

Rural Women in the Public Policy for Women in El Carmen de Viboral-Antioquia, Colombia: An analysis from Practical and Strategic gender interests

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Abstract

The analysis of public policies from a gender perspective has problematized the neutral character of state intervention and the way in which political decisions affect the maintenance or transformation of gender social inequalities. Using Maxine Molyneux's approach to practical and strategic gender interests as a reference, this research analyzed the way in which these are addressed in the public policy for women in the municipality of El Carmen de Viboral, Antioquia.

Methodologically, an interpretative instrumental case study was conducted on the formulation phase of the public policy for women in the municipality, through a documentary review of policy instruments and semi-structured interviews and focus groups with officials in charge of designing the policy, formal and non-formal organizations of rural women in the municipality. The findings show a low state response capacity to address the practical interests of rural women in key aspects such as access to water, employment and mental health. In terms of strategic interests, it was found that both government officials and rural women maintain in their beliefs and practices the structural aspects of gender inequality in relation to the care economy, gender-based violence and the gaps in access to land and credit for rural women.

Keywords: Rural women; Gender; Public policies; State; Practical interests; Strategic interests.

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Mujeres rurales en la Política Pública para las Mujeres de El Carmen de Viboral-Antioquia, Colombia: un análisis desde los intereses prácticos y estratégicos de género

Resumen

Los análisis de las políticas públicas desde el enfoque de género han problematizado el carácter neutral de la intervención estatal y el modo en que las decisiones políticas inciden en el mantenimiento o la transformación de las desigualdades sociales de género. Utilizando como referencia el enfoque de los intereses prácticos y estratégicos de género de Maxine Molyneux, esta investigación analizó el modo en que estos son abordados en la política pública para las Mujeres en el municipio El Carmen de Viboral, Antioquia.

Metodológicamente se realizó un estudio de caso instrumental interpretativo, a la fase de formulación de la política pública de Mujeres del municipio, mediante la revisión documental de instrumentos de política y entrevistas semiestructuradas y grupos focales a los funcionarios encargados del diseño de la política, organizaciones formales y no formales de mujeres rurales del municipio. Los hallazgos muestran una baja capacidad de respuesta estatal para atender los intereses prácticos de las mujeres rurales en aspectos claves como acceso a agua, empleo y salud mental. En cuanto a los intereses estratégicos, se evidenció que tanto los funcionarios de gobierno como las mujeres rurales mantienen en sus creencias y prácticas los aspectos estructurales de desigualdad de género en relación con la economía del cuidado, las violencias basadas en género y las brechas para el acceso a tierras y créditos para las mujeres de la ruralidad.

Palabras clave: Mujeres rurales; Género; Políticas públicas; Estado; Intereses prácticos; Intereses estratégicos.

Summary: 1. Introduction, 2. Methodology, 3. Findings, 3.1 Municipal context, 3.2 Practical gender interests, 3.3 Strategic gender interests, 4. Conclusions, 5. Bibliographic references.

1. Introduction

Considering that public policies are the concretization of the State in action, that is, the intervention of the State in situations that are considered socially relevant, through a set of actions, means, and instruments aimed at modifying or changing the State of things perceived as problematic (Roth-Deubel, 2004, p. 27). Understanding the nature of state intervention in rural women requires considering the socioeconomic and political context in which policies and regulatory frameworks arise, the participating actors, the responsible institutions, and the national and international interests that shape them.

Between the late 1980s and the early 1990s, Colombia made progress in formulating public policies to achieve formal equality of rights for rural women. That was due, on the one hand, to the signing of international treaties promoted by the UN and what became known as the Decade of Women, and on the other, to the leadership of women's organizations and associations, which demanded recognition as collective rights holders. Despite these political and regulatory advances, various studies highlight the challenges.

Moreover, challenges are facing the practical realization of gender equality and equity in rural areas (Gutiérrez, 2003; Parada-Hernández, 2018).

In 1984, the government issued the Policy on the Role of Rural Women in Agricultural Development for the first time (Departamento Nacional de Planeación [DNP], 1984) to highlight their role in food production, through specific projects for women aimed at generating greater income, Employment, and food production (DNP, 1984, p. 10). Although this Policy was important for insisting on income promotion and pointing out the need to offer various development opportunities for women, some analyses of its implementation show positive impacts on the institutionalization of the discourse of the "women in development" approach in the agricultural sector, its counterpart, the assistance-based and instrumental nature of state intervention, without structural changes in the problems of Access to land, credit, technical assistance, training, among others (Parada-Hernández, 2018; p. 114). However, the guidelines of this first Policy set a precedent for the transformation of institutional intervention for women. They opened a framework of possibilities for formulating policies for developing rural women: Document CONPES SOCIAL-23 (1994) and Law 731 of 2002, with different purposes, depending on the interests of the economic model.

Rural women have historically experienced greater inequality in terms of Access to goods, services, resources, and infrastructure; they have had less Access to productive assets; and they work double or triple shifts due to the overlapping of productive, reproductive, and caregiving jobs, which, in addition to being difficult to define, require a high investment of time and effort (Arias et al., 2013; DNP, 2015). According to the socioeconomic profile of rural women carried out by the Observatorio Colombiano de las Mujeres (2020), 47.2% of the rural population are women,

who suffer from high levels of poverty –37.8% – compared to the national poverty rate of 27%. Furthermore, they are the least likely to participate in the labor market –40.6% – because they face the highest informality rate of all population groups –88% – and receive lower wages.

Given the inequality faced by 5.2 million women, it is evident that the State has a historic debt to guarantee rights to this population group through public policies that support the achievement of equality and equity. Taking as a case study the "Public Policy for Women" of the municipality of El Carmen de Viboral (PPMCV) (Antioquia), which in its formulation process differentiates the attention to the needs of rural women, the objective of our research was to analyze the types of interests addressed by public Policy, by asking ourselves to what extent it considers and addresses the heterogeneity of the category of women and the needs they face, using as an analytical framework the approach of practical and strategic gender interests proposed by Maxine Molyneux (1984). During the 1980s, this author defined gender interests and, within them, distinguished between strategic and practical interests, to differentiate how state interventions maintain or modify structures of gender inequality, to the extent that they consider the condition and position of women in a given context.

Practical interests are those subjectively identified according to the class position and socio-historical conditions of each category of women within the sexual division of labor; they aim to satisfy specific immediate needs, such as Access to water, Employment, and the health system, among others. According to Molyneux (1984), when policymakers address practical interests, this does not mean they are tackling forms of female subordination, but rather that these interests originate from it. On the other hand, strategic interests refer to those derived from sex/gender attributes, which are objectively identified and related to the demands of feminism, promoting a more egalitarian organization of society. Strategic interests are structural, since they aim to recognize and overcome the political, economic, social, cultural, etc., conditions entail the systematic and historical discrimination against women in exercising and enjoying their rights, without implying a homogenization or universalization of the women category.

2. Methodology

This study used the case study method, which, according to Galeano-Marín (2018), seeks to understand the meaning of an experience through the intense and in-depth examination of various aspects of a single phenomenon. A case is, therefore, an event or social aspect located in a specific space and time, which is the study's object of interest (Galeano-Marín, 2018). The Carmen de Viboral PPMCV Public Policy represents a case in point, as it is one of the municipalities in Antioquia that has formulated an equal opportunity policy specifically for women, both in urban and rural areas, which makes it unique among other policies with similar approaches. Furthermore, the analysis focused on rural women, which requires detailed and careful consideration in Policy, understanding that policymakers often ignore the general and choose the specific (Galeano-Marín, 2018), to focus on a more specific analytical framework that,

in turn, enables greater understanding and clarity of the object of study. The case study conducted in the research was instrumental in interpreting the complexity of addressing the PPMCV, targeting rural women.

The research techniques used to conduct the case study were the documentary review of the PMCV (Agreement 004 of 2022) and some Municipal Council agreements related to incorporating the gender approach and the attention of rural women. As primary sources, the research team conducted six (6) semi-structured interviews: three with rural women who participate in organizations and associations, and three with rural women who do not participate in any organizations or associations. The interest in considering women with and without participation in women's organizations and associations was to recognize the degree of institutionalization of policy construction; that is, to understand whether policymakers widely promoted the debate and construction of the Policy among citizens, or focused it on formally constituted or recognized organizations. In addition, to identify the perception of women who do not have Access to the same information and resources as organized women or the presidents of the Community Action Boards (JAC), whose role is to be intermediaries between the government and the communities.

The research team also held two focus groups. One with officials responsible for policy formulation and design to understand the guiding aspects of government intervention in the situations of rural women. Two with seven women JAC presidents, representing the seven districts of El Carmen de Viboral: La Esperanza, Aguas Claras, Santa Rita, La Chapa, Alto Grande, Santa Inés, and La Madera.

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The work unit was configured based on the real possibilities of accessing those who voluntarily agreed to participate in the research within the time and resources, thus being a non-probabilistic snowball sample (Hernández-Sampieri et al., 2006). To ensure participants' informed consent, the research team gave them consent letters describing the project and its purpose. Each participant received this information and signed the letter.

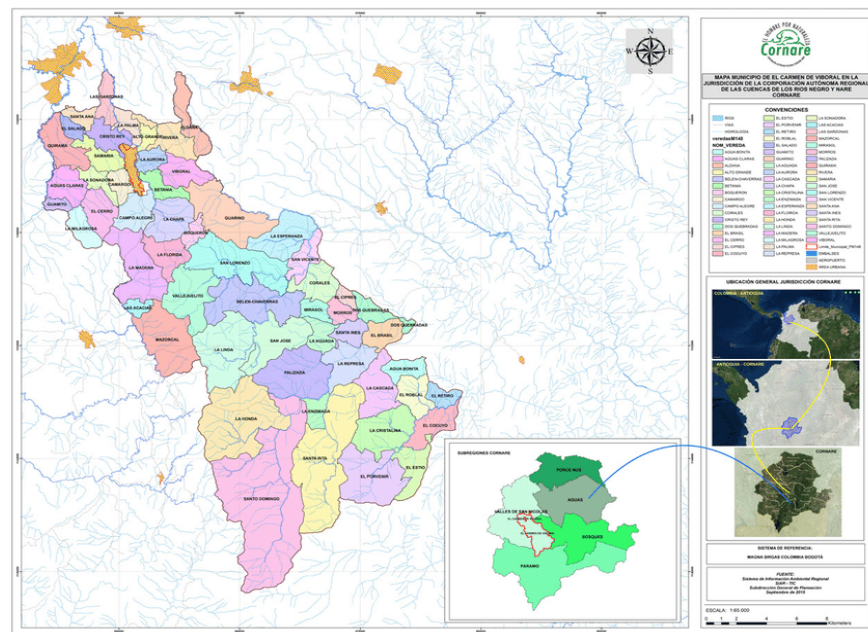
Data production was developed through an inductive exercise, using some analytical strategies from grounded theory: coding, categorization, and data description. This coding and categorization exercise used a matrix of categories and subcategories of practical needs and strategic gender interests as its basis, constructed based on theoretical approaches; in light of said matrix, in both the review of documentary sources and the in interviews and focus groups, we seek to identify how the various actors address these interests and whether they make progress in gender matters.

3. Findings

3.1 Municipal context

El Carmen de Viboral is located in the subregion of Eastern Antioquia (Figure 1), on the central Andes Mountain range, in the San Nicolás Valley area. It borders the municipalities of El Santuario, Marinilla, and Rionegro to the north; the municipality of Cocorná to the east; the municipality of Sonsón to the south; and the municipalities of La Ceja and La Unión to the west (Corporación Autónoma Regional de las Cuencas de los Ríos Negro y Nare [CORNARE], 2019). The municipality organizes its political and administrative division into seven districts encompassing 56 villages, covering 66.5% of the territory (29,803 ha), which has been declared a protected area (CORNARE, 2019, p. 8).

Figure 1. Geographic location of the municipality of El Carmen del Viboral, Antioquia.



Source: Development Plan 2020-2023 (Alcaldía Carmen de Viboral, 2020).

According to the population census, the municipality has 65,553 inhabitants, of which 32,337 are men and 32,216 are women. 67% of the population lives in the municipal capital and 33% in the "rest" (rural area). Of this percentage, 38.25% of the rural area is women, with approximately 8,274 women (Departamento Nacional de Estadística [DANE], 2018).

Like the vast majority of municipalities in eastern Antioquia, Carmen de Viboral was affected by the armed conflict because its geographic location serves as a territorial corridor for different armed groups between the highlands of eastern Antioquia and the middle Magdalena through its forested areas. According to figures from the Registro Único de Víctimas (RUV, 2023),

in the municipality, 12,967 people have been characterized as victims of the armed conflict, of which 6,585 are men, one intersex person, 4 LGTBIQ+, and 6,377 women.

Regarding the municipal political scenario for the design of policies with a focus on women or gender, the municipality has been taking action since 2000 when it created the Women's Council with the purpose of "ensuring plans, programs and projects aimed at developing policies that promote equity, participation and improvement of the living conditions of Carmelite women" (Acuerdo Municipal 100 de 2000, cited in Henao-Álvarez et al., 2020, p. 18). That allowed the adoption of the Public Policy on Women and Gender Equality (Agreement 05 of 2014) to protect women in vulnerable conditions and strengthen women's organizations, a policy that the government updated in 2022 under the Public Policy nomination for the Women of El Carmen de Viboral (Agreement 004 of 2022)-the subject of this research. He also designed the Sexual and Gender Diversity Policy and the Equal Opportunities Plan (Agreement 05 of 2023) and the last three development plans - from 2016 to 2027- (Henao-Álvarez et al., 2020) They have incorporated the gender approach as a fundamental right, a necessary basis for equity and the empowerment of women in the territory and recognize the centrality of the role of women in community development, "through affirmative actions that help combat sexist practices for the recognition of women as subjects of rights" (Agreement 004 of 2022, art. 2).

For the update of the PPMCV in 2022, the research team carried out a diagnosis of the situation of women in the municipality based on a virtual survey in which 503 people participated, of which 171 (34%) are from the rural sector; Through rural schools they obtained information from girls and young women between 10 and 18 years old (43%), to consider the socioeconomic and demographic conditions of women (Agreement 004 of 2022).

This section describes the practical and strategic interests derived from triangulating public policy information regarding its formulation phase (construction of the policy object and the nature of state intervention) and the narratives of rural women and public officials. Table 1 presents the theoretical categories and subcategories that guided the systematization of the information, crossing with the strategic lines and actions (A) of the policy document.

Table 1. Categories and subcategories of practical and strategic gender interests vs. the strategic lines and actions of the PPMCV document.

Practical interests		Strategic lines and Actions (a) raised in the PPMCV	Strategic interests	
Category	Subcategories		Category	Subcategories
Needs Basics	Access to water Access to housing Health access, Food Safety Education, and Employment	Economic autonomy and Access to assets Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (A) Encourage formal and informal education [...] Access to technical, technological, and professional studies. Education for work that enables economic autonomy Strategies and campaigns for health promotion and disease prevention in rural áreas.	Care economy	Self-recognition of contribution to the family economy Redistribution of care work
		Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights	Sexual and reproductive autonomy	Promotion and prevention of reproductive rights, Access to and care in healthcare
Social Welfare	Mental health, Sport, recreation, culture	Life free from violence	Life free from violence Economic autonomy	Physical, psychological, emotional violence Income generation Entrepreneurship (A) Promote the participation of rural and peasant women in political and community settings
		Economic autonomy and Access to assets	Elimination of institutionalized discrimination	Land tenure. Access to credit and financing (A) Provide support and technical assistance to peasant and rural women

Source: own elaboration.

The PPMCV contemplates eight strategic lines that guide state intervention to address the needs of women and, specifically, line seven (7) on rural women has the following objective:

Develop actions to prevent violence and promote the rights of rural and peasant women by fostering Access to education, health, economic autonomy, and social and political participation. (Agreement 004 of 2022, p. 27)

In this sense, the strategic lines contain aspects of practical and strategic interests, in which the resolution of basic material conditions prevails as a driver of strategic achievements. To achieve these objectives and actions, the political debate and its formulation recognized the

importance of building alliances with public and private institutions and entities to promote the guarantee of rural women's rights.

3.2 Practical gender interests

Practical interests consider concrete, basic needs; They highlight the coverage of services and fundamental rights for a dignified life as an important factor for personal development and emotional and social well-being. These included Access to health care, education, Employment, public services, and basic goods. Regarding basic needs such as Access to water, housing conditions, and food security, the results show access conditions without adequate quality. El Carmen del Viboral has three primary water sources (the Arma River, the Negro River, and the Santo Domingo River) that provide Access to water, although the quality is low. Some homes have septic tanks that lack basic technical conditions; the most significant limitation is the collection of recyclable and non-recyclable waste, which individual households are responsible for managing.

Garbage is another complication because, although the authorities provide recycling information, no one can access it. That happens because when they come down, sometimes people do not notice, or they give notice from one day to the next. There is no way to inform everyone when we realize we take down the recycling, and when we arrive, the dumpster is already full, they fill it with those from nearby, and those from far away are no longer available. (ASOCOMUNAL leader, personal communication, April 29, 2023)

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In terms of public goods, the women leaders participating in the focus group indicated that there have been changes in land use in rural areas that generate new problems of overcrowding, environmental and infrastructure problems, with greater impacts on women, as they are the ones who play a central role in household management and the provision of food, in which the water, land, and crop resources are central.

Regarding food security, in El Carmen de Viboral, traditional crops that are the basis of food production¹ have decreased due to promoting monocultures of flowers and avocados for export. This productive shift impacts the territorial dynamics of agrarian and peasant life and the working conditions of men and women.

Avocados and flowers have replaced food. The crop has largely dried up, not because farmers do not want to. The bad thing about this country is that farmers do not get help. Now they do not have the means to sustain fertilizers, irrigation, etc. So now they work as day laborers in

¹ According to the Municipal Agricultural Evaluations - EVA - agricultural production for the years 2019 and 2020, shows an increase in the production of avocado, tree tomato, gulupa, corn, sugar cane, and lemon, and a marked decrease in the production of potatoes, vegetables, peas, beans, carrots, and tomatoes (Unidad de Planificación Rural Agropecuaria [UPRA], 2020).

flower shops, because they have to wait four months for a harvest to come out, and if that is lost, they face hunger. (ASOCOMUNAL leader, personal communication, April 29, 2023)

The growth of monocultures of export flowers². This sector has engaged women in the last decade under informal contracts, with daily or hourly work shifts. Despite its informal nature, for many women, this Employment represents an alternative source of income and an improvement in their quality of life. At the same time, women work in sugarcane, coffee, potato, corn, and bean fields, some for daily wages and others on the crops of their production units.

We in flower shops get paid based on what we do. Where I work, it is hourly; I get paid monthly for my work hours. In hydrangea fields, very few women have contracts; you see that in flower shops, but in hydrangea fields, it is more convenient. They will accept if you can only come in for an hour one day. On the other hand, if you are in a flower shop, you have to work from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. (ASOCOMUNAL leader, personal communication, April 29, 2023)

The productive reconversion of the municipality varies according to the proximity or distance of rural areas to the municipal seat. Thus, the population centers surrounding the municipal seat have experienced this transformation mainly. At the same time, the municipality's scattered rural areas are located in protected areas with greater state control over the ecosystem and demands for ecological restoration activities. Consequently, the need for subsistence crop production is more prevalent than in other rural areas.

In our project [an ecotourism cabin], we try to work on the circular economy. We produce as much as possible and buy from the farmers themselves. We have a garden; these have been our initiatives. We bring in some things from outside, but grow several things on the farm. (D. Palomino, unorganized rural woman, personal communication, April 27, 2023)

Health care was one of the most significant findings. On the one hand, government officials and women—both organized and unorganized—identified the poor infrastructure of health centers to meet demand in the municipality. Added to this was the difficulty in providing some services through the mobile health strategy due to the complexity of access roads to dispersed rural areas. In addition, one of the most significant obstacles for rural women to access health services is cultural barriers, as one official mentioned: *They are women who sometimes do not seek medical attention out of shame, out of fear* (I. Arboleda, public official at the Women's Office, personal communication, May 19, 2023). Similarly, the women interviewed indicated that the travel time required to travel to the municipal capital, the transportation costs, and the low availability of appointments discourage them from accessing this service.

² The department of Antioquia has 23.8% of the areas dedicated to flower production in the country, and Eastern Antioquia is the epicenter, with El Carmen de Viboral being the municipality with the most significant amount of area cultivated for floriculture, with nearly 17% employment (CORNARE, 2016, p. 14).

On the other hand, women from the JACs and those from unorganized rural areas highlighted mental health as a significant problem, which receives little attention. We can say that this is an emerging category, since neither the policy document nor government actions³ considers it a specific need. In the various meeting spaces with the interviewees, they referred to mental health as an important aspect related to emotional well-being in environments of domestic abuse or Gender-Based Violence (GBV), work overload, caregiving tasks, and the management of emotions that are not adequately processed and trigger psychological and psychiatric disorders. They propose generating strategic alliances with organized groups such as JACs or women's collectives to bring mental health support closer to women, who often do not seek help or care due to a lack of financial resources, knowledge, tools, or social and family support.

It seems to me that psychological support is important from an institutional perspective, generating more alliances and closeness with the JACs, to create spaces, environments, and activities where women can socialize more, generate certain bonds of trust, such as sharing knowledge and experiences, because I feel that many things are kept silent. The fact that they are not said does not mean that they are not happening: abuse, domestic violence. Many things are very repressed and difficult to surface, so what do you notice, for example, more psychological support in the circles of the world? (A. Arias, an unorganized rural woman, personal communication, May 15, 2023)

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Similar to the limitations on Access to health, the participants referred to the costs of travel to the municipal capital and other cities such as Rionegro or Medellín as restrictions on Access to formal education⁴, since the availability of technological training is limited in El Carmen de Viboral, and although there is a Universidad de Antioquia campus near the rural area, distance and transportation costs often hinder men and women's Access to education at various levels. Economic determinants, family or community support networks, Participants frequently cited specific cultural beliefs about the limited need for rural women to access higher education as obstacles to accessing formal education.

Ali, a massive challenge for rural areas is Access to education. In these areas, there are many primary schools; if they access high school, it would be through COREDI⁵, which offers blended learning programs, but the university is challenging for them to attend, not only because of its distance but also because of its cost. Virtual education is also not applicable

³ In focus groups with government officials, they reported that in March 2023, they carried out a specific mental health activity within the framework of the commemoration of Women's Day, without the health component of the Policy explicitly addressing mental health as a line of action (government officials, personal communication, April 28, 2023).

⁴ Medellín is a major city, the capital of the Department of Antioquia, located approximately 46 km from the municipal seat of El Carmen de Viboral. Rionegro is an intermediate city that provides important goods and services to the Eastern Antioquia subregion, located 12 km from the municipal seat of El Carmen de Viboral.

⁵ A non-profit organization dedicated to promoting education and comprehensive development in rural and indigenous communities, led by the Catholic Church and part of the Diocese of Sonsón-Rionegro.

because there is no connectivity, which is a significant limitation. (I. Arboleda, public official at the Women's Office, personal communication, May 19, 2023)

In the Santa Rita district, people neglect training for women. It is too far away, and they do not even remember the people who exist. The truth is, we want to see training for women in entrepreneurship for some businesses, such as organic farming and tourism. (ASOCOMUNAL leader, personal communication, April 29, 2023)

Despite the above, there are efforts to offer informal training through institutions such as SENA, cooperatives, and NGOs in food processing, cooking, herbs, and dairy products.

There is agreement among organized and informal women in highlighting the need for formal and informal education, especially in productive and income-generating areas. Although women's organizations such as ASOMUCA, Corporación COMETA, and "Mujer Talento" have self-managed training programs, they propose that the local government decentralize educational offerings and listen to women's needs to create usable spaces.

3.3 Strategic gender interests

In Molyneux's (1984) proposal, the strategy refers to the objectives required to transform the structural foundations of female subordination, which analysts derive from examining the dominance/subordination relations between the genders. It expresses a set of goals related to a more egalitarian society organization (Pereyra-Cousiño, 2016, p. 9). While practical interests aim to improve the conditions of poverty or vulnerability of women without implying a modification of the established order, Strategic interests seek to modify the unequal distribution of power between men and women, focusing on aspects such as the sexual division of labor; domestic and care work; domestic violence, gender-based violence, women's control over their bodies, and all areas related to the division of control and power between the genders.

Let us look at the heterogeneity of the category of women. Researchers recognize that rural women, in addition to living in greater conditions of social inequality in terms of Access to public services, goods, and infrastructure, in peasant economic models, the support of production units is characterized by the overlapping of productive work, reproductive work, and care work (Franco-Patiño, 2021). Likewise, gender stereotypes are central to the forms of social organization in rural areas, even though sociocultural changes and the feminist struggle permeate some practices (Farah-Quijano and Pérez-Correa, 2003).

In this regard, organized and unorganized rural women in this study report the high time demands of performing these tasks, often limiting their ability to participate in the community and society. Culturally, women are considered directly responsible for raising children and providing for and supporting the family. That leads both men and women to believe that women's primary responsibility is to ensure family care. In very few cases, particularly some

female leaders, they stated that child-rearing and household chores should be a shared obligation between the couple. The representative of the Carmen Collective, when identifying the limitations faced by women, stated:

As for obstacles, there is housework, childcare, family, animals—everything that has to do with caregiving. Time is an obstacle. (D. Guzmán, JAC female leader, personal communication, April 15, 2023)

We women still have not left the kitchen. It is more specific because I have had more training and my husband has also received training in the subject. We have had a process. From the beginning, we have shared household chores, including childcare, so the workload between my husband and me is very equitable. However, in the canyon, women are generally the only ones who cook, care for the children, and care for the home and the people living there. (A. Arias, an unorganized rural woman, personal communication, May 15, 2023)

Along with caregiving tasks, domestic violence was another predominant element in the narratives of rural women, who reported experiencing or having suffered physical, verbal, emotional, and psychological violence, whether at the hands of their partners or other family members. In a few cases, they have sought institutional help, even though community leaders are familiar with the institutional approach to addressing these situations. They consider that there is no evidence of effectiveness or promptness in resolving these situations, and they criticized how institutions sometimes violate these rights.

I am a victim of domestic violence. I lived with him for about 22 years, and about a year ago I came to sue him. He spent nine months in jail, but he is now out. For the moment, I am not planning to pursue anything further. The authorities released him due to the expiration of his prison terms. I am afraid. (D. Aguirre, an unorganized rural woman, personal communication, May 15, 2023)

Much of the domestic violence is due to the economic dependence of many rural women. Since the family is the unit of production, reproduction, and consumption, the head of the household—conceived as the male—manages the family income from the land. Therefore, when inquiring about land tenure conditions and Access to financial credit for productive ventures, women leaders mentioned that very few families have property rights to their lands because they established these lands as joint ownership (partial rights to a property), a prevalent issue in rural Colombia. When land titles exist, it is primarily men who possess legal documents proving ownership and thus the ability to manage them and access credit from institutions. A 25-year-old unorganized rural woman put it this way: —I work the land with my father, but everything belongs to him. He pays me what I owe [for my work] (Personal communication, April 29, 2023).

From the institutional framework and given the impact of the armed conflict in the municipality, the PPMCV in its strategic line one deploys actions related to the comprehensive accompaniment and advice of women so that they can access land titling within the framework

of the Law 1448 of 2011 and the Law 1719 of 2014. While there are legal and regulatory government actions, a more comprehensive intervention is needed in this area, such as the allocation of budgets and professionals; public officials expressed this in the focus group:

The municipality lacks professionals responsible for providing care and representation to women victims of all types of gender-based violence, as well as providing legal advice and support on land restitution and ownership issues. The legal department is responsible for this. (Leader, Personal communication, April 26, 2023)

Land ownership is no minor issue for rural women in Colombia, as it is a determining factor in accessing and controlling household resources and income. This disadvantaged position regarding property rights has historically led to women's structural dependence on men, which tends to lead to situations of risk and violence. Researchers have proven that, with Access to formal property ownership, women increase their bargaining power within the home, the community, and society at large, and they gain effective Access to credit, which often enables them to strengthen their productive processes (Meertens, 2011).

Researchers could summarize all of this as a significant finding: the lack of prospective and strategic planning for the operationalization of the PPMCV. That is, while it is a necessary instrument in the face of the inequality faced by rural Carmelite women, exacerbated by their intersectionalities: being peasant women from remote areas, often victims of the armed conflict, this Policy, in addition to lacking budgetary support, proposes actions that are rendered unfeasible due to a lack of a deep understanding of the multiple problems facing rural women and the lack of resources—financial and human—for their implementation.

The feminist proposal to incorporate the gender interest' approach (Moser, 1995). Development planning sought, on the one hand, to distinguish the particular needs, roles, values, and expectations of men and women in the organization of society in order to question the purported universality and neutrality of state intervention; on the other hand, to position women's and gender agendas within the state public sphere as a mechanism for advancing the achievement of equality and equity.

In this sense, the research results demonstrate the complexity of implementing public policies in this field due to the tension between state operations' normative/legal nature and the concrete demands of reality. Thus, the review of policy formulation reveals how the discourses of institutional actors, and to a lesser extent, women, are aware of gender agendas and the priority of intervention in them, as seen in the strategic lines and actions of the PPMCV; however, there are budgetary, official training, and planning limitations that make this applicable. Second, there is the tension between the decision-making and action levels of the State. State Policy formulation at the national level prescribes international and national legal frameworks that must be adhered to at the municipal level, even when there is less installed capacity at the local level. On the other

hand, municipalities' focus on formulating policies for women and gender equality provides an opportunity for discussion on how sex/gender arrangements operate. It allows historically excluded social actors, such as rural women, to find a space to express themselves and discuss their needs.

From another perspective, gender interests in development make it possible to differentiate between women's needs and the feminist needs that mobilize state action. In the case under study, and given the context of inequality and poverty experienced by rural women, the emphasis on practical interests is evident in addressing the essential material conditions for a dignified life. While some issues on the feminist agenda appear as strategic interests, the discourses of officials and organized and non-organized women are still limited to women's issues, rather than a gender agenda that problematizes and challenges the political, economic, and cultural structures that sustain inequality.

In this sense, researchers recognize that development planners adapted needs as an instrument to design programs that meet women's demands, and this has led to greater consideration of practical needs that are palpable and addressable from a program or project, but that reduce or set aside strategic interests (Moser, 1995, p. 43). In other words, the existence of policies targeting women as protagonists is a necessary condition for their visibility and recognition. However, it is not sufficient to transform the patriarchal and androcentric state regime. Hence, women need to be informed, educated, and active in policy formulation and implementation, as well as in allocating resources and forward-looking strategies for their execution. In short, the formulation of the PPMCV is a first step toward advancing the debate and incorporation of gender into development and requires strengthening the debate, mainstreaming, and implementation.

4. Conclusions

The analysis of the PPMCV from the perspective of gender interests refers to an emphasis on the practical interests of rural women in El Carmen de Viboral, since needs such as Access to water, food security, housing, health, education, Employment, and land ownership remain priorities. Meanwhile, aspects such as mental health and recreational and cultural programs are subordinated or barely addressed, as they are considered complementary. Regarding strategic interests, the explicit mention of rural women as a line of action stands out, even though the objectives and intervention to address the particularity of this population group are still incipient. Despite this, incorporating topics from the feminist agenda into the government's public discourse is noteworthy, as multiple debates and practical tensions still need to be addressed. Paraphrasing Moser (1995), the structural changes required to achieve gender equality and equity will not be possible unless development planners rigorously and consciously adopt a gender perspective and challenge the widespread idea that 'women' is synonymous with 'gender'.

On the other hand, the data revealed how infrastructure and the limited availability of public goods in rural areas and dispersed areas limit the possibilities for intervention, even in practical matters, creating a map of socio-geographic inequalities associated with the locations reached by institutions in the municipality: the greater the distance, the less institutional presence.

In general, government officials' narratives mention the limited and scarce financial resources available to develop robust programs that benefit rural women; therefore, building alliances, combining efforts across various agencies, and devising action strategies that impact the lives of rural women remains a challenge.

Progress in the recognition of gender strategies will be possible to the extent that women have the time, space, and conditions to individually and collectively build feminist demands through comprehensive approaches that recognize the various dimensions of gender inequality and promote women's participation in decision-making and Access to economic, social, and political resources.

The involvement of women in organizational processes reveals rural women's political positioning to engage in diverse decision-making arenas, providing them with Access to information and training that opens up new opportunities. The training and knowledge acquired are, in turn, a distinguishing factor for women's leadership and representation. Therefore, the design and implementation of the Policy require ownership processes. Rural women become actors in development and not merely passive beneficiaries of government interventions.

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Sandra Milena Franco-Patiño: Conceptualization; methodology; information organization; supervision; writing (original draft); writing (revision of draft and revision/editing); Cristina Giraldo-Alzate: conceptualization, methodology, data curation, formal analysis, writing (original draft).



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