

Addressing the gender gap in the implementation of the Colombian peace agreement: the participation of homemakers in civic groups and community meetings

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Abstract:

Despite the Colombian government's efforts to implement the peace agreement with a gender approach, monitoring institutions cast doubts on the inclusion of women in the participatory mechanisms established to develop the postconflict territorial development plans. This research analyses the potential causes of the lack and variation of female participation by investigating the individual level factors that determine the civic engagement of women as well as their participation in municipal meetings. Empirically, the paper presents a statistical analysis based on the 2017 AmericasBarometer survey. The results indicate that it is not women per se but a specific subgroup of women, the homemakers, that tend to participate in civic associations that are less prone to engage in municipal council meetings. This finding is not only relevant for the academic study of the gender gap in participatory processes but also has implications for policy makers: It suggests that government officials should be more sensitive when convoking and selecting the civic organizations through which peacebuilding is meant to become more participatory.

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Introduction

Independent reports cast doubts on the inclusion of women in the participatory mechanisms of Colombia's peace accord despite the government efforts to include them (FIP, 2018; Instituto Kroc, 2018). This article investigates the female civic and political engagement in the Colombian postconflict municipalities and informs the public debate with a view to improve the inclusion of women in the participatory mechanisms of the peace process.

Civil society participation and gender are two of the most relevant cross-cutting approaches of the peace deal implementation between the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the Government of Colombia (Instituto Kroc, 2017). Regarding the participatory component, the peace deal follows the idea according to which, if citizens are directly engaged in the public decision-making, then the State will be more legitimate and responsive to their needs, and thereby, less exposed to be captured by particular interests (FIP, 2017). Concerning the gender approach, some considered it as a "Colombian innovation," an international landmark in peacebuilding (Instituto Kroc, 2017). The deal designed concrete measures that promote participation and representation of women in the peacebuilding. These measures aim to tackle the "structural discrimination" that hinders female inclusion in the public sphere and the "disproportionate impact" of the armed conflict on women (Instituto Kroc, 2017).

An analysis of the peace deal identified 67 participatory institutional instances that involve citizen organizations and the government in the peacebuilding, such as participation in plans, permanent dialogue, oversight and monitoring committees (FIP, 2017). The Development Programmes with a Territorial-Based Focus (DPTFs) is one of the most salient and essential instruments of the peace agreement's rural reform that engage the citizens in the public decision-making. About a third of the 67 participatory institutional instances are related to the implementation of the rural development plans, or DPTFs (FIP, 2017). With a lifespan of ten years, these territorial plans are instruments of bottom-up development planning and management oriented to prevent the reproduction of the armed conflict causes. The DPTFs plans are created with a participative approach by communities and local public authorities through municipal meetings. In those meetings, the methodology of participatory workshops is used to diagnose the local needs of the communities and identify projects that meet those needs.¹

The objective of the DPTFs is "to achieve the structural transformation of the countryside and the rural environment and to promote an equitable relationship between rural and urban areas" (Final Agreement, 2016). The process to elaborate the DPTF plans is as important as the objective to generate such structural transformation (Instituto Kroc, 2018). The process implies a profound, constant and organic dialogue of the visions to develop the rural regions in the medium and long term. It also implies the creation of a relationship of trust and constructive interaction between the State and the citizens. The objective of this interaction process is to generate a "detailed inventory" of necessities regarding infrastructure and public goods in the territories, and also the specific projects to address such necessities (Instituto Kroc, 2018). The interaction between the State and communities does not end with the elaboration of this DPTFs documents since citizens participate in the monitoring and management of the development plan (Instituto Kroc, 2018).

According to the peace deal, the government should guarantee that the DPTFs territorial development plans are created with a "broad" and "pluralist" participation from civil society and with a "gender approach that recognizes the particular needs of rural women" (Government of Colombia, 2017). The Colombian

¹ For a more detailed description of the DPTFs participatory methodology please see FIP (2018) and ART and GIZ (2017).

government has partnered with UN Women and the German cooperation to achieve this. With the assistance of UN Women, the government trained the territorial teams developing the participatory methodology to encourage participation of rural women and increase the effectiveness of their civic organizations in the participatory workshops (ART, 2017; ART and ONU Mujeres, 2017a; ART and ONU Mujeres, 2017b). For its part, the German cooperation contributed with the methodology of the participatory workshops (ART and GIZ, 2017). The methodological document recommends good practices to achieve a broad and pluralist summoning of the local civil society and the inclusion of women. For example, given that each workshop has a maximum capacity of people, it recommends that the teams consider positive discrimination to guarantee a minimum number of women. It also states that the teams should find alternatives to guarantee the participation of women that cannot participate due to the care of children.

Despite these efforts for an inclusive gender approach, from a total of 38.865 participants in 404 participatory workshops by January 2018, only 38 percent were women (Instituto Kroc, 2018). This percentage suggests a disproportion of men in these participatory spaces. In some regions, the government had to compensate this disproportion by doing additional workshops with female participants only (Instituto Kroc, 2018). Adding another layer of complexity to the female participation, it is not only low participation, but high variation in the number of women participating in the workshops. A report by Fundación Ideas para la Paz, a Colombian think tank, found a minimum of 19, an average of 40 and a maximum of 83 percent female participation from a small sample of 12 workshops studied (FIP, 2018). The study of the Colombian think tank underlines that “there was not always a differentiated strategy to summon women” to the DPTFs workshops and concludes that more evidence and analysis are necessary to understand better how are women participating (FIP, 2018). Finally, the monitoring committee established by the peace deal to guarantee the rights of women has asked the Colombian Government to make public how was the gender approach included in the participatory workshops methodology since this and other watchdog organizations, like Fundación Ideas para la Paz, have expressed a lack of proper inclusion into the DPTFs process (FIP, 2018; Instituto Kroc, 2018).

In conclusion, the DPTFs are an opportunity to overcome the historical distrust between local communities and the government due to their salience and the expectations generated to improve the livelihoods of people in rural conflict-affected regions. However, the lack of female inclusion is a risk that can hinder the effort, and thus become a new source of citizen discontent with the government peacebuilding strategy.

This research does not aim to study the participatory dynamics of the government’s peacebuilding strategy or the DPTFs implementation as such. Rather, the following study analyses the potential causes of the lack and variation of female participation. To do this, this research investigates the individual level factors associated with the civic engagement of women and their participation in municipal meetings. The focus on the civic organizations and municipal meetings is that the government strategy to elaborate the DPTFs is through the involvement civil society organizations in municipal meetings. The literature suggests that factors of the private sphere such as the occupational status (e.g. workforce or homemaker), the marital status and the number of children affect the civic and political participation of women. Other factors related to the Colombian postconflict context suggest that in certain occasions women assumed more leadership positions to resist the influence of insurgencies.

Taking into account the private sphere, this article explores the relationship between gender, municipal meetings and civic participation using the AmericasBarometer 2017 survey, representative of the 170

postconflict municipalities in Colombia². The policy relevance of this research is that it identifies sources of female inequality in the public arena and possible approaches to overcome such inequalities. Given that the participation in the peacebuilding policy is channeled through civic association, finding these sources can be helpful for public officials and communities that have lower chances to engage in those participatory mechanisms. As it will be explained below, it seems that homemaker women tend to participate more in religious and school-related associations. However, these organizations tend to get less involved in municipal community meetings. This finding indicates that the government could focus its efforts on these voluntary associations to increase the presence of women, particularly homemakers, in the participatory DPTFs workshops.

The specialized literature of associational membership and political activity in Latin America has relied on surveys to analyze what scholars have identified as a “gender gap” (Batista, 2012; Hinton, Mosele and Smith, 2012; Desposato and Norrander, 2009). Following this approach, and in the context of the postconflict municipalities, this research asks: to what extent vary the differences in civic and political participation according to gender?

Following this introduction, this article articulates some conceptual and theoretical ideas that guide the research. Then the analytical strategy, data and results are presented. Finally, the article concludes.

The public and the domestic spheres: the theoretical and conceptual insights

This section introduces the origin of the gender disparity in the public sphere by looking at the antecedent factors of the domestic sphere with a particular emphasis on the occupational factors and the research in Latin America. Then the section concludes presenting how the context of the armed conflict in Colombia affected the civic participation of women.

What is the origin of the gender disparity in the political sphere, in favor of men and detrimental of women? According to Wills, the distinctions of the public and the private spheres was one mechanism used to give men advantages over women (2004). The author proposes a historical perspective that goes back to the eighteenth and nineteenth century liberal democracies’ concept of citizenship. The nascent democratic regimes did not conceive citizenship equally for all. Despite the principles of freedom and pluralism, only certain wealthy males were entitled to citizenship. These emerging democratic regimes were built on societies organized around dichotomous cultural representations, which after being politically endorsed in the constitutions, were transformed into dominating stereotypes, Wills argues. Emotional, intuitive and passionate creatures, and with an innate inclination towards taking care of others. Those were the “natural” female attributes. Conversely, she continues, the characteristic of men were the rationality and the deliberation. The incipient democratic regimes, based on the ideas of classical liberalism, promoted for the first time a public sphere that defended liberty, and therefore, in opposition to the former Absolutist State, claimed spaces of self-regulation that the State could not penetrate (Bejarano, 1995). As women were excluded both from the political and private spheres, reserved for the realization of men, the domestic sphere was conceived as her natural territory of expression, the place where she could be fully realized as human beings (Wills, 2004).

² Colombia has 1.123 municipalities and the government defined 170 “postconflict” ones to implement the peace accords.

In light of this disparity, the scholarly research has found that the private sphere is a relevant determinant of the civic and political engagement of women (Lehman et al., 1999; Iversen and Rosenbluth, 2006). The researchers have argued that the family roles, being married and having children do not have a direct impact on political participation but on the decision to participate in the workforce. Women in the workforce tend to develop civic skills, which can be transferred into politics, and experience gender based work discrimination, which encourages them to engage politically. Conversely, since homemaker women do not gain those civic skills and do not experience the work disparity, they have lower political participation.

In regard to the gender disparity in the political participation in Latin America, women in the working force and married tend to report more political activism (Pachón et al., 2012). It has been documented that being a homemaker woman and having children reduces the political participation at the local community level (Batista, 2012). Other scholars find that in rural regions the division of labor at home is a barrier to participate politically for women (Ranaboldo and Solana, 2008; Cliche et al., 2015). Rural women would relate less with local institutions and organizations and tend to participate less in the community decision-making processes due to their domestic care roles. This seems to apply also in Colombian rural areas, since men dedicate 17.6 weekly hours to non-remunerated work, while women 42.6, 2.4 times more (ART and ONU Mujeres, 2017b). Other cross-country studies in Latin America have found a “segmentation” in the types of civic organizations and political participation between women and men (Espinal and Zhao, 2015). In particular, men tend to participate more in political and economic associations, while women participate more in religious and parent-school related ones. In regard to the political participation, women tend to report more voter turnout, but the gap in other activities such as participating in community meetings and protest tends to remain (Desposato and Norrander, 2009).

Though this research is limited to the individual level variables, there are contextual-level variables that certainly shape individual behavior as well. The relationship between armed actors and civil society adds another layer of complexity to the rural political participation, mainly because the battles of the armed conflict are not only fought on the battlefields but also on the daily interactions between civil society, their organizations and the armed actors.

Their strategies and objectives of the insurgencies to control territories shaped the daily lives of the communities in very different ways. The control posed by the armed actors influenced the private and the public spheres. Regarding the private sphere, there are accounts that the paramilitaries put a lot of effort into building social orders that manipulated the cultural representations of men and women based on traditional gender roles (Grupo de Memoria Histórica, 2011). The “accepted” woman does not make scandals in public, nor embarrasses his partner, even when he gives her reasons to, she must not argue with other women. On the contrary, her social conflicts must maintain exclusively in the domestic sphere. Women that transgressed these traditional roles and participated in the public sphere were punished by the paramilitaries (Grupo de Memoria Histórica, 2011). In regard to the public sphere, and in order to achieve political objectives with the population, the armed groups co-opted community organizations, forced participation and imposed community leaders (Gáfaró, et al. 2014). There is evidence that the presence of armed actors is positively associated with community participation in local organizations and a reduction in their incidence in decision-making processes, suggesting coercion from armed actors to participate in certain local organizations (Gáfaró, et al. 2014).

The relationship between insurgencies and civil society is not limited to coercion but also resistance, though. Scholars have documented that the communities that rely on their pre-war networks can oppose the influence of the insurgencies and protect themselves from violence (Kaplan, 2010; Arjona, 2009). Armed violence

can suffocate certain public initiatives, although it gives rise to others. This accounts for the malleability of individuals and communities in order to resist imposed order of an insurgency (Grupo de Memoria Histórica, 2011). For example, the women resisted the imposed cultural representations of right-wing paramilitaries. This resistance was not always overt, but a silent strategy to survive. For example, after human rights violations by the right-wing paramilitaries, people organized protests and portrayed them as a religious events. By doing this, the event seemed non-political, which increased the protection of participants (Grupo de Memoria Histórica, 2011).

In conclusion, due to the complexity of the relationship between civil society and insurgencies, it is not always clear-cut whether the armed groups increased the civic participation. However, it can be said that, since men were targeted by insurgencies, thereby reducing their public exposure and visibility, the women had a window of opportunity to be engaged in leadership roles and attend public meetings related with economic and productive organizations (Gáfaró, et al. 2014). For this research, in particular, is important to note that 94 percent of the FARC insurgency was concentrated in demobilization camps by February 2017 (OACP, 2017), and the survey used for the analysis in this article was collected between October and December 2017. Thus, it is possible that the effects of this armed actors on civic participation are less significant.

Analytical strategy and data

The analysis starts by comparing the percentage of women and men participating in civic groups and municipal meetings. Then, logistic models estimate the individual level variables associated with civic participation. Finally, logistic models estimate to what extent gender affects the probabilities to participate in a municipal council meeting according to the type of civic organization. All these models control for regional fixed effects, following previous research with survey data from LAPOP (Angulo et al, 2014; Batista, 2012; Pachón et al 2012). The regional fixed effects control for the observed and unobserved variables that are constant among the four regions of the study: Bajo Cauca, Pacífico, Cordillera Central and Macarena-Caguán.

The data for this research come from the 2017 AmericasBarometer by the Latin American Public Opinion Project. 1391 people were interviewed in 35 conflict-affected municipalities. The survey is representative of the 170 Colombian postconflict municipalities defined by the national government where the DPTFs are implemented. The survey has information about citizens' involvement in civic associations, political perceptions and attitudes. The survey was collected between 31st October and 31st December 2017.

Civic engagement was measured through a dummy variable equal to one if the respondent attended at least once a week, once or twice a month, once or twice a year to religious, parent-teacher, political movement, community action boards (Junta de Acción Comunal –JAC– in Spanish)³, peace, environmental and community improvements associations, and zero if the respondent has not.

Since the participation on the rural development planning workshops of the DPTF occurs in town meetings, this type of participation was measured with a dummy equal to one if the respondent attended answered yes

³ The JAC is a civic, social and community organization of social management, non-profit, legally recognized and may own patrimony. It is voluntarily integrated by the residents of a neighborhood on the basis of participatory democracy. More information: <https://www.registraduria.gov.co/descargar/jac-jal.pdf>

to the question: Now, let's talk about your local municipality. Have you attended a town meeting, city council meeting or other meeting in the past 12 months?

Following previous research on women civic participation (Angulo et al, 2014; Espinal and Zhao, 2015; Batista, 2012), the demographic and control predictors included are gender, years of education, age, household wealth measured in quintiles⁴, political knowledge⁵, political interest, political efficacy and interpersonal trust. Political trust and interest are measured as an ordinal four scale variables: none, little, some and a lot. Political efficacy is included as an ordinal seven scale variable. The following variables are included in the models as zero or one dummies: urban residency, armed conflict victim, being married (married or living together with a partner, and single, divorced or widowed), and ethnic minority (self-identified as indigenous or black and other). The occupational status was coded according to how they “mainly spend their time”. Respondent were coded one if he or she was working, the homemakers were coded as two if the respondent said “taking care of the home” and zero if the respondent reported to be a student, unemployed, permanently disabled, or retired, with the latter as reference category.

Results

Civic engagement

Table 1 shows the percentage of women and men that participate in civic associations and municipal council meetings, and the percentage difference, the so-called gender gap, and its statistical significance. In general terms, there is high participation in civic associations, particularly for religious and community action boards. 66.2 percent of women participate in parent-teacher association and 68.3 percent in religious, this is respectively 14.5 percent and 8.1 percent higher than men and with a statistical significance of one percent. However, there is lower female engagement in the rest of the civic groups and also in municipal meetings. The gap is not by random chance in community action boards (JAC) and environmental associations.

Table 1. Difference in means in civic and Town Council meeting

Civic associations	Women	Men	Difference
Parent-Teacher Association	66.2	51.7	-14.5***
Religious Association	68.3	60.2	-8.1***
Peace Association	25.8	29.1	3.3
Improvement Association	56.8	60.5	3.8
Community Action Boards – JAC	61.4	67.4	6**
Environmental Association	27.3	33.8	6.4***
Town Council meeting	13.8	16.6	2.8

⁴ Wealth is an index comprising five quintiles and is based on an analysis of household assets. A detailed construction of the variable can be found in Córdova (2009).

⁵ A battery of factual political questions measured the political knowledge. The questions were about the name of the US president (GI1), the continent of Nigeria (GIX4) and the length of the presidential term in Colombia (GI4). The questions were coded one if correct and zero if incorrect. The final variable is the simple sum of the three questions.

* p<.1; ** p<.05; *** p<.01

The previous table suggested that gender matters for the engagement in certain associational activities. Controlling for confounders and the variables of the private sphere, understood in the context of this article as the marital and occupational status, and having children, Table 2 presents six logistic models in odds ratios that estimate the association of gender and civic associations. The results evidence that it is not only the gender associated to civic participation, but also the occupational and the marital status.

In comparison to men, women have 48 percentage points higher odds to participate in religious groups and 99 percentage points higher odds for school associations. In comparison to non-workers⁶, the homemakers have 39 percentage points lower odds to participate in the local action boards (JAC), and 53 percentage points lower odds to do so in environmental civic groups. With a lower statistical significance of ten percent, homemakers have 31 percentage points lower odds to engage in peace groups in comparison to people that are not working. It seems that having children at home is not a burden for the engagement in associational activities. On the contrary, being married is positively associated with civic engagement in parent-teacher, local improvement groups and community action boards, in contrast to the single people, divorced or widowed. Being a victim of the armed conflict, the older the respondent is, more years of education, high interpersonal trust, respondents in urban areas and a high interest in politics are positively associated with civic participation. The wealthier the respondent, the lower the civic participation in all associations except religious and environmental.

Table 2. Logistic models of civic participation. Coefficients in odds ratios.

	Religious	Parent/School	Improvement	JAC	Peace	Environmental
Woman	1.48** (0.23)	1.99*** (0.32)	1.04 (0.16)	0.96 (0.16)	1.17 (0.19)	0.99 (0.16)
No. of children	0.94 (0.05)	1.59*** (0.09)	1.02 (0.05)	1.08 (0.06)	0.94 (0.05)	1.01 (0.05)
Economic Status = Work	0.93 (0.14)	1.43** (0.22)	1.11 (0.17)	0.97 (0.16)	0.87 (0.14)	0.82 (0.12)
Economic Status = Homemaker	1.17 (0.24)	0.96 (0.20)	0.80 (0.16)	0.61** (0.13)	0.69* (0.15)	0.47*** (0.10)
Married/Partner	1.19 (0.16)	2.23*** (0.30)	1.74*** (0.23)	1.60*** (0.22)	0.84 (0.12)	1.15 (0.16)
Victim	1.40*** (0.18)	1.36** (0.18)	1.55*** (0.21)	1.34** (0.19)	2.24*** (0.35)	1.76*** (0.25)
Minority	0.96 (0.14)	1.20 (0.18)	0.95 (0.14)	0.94 (0.15)	1.40** (0.23)	1.08 (0.17)
Edu. years	1.00 (0.02)	1.06*** (0.02)	1.01 (0.02)	1.00 (0.02)	1.04* (0.02)	1.05*** (0.02)
Household Wealth	0.98 (0.05)	0.88** (0.04)	0.86*** (0.04)	0.87*** (0.05)	0.90** (0.05)	1.00 (0.05)
Age	1.01*** (0.00)	1.02*** (0.00)	1.01** (0.00)	1.02*** (0.01)	1.01*** (0.01)	1.00 (0.00)
Political Knowledge	1.04 (0.08)	0.94 (0.07)	0.98 (0.08)	1.00 (0.08)	1.18* (0.10)	1.14 (0.09)
Interest in Politics	1.12* (0.08)	1.12 (0.08)	1.26*** (0.09)	1.18** (0.09)	1.42*** (0.10)	1.17** (0.08)
Political Efficacy	1.06* (0.08)	1.03 (0.08)	1.05 (0.09)	1.05 (0.09)	1.10*** (0.10)	1.03 (0.08)

⁶ Unemployed, students, permanently disabled, or retired.

	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Interpersonal Trust	1.10	1.07	1.25***	1.28***	1.21***	1.20***
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.08)
Urban	1.03	1.07	3.26***	3.36***	1.16	1.61***
	(0.16)	(0.17)	(0.51)	(0.53)	(0.19)	(0.26)
Regiones Bajo Cauca	0.99	1.08	0.86	2.18***	0.93	1.04
	(0.21)	(0.23)	(0.18)	(0.48)	(0.20)	(0.22)
Regiones Cordillera Central	0.67**	0.75	1.07	2.17***	0.88	0.90
	(0.13)	(0.15)	(0.22)	(0.45)	(0.18)	(0.18)
Regiones Macarena-Caguán	0.75	1.02	0.78	2.37***	0.81	0.85
	(0.16)	(0.23)	(0.17)	(0.54)	(0.19)	(0.19)
Constant	0.52	0.09***	0.04***	0.03***	0.03***	0.05***
	(0.26)	(0.05)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)
Observations	1,264	1,261	1,263	1,261	1,260	1,257
Pseudo R2	0.0369	0.119	0.103	0.137	0.0864	0.0576

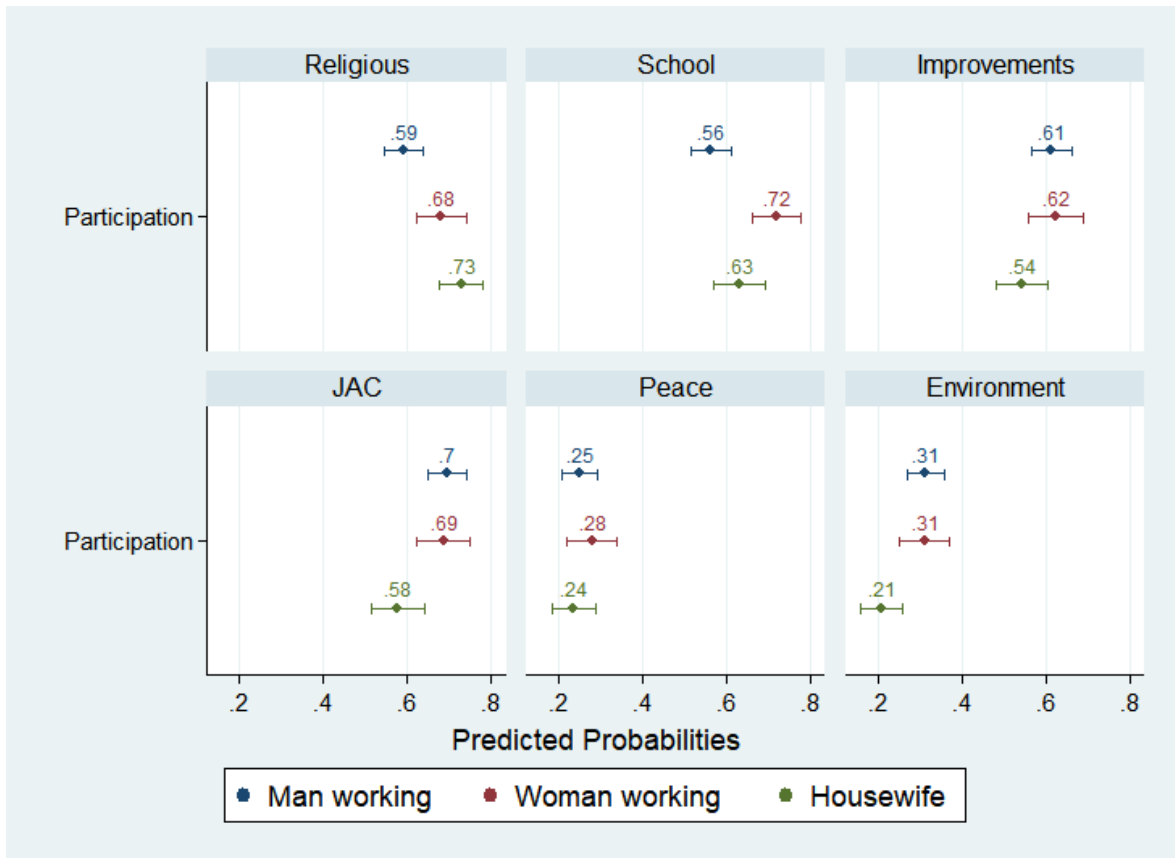
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Considering that only 2 percent of men reported to be homemakers, whereas 49 percent of women reported so, and that 66 percent of men said that they were working, while 27 percent of women said that as well, does the occupational status has diverging effects for the civic participation of men and women? To study this, Figure 1 estimates the predicted probabilities to participate in the civic groups for three categories: housewife and a man and woman in the workforce, with the rest of the covariates at the means⁷.

In conclusion, occupational status plays an important role determining the civic participation for men and women. While women in the workforce tend to behave as their male peers, homemaker women tend to engage less in civic associations. According to Figure 1, working men have a 70 percent probability to engage in community action boards (JAC), while housewives have 12 percent lower probabilities to do so. Working men have 31 percent probabilities to take part in environmental groups, whereas housewives have 21 percent chances to do that. Conversely, homemaker women have a 73 percent probabilities to participate in a religious group, which is 14 percent higher than working men. These probabilities are not by random chance since they are statistically different with a 95 percent confidence interval. Despite that the participation in local improvements association is not statistically different between men in the workforce and housewives, there is a 7 percent difference in favor of men. In contrast with the results from Table 1, Table 2 and Figure 1 show that gender and the occupational status of the respondent are relevant variables associated to civic participation.

Figure 1. Predicted probabilities of civic participation with the covariates at the means.

⁷ This study analyzed the possibility that the marital status and children at home had diverging effects for women and men though interactions with gender, as presented in Batista (2012). However, since no diverging association was found, only the relevant gender diverging results with the occupational status are presented.



Municipal meetings

Table 1 showed a low participation of men and women in the municipal meetings. 13.8 percent of women participate in that public arena, and 16.6 percent of men. Despite that the gender gap is 2.8 percent and not statistically significant, are there significant differences for genders in the community meeting participation according to type of civic association?

Table 3 compares the participation in community meetings between participants and nonparticipants of civic associations. It seems that civic engagement is positively linked to participation in municipal meetings: 22 percent of people that take part in civic groups go to municipal meetings. However, this percentage for people that do *not* participate in a civic groups is only 10 percent.

With respect to gender, there are differences as well. While 23.2 percent of men in civic groups participate in community meetings, this percentage for women is 19.8, a difference of 3.8. Table 3 shows that there are important variations in the participation of men and women according to the type of civic organization. The strongest percentage difference, beyond random chance and in favor of men, is 5.6 in religious, 7.3 in parent-teacher and 8.1 in peace associations. In community action boards such percentage difference is only 1.3. Table 3 gives some support to the idea according to which, the type of civic organization matters because it is related to the way women participate in the municipal meetings. Table 4 explores further this idea.

Table 3. Community meeting participation according to civic engagement and sex.

Participants

Civic group	% sample in civic group	% of women attending meetings	% of men attending meetings	Difference
JAC	64.4	18.6	19.9	1.3
Religious	64.2	14.8	20.4	5.6**
School	58.7	16.1	23.3	7.3**
Improvement	58.5	19.4	21.6	2.2
Environmental	30.9	27.2	23.4	-3.8
Peace	27.8	22.7	30.8	8.1*
Average	50.8	19.8	23.2	3.5
Nonparticipants				
JAC	35.6	6.6	9.6	3
Religious	35.8	11.7	11.1	-0.6
School	41.3	9.6	9.8	0.2
Improvement	41.5	6.4	9.1	2.7
Environmental	69.1	8.9	13.1	4.2**
Peace	72.2	10.5	10.6	0.1
Average	49.2	9	10.6	1.6

Total observations: 1391.

Table 4 examines six models estimating assistance to municipal meetings in odds ratios controlling for all the variables of the model in Table 2. The participation in the civic groups is interacted with the gender of the respondent. The reference category is women that do not participate in the civic associations.

In general terms, the results show that respondents that are engaged in civic associations tend to participate more in municipal council meetings than nonparticipants of civic associations. Thus, civic participation is an important determinant of the involvement in community meetings. However, civic participation seems to be moderated by gender. Among participants of civic associations, men tend to participate more than women in municipal meetings, with the exception of community actions boards and environmental associations. In contrast with previous results, occupational status is not related to community meetings. This is further explored in Figure 2 calculating the predicted probabilities.

Table 4. Logistic models of municipal meeting participation interacting gender with civic participation. Coefficients in odds ratios.

	Religious	Parent/School	Improvement	JAC	Peace	Environmental
Nonparticipant woman	Reference category					
Nonparticipant man	0.83 (0.28)	1.04 (0.35)	1.37 (0.49)	1.46 (0.55)	0.86 (0.22)	1.48 (0.39)
Participant woman	1.23 (0.35)	1.90** (0.55)	3.36*** (1.00)	3.54*** (1.10)	1.77** (0.46)	3.09*** (0.79)
Participant man	1.68* (0.50)	2.49*** (0.77)	3.77*** (1.21)	3.55*** (1.18)	3.08*** (0.83)	2.60*** (0.72)
No. of children	1.03 (0.07)	0.96 (0.07)	1.02 (0.07)	1.01 (0.07)	1.04 (0.07)	1.02 (0.07)
Economic Status=Work	1.09 (0.22)	1.01 (0.20)	1.06 (0.21)	1.09 (0.22)	1.09 (0.22)	1.11 (0.22)
Economic Status=Homemaker	0.77 (0.21)	0.75 (0.21)	0.83 (0.23)	0.81 (0.23)	0.78 (0.22)	0.91 (0.26)

Married/Partner	1.63*** (0.30)	1.48** (0.28)	1.49** (0.28)	1.59** (0.30)	1.77*** (0.33)	1.67*** (0.31)
Victim	1.62** (0.31)	1.61** (0.31)	1.54** (0.30)	1.64** (0.31)	1.51** (0.30)	1.53** (0.30)
Ethnic minority	1.60** (0.31)	1.51** (0.30)	1.57** (0.31)	1.58** (0.31)	1.52** (0.31)	1.58** (0.31)
Age	1.02** (0.01)	1.01** (0.01)	1.01** (0.01)	1.01** (0.01)	1.01** (0.01)	1.02** (0.01)
Edu. years	1.07*** (0.03)	1.06** (0.03)	1.07*** (0.03)	1.07*** (0.03)	1.07** (0.03)	1.06** (0.03)
Household wealth	0.97 (0.06)	0.98 (0.07)	1.01 (0.07)	0.99 (0.07)	1.00 (0.07)	0.97 (0.07)
Political knowledge	0.96 (0.10)	0.98 (0.10)	0.96 (0.10)	0.97 (0.10)	0.94 (0.10)	0.94 (0.10)
Interest in politics	1.23** (0.11)	1.24** (0.11)	1.21** (0.11)	1.22** (0.11)	1.16 (0.10)	1.21** (0.11)
Political efficacy	1.04 (0.04)	1.04 (0.04)	1.03 (0.04)	1.04 (0.04)	1.03 (0.04)	1.04 (0.04)
Interpersonal trust	1.01 (0.09)	1.01 (0.09)	0.98 (0.09)	0.99 (0.09)	0.99 (0.09)	1.00 (0.09)
Urban	1.01 (0.21)	1.00 (0.21)	0.76 (0.16)	0.78 (0.17)	0.99 (0.21)	0.92 (0.19)
Regions=Bajo Cauca	1.53 (0.42)	1.55 (0.43)	1.57 (0.44)	1.37 (0.38)	1.63* (0.46)	1.55 (0.43)
Regions=Cordillera Central	1.82** (0.47)	1.86** (0.49)	1.73** (0.45)	1.54 (0.41)	1.93** (0.51)	1.82** (0.48)
Regions=Macarena-Caguán	1.50 (0.45)	1.49 (0.45)	1.52 (0.46)	1.24 (0.38)	1.59 (0.48)	1.56 (0.47)
Constant	0.01*** (0.01)	0.01*** (0.01)	0.01*** (0.01)	0.01*** (0.01)	0.01*** (0.01)	0.01*** (0.01)
Observations	1,238	1,235	1,237	1,235	1,234	1,233
Pseudo R2	0.0619	0.0704	0.0840	0.0803	0.0881	0.0766

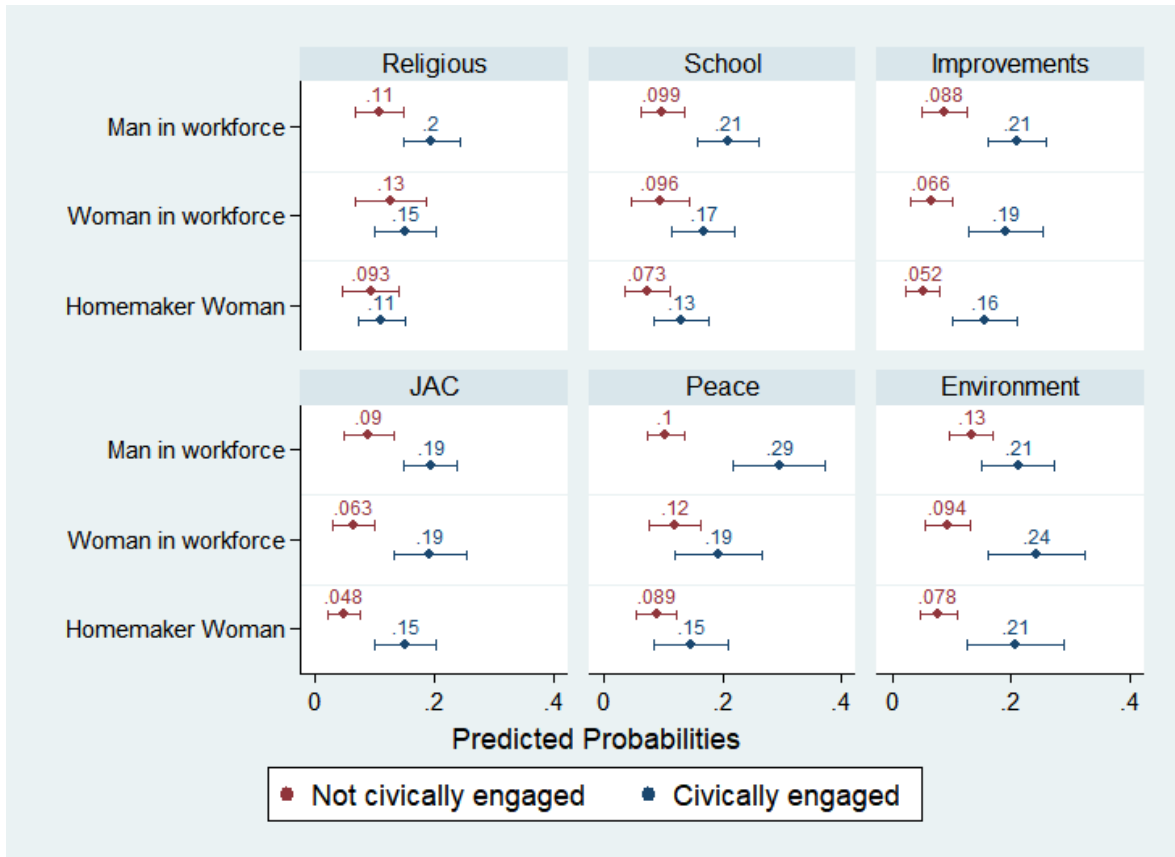
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Although occupational status is not directly associated to municipal meeting participation, it affects the civic engagement of respondents as Figure 1 indicated. To observe the relation of occupational status, voluntary civic engagement and municipal participation, Figure 2 presents the predicted probabilities to participate in municipal meetings for three categories: men and women in the workforce and homemaker women. The blue coefficients are three categories when civically engaged, and the red coefficients when the categories are not civically engaged.

Table 4 estimated that people engaged in civic groups tend to participate more in municipal meetings than people that is not engaged in civic groups. However, not all civic groups increase participation in municipal groups across genders equally. Figure 2 shows that men in the workforce engaged civically in community action boards, parent-teacher, improvements and peace groups have a statistically significant higher participation in municipal meetings than their peers that do not engage civically. Regarding the participation in municipal meetings of women, when they engage in community action boards, improvements and environmental groups, they have a statistically higher participation in the municipality, in comparison to women that do not engage civically. This is both for both housewives and in the working force.

Wrapping up the findings so far, Figure 1 evidenced that homemaker women tend to participate more in religious and parent-teacher, and less in community action boards, improvements and environmental groups. Considering the results from Figure 1 and 2 together, homemaker women have higher probabilities to participate in civic groups that have lower municipal engagement. In parallel, women engage less in the groups that promote the municipal participation within their participants. In contrast, men in the workforce tend to take part in civic groups that promote their participation in municipal meetings. Taking together these results, the observed gender gap in the DPTF workshops can be a result of the occupational status and voluntary civic engagement of people.

Figure 2. Predicted probabilities of political participation with the covariates at the means.



Conclusions and policy recommendations

The objective of this analysis was to understand the dynamics of women's participation in municipal councils and voluntary associations in order to identify ways to improve their inclusion in the participatory mechanisms of the peace agreement. The analysis was guided by the presumption that factors of the private sphere such as having children, the marital and occupational status determine the possibilities of women to participate in the municipal public spheres. In conclusion, the observed gender gap in the DPTF workshops can be interpreted in the following way. In comparison to both men and women that work, homemaker women have lower probabilities to engage in the voluntary civic groups that promote the assistance to municipal meetings. Since civic participation is positively associated to municipal participation, homemaker

women have lower probabilities to engage in the public sphere of municipal meetings. Thus, the gender gap in the participation in the public sphere of the Colombian postconflict municipalities is more nuanced than usually assumed: It is not women per se but a specific subgroup of women, namely the homemakers, that participate less.

Concerning the policy recommendation, the territorial government groups should complement the differential gender approach by not only focusing on women with children but by also promoting the involvement of female homemakers. This could be done, for instance, through promoting the participation of those civic groups in which housewives tend to concentrate: religious and parent-teacher organizations. There is a potential to promote the participation in municipal meetings of homemaker women that take part in these civic associations and, thereby, reduce the gap. In conclusion, territorial government teams could have more sensitivity in the type of civic organizations that are called to participatory DPTFs workshops to ensure a reduction of the gap for homemaker women.

The data was analyzed in the following way. Regarding the civic associations, Figure 1 showed that female homemakers tend to participate less in community action boards and associations related to the environment and local improvements, but are more involved in religious and school-related civic groups. Finally, this document analyzed whether gender and participation in civic associations are related to municipal council meetings engagement. The results showed that participants of civic organizations tend to be more engaged in municipal council meetings, and that there are gender differentials in the extent to which voluntary organizations are associated to municipal participation. Comparing the categories of respondents in civic associations, Figure 2 showed that homemaker women have lower probabilities to participate in municipal council meetings, compared to women and men in the workforce.

The results of this research are relevant for scholarly research because they show evidence about what is known by the social capital literature: that more engagement in voluntary organizations is associated with an increase in political participation and the public arena (Putnam, 1995; Verba et al. 1995). However, according to the results here, more attention is needed to the ways in which participation in specific voluntary organizations promote public participation of men and women.

As a final note for future research, this document is focused on the presence of women in the public arena of municipal meetings and voluntary associations. However, this tells little about the substantive representation of the women in such public instances. With these results, it is not possible to assess how the gender approach is considered in the policy discussions of those public arenas. Wills proposes two concepts to analyze the female participation in the political bodies of power: presence and representation (2004). While presence refers to the number of women participating in the public sphere, representation means “what goals and issues are defined for and from women, which ones are part of the political agenda, who promotes them and with what resources” (Wills, 2004, p. 105). While presence demands that women have the same possibilities as men to access structures of political power, in contrast, representation entails that women and their allies develop a sensible pro-equality agenda from and for women, says Wills. Despite that more female presence in the political structures does not translate automatically into an agenda committed to gender equality, the fewer women in the political structures, the less heterogeneous are the structures, and therefore, the lower the possibilities to advance in terms of representation, underscores Wills. This research focused on the female presence in the civic associations and the political arena rather than their representation in these instances. Future research should focus on analyzing the substantive representation of women in the civic and municipal meetings of the post-conflict regions.

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