensitive text in a peace agreement ever ratified, it is important to reflect on how a 'gender-based approach' was defined as a form of gender mainstreaming. When defining gender perspectives in peace agreements, Christine Bell argues that incorporating such an approach consists of three-layered components: (1) the inclusion of women in peace process negotiations, and support to women to effectively participate; (2) the inclusion of provisions designed to address the particular needs of women ('gender provisions'); and (3) an assessment of the implications for women and men of any provision of the agreement (a gender audit).¹¹⁰

The 'Final Agreement to End the Armed Conflict and Build a Stable and Lasting Peace' passed on 24 November 2016 deliberately avoids the term 'gender perspective' in favour of 'gender approach' and is defined in point six that deals with Implementation, Verification, and Endorsement as:

Recognition of equal rights for men and women and the special circumstances of each person, especially those of women, regardless of their marital status, life cycle and family and community relationships, as enjoying rights and special constitutional protection. In particular, it implies the need to guarantee affirmative measures to promote that equality, active participation by women and their organisations in peacebuilding and recognition of the victimisation of women as a result of the conflict.

To guarantee true equality, it is necessary to put forward affirmative measures which respond to the disproportionate impact which the armed conflict has had on women, in particular, sexual violence. With regard to the rights of victims, their protection includes differential treatment which recognises the causes and the disproportionate effects which the armed conflict has had on women. Moreover, differential action must be taken to enable women to access the plans and programmes contained in this Agreement on equal terms. Participation by women and their organisations and the equitable representation of women in the different areas of participation must be guaranteed. The gender-based approach must be understood and applied in a cross-cutting manner in implementing the whole of the agreement.¹¹¹

Despite the number of references to 'gender' being reduced in the final agreement, the content is more clearly defined.¹¹² A government negotiator explained that both FARC and the government 'managed to adjust a lot of things that allowed us to be more precise ... what we did was a

¹⁰⁶Lina Céspedes-Báez, 'Gender panic and the failure of a peace agreement', *AJIL Unbound*, 110 (2016), p. 183.

¹⁰⁷Boutron, 'Engendering peacebuilding', p. 116.

¹⁰⁸For how gender, and the gender-security nexus, can be politicised, see Karin Aggestam and Annika Bergman Rosamond, 'Re-politicising the gender-security nexus: Sweden's feminist foreign policy', *European Review of International Studies*, 5:3 (2018), pp. 30–48, available at: {<https://doi.org/10.3224/eris.v5i3.02>}.

¹⁰⁹While the question of implementation is not the focus of this article, it is the focus of our future and ongoing research.

¹¹⁰Christine Bell, *Text and Context: Evaluating Peace Agreements for their Gender Perspective*, PSRP Report (2015), p. 2.

¹¹¹'Final Agreement to End the Armed Conflict and Build A Stable and Lasting Peace' (24 November 2016), p. 205, available at: {<http://especiales.presidencia.gov.co/Documents/20170620-dejacion-armas/acuerdos/acuerdo-final-ingles.pdf>}.

¹¹²Salveson and Nylander, 'Towards an inclusive peace', p. 5.

very exhaustive revision of the text and created definitions on how we understand the “gender-(based) approach”.¹¹³ Furthermore, a representative from *Ruta Pacífica* explained that ‘the change in agreement presented in August to the one signed in November is better because it is more specific that the subject of the politics of peace are women, LGBTQI and the differential perspective’.¹¹⁴ Although there was pressure to compromise elements of the peace agreement among more conservative sectors of Colombian society – and the potential to lose important gains made within the agreement – a member of the government’s technical team explained that the original agreement was reached quite quickly because both parties were fundamentally synchronised in what they wanted. They outlined the message from the ‘NO’ campaign was politically instrumentalised, claiming that the agreement was imposing a ‘gender ideology’, but that this had little to do with the agreement between the government and FARC, and more to do with debates more broadly in Latin America and globally among conservative sectors. As a result, they explained that after consultation with the Christian community, this indeed allowed for more precision and closer common agreement.¹¹⁵

Our research suggests that while women’s organisations were able to agree on a common platform that influenced both sides of the elite bargain to incorporate greater women’s representation and participation, this also resulted in common agreements pertaining to what a gender-sensitive peace agreement should encompass on paper. This being said, our interviews revealed that there were some nuanced differences in terms of what was seen as necessary for such gender inclusivity to be achieved in practice during the bargain’s implementation. There appeared to be two primary points of common understanding among the sectors we interviewed. The first saw the gender-based approach serving as a ‘gender-inclusive’ guideline criteria that related to equal opportunities and rights, political participation, and the opportunity to influence government agendas and development during the implementation phase. For example, an Office of the High Commissioner for Peace representative explained that the gender-based approach encompasses specific measures that contribute to overcoming the ‘asymmetries and inequalities that have persisted between women and men in terms of access to public goods, spaces for political participation’, and in general, ‘the exercise of rights that are related to the end of conflict and peace-building scenario’.¹¹⁶ A FARC representative from the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Final Agreement (CSIVI) explained that the approach is not only about analysing the reality of women, but also sexual diversity and ‘implies the recognition of discrimination, violence and inequality among women to overcome that’.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, a *Mujeres por la Paz* representative explained that their organisation’s demands for greater women’s participation in the peace process were because an ‘agreement that is closing more than 50 years of armed conflict, where the women have been victims of sexual violence, forced displacement, land displacement as well ... in this conflict, we demand transformations that include the recognition of women’s rights’.¹¹⁸ In other words, despite a horizontal elite negotiation between FARC and the government, stakeholders from government, FARC, and civil society saw the importance of a gender-based approach in building vertical inclusion for women in a final political settlement.

The second point of agreement was that a gender-based approach encompassed more than just preventing affirmative measures to guarantee women’s participation and rights but was also overlaid onto overcoming and reconciling structural grievances in Colombian society that accounted for these gender inequalities in the first place. This is something that the final definition does not really address, despite some policies and provisions throughout the agreement endeavouring to

¹¹³ Authors’ interview with former government negotiator, Bogotá, 2017.

¹¹⁴ Authors’ interview with *Ruta Pacífica* representative, Bogotá, 2017.

¹¹⁵ Authors’ interview with former government technical team member, Bogotá, 2017.

¹¹⁶ Authors’ interview with Office of the High Commissioner for Peace representative, Bogotá, 2017.

¹¹⁷ Authors’ interview with FARC CSIVI Representative No. 1, Bogotá, 2017.

¹¹⁸ Authors’ interview with *Mujeres por la Paz* representative, Bogotá, 2017.

overcome key historic grievances that have traditionally generated insecurities, especially in the rural populations. While this was not overtly stipulated, it was clear from our interview data that the government, FARC, and civil society tended to agree that there were underlying structural grievances exacerbating and constraining women's participation that needed to be overcome. Participants maintained that Colombia's protracted war had affected men and women in different ways. For example, the Director of Transitional Justice acknowledged that this included being sensitive to 'the imbalance of power that is still very present in Colombian society in terms of men and women', including being sensitive to how women and girls experienced the consequences of war differently from men and boys.¹¹⁹ A former vice minister of defence explained that it is important to understand the gender-based approach from a differential perspective in terms of how the conflict has affected diverse women. He explained that the Colombian state would like to have a much more positive impact in terms of how it approaches the rural areas and as a result, 'we have to empower women, we have to empower those communities where women play a very important role in different ways depending on the ethnic group (indigenous, Afro-Colombian, etc.)'.¹²⁰ This was an observation about the intersectionality of women's experiences of gender, socioeconomic, ethnic, and colonial oppression was shared among the FARC members we spoke to. A member of FARC's CSIVI delegation agreed that a key component of the approach is the need for differentiation in terms of how women are discriminated against based on their environmental and social circumstances. She explained that 'for example, conditions are different for women because it is not the same to speak about a woman from the coast, or another from the country's south, or another being Afro-Colombian. A woman can have three different contexts being rural, engaged in illicit cropping and indigenous.'¹²¹

James Putzel and Jonathan Di John argue that 'whilst the effective organisation of non-elites in society can decisively influence the action of elites and the shape of a political settlement', often the immediate prospects of 'achieving or sustaining peace and promoting development are contingent on the complex processes of conflict and bargaining amongst elites'.¹²² We found that approaches towards renegotiating the broader political settlement differed as a result of how the elites (FARC and the government) understood and accounted for constraints on women's participation. This was particularly the case pertaining to how the two parties view the process of overcoming larger structural grievances in Colombian society that would allow for greater gender equality and women's participation, which is likely to become problematic in the implementation phase. That is to say, while women's civil society was successful in pushing greater women's representation and participation into both parties' negotiation agendas, both FARC and the government differ on the parameters that would define the new political settlement intended to engender this inclusivity.

Former and active members of FARC stressed that was key for the 'gender-based approach' to serve as a mechanism to provide the conditions for societal overhaul and women's collective empowerment *vis-à-vis* the machismo prevalent within Colombian society. A former FARC combatant explained that, 'women – no matter the background, race, or social stratum– have suffered from war in different ways. And they knew that we come from a society that is *machista* and capitalist. That's why they identified the need to incorporate a gender-based approach.'¹²³ Another FARC CSIVI representative agreed that machismo indeed exacerbated inequalities and discrimination against women, but that feminism for FARC is not only talking about this in terms of the 'classical theory of liberal feminism, but women and men in the context of oppression and poverty'.¹²⁴ For FARC, the discussion of a gender-based approach necessitated a shift to overcome class and economic inequalities prevalent in Colombian society, though not necessarily economic

¹¹⁹ Authors' interview with Director of Transitional Justice, Bogotá, 2017.

¹²⁰ Authors' interview with former Vice Minister of Defense, Bogotá, 2017.

¹²¹ Authors' interview with with FARC CSIVI Representative No. 2, Bogotá, 2017

¹²² Putzel and Di John, 'Meeting the Challenges of Crisis States', p. 2.

¹²³ Authors' interview with former FARC combatant, Icononzo, 2017.

¹²⁴ Authors' interview with FARC CSIVI representative No. 1, Bogotá, 2017.

inequality in the household gender division of labour (yet). In this respect, a gender-based approach was not only a way to analyse both the reality of women and sexual diversity, but also to have structural solutions to different historical problems such as poverty and agrarian issues through the elimination of class inequalities.

Not surprisingly, for the government structural grievances needed to be overcome by reforming existing institutional frameworks in line with a gender-based approach through gender-mainstreaming, that included positive discrimination towards women, rural, and Afro-Colombian and indigenous populations. An Office of the High Commissioner for Peace representative explained that at the negotiation table, the government approach was 'based on what is already existing in our constitution in terms of fighting against discrimination and positive measures that actually guarantees effective equality between gender, and also recognition of the various gender identities under specific needs in a post-conflict scenario'.¹²⁵ Furthermore, for the Director of Transitional Justice, peace agreements should serve as a 'road map for structural reform in the areas that are key for us, such as advancing gender justice – certainly in terms of transitional justice. They cannot make a revolution of course, but at least contribute in a small way'.¹²⁶ Yet despite these differences on how specifically the broader Colombian political settlement might seek to overcome gender inequalities, both the government and FARC came together to secure a gender-inclusive agreement.

Conclusion

In this article we have shown how women's bottom-up civil society mobilisation and political bargaining with elite actors, appealing both to international WPS norms and national, institutional frameworks, compelled them to adopt a gender-inclusive agenda. That agenda secured both women's representation in the elite processes and a gender-based approach in the substantive agreement ensuring women's human rights and access to resources. The Colombian case provides a significant example of how both elite and vertical, non-elite entry points can facilitate women's inclusion and influence gender perspectives into elite bargains, providing lessons for other peace processes and exclusionary contexts. We have argued that gender inclusion can *transform* rather than *threaten* elite bargains as illustrated by the Colombian 2016 agreement. However, what can we learn from the political bargaining dynamics of this novel, very significant and perhaps exceptional case for navigating gender in other elite bargains and peace deals? We highlight three main learnings.

First, our study suggests that context-rich political bargaining is essential to navigating gender in any elite domain. That bargaining is likely to be multi-sited, as well as vertical and horizontal. Our understanding of political bargaining in conflict-peace transitions needs to account for internal bargaining processes within the diversity of civil society and across women's organisations as well as between these groups and elite parties. No gender inclusion strategy should 'pick winners' or eliminate one stakeholder from its political or negotiation strategy. The dynamics will differ across contexts not only because of the elite actors but also because of the unique and diverse actors and structures in each situation. Thus, there can be no one preferred modality for women's participation in peace processes, no one-size-fits-all approach to negotiating for inclusive peace. Yet, the Colombian peace process does show that inclusive peace can be pursued during fragile elite bargaining to end conflict. Of key importance is to pressure leaders and international organisations to stop treating processes globally as elite and exclusive events.¹²⁷ Advocating for gender provisions, such as, no impunity for sexual violence and the promotion of women's postconflict participation is more persuasive when the international actors display that same level of equality in their representation, as was the case with the guarantors to the Colombian peace process.

¹²⁵ Authors' interview with Office of the High Commissioner for Peace representative, Bogotá, 2017.

¹²⁶ Authors' interview with Director of Transitional Justice, Bogotá, 2017.

¹²⁷ Ellerby, 'A seat at the table', p. 150.

Second, this insight on the context-richness of political bargaining dynamics has further implications for how we study women's meaningful participation in peace and women's mobilisation in male-dominated, exclusionary political settings. While we have good evidence at the general level that women's participation can be instrumental in the concluding and sustaining of peace agreements, we need much more nuanced, context-specific evidence on the political dynamics within women groups or civil society movements and the bargaining processes between these groups and elite actors. We need to better understand the incremental and punctuated processes of bargaining – when and how can breakthroughs occur, and gains be made with regard to gender inclusion. In the Colombian case analysed here, we observed that pushing for inclusion by women's movements happened early – well before the peace negotiations began – and often, using all possible mechanisms including those of the insurgent group. Inclusion cannot be left 'until later'. Attempting to support inclusion in the postconflict phase risks it not happening at all as power structures and the opportunities for transformation will likely be closed.

Third, the Colombian case highlights the importance of practically operationalising intersectional gender analysis in peace processes to make them stick. Outside of the horizontal elite negotiations, stakeholders from government, FARC and civil society understood that a gender-based approach with vertical inclusion for women in a final political settlement would also work to sustain and build the peace in diverse communities. Societal mobilisation led by women and involving women across ethnic, indigenous, socioeconomic, and rural/urban or regional groups was seen as a way to overcome differences and enable structural grievances to be tackled peacefully.

Although this article has dealt with the way in which a combination of women in elite processes and women's organisations came together to secure gender-inclusion in fragile elite bargaining, adequately implementing these gender provisions is another challenge. Significantly, in 2016 the second National Summit of Women and Peace took place in Bogotá between 19 and 21 September, which again unified diverse women's organisations. The theme of the second summit was the way in which women could participate in 'the construction of peace', arising from the need to give continuity to what was achieved in 2013, 'with the purpose of continuing to weave proposals from and among the various territorial, regional and national women's organisations, recognising that what is achieved is in the collective force'.¹²⁸ The main objectives were to contribute to a substantive analysis and pedagogy about the agreements reached in Havana, and to reflect on a road map for the role of women in the implementation of the agreements. It is precisely this point that will be critical going forward, and to what degree these commitments to substantive gender analysis and pedagogy are implemented should be prioritised in future research.

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¹²⁸Cumbre Nacional de Mujeres y Paz, *Sistematización*, 19–21 September, Bogotá (National Summit of Women for Peace, 2016), p. 10.