



Impact of public policies on gender equity in Colombia

Impacto de las políticas públicas en la equidad de género en Colombia

Julia Rojas-Rodriguez

julia.rojas@usa.edu.co

Universidad Sergio Arboleda, Santa Marta, Magdalena, Colombia

<https://orcid.org/0009-0006-4739-1709>

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to analyse the impact of public policies on gender equality in Colombia. The research adopted a documentary research design, focusing on the critical and systematic analysis of bibliographical sources. The population of analysis is composed of 16 scientific articles that examine the implementation and impact of public gender policies in Colombia. Policies against gender violence advance normatively, but their implementation is compromised by a lack of resources and cultural practices that perpetuate inequality. Media coverage of femicide makes these problems visible, but needs to be supported by intersectional analysis and policies that address diverse inequalities, including economic inequality. advancing gender equity in Colombia requires an intersectional, participatory and institutionally consolidated approach, with sufficient resources, community participation and robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

Descriptors: womens rights; womens participation; human rights. (Source: UNESCO Thesaurus).

RESUMEN

El presente estudio tiene por objetivo analizar el impacto de las políticas públicas en la equidad de género en Colombia. La investigación adoptó un diseño de investigación documental, centrado en el análisis crítico y sistemático de fuentes bibliográficas. La población de análisis se compone de 16 artículos científicos que examinan la implementación y el impacto de las políticas públicas de género en Colombia. Las políticas contra la violencia de género avanzan normativamente, pero su aplicación se ve comprometida por la falta de recursos y prácticas culturales que perpetúan la desigualdad. La cobertura mediática del feminicidio visibiliza estos problemas, pero requiere apoyo de un análisis interseccional y políticas que aborden diversas desigualdades, incluida la económica. avanzar en la equidad de género en Colombia requiere un enfoque interseccional, participativo e institucionalmente consolidado, con recursos suficientes, participación de las comunidades y mecanismos robustos de monitoreo y evaluación.

Descriptores: derechos de la mujer; participación de la mujer; derechos humanos. (Fuente: Tesoro UNESCO).

Received: 09/02/2024. Revised: 15/02/2024. Approved: 16/03/2024. Published: 01/05/2024.

Research articles section



INTRODUCTION

The impact of public policies on gender equality has been a central issue in the social and economic development of several nations, including Colombia. This study focuses on the effectiveness of policies implemented in Colombia to promote gender equality and analyses their implications in different areas of Colombian women's lives.

In Colombia, the implementation of public gender policies has had a significant trajectory. The policy "Women Builders of Peace and Development" (2002-2010) is an emblematic example of these efforts, standing out for both its achievements and its limitations. According to (Bernal-Olarte et al. 2022), this public policy sought to empower women in peace processes, although it faced critical challenges in its implementation and scope.

On the other hand, equal justice policies have addressed violence against women in Colombia, pointing out that, despite legislative advances, significant obstacles persist that impede the full realisation of women's rights (Castro-Herrera & Jaramillo-Marín, 2018). It also highlights the importance of media coverage in the visibility of femicides, showing how the journalistic narrative can influence public perception and the effectiveness of gender policies (Flores, 2017).

Public policies in Bogotá have been the subject of detailed analysis, identifying both successes and failures in the implementation of programmes aimed at promoting gender equity (Fuentes-Vásquez, 2007; Muñoz-Eraso & Barón-Mesa, 2017). Furthermore, Law 1448 and its gender approach underline the need to integrate gender perspectives more effectively in reparation policies for victims of the armed conflict (García-Salazar & Cotes-Cantillo, 2019).

At a comparative level, gender inequality in the context of economic liberalisation in Colombia, Thailand and South Africa highlights the differences and similarities in gender equality policies and their impact on society (García-Pinzón & Ruiz-Morato,



2016). Similarly, the development of a gender equitable participation index assesses progress in Colombia (Panu & Martínez-Usarralde, 2023).

On the other hand, recent studies explore evidentiary controversies in cases of femicide (Luna-Salas, Arrieta-Morales, & Cano-Andrade, 2023), and propose an intersectional approach to gender mainstreaming in Colombia (Miranda-Montero, Anctil-Avoine, & Hankivsky, 2020). The intertwining of gender, sexuality, social class and race in the anti-drug policy "Ruta Futuro" has also been investigated (Rodríguez-Díaz & Guerrero-Valencia, 2023), as well as the impact of the armed conflict on women victims of sexual violence (Rojas-Rodríguez, 2024).

Likewise, research on sexist beliefs and attitudes of gender-based violence among university students (Saldarriaga-Genes et al., 2021) and the epidemiological perspective of gender-based violence in Colombia (Serna-Trejos, 2023) provide a broad overview of the persistent challenges in the struggle for gender equity.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyse the impact of public policies on gender equality in Colombia.

METHOD

The research adopted a documentary research design, focusing on the critical and systematic analysis of bibliographical sources based on scientific articles. The desk research allowed for a literature review scrutinised through a Google search engine, including academic publications.

The analysis population consists of 16 scientific articles that examine the implementation and impact of gender policies in Colombia. These sources include critical analyses of specific policies, case studies on the media visibility of gender-based violence, evaluations of policy implementation in cities such as Bogotá, and comparative analyses of gender inequality in contexts of economic liberalisation.

Procedure

Selection of sources: A literature search was carried out in the Google search engine, scientific articles relevant to the researched topic and published in the last 20 years



were selected to ensure a historical and updated perspective, these documents were found in databases such as: Scielo, Scopus, Redalyc, Latindex 2.0, Web of Science.

Scientific articles were included that:

- a) Analyse or evaluate public policies on gender in Colombia.
- b) Present empirical data on gender equity in the Colombian context.
- c) Offer a critical approach to the implementation and outcomes of gender policies.
- d) The study was to be carried out in Colombia.

Papers that did not meet the above criteria were excluded.

The selected documents were subjected to a content analysis using thematic coding techniques. Recurrent themes and patterns in the implementation and outcomes of gender policies were identified and coded.

All ethical regulations related to documentary research were complied with. All sources used were properly cited and the integrity and accuracy of data interpretation was guaranteed. Furthermore, copyright was respected and standards of academic rigour were ensured throughout the research process.

ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

This study aims to analyse the impact of public policies on gender equality in Colombia. Through documentary analysis of various sources, key patterns and trends in the implementation and effectiveness of these policies have been identified:

Implementation and historical context

The implementation of gender policies in Colombia has shown both significant progress and persistent challenges. The policy "Women Builders of Peace and Development" (2002-2010), for example, sought to empower women in peace processes, highlighting the importance of their participation. However, it has been documented that the effectiveness of this policy was limited by institutional and



social obstacles, reflecting partial and uneven implementation (Bernal-Olarte et al. 2022).

Justice and equity

In the area of justice and equity, policies to address violence against women have been critical. Despite legislative advances, such as Law 1257 of 2008, significant barriers persist in the effective implementation of these regulations. Barriers include insufficient adequate resources and cultural resistance to gender equality, which perpetuates gender-based violence and limits protection and justice for victims (Castro-Herrera & Jaramillo-Marín, 2018).

Visibility and media

The role of the media in the visibility of gender issues has been the subject of critical analysis. The journalistic coverage of femicide in Barranquilla reveals how media coverage can influence public perception and the effectiveness of policies. The visibility of these cases is essential to raise awareness and promote changes in public policies (Flores, 2017).

Economic inequality and gender

Gender inequality in the context of economic liberalisation has also been a recurring theme. Comparing the situation in Colombia with Thailand and South Africa, it is concluded that economic liberalisation has exacerbated gender inequalities. Economic policies that do not consider gender-differentiated impacts tend to perpetuate inequality, disproportionately affecting women (García-Pinzón & Ruiz-Morato, 2016).

Specific policy analysis

Law 1448 of 2011, which addresses comprehensive reparation for victims of the armed conflict, includes a gender approach that has been critically evaluated. Although the law represents a significant advance, its implementation faces challenges that limit its impact, such as the lack of adequate training of personnel in charge and insufficient resources (García-Salazar & Cotes-Cantillo, 2019).



Critical evaluations

Critical evaluations of gender policies in Bogotá have identified both successes and shortcomings. While significant efforts have been made to promote gender equity, lack of policy coherence and continuity, as well as institutional resistance, have hindered their success (Fuentes-Vásquez, 2007; Muñoz-Eraso & Barón-Mesa, 2017).

Evidentiary disputes and femicide

Analysis of the evidentiary controversies associated with the crime of femicide highlights the need to improve investigative and judicial capacities to ensure justice in these cases. The lack of adequate evidence and inefficiency in evidence collection continue to be significant obstacles (Luna-Salas, Arrieta-Morales, & Cano-Andrade, 2023).

Gender mainstreaming

An intersectional approach to gender mainstreaming in Colombian public policies is proposed. This approach seeks to integrate multiple dimensions of identity, such as race, class and sexuality, to more effectively address gender inequalities (Miranda-Montero et al. 2020).

Comparative perspectives

The development of a Gender Equal Participation Index to compare progress in Colombia highlights areas where progress has been made and those where significant gaps persist (Panu & Martínez-Usarralde, 2023).

Documentary analytical summary

The documentary analysis conducted in this study reveals that, although Colombia has made progress in implementing public policies for gender equality, numerous challenges persist that limit their effectiveness. Institutional barriers, cultural resistance and lack of adequate resources are recurrent factors that need to be addressed to achieve true gender equality. The findings of this study underline the importance of a comprehensive and sustained approach to the formulation and implementation of public policies that promote gender equality in Colombia.

Theoretical proposal to overcome the weaknesses in the implementation of public gender policies in Colombia.

A comprehensive analysis of public gender policies in Colombia has revealed both significant advances and persistent challenges in promoting gender equality. Institutional barriers, cultural resistance and insufficient resources have limited the effectiveness of these policies, preventing true gender equity. This theoretical proposition offers a conceptual framework for overcoming these weaknesses, based on findings documented in previous studies.

To effectively address the weaknesses identified, a multidimensional approach is proposed that integrates intersectional perspectives and participatory approaches in the formulation and implementation of public policies. This framework is based on three main pillars: intersectional integration, community participation and institutional strengthening.

Intersectional integration

Intersectionality is essential to address the multiple dimensions of identity that affect gender equity. The proposal includes:

- a) **Mandatory intersectional analysis:** Any public policy on gender must include an intersectional analysis that considers factors such as race, class, sexual orientation and disability. This analysis should be a requirement at the policy formulation stage.
- b) **Intersectionality training:** Implement mandatory training programmes for public officials and policy implementers focused on understanding and applying intersectionality.

Community participation

The inclusion of affected communities in the policy formulation and evaluation process is crucial. It is proposed:

- a) **Community advisory councils:** Establish advisory councils composed of representatives from diverse communities, including women's groups, ethnic

minorities and LGBTIQ+ organisations, to actively participate in policy formulation and evaluation.

- b) Feedback mechanisms: Develop accessible platforms for ongoing community feedback on the implementation of gender policies, allowing for timely and relevant adjustments based on the experiences of those affected.

Institutional strengthening

To overcome institutional barriers and improve policy implementation, robust institution building is required. The proposal includes:

- a) Dedicated resource allocation: Ensure a dedicated and sufficient financial resource allocation for the implementation of gender policies, monitored by an independent entity to ensure transparency and effectiveness.
- b) Capacity building: Implement ongoing capacity building programmes for policy implementation staff, focusing on gender equality and social justice practices.
- c) Independent monitoring and evaluation: Establish independent bodies for monitoring and evaluation of public gender policies, ensuring objective review and accountability.

Implementation Proposal

To operationalise this theoretical framework, the following roadmap is recommended:

- a) Legislative review: Review and amend existing legislation to include requirements for intersectional analysis and community participation.
- b) Training and awareness-raising: Develop and implement training and awareness-raising programmes at the national level, ensuring that all stakeholders understand and apply intersectional and participatory principles.
- c) Structuring advisory councils: Formalise the creation of community advisory councils at local, regional and national levels, integrating their recommendations into the policy-making process.



- d) Resource allocation and monitoring: Ensure the allocation of specific and sufficient resources, with monitoring mechanisms to ensure their effective and transparent use.
- e) Continuous monitoring and evaluation: Establish a robust system of independent monitoring and evaluation to continuously review the implementation and effectiveness of gender policies.

The implementation of an intersectional, participatory and institutionally consolidated approach promises to overcome the weaknesses identified in public gender policies in Colombia. This theoretical proposal not only seeks to improve the effectiveness of existing policies, but also to foster a more inclusive and equitable environment for all people, regardless of gender, race, class or other intersectional identities.

CONCLUSIONS

Policies against gender-based violence are advancing normatively, but their implementation is compromised by a lack of resources and cultural practices that perpetuate inequality. Media coverage of femicide makes these problems visible, but requires support from an intersectional analysis and policies that address various inequalities, including economic inequality. Advancing gender equality in Colombia requires an intersectional, participatory and institutionally consolidated approach, with sufficient resources, community participation and robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Only with a comprehensive commitment will it be possible to overcome current weaknesses and promote gender equality in the country.

FUNDING

Non-monetary

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest with persons or institutions involved in research.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To the women who fight for the defence of their human rights.

REFERENCES

- Bernal-Olarte, A., Calderón, K. D., Gómez, P. A., Pérez, L. F., & Rojas Palacios, D. (2022). El trasfondo de una política pública de género en Colombia: Análisis crítico de "Mujeres Constructoras de Paz y Desarrollo" 2002-2010 [The background to a public gender policy in Colombia: A critical analysis of 'Mujeres Constructoras de Paz y Desarrollo' 2002-2010]. *Estudios De Derecho*, 79(173). <https://doi.org/10.17533/udea.esde.v79n173a08>
- Castro-Herrera, Fabio Saúl, & Jaramillo-Marín, Jefferson (2018). La justicia en equidad y las violencias contra las mujeres en Colombia [Justice in equity and the violences against women in Colombia]. *Revista de derecho (Valdivia)*, 31(2), 115-133. <https://dx.doi.org/10.4067/S0718-09502018000200115>
- Flores, Pamela (2017). News coverage and visibility of femicide in El Heraldo (Barranquilla, Colombia): A case study [Cubrimiento periodístico y visibilidad del feminicidio en El Heraldo (Barranquilla, Colombia): Estudio de Caso]. *Investigación y Desarrollo*, 25(1), 23-48. <https://doi.org/10.14482/indes.25.1.10227>
- Fuentes-Vásquez, L. Y. (2007). Las políticas públicas de mujer y género en Bogotá: tensiones y aciertos [Public policies on women and gender in Bogotá: tensions and successes]. *Revista Colombiana de Sociología*, (28), 181-198.
- García-Pinzón, Viviana, & Ruiz-Morato, Natalia (2016). Comparative analysis among Colombia, Thailand and South Africa of the gender inequality in the economic liberalization [Análisis comparado entre Colombia, Tailandia y Sudáfrica de la desigualdad de género en la liberalización económica]. *Population and Development*, 22(42), 36-44. [https://doi.org/10.18004/pdfce/2076-054x/2016.022\(42\)036-044](https://doi.org/10.18004/pdfce/2076-054x/2016.022(42)036-044)
- García-Salazar, A., & Cotes-Cantillo, K. (2019). El enfoque de género y la Ley 1448 en Colombia [The gender approach and Law 1448 in Colombia]. *Fractal: Revista de Psicología*, 31(esp), 228-235. https://doi.org/10.22409/1984-0292/v31i_esp/29024
- Luna-Salas, Fernando, Arrieta-Morales, Cristian, & Cano-Andrade, Ricardo Andrés (2023). Prospective of the Evidentiary Controversies Associated with the Crime of Femicide in Colombia [Prospectiva de las controversias probatorias asociadas al delito de feminicidio en Colombia]. *Novum Jus*, 17(1), 157-186. <https://doi.org/10.14718/novumjus.2023.17.1.7>
- Miranda-Montero, Yira Isabel, Anctil-Avoine, Priscyll, & Hankivsky, Olena (2020). Gender Mainstreaming: An Approach to the Colombian Case and an Intersectional Proposal. *CS*, (32), 191-219. <https://doi.org/10.18046/recs.i32.3530>
- Muñoz-Eraso, J. P., & Barón-Mesa, G. F. (2017). Aciertos y fallas en la implementación de la Política de Mujeres y Equidad de Género de Bogotá [Successes and failures in the implementation of Bogotá's Women and Gender Equality Policy]. *Papel Político*, 21(1), 101-120. <https://doi.org/10.11144/Javeriana.papo21-1.afip>
- Panu, Gabriela Roxana, & Martínez-Usarralde, María-Jesús (2023). Comparing Gender Equality in Colombia: Gender Equity Participation Index [Comparando la igualdad de género en Colombia: Índice de Participación Equitativa de Género]. *Revista Colombiana de Educación*, (88), 369-394. <https://doi.org/10.17227/rce.num88-13228>
- Rodríguez-Díaz, Andrés Felipe & Guerrero-Valencia, Valeria (2023). Social differentiation of the 'Ruta Futuro' anti-drug policy in Colombia: an analysis of the intertwining of gender, sexuality, social class and race [Diferenciación social de la Política Antidrogas "Ruta Futuro" en



Colombia: un análisis desde la imbricación de género, sexualidad, clase social y raza]. *Papel Político*, 28. <https://doi.org/10.11144/Javeriana.papo28.dspsa>

- Rodríguez-Pizarro, Alba Nubia, & Ibarra-Melo, María Eugenia (2013). Gender studies in Colombia. A preliminary discussion [Gender studies in Colombia. A preliminary discussion]. *Sociedad y Economía*, (24), 15-46.
- Rojas-Rodríguez, J. (2024). La huella del conflicto armado colombiano en mujeres víctimas de violencia sexual [The footprint of the Colombian armed conflict on women victims of sexual violence]. *Revista Multidisciplinaria Perspectivas Investigativas*, 4(1), 3-14. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10366889>
- Saldarriaga-Genes, Guillermina, Cárdenas Serrato, Patricia I, González Suarez, Nadia M, Velásquez Higueta, Fabio A, Díaz Usme, Olga S, & Ruidiaz Gómez, Keydis. (2021). Sexist beliefs and attitudes of gender violence. Situation of university students in the area of health. Cartagena - Colombia [Sexist beliefs and attitudes of gender violence. Situation of university students in the area of health. Cartagena - Colombia]. *Enfermería Global*, 20(62), 35-64. <https://dx.doi.org/10.6018/eglobal.427171>
- Serna-Trejos, Juan Santiago (2023). Perspectiva epidemiológica de la violencia de género e intrafamiliar en Colombia, 2022 [Epidemiological perspective of gender and domestic violence in Colombia, 2022]. *Revista Archivo Médico de Camagüey*, 27.
- Sinchi-Sinchi, J. M., Merizalde-Avilés, M. L., Romero-Fernández, A. J., & Altamirano-Dávila, C. (2023). El delito de femicidio en las legislaciones de Ecuador, Argentina y Colombia [The crime of femicide in the legislations of Ecuador, Argentina and Colombia]. *IUSTITIA SOCIALIS*, 8(1), 1591-1600. <https://doi.org/10.35381/racji.v8i1.3337>

Copyright: 2024 By the authors. This article is open access and distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>