Planning Befriends Women: A Look of a Gender Responsive City in the Colombian Context

Recipient of the II Award SEGIB-AECID in Research on Sustainable Development in Ibero-America

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Ganador del II Premio SEGIB-AECID de Investigación sobre Desarrollo Sostenible en Iberoamérica, primer premio

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Abstract

Gender is considered the most universal form of inequality. Therefore, a just and sustainable development cannot, and should not, be conceived without gender equality (GE), as recognized by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Several Latin American countries are making substantial progress in terms of critical aspects of GE. For Colombia, the path towards gender equality starts from nationwide mandatory laws to be implemented at the local level. In this study, it is used data collected for a Convergent Parallel Mixed Method to conduct a comprehensive assessment of efforts towards GE in Colombian municipalities. Data collected are employed from the municipal development plans (PDMs), cities' websites, and archival material. In this paper, I mainly present the results of the qualitative phase that uses a Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA). Results indicate that efforts towards GE in Colombian municipalities are portrayed through programs and initiatives to address the internationally recognized women's agenda.

Keywords: gender responsive planning, local planning, gender equality-SDG 5, content analysis, Colombia.

Resumen

El género está considerado la forma más universal de desigualdad. Por tanto, un desarrollo justo y sostenible no puede ni debe concebirse sin la igualdad de género, como se reconoce en la Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible. Varios países latinoamericanos han logrado avances sustanciales en aspectos críticos de la igualdad de género. En el caso de Colombia, el camino hacia la igualdad de género parte de leyes obligatorias a nivel nacional, que se implementarán a nivel local. En este estudio, se utilizan datos recopilados para un método mixto paralelo convergente, con el fin de realizar una evaluación integral a los esfuerzos hacia la igualdad de género en los municipios colombianos. Dichos datos provienen de los planes de desarrollo municipal, las webs de las ciudades y el material de archivo. En este artículo presento, principalmente, los resultados de la fase cualitativa, en la que se utiliza un análisis cualitativo de contenido. Los resultados indican que los esfuerzos hacia la igualdad de género en los municipios colombianos se vehiculan a través de programas e iniciativas con los cuales abordar la agenda de mujeres reconocida internacionalmente.

Palabras clave: planificación con perspectiva de género, planificación local, igualdad de género-ODS 5, análisis de contenido, Colombia.

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1
Introduction

«Is gender equality destined to remain our perpetual aspirational dream?» The 2015 Human Development Report shows that, although there have been improvements in terms of gender equality (GE) for women in the last twenty years, there are serious gender disparities in terms of —payment and access to— employment, health, leadership positions occupancy, and care work, among others (Jahan & Mukhopadhyay 2016). All of these is now aggravated by the COVID-19, which has put a bigger burden over women throughout the world. Despite years, feminist advocacy and pressure from civil society, governments and urban planners still struggle to create a strategy where women's interests and needs are well served (Fainstein & Servon 2005). Gender inequality is arguably the most persistent and insidious form of inequality. It impacts women of all stripes, both within marginalized and non-marginalized groups. GE is not only a matter of fairness for half of the population; solving gender inequality, also brings economic benefits and better human development for all (Beede *et al.* 2011, Kristof & WuDunn 2009, Blumberg 2005, Momsen 2004, UNWOMEN 2017). Tackling GE has a positive impact not just for women, but for the economy and the society at large, as it was recognized by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 (UNDP 2015).

Urban planning is defined as «a dynamic profession that works to improve the welfare of people and their communities». Welfare for all people is at its core. Urban planners can shape the nature of public investments (Rakodi 1991), that help reduce the burden of marginalized people within an urban setting. They can also serve as advocates to pursue a more equal access to opportunities and conditions by various marginalized groups, including for women (Young 1997). However, to the best of my knowledge, the studies assessing gender within local planning documents are scarce within the city planning profession. Doing gender and working towards GE is only a small fading branch within the planning profession.

The lack of attention that the urban planning profession gives to gender inequality is regrettable because, on daily basis, women are discriminated against for the simple reason of being women. The kind of inequality they experience range from being targeted and murdered for entering the political arena (Zulver 2019), to making less than what men make for the same job, to being denied freedom over their own bodies. In the 2018 global gender gap report (WEF 2018, p. 8), it is estimated that it will take one hundred and eight years to close the overall global gender gap, but two hundred and two years to close the gap on economic opportunity moving at the pace that we are. As scholars, not only do we have the ability to help reduce this time, we ought to exert that ability.

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This research constitutes an initial effort to advance the search for solutions to the gender inequality problem at the local level. It sheds lights on how GE for women is tackled at the local level by city planning authorities. To achieve the goals of this study, it is used a Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) of data collected from the municipal development plans (PDMs) for 2016-2019, cities' websites, and archival material found online or provided by the Colombian National Department of Planning (DNP).

The QCA was selected because a PDM is a comprehensive document that provides key information on the municipal planning for each city. PDMs are public information. They can be obtained on the city's website or, if not posted online, they can be obtained through the DNP or by using a legal right available to everybody in Colombia named *Derecho de Petición* (similar to a public records request in the U.S.).

Colombia was selected because it exhibits important particularities in terms of GE. It has been praised as a country making progress in improving the condition of women in education, health, and labor force, among others (World Bank 2011). It scores better in GE than countries such as the USA (WEF 2016). Moreover, in Latin America, Colombia constitutes an interesting case since it is almost an average case of the region, scoring better than Chile —a country with one of the best economic indicators of the region— but worse than Nicaragua —a poorer country with a long-standing leftist tradition (WEF 2016, 2018)—. While in an unitarian country like Colombia GE is legislated and mandated from the national government, it is in the realm of local governments that these national mandates are to be implemented. Thus, this work assesses how some municipalities advance GE; and how the efforts towards GE look within planning documents of different cities.

In what follows, I first present a discussion around the literature on gender responsive planning (GRP); I then introduce some methodological procedures to later show how planning at the local level in Colombia is addressing GE. This analysis enables me to get a rich understanding of the local dynamics and the different approaches towards GE pursued at the local level.

2
Literature review

Even though women's condition received more attention today compare with previous decades, women still experience inequality in most of aspects of their lives. This situation applies for developed and developing countries. According to UNWOMEN, women all around the world experience inequality in the access to basic education, health care, safe transportation; they also experience dispari-

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ties accessing to work and face occupational segregation and gender wage gaps, and they are also underrepresented in political and economic decision making processes (UNWOMEN 2014). Thereby, several authors consider that gender is the most universal form of inequality (Jahan & Mukhopadhyay 2016, Kabeer 2003). For instance, looking at situation of marginalized or vulnerable population, let's say, displaced people, the situation for women is frequently worse than the situation for men (Crenshaw 2006, Hill Collins 2002). Examples could also be drawn from disabled groups, ethnic minorities, LGBTQ communities, poor people, religious groups, illiterates, elderly, and immigrants, among others.

But should we care about gender discrimination? Why is it important to achieve gender equality? In the 2030 Agenda, it is considered that: «Ending all discrimination against women and girls is not only a basic human right, it's crucial for sustainable future; it's proven that empowering women and girls helps economic growth and development».

We should start by acknowledging that, in most parts of the world, women are at least half of the population. Then, GE is a matter of justice for half of the population.

Additionally, GE could be seen in terms of the economic benefits that it can provide to the society in general, and to the markets in particular. For instance, in the case of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, many of their associations are promoting the inclusion of women within their fields, not because it is a matter of justice, but because those fields are in need of a labor force that cannot be supplied, at least in North America, with the traditional White-male force (Beede *et al.* 2011).

Promoting equal access for women in aspects such as education, just work, health, empowerment initiatives, and decision-making positions, among others, have been shown to help boosting the results in terms of human development. Momsen (2004, p. 50), for instance, discusses how child mortality reduces when there are increases in education for women. In the same direction, Blumberg (2005) and Kristof and WuDunn (2009) also debate how the household welfare improve as a result of women's empowerment. Then, equality for women does not only benefit them but the society in general.

Based on the discrimination that women experience, and after decades of feminist battle, most of the UN members countries have defined a women's agenda to enhance women's situation, and to protect their rights (Banco Mundial 2011, Nallari & Griffith 2011). The goals within each agenda could vary among countries or regions; however, most of them try to address women's economic capacity, access to resources and services, and representation in decision making processes and positions. The economic capacity is related to access to the job market, as well as to economic resourc-

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es such as land, but this is also highly determined by access to education. Activities related to this goal also include the reduction of gender wage gaps, women entering decent work and actions against the discrimination they experience at work. On the other hand, access to resources addresses problems relate to women's health, both access and condition; the provision of basic services, because they are usually in charge of chores that require them, but also transportation or education. Likewise, the underrepresentation of women should be addressed in two different fronts, *i.e.,* getting them to participate as member of the communities within planning processes and sitting them on political and bureaucracy chairs where decisions are taken.

Blumenberg (1998) contents that gender-neutral development initiatives might benefit women, but they do not address the structural causes of gender inequality. Therefore, gender awareness or a *GRP* approach is needed to change the condition of women and to enjoy the benefits that empowered women bring to societies.

To fight the pervasive gender inequality, as well as to enjoy the benefits of a more equalitarian society, it is necessary to have a planning approach that accounts for the gender differential impact that the approach could yield on its beneficiaries. Neither the market, nor the most traditional planning approach are gender aware. According to Kabeer (2003), the market cannot reduce gender inequality; contrarily, it does not only assume gender-neutrality, but also it offers differential conditions for women and men that reinforces gender disparities. The traditional and most widely used planning model also encounters problems addressing gender inequalities since it is conceived from a gender-blind perspective (Sandercock & Forsyth 1992, Fainstein & Servon 2005).

Based on that, GRP is a type of planning approach that acknowledges the differential impact that planning, local planning in this case, will have on men and women. It does not refer to planning for women independently; contrarily, it recognizes that the population is not gender-neutral and that programs might have different effects based on the gender of the beneficiaries. A question that a GRP should answer is: does the implementation of the PDM lower, reduce, or leave gender inequality unchanged? Gender planning, the approach proposed by Caroline Moser, is one of the most straightforward and well-known GRP approaches (Moser 2003).

Moser's gender planning approach aims for women's liberation from the condition that hold them on subordinated positions within their families, communities, cities, and countries. The idea is to change the relations among women and men in such a way that there is equality among them, and women end up empowered as a result of the gendered planning approach.

According to Bock (2015), gender considerations in many programs are only an addendum or a single paragraph asserting

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that women will be targeted. Or, as Burgess (2008) argues, women's issues addressed by local planning authority are mainly «in terms of issues of access, transport and safety, rather than issues of gender income disparities, educational achievements or poverty inequalities» (Burgess 2008, p. 119). Nonetheless, a GRP approach is one that mainstreams gender issues, which acknowledges that women and men might have a different interaction within the planning context, and, therefore, might be impacted differently (Fainstein & Servon 2005, Momsen 2004, Moser 2003, Sandercock & Lysiottis 1998). GRP stresses gender awareness during all phases of a project or program, from the very conception of the project until the evaluation (Ostergaard 1992). Feminist and gender planners propend for approaches that make that recognition, such as Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB), and for those that help including the gender perspective in all the stages of the program, such as the Gender Analytical Frameworks (GAF).

GRB is a policy instrument that recognizes that budgets have non-neutral gender impacts over men and women (Sgueo 2015, p. 3). Sharp and Broomhill (1990, cited on Stotsky 2006, p. 18) provide a framework to classify public expenditures into three categories that could shed light on whether a PDM is responsive in terms of gender equality. The idea is to distinguish between gender specific programs such as reduction of gender violence; programs promoting GE within the public sector, such as initiatives to include a gender representative bureaucracy; and mainstreaming programs that look at the gender differential impact of a policy or program. Meanwhile, GAF are tools that offer the possibility to gather sex-disaggregated data that planners and policy makers can use at different stages of an intervention project (Warren 2007) to respond to the challenges placed by gender to the plan, project or program.

In this study, I work to identify whether local planning authorities in Colombia use GRP within their municipal planning initiatives. The PDMs constitute the main focus of the analysis, but sources such as city's websites are also analyzed. In what follows, I explain the methods used to conduct this study.

3
Methods

In this paper, it is used data collected for a Convergent Parallel Mixed Method to conduct a comprehensive assessment of efforts towards gender equality (GE), SDG 5, in Colombian municipalities. This paper shows the results of the qualitative phase that uses a Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA), to assess how the efforts to-wards GE are portrayed in the PDM's and how they differ across cities. The quantitative part, although not reported here, provides

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some insights of the factors influencing local authorities to prompt urban planning and policies that advance gender equality. The use of a mixed method proved to complement the results.

3.1. Sampling

To ensure representation of the Colombian cities, I first defined as sampling criteria the geographical representation, and the DNP's typology.[1] Since Colombia is a multicultural country where culture varies across geographical regions, a geographical criterion is useful to ensure representation of social and cultural characteristics. Differences based on the DNP Typology were included in the sample to represent differences in the planning capacity of the cities, which was the proxy used in the quantitative part of this study. Later I included city's GRP level, estimate in the quantitative phase not reported here, to ensure a more comprehensive description across municipalities and gender responsiveness.

The final sample is shown in Figure 1. In total, I analyzed 21 cities: 6 cities from the densest region, the Andean; 5 cities from the Caribbean and 4 from the Pacific regions; and 5 cities from both the Plains and the Amazon regions. Ten are capital cities and 6 with female mayors. The percentage of female mayors in Colombia is 12.2 %, none of them from a large major city (CSM 2016). As for the DNP typology, the sample also includes 7 cities with high planning capacity, 10 with a medium capacity, and 6 with low capacity, which is a well-weighted representation of the planning capacity across the country considering that most of Colombian municipalities fall into the medium planning capacity, but most of the population lives in cities with robust capacity (Carmona Sánchez *et al.* n. d.).

3.2. Building a coding frame

The unit of analysis of this study are the Colombian cities, and I study their PDMs as the main data source of my research. The next step of the QCA was to create a coding frame or codebook. As with most of codebooks in QCAs (Gibbs 2007, Hsieh & Shannon 2005, Schreier 2012), I used a mixed strategy to generate it. It was mainly concept- and experience-driven. Concept-driven categories refer to the process by which they are created, *i.e.,* driven by the literature or a concept that is already well known (Gibbs 2007, Elo & Kyngäs 2008, Schreier 2012). I used elements of the feminist and planning literature. On the other hand, experience-driven categories are the result of some of the knowledge that, usually, the researcher possesses. I made use of my everyday logic and experience as a Colombian woman, former public servant, and political activist and advocate to define the coding frame used in this study.

1 A typology that categorizes Colombian municipalities into seven groups, based on aspects of quality of life, security, economic potential, environment, urban functionality, and institutional capacity.

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The coding frame was tested for reliability and validity. The categories and subcategories were tested for unidimensionality, and exhaustiveness, exclusiveness, and saturation, respectively.
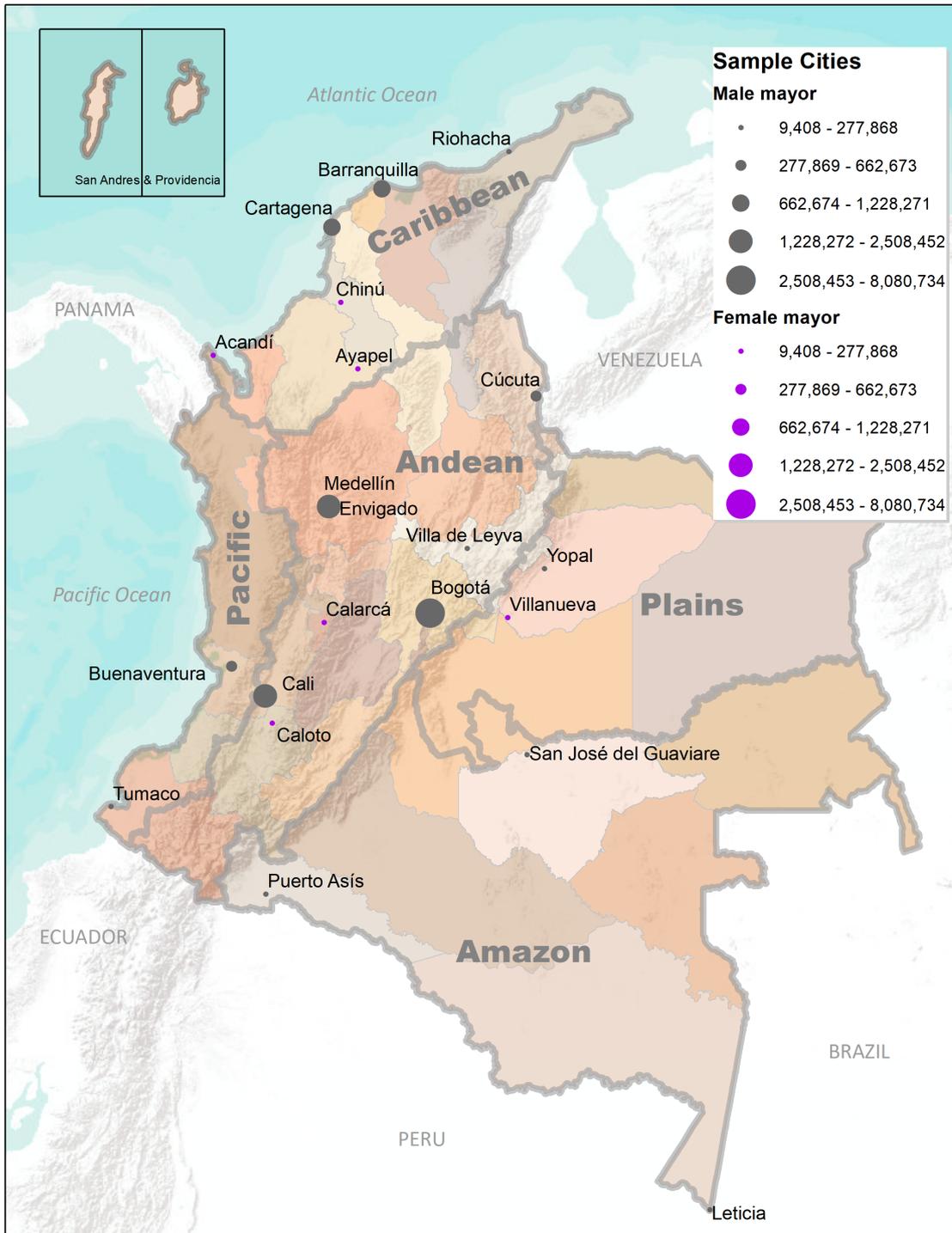
3.3. The coding process

Coding is a process by which the data is categorized or organized (Gibbs 2007). It follows a scheme that, for QCA, Schreier (2012) calls «coding frame». The coding frame, with its categories, subcategories, and questions, can be considered an interview to the data in this case. For this study, I initially define a coding frame comprised of four sets of questions or main categories. Categories are relevant aspects about the research question.

The first category that I defined looks at the same elements measured by the Global Gender Gap Index, which are based on the global consensus that, to reduce gender inequalities, efforts need to be done towards political empowerment, economic opportunity and participation, education, and physical integrity of women (Banco Mundial 2011, Nallari & Griffith 2011). I called this category *Women's Agenda.* It was intended to look at measurable outcomes in terms of GE.

The other three are called Organizational Readiness, Political Commitment and Plan Quality. In the literature on plan evaluation (Baer 1997, Berke & Godschalk 2009), it is assessed plans' quality by looking at technical and organizational components that I also included on the coding frame. The political commitment category is drawn from the recognition that the level of attentiveness that decision makers and politicians show towards GE has a direct impact on the success of it (March *et al.* 1999, pp. 126-128).

Moreover, the political category was enriched by my experience as a public servant. I worked at the city hall of a Colombian city for several years. Thanks to that experience, I came to understand the power that mayors hold for planning and the need for their commitment to any plan or initiative. Political commitment could be analyzed throughout the PDMs, and I included a category with several questions to capture this piece.

The last category is named *Gender Awareness.* This is intended to unveil not only how Colombian cities are making efforts in terms of desired outcomes, but how those efforts towards GE were accompanied with a change of the values and culture. It looks at the use of inclusive language, and the existence of a gender focus within the plan, among others. This category was also supported by the feminist literature, in which it is said that to be responsive towards GE, it is necessary to be aware of the gender differentials (March *et al.* 1999). Contrarily to the Women's Agenda category, this one assesses the cultural changes towards GE.

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Figure 1
Sample Cities
Source: by the author.

The coding process was conducted in two different phases and periods of time, both using NVivo. The first phase included me, the main researcher, and a second coder, who volunteered to test for inter-coder reliability. The main coding phase involved the main researcher coding all the 21 cities in the sample. This phase did also include coding again the three cities coded before during the first phase. It was done to check for time reliability.

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4
Local planning befriending women: the case of Colombia

The QCA results indicate that all the cities plan some type of actions to advance GE. Most of them also exhibit important levels of gender awareness, which in this case means that the people in charge of defining the PDM for the cities, and the mayor and perhaps the city council too, are acquainted with the definition of gender and its implications in a society. Although the levels of equality that they try to address might differ, all of them address some type of problem that would reduce the gender gap. Therefore, I dare say that the most important characteristic of the PDMs is their medium to high level of sensibility in terms of GE. Now, this is not to say that all the cities are addressing gender inequality or that they will reduce the *status quo* of gender gaps after the PDM is implemented. Curiously, most of them do not explicitly state the differential impact that the PDM implementation could have on men and women, which results in the lack of accountability regarding gender impact. Nonetheless, it could be said that these cities do know about it and, at the very least, plan to address some of the gender inequality that they have identified in their territories.

Next, I present the QCA results for the 21 cities that I analyzed. The presentation follows the same order of the coding frame.

4.1. The Women's Agenda in Colombian municipalities

This category evaluates the actions of every municipality associated to political empowerment, economic opportunity, education, and physical integrity for women. In what follows, I present the findings of how each of these pillars of the women's agenda are addressed within the PDMs. Table 1 shows a summary of the findings across the subcategories within the women's agenda category, except by educational attainment.

Pillars of the Women's Agenda	Number of cities	Percentage of cities
Political Empowerment		
Has programs to foster women's leadership and participation in the city's political, social, and cultural life	15	71 %
Has more than 30 % of its positions of power held by women	17	81 %
Has more than 30 % of female commissioners	1	5 %
Has more than 30 % of its positions within CTP held by women	14	67 %
Has programs designed to reduce teen pregnancy	19	90 %

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Pillars of the Women's Agenda	Number of cities	Percentage of cities
Economic Participation and Opportunity		
Has programs to increase women's participation in the labor market and to help securing their financial autonomy	19	90 %
Physical Integrity		
Has actions or plans designed to prevent and fight violence against women	19	90 %
Mentions domestic violence within their PDMs as an important problem to address	16	76 %
Regards gender-based violence a health problem	10	48 %

Table 1
Summary – Women's Agenda

4.1.1. Political empowerment

The elements, suggesting actions to promote political empowerment for women, are both implicit – and needed to be extracted from the QCA, or explicitly stated within the PDMs. The most explicit ones are the actions undertaken by cities to increasing women's leadership. Fifteen of the 21 cities have some type of intention to foster women's leadership and participation in the city's political, social, and cultural life (see Table 1). In general, with these programs, it is attempted to strengthen women's capacities in leadership and advocacy in public policy. Some of them also target women's organizations and others focus on different groups of women. Among the identified actions towards women's political empowerment by cities are: activities to increase women's political participation and agency and to reduce and address teen pregnancy.

As part of its gender program, Bogotá identified the need to «strengthen women's leadership for participation in the public arena and participation spaces, such as councils, committees, community action committees, in a way that promotes women's representation and the positioning of their agendas, needs and interests in the public agenda».

Bogotá's PDM explicitly recognizes the need to empower women by strengthening their leadership capacity in the public realm. At the same time, it determines that this is a way to place their demands within the city's agenda. This recognition is accompanied by a measurable objective of increasing the percentage of women in leadership positions by 5 % at the end of the four-year period.

By the same token, actions towards the political empowerment of Cali's women are explicitly called forth by its PDM's goal. Cúcuta also made clear that they want growth in their numerical representation of women in positions of power and set goals to do it.

The call towards greater political empowerment; however, is not common for most of the other cities. Nonetheless, much small-

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er cities also address their desire for women's political empowerment but in a less comprehensive way. For instance, they state the intention to do so, but do not define an indicator of success or a measurable target. Five cities do not mention any action towards political empowerment of women. All the plans mainly revolve around training women in political participation and advocacy, but the intention to improve the quality of women's participation in decision-making arenas is only stated by large cities.

Less explicit signs of women's political empowerment were found by analyzing the numerical representation of women within the local cabinet. Except for Acandí, San José del Guaviare, and Buenaventura, all the other cities have more than 30 % of women in positions of power within the cabinet (Table 1). This is aligned with the Global Gender Gap Report (WEF 2018), where it is recognized Colombia as one of the five countries in the World in which women are equally likely than men to attain managerial positions.

I found no trends in terms of what positions of power are mainly occupied by women. The cities that count with a women's affairs office do have a woman as a chief of the office. There is not any city with a female secretary for Economic Development, but the results in terms of Social Development, infrastructure, and treasure, among others, are mixed. None of the cities have a program for equal opportunity hiring.

The results for women at the local council are opposite to the cabinets. All the cities but Buenaventura have less than 30 % of women as city commissioners (Table 1), which shows that in Colombia the representation of women in appointed positions is larger than in elected positions. It is worth mentioning that Colombian women's quota for appointed position was enacted before the one for the electoral system. Women were also sitting at the planning table as part of the CTP (Consejo Territorial de Planeación, or Local Planning Council in English). They are part of the grass-root groups that represent the civil society, advising and vetting the PDM. Two-thirds of the twenty-one cities have more than thirty percent of women within the CTP (Table 1). This was not only as representatives of the women's caucus, but as part of other stakeholder groups.

In contrast to the local commissioner, CTP's representative is an unpaid position. It can add prestige to the person that takes it, and it is good for networking, but it is still an unpaid position. The city commissioners, meanwhile, get paid the same amount as the mayor; although they only get paid for the days that they are in session. This could in part explain why there are more female CTP's representatives than female commissioners, since in the literature it has been found that men tend to occupy less non-paid leadership positions (ILO 1998).

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I also included teenage pregnancy as part of the analysis of political empowerment to show that this main pillar of the women's agenda needs to be connected to ways to improve the opportunities of the future leaders. The notion that teen pregnancy brings severe implications for the life opportunities of young girls and women has been widely discussed (Hotz *et al.* 2018). In the analysis, it is indicated that 18 cities designed programs to reduce teen pregnancy (Table 1). All of them are linked to the local health plan, but cities such as Cúcuta and Villanueva also recognize the importance of addressing teenage pregnancy within their plan for GE. Meanwhile, Bogotá is the only city that explicitly recognized teen pregnancy as a problem for both: female and male teenagers.

Teen pregnancy is a public health issue for the local governments that I analyzed, although none of them linked it to the lack of women in elected positions. Education is the most used strategy to prevent it and is also the most basic action. All the eighteen cities have it, referring to education in sexuality and contraceptive methods. After that, the second strategy was birth control programs that seek youth access to them. Yopal put emphasis on teen-friendly birth control and reproductive health. Comprehensive reproductive health services, accessible and with responsive qualified staff, was the concern not only for Medellín, but for cities like Puerto Asís, Villanueva and Acandí, that are smaller and where social stigma of sexual life can play a crucial role. And, while it may be true that Colombia has approved the voluntary interruption of pregnancy in special cases, only Leticia and Tumaco explicitly address it as a component of their strategy on teen pregnancy.

4.1.2. Economic autonomy

Nineteen out of the 21 address female labor force participation within the diagnosis of the PDMs. Congruently, there is a clear focus on increasing the participation of women in the labor market, as well as to promote their financial autonomy (Table 1). Among the 19 cities targeting women's economic autonomy, Leticia and Ayapel only provided a statement of their desire. Cartagena and Cúcuta included the word «training» within a similar statement but did not provide more information. Their aspirations are in danger of not being achieved if that is the only thing they do. Other cities' programs went further, to clarify that women will be receiving training for work, on how to apply for grants and in project formulation, among others. Bogotá and Acandí specify that access to credit need to be addressed, if women's economic autonomy was to be achieved. Moreover, half of the cities either will assist women with their already-running businesses or provide support to create new ones.

Medellín has one of the most comprehensive plans to work on women's economic participation: «[A]n economic autonomy model with a gender and differential focus is designed and implemented for women [...] to strengthen the productive, entrepreneurial, and

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innovation capabilities of women, facilitating their incorporation into the productive processes of the city».

Medellín's plan is comprehensive in its aim to include women from different groups, such as disabled, native Colombian, young, and LGTBQ+ women, among others. It is also comprehensive with the use of resources, that provide financial opportunities for women, using different technologies and targeting traditional male jobs. Medellín explicitly seeks the increase of female labor force participation and aims to foster the creation of new enterprises by women. Additionally, they plan to partner with the private sector to identify the labor market's needs and trends, as well as the potential for women on it.

Some of the programs vary in terms of the group of women that they want to target. For instance, Puerto Asís, San José del Guaviare and Chinú target women heads of household in their employment programs and productive projects. Calarcá, as well as Chinú, also targets female entrepreneurs to leverage their existing initiatives.

Meanwhile, Leticia stablishes the «design and implementation of a strategy of economic autonomy for women victims», but they do not clarify the type of victims they are targeting. Contrarily to the programs mentioned above, Leticia's one is blurred with not further development.

Bogotá has two initiatives, that could help other cities to achieve their goals. These initiatives are aligned with what Klugman and Tyson (2016) identified as driver 6 to expand women economic empowerment. One is the «fostering of dignified employment and job environments that are safe and free from discrimination». This is extremely important. The advancement of women in the workplace is closely associated to everyday discrimination and harassment (McKinney & Company 2018). Therefore, if cities can lead the expedition to eliminate them, it would be a significant step in advancing GE. Moreover, it might not be the case of main cities, but many small cities happen to be the ones that employ an important number of their population. Therefore, having an equal opportunity, job policy could lead to improving female labor force participation. This is a simple inexpensive action, so it can be considered a low-hanging fruit strategy for cities to adopt. The other initiative in Bogotá is to foster a redistribution of nonpaid work within the household. Women have traditionally been designated as caregivers and the responsible for the reproductive task in the economy. Since the day only has 24 hours, freeing women from this task could help them improve their participation in the labor market.

The only cities that did not specify any actions towards economic participation and opportunity of women are Cali and Buenaventura, both important cities within the same province. They recognize that women are underemployed and acknowledge the need to undertake

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actions to address the high levels of general unemployment in the city, but none of them is explicitly directed towards women.

4.1.3. Physical integrity

I used physical integrity to do a more comprehensive analysis, that searches for explicit efforts to reduce violence against women, instead of only looking at their reproductive health and life expectancy. All the cities mentioned that domestic violence disproportionally affects women by an order of magnitude. A good part of them also acknowledge gender-based violence (GBV) survivors of the armed conflict. Moreover, the sexual violence has girls and women as the number one victim. Nevertheless, the results in terms of promoting the physical integrity of women are mixed. Nineteen cities explicitly express their desire to address the issue, or plan actions to prevent and fight violence against women (Table 1).

The results in terms of the actions and or programs to fight and prevent GBV are diverse. Same as with economic autonomy, Leticia only provides a statement saying that violence against women will be addressed; this time it is joined by Chinú, Yopal, Calarcá, and Barranquilla. Having a statement on GBV might help to comply with Act 1257 of 2008, against violence and discrimination of women, that requires local authorities to allocate resources to develop strategies and actions to prevent GBV. Of course, these cities do better than Ayapel and Caloto, that did not make their aspirations for GBV explicit; but their statements were not further developed. Meanwhile, cities under campaigns went further to specify actions that range from awareness-raising to complete educational programs to prevent violence and abuse of women. A step forward to those campaigns are the *GBV's attention and prevention roadmap,* a guide given for citizens to reestablish the rights of a victim of GBV, and to prevent that it happens again. It involves a hotline to ask for help, institutions, care. It answers questions such as what to do, how to do it, and where to go (CEDAVIDA n. d., p. 50). Not only is this roadmap important for the victim, but for the local authorities, organizations, and the community in general to know what to do and how to assist victims. That is why Tumaco and Cali manifested their intention to disseminate the roadmap widely among all their communities and institutions in general.

Large cities like Cali define the *Program of No Violence against Women,* where they establish [s]trategies aimed at the prevention, punishment, and eradication of all forms of gender violence against women. These strategies consist of cultural and educational campaigns, as well the development of the institutional capacity to prevent and assist the cases. They also include strategies within their public health plan, as well as within their education and public safety plans. Thorough programs such as this are found in less than six of the sampled cities.

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Surprisingly, given its poor results in terms of GE, Tumaco is one of these few cities. However, Tumaco desperately needs a sound strategy for GBV, because it has been in the armed conflict's eye for several decades. Women and girls have been victims of the war in all its forms. Nonetheless, neither the local government, nor the national one, have provided an adequate response to this situation (Benjumea Rua & Loaiza Zapata 2018, p. 99).

One could assume that the GBV's *roadmap* would include officers and institutions trained to provide a friendly and understanding service to the women victims. Cali, Tumaco and Villanueva emphasize their intention to get the right and proper training to the staff that will be dealing with GBV. Villanueva and Cali provide training for families too, while Cali and Tumaco take in schools as a starting point for prevention against GBV.

The core of a high percent of the violence against women is the family (Whitzman 2013, p. 7). In Colombia, as in many other countries, violence against women has been related to domestic violence. Colombia accounts with an act against family violence that most of the cities recognized as a guiding principle of the efforts to guarantee the physical integrity of women. All, except five of the studied cities, mentioned domestic violence within their PDMs as an important problem to address. This recognition means something more than just stating the existence of domestic violence. Cúcuta plans to «implement and operate the Surveillance System in Public Health of Intrafamily Violence», while at the same time «[i]mplementing a Transitory Center to care for victims of intrafamily violence and violence against women, as well as provide the community with access to justice services, the restoration and guarantee of family rights through the Family Superintendent Office».

In short, the results indicate that cities are not doing enough to take care of the GBV problem that they all recognized. Almost half of the cities do not consider gender-based violence a health problem. The cities for whom gender violence is a public health problem are pretty much the same cities for which it is possible to clearly see an attempt to ensure women a life without violence.

4.2. Easier said than done: analysis of cities' preparedness to advance GE

The analysis of the gender agenda showed that Colombian cities are talking and, to a degree, planning how to advance GE. Nonetheless, since it is easier said than done, in this section I look at the city's arrangements to work towards it. Knowing that there are some cities that are better positioned to address GE than others, I looked not only at the current administrative structure, but I also examined at new initiatives that less well-positioned cities are pursuing to achieve their goals in terms of GE. This is what

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I analyzed within the Organizational Readiness Category. This and the political commitment category are an attempt to evaluate whether local governments go beyond loftily-sounding statements and actually are positioning themselves to be more effective in addressing GE, undertaking actions and committing resources to improve.

In Table 2, it is presented a summary of the findings of these two categories, and the one addressing plan quality. Results are grouped by city's size to depict differences that size and, likely, capacity can have.

Moser (1993, p. 108) points out the lack of administrative structures as a main constraint to incorporate gender. To identify the city's administrative structure, I looked up the organization's chart online, and the city's cabinet within the PDMs. I also analyzed accommodations towards GE, that include a query on any type of improvement of institutional capacity, acquisition of equipment and materials, launching or implementations of programs, or public policies to advance GE, among others. The existence and structure of the Family Superintendent Office (FSO), as well as gender mainstreaming, were also part of the analysis conducted for organizational readiness.

	Cities by size		
	Small	Medium	Large
Readiness and Commitment			
Plan to increase the number or provide the resources needed to the appropriate functioning of the FSO	33 %	50 %	100 %
Add a new FSO	33 %	0 %	14 %
Has a woff	17 %	50 %	100 %
Has a budget for GE	50 %	38 %	71 %
Plans to open a woff	33 %	0 %	0 %
Plan Quality			
Have a diagnosis of women's condition within the city	33 %	63 %	86 %
Do a thorough diagnosis	17 %	13 %	14 %
Incorporated interorganizational cooperation into their plans	0 %	75 %	71 %
Defined responsible parties	17 %	13 %	86 %

Table 2
Provision for GE

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Mostly large and capital cities are ready with a sound administrative structure for it. Medellín is an exceptional example positively checking for all the criterions analyzed. Small and medium cities, on the contrary, exhibit mixed results. Nonetheless, Ayapel and Acandí, both with female mayors, and the last one also with a female planning chief, are the most disturbing. The question of how these two municipalities are going to address their GE goals is not easy to answer. They operate with a basic FSO and plans of leveraging it were not found. They have not adopted the Public Policy for Gender Equality for Women and, at least in the PDM, state no intention of doing it. Contrarily, Puerto Asís is planning efforts to move towards GE by getting an administrative structure that is in accordance to their GE goals. Furthermore, San José del Guaviare and Yopal, small and medium but both young capital cities, indicated to be on the right track of a ready-to-work-towards-GE municipality.

4.3. Political commitment

Discourse without commitment does not bring about change. For gender equality to occur, there is a need to transcend the aspirational level into tools and mechanisms that operationalize the GE policies and programs (Loria 2002, as cited in Montoya Ruiz 2009). The political commitment category assesses whether the aspirations found with the women's agenda category translate into resources and measurable actions. It looks at the hierarchical level of *woff,* the budget for GE or, for the women's agenda, the control and monitoring strategies of the GE programs, and to other programs that might results in wins to advance GE.

Twelve cities in the sample have some type of office for women's issues, *i.e.,* 57 %. Six of the cities have *woff* at the level of Secretary and the other six are a combination of subdivision, office, or council. Secretaries are high-level offices in Colombian local governments. They are right under the mayor in the organizational chart *(Manual de Estructura del Estado Colombiano)* and, in theory, are assigned a budget to achieve their goals. As shown in Table 3, «Types of Women's Affairs Offices (woffs)», *woff's* name indicate that its mission is either for women or gender equality or for both. Only Riohacha, which is one of the cities where the *woff* is in a lower hierarchical level, named its *woff* for Women, Children and Youth. It is not strange that Riohacha's *woff* name is attached to children and youths, since according to Montoya Ruiz (2009), in Colombia, the women in development approach (WID) emphasized the reproductive role of women to achieve economic goals, opening the door to many and mainly mother-infant programs.

Aligned with the WID's view, Villanueva plans to create, within the next four years, a *woff* named *Secretary of Women, Gender and Family.* Its mayor is a woman that highlights her commitment towards inclusion and equity for women. The GE program initiates

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by saying: «Mayor Ruth Yaneth Bohórquez Peña […] has proposed a project to mainstream all the other projects that the city will undertake […] seeking women's inclusion and equity».

And it continues as follows:

Women are the carrier and transmitter of values, particularly of discipline and responsibility, for their families and for the society. Thus […], gender mainstreaming through all the city's programs let us to strengthen and to empower families through. After that, they can take care and embrace their life projects and self-development […]. Women play a crucial role as caregivers guaranteeing the improvement of human capital in the present and future generations. With all that in mind, we plan to create the Secretary for Women, Gender and Family.

Again, this is another case in which the empowerment of women is sought through their traditional and reproductive role (Monkman *et al.* 2007). It is not clear how this type of approach can empower them since it keeps circumscribing them as caregivers.

City	Woff name
Cali	Sub-Secretary of Gender Equality
Barranquilla	Women's Office
Cartagena	Women's Issues Group
Buenaventura	Women and Gender Unit
Riohacha	Office for Women, Childhood and Youth
Yopal	Office for Women Equality and Equity
Bogotá DC	Secretary of Women
Medellín	Secretary of Women
Cúcuta	Secretary of Gender Equity
Envigado	Secretary of Gender Equity
Puerto Asís	Secretary of Women
Chinú	Secretary of Women and Gender

Table 3
Types of Women's Affairs Offices (woffs)

The analysis of the Women's Agenda category concluded that, in general, its pillars are on the radar of the cities. The achievement of these pillars, however, does not seem possible when looking at the city's readiness and political commitment. The percentage of municipalities with an institution to operationalize the GE programs is barely more than 50 %, and only three cities promised to create one (Puerto Asís, Villanueva, and Villa de Leyva plans).

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Remember that all the cities in this study included some type of GE program. Therefore, it is noteworthy how Cali and Baranquilla, two large and capital cities that are good in other terms, do not present a budget for GE. They have a very general one, but do not show one for their different programs, including the GE. On the other side of the spectrum are Caloto, Villanueva and Acandí; cities that do not have yet a *woff* and still define a budget for their GE efforts. Villanueva and Acandí have female mayors. Caloto designated a budget for its *Women and Gender Equality* program. Another of its intentions is to create the *woff,* but no money is allocated to that. Then, if budget appropriation was the only indicator that the promises or aspirations on the GE program are going to be kept and of the political commitment of the local governors, cities without the check mark will not be fulfilling their aspirations.

In addition to having a defined budget for GE, I sought whether the programmed expenditures will address GE and change the traditional gender roles of a patriarchal society. Besides the large cities, Acandí, Villanueva, and Caloto stood out by assigning a budget to programs such as Villanueva's «[t]o support women's participation in the public sphere». Also, Villa de Leyva targeted a group of 512 women to be trained on actions against GBV, and at the same time plans three city-wide campaigns against physical, emotional, sexual, and psychological abuse of women.

Control and monitoring of the GE is another way to show commitment. Cities are accountable to their constituencies and to the Office of the Comptroller General of Colombia. Therefore, they have an incentive to establish their control and monitoring mechanisms. Most of cities define result indicators to evaluate the path towards GE. Some of them do so in a more accurate and consistent way. These are the ones that define, besides indicators, the responsible party for each goal.

In brief, large cities in general are taking the steps towards GE and their commitment cannot be denied. The efforts of medium and small cities are less straightforward, but there are cities that excel in certain aspects. Political commitment shown to GE by cities like Villanueva, Acandí and Caloto is perceptible through the budget assigned to GE, the kind of expenditure planned and their monitoring mechanisms. In both cities, Villanueva and Acandí with female mayors, it is possible to identify the desire to advance GE, but at the same time, at least for Villanueva, the meaning of GE and empowerment of women does not challenge the patriarchal stereotypes that have placed women in a marginalized position. Cities with absolutely no sign of political commitment are Calarcá and Leticia, as well as Chinú to a certain degree. Calarcá and Chinú both have female mayors, but contrarily to Villanueva and Acandí they do not specify a budget for their GE plans, nor they define how to monitor them; and, although Chinú has a *woff,* their GE program is

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not attached to the office nor to any other department. Of the large cities, Yopal, Cúcuta and Envigado would be good interesting cases to study. They pass the check for every sign for political commitment that I analyzed. Envigado is not a capital but a mayor city in the Antioquia Province where Medellín is the capital.

4.4. Technical disposition or plan quality

By looking at the technical disposition or plan quality of the PDMs, I look at how much technical effort the city devoted to the plan elaboration as well as to assess, in general, what is their technical capacity to undertake the PDM's goals in general, and the GE efforts in particular. This is what Baer (1997) calls «comparative plans research» and «professional evaluation». In this case, the criteria, defined within the coding frame under the technical disposition capacity category, are an adaptation of Berke's *et al.* (2006), four characteristics of good plans. Most of them are internal characteristics of the plan, but I also included interorganizational coordination as a criterion. The internal characteristics refer to having a fact-based PDM, which in this case is assessed by looking at the existence of a diagnosis and the incorporation of laws.

The analysis in terms of technical capacity or plan quality showed that, although 18 cities clearly defined their GE goals, only seven have a budget to achieve them. None of them included timetables for their strategic plans, but large cities and San José del Guaviare defined the responsible parties for their GE goals. Interagency coordination is a principle recognized by eleven cities and some of them also see it as funding source.

4.5. Gender awareness

This category looks at the intangible or less obvious aspects of the PDMs that signal true responsibility towards GE. Effort towards GE need the awareness of the differential impact that gender impose on planning efforts. Since this study follows a QCA, the evidence of gender awareness is extracted from the PDMs by looking at the use of language, the kind of goals, the existence of affirmative actions and the importance the PDM's differential impact on gender, its sensibility levels to GE, the existence of a gender program, its nature, and the levels of equality sought.

4.5.1. The use of language

A language reflects the society that uses it (Pérez Cervera n. d.). In Spanish, words reflect the patriarchal culture that has dominated Spanish-speaking areas. The Academy regulating the use of words in Spanish still considers that an inclusive language is not needed; on the contrary, the use of both feminine and masculine nouns violates the principle of linguistic economy (*i.e., ciudadanos y*

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ciudadanas, niños y niñas, n. d.). However, feminist activists, academics, and institutions such as city halls, universities, NGOs, and multilateral organization propend for the use of masculine and feminine expressions when talking of both, men and women, as well as the use of neutral forms. Even in English-speaking publications and news articles, the word *Latinx* has been increasingly used since 2004 in lieu of the original *Latino,* to make reference to Latinos *and* Latinas (Google Trends 2019).

Results of the analysis on the use of language show all the ambiguity existing around the use of a gender-inclusive language. My idea was to use the PDMs to explore the changes in cultural values towards GE. I found that there is a shift in terms of the use of language. The most clear and common one is the use of *niños y niñas* (boys and girls) instead of only *niños* accounting for both. Some examples include Chinú recognizing that «Chinú is a young city, therefore it must address the needs of our boys, girls and youth». Even Ayapel, that misses important points of the GE quest, states that «boys' and girls' rights in their early childhood cannot be delayed». And, in the same way, Barranquilla defines a «strategy […] to guarantee boys and girls […] inclusive and fair access to art and culture educational programs». This finding is consistent throughout all the cities. All the 21 cities predominantly use *boys and girls,* when addressing education, health, sports and recreation, culture, and problems related to the Colombian armed conflict. I only found few examples where they named some programs with the masculine plural: *Encounters for Boys and Teenagers,* for Envigado and *Todos vivos, Todos Saludables and Todos bien nutridos* (All Alive, All Healthy and All Nourished) for Leticia. But they use boy and girls when explaining the program and defining goals and indicators.

There is evidence of the use of a more inclusive language within the PDMs. The use of words such as *boys and girls* is constant in all the municipalities. That is not the case for nouns or professions, that traditionally have been considered male spheres such as business or positions of power in general. An evident lack of consistency in the use of inclusive language was noticed in most of the cities. Some cities, such as Villanueva and Cartagena, excel in the use of inclusive language, contrary to the others in which the use is an average between the line of non-inclusive and inclusive.

4.5.2. PDM's principles, goals, and its understanding of GE for women

Another way to look at intangible changes towards GE is to assess the PDMs' principles and goals and how they are related to GE. Fourteen out of the 21 cities have GE as a central principle, which at the same time should serve as one of the foundations for the entire PDM and its programs. The results are different when one looks at the PDM's main objectives. To answer this part, I looked at

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each city's main goal and vision. Not even one of them has women or GE within their main goals. Thus, although all the cities have knowledge about gender ideology and most of them have GE as a principle in their plans, that does not elevate GE to the PDMs' main objective and or vision. This does not mean that they are not working for it.

4.5.3. Affirmative actions and differential impact

in this section, I look at the importance given to the gender differential impact of the PDM and examine whether the cities have affirmative actions to increase opportunities for women. Bear in mind that in Colombia the gender and differential focuses have a legal frame that forces local authorities to incorporate them. The differential focus is considered a characteristic of good planning (DNP 2016).

Although 19 out 21 municipalities introduce affirmative actions for women, cities on average do not explicitly consider women as subjects of a differential focus. All the cities talk about the importance of having a PDM with a differential focus, as it is required by DNP, but only 13 specifically include it for women. The other eight cities recognize the differential focus as principle, but they do not develop it as it pertains to women. Six out of the 19 cities with affirmative actions do not have a budget defined for them.

5
Conclusions: how are efforts towards GE portrayed in the cities across Colombia?

In an effort to understand the local dynamics towards gender equality, SDG 5 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, I completed a qualitative content analysis of the PDMs of 21 cities in Colombia. PDMs are, arguably, the most important planning documents that Colombian local authorities have for shaping the future in the short and medium range. Since women are, most of the time, half of the population of a city, PDMs convey important information of what a city is planning for women. The results indicate that efforts towards GE in Colombian municipalities are portrayed through programs and initiatives to address the internationally recognized women's agenda.

As stated by World Bank (2011) Colombia, as well as by the results, is doing good progress towards GE. All the cities in the sample included some type of action, aiming to conquer some type of goal, that could help advance GE. These actions vary sometimes according to size of the city, other times according to the kind of strategy or the type of aspiration they have. The aspirations can be as shallow as to just stating that they will address gender inequali-

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ty or that they will care for women; others, however, can be presented as structures to have a plan to increase women representation in decision-making arenas that includes education, teen-friendly birth control, and a roadmap for GBV. For some cities, their goals for GE are not necessarily connected or included within the same chapter. That was the case for *educational attainment* and *training for work* as part of economic opportunity strategies; they were not connected within the PDMs most of the time but are aimed to achieve the same result. Another similar example is represented by the endeavor against GBV and accommodations towards GE. A better organization of these efforts would facilitate the achievement of the different goals.

As said before, these plans are aspirational. Nonetheless, the way they planned their GE program or SDG 5, and the existence of an institutional structure and the political support shown on them indicate that there are some aspirations more likely to be achieved than others. That would be the case for most of the large cities, and for cities such as Villanueva and Puerto Asís. These cities are ambitious in their plans for their female population. They went further to state some strategies on how to achieve their fact-based goals and defined a budget for them, as well as the responsible units to undertake them. There were some cities that did not develop their GE aspirations and, most of the time, that was paired with little or no technical back up or political support. Finally, a generalized weakness is the lack of attention to care work, which heavily weighs on gender inequality as recognized by IMF (2019). Future research should assess caregiving as part of the dynamics towards GE.

6
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