November 2019

The Progressive Transformation of Medellín- Colombia: A Successful Case of Women's Political Agency

María Auxiliadora González-Malabet
University of South Florida

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The Progressive Transformation of Medellín- Colombia:
A Successful Case of Women's Political Agency

by

María Auxiliadora González-Malabet

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy School of Interdisciplinary Global Studies College of Arts and Sciences
University of South Florida

Major Professors: Bernd Reiter, Ph.D.
Rachel May, Ph.D.
Peter Funke, Ph. D.
Tonya E. Perry, Ph.D.

Date of Approval:
October 29 2019

Key Words: Women, Latin America, Agency, Direct Democracy, Social Movement, Governance

Acknowledgments

The only word that I could think and feel is gratitude. Thanks to God, to life itself, the precious timing, the challenges that make you stronger, and the love that makes you powerful. To my hard-working and always supporting family, my mom who is my true hero, my dad, and my amazing brothers Nandi and Moi. My incredible major professor, Dr. Bernd Reiter, for guiding me through all this academic journey. To my great committee, Dr. Rachel May, Peter Funke, and Dr. Tonya Perry for all the support. To the inspiring women from Medellin, this is for them. To all my greatest friends in the Ph.D. program that became my family as well. To my dear companion in all types of paths, ups, and downs, Santi.

I am deeply grateful to all the institutions that financed my research and believed in it. First, thanks to the Inter-American Foundation for the Grassroots Development Fellowship 2017-2018, I was able to do my fieldwork research. To the Office of Graduate Studies of the University of South Florida for the Dissertation Completion Fellowship 2019. Also, I would like to thank the Editing Press for the Laura Bassi Scholarship. Lastly, but not least, thanks to the Sisters of the Academy, and the Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Equal Opportunities at the University of South Florida, for the fellowship for participating in the Research BootCamp 2016.

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Abstract

Medellín, Colombia, once one of the most corrupt and violent cities in the world, is now one of the most progressive and democratic cities in South America. This transformation was due to the mobilization of women's movements and the influx of women in the city's executive branch. Female political agency and new urban development programs reshaped democratic practices for the citizenry. This research examines the robust association between women's organizations, women from Compromiso Ciudanano (CC), and a solid and active civil society. The theoretical framework covers democratization, good governance, and Latin American/Indigenous Feminism. The sources include interviews, polls, news articles, and government/NGO records. This work promotes female political agency, inclusionary policies and democratic institutions.

Introduction

This dissertation explores the political agency of women in the radical improvement of security, education, and equality of life in Medellín, Colombia, from 2004 to 2012. Medellín used to be a convoluted city due to corruption and violence from the drug-related conflict that was nourished by deep social inequalities. In 2004 a new type of administration based on a social movement, called "Compromiso Ciudadano" (CC) came to power when they elected their candidate, Sergio Fajardo, to the office of mayor. The Fajardo administration was characterized by bottom-up policies and by including a large number of women in directive positions, and by the mobilization of women's movements at the community level. Therefore, my main question seeks to understand how women's political agency and organization has generated the building of innovative democratic institutions and inclusionary social policies for the progressive change of Medellín.

In this research, I argue that in the recent history of Medellín, women have had a prominent place and direct participation, which marks a radical change in the social structure and authority in the city. I seek to prove that female political agency is partially responsible for the design of new urban development programs that make the citizen the center of urban planning. This case study is an ideal one, as the project reveals the causal mechanisms of female political agency in the progressive changes that have happened in Medellín. Through ethnographic work such as interviews and participatory

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observation, this dissertation demonstrates the relationship between women's political agency, innovative democracy, and good governance.

This dissertation is divided into four chapters, plus an introduction and conclusion. The chapters are organized as follows. The first chapter describes the transformation of Medellín as one of the most violent and complex cities in the world into a "Smart City"[1]. This section shows the history of CC and its political vision for the creation of four fundamental bottom-up programs[2], which I analyze in-depth, all led by women in CC. Moreover, the chapter presents the positive results that the four bottom-up programs achieved in Medellín, and it introduces the main actors who created and implemented the four bottom-up programs.

The second chapter situates the work in the broader academic literature, by focusing on two bodies of relevant literature: first democratic participation, and state-society synergy theories, and second feminist theories, especially Latin American and indigenous feminist theory. The first body of literature will demonstrate that the conceptual meaning of direct civic participation has a long pedigree, reaching back to classical Athens. This body of literature will display the important connection between bottom-up policies, civic participation, and successful democratic institutions, based centrally on the important contributions of Leonardo Avritzer (Avritzer, 2009).

In the review of feminist theories, the second chapter ponders the central inputs that feminists bring to the academic debate, challenging the political agenda of power

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[1] Smart City is a term to categorized cities that show significant development in information and communication technology (ICT) in their infrastructure and economic activities, as well as citizens' participation and quality of life.

[2] I use the concept "bottom-up" programs to follow and be consistent with the academic literature and the previous work of Leonardo Avritzer. Avritzer refers to the programs and designs from the grassroots level in terms of bottom-up.

relations and oppression (Burr, 1995; Gough & Whitehouse), and highlighting the political agency of subaltern female subjects, as elaborated by Gayatri Spivak (1988). It will take a closer look at Indigenous feminist theory from Latin America, based on Francesca Gargallo's (2007) analysis of the construction of critical female political subjects linked to Indigenous communities for the liberation of external oppressions.

The third chapter describes the methodology as a qualitative case study. It presents the method's interdisciplinary approach, and the tools I used, such as interviews, surveys, participatory observation, and field notes. This chapter also presents the population universe, namely women in executive offices who designed bottom-up policies, activists from CC, women communal leaders, and women from relevant female movements of the city. Additionally, this chapter describes my fieldwork research, which I conducted from 2017 to 2018 in Medellín, Colombia, funded by a Grassroots Development Fellowship from the Inter-American Foundation. During that year, first and second-hand data was collected. The interviews conducted were based on a semi-structured questionnaire and informal talks. I used quota sampling by interviewing women and men from various political levels of the movement. Moreover, this section shows the Sentipensante approach I implemented in my fieldwork and when conducting interviews. Sentipensante is a method that was born in Latin American and has been largely used by Latinamericanist scholar in sociology and political science. Lastly, I will explain my position as a researcher in the process of acquiring information and connecting with the interviewees.

The fourth chapter is where I systematize and analyze the data. This chapter is the densest section of the research. I apply content and discourse analyses to analyze

the data I have obtained, which focuses on the influence of women from CC and feminist movements in the development of the four bottom-up programs. I dissect the most common themes from the interviews, and I analyze these themes relationship to with women's agency.

Summarized into one comprehensive graph, my findings can be depicted as follows:
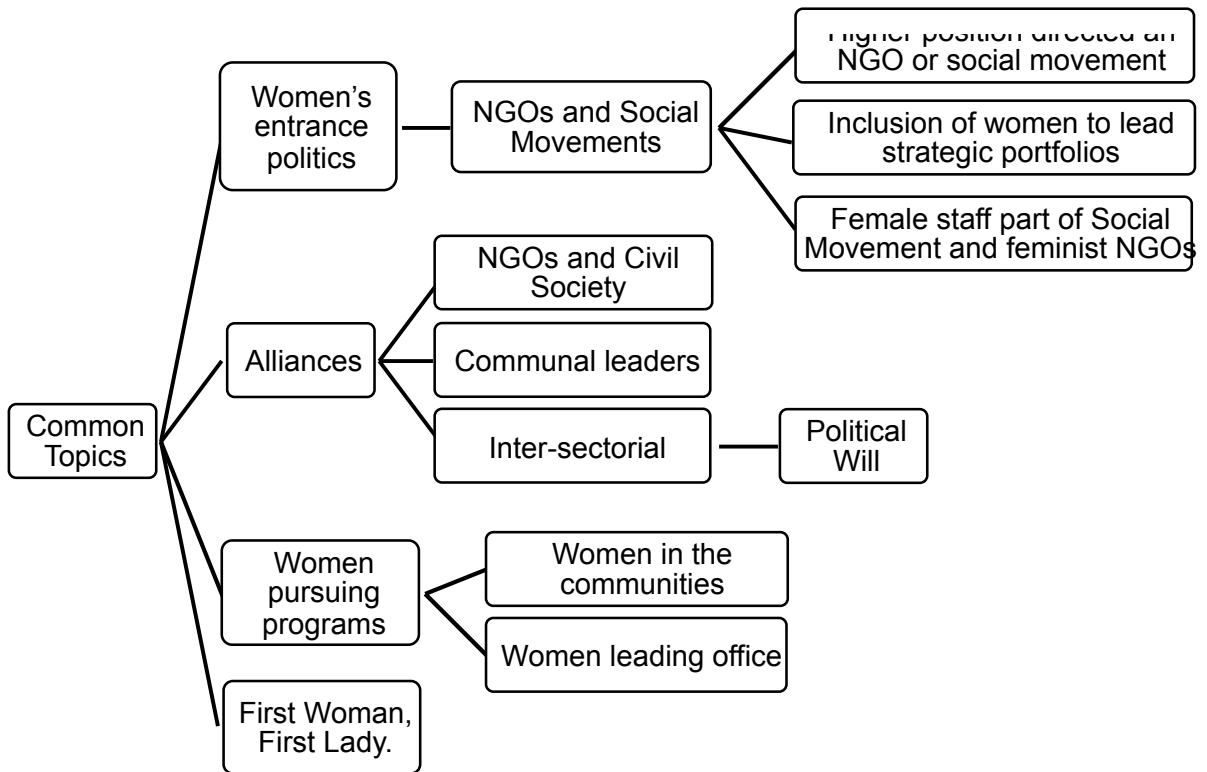
Figure 1. Analysis of Common Topics

The graphic figure one shows the four common topics that came out from the primary data I gathered. These common topics are: Women's entrance to politic; alliances made for pursuing bottom-up program; women pursuing bottom-up programs; and the First Women and First Lady. All these four themes contain further components of female political agency, highlighted in my analysis of the most repetitive and salient answers that express this agency. For instance, the entrance of CC women was through a social movement and an NGO. I also found that the women who had higher positions in the government used to be the directors of NGOs or remarkable members of a social movement. I conduct this type of deep and detailed analysis in chapter four.

Finally, the conclusion shows the limitations of the study and it reiterates the importance of the conceptual components of female political agency and its fundamental role in human development policies and democratic practices. Furthermore, the conclusion shows the future research that I will perform about gender dynamics in the creation of bottom-up policies.

Chapter 1: The Progressive Transformation of Medellín

Introduction:

Medellín is a city in Colombia that has radically improved its security, education, and human development index in only one decade. In the 80s and 90s, Medellín was internationally known as one of the most corrupt places in Latin America, due to the drug-related conflict that was fed by deep social inequality (Maclean 2014,6). Nonetheless, according to Indra Sistems' 2014 survey, Medellín is now one of the "best cities" to live in South America, sharing this distinction with cities such as Santiago de Chile, as well as Barcelona and Lisbon in Europe (ACI 2014). Medellín has been the only city in Colombia with this rapid change of pace, new and innovative democratic institutions, and overall progressive results over a short amount of time, during 2004-2014 (Anaibar 2015). During those ten years a new type of administration based on a social movement, named "Compromiso Ciudadano" (CC), came to power with an influx of women holding political office.

In 2004, CC's leader Sergio Fajardo assumed the mayorship. His administration was characterized by bottom-up policies expressed in the "Social Urbanism" programs such as Participatory Budgeting, "Buen Comienzo" ("Good Beginning", educational and nourishing program for early childhood), "Medellín Solidaria" ("Solidarity Medellín", a program for populations that live in extreme poverty), and the creation of a Secretariat of Women (an executive office that gave a higher political status to women's issues). This was done by including a large number of women in the directive positions on those

bottom-up policies, and by the mobilization of women's movements at the community level. Therefore, this chapter seeks to define the central question of this project, how women's empowerment, through their political agency and organization, has generated the building of innovative democratic institutions and inclusionary social policies for progressive change in Medellín.

This chapter displays the transition of Medellín into a "Smart City", and the historical development of the four fundamental bottom-up programs that became public policies, or were pillars for major public policies. Moreover, it analyzes the influence of the CC's vision for the application of these bottom-up programs as part of a broader urban intervention model called "Social Urbanism." Social Urbanism is a plan to reverse the historical social exclusion of the unprivileged in Medellín. Additionally, this chapter discusses the progressive changes that the four bottom-up programs achieved in the political, economic and social life of Medellín.

The text has a central train of thought which highlights the political role of women in all four bottom-up programs. It explores how these programs are founded and directed or managed by women with support from grassroots female movements, social movements, and female communal leaders. Thus, this section shows the existing synergy between the females in office, grassroots female leaders and broader civil society, among all four programs. Nonetheless, the in-depth analysis of this synergy is further developed in the fourth chapter of this dissertation.

Compromiso Ciudadano and Social Urbanism

"Compromiso Ciudadano" (CC), which roughly translates into "Citizen Commitment," was born as a political movement in 1998, created by different groups of society, such as academics, businessmen, socialist politicians, students, feminist groups, and many grassroots movements from Medellín, Colombia. CC filled a niche for independent and alternative political leaders. Additionally, the collective of feminist movements and grassroots women's movements in Medellín were part of the formation of the CC, and they were key for mobilizing citizens in order to development participatory exercises for the construction of communal policies.

In 2003 when CC's leader Sergio Fajardo won the elections for Mayor of Medellín, his victory was an historical moment for CC for different reasons. First, this was a collective success not only for CC, but also for the confluence of grassroots movements that united for the specific political goal of entering the executive branch of the city. Second, CC was not a political party; therefore, its leaders used an alternative and small party, namely the Alianza Indígena (Indigenous Alliance) in order to get elected, creating interesting connections with other political actors. Third, CC and the confluence of movements were able to break twenty years of bipartisanship in local elections; there were just two powerful political parties, Liberal and Conservative, which were alternating in executive power in Medellín.

During the mandates of Sergio Fajardo, and the next mayor Alonso Salazar, also a political leader from CC, the major's office implemented the most salient public policies based on bottom-up methods of the "Social Urbanism" (SU) model, which developed programs under the Integral Urban Project (PUI in Spanish). The PUI were born in 1993 as a result of cooperation between the Colombian government, the German government

and the city government of Medellín (Observatorio Ciudades Inclusivas , 2007). They seek to combine efforts for physical rehabilitation and improvements regarding social inclusion, with particular emphasis on institutional coordination and citizen participation.

PUI programs target the improvement of three different areas of the city. First, the physical deficiencies of the city such as low housing standards linked to informality, the absence of public spaces and environmental degradation. Second, the institutional weaknesses represented in the scarce and disjointed interventions by public administrations. Third, moreover, social marginalization, expressed in high poverty levels, lack of opportunities and marked social exclusion, as well as high levels of violence. (Observatorio Ciudades Inclusivas , 2007)

In 2004, these PUI programs were adopted by the leaders of CC and expanded to poor neighborhoods – the "comunas" of Medellín (Observatorio Ciudades Inclusivas , 2007). They emphasized two major objectives: physical integration of the city; and citizen participation (Duque 2014). The physical integration of the rich and poor parts of the city, for achieving this integration, leaders of CC built the most progressive constructions in the poorest sectors of the city. Every construction had a holistic plan for neighborhood revitalization. One important example is "Buen Comienzo" with educational and child-caregiver centers. 17 of these were built from 2008-2011, offering universal coverage. Another example is "Medellín Solidaria," which is a holistic social and economic interventions for the most vulnerable families, one of its works consist of the renovation of precarious housing units.

The second objective of the PIU, emphasized in citizen participation in public decisions through neighborhood assemblies, and the involvement of grassroots

movements. The most important public policy in this realm was Participatory Budgeting (Duque 2014). Participatory Budgeting combines direct democratic participation of the community with real economic investment and political consequences of their communal decisions. Likewise, "Buen Comienzo", and "Medellín Solidaria" had fundamental involvement of movements and communities in the decision-making process.

Moreover, there is another remarkable process of citizen participation and democratic inclusion for the development of Medellín, the creation of the first "Secretaría de las Mujeres"- Secretariat of Women- in Colombia. For the first time in Colombian history, in a Colombian city, women had an executive office with governmental budgets, and the same political status as other offices. Furthermore, this office was a collective creation by female leaders of CC, and the grassroots feminist and female movements of Medellín.

Impactful and holistic infrastructure usage

One of the most radical changes that the leaders of CC brought to the city was the holistic usage and investment of public spaces and infrastructure in Medellín. For eight years, many of the infrastructure investments were focused on providing a space to enjoy the city by recovering public spaces through educational and cultural buildings.

Before 1991, citizens did not have effective access to public spaces, not only because of security concerns but because some places were used exclusively by the city's elites. The investment into the creation of public spaces was a pillar of their pro-poor policies of social urbanism that gradually changed the exclusionary view of the city,

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improved its mobilization, and reconstructed the social tissue, which is still ongoing (Abello Colak & Pearce , 2015).

The importance of public ownership in Medellín is based on the idea that citizens gradually learned to exercise solidarity and the construction of civic culture (Bateman, Duran Ortíz , & Maclean , 2011). The primary outcome to these initiatives was not only a physical and social integration of the poor sectors in the fabric of the city but also to reduce violence and to affirm state control in areas that used to be dominated by illegal armed groups (Abello Colak & Pearce , 2015)

The City's Development Plans for 2004-2007 and 2008-2011 oversaw the construction of seventy-three "Ludotecas"- (Leisure Libraries), Buen Comienzo Kindergartens, and Library Parks in the poorest neighborhood as integral centers for culture and development. For example, during this time, five Library Parks were built as an urban development project for an inclusive city and a contribution to the educational planning. These libraries have not only the regular function of a library, but they became community centers, childcare places, and training sessions (Bateman, Duran Ortíz , & Maclean , 2011). In this regard, these buildings did not have a traditional purpose; they instead provided the community with other new programs.

The Leisure-library, library parks, Buen Comienzo's Kindergartens, among others, became icons of the city's changing image. These public spaces had areas for public artwork, science, childcare and botanical gardens, which link communities together. The availability of these types of public spaces targeted the geographically excluded and transformed the mobility in the city, which lead to the reduction of social and economic segregation (Maclean , 2014). Another critical program was Medellín Solidaria, one of

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its pillar points is to regenerated housing for many unprivileged families. This is a way to recover the dignity of the physical spaces of homes in Medellín. Nonetheless, Medellín Solidaria addressed other important areas of the United Nations Human Development index, related to intangible wellness.

Solidarity and Citizen Participation

Avritzer's (2009) theory states that grassroots participation should be designed by local organizations within a process of interactive, participatory design. Analyzing Medellín during 2004-2007, this city witnessed an emerging consensus between businesses, the city administration, and communities. Leaders of CC developed three main programs to encourage democratic participation among citizens, which were Buen Comienzo, Medellín Solidaria, and Participatory Budgeting. In these three programs, citizens were able to make decisions through consensus on how they want to be ruled.

Moreover, the creation of the Secretariat of Women was another remarkable achievement for the citizenship participation of the City. Women from the different female social movements and the administration of Sergio Fajardo lead to the creation of a political office for women's issues. This opened a venue for the active political participation of vulnerable population-women, which gave a historical reference of democratic inclusion in Colombia.

Programs with a "bottom-up" perspective

In 2004 Fajardo's administration implemented policies based on a general framework of Social Urbanism strategy, which had a pro-poor and bottom-up

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perspective. Likewise, Alonso Salazar continued developing that alternative political perspective. This political perspective reflected CC's horizontal vision of society. CC was consolidated as a pluralistic and civil movement; it was promoted and supported by other grassroots social movements, feminist movements, academia, and NGOs (Maclean , 2014). Therefore, CC is a confluence of interconnectivity among many sectors of society. In this, it is essential to highlight the role of women from CC as intellectual leaders for policies, which seek to help the under privileged, and as access points that connected multiple civic groups and numerous female leaders in society.

The bottom-up programs and policies applied by CC's leaders, Fajardo and Salazar, were in inside the Social Urbanism model (SU) expressed through programs from the Integral Urban Project (PUI in Spanish). SU is an urban intervention model applied in 2004 for reversing inequality and exclusion of abandoned areas, due to the 'historical debt' generated by the city's elites that used to be in power. The strategy to achieve bottom-up programs and SU's objective for reversing inequality, was classified into four main components: 1) infrastructure projects; 2) prominent investment in unprivileged areas; 3) development of public space; 4) solidarity economy and participation (Maclean , 2014).

With the arrival of CC leaders on power and the implementation of the SU model, PUI extended its work to improve the intangible aspects of the under-privileged like citizen participation, education, inclusion, culture, conviviality, and entrepreneurship (Observatorio Ciudades Inclusivas , 2007). Due to this change of political and framework perspective, many bottom-up programs were able to match and expand the

notion of PUI. Some of these bottom-up public policies were Buen Comienzo, Medellín Solidaria, Participatory Budgeting, and The Secretariat of Women.

All four programs are based on direct democratic participation from the community of each neighborhood association and social movements, through an open forum for all. Interestingly, all four programs are founded and directed or managed by women with support from grassroots female movements and female leaders. There has been synergy between the females in office, grassroots female leaders and broader civil society. The recent experiences of Medellín are comparable to contemporary cases analyzed by such prominent political scientists such as Leonardo Avritzer. Avritzer (2009), states that democratic institutions are more successful and desirable when they have social participation that responds to a "bottom-up dynamic." Bernd Reiter (2009), another theorist of democratic citizenship, has argued for the importance of direct citizen participation as central to democratic institutions.

Bottom Up Programs Directed by Women

Fajardo and Salazar generated key public policies for reversing the history of inequality and social debt in the marginalized areas and communities of the city. Also, the government had a fluid conversation with communities and social movements. Strong female participation in the process marked this conversation, from 2004-2014 female leadership was visible in CC's administrations. The increased female participation challenged the machismo culture that prevails not only in the society of Medellín but also in its political world. Additionally, and interestingly, many women were directing the design and application of the most remarkable bottom-up policy programs

in the local administration, the policies that make of Medellín an internationally well-known Smart City. By the end of Fajardo's mandate and the beginning of Alonso Salazar's, these programs were institutionalized and upgraded as public policies or as pillars of new public policies. Since more than a decade, all of the programs have been continuously implemented by the government and are highly valuable for different sectors of society.

Buen Comienzo: Program for Early Childhood Care

Buen Comienzo was created by the Municipal Agreement No.14, expedited by Council of Medellín in 2004. It was fully implemented in 2006. In a couple of years Buen Comienzo grew to be one of the most important childhood programs in Colombia, and this program became a public policy at 2009 in Medellín. Buen Comienzo was under the Secretariat of Social Welfare, and later managed by Department of Education of Medellín, which was led by a Strategic Manager delegated by the mayor. This program started with the leadership of Beatriz White, former manager of a Colombian-Swiss NGO for underprivileged children in Medellín, former director of the alliance Director of the Alliance of Entrepreneurial Foundations for Pro-antioquia, member of the Citizen Monitoring of Development Plan and Coexistence, and former member of CC. After White's retirement, Buen Comienzo continued under the direction of Martha Liliana Herrera, the former first lady and member of CC. Buen Comienzo was highlighted as one of the best programs in Colombian history for early childhood development. The program proved its success in 2011 when the Colombian Government elevated this public policy from Medellín as national policy with the name "de cero a siempre" (from zero to always).

Buen Comienzo was designed for early childhood in vulnerable conditions, offering opportunities for their integral development. This program responded to the needs of children from the lowest economic strata 1, 2 and 3 of SISBEN[3] in the city. In 2006, Medellín was the first city in the country that provided primary education for 3 and 4-year-old boys and girls with public resources in that year; it served a total of 6,231 boys and girls in nurseries, homes and children's centers. In 2007, 12,590 boys and girls attended. (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2007).

In addition, Buen Comienzo through the strategy named "Buen Comienzo-Había Una Vez" (Once upon a time) delivers nutritional supplements of fortified milk to pregnant mothers. In order to ensure breastfeeding, mothers received the supplement of the child reached six months of age. From 2005 to 2006 the supplement was delivered to 4,300 mothers and in 2007, to 1,700 more (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2007). This was significant because the assisted mothers' and children's nutritional and health conditions have been improved, by reducing the rate of congenital diseases and cases of low birth weight (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2009). Also, mothers that are part of the "Buen Comienzo-Había Una Vez" are successful in nourishing babies by exclusively breastfeeding (Gómez-Aristizábal, Díaz-Ruiz , & Manrique-Hernández, 2013, p. 383). Additionally, studies prove that the children in Buen Comienzo developed higher comprehension and knowledge skills in school than the children that are not in this program (Gómez Cardona & Arias Vanegas, 2013).

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[3] "Sisbén is the Identification System of Potential Beneficiaries of Social Programs that, through a score, classifies the population according to their socioeconomic conditions. Sisbén is used to quickly and objectively identify the population in poverty and vulnerability to focus social investment and ensure that it is allocated to those who need it most" (Direccion Nacional de Planeacion, 2017)

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Another important aspect of Buen Comienzo is the social mobilization that it had in the entire process since its beginning till it became a public policy. Before 2004 and prior Beatriz White became the Secretary for Social Welfare, she was able to identify the most urgent necessities of the underprivileged population in Medellín by using studies from NGO's, primarily from Coorporación Región, the consensus of local movements focused on childcare, and academic institutions (Corporación Región, 2006). This information was also relevant for the formulation of Medellín Solidaria. Later, after Buen Comienzo was formed, for the creation of the public policy of Buen Comienzo different civic organizations formed environments of dialogue, consensus, and joint strategies. These actors were social movements, academia, the ICBF (Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar) Colombian Family Welfare Institute, Madres Comunitarias (Communal Mothers) and employees of the government; all experts of early childhood education. These actors were named "La Mesa de Expertos" (The Panel of Experts), which were a majority of women (Salazar-Villegas & Sepúlveda-Villegas , 2015). When Buen Comienzo became public policy with the management of the mobilization, it focused on two instances: the technical direction of the program, and the entities providing the integral attention service. Likewise, the communities and grassroots movements were constantly involved with advising and oversight processes in the application of Buen Comienzo (Salazar-Villegas & Sepúlveda-Villegas , 2015).

Medellín Solidaria- Solidary Medellín

In the economic sphere, there are many important programs with a bottom-up perspective and cooperative sense. One of those programs is Medellín Solidaria, similar

to Chile Solidario in Chile, and the cash grant program Bosla Familia in Brazil. This program in Medellín provided personalized, family and community accompaniment, facilitating the empowerment of processes from the families (Bateman, Duran Ortíz , & Maclean , 2011). Moreover, due to this program, more than 16,800 persons and 4,200 families were brought out of extreme poverty (Montoya Roman, 2015). It is important to highlight that this program was created under the leadership of Beatriz White, and later continued and expanded with the direction of Martha Liliana Herrera.

During the government of Alonso Salazar, Medellín Solidaria was a strategic program in the government plan, and was the fundamental program for developing the public policies of "food and nutrition security and sovereignty policy" in 2005, and the "family policy" in 2011. Also, Medellín Solidaria had the political support of the first lady Martha Liliana Herrera from 2008 to 2012. Additionally in 2010, the United Nations Human Settlement Program (UN-HABITAT) awarded both programs, Buen Comienzo and Medellín Solidaria, because of the improvement in living conditions in the city. (Tavares, 2016, p. 192)

Medellín Solidaria is a social program built around the principle of shared responsibility, which strengthens the capabilities and autonomy of individuals, households, and communities, creating conditions for their integral human development (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2013). Thus, by supporting the population at the lowest social and economic levels, this program aims to achieve the nine dimensions of human development: identification, health, nutrition, education, access to justice, family dynamics, banking and saving, income and employment, and housing. The local government and the National Agency for Overcoming Extreme Poverty (ANSPE)

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created mitigation and improvement strategies, partnering with families, to approach the institutional offerings and social benefits for improving the quality of life (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2013).

The nature of Medellín Solidaria is co-formation with various entities form the different sectors of society. Since its formulation, Beatriz White supported the creation proposal of Medellín Incluyente (later Medellín Solidaria) on the evaluations of local NGOs, such as Coorporación Región. Then, in the application of the program, White searched for multidimensional cooperation from various local, national, and international actors. In the national governmental level were: the Presidential Agency for Social Action: Juntos, RESA Food and Nutritional Safety Network, Families in Action, and the income generation program. From local academia, the program was supported by SENA, Corantioquia, the University of Antioquia-School of Nutrition, and Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana. Another critical local support were foundations for alimentation security such as The Food and Nutritional Security Management of Antioquia -MANA. Internationally, Medellín Solidaria was supported by the Institute of Nutrition of Central America and Panama -INCAP, the Food and Agricultural Organization from the United Nations- FAO, the European Community, and the Chile Solidario program (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2007, p. 279).

Participatory Budgeting

In 1998, the first popular elected Mayor of Medellín, Juan Gómez Martínez, tried to implement "Participatory Budgeting" (Fierst, 2012). This first attempt for Participatory Budgeting was not successful because the communal organizations that were created

did not have experience in the territories and in prioritizing projects. Additionally, the Communal Consultative Council that was created had limited representation and did not have decision-making power (Correa, 2004). These local consultative assemblies did not have enough engagement with the process because ultimately the assembly representative was responsible for making the final decision.

Nevertheless, in 2004, the mayor Sergio Fajardo and Clara Inés Restrepo, the former Secretary of the Secretariat of Planning and member of Compromiso Ciudadano, addressed the weaknesses of Participatory Budgeting. They further changed "Participatory Budgeting" into "Local Planning and Participatory Budgeting." This program brought government and city planning closer to civil society.

The local government accomplished this by implementing two major innovative points. First, by allocating 5% of the municipal budgeting to Local Plans and Participatory Budgeting for *comunas* and *corregimientos*. Second, by replacing the Communal Consultative Council with the Communal and Corregimientos Council, which had decision-making power over part of the city's budget (Foronda, 2009). Furthermore, in 2007, a new decree institutionalized Participatory Budgeting inside the Municipal Planning System's legal framework. Participatory Budgeting is still one of the most critical public policies concerning citizen participation and planning in Medellín.

"Participatory budgeting," which was inspired by the Brazilian model in Porto Alegre. Medellín is one of the largest cities in the world that has effectively adopted this model. Participatory budgeting is based on citizens having the power of deciding the allocation of public money. For this purposes, Fajardo's government divided the city into small neighborhoods and Village Assemblies. This is where the people came together

and decided to allocate the city budget in what the citizenry considered as priority such as health centers, public recreation, college scholarships, among others (Schmidt, 2011).

The person in charge of participatory budgeting was Clara Inés Restrepo, former founder of the NGO Coorporación Región, activist from CC, and professor of classes like Planning and Development in various universities in Medellín. Her experience with NGOs and social movements in the city reinforced the perspective of participatory budgeting as an important amplifier in the exercise of democracy. She was responsible for extending the democratic participation of participatory budgeting by exploring different mechanism for local participation. Nevertheless, the communal and Corregimientos Councils have been fundamental for civic participation in participatory budgeting, Restrepo opened the spaces to neighborhood assemblies, which is a smaller geographical level of representation, in order to expand the meaning of citizen participation in participatory budgeting (Rojas , 2006).

In participatory budgeting citizens have to deliberate about collective problems and necessities, and then come to a collective decision on the community budget. Also, the same citizens supervise this deliberation and decision-making process for its correct development, which generates more transparency and efficiency in the administrative offices (Molina Merchán , 2013). In this open forum process people can track what is happening before, and after the deliberation, for this reason, transparency and accountability are major elements for citizens participation in participatory budgeting. Moreover, participatory budgeting is part of the "Investment Municipal Plan" and by law it cannot be lower than 5 percent of the local budget. (Molina Merchán , 2013).

Secretariat of Women

The idea of a Secretariat of Women comes from an historical proposal from the female and feminist social movements of the city. The antecedent of the Secretariat of Women was the Sub-office of Metromujer, under the Secretariat of Culture, created in 2002 due to the political mobilization of the female movements (Barraza M , 2006). Though this sub-office was an important accomplishment to the feminist and female grassroots movements, because they finally opened an administrative space for gender issues, it had many political and financial limitations for achieving gains for women in Medellín.

Metromujer lacked the economic and political autonomy to generate more effective actions. Therefore, it operated more on a short-term than a long-term level. In the short-term this meant that Metromujer concentrated its intervention on specific programs that could be achieved within six months, and which had a strong component of technical support and a low budget. It lacked a long-term plan for sustaining its programs. Metromujer did not have important political status or the financial strength in the administration to generate the actions that could have impacted citizenship, and break down the sexist socio-cultural structures. (Barraza M , 2006) Besides, Metromujer was a mid-level entity, which restricted the possibility to have consensus and peer dialogues with executive offices. This disconnection with executive offices constrained the gender policies. They were never adequately integrated into the local political agenda. (González Montoya , 2009)

Hence, in 2007 the agreement 001 the Municipal Council of Medellín, which is the legislative branch of the city administration, created the Secretariat of Women. This resolution made official the creation of an institutional mechanism with an important profile, autonomy and advocacy capacity for women's rights. Clearly, it was created taking advantage of the previous administrative space of the Metromujer office, the political will of Mayor Fajardo, the international cooperation support, and the important influence of Lucrecia Ramirez. Moreover, this lengthy process for demanding institutional space was pushed by NGOs of women, social movements, (CMQC, Corporación Vamos Mujer, Unión de Ciudadanas, Convivamos, Penca de Sávila, Corporación Región, IKALA), and the Mesa de Trabajo Mujer de Medellín (MTMM) (López de Mesa , 2008). It is important to highlight that the creation of this secretariat strengthened the link between the Municipality of Medellín, the legislative branch of the city, and civil society in particular with the Women's Social Movement, which historically demanded the existence of a municipal unit (The Municipal Council of Medellín, 2007).

Therefore, it is important to emphasize that the Secretariat of Women exists, because Sergio Fajardo and CC leaders had the political will to open that space. Therefore, the Women's Social Movement matched the political will of Fajardo and had the critical political influence of the well-known feminist psychiatrist Lucrecia Ramirez - Fajardo's wife and an activist from CC. These principal components: the historical achievements of the Women's Social Movement, the political will of the Mayor, the CC alternative perspective, and the political impulse of Lucrecia Ramírez, were fundamental for the momentum of the actual creation of the Secretariat of Women.

The Secretariat of Women is still in place, and it is a historical hit for women's political representation in Colombia. This was the first time a Colombian city developed an institutionalized space for vindicating and protecting the female population with the same political importance of other executive offices such as Secretariat of Health, Secretariat of Infrastructure or Secretariat of Education.

The first secretary of this office was Flor María Díaz Chalarca, a former director of the NGO Cerfami, an important institution in Medellín that promotes women's human rights, social and gender equity in every political and social environment. Afterwards, Díaz was named as the sub-secretary of Metromujer. Subsequently, during that time, she also closely accompanied the creation of the Secretariat of Women with the Women's Social Movement, and Lucrecia Ramirez.

How Bottom-Up Policies Transformed Medellín

Leaders from CC and its urban policies represented a radical and visible political break from the past, approaching democratic participation and quality of life from a different perspective. According to the "Indice de Progreso Social de Las Ciudades De Colombia" (The Index of Social Progress of Cities in Colombia- ISPCC) of 2015, since leaders from CC came to power in 2004, Medellín is the city that has recorded the most progress in Colombia: "the levels of quality of life of its inhabitants has increased by 25% in just six years" (Aranibar, Maldonado, García, Jimenez, & Caro , 2015, p. 19). Therefore, this supports the success of the leader of CC changing their political approach from the previous leadership.

Moreover, according to the ISPCC, Medellín reversed the critical situation of personal security and saw a significant boost in economic opportunities (+ 44%) from 2009 to 2014, after the CC leaders applied the bottom-up policies (Aranibar, Maldonado, García, Jimenez, & Caro , 2015). Also, the city has a superior performance among other cities in Colombia, in terms of freedom of movement because of the "degree of citizens' satisfaction with daily transportation and access to recreation and cultural venues, as well as the inclusion of people with disabilities" (Aranibar, Maldonado, García, Jimenez, & Caro , 2015, p. 19). This shows the improvement in the quality of life for the citizens.

Additionally, in 2011 Medellín received four prestigious awards. Three awards were from the HABITAT-UN to the programs "Buen Comienzo", "Medellín Solidaria", and "Encuesta de la Calidad de Vida" (Tavares, 2016). The other award was a recognition from the World Health Organization- Pan American Health Organization for the good practices in health promotion intersecting with an educational approach (Cortes Gomez, 2017). In 2013, The Wall Street Journal and Citibank awarded Medellín with the prize of Innovative City of The Year, beating cities like New York, and Tel Aviv. Also, in 2016 the city won the prestigious Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize. (Tavares, 2016)

During the first decade of 2000's, which was the time frame when CC was in power, no other city in Colombia has grown so exponentially as Medellín did in terms of quality of life, security, and opportunities for its citizens. Thus, the institutional change in Medellín brought the citizens onto the stage as the principal actor in the city.

Medellín as a Smart City

Medellín is considered a "Smart City" because of its improvement in technology, communication, and citizens' participation. *Smart City* is a term that came into use in the 1990s to show significant improvements in information and communication technology (ICT) in their infrastructure and economic activities. Nonetheless, the label "Smart City" has been used for many sectors, without a clear definition.

There is no agreement on the definition of Smart Cities because this term has been used for two different domains. First, it has been applied to "hard" domains, for instance, infrastructures, mobility, buildings, logistics, energy, water, and waste management. In all of these "hard" elements, the application of ICT plays an important role as a measurement of efficiency and smartness. Second, the term has been applied to "soft domains," such as quality of life, governance, policy innovation, social inclusion, culture, and education. In these "soft" elements, ICT is not as determinant as in the "hard" domain (Albino, Berardi , & Dangel, 2015).

In this regard, there are many facets of Smart Cities in these the "hard" and "soft" domains. Several notions and components define a Smart City, depending on the theoretical background of the evaluator. Some components can be industry, economy, mobility, education, governance, community participation, quality of life, and technical infrastructure (Albino, Berardi , & Dangel, 2015). Nonetheless, it is interesting that the previous list of components includes "quality of life" and "community participation," as it gives a more human understanding of the citizen as an actor in the city's development.

Furthermore, according to Nam and Pardo (2011), community, or smart community, is another important concept for defining a Smart City. The idea of community is oriented toward inspiring citizens to achieve a communal sense and implementing citizens' initiatives utilizing bottom-up knowledge patterns (Nam & Pardo, 2011). In smart communities, members and institutions work in partnership to positively transform their environment. This way to conceive Smart Cities is within the framework of "New Urbanism", as a community-driven reaction to deteriorating trends and challenges within a city, such as traffic congestion, school overcrowding, and air pollution (Albino, Berardi , & Dangel, 2015). Therefore, the city of Medellín has been categorized as a Smart City precisely due to its implementation of programs for citizen engagement, with bottom-up policies, and the construction of innovative infrastructure with high ICT in the most impoverished areas of the city.

Conclusion

This chapter sheds light on the influence of CC and its leaders' women in the change of the city of Medellín. Additionally, it shows the progressive transformation of Medellín through four politically significant programs and policies that were designed and directed by women, "Buen Comienzo," "Medellín Solidaria," Participatory Budgeting, and the Secretariat of Women. The above programs are a fundamental part of the Social Urbanism policies from 2004 to 2014. These programs were closely related to the development of the Integral Urban Projects (PUI) and many were elevated to public policies.

Additionally, this section discusses how the horizontal vision of CC was reflected in the creation of a holistic urban intervention model, and bottom-up public policies. The specific four programs developed in this chapter, were based on direct democratic participation from the community of each neighborhood association. Also, CC progressive sense and alternative political agenda allowed the leader women that came from NGOs, social movements and academia to occupy the direction of executive offices. These women were essential connecting points to access the important support of grassroots movements, female and feminist movements, female communal leaders, and broader civil society.

Chapter 2:Literature Review

Closing the Gap: Establishing Intersection of Participatory Democracy, and Latin American feminism.

Introduction

The political agency of women in Medellín brought progressive change to the city's governance practices. There is a need for current scholarship to uncover the overlooked intersection of participatory democracy and political agency from a Latin American Feminist perspective. This chapter identifies a gap of knowledge, reflected in the available literature with regard to the political agency of women on the margins of society. By employing a Latin American Feminist perspective, this chapter examines women's roles in the development and maintenance of bottom up policies.

The first part of the review focuses on democratic participation, which centers on the synergy between state-society and good governance theories. This section introduces democratic theories and praxis based on the ancient Greeks, primarily Aristotle, Solon and Cleisthenes. Also, this section shows the scholarly debate about the crisis of representative democracy, and the need to re-focus debates around direct democracy. This is further elaborated by a new generation of contemporary scholars that research Brazil, (Andrew Selee and Enrique Peruzzotti 2009, Bernd Reiter 2009, and Brian Wample 2007) who have explored the concept of participatory democracy. The synergy between state-society is used by these scholars to analyze the Brazilian experience in cities that employed bottom-up policies.

This literature review also explores authors that expand the concept of civic participation. Brazilian experts like Leonardo Avritzer (2009) state that there are different types of innovative civic participation that can generate important democratizing outcomes, such as "bottom-up", power-sharing, and ratification designs. The "bottom-up" design from Avritzer is linked to the development of this dissertation, because it explains the civic society capabilities to push forward political proposals into the local government, which was the process for the programs and public policies applied in Medellín, Colombia. Along the lines of civic society participation, Peter Evans (1995) states that the development of a state is based on the synergy between the state and society. This statement reflected on the continuous conversation and interchange between these two actors, which I have applied to the methodology of governance from female leaders of *Compromiso Ciudadano* (CC) in Medellín. Joel Migdal (2001) developed the theory of 'state-in-society' that helps to desegregate the interaction of different groups influencing the state. Migdal's statements are applied in this thesis because they explain the reason for successful governance of the leaders of CC, and they help highlight that these leaders were alternative people that came from social movements, academia, and NGOs, far from the political tradition of mayors and political parties in Medellín.

The second section of the literature review focuses on female political participation. This review sheds light on women's participation in direct participatory democracy. I first showcase how much has been written about the topic, and I follow up with an analysis of this literature. The major gap in mainstream academia is the lack of recognition of the informal ways that citizens participate. In this sense my research

proves the importance of activism for amplifying citizen participation. Another fundamental gap that my research fills is the lack of studies on women's influence in social movements for democratizing governments and transforming formal politics by increasing political rights. Hence, my research makes visible the overlooked reality of women's roles in Medellín and in social movements that have democratized and expanded democracy. My work adds to the research by such authors as Laurel Weldon (2002) and Shireen Hassim (2006), who have already advanced our knowledge about women's movements and organizations as important venues for female political participation. My research enhances the literature by detailing the type of female leaders that entered public offices from social movements, and their synergy with other feminist movements.

Moreover, this second section emphasizes women from Latin America. The major gap is the sparse analysis of women in direct democratic institutions that were created throughout Latin America since the early 2000s, like participatory budgeting. Also, these few studies offer an example of the ways many mainstream political institutions and communities render women invisible. There are even less academic assessments that prove the important political contributions of women in these participatory spaces. This is where my research makes an important contribution by expanding the studies about the positive outcome of women in participatory venues.

Another important part of this chapter is the discussion of women's agency. The debate starts with a critical assessment of mainstream theory debates about agency, referencing authors like Max Weber (1992), Anthony Giddens (1984), Emile Durkheim (1978), Norman Long (1992), among others. My literature also review engages with the

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political science perspectives and conversations about agency, starting with authors as Mitchell Dean (1999), Arun Agrawal (2005), and Mike Kesby (2005), who bring a feminist perspective to agency. Finally, I discuss the meaning of women's agency in feminism with author like Nancy Fraser (1992), Mounira Charrad (2010), and Rupal Oza (2001).

In this section, the literature review explores authors that explain postcolonial feminism, specifically, Latin American Indigenous feminism. First, I show the analysis of the political agency of the subaltern, or oppressed female subject by Gayatri Spivak (1988). Then, this section narrows down the feminist theorist to the Indigenous feminist theory based on authors like Arrobo Rodas (2005), Francesca Gargallo (2007), and Latin American feminist Sonia Álvarez (1997). I also present communitarian feminism by Julieta Paredes (2010), which is a branch of Indigenous feminism.

My Contribution to Feminist Critique

My dissertation centers on the contribution that feminism has brought to the academic debate. Feminism revealed how academia was primarily composed of men and designed within a narrow male logic for researching social phenomena. Historically, the process of conducting research has been reserved for men. This does not necessarily mean that women were purposefully excluded from science, but it indicates a resistance to female presence in scientific research. Recognizing this lack of women signifies that the existence of a universal researcher and subject in science is not reasonable as such a perspective assumes a male self, ignoring the female perspective

as a researcher and as a subject (Bandeira, 2008). Thus, feminism challenges the hegemonic epistemological patterns in academia.

Feminism provoked another important and well-known epistemological rupture when it established that the private domain is also political. This slogan -"the personal is political"- was a challenge to the liberal perspective of the separation of the public sphere vs. private sphere. In public forums women were excluded, and so they were pushed into the private space of the households. This had political consequences as women were rejected from the political activities. This imperative division of the public and private can be traced back to the ancient Greeks. According to Jean Bethke Elshtain (1993), this imperative emerged in the Homeric period through the aesthetic political thought of Plato, and then Aristotle. The public as a cultural phenomenon with a structured body politic set was "polis", and in contrast, the private as the household was "oikos" (Bethke Elshtain, 1993). For Aristotle, participating in the polis was the highest good for individuals and made the good life possible. It was the place for the development of thought and political agency. Thus, only citizens were able to achieve complete dignity and a good life, whereas the private sphere was the place where the action of production and reproduction of society happened, a less enlightened mission than that of the public. The oikos was destined for women, slaves, and children, as they were considered irrational and hence excluded from the deliberation in the polis. They did not share or enjoy the fullness of a good life (Bethke Elshtain, 1974).

This exclusionary dynamic has persisted into the present, and is reflected in every dimension of society, including science. Science is a productive human activity that responds to the demands of a social and political system. Therefore, the limited

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participation of and lack of existing research on women in science as an important subject is a reflection of political settings (Bandeira, 2008). Thus, feminist scholars started proposing new themes and research intentions in social science regarding the importance of the private sphere, such as the sexual division of work, the categories associated with individual and collective appropriation of women and their social control, and the relationship between genders (Burr, 1995; Gough & Whitehouse, 2003; Kelly, 1997). All these themes were selected to give visibility of patriarchal logics in the scientific practice.

Feminism questions the institutionalized social and natural history of sexual hierarchy and it produces new cognitive modes for studying reality through a lens of gender. Feminist dialectics challenge the social and biological assumptions of gendered behaviors, and expose how the categories of "female" and "male" have been socially constructed (Bandeira, 2008). In this way feminism tries to deconstruct the fixed production of gender dynamics in every social scenario, and to produce a new language, concepts, models, and behaviors around gender. This brought some changes to the social conditions of both men and women, in different levels of society (Bandeira, 2008). Hence, these conceptual changes and constant questioning of academic activities transformed the relationship of science and the type of institutional and professional engagements.

Regarding the topic of agency, I highlight how feminism brings another layer to the previous studies of agency. The feminist scholars analyzed have proposed the concept of positionality of women in relationship to men in a social context, concluding that similar actions might have different results depending on gender. Generally, the

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choices, voices, and power of the female gender are restricted relative to men. In feminist studies of agency there is a major discussion about two contradictory principals. The first is that agency appears to exist in an ongoing pressure where the male dominated structure always diminishes or constrains female agency. The second one is the capacity of female agency to change the dominant structure. I highlight the different conceptual debates about agency according to different feminist authors, focusing on different axioms, such as relational and multifaceted, dimensional, intersectional, political, procedural, civic, among others.

Also, for advancing the discussion on feminism, my dissertation integrated a Latin American feminist view. I specified the usage of indigenous Latin American feminism as a framework because of the three main reasons: first, it contextualizes and analyzes the postcolonial area of Medellín, Colombia, and the conditions of women in that space. Second, it challenges the feminism of the white, elite, and Western women's experience that does not describe the complexity of women in Latin America. Third, indigenous feminism traces politic elements that resonate with democratic concepts, communal actions, and even experiences of CC women from Medellín.

Direct Democracy, Deliberate Democracy, and Civic Participation

To understand democratic institutions built in Medellín in the 2000s, it is helpful to analyze the history of the direct democratic system and its evolution. The ancient Athenians were the Western pioneers in the study of democracy and in the empirical application of this concept. For many scholars, Athenian democracy has been the strongest example of direct democracy in Western history (Pitkin 2004, Kaufman 2006,

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Reybrouck 2018, J. Peter Euben, John R. Wallach, & Josiah Obe, Euben, Wallach, & Obe, 1994, Tolbert Roberts 1994). According to Leveque (1996), the main characteristic of Athenian democracy was that the citizens were the rulers and the ruled at the same time. Despite the useful application and study of the Greeks, one of the biggest limitations of Athenian democracy is its exclusionary nature. In this democratic system, only adult males who had a stake in the city's operations were considered citizens for participating in politics, whereas other types of populations were excluded from active citizenship (Leveque & Vidal-Naquet, 1996). Enslaved men were not able to participate because they were considered property, and women and foreigners were also excluded on the basis that they were considered too irrational to participate in politics. Therefore, some important elements do not apply to the actual development of democracy.

Many modern authors who study the modern systems of democracy have opposed Athenians' concept of democracy as direct participation. Modern democratic states practice representative democracy centered solely on political parties and the electoral system (Tridimas, 2011, p. 42). According to authors such as Schumpeter (1943), there is no liability for people ruling democratic institutions (Tridimas, 2011). Schumpeter (1943) argues that only the elite can truly govern and represent the citizenry because they have the material capabilities in order to best govern (Tulchin & Ruthenburg, 2007, p. 24). Likewise, Przeworski critiques the concept of self-governance, and its application nowadays (Przeworski, 2010, p. 18). Cities have millions of citizens and the assumption of citizen's equality among in society is not real. Citizens are not equal entities; in societies, there are actors with diverse and conflicting interests (Vargas-Reina, 2011).

Nevertheless, in the late 20th and 21st century, political scientists conclude that representative democracy is in crisis, and argue for more direct democratic participation Reiter 2017, Ungureanu & Serrano 2018, Michael A. Neblo, Kevin M. Esterling, David M. J. Lazer 2018, Pitkin 2004, Reybrouck 2018, Rawls 1999). In the body of literature, there are different causes for representative democracy crisis. First, traditional political parties, as one of the most important institutions in a representative democracy, have lost their political formation as well as their legitimacy for citizens (Fishkin 2018, Ungureanu & Serrano 2018). Political parties' ideological canons, of left-right, became blurry after the Second World War, generating ideological confusion (Ungureanu & Serrano, 2018). Second, there is tension between the current economic system, corporatist capitalism, and the maintenance of democratic institutions. Capitalism has gradually eroded the link between nation-states, their political parties and interest groups (Reiter 2017, Escobar 1995). Since the 1970's, when neoliberal policies and globalization took place in many developing countries, societies started experiencing extreme economic inequality, which generated distrust from the citizens to their representative politicians. Capitalism and neoliberal policies also fostered the appearance of important actors in the political realm such as, lobbies and economic pressure groups. These new actors had economic power to pressure politicians to prioritize their own political agendas, thus, challenging the importance of citizens' interest and representation (Ungureanu & Serrano, 2018).

Moreover, for Neblo, Esterling, and Lazer (2018), the main crisis of recent representative democracy is a result of "the absence of meaningful avenues for citizens to engage in effective dialogue with public officials" (Neblo, Esterling, & Lazer, 2018, p.

3). There is no space for citizens to develop their deliberative capacity, and there is a disconnection between elected leaders and citizens. In this sense, also, Tulchin and Ruthenburg (2007), argue that citizens have been relegated to the role of voters and the political decision-making process is distant from the daily communal debate (Tridimas 2011).

Therefore, authors as Bohman (1998), Gutman and Thompson (2004) evaluated deliberative democracy as an effective tool to achieve direct democracy. This type of analysis can be traced back to Jean-Jacques Rousseau (2003), but more recently in the 20th century, Hannah Arendt (1963), and Joseph Bessette (1994). On the one hand, there is an important body of literature that focuses on the philosophical work about public deliberation such as Jürgen Habermas (1998), Amartya Sen (2009), and Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato (1994). On the other hand, Fishkin (2018), Neblo, Esterling, and Lazer (2018), and John Gastil (2000) focus on innovative methodological experiments for theorizing deliberative democracy as an operative model.

Contemporary Scholarship in Latin America

In the 1980's and '90s, cities like Porto Alegre, Curitiba, and Rio de Janeiro started implementing a type of direct democracy program called "Participatory Budgeting". In this program people from different city neighborhoods got together in community halls to debate and decided how to allocate the city's budget (Nylen, 2011). Consequently, many political scientists and specialist on Latin America started analyzing these cities' democratic programs, arguing that they extended the scope of democratic outcomes to direct civic activity (Baiocchi 2005, Selee and Peruzzotti 2009,

Reiter 2009, Avritzer 2009). Some scholars are returning to the debate of questioning the primary and basic elements of democracy, thus embarking on a similar endeavor to the one Cleisthenes took on when he sought to devise institutional ways to bring political power back to ordinary people (Reiter 2009, Lucardie 2014, Nylen 2011). Additionally, the case of participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre motivated the application of this program, or other innovative institutions for citizens direct participation, in other parts of Latin America. This generated the analysis and comparative studies of these increasing phenomena for the different countries in the region (Yovanovich & Rice, 2017) (Selee & Peruzzotti, Participatory Innovation and Representative Democracy in Latin America, 2009) (Pearce, 2010).

Roberta Rice (2017), Pascal Lupien (2017), and Donna Lee Van Cott (2008) analyzed the democratic deliberation institutions put on place in Ecuador and Bolivia, which gave higher participation to indigenous populations, reshaped civil society, but also strengthened the overarching control of the government. In Venezuela, under the former president Hugo Chavez and his Bolivarian Revolution implemented, in 2005, communal councils in many municipalities, which are very similar to participatory budgeting as created in Porto Alegre (Lucardie, 2014). Scholars' studies about this case have generated divided conclusions about its implementation. On one hand, many agree that increasing citizens' participation was a success by itself (Azzellini, 2012, Corrales 2010, Hawkins 2010, Motta 2011, Roberts 2012). On the other hand, Steve Ellner and Daniel Hellinger (2003) see it as citizen participation with clientelistic and paternalistic elements, as it went along with Chavez's excessive use of power (Lucardie, 2014). In Argentina, participatory budgeting also emerged, Selee and

Peruzzotti (2009) criticized how it retained political power and had factors that could compromise its continuation. Finally, in Medellín, Colombia, the case of Porto Alegre also motivated the creation of bottom-up policies, which will be developed later in this section.

In the academic literature on Latin America, there are different approaches for understanding the expressions of civic participation, and their products. According to Leonardo Avritzer (2009), a pioneer and contemporary Brazilian author on citizen participation in Brazil, there are different types of innovative civic participation that can generate important democratizing outcomes, not only participatory budgeting. These institutions of democratic participation emanate depending on each social scenario. Avritzer (2009) identifies three different types of institutional designs. The first variety of participating institutions is participatory or "bottom-up" design, which is the most radical democratic participation as all citizens are allowed to participate. The second institution is power-sharing designs: elected representatives and the government share decision-making authority, whereas citizen-participants have a limited capacity to influence issue-specific agenda settings (Avritzer, 2009). The third classification, ratification design, allows citizens to approve or reject government proposals but does not allow for deliberation of proposal content (Avritzer, 2009). Many of the bottom-up policies designed and developed from 2004-2012 have been consulted and created by grassroots assemblies, and by citizens in their communal organizations.

Furthermore, according to Avritzer (2009) democratic institutions are more successful and desirable when they have social participation that responds to a "bottom-up dynamic". These types of institutions are the "most democratic and the most

distributive" (Avritzer 2009, 174). For a "bottom-up dynamic" to succeed it needs the combination of the following three dimensions: civil society, political society, and appropriate institutional design (Avritzer 2009). Thus, for Avritzer, institutions should be designed and adapted to the local organization of both civil and political societies, in a process that he calls "interactive participatory design" (Avritzer 2009).

In the same way, Paul Lucardie (2014) after comparing the participatory budgeting of Porto Alegre with the citizen's assemblies of the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Vermont, concluded that direct democracy has a positive effect for democracy. For Lucardie, it has an important influence on the efficacy and confidence of citizens. In this sense, participatory budgeting and active citizen participation in small, local assemblies are immediately visible, as they "give participants a sense of responsibility" (Lucardie, 2014, p. 58). Participation in face-to-face meetings may also increase trust and a sense of belonging (Almond and Verba, 1963, Donna Lee Van Cott 2008, Lucardie 2014).

Additionally, Peter Evans (1995) states that the development of a state is based on the synergy from the state and society. Moreover, Joel Migdal (2001) developed the theory 'state-in-society' that helps to disaggregate the interactions of different groups and individuals who influence the state. These two authors follow the idea of the fundamental role of civil society for strengthening democracy and building more successful public policies that answer to the prioritized necessities of local communities. These theories explain the importance of the grassroots organization of citizens in order to influence politics. In this sense, these theories speak to the case of social movements like CC that started connecting with other grassroots movements. Later, CC articulated these other movements while it was in power, which triggered the development of

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"bottom-up" policies. The Secretariat of Women, Buen Comienzo and Medellín Solidaria, were all designed to advance the efforts of social and grassroots organizations.

Following Avritzer's idea of civil and encouraging democratic institutions, Bernd Reiter provides an insightful examination of how this institutional participation translates to each aspect of "everyday life" (Reiter 2009, 141). Direct democracy in the cases of Porto Alegre and other Latin American cities, aim to center important decision-making of vary social topics in hands of the citizens, which encourage democratic values. Putting citizens first should be the core value in the development of every institution, such as school or urban centers, in order to readily implement democracy. Therefore, political institutions should include all spheres of society to have a more successful bottom-up participation (Reiter, 2009). Political institutions play a significant role in civic and political participation by promoting political agenda, providing formation to citizens and serving as a platform for people to express their concerns.

Role of Women in Direct Democracy

In the academic literature, there are different ways to understand the role of women in a modern democracy, such as political participation and electoral participation (Carreras, 2018). Political participation refers to activities such as working in political parties, communicating with politicians, and participating in manifestations (Huckfeld and Sprague 1995, Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995), whereas electoral participation focuses on voting activity (Carrera 2018, Paxton, Kunovich, and Hughes 2007, Burns 2007, Norris 2002). The majority of both types of studies about participation tend to be

quantitative and focus on the gap or the inequality of women vs. men in their political participation, arguing that women constantly are less engaged than men. (Inglehart and Norris 2003, Dalton 2017, Coffé and Bolzendahl 2010)

Nevertheless, there are other studies that argue for an important and active role of women in democratic practices. In Catherine Bolzendahl and Hilde R. Coffé's (2009) quantitative research, there is a difference between men and women's view of political rights and social and responsibilities. Women tend to value these topics more than men. Others studies show that women have a higher respect for laws than men (Steffensmeier and Allan 1996, Tyler 2006). Also, Miguel Carreras argues that women in the United States, and especially in Latin America, vote more than men (2018).

For Susan Bourque (1998), the classical investigations about women's participation misused and distorted the data about women, contributing to a dissemination of erroneous assumptions about women's political agency and a consolidation of gender stereotypes. For instance, the case study conducted by Lakshmi Iyer and Anandi argues specifically in the case of India that the "conventional" civic and political engagement gap between men and women is present even when there are women in elected positions. However, there are deeper reasons that need to be researched for a correct understanding of the unequal way women participate. (Iyer & Mani, 2019). Harrison and Munn's research shows the gap in the debate about the term citizenship in liberal democracies, which is a result of a lack of explicitly addressing gender. Many governments do notice the sexual difference in formal participation, but there are few efforts to understand how men and women experience citizenship, and how democracies work against the limitations that women have for engaging in civic

participation. Birte Siim (2002) argues that there is a lack of criticism of the "universal" and neutral conditions of the concept of citizenship. She contrasts the mainstream theories of citizenship with feminist theories in order to rethink what citizenship means in an equalitarian gendered democracy.

There is another body of literature that highlights women's participation in informal political organizations and processes, which has been also important for democracy. This body of literature concludes that there is not enough research on this topic (Harrison and Munn 2007, Sarvasy and Siim 1994, Bourque and Grossholtz 1998, Siim 2002). Sarvasy and Siim (1994) state that political science has neglected to study women's influence in the social movement for democratizing governments and transforming formal politics by increasing political rights. In this sense, these authors speak to the invisibilized reality of women in Medellín and many other cities in Latin America where the role of women in social movements that democratized or expanded democracy in their cities has been overlooked by academia. This is the gap my own research seeks to fill.

Laurel Weldon advanced the research on the impact of women's social movements in the creation of policies impacting women positively in democratic countries. Her quantitative research among 36 countries included six Latin American countries, namely Venezuela, Jamaica, Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago, Costa Rica, and Colombia. However, Colombia and Venezuela were considered as partially free democracies (2002). Additionally, Shireen Hassim (2006) released a study about the influence of the women's social movements and organizations in the successful elimination of the apartheid norms in South Africa. Weldon (2002), as well as Hassim

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(2006), argue that autonomous women's movements and organizations provide an important venue for women political participation and a stronger way to influence the successful application of policies that fight against women injustices and expand democracy. According to Weldon, these groups are even more effective in advocating and pressuring the legislative branch and politicians than the women elected to the legislature. Moreover, both studies highlight the importance of women's movements and organization articulation with other political actors, but at the same time retaining their autonomy. In Hassim's research, women's social movements were the most successful when they articulated and united with other organizations and movements without losing their major objectives (2006). Weldon shows that the most successful cases of her research are in those countries where the women's movements articulated and reinforced their actions with a women's agency or office that acted inside the state. This theoretical background partially explains what happened in Medellín, Colombia with the creation of the Secretariat of Women. Nonetheless, I argue that this also happened because of the type of female leaders that entered the public offices.

Regarding direct democracy, there are few findings on the importance of these institutions for extending women political engagement, and the women's impact or contributions to these institutions. Aparimita Mishra presents how the Raj Institutions in India, which is a community-level and self-governed institutional mechanism, opened spaces for higher participation of women in this public space; nevertheless, there are still exclusionary practices for women in politics overall (Mishra, 2018). Olken (2010) quantitatively analyzes the participatory political process in 49 rural villages in Indonesia, where villagers selected the types of development projects that the World

Bank aimed to apply there. This author found that the result of the female votes led to the selection of projects located in poorer areas for improving quality of life. Additionally, Robert Gibson (2012) argues that women participation in Redistributive Direct Democracy (RDD) has significant results for the development of democracy in the global South. Furthermore, Sonia Alvarez (2017) argues that this the type of direct participatory programs, created in Latin America, opened new opportunities for activists to enact transformative practices and to advance in autonomous agendas, especially women's movements (Alvarez, 2017).

Role of Women in Deliberative Democracy Latin America

Latin America has an increasing body of literature on women political and electoral participation in the last decades. Nevertheless, there are two major gaps in this literature. First, as stated in the previous section, the literature about women's participation in Latin America has narrowly defined the concept of "political participation" (Booth 1979, Aviel 1981). Political participation has been mainly understood in conventional and "legal" terms (Aviel 1981), thus disconnecting it from a broader meaning of women's political agency. Many authors argue that in Latin American countries women's political participation and agency took different forms because of military dictatorships, rapid regimes' changes, continuous high levels of violence, corruption, poverty, and inequality, as well as economic stagnation and neoliberal policies (Aviel 1981, McNulty 2018, Lebon 2010, Martinez Palacios 2016). In this context arose the formation of leftist movements, guerrilla groups, alternative political parties, neighborhood assemblies, and counter-establishment movements. These

diverse forms of political agency developed feminist political actors (Maier 2010). Second, during the 1980s and '90s new direct and deliberative democratic institutions were put in place, where citizens were part of the public decision-making processes, allowing more visibility for women organizations and strengthening their political force (Alvarez 2017, Martínez Palacios 2016). Paradoxically, there is little literature about women's participation in these deliberative processes and direct democratic institutions in Latin America (McNulty, 2018).

For authors like Martínez-Palacios (2018) and Stephanie McNulty (2018), even though deliberative participation institutions in Latin America increased and reinforced the collective engagement of women's groups, it has not eradicated exclusionary logics for women in these participative procedures. Martínez-Palacios analyzes the case of Participatory Budgeting in Porto Alegre and the 15M movement in Spain, as both cases have deliberative and direct citizen participation. The first one is an official and institutionalized process aligned with the state apparatus, and the second is a participatory expression from the civil society. In both cases, Martínez-Palacios found an imprecise assumed "neutrality" of citizen participation, which is based on male experiences. Additionally, both cases perpetuate the division between the private vs. public without understanding and confronting how this division affects women's experiences of participation (Martínez-Palacios, 2018). Stephanie McNulty studies gender participation in six regions that apply the Participatory Budgeting in Peru. Her data suggest that women and men are joining in equal rates at these forums, but men speak 79% of the time whereas women speak 21% (McNulty 2018). Thus, these spaces

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are not engaging women and men equally; women do not receive an equal chance to participate.

Other authors like Jules Falquet (2005), Jean Gabriel Contamin (2007), in their studies of three progressive movements in Latin America, argue that even in the most progressive scenarios engrained patriarchal rules persist. As result, the deliberative scenarios for citizens, activists, and members of autonomous organizations, may reproduce the same patriarchal logic and conventional gender role expectations (Martinez Palacios 2016, McNulty 2018, Sintomer, Herzberg and Röche 2008). For example, in the case of Porto Alegre, Alfredo Gugliano (2008) shows that women participated more in assemblies about social assistance and care (69.2%), environmental care (53.8%), and education (56.4%), but men participate more in culture (54.3%) and transport and circulation (54.1%) (Gugliano, 2008). In this sense, as Yves Sintomer, Herzberg and Röcke (2008) explain, the deliberative and direct participation institutions that do not have a feminist perspective do not change the oppressive relations between women and men, strengthen traditional gender norms, and further invisibilize women's experiences in democratization processes. According to Martinez Palacios (2016), one main reason is that gender or feminist perspectives were never incorporated in the creation of the early stages of these institutions or spaces.

Women's political agency

In order to fully understand the role of women in political participation, we need to study their political agency from a feminist perspective. In this section, I will show the classical and conventional ways in which women's political agency has developed

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through social science, and political science. In the literature on social theory, agency is defined as a capability to originate an act that makes the agents human beings, which operates inside a structure and time frame. Max Weber refers to agency in a rational way, as an intentional and purposeful action (Cleaver , 2007). In the body of literature on agency there are two classical and traditional groups. Some classical authors emphasize structure over the agency such as Bourdieu, Durkheim, Marx & Engels. Other authors focus on the capacity of the individuals to overcome structure (Cleaver 2007, Giddens 1984, Long 1992, 2001, Berger and Luckmann 1966, Mead 1967, Dean 1999, Foucault 1979).

For Frances Cleaver (2007), the understanding of agency can be divided, first in a profoundly relational dynamic, and second as a dynamic shaped by routine practices and purposeful action. Additionally, Cleaver presents six different restrictions that limit agency, namely cosmologies, complex individual identities, unequal interdependence of livelihoods, structure and voice, embodiment and emotionality (Cleaver , 2007). Cleaver (2007), Anthony Giddens (1984) and Norman Long (1992, 2001) point out that agency has been conceptualized as a relational action, which exists in the social world. In this social world, there are established structures that condition opportunities and resources for each person. Therefore, it is debatable to what extent people can authentically choose the way of being and performing in their realities (Cleaver , 2007). Giddens (1984) and Long (1992, 2001) recognize the structural limitations that depend on where agents are located. These authors analyze actors' agency and the variation of outcomes depending on their social position. Long studies members of grassroots movements, and he argues that actors have the capacity to re-create meanings and re-

negotiate identities, and so the structure influences the actors, but it does not determine them (Long, 2001). Also, Long says that actors can choose the degree of engagement with projects of others to influence others to become part of one's project (Long, 2001). In contrast, Giddens has a western view about society, a society based on rationality, scientific knowledge, liberalism, democracy, freedom, individualism and its responsibilities, and industrial capitalism (Loyal, 2003). For Giddens, there is a duality in the structure, where human agents create the structure, and this structure is the medium that constitutes this human agency. Also, Giddens explains that individuals are agents that in that structure can handle challenges and risk, he calls this structuration (Giddens, 1984).

Through a political science perspective, Mitchell Dean (1999) proposes another definition of agency in the relational approach based on a Foucaultdian view of government. For Foucault government means "conduct to conduct." This means that the government guides and shapes individual behaviors, through intense moral and ethical bases and rational calculations. Dean uses the concept of power in everyday interactions show the embodied institutionalized practices, create a "regime of practices", which a population generally takes for granted. Dean adds the concept of "govermentality", which is Foucault's analytical tool for studying the organized powers and practices that shape our conduct. Dean argues that these "regimes of practices" are the settings where individuals problematize their identity. The ritualized behavior in certain moments and places can evidence the influence of governability and power of political and social institutions, as well as the governability on oneself (Dean, 1999). Thus, it is important to analyze the connections between politics, authority, and

questions of the self. Different networks of institutions in a society can execute governability in different ways and arenas. For example, the church, government, laws, and organized community, all exert different forms of influence. Consequently, agency can be exercised in different ways due to the influence of these overlapping organized networks of governmentality.

Arun Agrawal (2005) analyzes agency through a macro connection of linkages between decentralized local government policies, new localized grassroots communities, and the changes in perceptions from the actors that have a stake in the decision-making process in the community (Agrawal, 2005). Agrawal argues that depending on the opportunities and limitation of the subjects, laws have different impacts on individuals. The perception of people in a community of an agent's social position and reputation affects how much agents follow the traced laws (Agrawal, 2005). In more detail, Agrawal explains how structure shapes agency according to an individual's positionality. Leaders or people with leadership and visibility before authorities in a grassroots community may have shaped a more flexible self, thus their agency is more permissive than the rest of the people of the same locality for following laws.

Additionally, Agrawal (2005) and Mike Kesby (2005) investigate agency not only as a choice but a way to challenge power dynamics and the status quo. Mike Kesby has a feminist approach forward political participation and agency. He has realized that not only can agency reproduce the same power relations, but it also can be an empowering tool for social transformation (Kesby, 2005). For the previous authors, an individual's agency is shaped by a network of social and political agency, together with the

development of the self. Nonetheless, this process of shaping agency can have two outcomes, namely the perpetuation of those power networks, or the challenge and change the status quo.

Feminism and Women's political agency

For feminist scholars it is strategic to understand how agency reproduces power relations and provides empowerment to agents when deconstructing power cycles. Also, feminist scholars have illustrated this dual conceptualization of agency with the application of this concept on gendered bodies. As stated above, many authors deduce that not all agents have the same positionality in a community; hence their choices are not equal. Therefore, even similar actions performed by these agents will not have the same results. Female agency has been a clear example of this formulation. Women do not have the same positionality and choices as men do. Their choices are oftentimes restricted systematically by their inferior (vis-à-vis men) positionality within a given social structure, thus leaving them not only with fewer voices, but also with less power.

Nevertheless, according to Nancy Fraser, agency has been a contested concept inside the feminist literature because of two intrinsic and contradictory imperatives (Fraser, 1992). First, agency is contested by the oppression of a male-dominated structure that diminishes the capacity of women to overcome this structure. Second, feminists have presented models aimed at inspiring activists for changing the status quo. However, Fraser tries to advance this disjunction by arguing that feminist theory should understand women agency in a balanced and coherent way, in order to analyze

the power of social and cultural constraints and the capacity that women have against them (Fraser, 1992).

Thus, there is a big part of the feminist literature that treats agency and structure like phenomena that are relational and multifaceted. For, Mounira Charrad (2010) women's agency is understood in relation to macrostructures of the power hierarchy in politics and economics, and at the micro level within social institutions, such as the church and family (Charrad, 2010). But, agency by definition is inevitably ambiguous, because "it is context-specific and involves contradictory aspects that cannot easily be disentangled" (Charrad, 2010, p. 519). In various social scenarios of a given social structure, agency can be empowered in certain dimensions, but marginalized on others (Charrad 2010, Cabezas, Reese, & Waller 2007). For instance, Charrad (2010) and Rupal Oza (2001) explain that the contemporary scenarios of globalization and neoliberalism marginalized the lives of many women, especially in the Third World. But it also brought social and cultural changes for strengthening women's right and making women's struggles internationally visible (Charrad, 2010). Hence, according to Iris Marion Young (1990), women form their agency within the limits of a given social structure. In this same vein, Kimberly Crenshaw (1989) introduced an important term for the configuration of agency, which is intersectionality. Intersectionality was important for developing black feminism in the United States because this concept is based on the oppression that women live by race and gender (Crenshaw, 1989). Furthermore, other feminists like Jennifer Leigh Disney (2008) and Ange-Marie Hancock (2007) extended this term to other categories such as class, ethnicity, and sexual identity.

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Likewise, Maud Edwards analyses that agency is differently exercised in different political and social contexts. Saba Mahmood argues that agency is not a concept of resistance or related to domination, but it is the ability to act in a relationship of subordination that allows and creates that agency (Mahmood, 2001). Nonetheless, Joanne Baker (2008) argues that women are still in subordinate relationships in many dimensions in addition to the political realm. In this area many political parties had women. Many political parties, instead of empowering women's political agency, force women to negotiate their structural subordination in the organization for having a voice in male-dominated logics (Baker , 2008). In this sense, for Baker, (2008) agency can be conceptualized as regressive.

Among the many important feminist approaches, the Female Sphere Theory by Boals and Jaquette helps to understand the importance and dual agency of women in the political sphere. This is an eclectic theory that addresses female identity from a historical reconstruction with a projection into the future (Boals, 1974) (Jaquette J. S., 1974). In this theory, there is a less egalitarian sense of womanhood as it addresses the major differences between the women's sphere and the men's sphere (Jaquette J. S., 1982). Female Sphere Theory has two main trains of thought. The first is that women in private/public dimensions are "Women Specific". The second is that women are integrated into the development project. "Women Specific" is based on the argument from Rosaldo and Lamphere of the Private vs. Public dimensions of female power (Jaquette J. S., 1982). According to these authors, historically women have agency in the majority of the social private dimension, while in the public sector they do not have any voice.

This concept of division within women's agency generated many discussions in academia. Some works have glorified that the domestic (private) labor of women as complementary to men role in society (Leacock, 1975). Other works highly criticize this division because it reduces and oppresses women's power in the public sphere, and maintains an asymmetric status quo of women in society (Hungtinton, 1975). Susan Bourque and Kay Warren point out the inaccuracy of the male definition of power and development due to the insufficient emphasis on present historical uniqueness. Nowadays there are different understandings of social norms in topics such as the creation of life and men's needs, which demand more studies of the gender dynamics in society (Jaquette J. S., 1982).

The second approach to the Female Sphere Theory is that of women "integrated" already into developed projects, which is based on the differentiation of a female culture from a male culture (Jaquette J. S., 1982). The authors express the idea that women contend with historical oppression that has created functional female values for surviving in an unequal society. These survival values combined with many global changes have resulted in the rapid increase of women in leadership positions. Authors such as Elise Boulding argue that marginalized populations are able to bring innovative solutions, and they have a different perspective of social inequities (Woodhouse & Santiago , 2012). Such perspectives offer more insight for understanding the role of women in the social and political development process.

One important theme in the feminist literature of women's agency is citizenship. For Elizabeth Jelin, the concept of the citizen is conflictive, because it brings attention to the power of an individual into the state for defining social problems, and deciding how

to face them. Also, this concept brings the idea of boundaries, who and what type of groups are recognized as members of society for deciding its destiny (Jelin, 1996). For Mounira Charrad (2010), the concept of citizenship brings important questions about what level "citizenship" integrates women's gender-specific needs and problems, or excludes women and their issue within a male dominated structure. This is why Nira Yuval-Davis refers to the "dualistic nature" that citizenship has in liberal democracies. In these library democracies, there are still mechanism and political and social processes that exclude women (1993). Nevertheless, thanks to the access to formal citizenship women have the platform for challenging power holders and demanding attention for women issues and their participation in politics (Yuval-Davis, 1993).

Kabeer is a feminist scholar who refocuses the debate of agency from whether someone can choose to act in a given scenario, to questioning at what point people can make decisions to conduct their own existence (Kabeer, 2000, p.28). For Kabeer, choosing a particular form of action does not entirely define one's agency. Instead, agency can be defined as acting according to the real effects that action may bring about in the agent's life. For instance, the consequence of protesting the construction of a pipeline is not the same for a middle-class white woman activist and an underprivileged working-class Indigenous woman. Similarly, outcomes related to job opportunities or encounters with law enforcement, would be completely different for each agent (Kabeer, 2000). Additionally, when there are different powerful institutions overlapping with someone's agency, the effects on agency can vary. Individuals can accept power dynamics consciously or unconsciously, which means that they can unconsciously repeat practices, or purposefully follow the expected practices as an

exchange of social and political benefits (Kabeer, 2000). Regardless, if agents accept relations of inequality, they are maintaining and reproducing this unjust power relation. In words of the feminist Gayatri Spivak, they became a "subaltern" of a structure.

Gayatri Spivak is a key feminist scholar who critically analyzes female agency based on the approach of deconstruction. Spivak claims that agency is an action that is validated by a structure that tends to operate primarily in the capitalist mode of exploitation. She states that in academia, as in the social world, agency has always been shaped by capitalist and male-oriented structures, where women happen to be historically victims of destiny (Spivak G. , 1988). For Spivak, the world structure is aligned with the effects of capitalism from a Marxist and feminist perspective. For Spivak, this structure facilitate the coexistence of the privileged and powerful people, with the unprivileged and powerless. The subalterns are located in the lower category of the structure, people "removed from all lines of social mobility" (Spivak G. C., 2005, p. 475) and are irrefutably silenced by the structure. Subalternity is an economic and political category that leads to a strong dependency of the subaltern from the powerful, leaving them in a voiceless condition. Additionally, Spivak analyzes that the subaltern in colonized areas of the world adds another layer of complexity, higher repression, and silence from the oppressive world system. In this sense, the author explains how colonialism is attached to patriarchy logics, as both are in their cores systems of exclusion and repression. Both expanded the Western male-dominated culture in different regions of the world. Colonialism and patriarchy share two common characteristics: a mistaken belief that their values are universal, and a constant silencing of subaltern voices by homogenizing them and not hearing their claims

(Spivak G. , 1988). In this scenario, the subaltern cannot make her interests known and cannot be ethically represented.

From a feminist perspective, Gayatri Spivak analyzes how subaltern women, particularly in the colonized areas, are doubly marginalized and silenced. For Spivak, colonialism and patriarchy work together through a system of power like laws, academia, economy, etc. In this world structure, there is a dubious place for women's free will, as they are always sexed subjects. Women are considered subalterns in a patriarchal society, thus women's agency depends and is conditioned by the structure, not in female free will. For subaltern females to have agency and autonomous actions means disproportionately negative consequences compared to subaltern men, because subaltern women are placed in a categorization of silence, the structure closes all venues to witness subaltern women's struggles (Spivak G. , 1988). By historically neglecting the role of subaltern women, the actions that they could produce are disregarded, eliminating any record of their agency and keeping it in the shadows. Spivak illustrates this problem with the following phrase: "White men are saving brown women from brown men" (Spivak G. , 1988, p. 287). This statement has an overlapping colonized and sexist assumption in it. First, brown men, as the subaltern are portrayed by elite white men as a threat to the female in their own communities, thus the white men present themselves as the saviors of the most oppressed group who are brown women. This means that privileged white men consider themselves to be the ones able to interpret the needs of the brown women. Second, according to that statement, brown men hold power over brown women, which is indeed true in many developing countries (Spivak G. , 1988). But, the colonial mentality of the white men keeps recognizing that

women are voiceless and passive subjects, rather than recognizing women's rights as independent subjects. All in all, the patriarchal and colonized system keeps women trapped and their independent agency is negated.

Following the deconstruction method and adopting Spivak's concern of the primacy of the patriarchal structure and the hierarchies in it, Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1984) brings a fundamental critique to the arrogant creation by Western feminist scholars of Third World Women. In her book, Mohanty criticizes the unification of the vast collective of women into a homogenous category by Western scholars. White feminist scholars deem themselves entitled to define Third World women according to their own parameters by using an ahistorical systematization of the oppression of Third World women and creating an inaccurate image of their struggles and ways of life (Mohanty, 1988). This has produced a hierarchical relationship between white women and women from other places that are not considered the first world. This hierarchical relationship between feminist scholars is problematic for three reasons. Firstly, the category of Third World women vis-à-vis, as a consistent and coherent group with the same interest and struggles, does not consider other important categories such as race, ethnicity or class. Secondly, there is not a critical measure to prove that there is one overarching category for third world women that is universally acceptable. Finally, these women are condemned to a homogenous notion of oppression under patriarchy; they are not only women but are also from the Third World. White scholars have established themselves as the normative reference and perpetuated the image of the western white woman as stronger, more intelligent, and having control over their bodies. Also, this account also fails in always representing women in a binary relationship with men and

patriarchy, as if men are the only ones creating oppression (Mohanty, 1988). A hierarchy among women creates a structure that perpetuates the oppression of non-white women by white women.

Intersectionality is central to understand Third World feminism (Disney, 2008) and Postcolonial feminism (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 1989) are good cases for applying intersectionality for gender, race, class, and colonial heritage oppression, among other important categories. Women from this region have different intersections and locations inside this structure. Intersectionality is an important tool to understand the multiple subjects' positions and change subordinate relations (Crenshaw, 1989). Also, intersectionality is important for visualizing the plan of activist women and feminist agents (Disney, 2008).

Feminist approach to Women's political agency in Latin America

Latin America is a colonized area (Spivak, 2005), and a Third World area (Mohanty, 1988), where states have a complex interest in gender, and North American and European feminists have misunderstood and homogenized these women. Hence, Latin American women's agency demands a complex conceptualization because each country has a different history and political context. After all, Latin America is a heterogeneous region in terms of ethnicity, culture, and race. But, this region shares a colonized history, repeated military interventions from the United States, civil wars, guerrilla movements, and it is home to developing economies with high levels of poverty and inequality. For this reason, in this region the creation of Latin American feminism was a difficult encounter of post-colonial feminism, decolonial feminism, communal

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feminism, and Indigenous feminism, among others. Hence, for Rosa Cobo-Bedia it is more appropriate to speak of feminist debates in Latin America (2014).

Notwithstanding of the conceptual and academic labeling, Latin American feminism has history of encounters and constructions of feminist and women's movements (de Aragão-Ballestrin, 2017). Many authors explore the history and chronology of women's agency in Latin America (Lamus-Canavae 2008, Lebon 2010). In this historical development, the women's agency did not begin intrinsically with feminist movements or perspectives. Around 1970 women and women's movements started an intense activism for demanding social justice and as response of political repression and dictatorship. Women were important allies of men for socialist demands like land, fair wages, heath, basic needs and food, such as the poor women's neighborhood organizations. Also, women's movements were important for the defense of human rights and the disappeared of dictatorships and peace accords, for example the Argentinean Madres y Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo (Mothers and Grandmothers of May Plaza), Domitila Barrios and the Housewives Committee. But, none of these movements were primarily feminist.

Later, after the middle of the 20th century, women recognized their exclusion and subordination in socialist and other political and social movements (Lamus-Canavae, 2008). Activist women realized that their roles "were often limited to serving coffee and cleaning up meeting rooms, and that the principles of equality did not carry over in the home or the workplace" (Lebon, 2010, p. 7). Once the men had realized their goals, the male visions were in power, not the women's. Thus, feminism started being an important tool for activists and women to advance in the construction of their own

agenda for liberation of oppression and gender equality. Nevertheless, many women were activists of feminist movements and in "male" political parties, which is known as "double militancy" (Alvarez, 2001). For, Doris Lamus Canavae (2009) this is an important difference from Western Feminism, because Latin American Women movements are heterogeneous, and feminist movements, which are part of the women's movements, are diverse as well (Lamus-Canavae, 2008).

Also, some authors talk about how the formation of Latin American feminist consciousness has external influences. One example is the celebration of The United Nations International Women's Year in 1975 in Mexico City, which legitimized women claims in Latin America. Additionally, many activists and political women's that were in exile in Europe because of anti-communist political repression started coming back with feminist ideas. This generated a close relationship between the emerging Latin American feminisms and American and European feminist theory and ethnocentric practices. In this moment, there were many feminist scholars who wrote critiques of feminisms that supported NGOs, gender specialists, political parties, states and foundations (Curiel, 2014). Many postcolonial feminists started to relate this institutional imposition as a neoliberal and neocolonial process. (Villarroel Peña , 2018)

Postcolonial feminism in Latin America was born because of postcolonial studies in Latin America (Rodríguez, 1998; Coronil, 1998; Castro-Gómez, Moreiras, Achúgar, 1998; Moraña, 1998). Postcolonial studies, including postcolonial feminism was born in India and the Middle East when scholars deconstructed the colonial narratives that the colonized areas had. The main objective in postcolonial feminism is to target the universalized ethnocentric narratives that are in feminism, and to advocate against

neoliberal policies. Additionally, postcolonial feminism sought to establish South-South conversations among feminist from these regions.

There is another important group of feminist scholars called "decolonial feminists" (Maria Lugones 2014, Rita Segato 2010). They expand the work of postcolonial feminism and respond to the contemporary decolonial studies in Latin America (Escobar 2003, Dussel 2003, Quijano 2000, Mignolo 2008) that were not viewing gender as a fundamental category of study. Decolonial studies is centered in the region of Latin America, and argues that the project of modernity is rooted in colonial logics with ethnic and racial classifications and capitalist exploitation as its bases (de Aragão-Ballestrin, 2017). Also, decolonialists argue that this modernity project originated the inequalities of regions like Latin America. María Lugones proposes the notion of "world-colonial and gender system", and "decolonial feminism" (Lugones 2008). Her proposal of gender as a category in the modern colonial project invites scholars to historicize patriarchy. She explains how the imposition of a binary gender system in the colonies established a way to exercise power, and this constituted the actual modern system of gender (Lugones, 2008). Lugones is challenging Anibal Quijano by stating that gender and race are constructed and inseparable categories for understanding gender oppression in the colonized societies and in the modernity project (Lugones, 2008). Additionally, decolonial feminist authors such as Rita Segato found evidence that there existed "low-intensity patriarchy" behaviors even before colonialism (Segato, 2012). But, gender dynamics were "non-binary but complementary gender dualism in the indigenous world" (de Aragão-Ballestrin, 2017, p. 1048).

Communitarian feminism is inspired in the Indigenous feminism from Latin

America, particularly from the Aymara culture and ethnicity, and the women from Chiapas and the Zapatista movement (Gargallo, 2014). The Indigenous feminism raised the problem of not considering valid the cosmovisions of some communities by ethnocentrism. Nevertheless, Indigenous feminism can help us to understand the subordination of women (Hernández-Castillo & Suárez-Narvaz, 2008). According to Arrobo Rodas (2005), Latin American Indigenous women have a strong sense of collectivity, and this is why they promote the Communitarian Feminism. Communitarian feminism contradicts the individualism that western liberal feminists have been promoting. Liberal feminists have prioritized individualism, which is essential to women's human rights and reproductive rights. Nevertheless, Indigenous populations have been against individualist goals. Additionally, Maria Lugones (2008) argues that the collectivity cannot be detached from the individual, because if both are not taken into consideration simultaneously, then, any cause or project will fail. Thus, individuals as the collective have an important role for the Indigenous. Moreover, for Lugones, resistance can successfully take place just through collective activity, because the oppressors won't be able to install or create a new universal meaning (Lugones, 2008). Thus, this interconnection of collectivity is a tool to counterbalance external forces, and for straightening the ties with their immediate community (Orozco-Mendoza , 2008). For Julieta Paredes (2005), Indigenous feminism is based in the community; this author was the pioneer for writing about communitarian feminism. Paredes explains community as a concept that embraces all the different types of communities in society as an alternative to individualist society. For this indigenous feminist, one of her major points about community is that it is formed by the complementary relationship of chacha-

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warmi, men and women. This complementary is reciprocal and autonomous relationship, like two indispensable halves of society (Paredes, 2010).

Conclusion

This chapter seeks to unite the theories of comparative politics with feminism and Latin American feminism, in order to locate the idea of women's agency in the transformation of Medellín within the academic debate. In the first part of this chapter I have traced direct citizen participation back to the Ancient Greeks as the main characteristics of democracy. For classical authors, active citizenship was a fundamental element of politics for citizenry interactions and sense of belonging. Later, I have explained the different participatory democratic theories, focusing mostly on the one's developed in Porto Alegre, Brazil, which strengthened the civic society participation and the development of bottom-up policies.

In the second section I have discussed the concept of agency, specifically from a feminist perspective and I have introduced postcolonial feminism, decolonial feminism, communitarian feminism, and indigenous feminism. The explanations of these different Latin American feminisms are important because the experience of women in Medellín detailed a type of organization based in communal logics and subaltern feminism. Women from CC follow a common struggle of Latin American feminists when their female bodies are excluded from political spaces dominated by white males. Additionally, the women of Medellín follow the sense of complementary with men of CC as suggested by indigenous and communitarian feminism. This is obviated by role of

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Sergio Fajardo and Alonso Salazar who fomented the creation of a women political agenda, and prioritized women in the positions for strategic public policies.

This literature review identifies three important gaps. First, it is the first study that visibilizes and analyzes systematically the role of women for the progressive change of a city such as Medellín. Second, it advances the discussion about political participation of women in Latin America, outside of the mainstream tradition of "participation". Third, it discusses and develops the meaning of political agency through a communal feminist lens of women that come from social movements and occupy leadership positions.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce and explain this project's qualitative methodology. I aim to reveal the causal mechanism that women's political agency has in the progressive change in Medellín, Colombia. Thus, I explore the different phenomena that political agency comprises, in order to analyze the contemporary formation of the women organizations and their influence on good governance and innovative democratic institutions in the city. Therefore, my choice of the case study method allows me to provide a detailed account on the political shift and change in governance practices that women leaders and organizations brought to public institutions, as women directly influenced executive power in Medellín.

This chapter discusses the "sentipesante" perspective, elaborated by the Colombian sociologist Orlando Fals Borda. Furthermore, this chapter describes the research plan, methodology, analysis method, procedures, participants, and ethical matters. Lastly, this chapter describes the limitation of the methodology used, and possible improvements.

Research Plan

I formulated the following initial research questions before entering the field, based on my reading of the relevant literature on the specific topics of participatory

governance, civil society, and feminism in Latin America. *How did women's political agency and organization influence the establishment of innovative governmental institutions in Medellín through the movement "Compromiso Ciudadano"?*

My hypothesis is that the fact that women have had a prominent place and direct participation in Medellín's recent history itself marks a radical change in the social structure and authority in the city. I did not take this initial hypothesis as fixed and I did not set out to test levels of changes in a strict way. Instead, I used this presumption as a guide to my research (Reiter, The Dialectics of Citizenship: Exploring Privilege, Exclusion, and Racialization, 2013).

I focused on four areas for understanding the progressive change of Medellín and the role of women. Three of the four programs that I choose are part of the Social Urbanism policies and are closely related to the development of the Integral Urban Projects (PUI in Spanish). These programs are, "Participatory Budgeting", "Buen Comienzo", and "Medellín Solidaria." Additionally, I included in my study the creation of the Secretariat of Women (Secretaría de las Mujeres) as an historical hit for women democratic inclusion. The creation of this secretariat also followed a bottom-up dynamic, with important influences from social movements.

These four programs are based on direct democratic participation from the community of each neighborhood association or of grassroots movements. Interestingly, these programs were directed or managed by women with the support of grassroots female and feminist movements, and female communal leaders. There was a strong synergy between the females holding political office and the grassroots female leaders, and broader civil society. Also, these programs presented an inter-office integration and

synergy among them. Given my interest in unveiling causal mechanisms, I chose the 4 programs headed by women to examine how their leadership influenced outcomes.

There were strategic lines of action during the first term of CC in power, "Medellín Social e Inclusiva"(Socially Inclusive Medellín), "Medellín un Espacio para el Encuentro Ciudadano" (Medellín: A Space for Citizen Encounter), "Medellin Productiva, Competitiva y Solidaria" (Productive and Competitive Medellín that promotes Solidarity), and Medellín integrada con la Región y el mundo" (Medellín, Integrated with the Region and the World) (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2004). These four "lines" break off into 69 programs, which have 16 strategic plans that were the most important plans to change Medellín's governance. From these 16 strategic plans, the three Secretariats that I am researching are spearheaded by women exclusively. And they lead six plans. I chose four specific programs for closer examination. The secretariats that I researched jointly participated with other governmental entities in developing the other ten strategic projects. Interestingly, from all the 16 strategic plans, 3 are directly designated for women issues, under the Secretariat of Women: Proyecto de Prevención Anorexia-Bulimia (Prevention Project of Anorexia-Bulimia), Proyecto de Prevención de Embarazo Adolescente Sol y Luna (Project Prevention of Teenage Pregnancy Sun and Moon), and Red de Mujeres Públicas (Public Women's Network) (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2007). Thus, the focus on treating gender was prioritized in this administration.

Selected Methodology

This research explains the connection of different variables, but also, to understand the process that caused the changes the social and political landscape of Medellín.

Additionally, the women's political agency for Medellín's transformation is not a very well known case (George & Bennett, 2005). There is almost no published documentation about this topic, hence the use of original historical texts, interviews, and participatory observation are fundamentals for the development of the research.

The case study approach allows me to achieve conceptual validity and to measure categories that are difficult to quantify, such as political agency. There is not an exact measure for female political agency, but it is possible to define and identify some of its attributes in a defined context such as Medellín 2004-2012. By analyzing a detailed consideration of contextual factors, I can identify explanatory paths and desegregate fundamental variables (George & Bennett, 2005). According to Sharan Merriam and Elizabeth Tisdell (2015), case studies are "an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system"(p. 37). Multiple unsynchronized layers of institutions, policies, and background conditions form the context where the phenomena took place and the system where different subjects interacted (Falleti & Lynch, 2009). As this project is based on empirical research of contemporary phenomena, it is impossible to separate the case study from its phenomena. I cannot manipulate the behavior of those involved in the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). It is thus necessary to use a case study for this type of research with overlapping institutions, operating in an enclosed system, and within a particular social background, in order to assess the variables and aspects that are fundamental for the process and outcome of this phenomenon.

Additionally, the case study allows me to explore the causal mechanisms of the transformation of Medellín, through women's political roles. Causal mechanisms are conceptualized as links between inputs (I) or independent variables, and outcomes (O),

or dependent variables in a given context (Falleti & Lynch, 2009). According to Falleti and Lynch (2009), if "I, then O" (I → O) become "if I, through M, then O" (I → M→ O). This means that the causal mechanism serves to unveil the process that explains the occurrence of a phenomenon in a particular context. Additionally, in this research, I need to do a historical and contextual examination of the case in order to present the causal mechanism.

Lastly, I selected the case of women in Medellín because it is an ideal case of study for understanding the relationship between women's political agency and innovative democracy and good governance. It is ideal because it manifests all the elements of political agency that can be observed in the public leadership of women, and its impact on the synergy between state and civil society. As such, it extends to explaining this synergy as a larger phenomenon for strengthening democratic practices (George & Bennett, 2005). Cases, it is worth highlighting, are not representative samples. Instead, they are purposefully and strategically selected by the researcher, based on their characteristics. Cases can thus be "ideal, crucial, deviant, most likely, or least likely" (George & Bennett, 2005). The four programs I selected to examine female political participation are ideal cases, representing a most-likely scenario, meaning that they are most likely to follow the theoretical predictions generated by my initial hypothesis, namely that female political participation can account for and explain the positive outcomes witnessed in Medellín. Medellín itself is a crucial case. Eckstein (1975) described a crucial case as one "that *must closely fit* a theory if one is to have confidence in the theory's validity, or, conversely, *must not fit* equally well any rule contrary to that proposed." (Eckstein, 1975, p. 118). This means that if the case of

Medellín holds, the theory that female political participation can explain positive political change in city governance leading to improved quality of services and life in a Latin American city – then my case study has proven this theory.

Data Selection

The data I use in this dissertation is both primary and secondary. I collected the first-hand data through interviews, focus groups, participatory observation, and an online poll for the women of Compromiso Ciudadano (CC). For the interviews, I used snowball sampling through key informants who led to interview other important female leaders of CC, and female communal leaders (Bernard, 2006). I did a focus group with different women that have been part of CC for the purpose of participatory observation related to particular topics, and an online poll for those same women. I conducted participatory observations in regular meetings of CC women, and Women's Social Movement respectively.

I collected secondary data from unique sources, which were historical archives, official records, and minutes from CC, Women's Movements, NGOs, and from the Mayor's Office, dated from 2004 to 2014. I lived from 2017-2018 in Medellín- Colombia, in order to perform the Fieldwork research. During that year, I was able to collect all the needed first and second-hand sources. I detailed my fieldwork research experience later in this section.

I conducted interviews that were based on a semi-structured questionnaire and informal talks; the questionnaire is attached to the appendix of the entire dissertation. I

used a quota sample by interviewing 42 women from various hierarchal and political levels inside the movement. The objective of the interviews was to realize the following:

1) The historical development of these women's participation in CC.

2) Women's perception of their influence on decision-making processes inside CC.

3) The methodology that they used for applying certain communal policies.

4) The struggles or issues that they encountered due to gender, inside the movement and during their public service.

The focus group comprised a larger number of women, all from different stages and hierarchical levels of the movement. I selected this sample through a purposive sampling method, which is a non-probability sampling technique. This method is used for selecting a sample of members based on their knowledge, relationship, and expertise according to the topic. (Tongco, 2007). Also, the purposive sampling method is used when the overall population is too small for random sampling, which is the case of women from CC (Tongco, 2007). I selected the women that were in the database of CC, specifically women who were actively participating in the movement for at least the last ten years, as I was interested in determining the connection of women in the CC who have witnessed the change of Medellín, and the rise of CC to power. A key informant from CC facilitated my access to this database and then I contacted the women through emails. The main objective of the focus group was to discuss the development of the movement and their experience as women inside the movement.

This discussion would further help me to identify the most dominant narrative and common elements that they shared within the focus group.

Another tool I used for collecting data was the online poll. I designed the online poll to reach individually and anonymously selected women from the focus groups. I sent the online poll out before directing the focus group, as an interesting exercise for the participants to reflect first on their own experience inside the movement, so they could then bring that awareness into the focus group discussion. I then contrasted the answers in the autonomous exercise of the poll with the collective discourse in the focus groups.

The online poll had twenty questions, the first seven questions are concerned with gathering demographic information, including age, ethnicity, their socioeconomic status, the type of job they have, and the time they have been investing CC's activities. These questions helped me to identify the characteristics of the broader population and conditions of the women in the movement. The second part of the poll sought to examine women's history as an activist and their relationship with CC and other civic movements or political parties. The third set of questions targeted their engagement with communal policies developed in the 2004-2012 term and their perception of gender inside the movement.

On the other hand, the secondary sources that I collected were primarily historical archives, official records from the Mayor Office during 2004-2012, recent United Nations-Habit reports, statistics from the independent organization "Colombia Cómo Vamos" and "Medellín Cómo Vamos". Another important resource were Colombian and international NGO's records, women NGO's records, and reports from European

governmental agencies for development. I also used news snippets from several major Colombian newspapers, such as *El Tiempo* and *El Espactador*, and articles from the well-established political weekly magazine *Semana*, in order to identify notable examples of communal programs.

To further understand the contribution of the women in institutional change, it was important to examine the political structure that women had in Medellín and their constitutional access to political leadership for public representation. For this examination, I read texts from the official archives and minutes from CC, in order to describe their structure. Furthermore, I used statistics from the Inter-American Development Bank for noticing the average of women participation in the public scene before and after the new constitution of Colombia. Finally, I consulted the newest constitution of Colombia, ratified in 1991. As this type of data is more quantitative, I implemented a descriptive quantitative method for the CC women demographic data resulting from the online polls.

Sentipesante approach

For conducting the participatory observation and the interviews I used the "sentipensante approach", developed by the Colombian sociologist Orlando Fals Borda. Sentipensante "sensing-thinking" was a notion used formally by Fals Borda in the 1970's that is originally from a Colombian Caribbean fishermen community. This notion means doing a task with reason but also with the heart, intuition, and emotions; to think while feeling and feel while thinking. Fals Borda promoted the application of sentipensante for doing research in a more human way and with higher connection and

engagement with the communities that are investigated. This notion recognizes the intellectual and rationalistic qualities of researching with the emotions and inner sensitivity of the researcher, connecting it to a holistic knowledge experience. This way, the researcher can have a more opened mind that is not restricted by theoretical bias and is able to get a multiple gaze of reality. Thus, it validates other forms of knowledge outside academia and incorporates it in the theoretical analysis.

Sentipensante was a groundbreaking concept for mainstream academia because it challenged the strict position of the researcher in traditional research method. The concept of "sentipensante" dismisses the researchers as being neutral, and as the absolute expert. Thus, the term sentipensante opened a space for a different way to perceive research, where the object of the study becomes a subject, and the researcher is not a superior being detached from the communities, but an agent that is working with subjects, learning from the community, and building knowledge with them. Gonzalo Cataño has summarized this approach as follows:

> "The researcher should be investigated, his role as a subject should be exchanged in that of the object, and learn that knowledge is acquired in an egalitarian relationship with who owns it and has the desire to transmit it." (Cataño, 2008, p. 4)

Additionally, "sentipensante" was a stepping-stone for creating the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach by Fals Borda and other scholars like Kurt Lewin, Sol Tax, Anisur Rahman, Max Neef, and Paulo Freire, among others (Jaramillo Marín, 2012). This research approach is one of the most important legacies of Fals Borda. It focuses on the participation of the researcher in the changes of the community or

movements they research about. The researchers should not be just observers, but put their thoughts or arts in service of a cause, especially in times of crisis. It is important to highlight that this approach was created for doing fieldwork with marginalized communities.

In this sense, PAR invites social science academe to reflect on the colonial activity that it has performed, particularly with marginalized populations in the Global South, where researcher extract information and knowledge from the subjects, but few times share their findings with those researched. According to Fals Borda, without popular participation the social research loses all its meaning, because research is empty if it does not engage with what it is researching. For the author, research is not only disciplinary or academic; it is a process of social construction of learning and knowledge for change. Thus, the researcher should facilitate processes that the communities need for changing the problems in their territories.

When I was in Medellín conducting interviews and participatory observation I applied both approaches. I got purposely involved in the movement within the section of women. I volunteered to doing minor support work like scheduling meetings, advising their social media, or giving talks about women in politics in Latin America. I was connecting with them on daily bases, and I was aware about my emotions, while I was with them. I wrote down the way I felt most of the time I met them, which was predominantly a feeling of safety and welcoming. I also shared their feelings of discomfort and impotence and frustration when they faced barriers in their attempts to push forward an agenda for women in the movement in convoluting times of a presidential campaign.

When I conducted my interviews I was able to connect with them in a trusting and deep way so that many of them shared such thoughts as, "I feel that I am talking to a good friend", or "I have never said this before, I feel I can trust you." Additionally, almost all of the women during the interviews cried and experienced some sort of catharsis while they were reflecting about their life in our conversation. My interviews were deeply human, so much so that the interviewees told me private family secrets, intimate details of their health, and life regrets that they had. The interviews, for the majority of women, allowed them to vent their feelings. In the same way, the focus group with the women of CC had the same effect but on a collective level. The women were able to vent their frustration with the difficulties they faced as women inside the movement.

The researcher

Social science research requires that I, as the researcher, am aware of my own positionality to better understand any possible biases that this research might have as a result of my lack of access, understanding, and the way I was perceived by those whom I researched. As a sentipensante researcher, I cannot claim complete neutrality or been unbiased towards this project. I felt passionate about women's political agency in Medellin because I also have been in places where my professional work has been overlooked due to my gender, culture, and country of origin. I am Colombian and I grew up in a family where the women were hardworking individuals that lead the way for their family to be better off, but unfortunately men were praised as the only ones responsible for positive outcomes. In my mom's family, the previous generation of women did not go

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to college because that was not for women, and my grandparents preferred to pay education for the men but not for the women of the family. Therefore, I felt there is a huge debt to women in my family for vindicating their importance as agents.

I am a woman from a middle class family of Barranquilla, Colombia. Hence class, as well as regional identity, might have influenced how I was perceived by the people I interviewed. I am not from Medellín and I do not belong to this region. So even though I am Colombian, in a small scale I was a foreigner in their culture. Additionally, Medellín and Antioquia are recognized by their strong sense of belonging, pride of their culture, and pronounced regionalism. I noticed that my origin was a subject of conversation with all the women of Medellín; they were aware and curious about my city of origin, my accent, and Caribbean culture. The majority of the women asked me several times how it comes that a Barranquillera (someone from Barranquilla) was researching about paisas (someone from the Antioquia region). For many of them this was a surprise and they were skeptical that someone different from their territory and culture could understand them. Furthermore, it was not helpful that in Colombia the people from the Caribbean coast, such as the Barranquilleros, are stereotyped as being lazy, corrupt, and not educated.

Particularly, Caribbean and Barranquillera women are seen in a hyper-sexualized way and exotic. This was noticeable in the way men treated me in contrast to women. Some women were distant whereas many men were too nice and charming, indicating a flirtatious and hence sexualized way of treating me. Nevertheless, to eradicate this wariness of women and the intentional friendliness of men, both related to my cultural identity, I emphasized my academic training and experience. Concretely, I highlighted

that I was obtaining a Ph.D. in the United States; that I was a Latin American feminist; that I had a funding from the Inter American Foundation; and that I was volunteering in CC. This gave me enough legitimacy to assure the women that I was qualified to conduct this research and it helped diminish the stereotypes of the Caribbean woman, held by many men. This strategy also helped to bridge the perceived distance separating me from their region. Additionally, once I started using snowball sampling and the interviewees knew that someone they know recommend me, it was easier to be accepted.

I studied International Relations as a Bachelor degree and obtained a Ph.D. in Politics and International Relations in the United States, which, to many in Colombia, is perceived as a privilege reserved to very few in the country. In my whole career, I worked in academia as a research assistant and I provided classroom-related work for almost eleven years. After elaborating my research proposal, I started participating as an activist for the CC movement, particularly for CC's women chapter for Colombians abroad. My participation was part for gaining the trust of the women from the movements. Furthermore, their political values align with mine. In this sense, I have a close identification with the CC movement, and I actively participated in their meetings. This was an important challenge for me, as I strived not to be biased when analyzing them as I see value in their work and struggles while I felt connected to their cause.

Nonetheless, there were times when I felt I was judgmental with radical feminists of CC and other feminist movements because I was not comfortable with some ideas they promoted, which again was jeopardizing my analysis of the movement. I felt that some programs created by the radical feminist were detached from the reality of the

poorest or non-feminists women, who tend to be elderly. Some former staff members and grassroots women expressed similar complaints during the interviews. For instance, some younger, more radical, but also more upper class women proposed programs to fighting against Anorexia-Bulimia - in a society that has high numbers of malnutrition among poor women. I perceived this sort if detachment from the everyday realities of the poor as a colonizing attitude, trying to impose in a short period of time, a progressive feminist agenda and ideology to women that had lived in patriarchal structure all their life. This was a very complex process that generated conflicts for many women that have less exposure to privilege of higher education, which tend to be the majority of women in Colombia.

The way I got around the two biases, my identification and rejection of certain ideas and proposals, was an internal analytical work and the constant advice of experts in this topic. I confront the bias about rejecting some feminist ideas by balancing it with the positive accurate programs that they applied in Medellin, which had impactful results. For example, programs against teenage pregnancy that are a critical problem for the younger generation of Medellín and perpetuate the poverty cycle. I confronted the bias about identification by constantly asking my mentor and people from the Inter American Foundation for their feedback in my analysis and letting them know that I was personally struggling with these points. It also helped to know more about the limitations of the women inside CC and the mistakes some women made in their powerful position, such as omitting more work in pro of women or applying a hardcore feminist agenda.

Additionally, discovering feminism has been a recent but slow process for me. It was thanks to my passion for my dissertation that I started to engage more with the

feminist literature. Actually, I took specialized classes about feminism outside my department, even outside my University. Thus, I had good academic training before going into the field, while I still need to work more in the acceptance of the differences among the feminisms. I feel that I have preconceived notions of what it means to be a feminist and I probably hold stereotypes of female behavior and beauty in my unconsciousness that makes me judgmental with certain feminist behaviors. Again, this should not happen but I am aware of the inner work I need to keep improving.

On a more technical level, I have been training for listening and observations skills through my Ph.D. when I received classes in qualitative methods. Hence, I am prepared to conduct interviews and to work with people as research subjects. Additionally, I passed all the examinations from the Internal Review Board of my university for conducting interviews, which enforces ethical standards with all the subjects of this research and provides an avenue for reflecting about how not to harm any of the people participating, voluntarily, in my research. All the interviewees had a recorded voice consensus, even in the focus group. I received signed permissions from the movement in order to perform the focus group and participatory observation in CC's headquarter.

One year of fieldwork research in Medellín- Colombia

I conducted the fieldwork research from 2017 to 2018 in Medellín, Colombia, which was funded by a Grassroots Development Fellowship from the Inter-American Foundation. During that year, I collected first and second-hand data. Nonetheless, while in the field, I decided to make three major changes to my original and previous research

plan. I started to include men in my interviews of CC, because I realized that their perspective on female agency could shed a different light on female agency. I canceled my research about the Library Parks, because I decided that focusing on four programs was enough to support my argument. Finally, I conducted just one focus group rather than the several, because I realized that in focus group interviews, participants influence each other's responses, thus polluting the kind of information I was seeking.

In 2017, when I arrived in Medellín, I immediately connected with women in the executive office, women from CC or closely related to it, female communal leaders, and women from feminist movements. The first five months, from August to December, I interviewed the majority of women that were directing different executive offices from 2004 to 2012. Particularly, I interviewed the women that designed the four bottom-up policies and directed the Secretariats of Planning, of Social Welfare, and of Women. Furthermore, I interviewed the female staff members who supported the implementation of the four programs. I also dialogued with the female staff in charge of mobilization of civil society and social movements within Medellín, and nine communal leaders from the different *comunas*. At the end of my research period, I completed 54 interviews; 12 interviews of men from CC, and 42 interviews of women that were directly or indirectly related to CC On the other hand. I completed one focus group for CC women, and an online poll answered by 15 women from CC.

During my fieldwork research, I encountered some difficulties related to recruiting women for my interviews and adapting my plan for the particular political context. Many activists from CC and social movements, in general, were hesitant to participate in interviews (mostly in the focus groups) due to political tension. Colombia going through

Presidential and Congressional elections from 2017 to 2018, and the leader of CC, Sergio Fajardo, was running for the presidency. This presidential election was particularly complex because it happened after the controversial implementation of the Peace Treaty, which was signed between the Colombian government and the guerilla FARC in November 2016.

This treaty was following a referendum, where a small majority of citizens voted "no" to the implementation of the treaty. However, almost half of the voters voted "yes". The treaty was finally implemented because it had important modifications made by Congress. Nevertheless, after the political confrontation of the treaty, Colombian society was deeply polarized between the half who agreed and the other half who disagreed with the treaty. The political scenario was polarized, the public opinion and debates were centered in a post-conflict discussion. There were constant manifestations from the two positions towards the treaty, which were supported by the different political parties. There was intense and constant political propaganda from each side. Also, there was a big uncertainty about how a newly elected president will act upon the treaty.

Many women whom I wanted to interview were working in political campaigns or in positions for the current mayor or governor administrations, which are political competitors of the CC leader. Thus, these women were concerned about potential retaliations they might face when talking about politics and politicians. Since these women were publicly and politically active, they were hesitant to openly talk about social inequalities and their political past or associations. I overcame this difficulty by only performing interviews and not focus groups, working on gaining these individuals' trust, and establishing safe and private settings where they felt secure enough to openly

discuss their political role and experiences as women in politics. I performed interviews in places such as remote countryside houses, basements, and in the last corner of an underground parking building. Another strategy was virtual interviews, but I used this as a last resource for only three particular interviews.

Another difficulty was to reach all the communal leaders, as a female researcher and outsider; the topic of security was a concern when I navigated through some marginalized sectors of the city. Many times I asked someone I knew from the movement to go with me to these places. Some other times, I asked to meet in more secure spaces for me. Nevertheless, I did not meet with some communal leaders because they could not dislocate much. They were located in isolated places that had security problems, and I could not find anyone to accompany me to go there.

Participatory Observation in CC Headquarter and Men's inclusion

From August 2017 to May 2018, Compromiso Ciudadano (CC) focused on the presidential campaign of Sergio Fajardo. During this campaign, I regularly visited CC political headquarter in Medellín for performing participatory observation in their small and macro assemblies; I attended 10 encounters of the overall movement. In these encounters, generally the attendance of men was much higher than women's. In those spaces, I observed certain unspoken and interesting gender dynamics between men and women, which triggered my curiosity about the perception of CC men on gender issues. Thus, I identified the importance of including men in my interviews, as I wanted to examine their understandings about women's political agency in the transformation of Medellín and gender roles inside CC's history. I completed 12 interviews of important male figures of CC including Sergio Fajardo, Alonso Salazar, Alejandro Fajardo, among

others. Some men from CC were hesitant to participate in the interviews because of the busyness of the political campaign and the political tension of the presidential election. Importantly, some men felt unprepared to talk about gender issues. Nonetheless, I overcame this challenge with a flexible schedule for performing interviews and gaining their trust with empathy. I strove to make them feel safe to talk about their political background and their opinions about women's agency.

In October 2017, the group of CC women started their meetings at the CC headquarters. During eight months, I went to 15 of those all-female encounters and I conducted participatory observation of each one. I realized that the women's reunion had different schedules, timing, rituals, methodology, and organization from the rest of the movement's. Half the time of the meetings was allocated for holding interactive workshops, and the other half consisted of political meetings. These gatherings produced many important initiatives for Fajardo's presidential campaign and the movement in general. They also let to the national democratic election of a CC women representative for the presidential campaign, the unification of CC women with the different female collectives of the political parties Partido Verde and Polo Democratico, regional meetings with other feminist movements, and the creation of a gender equality governmental plan. This plan was recognized by the national media as the best gender equality proposal among all the presidential campaigns.

Participatory observations and field notes were another important ethnographic method that I used. At the end of my research period, I conducted a total of 27 participatory observations that included observing 10 meetings from the overall CC movement; 15 exclusively from the CC women's meetings. Additionally, I performed two

observations of the assemblies from the Mesa de Trabajo Mujer de Medellín (MTMM) and the Women's Social Movement of Medellín.

Other NGOs and Social Movements

Besides my intensive fieldwork with CC, I engaged with other entities that were allies of CC during Medellín's transformation, such as NGOs, foundations, Universities, and various feminist movements. Regarding NGOs, I visited the offices and interviewed a director of *Coorporación Región*, one of the leading and credible independent institutions that analyses and advocates for citizen political participation. Also, I interviewed former staff members of *Pro-Antioquia*, a private foundation that focuses on contributing to economic development and social sustainability. From academia, I interviewed staff from the Universidad de Antioquia, a directive official of the independent association AAEI, Asociación Antioqueña de Educación Infantil (Association of Antioquia for Childhood Education), and a member of the *Mesa de Primera Infacia* (Bureau of Early childhood). These organizations were strong supporters of the creation and implementation of the bottom-up policies: Participatory Budgeting, Buen Comienzo, and Medellín Solidaria in Medellín. Also, all the women from CC in the directive offices used to be related to these organizations.

Significantly, I connected with the Women's Social Movement of Medellín that is a fundamental actor for the creation and political continuation of the Secretariat of Women. Remarkably, three former directors of the Secretariat of Women were members of this Movement, as well as CC. The Women's Social Movement is complemented by various feminist movements and NGOs, which are Coorporación para

la vida Mujeres Que Crean (CMQC), Corporación Vamos Mujer (CVM), Unión de Ciudadanas, Convivamos, Penca de Sávila, IKALA, and the Mesa de Trabajo Mujer de Medellín (MTMM) (López de Mesa , 2008). I interviewed the directors and coordinators of CMQC, CVM, and Unión de Ciudadanas.

Original Secondary Data

In my research fieldwork, I journeyed around the city for original and unique secondary sources. I collected historical archives, photos, official records, and minutes from CC, Women's movements, NGOs and the Mayor's Office. All these sources are dated from 2004 to 2012. The Council of Medellín provided me voice records and minutes of the assembly deliberations for the creation of the Secretariat of Women. I was also provided documents for the acceptance of Participatory Budgeting projects with a gender focus. From the Press Agency of the Training Popular Institute (ICP) and NGOs such as "Coorporación Región", I collected quantitative and qualitative reports on the progressive change of Medellín and social movements' history. From the Universidad de Antioquia, I obtained studies on the civic movements and women's history that are not available in other libraries or online.

The women that directed the different Secretariats and bottom-up programs sent me official reports they had presented to the Council of Medellín about the creation and implementation of each program. These women also gave me manuscripts that show the transition of the programs to public policies. The coordinator of the social movements Mujeres Que Crean (CMQC), Corporación Vamos Mujer (CVM), Unión de

Ciudadanas, provided me historical archives, and management reports of their actions for the political consolidation of the Secretariat of Women.

Also, I took original photos of the first political campaign of Sergio Fajardo and Salazar—that included rare flyers, brochures, pamphlets, and charts—from the historical archives of a lithograph of Medellín. Some other female members and activist of CC sent me pictures of two women who were elected in the legislative branch of Medellín. Likewise, I obtained original photos of the collectives of the Women's Social Movement of Medellín when they were supporting the creation of the Secretariat of Women inside the Departmental Assembly of Antioquia.

Conclusion

This chapter exposes the methodology of my research dissertation. The method is a qualitative case of study as the dissertation targets to reveal the causal mechanisms that political agency, as it relates to women, has had in the progressive change of Medellín. Also, this section presents the used method tools such as interviews, survey, a focus group, participatory observation, and official documents, and the type of logic that I chose for each of those tools. The chapter shows the population universe; primarily women that were in executive offices that designed and applied the bottom-up programs, activists from CC, staff members from the bottom-up programs, communal leaders, and women from the most relevant female movements of the city. Nonetheless, later I start interviewing specific men of the movement.

This chapter presented the different experiences I had navigating my fieldwork research in a post Peace Treaty presidential elections. The methodological changes I

did for accomplishing the encounter with the activist from CC, and other movements, due to an important and conjunctural political circumstance of Colombia. Additionally, this chapter exposes my positionality as a researcher and an outsider from the culture of Medellin with a sexualized stereotype for being a Caribbean woman. I participate in activism for CC to get closer to the movement, which generated biases of identification for analyzing the women of the movement. But, also, I expressed the internal rejection that I had with some feminists of CC and different movement and the way I scope that rejection for developing my study.

Chapter 4
Bottom-Up Programs: Participatory Budgeting, Buen Comienzo, Medellín Solidaria, and the Secretariat of Women

Introduction

This chapter is the densest section of the research, as it shows the systematization of the data and the analysis of it. In particular, the analysis is a content and discourse analysis of the data, always focusing on the influence of women from Compromiso Ciudadano (CC) and feminist movements in the development of the four bottom-up programs. Also, I share what I have learned from the interviews and polls, the focus group, and observations I performed with these women. Importantly, speech analysis is a necessary tool for understanding the role of women, because through it we can learn the speaker's culture and gather perspectives on the politics of the speaker. According to James Spradley (1979), "both tacit and explicit cultures are revealed through speech" (p. 9). Additionally, there is little research published about these women, and hence their testimony about their own history in the movement is one of the most important data sources. I interviewed different sets of women: women who were the directors of the four bottom-up programs, women who were their staff, and the women from the grassroots movements involved in the development of these programs. All the women who directed the bottom-up programs were active members of CC, and some of the women in the staff and grassroots movement were part of CC. Furthermore, I will also analyze the 16 polls I obtained from women from CC, as well as the focus group.

In the first part of the text, I describe the women of CC based on the demographic information that I systematize from their answers in the interviews and online polls. Then, I show the four main common topics of the interviews. In each one of the common topics, I categorized women's answer into subcategories based on the most repetitive argument. Later, I emphasize in an analysis of the different elements that express the women's political agency in each sub category. Figure 2 serves as road map to clarified the organization of the analysis of the common topics in this chapter.
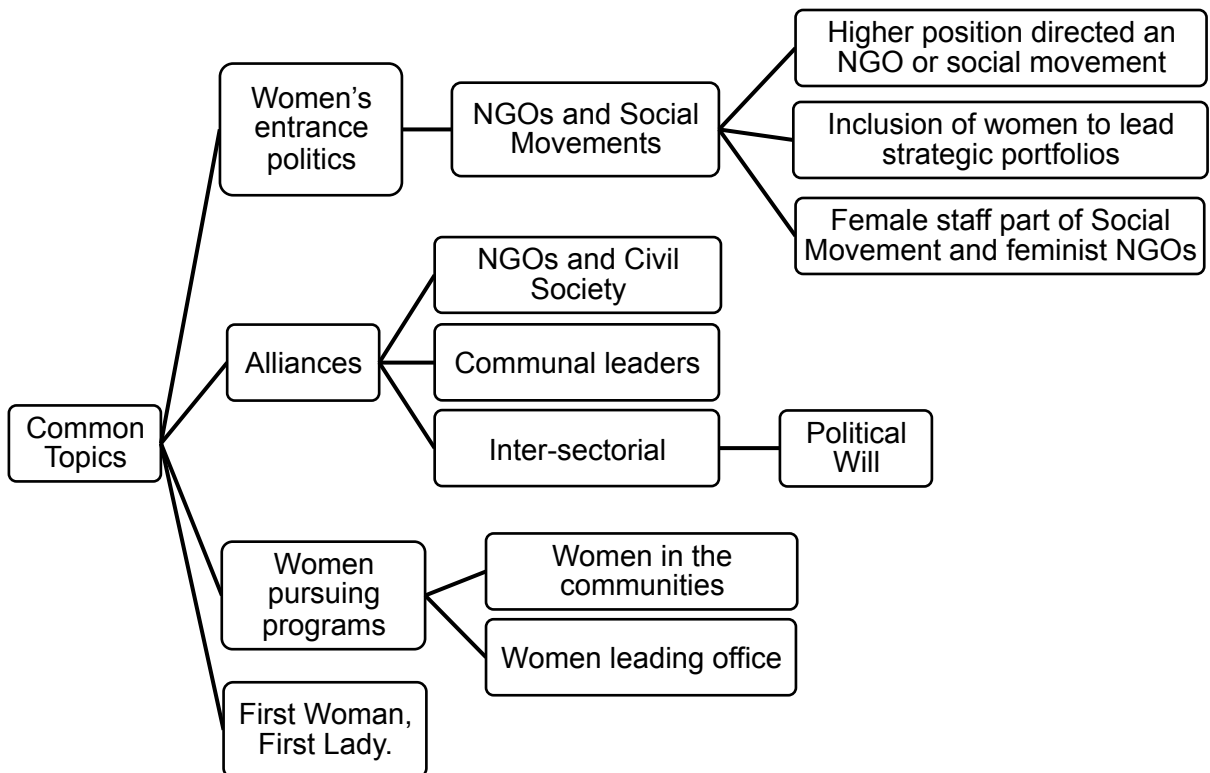

Figure 2. Analysis of Common Topics

Demographic Information

Before analyzing the interviews, it is pertinent to contextualize the demographics of women from CC. In the online poll and in the interviews, I posted questions related to participants' age, economic status and self-identification with ethnicity. I did not use race because the National Department of Statistics of Colombia does not recognize race as a category but instead uses ethnicity. I wanted to know whether any women self-identified as Indigenous or Afro-descendent.

Of the total of forty-three women I interviewed, the majority from CC were older than thirty-four years, but women who were directing the different Secretariats ere around sixty years old, except for one secretary who was thirty-four. Nevertheless, it is important to state that I purposefully searched for women who were members of the CC movement and government from 2004–2012, because that was the time when CC was in power and when the four bottom-up programs I focused on were created. Therefore, from 2017, when I did the interviews, the majority of women had more than ten years in the movement; just one woman had six years in CC.

The majority of the women identified as being of medium and high economic status. As for ethnicity, eighty-seven percent of women recognized themselves as "mestizas[4]", whereas thirteen percent identified as white. All of them lived and grew up in Medellín-Antioquia. Thus, the women from this movement can be categorized as middle- or upper-middle-class. The spectrum of jobs of these women varied, from

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[4] Mestizo: "empirical hybridity, built upon eighteenth and nineteenth century racial taxonomies and according to which 'mestizos' are non-indigenous individuals, the result of biological or cultural mixtures (de la Cadena, 2005). Mixture of different populations, white European, black African, and indigenous. Nevertheless, popularly is more known by the mixture of white and indigenous.

retired, working in the public sector as a consultant, or working in administrative offices, academia, private companies, independent, or consultants in Intergovernmental Organization.

Common Topics

In the process of analyzing, systematizing, and learning from the interviews, sometimes I was surprised about the answers that I received. I did not expect these answers from a group of middle-class women and communal leaders; this was a process involving deconstructing stereotypes for me as well. Some other answers had a strong emotional charge. For all the participants, politics is indeed a male-dominated world where women generally have tough experiences.

In this case study, I analyzed the interview and poll responses from women from CC and women related to this movement. There were four major topics that women constantly repeated. First, the way they entered politics. Second, the strategies and alliances they sought for pursuing the bottom-up programs. Third, the women's role in pursuing bottom-up programs. Fourth, the political role of the wives of the CC mayors, the First Woman and First Lady, for the development of the bottom-up programs.

The roles of the mayors' wives were particularly relevant for debating women's political agency for Medellín's transformation. Lucrecia Ramirez was the wife of Sergio Fajardo, the first mayor of CC; she is a psychiatrist, a professor and researcher of the University of Antioquia, and a very well-known feminist. During Fajardo's government, Lucrecia changed the name of the position of First Lady to First Woman. Lucrecia provided the political support for the institutional and financial creation of the Secretariat

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of Women, and she was the thinker behind its initial programs. Afterward, in Alonso Salazar's government, his wife Martha Liliana did not pursue the feminist fights of Lucrecia; she returned the title to First Lady. She focused on exponentially growing Buen Comienzo and Medellín Solidaria. Martha Liliana was very well-known psychologist, and like Lucrecia, she did not use the title of the First Lady as merely a protocol job, but rather as an executive and political platform for massively changing the priorities in politics and public mentalities towards the beginning and needs of early childhood and the necessities of extreme poverty.

I changed the names of all the interviewees to their role: for example, to communal leader, staff member, or grassroots leader. This procedure is done to protect the interviewees, especially those who work in politics and for whom the publication of their name could bring negative repercussion. However, at the same time, I wanted to give visibility to those women in important leadership positions, like those heading different Secretariats. As these secretaries are well-known public figures, I have used their real names—if they agreed to it. Additionally, I conducted all the interviews, polls, and the focus group in Spanish, as it is the native language for the interviewees. Thus, I translated all of the quotes used in this dissertation.

Women's entrance to citizen and politics participation: Social Movements and NGOs.

One of the most common themes in the interviews was participation in a social movement or NGO as the gateway to politics and citizen participation. The majority of the participants used to be part of CC. Only seven women of the forty-three

interviewees stated that they were not involved with CC, but that they used to work in their government and they entered politics through this public work. Additionally, a few women had CC as their only experience in activism. Many women used to be part of more than one social movement or NGO, which tended to be alternative movements or organizations. Nevertheless, just two interviewees were part of a traditional political party before entering CC.

The women who were directing the four bottom-up programs directed grassroots movements and/or a non-governmental organization focused on the social transformation of the city. The Secretary of Social Welfare's explanation was typical: "I was part of the Citizen Oversight to the development plan of Medellín, and I was the director of an alliance of business foundations and companies that had joined to achieve citizen coexistence programs due to the situation that Medellín was facing at that time" (Secretary of Social Welfare, interview conducted on 3/12/2017). Many of my interviewees had expertise in the participation and oversight of the development plan of Medellín at the end of the 1990s. The Secretary of Social Development explains: "I used to be part of the Oversight in the development plan of the city and the director of the NGO [called] Region" (Secretary of Social Development, interview conducted on 10/10/2016). A very important point raised by women of CC was that they were in specific types of NGOs and movements, as explained by one of the CC participants in the focus group: "These NGO were considered the progressive group of NGOs; they did not have view[s] of depending on social welfare, but based on education and development of capacities" (Speaker 6, focus group conducted on 9/29/2016). These

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NGOs and movements were characterized by opposing the government and challenging the status quo of Medellín politics.

From the five different Secretaries of Women I interviewed, five used to be part of the Women's Social Movement from Medellín, leading a feminist movement or an NGO. The remaining participant used to work in a feminist NGO. A very influential Secretary stated, "I was part of the foundation for women[s'] health… and I enjoy the feminist movement" (Women's Secretary 3, interview conducted on 9/29/2016). Furthermore, a previous secretary explained: "I would refer to as the most significant experience in the first place as the director of SERFAMI, an NGO" (Women's Secretary 1, interview conducted on 10/10/2017). Another secretary explained: "From the Unión de Ciudadanas, I had worked for women's right[s]" (Women's Secretary 4, interview conducted on 7/11/2018). This activist background of the Secretaries is a major component of the articulation of goals and mobilization that the women in power had with the grassroots movements and illustrates the political path that they developed for the creation of the Secretariat of Women.

Additionally, other women with important hierarchical status and visibility in CC had experience in leftist movements. As the Women's Secretary 3 discussed, "When I entered the University I was part of the student movement, which was socialist and leftist. Then I started working in an NGO that was the National Union School, which opened a section for worker and unionized women… they did not have a view of dependency on welfare … but this was … progressive and democratic with an objective of influencing the transformation of the country" (Women's Secretary 3, interview conducted on 9/29/2016). Another CC participant expressed a very similar pathway

toward CC activism: "Before being a Secretary, I was part of the leftist student movements and Women's Social Movement" (Participant 13, interview conducted on 10/12/2016). Contrasting the interview data with the poll I conducted, the women from CC who had achieved a higher position in the government were the ones who had experience directing an NGO and participating in social movement, plus academia. The women who answered that they had not participated in a previous movement tended to have the role of an activist or volunteer. Nevertheless, there were two women who started their activism with CC and had no previous involvement with any social movements.

Another group of women from CC who are part of the Staff for the Secretary of Women, Participatory Budgeting, and Communal Leaders used to be part of the Women's Social Movement and feminist NGOs: "I come from a social training with an emphasis on work and processes of the Women's Social Movement. I approached a communal group from a popular neighborhood… to work and systematize a process of organizing popular women. And with that process, I am linked to the social movement of women in Medellín. Through this organization that is a community organization … I understood local planning process and participation, advocacy and territorial development management" (Staff member 3, interview conducted on 7/13/2016).

These women's movements were spaces for empowering women in politics to participate in participatory budgeting assemblies and communal organizations. Additionally, this participation in feminist movements was an important forum for acknowledging women's issues. Staff member 1 declared, "I started a communal project when I was a kid because I was in a very violent and marginalized neighborhood and

this female organization was interested that we were not recruited by the armed groups or pregnant at a very young age. After years, I was part of that group that became more political… we presented a project through our communal organization in Simon Bolivar for gender issues to a cooperative agency" (Staff member 1, interview conducted on 11/29/2016).

In the 1980s and 1990s, social participation happened as a way to search for answers and provide alternatives to the drug-related violence of the city: the communal organization was imperative. The Secretary of Social Welfare explained, "Groups came together to look for alternatives, to think about the future, to do strategic planning. Medellín was one of the first cities in Latin America that had a long-term strategic plan, scenario planning" (Secretary of Social Welfare, interview conducted on 3/12/2017). Similarly: "The 80s opened the door for organizational processes and the growth of NGOs, social movements, social organizations, community organizations. Everything in which in the communes moved to solve the conflict... All that raised scenarios to think of a different Medellín, everything that the organizations did in the 'Alternative Seminars for Medellín', 'Alternative Seminars for the Future', thematic forums, alternative plans, strategic plan of Medellín…" (Grassroots leader 1, interview conducted on 7/18/2018).

Additionally, the increase in citizen participation resulted in a critical mass of people reflecting on governance. All of that, explained grassroots leader 1, "generated social capital, who became aware that without electoral power they would not achieve anything. And, that under the roof of traditional political parties neither" (Grassroots leader 1, interview conducted on 7/18/2018). This explains why many political leaders at that time came from social movements, NGOs and communal groups. As Grassroots

leader 1 stated, the social capital they built during the 1980s and 1990s gave them the conviction of the need to arrive at a place of political power, specifically executive power. This was also the main concern for many women in CC who were part of this communal process. The Secretary of Social Welfare added, "This group [an alliance of foundations] was very clear that only in the field of politics, where decisions could be made… [was it possible to] produce the transformations, generate the changes and long-term sustainability" (Secretary of Social Welfare, interview conducted on 3/12/2017). Staff member 3 continued, "Back in that community process, I knew a proposal such as articulation and communal project, which was building a local development plan and had a premise that had been working since the 90s, which said that without political participation there is no development" (Staff member 3, interview conducted on 7/13/2016).

Furthermore, some women argued that the great influence of NGOs and grassroots movement was a key element for the inclusion of women in Secretariats and for women to lead important and strategic portfolios in the city. The former Secretary of Social Welfare explained, "Much of the participation of CC was from people who were from NGOs that have important participation of women [of] almost 70% or 80%, I would dare to say this on the one hand. And on the other hand, the direction of the organizations was in the hands of women. The participation was very high, Margarita Fernandez (PAN), Clara Ines Restrepo, fulfilled a very technical role and with a lot of impacts, and also a capacity for political mobilization that was supremely important" (Secretary of Social Welfare, interview conducted on 3/12/2017).

Another interesting point that came out from the beginnings of CC women in politics and the relation with grassroots and communal organizations was the existence of two subdivisions of CC, called Compromiso Comunitario and Compromiso Belen. Both were created as branches of CC for communal issues in many popular neighborhoods. Staff member 3 clarified: "In this process [Fajardo's political campaign for mayor], I met in parallel Compromiso Comunitario … Compromiso Comunitario was like a trend within CC or like a sector that was linked to a political proposal" (Staff member 3, interview conducted on 7/13/2016). This is confirmed by another communal leader, who stated, "I have always liked politics, and I found Compromiso Comunitario interesting because it targeted part of my life project, which is to be able to help the people through the resources that the state generated, and I felt identified with many friends that work for the city, in many topics, but particularly education" (Communal leader 4, interview conducted on 12/3/2017). Another communal leader explained, "They [Compromiso Belén] organized the conversations Mrs. X and Mr. Y, Z ... well it was a small group of people from Compromiso Belén, so we made those conversations … Because I was also interested in community work, and participatory budgeting" (Communal leader 1, interview conducted on 11/1/2017). In the communal level, CC found allies through two different branches based on the same movement where women had a protagonist role.

Thus, CC not only gathered important women who had developed an influential background in NGOs. CC also articulated the goals of many other movements and communal organizations where not only were the majority of participants women, but some women were charismatic leaders of the "Juntas." According to Communal leader

1, "Most of the people in the Juntas de Acción Comunal [communal action meetings] are women, so I went to talk to the women and I told them: we are so tired that these men [the ones in the board of the Juntas] lie to us, I am not a feminist, so you know I am not from those that come out with the flag, no, but indeed we need to make them respect our rights, girls, we are all the time working as laborer and we have never been on the board" (Communal leader 1, interview conducted on 11/1/2017). This leader was talking specifically of Compromiso Belen, which was one of the most strategic localities in Medellín. Interestingly, this woman did not consider herself a feminist but was advocating for women's rights. It looks like for women in the territories and older women, being feminist is something more radical than being aligned with women's rights. Another charismatic leader was the communal leader 4 claimed "I won with 688 votes, [those] who voted were friends and parents from the preschool that I used to have, and my political friends said that I was part of Compromiso Comunitario and CC ... With the cultural groups, with pageants, sounds, music and the inauguration of the preschool… In Comuna 5, there are predominantly women, in cultural groups, the majority are women" (Communal leader 4, interview conducted on 12/3/2017).

Strategies: Alliances for pursuing the bottom-up programs

In this subsection, I dissect the interviews and analyze them according to each program. Each program had a particular strategy for its creation and to ensure its sustainability. Among the four, all of them had a strong association to the executive branch with social movements and NGOs. But also, an inter-sectorial association, different secretaries, academia, and even the private sector cooperated with the

development of the programs. I discuss Buen Comienzo and Medellín Solidaria together in one subsection because the same secretary, staff, and later the First Lady, directed both.

Participatory Budgeting

The secretary and the staff of Participatory Budgeting (PB) always centered their answers on the constant interactions and synergies with the communal organizations, NGOs, and the different secretaries in the government. As the secretary explained, "We arrived at the City Hall; as I remember, it was very early January of the first year, we were already having meetings in all the comunas and all the townships with the leaders. Then the development plan was built with very high participation. It was a plan in which we really tried to listen to people, period" (Secretary of Social Development, interview conducted on 10/10/2016). She furthermore explained: "Weekly we were in comunas and townships because we have to go around the whole city, there are 21 comunas and townships and time is very short because in February the mayor has to deliver the draft of the entire development plan. Hence, between January and February, we made all those councils. Successively, delegates were in charge. We also met with the Juntas de Administrativas Local [local administrative board], that is to say, there was permanently a very participatory process that lasted the entire government of Fajardo" (Secretary of Social Development, interview conducted on 10/10/2016). Moreover, staff member 3, who used to work in PB and is a CC member, reflected about the methodology: "The methodology was to organize work teams that were in the territory having those discussions, work with them from the question and generate conditions for debate or

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argumentation to cause an agreement: that was a lot of the fieldwork we did" (Staff member 3, interview conducted on 7/13/2016).

Inside the government, there was an interesting connection between the secretaries. As the Secretary of Social Development explained, "The advantage at that time [was that] we had a supremely united cabinet of friends, and since it was not a cabinet of "politiqueria"[5] it was not a cabinet to put some politicians in power; because we all came from the academy, from the NGOs, we even met before. Hence, it was easy to discuss with them the topics that concerned us. I don't remember even having a bigger problem with anyone, with the secretaries with any [departments]. We were very close with [the Secretary of] Planning, with [the Secretary of] Social Welfare, with everyone… Also, in the [Secretariat of the] Treasury that was very difficult because the PB was very complex for hiring [contracting]" (Secretary of Social Development, interview conducted on 10/10/2016). PB had many dimensions as the communities invested the resources in many different topics. The Secretariat of Social Development needed the support of the officials in the different areas for supervising communities' projects and the contract process to assure legality and accuracy during the investment of the resources.

Moreover, Staff member 3 described the relations in the mayor's office: "We arrived with the PB proposal to the entire mayor's office, we managed to involve all the secretaries in the development of the process, and in that involvement, we focused on the need to be on the street, be in the territory, talk to people closely, explain the processes or listen to people's arguments. It was never an orientation to impose a

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[5] A popular expression to refer to politics and politicians who are corrupt, unfair, and related to illegal activities.

process: the orientation was always to build with people" (Staff member 3, interview conducted on 7/13/2016). In this sense, there was a major concern with PB, and it is related to the connectivity of the government with the people. Participatory Budgeting created channels of communication between these two worlds, in order to escalate the conversations. Thus, the communal groups not only debated between each other but also elevated the discussion with a specific institution of the government. Furthermore, she added:

We made the secretaries go to the territory to know the farthest neighborhoods, those where the institutionality had not arrived. Then, of course, it is very different when an office and a manager goes to the territory and sees the conditions in which people live, and manages to understand in part the arguments that people have, it was not once, but they began to look for alternatives. Much of the success in this methodology was that the institution had such closeness to the community that it was able to understand what the community needed at that time. Then, of course, there were secretaries, sub-secretaries, complete management teams that appropriated that methodology, who were willing to be in the territories and managed to reach agreements with the community or managed to find alternatives to the problems that people had. That was the biggest hook in the process. (Staff member 3, interview conducted on 7/13/2016)

Another important alliance was with the NGOs, particularly with Region Corporation. Grassroots leader 1 exposed that "Region" was a fundamental actor in the development and strategies of PB. "There was a moment where Region occupied a very important place for this city, for the participatory processes... I believe that Region took a leading

role and was very close to the mayor's office because several of its partners and former workers were part of the Fajardo government team. Thus, the organization was close to the mayor's office" (Grassroots leader 1, interview conducted on 7/18/2018). Actually, the closeness between the government and the NGOs was visible when the former director of Region was elected as Secretary of Social Development.

Also, Region needed to work with the administration, as this NGO was able to provide technical and analytical support for PB. According to the assessment of Grassroots leader 1, "There is a big objective of Region in not being just operators but thinkers of the process [the application of participatory budgeting], so we were playing a key moment for the city participation. The arrival of the participatory budgeting will generate a series of regulations that will allow the institutionality of participation to grow. Region was very interested in that, that Region was the protagonist to be part of the discussion" (Grassroots leader 1, interview conducted on 7/18/2018). She continued, explaining, "Let's say that the fundamental bet was that PB was an opportunity to think about expanding democracy, so [in this] enclave of expanding democracy we chanced a number of things during that period of time" (Grassroots leader 1, interview conducted on 7/18/2018).

Another important source for building the PB was the communal leaders. Specifically, the female leaders such as Communa leader 1 expressed thoughts about their experiences: "Then we started working to be very aware of everything that the mayor's office offered us to participate when they already started to implement … that they were going to start implementing the participatory budgeting that was an idea that came from Brazil, and that they were implementing it in Pasto… And we started, the

new ones, to work what they proposed to us from the mayor's office of the secretariat…
Mr. Miguel Restrepo, Jairo Foronda, Omar Uran, Melguizo, Mrs. Clara Restrepo, projects that will help the whole commune, [projects] that were not individuals, that were not little, that were not grocery listings, a list of 'mecato' [snacks]" (Communal leader 1, interview conducted on 11/1/2017).

The participation and political will of the communal leaders was fundamental for the development of the project of PB, as explained by Communal leader 2: "There was a recognition because that [project] was not only the Secretariat, the work was made in the community that many organizations finally recognized it, which also positioned the Junta [actions of the communal board], but from there, from the same communal scenario. From the junta, [me] being the president of it, as being representative of the neighborhood, we also led the process of local planning and participatory budgeting in those years in comuna number 12, and we did influence" (Communal leader 2, interview conducted on 11/29/2017). She continued, "We managed to get other community representatives to also do work of the junta through the delegates of Neighborhood Assemblies and other organizations that we managed to influence" (Communal leader 2, interview conducted on 11/29/2017). Inside the comunas, many female leaders carried out pedagogical and political work with the people in order to follow and implement the PB.

The process of deciding part of the comuna budget gave agency to the communities and female leaders to decide what strategic and political ways they would use to make visible the needs of their neighborhood. Communal leader 2 clarified, "Thus that was also a political work that we did from the Junta on how we influenced the

participatory budget, being a small sector of the comuna, but with a huge number of massive needs; nonetheless, we had to make ourselves recognized, empowered ourselves about our own territory and worked hard on issues of the real needs of the territory" (Communal leader 2, interview conducted on 11/29/2017).

Another aspect that catalyzed the communal support for Participatory Budgeting was that the alternative leaders from comunas were tired of the old way the program was offered and the lack of accountability. Thus, many resonated with the reform and effective application of this program, as Communal leader 1 elucidated: "So it used to be like that before, you had to queue a bad old man, who tell you that you can't do that, take your project away … if he wanted he would help you and if he does not, he will throw it away. That change [when CC was applying the PB program] was for the old leaders of this comuna, it was a change that hit them in the face because they were accustomed to take the projects to the project bank, and then begin to intrigue with the politicians, with Council men … because all the positions that used to be in the mayor's office were political debts" (Communal leader 1, interview conducted on 11/1/2017).

Moreover, there was the administration's and the staff's openness, identification, and willingness to connect with the community members. The communal leaders highlighted: "the secretary with the citizen movement [CC] opened the doors; you could go to all events. But since Miguel [the sub-secretary] was strong in participation, Miguel was the bridge that we had, because Miguel was from the people, he was from the village, then you came to [secretary] participation and you had the doors open there. As the mayor says, the mayor's office has opened its doors" (Communal leader 3, interview conducted on 11/30/2017). In this sense, the staff of the Secretariat agreed with the

communal leaders about the intended effort that this program would take the institution closer to the citizens. Staff member 3 added,

> The local planning exercise and PB had a methodology that took the institutionality to the territory, so we managed to be in the city with all the institutional teams of all the dependencies, [and] in addition to that, generating some communication channels at the directive level. Hence there were parts where people did not know what a public servant was, there were people who did not know what a secretary was. But that program especially was the possibility, through its methodology, of knowing what the public sector is, of appropriating the public. There were people who, leaders with whom we worked, people with whom we developed the process that even came to ask if they could enter the mayor's building. They did not know that as citizens they could enter that building. (Staff member 3, interview conducted on 7/13/2016)

Hence, this methodology and the PB process was an awakening for many communal leaders and common citizens about their basic rights.

In PB, emphasizing the agency of the people was a priority, as well. For Staff member 3, "the methodology used was totally social, but a very critical approach that developed potentials and abilities in the groups. We were interested in generating questions, in the communities to gather concerns, to generate discussions about development. So the methodology was very participatory" (Staff member 3, interview conducted on 7/13/2016). Thus, for communal leaders, the methodology of PB supported the creation of groups that nourished long-term citizen participation, and ensured the benefits that PB brought for political strength in the territories. Interestingly,

the approach that the CC member in the Secretariat of Social Development had was similar to the one taken in Buen Comienzo, Medellín Solidaria, and the programs from the Secretariat of Women. The approach is based on developing capabilities, not dependency.

For Communal leader 1, PB was training the next generation in citizen participation: "It [PB] is a space of liberation, and apart from that space, youth networks were created almost throughout the city. Spaces for groups of youth that wanted to participate in PB, and that were formed to participate there in that space" (Communal leader 1, interview conducted on 11/1/2017). Likewise, young and female communal leaders agreed that PB was a very important training for them because these leaders were publicly elected to represent the interest of their neighborhood in the participatory budget assemblies. PB was their first political experience: "That scenario as it was posed… it strongly qualified us, all that situation, in terms of participatory budget, was [a scenario where] possibly [the assembly to] tell us not at first, but we got elected to get a yes" (Communal leader 2, interview conducted on 11/29/2017).

Buen Comienzo and Medellín Solidaria

The initial implementation of Buen Comienzo and Medellín Solidaria took place in neighborhoods and communities. The former Secretary of Social Welfare argued, "We had assumed a whole path and previous knowledge where there had been active participation of community organizations, of people, of community mothers and others. This creation of Buen Comienzo and Medellín Solidaria has a history or precedents of

very high community participation" (Secretary of Social Welfare, interview conducted on 3/12/2017).

In the case of Buen Comienzo, civil society, grassroots movements, and NGOs played a leading role in the formulation of the program, first in criteria of its application. According to the Secretary of Social Welfare, "The debates we had done before from the organized civil society and Citizen Oversight had been debating the state of that early childhood and that institutions should attend this early childhood with a criterion not of protection but development" (Secretary of Social Welfare, interview conducted on 3/12/2017). In this sense, the criterion of Buen Comienzo was breaking a paternalistic idea of government's attention to child care, not only as assistance that tends to be confused with charity, but as a broader topic of development and state investment. A second role of the NGO was in the production of knowledge and data. The Secretary continued, "Extraordinary contributions had been made from these NGO entities that had been attending to children … had also developed thinking, research, gave clarity on what to do, and pointed out with great force which were the gaps that the state had and that were necessary to be taken care of to give integral attention to the boys and girls" (Secretary of Social Welfare, interview conducted on 3/12/2017).

Nevertheless, to position the topic of early childhood, and then to elevate it to a municipal agreement, there was the need for political work in the legislative branch of the city, the council of Medellín. As the Secretary of Social Welfare typically stated, "Then there was also political management. I met with the councilmen, I asked them for an appointment, and I was telling them little by little, what was the interest, why it was important to think about the city towards children, why early childhood was important. In

other words, a process of awareness and motivation" (Secretary of Social Welfare, interview conducted on 3/12/2017).

Another important synergy was with the different secretariats and the government. The Secretary of Social Welfare highlighted, "Another group that was also important and that was part of how public policy is made: the secretariats of the mayor of Medellín and the same mayor of the city, Sergio Fajardo. The Municipal Cabinet and the mayor himself did not have to know the development that takes attending to children [through the provision of childcare services] … so in the sessions with the government I asked to have a space, and I had a supremely important and powerful alliance with the secretariats of health, education, sports, and social welfare. We were four who led the issue in common, to harbor its importance in the government as well" (Secretary of Social Welfare, interview conducted on 3/12/2017).

A woman who was later directing Buen Comienzo, Staff member 6, asserted, "The big risk and innovation of the Fajardo government was to say here is my [government] income, I am going to bet on the early childhood education… we said those people took a risk!" (Staff member 6, interview conducted on 4/16/2018). Even for the women who were working in early childhood and later in Buen Comienzo, the political will of these governments was radical and surprising. Thus, the following CC government maintained the line of risk in that social investment, but exponentially higher. Staff member 8 emphasized, "We expanded services and coverage… it passed from 10 thousand million pesos annually to 100 thousand million… It goes from 10 thousand children to 80 thousand children to universalization of the service" (Staff member 8, interview conducted on 4/11/2018). Staff member 6 complemented that

response: "The first thing that would have been done in Colombia was to begin to attend younger ages gradually, to go down, attend to the 4-year-old, afterward to the 3-year-old. But, the first thing we did in Alonso's government was to change that hypothesis and say children will be treated since they are in the womb. We are going to cover pregnant women now!… Start to change the mentality" (Staff member 6, interview conducted on 4/16/2018). Thus, Medellín started to become the most important city in social investment: they took greater risks, especially for childcare in Colombia.

In the case of Medellín Solidaria, even though Fajardo's administration and the Secretariat of Beatriz White placed the groundwork for extreme poverty attention, this was just a starting point, because in Medellín Solidaria the government had to elevate the number of families, and they now had a more integral focus. Staff 7 clarified, "In the Fajardo government, a baseline document was made, the base information to analyze if we could do that work. We asked the people of the University of EAFIT and Banco de la Republica [Federal Bank], because it was based on the United Network. They had an important project and idea that they wanted to do, but they were not so clear" (Staff member 7, interview conducted on 7/5/2018). Additionally, the new administration re-based the program with the social program of Chile Solidario, an extreme poverty program created in Chile. Staff member 7 expanded, "Medellín Solidaria, is similar to Chile Solidario. We traveled to Chile to understand the program better, and we brought to the realities of Medellín. Medellín Solidaria was ally and based on the United Network from Colombia, and the national government. Nonetheless, we made a decision with Marta Liliana and Alonso Salazar… there will be things that work for us nationally and others that don't, and those that don't we won't do them. Medellín was putting money,

so we put the conditions in our territory" (Staff member 7, interview conducted on 7/5/2018). According to this woman, there were conjunctional processes with other national actors, but as this program was created with an significant amount of money that came directly from the local government, they had the flexibility to apply what worked best for them, instead of just following national rules regardless of any political tension.

In the case of Buen Comienzo, for the formulation of its public policy, there was more engagement with NGOs, grassroots movements and communities. Staff member 6 stated, "In a public policy, it is not enough to have the resource, to improve the quality, but if you do not have a society that sees that that child is effectively the subject of the policy, that is crucial" (Staff member 6, interview conducted on 4/16/2018). For the women managing Buen Comienzo, since 2008, the mobilization was intended to change the public mentality about the need of a program and policy to attend to babies in the womb, as part of early childcare, in order to promote long-term viability of the program. Staff member 6 elaborated: "When I tell you that there was social mobilization, I tell you not only just in thought, of explicitly saying visualize the children... But, organizations were created, organizations were made visible, a social base for early childhood care was created, because if not then it won't be sustainable. There were entities that attended to boys and girls but had not turned around to attend infant development, they began to expand and prepared attention" (Staff member 6, interview conducted on 4/16/2018).

For the creation and development of Medellín Solidaria, it did not have a mobilization as large as Buen Comienzo's. But, since its beginning Medellín Solidaria

was planned with the cumulative knowledge of NGO and grassroots movements. Moreover, it was ingrained in the community that trusted in the project. Staff member 7 argued, "A mobilization as such no, but it was a project that people wanted… It is a very dear project to the community of Medellín, the only ones that could enter a community during conflicts were those of Medellín Solidaria. The same families and gangs helped them to get in and out the territories, without a scratch" (Staff member 7, interview conducted on 7/5/2018). This is interesting, because when a comuna had a gang conflict in Medellín, all other services from the mayor, and sometimes even the police, could not enter into those zones. Nonetheless, this was not the case for the people who developed the program of Medellín Solidaria, and actually, as Staff member 7 stated, "the percentage of satisfaction is very high when the co-manager[6] arrived: the families benefit" (Staff member 7, interview conducted on 7/5/2018). One of the important elements of this connection with the community was the ownership and recognition the families gained, because as Staff member 7 stated, "The [prior] feeling of exclusion of these families was huge… They [families] understood that they are part of Medellín. They felt that this [Medellín] was a distant and far away thing. What we did is to [bring] Medellín to their homes, this was not only for [socio-economic] strata 3, or 4[7]. They [families in extreme poverty] had the right; we generated a very important conscience" (Staff member 7, interview conducted on 7/5/2018).

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[6] The co-managers (co-gestores in Spanish) are the persons who do the visits to the families in extreme poverty to give the services of the mayor, and evaluated their progress in different capabilities.

[7] In Colombia, housing, properties, and neighborhoods are divided according to socioeconomic levels and resources of the users and owners. There are 6 socioeconomic strata, which go from 1 as the poorest to 6 as the wealthiest. (DANE)

The interviewees stated that the topic of participation was key for the formulation of Medellín Solidaria and specifically Buen Comienzo and its development of public policy. Staff member 8 specified, "We listen to families, early childhood entities, the actors responsible for the children that developed programs. It is not that a single actor is refining the policy, we are all responsible, and we all contribute and monitor the process. When I tell you that it is participatory, it has several characteristics. First, inter-sectorial, second, population, because we make that children, families, leaders, [and] educative agents have scenarios where they can give their proposals, say how they feel, and at the same time, actively participate in the construction of these strategies and the implementation. The spaces were forums, conversations, meetings, the same spaces where we share with families, we collected imaginary workshops, surveys, congresses. I can tell you about a thousand strategies" (Staff member 8, interview conducted on 4/11/2018).

Additionally, Buen Comienzo was created with a mission of bringing expertise to the construction of the childcare public policy. Staff member 8 detailed, "Mission of experts will [be to] identify what is missing in the city, and according to that, they would give a critical route to improve the Municipal Agreement [of Buen Comienzo] that already existed, but they want it to be a stronger social base policy, that won't be forgotten but that every year it would be replicated. The mission of expert[s] was formed by the academy, especially the pediatric department of the University of Antioquia, people of compensation funds and foundations... Apart from that committee, there was a sub-committee that was the group of operators and entities that worked and did very strong advocacy" (Staff member 8, interview conducted on 4/11/2018).

As the previous secretary and the later directors of Buen Comienzo and Medellín Solidaria stated, it was important to do political work inside the government. Staff member 6 was clear that "Convince, persuade, and seduce, to move the others [secretaries]. Alonso's government exceeds all forecasts in the history of this country in early childhood investment. Buen Comienzo began to invest 100 thousand million pesos a year, it had more money than a secretary ... I needed to justify and argued [to the other secretaries] why this was so important" (Staff member 6, interview conducted on 4/16/2018). Nonetheless, this political work was also possible because Buen Comienzo and Medellín Solidaria had the status of being strategic programs in Alonso's government. According to Staff member 7, "We were the only social projects that had chairs on the Government Council, we were like another secretary, and we had a very high status and political status. Medellín Solidaria and Buen Comienzo kept their chair during the entire Alonso period. We were peers with the secretaries, so I could say, 'Come on David [a secretary], you have not put the places of early childhood that I need' or 'The president of the institute *x* did not allow the entrance to a mother of Medellín Solidaria'. I related to another secretary as a peer. Medellín Solidaria had higher budgets than some secretariats" (Staff member 7, interview conducted on 7/5/2018).

In both cases, Buen Comienzo and Medellín Solidaria had more economic resources than a secretariat and a high degree of political power to interact with them. Moreover, the money came directly from the mayor. Thus, in the moments of negotiation, these strategic programs were independent enough from other dependencies to determine, or change, their own actions. Nevertheless, the political

work that the women directing these project did was based on empathy and consent, which marked a difference in the way that all the actors were involved. Thus, these women were able to cooperate and even gain more resources from other secretariats because of the construction of that cooperation.

One of the most important strategies was the inter-sectorial work. These programs had all the institutional support and they related as peers with the other secretaries. In the words of Staff member 6, "There were four strategic secretariats… Inder [sports], Secretary of Education, Social Welfare, and Health. How to articulate those four monsters? That was one of the most delicious things in my life, convincing why the child had to be placed in the center. How it benefits? What benefits will have all sectors if they managed to fit with their know-how... that the sector will manage to be more efficient and effective" (Staff member 6, interview conducted on 4/16/2018).

As the Secretary of Welfare previously stated, the political work is about engaging, sensitizing, raising awareness, and motivating the other political sectors. Another example was in Medellín Solidaria, during Salazar's government, as stated by Staff member 7: "what we did to sensitize the secretaries? We did something called 'co-manager for a day', we took them [the secretaries] to the extremely poor neighborhoods, we put them on the vests, the boards, and we gave them the instruction, go and visit. And the secretariats were going up the mountain to visit the families. The same mayor said, this is not optional; we are all going to 'co-manager for a day'. Even the same mayor made visits. When the secretaries complained, 'But this suitcase weighs a lot', [I answered] oh well that's what my co-manager feels" (Staff member 7, interview conducted on 7/5/2018). This way the other sectors would

understand what happens on the field. Furthermore, she explained, "this generated a lot of awareness and empathy for Medellín Solidaria" (Staff member 7, interview conducted on 7/5/2018).

Even though the connection with the other sectors, inter-sectoriality, was a challenge since Beatriz White, the political will of the mayor and the other secretaries was a key for the success of the inter-sectoriality. According to Staff member 6, "When there is political will, inter-sectoriality operates exquisitely; it was super clear, inter-sectorality is a powerful tool, but in-depth, living it as a process of transformation of what I do in a sector and what the other sector does" (Staff member 6, interview conducted on 4/16/2018). Medellín Solidaria and Buen Comienzo were a clear example of that statement; they started as small programs, but they became the most important in the development plan.

Secretariat of Women

As the previous programs, the creation of the Secretariat of Women and its programs was a grassroots effort with the fundamental political will from the Mayor Sergio Fajardo and his wife Lucrecia Ramirez. The creation of the first Secretariat of Women in Colombia had several actors that coordinated with each other. Nevertheless, there are two major differences from the other three programs that were led by CC women. First, the following mayor, Alonso Salazar, had a limitation in his political will, illustrated when he cancelled the construction of the project of the Clinic for Women, due to a huge scandal from the conservative parties and religious institutions of Medellín. Second, once the secretary was created, there was political tension between

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the Women's Social Movement and the government. Additionally, positioning the Secretariat of Women inside the government required major political work after those two controversies.

The creation of the first Secretariat of Women in Colombia had several actors that worked together with each other. The Social Movement of Women, La Mesa de Trabajo Mujer de Medellín, many feminist NGOs and foundations, as well as the First Woman's Office and women from CC, were pressuring the creation of this office. Also, international IGOs were involved, such as a Spanish international cooperation agency and representatives from United Nations Women Colombia, as well as social movements and the Council of Medellín. To the question what was the role of social movements for the Secretariats of Women creation, the Women's Secretary 1 argued,

> "Women [the Women's Social Movement] were interested that this secretariat exist for years without having achieved it; in fact a project had been submitted years ago that had been archived without debate at the Medellín Council. But, let's say that the conjunction of Fajardo's political will at that time with the issue, plus the technical proposed quality that was presented and received support from the Spanish international cooperation agency, UN Women. Also, the set of women's social organizations supporting the secretary" (Women's Secretary 1, interview conducted on 10/10/2017).

The importance of the Women's Social Movement arises in its long history of pursuing a political institution. Women's Secretary 3 recalled, "But before the Women's Social Movement in the city, we were putting together the Mesa de Trabajo Mujer de Medellín [a work table for woman in Medellín] in 1994. This table was the one that led the

proposal of a women's secretary. Additionally, women of the Liberal Party started gaining a lot of political importance in Antioquia. Those same women began to pressure the mayor of Medellín to create the secretariat, but what they achieved was a sub-secretariat that was called *Metro-Woman*" (Women's Secretary 3, interview conducted on 9/29/2016). Therefore, other women from traditional political parties, such as the Liberal Party, were part of the history of the political institution. In this same way, for Women's Secretary 8,

> The women's secretariat is a population secretariat, but above all, it is a secretary that responds to the request of a political movement. If women do not mobilize so that the women's secretary is created, then it will never be created. Even if Fajardo is the most sensitive man with gender issues, but if it had not been an interest on the part of the women's social movement that this exists, let's say it would not have been so significant. It would have been more a matter of bureaucracy of the ruler and would also have been temporary. (Women's Secretary 8, interview conducted on 9/27/2016)

When Fajardo arrived in office, the sub-secretariat of *Metro-Mujer* already existed. However, his wife, Lucrecia Ramirez, through the Office of the First Woman, politically catalyzed the Secretariat of Women. It is important to explain that the office of the First Lady is a political institution with little political power, with no budget, no salary, destined to work in the shadow of the mayor. Nevertheless, Lucrecia Ramirez turned the First Lady Office into the First Woman's Office, giving it political status and broad public attention. Doing so, she provided fundamental support for the historical creation of the Secretariat of Women and also achieved a strong budget for the programs developed in

her office that later continued in the Secretariat of Women. As the Women's Secretary 3 explained, "One of Lucrecia's purposes as the first lady is to promote the creation of the Women's secretariat, then Lucrecia puts in the foreground the issue of women's rights and development in the life of the city" (Women's Secretary 3, interview conducted on 9/29/2016).

In the political element of this program, the secretariat and the women's organization found an unexpected ally. Secretary 1 stated, "Finally a Council man [a politician, an elected member of the Council of Medellín] who supported the project, clarifying that this person was not from CC because that CC Council man gave us a very weak support. However, who did it [gave the political support] was a liberal Council man; he took the political moment to personally present this initiative to the Medellín Council" (Women's Secretary 1, interview conducted on 10/10/2017). Even though the first Council man was from CC, he did not present the initiative to the Council; this showed that this project was not a priority for some members of CC, or that the political members of CC were not aligned to the purpose of creating the Secretariat of Women. Nevertheless, the political support of the entire Council was unanimous due to the pressure of the social movements, the successful feminist programs led by Lucrecia Ramirez, and the political will of the Mayor. As Women's Secretary 1 remembered,

> During the voting, in the Medellín council in a process that was politically and socially very beautiful, because there was a vote of the entire council for the creation of the secretary, that is, there were 19 councilmen and they voted 19 out of 19. Also, they could not vote against because the bars were filled with women from the movements, then the women began to demand that the councilmen

showed their vote to see if they voted in favor or against, which made it very difficult for the Council men to vote against, and they ended up showing the white ballot, voting unanimously for the Secretariat. (Women's Secretary 1, interview conducted on 10/10/2017)

The formulation of the programs for the Secretariat of Women started in the First Woman's Office. The programs were a joint effort among different groups led by Lucrecia Ramirez. She described, "I think they were groups, the Women's Social Movement was very important because they participated in the formulation, another was the team from the First Woman's Office that we were 12 women and I looked for different experts, and the municipal cabinet, where these women were Beatriz White, Algeria Londoño, [and] Luz Marina who were very valuable and important for the First Woman's Office because there was no money in that office. There were also other Secretariats led by men" (Lucrecia Ramirez, interview conducted on 8/24/2017). Furthermore, she expanded: "It [the methodology] was always constructivist, for example, we are going to design the program against teenage pregnancy then we are going to call these strategic people of the community... We met with the people, we began to see what there was, what the other first ladies had done, secretariats, what projects were active, what money there was. And we started to formulate it. That is why they took time to start because we did not improvise, we were structuring it very well, with a conceptual model strategy, management indicators, impact, monitoring" (Lucrecia Ramirez, interview conducted on 8/24/2017). The work that was developed from the First Woman's Office was decisive, which was built with different communities according each project. The success of these programs for Secretary 3 was because "they were

innovative, modern and creative programs… and those were issues that the women's movement did not have, because the women's movement has other ways and flags, and another way to manage these vindications. But, Lucrecia, who did not come from the movement, but from academia, gives a different touch to public management to women's development programs, more framed in the concept of women's development than the vindication of rights" (Women's Secretary 3, interview conducted on 9/29/2016). These programs were thought of in the same way as the PB, Buen Comienzo, and Medellín Solidaria: they were based on the development of capacities. Lucrecia explained, "We set out to touch issues that were obstacles [for women's development], but from a more modern way to work [for] the capacities. In the obstacles we find adolescent pregnancy, anorexia and bulimia... and the capacities, talented women, public women..." (Lucrecia Ramirez, interview conducted on 8/24/2017).

Lastly, building good relationships and alliances with the other secretaries was an important channel of political work, especially when the Secretariat of Women was in the process of being created and during the formulation of its programs. These programs were planned in the Office of the First Woman and the sub-secretary of Metro-Mujer, but they depended economically on other Secretariats. As the Women's sub-secretary 5 explained, "It was very difficult to negotiate with the sub-secretary of *Metro-Mujer* because they did not have resources. But, then I told Lucrecia, I read the development plan, and I saw that there are all these lines from each of the secretariats, which are consistent with what is being done in the First Woman's Office; look at this line, money can go out from that line to the adolescent pregnancy program, by this other line to fight anorexia–bulimia. Also, I asked her, how are these [other Secretariats] going

to get involved? Because the First Woman's office doesn't have money, nor does the first lady have a salary" (Women's Sub-secretary 5, interview conducted on 9/3/2017). Thus, at that moment, the women from the First Woman's Office created financial sustainability for their programs and the future Women's Secretariat by compromising resources of other dependencies.

Additionally, in a similar fashion as for Buen Comienzo and Medellín Solidaria, the political will of the mayor was an important factor for inter-sectorial work with the Secretariat of Women and its programs. Sub-secretary 5 recalled, "In the governing council, Lucrecia exposed which secretary, by which line and item, could unite and give money for the programs. And, then, Sergio Fajardo said, it is not if you want, it is mandatory, and those resources are put into the Vice-Secretary Metro-Mujer. We obtained 5,500 million pesos [for the programs in the Office of First Woman]. But, for the Secretary of Women, we finish with 8,500 million pesos annually. If it had not been for that reason the secretary would have entered completely undercapitalized" (Women's Sub-secretary 5, interview conducted on 9/3/2017).

One of the major crises for the Secretary of Women happened with the cancellation of the Clinic of Women. This project was typically designed with high participation from activists, the social movement, academia, and NGOs. The Women's Secretary 3 reported,

> [The project proposal signed by, like, 800 or 900 women from the women's movement of Medellín. This project was jointly thought of by the network for sexual and reproductive rights, the academic women, the municipal government, the Secretariat of Health, and the Women's Social Movement. It was approved in

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the Municipal Council … we were asked if the clinic was going to offer the service of voluntary termination of pregnancy, which had already been a ruling of the Constitutional Court before. This triggered a political diatribe of the most conservative forces, and the clinic was named as the abortion clinic in the public debate. In that debate which lasted approximately 3 long months, in the end, the mayor removed his support (Women's Secretary 3, interview conducted on 9/29/2016)

The mayor asked for the dismissal of the Secretariat of Women, and the Secretariat of Health, both women and activists from CC. The majority of women in CC criticized this decision; for example, Staff member 3 argued that

Definitely, male leadership prioritizes how institutions have prioritized, how churches have prioritized, and how family has prioritized the issues that generate tension. Thus, there were two very good women, very good in front of two very important portfolios, Health and Women, who practically had to resign without the institutional support or the political support they needed for a very important issue. Also, this issue was the issue of gender, it was the claim of women's rights, it was the more coherent and easier claim… I think that it is absolutely graphic that in politics the issues that are first given up are those of women. There could have been many solutions… there was no accompaniment of either the leadership or the movement in this situation. (Staff member 3, interview conducted on 7/13/2016)

For many activists of CC, this controversy showed a lack of cohesion in CC and CC commitment with a strong agenda for women's rights.

There was another common theme raised by the interviewees: the strong political tension between the governments and the Women's Social Movement after Sergio Fajardo's government and Lucrecia's presence, and after the crisis with the Women's Clinic. For Women's Secretary 8, "Hence, let's say that the women's secretary responds to very strong political demands, and from very strong sectors that expected to have an impact on decision-making. Then, sometimes that confusion is created, how we are going to govern? Social movement and state? And, then decisions cannot be collegiate?" (Women's Secretary 8, interview conducted on 9/27/2016). Other women of CC and various secretaries identified this tension as a controlling attitude from the Women's Social Movement, as Women's Secretary 8 explained: "You [Women's Social Movement] are a very important part, but there are women from all economic strata, from all ethnicities, from all conditions, there are lesbian, disabled women, Afro women who also have to reach the secretariat" (Women's Secretary 8, interview conducted on 9/27/2016). Thus, for this secretary, the public entity should benefit a population in general, not a movement or particular political actor.

After the Women Clinic crisis, the challenge was connecting with the other secretaries. According to Women's Secretary 8

"One big task was to Position the [Women's] Secretariat as friendly for all the secretariats, because everyone was in a panic about anything that came from the Women's Secretary because that annoying inclusive language [demands], [Women's Secretary caused] problems. Then, they were avoiding us. Thus, it was a work of internal climate with the peers of the government, to convince them… [Women's Secretary 8 used to tell the other secretaries] we can do very

engaging things, and we can envision very interesting topics that also interest you. The idea was to connect, not as [Secretary of] Health [saying] I need this, but as [saying to] secretary of health, what do you think if I help you in this, what about what you are doing with teenage pregnancy, what if we articulate it with this project of young talented women? That is, how to reverse the version that women just need, and position the message that women are protagonists of development, women are a capital of fundamental participation that you are interested in having us there in your budget, in your photo, in your interests. Therefore, this generated a very cool atmosphere in the administration and out in the city. (Women's Secretary 8, interview conducted on 9/27/2016)

The Women's Role For Pursuing Bottom-Up Programs

In this subsection expands the women role between the women in the offices, and the women in the communities and social movements. As stated before, both group of women had strong cooperation among them.

Women in the communities and organization

The communal leaders, and women from social movements stated that indeed they had position of leadership, and that there are political women that were decisive for these bottom-up programs. The communal leader 2 explained about her example, "Then, of course, a young girl, president of a communal action board, a community educator, and with a different position than the leadership of just asking [to the

government]. I arrived with clear proposals to the administration, and the administration likes that people arrives with clear and forceful proposals. So, in that I also gain institutional recognition and that is positive" (Communal leader 2, interview conducted on 11/29/2017).

In the reflection of women participation in PB, the staff that was constantly working with them argued that women capacity for organizing and mobilizing was higher, which was beneficial for developing programs as PB. Staff member 3 argued

Women have always played an important role, in the case of participatory budgeting I think there were women who were in charge of organizations especially Junta de acción Comunal (community action boards), and Junta Administrativa Local (local administrative boards). I think there is a group of women who connected with this experience of participation and in general grassroots women who were very important for citizen mobilization has also happened. Well, if something happens with the issue of women in the social levels of leadership, is that women are very organized. Usually, they have processes much more systematic, organizations are a bit more organized, a little more stable, they are a little more trained to develop processes with the community, they also tend to have coherent, transparent practices. Really, women who shine the most in participatory budgeting spaces, they were very democratic women who achieved to do their [democratic] exercises with their community that managed to make a return with their community, have moments of accountability" (Staff member 3, interview conducted on 7/13/2016).

A very interesting topic raised by the interviewees was that in the communities the elder women are the ones supporting and doing major tasks of the communal work. As communal leader 1 stated, "Not all of the directive was female but women were very close and we gave a lot of importance to the work of women and especially to older adult women"…"The most hardworking women of Belen are the adult women who are in the social organizations, those are the ones that have to be politically educated, they are who we have to work with" (Communal leader 1, interview conducted on 11/1/2017). In this same way, the same Secretary of Social Development highlighted, "but also organizations of old age that are managed by women, also youth organizations where there was much more participation of women, so the participation of women was very strong in PB" (Secretary of Social Development, interview conducted on 10/10/2016).

Furthermore, it looks that the legacy of elder women was the most visible and stronger in the communities. Communal leader 3 argued, "In our commune there have been women before me who have fought the issue of women, those who started to state that they had to be superior than men, which had a rejection. But, they still struggled to have a budget, so that there is more awareness" (Communal leader 3, interview conducted on 11/30/2017). Lastly, this other woman, see the elder women not only as a work force but political advisor. According to Communal leader 2, "I invited other women from the community to be part of that ballot [for communal elections], why women? Because I am convince that when women are given any role they transform it. That gives me a lot of nostalgia (she cried), so I invited them, to the adult women. And the adult woman has a different formation, a different life experience... I knew that what we really needed was to positively transform our territory and that in the hands of

women that was possible. It was an intuition. Time proved me right, and I would do it again. And if I have to form a movement I would do it of women" (Communal leader 2, interview conducted on 11/29/2017)

Although the majority of the participation in the communal level is female, one of the main critiques is the existed gender dynamic in the territories for applying PB, Buen Comienzo and Medellín Solidaria, is that female leadership tends to be the exception. About female participation the Secretary of Social Development specified, "Of course, very strong, it is more [than men], I would say that in general they were more women than men. What happens is that in this city it has always been this way, the little ants that work are women, men are the ones who have the management positions for example in the Junta [communal action meetings] it is like that, and in many organizations" (Secretary of Social Development, interview conducted on 10/10/2016). Likewise for Grassroots leader 1, "I believe that women do participate, see that the results of the indicators for every 4 people participating, 3 are women. What I question is the role that women play in the framework of these processes … the role women have played in the dynamics is not decisive. Many times were there are women, they are at a lower level of participation, more in information, consultation, peripheral, more assistance, but not in the decision. (Grassroots leader 1, interview conducted on 7/18/2018).

In Buen Comienzo, the most important communal leaders were the communitarian mothers. According to staff member 5 "In the beginning, my great support was the community mothers" (Staff member 5, interview conducted on 1/26/2018). However, at the beginning, the arrival of Buen Comienzo to the different

comunas was negative for these mothers because they were not trained in early childhood education, they have always taken care of kids in an not specialized way. Therefore, the mothers were scared of being replaced by Buen Comienzo. Nonetheless, the local government and the ICBF gave training to these women, staff 5 described, "But in commune 3, for example, community mothers who began to do the early childhood technique, because the state was providing them (Staff member 5, interview conducted on 1/26/2018). The importance of training was that it empowered these women to continue working in pro the early childhood, as staff member 5 exemplified "Those mothers who were being trained were those who had all the ability to say let's go to participatory budgeting and demand that they give more things to children, so, they [the mothers] began to be part of the movements that are generated in the communities for the Participatory budgeting … In commune 3 and commune 8 what … they began to be part of the education commission and there was more power to pull more money than was due to that commune for early childhood issues (Staff member 5, interview conducted on 1/26/2018).

Women Leading Offices

Many interviewees recognized the powerful work of CC women in the directive office of different secretariats. According to Staff member 3, "Practically, in CC the women had the most important portfolios because the secretary of health, the secretary of housing, the secretary of inclusion…the secretary of public works, and the secretary of planning finance bill… have been women who have had almost the entire responsibility within the public sector" (Staff member 3, interview conducted on.

7/13/2016). In this sense, while CC governed, women were leading traditional masculine secretaries, such as planning, budgeting, public work.

One of the strongest statements about the importance of CC in the office was from the focus group by the participant 6 "Women are the ethical reserve of CC in the matter of relating to others. Women always participate in the [formulation] programmatic plan. The women of CC, we are who have led the debate, we have been the ones that originated the most innovative policies…it was the women who put the stamp" (Participant 6, focus group conducted on 9/29/2016). Indeed, women developed the technical plan and the political work of the programs that have been sustainable in time, increased the quality of life in many marginalized areas, and expanded democracy. These programs are related to social work, building capabilities, and democratic participation. Even though in CC the political leaders have been men, and the ones that take the major decision have been a close group of four men, this demonstrated the lack of women in the political decision of CC. Hence, majority of women inside the movements have been working in the programmatic plan for each government.

In the case of Buen Comienzo, Medellín Solidaria and the Secretariat of Women these programs are predominantly manage and execute by women. Staff member 8 claimed "Early childhood is feminine, has been feminine, there is a total matriarchy. Also, in Medellín has been the secretary of women who always looks at the role of women" (Staff member 8, interview conducted on 4/11/2018). Interestingly, when the interviewees want to refer to men, they just name the three that were on the higher power. Staff member 8 asserted, "women have participated, 80% -90% in Buen Comienzo have been women, there have been very important men like Sergio Fajardo,

Alonso Salazar, Fabian Zuluaga" (Staff member 8, interview conducted on 4/11/2018).
In other cases, they explained the high number of women that is vocational issue, Staff
member 7 reiterated, "For Medellín Solidaria is almost the same as Buen Comienzo.
The role of women in this project, I can tell you that Medellín Solidaria was composed of
70% women and 30% men. Because if you are going to find out who are the
psychologists, women, who are the nutritionists, women. Of course there were men, but
mostly these positions were women" (Staff member 7, interview conducted on
7/5/2018).

Beatriz White was key for everything that happened with Buen Comienzo and
Medellín Solidaria. For staff member 5, "And in the process for me, women have been
key, much of the things that are being done in the city with the theme of early childhood
has been created, written, reviewed and implemented by women. Beatriz White was
there thinking about the story and listening to her intuition and convincing Fajardo that it
was important to touch in someway the issue of childhood... Beatriz took over the lobby,
with the movements, governments, secretaries"(Staff member 5, interview conducted on
1/26/2018). Not only in the government, but Beatriz White was called to be the first
senate candidate from CC, which was a very important step for the political role of
women from CC, the participant 2 of the focus group, "we the women were going to play
the political life as a party with Beatriz White" (Participant 2, focus group conducted on
9/29/2016). Staff member 3 furthermore elaborated, "That woman (Beatriz White) I think
was the most important political capital that Fajardo had, the most important because in
the politics you measure yourself with votes, and that woman got the votes that nobody
had taken. So I think that woman had a role won CC" (Staff member 3, interview

conducted on 7/13/2016). Nonetheless, Beatriz White did not win because a bad political strategy from the political party, she got the enough votes to be a senator, but the political party did not.

In participatory budgeting at that time the secretary was a woman, Grassroot leader 1 justified, "The fact that Clara was there, I think was a key thing" Grassroot (Grassroots leader 1, interview conducted on 7/18/2018). Staff member 3 expressed, "She knew the social sector, she had even been a consultant and an expert on the issues of territorial planning, local development plan, and then logically she had a very clear vision of the role of organizations of the processes, of the process differences between a very important territory" (Staff member 3, interview conducted on. 7/13/2016). Grassroots leader 1 reiterated, "Clara gives another perspective to the process, Clara came from being a region director, Clara is a very focused woman who had had power in the region, had read this city" (Grassroots leader 1, interview conducted on 7/18/2018). Furthermore for Staff member 3, "She achieved the vibration, and let's establishes a very good work team and trust that the team was doing an important job in the city. She supported the team in the mayor's office and to the other secretaries" (Staff member 3, interview conducted on 7/13/2016).

First Woman, Lucrecia, and First Lady Martha Liliana.

Lucrecia Ramirez and Marta Liliana Herrera were very influential women for the success of the most important bottom-up policies for the transformation of Medellín. Their political figures and technical knowledge allowed the consecution of resources and the high political status of the Secretariat of Women, Buen Comienzo and Medellín

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Solidaria. I was able to interview Lucrecia Ramirez. But, unfortunately, Martha Liliana passed away in 2015 and I was not able to meet her. Many of the testimony about Martha Liliana form her staff and close friends.

Lucrecia Ramirez played an important role not only for the creation of the secretariat, but for boosting the topic of gender inside CC and the city. As Women's Secretary 8 stated, "Although Fajardo is not a feminist man, he is a man sensitive to gender issues and that we have to thank Lucrecia because he could not be so familiar to gender issues without a person as close as Lucrecia to make him understand the reality of women" (Women's Secretary 8, interview conducted on 9/27/2016). Once Fajardo is elected, Lucrecia did a very interesting task for transforming the meaning of being a first lady. In words of Lucrecia

"When Sergio won, I saw myself as his couple in that place that I call the limbo of the first ladies. It is an extension of the reproductive space, because it is like go there and help, but that help is usually in a very classic, very traditional way ... the mold is help from the reproductive perspective, then do what you would do in the private space, go and take care of children, distribute gifts to poor children, meet in the city with the wives of the wealthy men of the city, the notables, and try to receive donations to give gifts to poor children. Participate in the beauty pageants as part of the departmental beauty committee. An agenda that I consider innocuous, that does not transform anything, structurally, symbolically, economically, or anything, the lives of women in any country; in addition to being a decorative figure. Also, I came from the University and private practices. Hence, I said what I'm going to do at that Office of the First Lady? I

saw it as a waste of time. But, as we had been working all those months on the campaign on the agenda and how there was no formal space that was at the top level as a women's secretariat. I saw it as an opportunity to create a series of projects in the office and we will make symbolic changes such as changing the name, which is no longer, the first lady but a first woman, and begin to influence, to prepare the city and the council of Medellín to create that secretariat (of Women) at the end of that government" (Lucrecia Ramirez, interview conducted on 8/24/2017).

After Fajardo, the government of Salazar exponentially grew Buen Comienzo and Medellín Solidaria, by positionating these programs as Strategic Programs from the office of the First Lady, and the development plan. Hence, for staff member 6, "Martha Liliana was crucial not only for Buen Comienzo but for Medellín Solidaria because she decided from her office that these two programs were going to be the strategic projects of the first lady's office and also those two were scaled to strategic projects in the government plan. That in terms of public policy is what allows these programs to shine as they shone because the mayor decided to put them as strategic projects and that had consequences. And politically, just that exercise of will is going to resolve conflicts in terms of budget" (Staff member 6, interview conducted on 4/16/2018).

Staff member 8 expanded, "A woman with impressive clarity, Marta Li was a woman trained in psychology, with extensive knowledge in education, maternal health, then of course, that was the topic she wanted to work on. She turned around social work in Medellín, not only because she wanted us to go ahead and count numbers of children attended, but [also] she wanted quality to be provided, and when we talk about

quality it is not to provide any service in any scenario, or with any teacher. But, we had to be aware it had to be the best, the best teacher, the best food, the best atmosphere, and that was a process of qualification of continuous improvement, investment was needed, but also a process of generating communities and critical mass that thinks the city differently, think about it [the city] from early childhood" (Staff member 8, interview conducted on 4/11/2018).

Conclusion

In this chapter I analyzed and showed the data from the interviews, the poll and focus groups that I conducted from 2016-2018 in Medellín, Colombia. I divided this chapter according to the common topics that appeared in the different sources. First, I recognized basic demographic information from women of CC. The women were white or mestiza middle and upper middle class women with elevated levels of professionalism. Generally, the women joined CC because of three main causes; its charismatic leader; the ideals of a new type of governance based on principles; and the close connection with grassroots movements and academia.

The first topic that I analyzed concerned the many women from CC that had previous experiences with NGO's and grassroots movements. The majority of women that were secretaries or directing bottom-up programs did have previous expertise directing NGOs and foundations. It is important to highlight that those organizations or movements were progressive and critical of the status quo. Concretely, they tended to advocate against welfare dependence, while being very concerned with inequality, lack of education, opportunities, and corruption in the city. I also analyzed the strategies that

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women pursued in the bottom-up programs they directed. In this section, I dissected each program in an attempt to show the different testimonies about the alliance with grassroots movements, communal female leaders, and the political work with the other secretaries. From this section a major conclusion was the importance of political will of the authority and inter-sectoriality. Many women said that this was a very political work, demanding a heightened capacity for negotiating with the other government sectors. The third theme emerging from the interviews was the women's role in pursuing bottom-up programs. The interviews I reproduced in this section were important for understanding how women saw themselves and how they perceived the women that were leading the secretariats. Fourth, during the interviews there was a recurrent topic about the major political role of the First Woman and the First Lady for the development of bottom-up programs. For many women these two figures, who were very different in style and ideology were the executors and thinkers behind the most important programs in Medellín. Programs that not only changed the quality of life and democracy in the city, but the mentality of many.

Conclusion

The overarching purpose of this dissertation was to examine women's political agency and organizational influence in the creation of innovative democratic institutions and inclusionary social policies, for the progressive change of Medellín. I focused on the women that were part of CC, Secretaries from CC, women staffs from the Secretariats and other women from social movements and NGOs outside CC. I analyzed the time frame from 2004 to 2012. My research shows that in the recent history of Medellín, women have had a prominent place. Direct participation and female political agency were partially responsible for the design of new urban development programs, such as the four bottom-up programs; 1) Participatory Budgeting, 2) Buen Comienzo, 3) Medellín Solidaria, and 4) The Secretariat of Women. These programs increased the quality of life and expanded democracy in Medellín.

One of the most important objectives that this dissertation was to increase the visibility of women's unwritten history. There is almost no documented history of women of the CC and their impact on the creation of programs that increased the quality of life and expanded democracy in the city of Medellín. Nevertheless, in this research, I also included women from other sectors, not only CC.

It was my goal, through this research, to expand the debate about Latin American Feminism and theories of direct democracy. In the context of a developing country with a colonized history, women in Medellín have been excluded from political spaces that have been dominated by white and elite men, which is still the case in every

level of politics. During the CC government, women that were in power, and women at the community level were able to cooperate in the realization of bottom-up programs. Additionally, women in the Secretariats were able to cooperate with other Secretariats to develop the four bottom-up programs. Nevertheless, the political will and support of the mayors were fundamental for the influx of women in the Secretariats, the fomentation of women in important roles regarding the application of strategic programs, and the sustainability of them. Particularly, the mayors supported the creation of programs that were amplifying women's rights, and the mayors fostered the political participation of women at the communal level. In this sense, I found a complementary element of cooperation between genders, which is in tune with communal Latin American feminism (Paredes, 2010).

However, the case of women in Medellín also showcases the continued paradox of women's agency (Kabeer, 2000) and its dualistic nature (Yuval-Davis, 1993). Powerful men allowed these women to developed political agency, within a patriarchal structure that is led by men. Hence, this structure determined the level of that agency and the consequences of developing that agency. This was evident in the Women's Clinic crisis. Even though this program was an official program inside the government development plan, with the support of CC, a major sector of society, and the Women's Social Movement, the mayor decided to cancel the construction of that Clinic because of the strong opposition and pressures from the conservative sector and the Catholic Church of Medellín. As a consequence, the two women running the Secretariat of Health and the Secretariat of Women had to resign during a public scandal, and a project that would have advanced women's rights was abolished.

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Through a qualitative method, I analyzed forty-three interviews, a poll, and a focus group. The main findings were the strong alliance between the women leading the four bottom-up programs and the grassroots movements, the communal female leaders, and the other Secretaries. Additionally, the women from the CC had experience in activism and they have been members of NGOs that were generally generating opposition to the status quo. Also, these women opposed the paternalistic and welfare dependency logics that the state used for creating policies to fight against poverty or the lack of basic services in the comunas. Thus, when women were leading the bottom-up programs they already had a strong relationship with grassroots movements and the communities, which helped to formulate and apply the four bottom-up programs. Moreover, the interviewees argued that each of the four programs had an approach for developing capacity, not of dependency on the state.

Another important finding was that, during the political campaigns, CC women were typically doing the technical work and creating the programs for the government plan. The interviewees called this the programmatic work. While men tended to be involved in the political sphere and were the political leaders, women were generally involved in the development of the most important programs that later were applied during the governance of Fajardo and Salazar. This programmatic plan was the beginning of the consolidation of the four bottom-up programs.

Through the interviews, all the participants highlighted the radical and important political role of the first woman, Lucrecia Ramirez, and first lady, Martha Liliana Herrera. Both developed very different agendas, Lucrecia had a feminist agenda, whereas Martha Liliana a childhood and poverty agenda. Both took on grassroots, communal,

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and initial institutional efforts to exponentially transform them into strong and sustainable programs that challenged the traditional mentality of a city in topics such as women's oppression and capabilities, the professionalization and importance of free early childcare, and the dimensionality for fighting extreme poverty. Additionally, both were recognized for their professional life, technical work, and their lack of interest in protocol and traditional social activities. Nevertheless, the mayors and their political will supported both agendas. Lucrecia and Martha had direct influence among the Secretariats and authorities of the city, but in great part because the mayors gave them that power. Additionally they had charismatic and plausible power among society because of the programs that they developed, the way they communicated and developed those programs, and the controversial changes they achieved. This was particularly true for Lucrecia, who confronted a conservative, religious, and machista society with a progressive and feminist agenda for women and developed programs outside the old-fashioned framework of rights' vindication from the Women's Social Movement.

This research demonstrated that women's political agency in Medellín by highlighting the impact of women in the public sphere, is based on the synergy between state and civil society. This extends to explain synergy as a larger phenomenon for strengthening democratic practices (George & Bennett, 2005) (Tendler, 1997).

The four programs I purposefully selected are ideal cases as they are the most likely scenarios because they followed the theoretical predictions generated by my initial hypothesis (Eckstein, 1975). Thus my case study supports my theory that female

political participation can explain positive political change outcomes witnessed in Medellín.

Recommendation for future research

This research is a starting point for further research about women's political agency, good governance, and synergy among the state and civil society. The political tension lived in Medellín while I was performing the interviews, and my limited time and resources, only allowed me to interview forty-three women and from them, four were communal leaders. I would have liked to interview many more communal leaders. A way to do that would be to go back during non-election times, going to all the *comunas*, including the more marginalized and insecure areas.

Since I wanted to remain focused on women's experiences, I did not include the testimony of men that I interviewed. Moreover, I did not have enough time and space for including the interviews of men. Nevertheless, these interviews with men will be part of my next project, which targets the difference between the perception of women's agency between men and women in a political movement such as CC. It is important to find out if there is a different perspective towards political agency based on gender, and if I can perceive new masculinities inside CC.

Additionally, I did not include a section about women's interviews where they answered if their gender was a source of discrimination or limitation in their public job. This section has the most sensitive information about women in CC, in politics, and in organizations that were supporting the bottom-up policies. I did not include this section because this is a crucial research topic that deserves a dedicated project. The literature

framework that I used in this dissertation fell short of analyzing the constraints in politics and personal afflictions women routinely suffer. Hence, this is another investigation that I am currently working on.

As I support my theory of the importance of female political agency with this dissertation, this research can be generalizable if supplemented with other cases in Latin America about the role of women's political agency for the progressive transformation of cities. Furthermore, I can expand the case of CC and its women toward other social movements in the region for finding common threads about the creation of innovative social program and to analyze the different gender dynamics in progressive movements were women strive to strengthen the synergy of civil society and the state.

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