

The Post-Political Link Between Gender and Climate Change: The Case of the Nationally Determined Contributions Support Programme

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Abstract: This paper interrogates to what extent the gender component of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) Support Programme of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reaffirms the post-political condition of climate change. By analysing the incorporation of gender in the NDC Support Programme and its articulation in Colombia's Low-Carbon Development Strategy, the study exposes the strategic, epistemological, and normative risks of advancing feminist ideas within mainstream institutional frameworks. Thus, this paper shows the opportunities and challenges of dislocating the political and epistemological boundaries of climate change policies by promoting feminist ideas.

Keywords: gender; climate change; feminism; post-political; Colombia.

Introduction

Feminist movements have managed to insert their ideas into institutional contexts. Governments and international organisations have begun to abandon gender-neutral approaches, addressing issues such as sexual violence, the gender wage gap, and the equal participation of women in politics (Prügl 2017; Céspedes-Báez and Jaramillo Ruiz 2018). Recent efforts to mainstream gender in climate actions suggest the consolidation of feminist knowledge and expertise in international governance (Cohen 2018). However, as the gender lens garners strength in public policies and projects, scholars have started to

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question the possibilities, motivations, limits, and consequences of feminists' growing influence (MacGregor 2009, 2013; Cuomo 2011).

This research analyses the inclusion of gender in the Nationally Determined Contributions (hereafter NDC) Support Programme of the United Nations Development Programme (hereafter UNDP) and its articulation in Colombia's Low-Carbon Development Strategy. Since 2008, UNDP has supported more than 140 countries to access over US\$3.2b in grant finance in the areas of adaptation, mitigation, and monitoring and reporting. Within the framework of the Paris Agreement of 2015, the NDC Support Programme seeks to advance UNDP's climate strategies by bringing 'about a real and positive change for living and future generations by advancing ambitious progress towards resilient, zero carbon development' (UNDP 2018). For accomplishing this objective, the NDC Support Programme works directly with 25 countries, strengthening their capacities for governance, financing, planning, transparency and private sector engagement. Furthermore, it seeks to incorporate gender as a cross-cutting component of climate change management strategies (UNDP NDC Support Programme 2018).

On January 2018, Colombia had access to US\$802 500 as part of its participation in the NDC Support Programme. The purpose of these funds is 'to build on previous work under [the] UNDP Low Emission Capacity Building (LECB) Programme, including support for Colombia's Low-Carbon Development Strategy, to assist the country in achieving its NDC' (UNDP NDC Support Programme 2018). Accordingly, this programme seeks to advance the implementation of the country's carbon reduction goals and related sustainable development objectives, including the advancement of gender equality (UNDP 2017b).

Swyngedouw (2010) describes the post-political condition of climate change. By using this post-political frame, Swyngedouw argues that, although climate change has turned into a matter of public concern, the techno-managerial machinery has institutionalised post-political forms of governing that reduce citizens' possibility of political participation. Building this framework, MacGregor (2013) cautions feminist engagement with climate change action, underscoring the dangers of perpetuating the dominance of experts in public decision-making.

Based on Swyngedouw and MacGregor's work on the post-politics of climate change, this paper interrogates to what extent the gender component of the NDC Support Programme reaffirms the post-political condition of climate change, understood as the construction of discourses that reduce citizens' political right to dissent (Swyngedouw 2010). Accordingly, it evaluates if MacGregor's warnings about the strategic, epistemological, and normative risks of advancing feminist ideas within the dominant, neoliberal climate change narrative materialise. In line with the theme of this special issue of *Contexto Internacional*, this article explores the possibilities of dislocating the political and epistemological boundaries of international relations by advancing feminist knowledge within mainstream institutional frameworks.

This investigation examined the information available on the NDC Support Programme official webpage. A detailed case study of Colombia's participation complement-

ed these findings. Primarily, the study reviewed a 47-page policy document drafted by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (hereafter MESD), which outlines the country's partaking in the NDC Support Programme. Ivan Dario Valencia, Coordinator of Colombia's Low-Carbon Development Strategy, and Ana Milena Ruiz, climate change contractor of the MESD, were interviewed to supplement this document-based research. The semi-structured interviews revolved around three central questions: How does Colombia's NDC Support Programme frame the gender-responsive approach? What is the relation between gender and climate change? Why and how has gender been included in climate action?

The study of Colombia's NDC Support Programme is particularly relevant. In recent years, local communities have opposed the exploration and exploitation of non-renewable natural resources. They have pushed for referendums (*consultas populares*), in which local districts have voted against of exploration and exploitation projects in their territories. For example, in 2017, there were five referendums about the exploration and exploitation of non-renewable natural resources: Cabrera, Cajamarca, Pijao, Arbeláez and Jesús María. These referendums have mobilised a large part of the population, influencing political agendas and institutional norms and opening new opportunities for debate and democratic participation (Dietz 2018).

However, the growing number of referendums has generated resistance. On 11 October 2018, the Constitutional Court deemed that these referendums were illegal, insisting that the central government and not local municipalities owned the underground resources. In this ruling, it urged Congress to define mechanisms of citizen participation to allow for local communities to veto the exploration and exploitation of non-renewable resources (Corte Constitucional 2018). In this sense, Colombia's NDC Support Programme comes at a time when there is increasing construction of discourses that reduce citizens' political right to dissent. Thus, the importance of examining how these international initiatives alter or reaffirm the post-political condition of climate change.

To analyse the case proposed, this article is structured in four sections. First, it discusses the literature on gender and climate change, identifying the main issues that have caught the attention of feminist scholars. More precisely, the study underscores the current post-political condition of climate change and the challenges, problems, and opportunities for bringing feminist knowledge into mainstream climate policies and actions. Second, the research reviews the inclusion of gender in the NDC Support Programme. Third, it explores the articulation of gender in Colombia's NDC Support Programme. As a conclusion, the study confirms the dangers raised by feminist scholars about the strategic, epistemological, and normative risks of advancing gender equality within the dominant climate change narrative. However, it reveals the possible openings for furthering women's empowerment and participation to resist the construction of post-political discourses that reduce citizens' political right to dissent.

Gender and climate change

The intersection between gender and climate change has caught the attention of feminist scholars. Within this literature, most authors argue that climate change has severe ramifications on gender inequalities (Denton 2002; Masika 2002; Skinner 2011). For instance, since women constitute the majority of the world's poor, they face greater economic, social and political barriers that limit their capacity of coping with the effects of climate change (Hemmati and Röhr 2009). In this sense, women and girls are more likely to die from natural disasters (Williams 2013). Notably, women and girls living in rural areas are more dependent on natural resources for their living and encounter unequal access to decision-making processes, which augments the threat of climate change to their food security (Cuomo 2011). For these reasons, environmental degradation can increase the gender gap by crippling women's material welfare and livelihoods.

Despite the growing evidence on the differentiated impact of environmental catastrophes, feminist scholars have claimed that gender continues to be the missing piece of the response to climate change (Nelson et al 2002; Lambrou and Piana 2006; Alston 2014). As a result, they have sought to challenge the gender-neutral design of climate adaptation and mitigation strategies, sprouting institutional efforts to bring women's knowledge and experiences into mainstream institutional environmental policies and agendas (Khosla and Masaud 2010). From this perspective, feminist scholars have sought to ensure 'climate justice' by addressing the asymmetries and inequalities 'created and/or exacerbated by climate change, such as sexism, racism, classism and xenophobia' (Dankelman 2010: 160). In doing so, they have revealed the linkage between environmental variations and women's political, social, and economic situations (Hemmati and Röhr 2009).

For feminist scholars, climate governance continually excludes women's concerns and voices (Hemmati and Röhr 2009; MacGregor 2009; Cuomo 2011). For instance, Alston (2014) suggests that climate policies and practices have failed to incorporate gender mainstreaming in mitigation and adaptation strategies. On a similar note, Cuomo (2011) underscores the historical injustices and relations of power that trump women's possibilities of contributing to the formulation of environmental strategies. Williams (2016) maintains that the invisibility of women in climate change policies inhibits them from being part of the solution. These authors claim that the lack of attention to the gendered reverberations of climate change results in the abandonment of vulnerable groups, including women. As a way of contesting women's marginalisation from environmental politics, feminist scholars have urged not just governments, but NGOs and other institutions, as well as other (non-feminist) academics writing on environmental issues, to incorporate a gender lens in the institutional frameworks aimed at addressing environmental degradation (MacGregor 2009; Alston 2014; Dazé and Dekens 2017).

From a feminist perspective, dealing with climate change requires collective efforts in governance, decision-making, and participation (Denton 2002; Skinner 2011). It demands the inclusion of a gender lens in the design of public policies, adaptation planning, risk assessment, and implementation, ensuring that women are empowered and supported to take action on their behalf (Arora-Jonsson 2011; Alston 2014). Furthermore, a gender-in-

formed response to climate change seeks to eliminate barriers to participation, increase technical capacities, and provide gender-responsive access to information and resources (Dazé and Dekens 2017).

Recently, gender has started to appear more frequently in mainstream institutional climate policies and agendas. However, this integration of gender has not been exempt from criticism. For example, Skinner (2011: 7) argues that, while there is increasing acceptance of the need to tackle climate change through a gender lens, ‘too often gender concerns are added into policies or processes as an afterthought and only focus on issues considered relevant to women.’ Likewise, Bryan et al (2018) show that, although policymakers are gradually recognising the importance of gender in assessing climate vulnerability and developing effective adaptation policies, lack of funding to support gender integration, lack of staff capacity on gender, and socio-cultural constraints act as barriers to the incorporation of gender into climate policies. Additionally, Arora-Jonsson (2011) suggests that, when implemented, gender assessments of climate change tend to replicate stereotypes, stigmas, and dichotomies, reinforcing western biases and reproducing an image of poor women from the South. These authors seem to hint that something troubling occurs when gender approaches find their way into mainstream environmental policies and agendas, cautioning about the limited and un-reflexive incorporation of feminist knowledge in climate change policies and actions.

Swyngedouw (2010) describes the emergence and consolidation of climate change’s post-political condition. For him, the post-politicisation of climate change evacuates democratic deliberation by privileging expert knowledge and technocratic management in public decision-making. Swyngedouw (2010: 225) states, ‘Post-politics is marked by the predominance of a managerial logic in all aspects of life, the reduction of the political to administration where decision-making is increasingly considered to be a question of expert knowledge and not of political position.’ Building on Swyngedouw’s critique, MacGregor (2013) underscores the risks of insisting on the incorporation of gender-sensitive responses within mainstream institutions. She exposes the need to examine the way gender/climate expertise can, in some cases, contribute to furthering the current post-political condition, understood as the construction of discourses that reduce citizens’ political rights to dissent (Swyngedouw 2010). In other words, MacGregor reveals the importance of analysing how the drive for expert knowledge has represented a loss of political democracy, depoliticising decision-making in the name of a neoliberal rationale that seeks to maximise efficiency and minimise contestation. For her, this post-political condition privileges the voices of experts and bureaucrats, reducing citizen’s rights to engage in the formulation of policies and eroding public forms of resistance.

According to MacGregor (2013), a post-political theoretical framework is a valuable tool for problematising feminist environmentalism interaction with the widely accepted climate change narrative that sustains elite neoliberal interests. She pinpoints three potential strategic, epistemological, and normative challenges of a post-political understanding of climate change. Regarding the strategic consequences, she suggests that, by joining the neoliberal climate change bandwagon, ‘the arguments of women’s climate justice groups may, by strategic necessity, be confined to getting the word “gender” included in key pol-

icy documents and to gaining recognition of the material impacts of climate change on women' (MacGregor 2013: 624). This limited inclusion would fail to question hegemonic understandings of gender in the environmental public realm. Furthermore, the bandwagoning of feminism in mainstream climate approaches would privilege the role of individuals in climate action, relinquishing public political acts of resistance.

Concerning the epistemological implications, MacGregor (2013) underscores the risk of abandoning feminist commitment to positionality and situated knowledge. In other words, by accepting the discourses of a small number of natural scientists about climate change, feminist environmentalism might collaborate with framing the issue in stereotypically masculinised ways. As a result, the feminist boarding of the neoliberal climate change bandwagon might reinforce managerial programmes that serve elite male interests. This detachment from women's local experiences can propel ideas of climate change as an apolitical, impersonal, and universal threat, silencing the meaningful critique articulated by feminist in the environmental arena. As Haraway (1988: 575) explains, 'science – the real game in town – is rhetoric, a series of efforts to persuade relevant social actors that one's manufactured knowledge is a route to a desired form of very objective power'. In this sense, a feminist response to global climate change must challenge not only masculine technical and expert knowledge about climate change but also the tendency to portray women as vulnerable or virtuous (Arora-Jonsson 2011). Thus, by accepting the conventional narrative about climate change, feminist activists and scholars might neglect the basic principle of feminist epistemology, which insists on the social situation of the knower and the power relations that lie behind the manufacture of 'scientific' knowledge.

As for the normative implications, MacGregor (2013) highlights the neglect of questions of power in the dominant climate discourse. This characteristic of the neoliberal climate change bandwagon is particularly problematic for feminist agendas. It ignores the differential impacts of climate change and leaves social asymmetries untouched. By presenting climate change as the ultimate threat to humanity, environmental policies reinforce a feminised image of nature. They replicate a narrative that incites a response because climate change is a menace to human life and not because humans are harming the environment. In this sense, women and vulnerable people are part of the dominant climate framing only because they will be hurt. Hence, these climate narratives use women's bodies and situations to reinvigorate the idea of nature as the enemy, rather than pushing for the contestation of gender inequality and oppression.

Based on MacGregor's ideas, it is possible to propose an alternative for evaluating the post-political risks of the consolidation of gender/climate expertise and, in consonance with this issue of *Contexto Internacional*, explore the possibilities of dislocating the political and epistemological boundaries of international relations by advancing feminist knowledge. First, feminist environmentalism research must examine the extent to which gender has been tokenised to advance neoliberalism and reinforce the post-political condition of climate change. Second, it needs to inquire if the linkage of gender and climate expertise encourages political engagement and empowerment or, instead, upholds the dangers of waiting for slow and cumbersome democratic deliberation processes to func-

tion. Namely, feminist approaches to environmental policies must identify the articulation of urgency as one of the central tropes for justifying the replacement of democratic participation by gender/climate expertise. Third, a post-political analysis of gender in climate politics implies looking into how the construction of nature as an enemy plays down social inequalities and asymmetries and downplays the harm done by humans to the environment. Here, feminist environmentalism must question the emphasis on the protection of women from climate-related disasters.

It is this post-political theoretical framework that guides the analysis of the UNDP NDC Support Programme.

Gendering climate action in the NDC Support Programme

The NDC Support Programme is part of the NDC Partnership, a multi-stakeholder platform that aids governments in the development and implementation of national climate plans and outlines emission reduction and resilience targets. By facilitating technical assistance and knowledge sharing, the NDC Partnership is intended to endorse the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the objectives enshrined in the Paris Agreement. As such, it is part of the commitments set out in Article 4 of the Paris Agreement, which establishes, ‘Each Party shall prepare, communicate and maintain successive nationally determined contributions that it intends to achieve. Parties shall pursue domestic mitigation measures, with the aim of achieving the objectives of such contributions’ (United Nations 2015: Art. 4.2). In this vein, the NDC Support Programme seeks to assist emerging economies and developing countries in the implementation of their NDCs and related development objectives (UNDP 2017b).

The countries that participate in the NDC Support Programme envision a transition towards ‘resilient, inclusive green economies’ (UNDP 2017a). In doing so, they take part in a gender mainstreaming strategy, which includes the design of ‘gender-responsive climate actions.’ According to the UNDP, the ‘gender-responsive measures’ seek to ‘take into account the impact of climate-related events on women’s livelihoods and women’s specific contributions to climate adaptation and zero-carbon economy’ (UNDP 2019). The objective of these measures is to ‘demonstrate that purposefully connecting the interlinked processes of climate change and gender equality can lead to more inclusive, successful outcomes’ (UNDP 2019). Additionally, the countries participating in the NDC Support Programme must ‘undertake gender work and need to conduct an in-depth gender analysis that examines the legal, policy, and institutional frameworks related to climate change and gender’ (International Climate Initiative 2018).

It is possible to draw the axes of the programme from the observations made by the UNDP Administrator, Achim Steiner. First, the programme makes climate actions a condition of development. In the words of Steiner, “development” should not be a buzzword of the Paris discourse but the driver for implementing climate actions that are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals’ (Steiner 2017). This integration of climate and development planning can ‘make us more fit for the challenges of the 21st century, forcing us to

leave old ways behind, and embrace new technologies' (Steiner 2017). Thus, as framed by Steiner, the programme marks a rupture between the 'past' and the 'future.'

Second, the programme conceives climate change as a threat to the global economy. In this sense, it aims to secure the financial assets that climate change endangers, positing climate action as the 'best insurance policy' (Steiner 2017). Lastly, the programme is globalising. It seeks to engage with governments, business and financial communities, social actors, and international institutions, for the challenges require 'us to work together across department walls and discipline lines and country borders, pooling our respective skills, resources and creativity' (Steiner 2017).

The documents describing the NDC Support Programme do not define gender-responsive actions. Nevertheless, according to Steiner, the purpose is to 'help countries make these important linkages and create an integrated approach' (NDC Cluster 2017). As such, it follows the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (hereafter SDG), which recognise the potential synergies and benefits of integrating development priorities (United Nations 2015). The UNDP describes the possible linkages between climate change (SDG 13) and gender equality (SDG 5) in the *Gender-responsive national communications toolkit*. In this report, the UNDP develops a gender-responsive checklist that instructs state actors on how to include a gender-responsive approach in their climate policies and programmes. For example, when engaging with stakeholders, they must document 'gender-differentiated evidence and perspectives across sectors' and articulate the efforts between government agencies responsible for gender equality and climate change (Nelson 2015). It also states that government agencies must consider gender expertise when 'stocktaking' their gender-responsive teams and actions.

Furthermore, the UNDP highlights the building blocks for gender-responsive NDCs in a document titled *Gender equality in national climate action: Planning for gender-responsive nationally determined contributions*. This document makes analysis and consultations, institutional frameworks and co-ordination mechanisms, alignment of national policy and planning instruments, and monitoring and evaluation central to gender-responsive approaches. It also identifies a series of challenges to integrating gender concerns into climate change policy. For example, it highlights the difficulty of operationalising these plans, the lack of knowledge on how to incorporate climate change, gender equality and sustainable development, and the need to develop capacities at the national level. Despite these barriers, it claims that 'the integration of gender equality and a gender-responsive approach to NDC planning and implementation will result in better climate change outcomes, as well as more rapid progress towards achieving sustainable development and poverty reduction goals' (Huyer 2016).

The incorporation of gender into climate action occurs through the formulation of specific discourses. In the NDC Support Programme, the importance of gender is justified by remitting to expert research that exposes the correlation between gender inequality and higher rates of environmental degradation. It also associates women's participation in parliament with the ratification of environmental treaties (Huyer 2016; Nelson 2015;

Steiner 2017). In this sense, the gender and climate narrative insists on the way climate change deepens gender inequalities and the way gender equality reduces climate change's hazardous impacts. This tethering process implies that climate change policies must integrate a gender perspective. Those countries that want to be recognised as 'developed' must adopt a gender-responsive lens for governing the impact of climate-related events, designing climate adaptation and mitigation policies, and advancing towards a zero-carbon economy. From this perspective, the NDC Support Programme aims to expel 'old ways' by abandoning business-as-usual models with economies based on polluting technologies and addressing gender inequality. More specifically, concerning gender, this requires establishing institutional frameworks and mechanisms 'to ensure gender integration into climate planning and policy processes and bodies' (Huyer 2016: 26).

From a post-political perspective, the NDC Support Programme seems to reinforce managerial programmes that privilege expert knowledge. These experts seek to expel 'old ways' by considering the impact of climate-related events on women's livelihoods. Furthermore, they must purposefully prove that advancing gender equality generates more successful climate outcomes. In this sense, although the NDC Support Programme does not define gender-responsive actions, it does underscore the importance of 'gender expertise' when stocktaking climate teams and actions. Accordingly, the NDC Support Programme identifies the lack of knowledge and the need to develop capacities as the main challenges for advancing gender equality into climate change policies, making expert knowledge a fundamental element for achieving 'rapid progress towards sustainable goals.' The lack of references to women's political engagement, democratic participation, and empowerment reinforces the post-political framing of the NDC Support Programme.

Under the current NDC Support Programme, gender inequality and climate change must be solved to preserve the well-being of the economy. The aim is to secure the financial assets that climate change and gender inequality endanger. These struggles go hand-in-hand. Gender equality produces effective climate action, and vice versa, effective climate action generates gender equality. The investment and government action are justified because they safeguard economic growth and financial stability.

Additionally, the construction of climate change as the enemy is central to the articulation of the NDC Support Programme. The idea of climate action as the 'best insurance policy' shows the extent to which the notion of risk is fundamental to justifying policy responses. The conception that climate change deepens gender inequalities and gender equality reduces climate change's hazardous impact reinforces the image that climate change is a menace to human life, rather than the understanding that humans are harming nature. Thus, the NDC Support Programme articulates a narrative that builds on the dangers of slow government responses and the need for 'expert' and 'urgent' solutions to climate threats.

It is within the broader institutional framework that Colombia's participation in the NDC Support Programme comes to the fore.

The gender component in Colombia's NDC Support Programme

On the NDC Support Programme's webpage, it is possible to find a fact sheet about Colombia's participation. It states that the target of the project is to reduce 20 to 30% of Colombia's greenhouse emissions by providing US\$802 500 in international financial support. These funds seek to support the country's transition towards a low-carbon economy and carbon neutrality, taking into account gender equality (UNDP NDC Support Programme 2018). Colombia's NDC Support Programme seeks to 'translate sectoral mitigation action plans into implementation plans (including mitigation actions prioritized by ministries); strengthen the country's institutional capacities and define sectoral responsibilities; develop enabling measures; engage the private sector; and incorporate gender considerations into climate change management' (UNDP NDC Support Programme 2018).

Colombia's NDC Support Programme has four focus areas: Institutional Capacity and Enabling Environment, Implementation Plans for NDC Mitigation Component, Long-term Climate Strategy – 2050 Strategy, and Private Sector Engagement. References to gender appear in three of the descriptions of these focus areas. First, regarding institutional capacity and enabling environment, Colombia's NDC Support Programme states that the country must 'facilitate the systematic incorporation of a cross-cutting gender approach, mainly through National System of Climate Change and National Climate Change Policy' (UNDP NDC Support Programme 2018). Second, in the focus area of private sector engagement, Colombia must 'develop a roadmap for the construction and approval of a gender-responsive 2050 Strategy for climate change management' (UNDP NDC Support Programme 2018). Third, when carrying out its implementation plans for the NDC Mitigation Component, Colombia must 'support the formulation and approval of gender-responsive, sectoral mitigation implementation plans by five ministries to achieve Colombia's NDC mitigation target for 2030' (UNDP NDC Support Programme 2018). Thus, the gender component emerges as an integral part of the programme.

On 17 January 2018, the Direction of Climate Change of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MESD) published the project 'Construction for Capacity Building for Contribution,' which outlined Colombia's participation in the NDC Support Programme. This 47-page policy document exposes the challenges, context, objectives, and strategies aimed at executing the US\$802 500 provided by the NDC Support Programme (UNDP NDC Support Programme 2018). Gender is a core component of this project.

In this document, the MESD frames the incorporation of gender into climate policies within a broader normative background. It remits to Law 51 of 1981, which approved Colombia's ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); and it underscores the legal mandates enshrined in articles 13 and 43 of Colombia's constitution, which recognise equal rights and opportunities between women and men and reject any gender discrimination. Furthermore, the MESD describes Law 188 of 1995, which created the Presidential Advisory on the Equality of Women, emphasising the impulse given to the adoption of a gender lens in the creation, administration, and monitoring of policies and programmes. It also shows how the Na-

tional Development Plan of 2010–2014 refers to gender equality as ‘the construction of equal relationships between women and men –from their differences– as well as equality of rights, the recognition of their dignity as human beings and the equal value of their contributions to society’ (Ruiz 2017). Additionally, the MESD mentions the National Advisory of Economic and Social Policy 161 of 2013 (CONPES for its acronym in Spanish), which calls on Colombian ministries to incorporate a gender approach in their planning processes and budget with the purpose of strengthening the gender expertise of its public servants and duties (Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development [Colombia] 2018).

The MESD remits to the normative obligations of the Paris Agreement to insist on the different roles, necessities, and abilities of men and women in climate change management. It claims, ‘the incorporation of a gender perspective in the design of mitigation and adaptation policies, programmes, and actions can facilitate the successful and sustainable implementation of climate management’ (Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development [Colombia] 2018). For the MESD, climate change can exacerbate structural inequalities in society. Consequently, the inclusion of a gender lens in climate change management represents an opportunity to ‘identify, uncover, and transform the differentiated vulnerabilities between men and women’ (Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development [Colombia] 2018: 6).

The MESD claims, ‘If a gender approach is not adopted in the management of climate change, some existing structural inequities could be aggravated as a consequence of the effects of climate change, due to the country’s geographical, climatological, and environmental vulnerability’ (Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development [Colombia] 2018: 7). It insists that climate policies and projects cannot be successful if they do not consider the gender component of climate management. In this sense, the absence of a gender perspective increases the country’s vulnerability to climate change. In sum, the MESD underscores the ‘differential vulnerabilities’ and makes the incorporation of a gender perspective a fundamental component for ‘a successful and sustainable’ response to climate change. As explained by Ana Milena Ruiz (2017), it articulates the gender-responsive approach based on two theses: 1) climate change can aggravate structural inequalities; and 2) men and women have different roles, needs, abilities in climate change management.

The public policy document states that one of the challenges for carrying out the NDC Support Programme is ‘the lack of information about the differential effects of climate change in men and women’ (Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development [Colombia] 2018: 10). For this reason, with this project, the MESD aims to generate information regarding the following questions:

What are the actors (detailed stakeholder mapping) that can be strategic allies in the incorporation of gender considerations in climate change management and construction of associated capabilities? What are the main differences between men and women concerning the divisions of work and employability? What are the main differences, between men and women, in access to resources and participation in decision-making processes? How can women be differentially affected by the effects of climate change? How can women contribute, in a differential way, to reducing emissions and adapting to climate change?

What are the gaps and barriers that must be overcome in order to effectively include the gender approach in the management of climate change? (Ruiz 2017: 5).

These questions shed light on the curious link between climate change and gender. On the one hand, the MESD insistently articulates the idea that without a gender approach climate management cannot tackle the pervasive effects of climate change. On the other hand, it admits that it lacks information on the differentiated impact of climate change on men and women.

The research interviews reaffirmed this conundrum of insisting on a gender perspective for tackling climate change and the lack of knowledge about gender. For instance, Ivan Dario Valencia (interview by the authors, 14 December 2018), Coordinator of Colombia's Low-Carbon Development Strategy, insisted, 'the impact of climate change on men and women is different and, for this reason, gender must be considered when designing mitigation and adaptation strategies.' However, he also acknowledged that the Colombian initiative was in the process of elaborating more explicit guidelines for incorporating gender in its environmental programmes. In this sense, although they recognised the importance of including a gender perspective in climate change management, public servants were still struggling to figure out the practices and actions necessary for incorporating gender into their policies and projects.

With the aim of gathering information, as a first outcome of the NDC Support Programme, the MESD seeks to incorporate gender into climate management by strengthening institutional capacities. For the MESD, to achieve this result, the government must design a cross-cutting gender management strategy, creating indicators for evaluating and monitoring the challenges and opportunities and mapping key stakeholders. To construct this strategy, the MESD identifies three key steps:

1. Analyse the main differences between men and women concerning the division of roles, tasks, employability, access to resources, and participation in decision-making processes;
2. Identify the barriers and opportunities for the inclusion of a gender perspective, recognising how women and men are affected differently by climate change and how they can contribute, in different ways, to reducing emissions and adapting to climate change;
3. Identify the institutions, organisations and networks of women working on the issue of gender equality that can be strategic allies and with whom synergies can be established (Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development [Colombia] 2018: 19).

These three points aim to form the starting ground for the incorporation of gender as a cross-cutting component of climate management.

Lastly, Colombia's NDC Support Programme contemplates the hiring of one 'gender expert' and the creation of a consulting project for the elaboration of 'gender guidelines' for climate change management. The role of the 'expert' is to identify possible alliances to incorporate the gender approach in climate change management, including the Presidential Council for Women's Rights and civil society organisations (Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development [Colombia] 2018: 25).

The inclusion of gender in Colombia's NDC Support Programme appears as a paradox. The word 'gender' finds its way into almost every section of the 47-page policy outline. Throughout the whole document, this term is mentioned 119 times, being the seventh most frequently employed word – 0.46% frequency relative to the total words counted. As a case in point, there are 125 references to the word 'climate' – 0.48% frequency relative to the total words counted – only six more than that of gender. However, the term 'equality' appears 19 times, 'participation' 14 times, 'empowerment' six times, and 'discrimination' and 'inequality' five times, with a frequency relative to the total words counted of 0.07, 0.05, 0.02, 0.02, 0.02% respectively. Thus, although the word 'gender' is frequently employed, other concepts that are part of feminist advocacy do not find as much space.

A void of content follows the persistence of the inclusion of the term 'gender.' In other words, the MESD only provides a faint hint of the definition, articulation, and implementation of a gender perspective in climate change policies and actions. As such, on some occasions, the term 'gender' is included at the end of a sentence without any concrete explanation of what this insertion implies. For example, the policy document states, 'The country needs continuous support in this type of cooperation to capitalise on the implementation of its NDC to 2030 at the institutional and private levels with a transversal gender focus' (Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development [Colombia] 2018: 9). On a similar note, it also reads, '[Colombia's NDC Support Programme] seeks to generate an environment that allows the decarbonisation of the economy in the second half of the century, integrating a gender approach' (Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development [Colombia] 2018: 20). Hence, on various occasions, the policy documents add the phrase 'incorporating gender considerations' at the end of a paragraph without specifying what this entails. More telling is the fact that the policy document identifies 'the absence of guidelines for the incorporation of a gender approach in the management of climate change' as one of the country's main challenges (Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development [Colombia] 2018: 9).

A post-political reading reveals the extent to which Colombia's NDC Support Programme policy document tokenises gender. Accordingly, the case study confirms the concern that women's climate justice risks being 'confined to getting the word "gender" included in key policy documents and to gaining recognition of the material impacts of climate change on women' (MacGregor 2013: 624). Under this post-political frame, gender is relegated to the positions and behaviours of women. As such, it reinvigorates biological conceptions that exclude the operation of gender beyond women.

Moreover, the study reveals the reliance on expert knowledge for the formulation of gender-sensitive responses to climate change. In this sense, 'doing gender' is reduced to a form of institutionalised social management and to the mobilisation of governmental technologies, where difficulties and problems are dealt with by administrative techno-organisational means' (Swyngedouw 2010: 226). The predominance of this managerial logic materialises as a barricade against radical political action and dissent. It assigns experts the role of providing a solution for the differentiated impact of climate change on women. These experts must integrate stakeholders to deliver the guidelines for solving the prob-

lem. In the words of Swyngedouw (2010: 227), 'discussion and dispute are tolerated, even encouraged, in so far as the general frame is not contested.'

This frame for incorporating gender also serves to maintain the post-political condition of climate change. It reinforces the managerial function of government, in which experts are endowed with the task of making sure that 'women' are safe from climate change impacts. In this sense, post-politicisation uses women's bodies and situations to reinvigorate the idea of climate change as the enemy. This construction of climate change as an externalised 'enemy' forestalls the articulation of divergent and alternative trajectories for tackling environmental degradation. Thus, the inclusion of gender does not necessarily question hegemonic understandings of gender in the environmental public realm.

However, although the dangers and risks remain, feminist movements can use these new spaces to garner strength and impel their agendas. For instance, they can push for listening to women's local experiences and situations, using climate platforms to promote democratic deliberation and women's participation. Additionally, feminist movements can insist on the need for tackling social asymmetries and inequalities, asserting the social rather than environmental causes of the harmful effects of climate change. In this sense, the incorporation of gender can lead to resisting discourses that reduce citizens' political right to dissent.

Conclusion

This paper interrogated to what extent the gender component of the NDC Support Programme and its articulation in Colombia reshapes the post-political condition of climate change. It exposed the opening to and dangers of the advancement of feminist ideas and expertise in mainstream climate change frameworks. The study confirmed some of the concerns raised by feminist scholars regarding the incorporation of gender into mainstream institutional structures. It identified the extent to which climate policies tokenise gender. In this sense, the article evidenced a lack of concrete gender policies, actions, and strategies in the NDC Support Programme documents. Thus, although gender finds its way into these policy documents, a lack of content and specificity follow its increasing presence.

This tokenised use of gender can sprout institutional efforts that reduce citizens' political right to dissent. Nevertheless, the gradual abandonment of gender-neutral environmental policies and plans can introduce new modes of reasoning, calculating, and responding to climate change. This advancement can serve to strengthen women's political engagement and empowerment. In this sense, the inclusion of gender can reinforce the importance of democratic deliberation, challenging 'expert'-driven approaches that reduce citizens' political right to dissent.

In conclusion, the research found that the gender component in climate change policies is not always emancipatory, for it can perpetuate the post-political condition of climate change. However, the instalment of gender in climate policies and actions opens up new possibilities by insisting on women's participation and empowerment, articulating mech-

anisms of deliberation to strengthen citizen's political right to dissent. Thus, the strategic, epistemological, and normative risks of advancing feminist ideas within the dominant, neoliberal climate change narrative can materialise if the construction of gender-responsive climate policies does not contemplate mechanisms of citizen participation, failing to listen to women's situated knowledge and experiences.

Notes

- 1 The NDC Support Programme's webpage provides guidelines, interviews, speeches, and other materials that explain the Gender Responsive NDC Planning and Implementation (see UNDP 2019).
- 2 The documents of Colombia's NDC Support Programme are originally in Spanish. The authors of this article have translated the quotations included in the research.

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O Link Pós-Político entre Gênero e Mudança Climática: O Caso do Programa de Apoio às Contribuições Determinadas Nacionalmente

Resumo: Este artigo questiona em que medida o componente de gênero do Programa de Apoio às Contribuições Nacionalmente Determinadas (CND) do Programa das Nações Unidas para o Desenvolvimento (PNUD) reafirma a condição pós-política das mudanças climáticas. Ao analisar a incorporação do gênero no Programa de Suporte às CDN e sua articulação na Estratégia de Desenvolvimento de Baixo-Carbono da Colômbia, o estudo expõe os riscos estratégicos, epistemológicos, e normativos do avanço das ideias feministas dentro das estruturas institucionais tradicionais. Assim, este artigo mostra as oportunidades e desafios de deslocar as fronteiras políticas e epistemológicas das políticas de mudanças climáticas ao promover ideias feministas.

Palavras-chave: gênero; mudança climática; feminismo; pós-política; Colômbia.

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