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Gender Justice in Territorial Land Management: An Eco-Justice Peacebuilding Analysis of Sierra Nevada-Perijá's PDET Zone

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Author's declaration

No portion of the work referred to in this thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS submitted by:
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for the degree of Master of Science and entitled: Gender Justice in Territorial Land Management: An Eco-Justice Peacebuilding Analysis of Sierra Nevada-Perijá's PDET Zone

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Amidst Colombia's post-conflict transition, this thesis delves into the intersection of gender, land management, and peacebuilding, focusing on the Participatory Development Programs with Territorial Focus (PDETs). Specifically, it scrutinizes the PDET of Sierra Nevada-Perijá to assess how it integrates women's involvement and a gendered approach to territorial land management, thereby influencing post-conflict reconstruction. Guided by an eco-justice peacebuilding framework, this research investigates the mechanisms through which PDETs incorporate women into land reform processes, evaluates their efficacy in promoting gender justice, and explores the broader ramifications of gendered environmental management on post-conflict stability. The study addresses the pressing need to understand how PDETs tackle the intricate challenges of Colombia's post-conflict transition, particularly regarding territorial and environmental rights. It seeks to discern whether these initiatives afford women in the Sierra Nevada-Perijá region opportunities for engagement in territorial planning, crucial for fostering inclusive and resilient peacebuilding. Furthermore, by focusing on the intersectionality of gender, environmental justice, and transitional justice within the context of Sierra Nevada-Perijá, this research bridges a critical gap in existing literature. It not only contributes nuanced insights for more effective policies and practices in post-conflict Colombia but also underscores the significance of inclusive environmental peacebuilding and women's participation therein for sustainable peace and development.In essence, this thesis aims to offer a comprehensive analysis of gender dynamics within PDETs, shedding light on their role in shaping post-conflict landscapes and advancing gender-inclusive peacebuilding agendas in Colombia.

Keywords: PDET, territorial management, environmental peacebuilding, transitional justice, eco-justice peacebuilding, gender

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List of Abbreviations

ADR	Agencia de Desarrollo Rural [Rural Development Agency]
ANT	Agencia Nacional de Tierras [National Land Agency]
APPG	Asociación Poder Para la Gente [Power to the People Association]
ART	Agencia de Renovación del Territorio [Land Renewal Agency]
AUC	Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia [United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia]
DANE	Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística [National Administrative Department]
DNP	Departamento Nacional de Planeación [National Planning Department]
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ELN	Ejército de Liberación Nacional [National Liberation Army]
FARC-EP	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo [Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army]
FIP	Fundación Ideas para la Paz [Ideas for Peace Foundation]
JAC	Juntas de Acción Comunal [Community Action Board]
JEP	Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz [Special Jurisdiction for Peace]
PATR	Planes de Acción para la Transformación Regional [Action Plans for Regional Transformation]
PDET	Programa de Desarrollo con Enfoque Territorial [Participatory Development Programs with Territorial Focus]
PMRT	Pacto Municipal Para La Transformación Regional [Community Pact for Regional Transformation]
PNIS	Programa Nacional Integral de Sustitución de Cultivos de Uso Ilícito [National Comprehensive Program for the Substitution of Crops Used for Illicit Purposes]
PRIO	Peace Research Institute Oslo
RRI	Reforma Rural Integral [Comprehensive Rural Reform]
UGT	Unidad de Gestión Territorial [Territorial Management Unit]
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
URT	Unidad de Restitución de Tierras [Land Restitution Uni

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

Colombia's rich cultural and environmental diversity forms the backdrop to a complex history marked by decades of conflict and a transformative peace process. Nicknamed the 'gateway to South America', Colombia is the land of contrasts. The country's 32 departments are home to paradisiacal, tropical beaches along the north and west, snow covered Andean mountains in the center, several deserts in the north, and vast grasslands in the east. Not to mention, almost the entire southern half of the country is taken up by the dense forests of the Amazon. This diversity extends to wildlife with Colombia hosting nearly 10% of the planet's biodiversity across 314 different ecosystems (UN Environment Programme, n.d.). The country's landscape richness is equally matched in the diversity of its people. Colombia is considered both multicultural and multilingual, one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world. Today, 87 indigenous ethnic groups, speaking 64 Amerindian languages, are recognized along with three distinct Afro-Colombian population groups, together inhabiting 24% of the country (ACTO, n.d.; DANE 2007, 9). This rich diversity, spanning from its stunning natural landscapes to its multicultural society, sets the stage for understanding Colombia's unique identity.

In the 1960s, Colombia was catapulted into an internal armed conflict that would come to span five decades. While the countryside had been rocked with violence years before, 1964 marked a turning point in Colombian history when two separate guerilla groups were formed, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC- Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – Ejército del Pueblo) and the National Liberation Army (ELN - Ejército de Liberación Nacional). For a little over half a century the country was thrown into a brutal conflict between the Colombian government, allied with far-right paramilitary groups, on one side and far-left guerrilla groups on the other. The armed conflict, which has resulted in the loss of 250,000 lives, saw the two sides fighting each other in the name of influence and control of the Colombian countryside (UNDP/PRIO, 2020, 16).

Finally, in August 2016, following four years of arduous debate, Colombia's long-standing conflict came to a standstill with the signing of the *Acuerdo Final Para La Terminación Del Conflicto y La Construcción De Una Paz Estable y Duradera* (Peace Agreement for the Termination of the Conflict and the Construction of a Stable and Lasting Peace). Signed between the government of President Juan Manuel Santos and the FARC, the peace agreement incorporated provisions for truth, justice, and rural development while offering political inclusion for former combatants. Most importantly it established that peace must be built with differentiated attention to the territorial, gender, and ethnic dynamics of the conflict (Rodríguez Iglesias & Rosen 2022). In this manner, the Peace Agreement offered an opportunity to establish a connection between gender, land, and justice in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction.

It is within this context that this thesis emerges by casting a light on one of the land reforms put forth by the Peace Agreement: *Programas de Desarrollo con Enfoque Territorial* (PDETs Participatory Development Programs with Territorial Focus). PDETs aim to promote sustainable development and inclusive governance through targeted land reforms and community involvement. This thesis specifically centers on the PDET of Sierra Nevada-Perijá as the focal region for examining how these initiatives intersect with pillars of gender and land management in the context of post-conflict reconstruction. The core research question guiding this study is: **How does the PDET of Sierra-Nevada Perijá integrate women's involvement in and a gendered approach to territorial land management, and how does that impact the region's peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction?** This question will be answered by applying an eco-justice peacebuilding conceptual framework, merging principles of environmental peacebuilding and transitional justice, to explore the dynamics of gender inclusion, land governance, and sustainable development within the PDET framework. Consequently, this research aims to investigate the specific mechanisms through which PDETs incorporate women's participation in land reform processes, evaluate the extent to which these mechanisms promote gender justice, and examine the broader impacts of gendered environmental management on post-conflict stability.

1.1 Problem Definition

The research problem revolves around the intricate challenges faced by Colombia in its post-conflict transition, especially concerning territorial and environmental rights. The urgency lies in understanding how PDETs address these challenges and, more crucially, if they make space for women in the Sierra Nevada - Perijá zone to engage in territorial planning processes. Understanding this is crucial for fostering inclusive, gender-sensitive, and resilient peacebuilding. Thus, the research aligns with the broader goal of contributing nuanced insights that can inform more effective policies and practices in post-conflict Colombia.

Furthermore, the study addresses the gap in existing literature by focusing on the intersectionality of gender, environmental justice, and transitional justice within the specific context of territorial planning projects in Sierra Nevada - Perijá. This issue holds both practical and academic relevance, as the success of post-conflict transitions in Colombia hinges on effective environmental peacebuilding and the inclusion of women in these processes.

1.2 Thesis Aim

The aim of this thesis is to provide a critical examination of the integration of women's involvement and a gendered approach to territorial land management within the PDET context, with a focus on the PDET of Sierra Nevada-Perijá as a case study. By utilizing an eco-justice peacebuilding conceptual framework, the study seeks to explore how these initiatives intersect with the key aspects of gender and land management in the context of post-conflict reconstruction in Colombia. Specifically, the research aims to investigate the mechanisms through which PDETs incorporate women's participation in land reform processes, evaluate the effectiveness of these mechanisms in promoting gender justice, and analyze the broader impacts of gendered environmental management on post-conflict stability.

1.3 Motivation

My personal motivation to delve into this thesis topic stems from a convergence of academic background, linguistic proficiency, and a commitment to understanding and addressing the intricate challenges faced by communities in post-conflict Colombia. As a Spanish speaker and a graduate in Political Science during my undergraduate studies, I recognized the unique opportunity to merge my linguistic abilities with my interest in political processes. Pursuing a master's in environmental science further allowed me to bridge these disciplines, creating a platform to explore the intersection of women's roles, environmental dynamics, and post-conflict transitions.

The motivation behind this research is rooted in a desire to contribute to academic discourse by addressing a critical gap in the existing literature, namely the lack of information about women's role in territorial planning processes in Sierra Nevada - Perijá. I am driven by the conviction that understanding how transitional justice can effectively address environmental issues while empowering women in post-conflict Colombia is essential for comprehensive peacebuilding. The practical implications of this research extend to policymakers and civil society organizations, offering insights into integrating environmental justice, gender equality, and sustainable peace into transitional justice processes.

Personally, the commitment to this thesis topic is fueled by a deep belief in the transformative power of empowering women defenders and rectifying environmental injustices. Through this research, I aspire to contribute meaningfully to Colombia's ongoing peace and reconciliation efforts, promoting not only a more just society but also environmental sustainability. This endeavour aligns with my academic journey, combining language proficiency, political science expertise, and environmental science insights to explore a topic of profound relevance and impact.

1.4 Research Question

How does the PDET of Sierra-Nevada Perijá integrate women's involvement in and a gendered approach to territorial land management, and how does that impact the region's peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction?

1.5 Thesis Outline

To best answer the research question this thesis is structured in seven distinct chapters. As Chapter 1 already explained the basis of the thesis, Chapter 2 will address the context of post-conflict Colombia, highlighting the significance land and gender have played in Colombia's armed conflict. This will be followed by an introduction of PDETs and the Sierra Nevada-Perijá PDET as the case study location. Chapter 3 will delve into theoretical frameworks of environmental peacebuilding and transitional justice, elucidating their roles in post-conflict reconstruction. It will explore how these frameworks inform the conceptualization of eco-justice peacebuilding in Chapter 4, providing a theoretical basis for understanding the dynamics of gender inclusion, land governance, and sustainable development within the PDET framework. Next in Chapter 5 the methodology section will outline the rationale behind employing methodological triangulation, combining semi-structured interviewing, participant observations, and document analysis. Chapter 6 will present the empirical analysis of the Sierra Nevada-Perijá PDET, structured around the eco-justice peacebuilding framework. It will evaluate the success of the PDET in incorporating women's participation, promoting gender justice, and contributing to post-conflict stability. Special attention will be given to examining the implementation of key pillars of the eco-justice framework from a gender perspective. Finally, in Chapter 7 the thesis will conclude by summarizing the key findings and offering recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness, inclusivity, and sustainability of PDET initiatives in post-conflict Colombia. It will highlight the importance of addressing issues of gender and land within PDETs to contribute to long-term peace and development in the region.

CHAPTER 2: On The Road To Peace: a land and gender analysis of Colombia's post-conflict reconstruction

The intertwined dynamics of land, natural resources, and gender have played pivotal roles in shaping Colombia's protracted struggle for peace. As explored in "Landscapes of Conflict: The Role of Natural Resources in Colombia's Protracted Struggle for Peace," the exploitation and contestation of resources such as land, oil, and gold have fueled the Colombian armed conflict, leading to widespread displacement, environmental degradation, and economic instability. Concurrently, "Empowering Women for Sustainable Peace: Gender Perspectives in

Colombia's Post-Conflict Reconstruction" highlights the indispensable role of women in upholding peace and advocating for land rights amidst the aftermath of violence. This section delves into the intricate connections between land and gender, particularly important considerations in Colombia's post-conflict reconstruction efforts. In the Colombian context, the intersection of land and gender reforms will be studied in PDETs, signaling a shift towards more inclusive and sustainable peacebuilding strategies. This analysis not only informs the theoretical framework of environmental peacebuilding and transitional justice that will be explored in Chapter 3 but also sets the stage for how these concepts intersect and inform Colombia's path towards lasting, sustainable peace.

2.1 Landscapes of Conflict: The Role of Natural Resources in Colombia's Protracted Struggle for Peace

The relationship between peace and land is particularly salient in the case of Colombia, a nation that has endured a protracted and violent internal armed conflict largely sustained and financed by issues related to land. The Colombian conflict underscores the critical role that land plays not only in sustaining livelihoods but also in fueling conflict and, conversely, in fostering peace. The struggle for control over land has been a central issue, with various armed groups vying for dominance over fertile territories and resource-rich areas. This has led to widespread displacement, social fragmentation, and economic instability. The following section will elaborate on how the environment played an active role in the conflict and how it led the government to adopt a differential approach to land and territorial peace in the quest of post-conflict stability.

Conflicting interests and values surrounding natural resources can lead to their politicization and subsequent disputes, often escalating into violent conflicts.Natural resources and the environment can serve as direct or indirect targets during conflicts, acting as both weapons and victims, while also inadvertently benefiting certain factions involved (Dresse et al., 2016, 5; Ide 2020; Garavito, Franco, Crane 2017). The critical role of natural resources in fueling conflicts is evident from recent historical patterns: as of records from 2017, disputes over natural resources have escalated at least 18 internal armed conflicts and approximately 40% of interstate conflicts in the last 60 years have been connected to natural resources (UNEP,

2009). Given these statistics, it comes as no surprise that Colombia, a country abundant in natural resources, has experienced prolonged internal conflicts. The exploitation and control of resources such as oil, gold, and coca have been central to the violence, impacting both the environment and local communities (Johnson et al. 2023). Furthermore, land seizure and abandonment have regularly been cited as prominent causes of the armed conflict (Yoshida & Céspedes-Báez. 2021, 29). The struggle over these valuable resources continues to shape the socio-political landscape, making sustainable peace in Colombia deeply intertwined with effective and equitable natural resource management.

To be more specific about the role the environment, particularly land, has played in the Colombian armed conflict, Garavito, Franco, and Crane (2017) elaborate four key ways this interaction has manifested. First, they argue that natural resources can be a cause of the armed conflict by the way they exacerbate tensions. As a natural resource, land has often been at the heart of violent confrontations, being both a strategic asset and a source of livelihood for many (Ide et al. 2021). In Colombia, unequal land distribution and widespread land dispossession are recognized as some of the primary manifestations of the armed conflict (Comisión de Seguimiento, 2009; Sánchez, 2017; Grupo de Memoria Histórica, 2013). The concentration of land ownership among a small elite has fueled social and economic disparities, leading to widespread rural poverty and disenfranchisement. These inequalities have driven marginalized communities to support or join insurgent groups, seeing them as potential agents of change (Garavito, Franco, and Crane 2017). Moreover, new actors have emerged to exploit resources like coca, oil, and gold. Drug cartels, for instance, have financed paramilitary groups to protect their interests, leading to their territorial expansion and the emergence of new forms of land conflict (Graser et al. 2020; Echandía, 2013). The exploitation of these resources has created a vicious cycle of violence and instability. For example, the lucrative cocaine trade has not only funded paramilitary groups but also guerrilla movements, perpetuating the conflict and making it more difficult for the state to establish control in certain regions (Garavito, Franco, & Crane 2017). Disputes over revenue distribution, scarcity of resources (unequal distribution of resources like land and water) and economic dependence on resource extraction have only furthered escalated tensions (UNEP 2009). To date unresolved grievances over land ownership and use remain a major source of tension and conflict and more worryingly, continue to impede efforts towards lasting peace.

While natural resources are not the sole cause of the Colombian conflict, they are deeply intertwined with its dynamics and evolution.

Second, the scholars argue that natural resources can be a source of financing for armed groups and thus facilitate the perpetuation of the conflict. Over the past 25 years, resources such as timber, cocoa, and diamonds have been significant financial sources for various internal armed conflicts worldwide, including those in Angola, Cambodia, Liberia, and Colombia (UNEP 2009, 11-14). In Colombian regions rich in oil and gold, armed groups vie for control over extraction sites, leading to violent confrontations and further displacement of local communities. Areas of high environmental value, including national parks and forest reserves, have become essential for alternative financing methods such as kidnapping and illicit crop cultivation due to their secludedness (Garavito, Franco, Crane 2017, 25). In 2014 alone, coca crops covered thousands of hectares in national parks, forest reserves, indigenous territories, and Afro-descendant community lands, accounting for 54% of all coca cultivation that year (Ministerio de Justicia y ODC, 2015). This exploitation of natural resources has provided significant financial backing to armed groups, allowing them to sustain their operations and further entrenching their influence and power. Beyond direct financing, remote and difficult-to-access areas, such as jungles or forests, serve as sanctuaries for armed groups, allowing them to evade attacks and access essential resources like food, wood, and water (O'Neill, 1990). In Colombia, the FARC guerrillas greatly took advantage of such terrain by establishing their strongholds deep inside the jungle. The state's inability to effectively regulate and manage these areas and natural resources has allowed armed groups to step in and fill the power vacuum, further complicating peacebuilding efforts and resulting in inadequate basic infrastructure and living conditions for local communities (Yoshida & Céspedes-Báez. 2021, 29).

Third, the environment, specifically land in this case, can fall victim to a conflict. Garavito, Franco, Crane (2017) argue that the environmental impacts of armed conflict can be both direct and indirect. In the case of the former, the presence of armed groups in biodiversity-rich areas leads to habitat destruction and pollution (Yoshida & Céspedes-Báez. 2021, 29). Conflict also hampers conservation efforts, with armed groups hindering environmental institutions in protected areas (McNeely 2003, 33). As mentioned above, the vast illicit activities taking place during the Colombian conflict such as illegal mining and coca

cultivation have led to widespread soil degradation, and water contamination, exacerbating the already precarious living conditions of rural populations. Deforestation is also an important issue to account for with the conflict having driven 3 million hectares of the total deforested land in the country between 1990 and 2013 (DNP 2015). In terms of indirect impacts, conflicts can lead to forced displacement, adding pressure on natural resources as displaced populations settle in ecologically sensitive areas. In Colombia, the number of displaced persons surged dramatically from approximately 720,000 in 1994 to over 2 million in 2005, and nearly 6 million in 2017 (Cairo et al. 2018, 474). This significant increase in displaced persons and its subsequent impact on the environment underscores the profound effect of the country's internal conflict on communities and land, highlighting the urgent need for comprehensive and sustainable peacebuilding strategies that address both human and environmental concerns.

Although Colombia is a prime example of the devastating impact an armed conflict can have on land, from an ecological perspective, there are also occasions where the environment can very well be a beneficiary of conflict. This less studied side effect of conflict is the last relationship explored by Garavito, Franco, and Crane (2017). They argue that while the environmental threats and damage posed by armed conflict are very real, they do establish a certain status quo that can work to the advantage of land. The presence of armed conflict greatly deters human activities that would be degrading to the environment such as deforestation, mining, and agriculture thereby protecting certain ecosystems and allowing them to regenerate and grow (Hanson, 2009; Reardon, 2018). This was exemplified in the case of deforestation rates in Colombia where following the 2016 signing of the Peace Agreement, several regions reported a surge in deforestation, possibly from the reintegration of civilians in zones that were previously considered too violent or unsafe to conduct cattle ranching and large-scale agriculture (Bernal Bermúdez, et al., 2023; Reardon, 2018).This paradox highlights the complex and multifaceted relationship between conflict and the environment, emphasizing the need for nuanced approaches to post-conflict environmental management.

In all, the Colombian case evidences how the environment has not only played a passive role as a backdrop to conflict but has also been an active element influencing the course and nature of it. Understanding this intricate relationship is crucial for addressing the underlying causes

of violence in Colombia and prioritizing environmental management as a strategy to combat conflict resurgence (UNEP 2013; Jensen & Lonergan, 2012).

2.2 Empowering Women for Sustainable Peace: Gender Perspectives in Colombia's Post-Conflict Reconstruction

The essential role of women in successful post-conflict reconstruction efforts cannot be overstated. Although Colombian women have been differentially impacted by the conflict (Zulver 2018, Meertens 2012), have emerged not only as survivors of the conflict but also as key actors in upholding peace and land rights (Rocheleau et al. 1996; Ide et al. 2021). Their involvement has been crucial in fostering community resilience, promoting inclusive governance, and ensuring that peacebuilding processes address the specific needs and contributions of all members of society.

Integrating a gendered perspective in post-conflict reconstruction first garnered attention in 2000 with the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (Ide et al. 2021, 9; Cairo et al 2018, 472). This resolution called for the inclusion of gendered approaches in peace talks and agreements, recognizing the unique experiences and contributions of women in conflict and post-conflict settings. More recently, as conflict resolution has expanded to include post-conflict policies, gender issues have gained recognition as being crucial and having a direct impact on the effectiveness of peacebuilding efforts (Pankhurst 2003, 157). While the use of a gender perspective in national peace accords has gradually gained popularity, the 2016 Colombian Peace Agreement stands out in having explicitly stated the incorporation of a gender approach throughout its implementation particularly by establishing valuable opportunities for women’s participation and leadership (Cairo et al 2018, 472; Instituto Kroc de Estudios Internacionales de Paz & de Acuerdos de Paz 2021, 12). However it must be noted that this achievement was largely due to the pressure exerted by the Colombian women’s rights movement and the international community that pushed to establish the Sub-Commission on Gender in 2014, nearly two years after the peace talks began, with the primary role of integrating gender considerations into the entire negotiation process (Yoshida & Céspedes-Báez. 2021, 27).

The intersection of women and land in post-conflict reconstruction underscores the intricate dynamics of gender, power, and resource management in conflict-affected regions like Colombia. In the context of Colombia's quest for post-conflict stability, acknowledging and addressing gender dynamics is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, women often play significant roles in environmental conservation and sustainable resource management, yet their contributions are frequently overlooked or undervalued (Pankhurst 2003, 159; Zulver 2018). Women's roles as primary caregivers and custodians of natural resources situate them at the forefront of land-related issues, emphasizing their critical importance in shaping sustainable peace (Cirefice & Sullivan 2019, 83; Nightingale 2006). Women's livelihoods are intricately tied to agricultural practices, environmental management, and resource utilization, highlighting their indispensable contributions to local economies and ecosystems (Meertens 2015, 361). These relationships were accentuated during the conflict as for the most part women were not considered primary targets and were instead left behind to tend to the land as men fled (Ibid). And yet, throughout history, women have faced systemic discrimination in land ownership and access, perpetuating gender inequalities and hindering sustainable development efforts. Agrarian reform policies, while aiming to address land inequities, often overlook women's land rights, leaving them marginalized and vulnerable to exploitation (Meertens 2015, 361). Despite some legislative advancements, such as provisions for joint ownership, challenges persist in translating legal frameworks into meaningful change on the ground, especially regarding women's decision-making authority over land (Ibid). The refusal to incorporate a gendered perspective in post-conflict reconstruction disregards women's deep-rooted connections with the land as sources of livelihood, identity, and belonging. By recognizing women's agency in environmental protection efforts, Colombia can harness their expertise and leadership to foster more inclusive and effective post conflict transition.

Secondly, gender-based violence has been a pervasive feature of Colombia's armed conflict. Despite progress in recent years, there remains a gap in understanding how peace is gendered and the differential impacts of armed conflict on women and men (Confortini 2012, 7). Unlike men, women's experiences during conflict tend to characterized by specific gender-based risks such as sexual violence, highlighting the urgent need to address gender inequalities in post-conflict societies (Instituto Kroc de Estudios Internacionales de Paz & de Acuerdos de Paz 2021, 12; Meertens 2015; Pankhurst 2003). Failure to address the trauma and injustices experienced by women undermines efforts to build trust and reconciliation within

communities. Integrating gender perspectives into environmental peacebuilding strategies therefore can help address the root causes of gender-based violence and promote healing and social cohesion (Zulver 2018).

Thirdly, women in Colombia often bear the brunt of environmental degradation and climate change impacts, particularly in rural and indigenous communities. Land dispossession, displacement, and loss of livelihoods exacerbate existing gender disparities and increase women's vulnerability to poverty, violence and labor exploitation (Yoshida & Céspedes-Báez. 2021, 26). As the Colombian constitutional court emphasized in 2008, in the context of the country's armed conflict, internally displaced women face risks before, during and after forced displacement (Ibid, 58) This reality contributes to the framing of women as 'double victims' grappling with the consequences of conflict while also assuming caretaking roles within their communities (Pankhurst 2003, 159). One of my interviewees, a lawyer working for a human rights NGO in Bogotá, emphasized this point by describing how Colombian women suffer both from the direct impacts of the conflict and their inability to secure land following the Peace Agreement. Traditionally excluded from discussions about household finances and land ownership, these women found themselves without legal protection when the family head was killed during the conflict. Consequently, many women were unable to claim land restitution as they had historically been kept in the dark about the finances or legalities of the territories they inhabited. This exclusion from critical information channels meant they had limited or no knowledge of property rights, legal procedures, and financial transactions related to their land. As a result, women continue to face significant difficulties in accessing the necessary information and resources to contest land claims effectively. This lack of access perpetuates their disenfranchisement, making it nearly impossible for them to assert their rights or gain legal recognition of their land ownership. Cirefice & Sullivan (2019) build on the idea of women being dually exploited, arguing that this exploitation arises from both of their perceived status as 'other' and lack of agency within capitalist, colonial, and patriarchal systems (91). In the context of post-conflict Colombia, this situation highlights women's compounded victimization and the need for more inclusive and transparent processes pertaining to women and land. Furthermore, the disproportionate discrimination against women in Colombian society is owed to a variety of factors, namely the precarious conditions they endure in conflict-affected, isolated regions, and the state's failure to respond adequately in a gender-sensitive manner to guarantee their rights during and after the conflict (Ibid, 30).

In recognizing these gender-specific impacts, it becomes clear that addressing the unique challenges faced by women in conflict and post-conflict settings is essential for fostering genuine and inclusive peace.

The aftermath of conflict presents a strategic opportunity to adopt legislative and policy measures aimed at eliminating such type of discrimination against women and promoting their equal participation in governance structures (Yoshida & Céspedes-Báez 2021, 23). As Fröhlich and Gioli (2015) have noted, gender is an important factor in analyzing both the escalation and de-escalation processes in violent conflicts, as well as in examining the differing vulnerabilities and adaptive capacities of women and men to global environmental changes. Therefore, recognizing the gender dimensions of environmental degradation is essential for developing equitable and sustainable solutions that prioritize the needs and rights of women and marginalized groups. Throughout this literature review, land reform is understood as essential for peacebuilding. Yet its implementation in various regions worldwide have overlooked gender considerations meaning that they have yet to be mainstreamed (Pankhurst 2003, 172). On occasions where gender is intertwined with peacebuilding efforts, insufficient research to date has led to instances where women are often treated as a homogeneous group, ultimately defeating the purpose of a holistic peacebuilding approach (Ibid, 167). The NGO lawyer I interviewed highlighted how detrimental it is when a single woman's voice is generalized as representing the will of all women, ignoring the diversity of experiences and perspectives. The tendency to view women's experiences and perspectives as uniform across different contexts overlooks the diverse realities and needs of women from various socio-economic, ethnic, and geographical backgrounds in Colombia. Efforts to amplify women's voices, address gender-based violence, and challenge discriminatory practices are essential for creating more inclusive and resilient post-conflict societies. By recognizing the importance of gender perspectives and empowering women as key agents of change, peacebuilding initiatives can build more equitable and durable pathways to peace in Colombia and beyond.

2.3 Transformative Pathways: Introducing PDETs as Catalysts for Gender and Land Reforms in Post-Conflict Colombia

Understanding the intersection between land and gender in Colombia's armed conflict leads to an exploration of PDETs as both territorial land reforms and catalysts for gender equity. PDETs are the third pillar of the *Reforma Rural Integral* (RRI - Comprehensive Rural Reform), a policy introduced by the 2016 Peace Agreement to tackle large-scale transformation of the rural countryside. Broadly, the RRI aims to combat rural poverty and inequality and ensures that displaced individuals affected by the conflict will be able to return to their lands, work on them, and live in peace (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Colombia 2016, 31). Additionally, rural populations will have opportunities for education, healthcare, and housing, with the reconstruction of conflict-affected rural regions involving community participation (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Colombia 2016, 31).

To demonstrate the Peace Agreement's attempts at holistic transformation, the RRI is structured around pillars that address various land challenges faced by rural communities. Notably, the first pillar deals with land access and use by establishing the redistribution of uncultivated territories, land donations, and reclaimed lands acquired illegally back to victims of displacement through the Fondo de Tierras' or Land Fund (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Colombia 2016, 31). The second pillar argues for a significant reduction in poverty through rural planning to narrow the gap between rural and urban areas. The third pillar, as mentioned, established the PDETs as specific areas where marginalized communities would benefit from focused interventions aimed at addressing their needs, promoting equitable land distribution, and enhancing women's participation and leadership in the peacebuilding process (FARC-EP y Gobierno de Colombia 2016 ; IOM 2019). Lastly, the fourth pillar argues for food security by asserting that all efforts to transform the countryside must lead to increased food production and better nutrition.

Table 2: PDET Legal and Financial Structure

RRI PILLAR	LEGAL REGULATION	AREA	SIGNIFICANCE	IMPLEMENTATION
2. *Programas de Desarrollo con Enfoque Territoria*l - PDET	Decree 893 of 28 May 2017	170 municipalities across 16 subregions of the country, covering 36% of the national territory (ART n.d.a).	PDETS seek to contribute to the socio-economic development of communities and thus help overcome widespread structural inequalities through novel territorial ordering policies (Dejusticia 2022).	Overseen by the ART, a government agency that finances initiatives through the *Sistema General de Participaciones* (General Participation System) (ART n.d.a, Dejustica 2022).

Established in 2017, the PDET programs were designed as a 15-year land reform initiative that was meant to address, at least partly, the differentiated territorial, gender, and ethnic approach the government was trying to put forward post-conflict. PDETs aim to comprehensively transform 7 million hectares of the Colombian countryside prioritizing development projects in areas marked by high poverty rates, institutional and administrative weaknesses, and dangerous levels of conflict (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Colombia 2016, 33; Poder Legislativo 2016, 22; USAID & Universidad Javeriana n.d.; Silva Aldana et al., 2021, 16). To expand on the degree of impact from the conflict, one of my interviewees mentioned this implies that at least 35% of the local population must have been a direct victim of the armed conflict (given the wide of range of this definition it can apply to anything from having been displaced, assaulted, or having had someone close killed). In San Juan del Cesar, a PDET municipality I conducted interviews in, the number of reported victims was close to 60% of the population, far surpassing the minimum requirements.

The PDETs were created under the promise to champion an approach that is sensitive to the peculiarities of each locality and the varying needs of its inhabitants (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Colombia 2016, 33). As such, proposed initiatives are based on a mass consultation process that included a record number of women (Cardozo Lozano, 2023, 30). Moreover, these consultations were, for the first time in Colombian history, conducted with state employees who had travelled to the PDET communities to discuss core problems and potential remedies with their inhabitants and to develop a vision of the future of the territory according to the communities' wishes (Bachmann 2023; IOM 2019, 1).

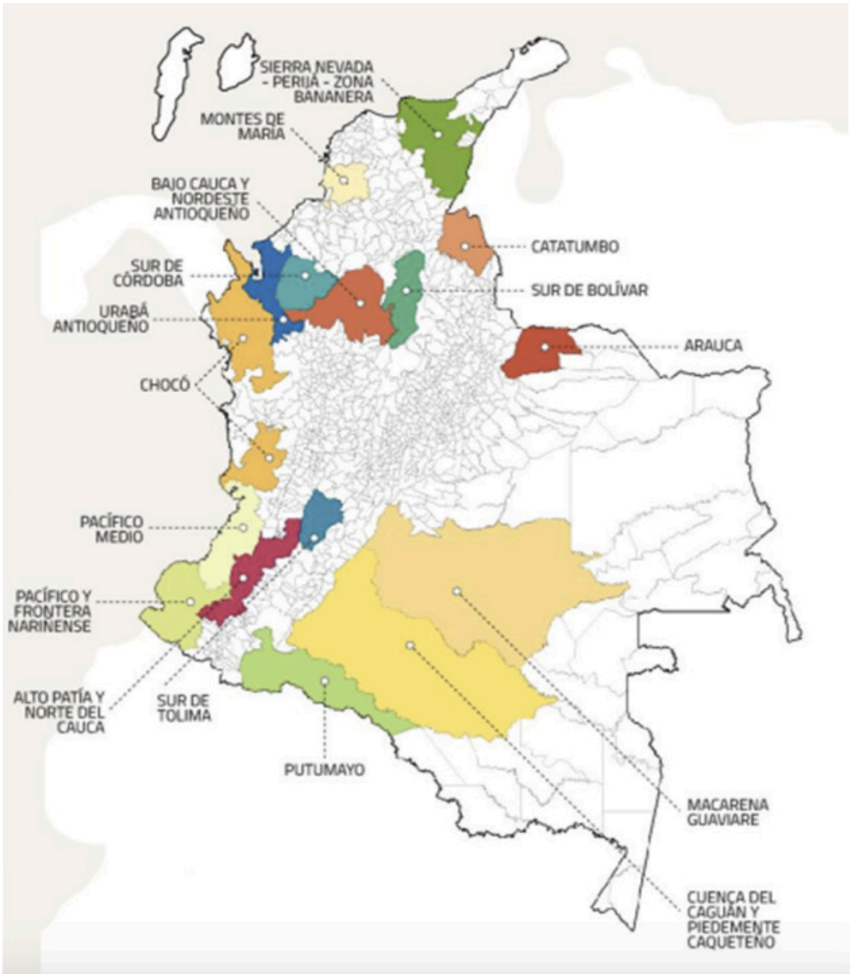

Figure 1: Map of the 16 PDET zones across Colombia (Source: Agencia de Renovación del Territorio)

The implementation of the PDET is structured into three key phases, all of which prioritize communities as the driving force behind initiatives aimed at addressing their needs. These phases are organized based on a territorial approach: 1) rural communities; 2) municipalities; and 3) sub-regional (Bernal Bermúdez et al., 2023, 17; IOM 2019, 1). Initially, an extensive participatory evaluation and analysis of the local context, opportunities, challenges, and existing local initiatives were conducted in collaboration with rural communities. Subsequently, the various processes established at the rural community level are merged with input from local government, community leaders, and the private sector to formulate a *Pacto Municipal Para La Transformación Regional* [PMRT - Community Pact for Regional Transformation] (Bernal Bermúdez et al., 2023, 17). Finally, during the sub-regional phase,

Planes de Acción para la Transformación Regional [PATR - Action Plans for Regional Transformation] are synthesized and endorsed, drawing from the plans developed in the preceding stages.

Communities gathered and expressed their expectations for their territory on various issues, organized into eight pillars: (1) social organization of rural property and land use; (2) infrastructure and land adaptation; (3) rural health; (4) rural education and early childhood; (5) housing, clean water, and rural sanitation; (6) economic reactivation and agricultural production; (7) system for the progressive guarantee of the right to food; (8) reconciliation, coexistence, and peacebuilding. The first pillar, focusing on the social organization of rural property and land use, stands as the central axis of the thesis due to its foundational significance in shaping the socio-economic landscape of rural communities. This pillar encompasses crucial aspects such as land ownership, land use policies, and community participation in decision-making processes regarding land resources (FARC-EP y Gobierno de Colombia 2016).

PDETs are also characterized by two specific groups that have an active say in policy implementation. *Grupos motor* (motor groups), established during the participatory construction phase of the PDETs, are composed of elected delegates. These group, composed of local residents who voluntarily collaborate with the city council and its technical team in PDET development and implementation, play an active role in managing projects and ensuring that PDET mandates are being fulfilled (Bernal Bermúdez et al. 2023, 24; FIP 2017,5). The motor group is a civic space composed of l. They are a liaison between government institutions and local communities.Another key stakeholder in PDET processes are the victims' tables which offer spaces for victim participation and dialogue throughout PDET policy creation (Bernal Bermúdez et al. 2023, 24; Unidad para las Víctimas, 2015). In this manner PDETs aim to embrace a holistic approach where community participation is guaranteed through motor groups playing a crucial role in overseeing project implementation, while victims' voices are given space to influence the process of reparation.

Across the three implementation stages, all 16 PDET regions devised over 32,000 initiatives and development strategies tailored to address the prioritized needs of each community (IOM 2019). Of these, around 1,169 initiatives directly addressed issues pertaining to women and

another 3,239 were listed as possibly tackling gender equity if implemented with a gender-focused approach (Instituto Kroc de Estudios Internacionales de Paz & de Acuerdos de Paz 2021, 34). These numbers are historic in their scale and ambition but also point to the significant challenges and opportunities in ensuring these initiatives translate into meaningful, gender-equitable outcomes on the ground. Through the lens of PDETs particularly that of the selected case study region of Sierra Nevada-Perijá, this thesis will explore how gender and land reforms are being operationalized in Colombia's post-conflict reconstruction, highlighting the avenues through which these programs foster sustainable peace and equitable development.

2.4 Case Study: Sierra Nevada-Perijá

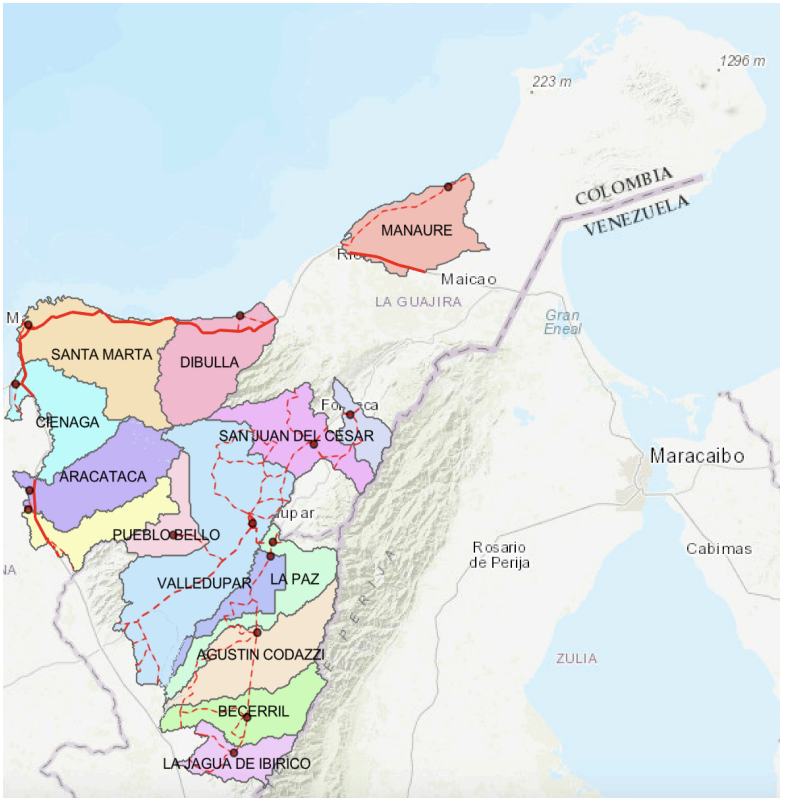

Figure 2: Map of the Sierra-Nevada Perijá PDET zone (Source: ARCGIS)

The Sierra Nevada - Perijá PDET zone, encompassing fifteen municipalities spanning the departments of Cesar, La Guajira, and Magdalena, represents a significant focal point for my thesis. This decision stems from several key factors that underscore the area's contentious history, importance within the realm of academic inquiry, and significant investments.

Sprawling around 20,464 square kilometres, or 1.8% of the national territory, the subregion of Sierra Nevada - Perijá boasts a rich tapestry of natural wonders and cultural heritage (ART n.d.b). Situated between two mountain ranges, the Serranía del Perijá to the east and the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta to the west, this area north of the country is home to a population of 1,673,353 inhabitants (ART n.d.b). Within the region, 36 councils of Black communities can be found along with 19 reserves of the following indigenous peoples: Kogui, Wiwa, Arhuaco, Kankuamo, Wayúu, and Yukpa (Comisión de la Verdad n.d.). Nestled amidst the towering peaks lies the picturesque valley of the Cesar River, an important tributary of the Magdalena River, Colombia's most important aquatic expanse.

Beyond its impressive natural landscape and cultural diversity, the Sierra Nevada - Perijá PDET zone grapples with a legacy of conflict, pursuit of peace, and aspirations for sustainable development. Contextualizing the area reveals a history rife with conflict and subsequent challenges. Almost 50% of inhabitants live in rural zones, exposing them to arduous journeys, sometimes spanning up to fifteen hours, to access urban centers and essential state services (ART 2023, 1; Bachmann 2023, 444). In 2018, 529.727 inhabitants were living in poverty, amounting to 34% of the total population (Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural 2021, 1). Furthermore, the 1980s marked the region's entanglement in armed conflict, characterized by the guerrilla's emergence. Subsequently, the paramilitary Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC) supplanted guerrilla forces, ushering in a violent phase. Despite the signing of peace accords in 2016, the region continues to grapple with armed violence, albeit at a moderate intensity compared to other PDET regions (Bachmann 2023, 444). Ongoing rivalries between criminal-paramilitary factions pose a significant threat to the peace process, impacting civilians on a massive scale. It is within this dynamic context that this thesis endeavors to explore and analyze the intricacies of peacebuilding efforts and development initiatives in the region.

Curiously, despite its tumultuous history and contemporary challenges, the Sierra Nevada - Perijá subregion remains conspicuously absent from scholarly and policy-making discourses on peacebuilding in Colombia. In spite of noteworthy academic analyses and meticulous monitoring efforts, particularly by institutions such as the Universidad del Norte in Barranquilla, there exists a dearth of publications scrutinizing the implementation of the PDET structure into the Sierra Nevada - Perijá area (Bachmann 2023, 445). Thus, in light of

the broader Colombian territorial peace dialogue, there is an imperative for scholars to integrate sub-national perspectives from all regions more evenly.

Furthermore, the allure of this particular case study area was amplified by the groundwork laid by my advisors from the Universidad de los Andes, Dr. Pablo Jaramillo Salazar. He has conducted significant prior research in the area and I was able to leverage both his insights and established network to navigate my own research in the region. Thanks to his contacts and a snowball effect I was able to conduct interviews in four municipalities across the three departments (Valledupar, San Juan del Cesar, Jagua de Ibirico, and Santa Marta).

Additionally, the recent influx of substantial funding, totaling $1.2 billion (in Colombian pesos) as of 2021, has catalyzed over 305 projects with resources from OCAD Paz and from the different PDET financing sources such as International Cooperation, Works for Taxes, ART-FCP-Sustainable Colombia, and PGN Works (El Informador 2021, ART 2021). As of December 31, 2023 that number has risen to approximately $2 trillion Colombian pesos that have been invested in the Sierra Nevada - Perijá region (ART 2023, 6). Administered by the Agencia de Renovación del Territorio, these funds have mainly been allocated to bolster a range of infrastructure, healthcare, and housing initiatives across 449 projects. Notable investments were made in the transport sector (a whopping $589 billion pesos), education (close to $231 billion pesos), and the mining and energy sectors ($281 billion pesos) (ART 2023, 6). While many of these projects aimed to benefit multiple municipalities at once, Valledupar and La Jagua de Ibirico, two cities I conducted interviews in, stand out having received approximately $361 billion pesos each (ART 2023, 6).

In taking a closer look at the first pillar of PDETs, my case study region has also undergone several advancements. Between 2018 and 2021, over 3,000 peasant families benefited from access and official formalization of land titles (Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural 2021, 2; ART 2023, 3). Valledupar and San Juán del Cesar are home to the highest number of benefited peasant families. Furthermore, Valledupar stood out as one of the territories where the highest number of hectares were formalized (Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural 2021, 2). Overall, more than 6000 hectares, accounting for 2.5% of the total Sierra Nevada PDET, has been formalized during this time (ART 2023, 3). These figures position the Sierra Nevada Perijá sub-region as the fourth among the 16 PDET sub-regions in terms of peasant

families benefited with formalization titles and access to land (Ministerio de Agricultura y Desarrollo Rural 2021, 2).

Moreover, despite being the recipient of significant financial allocations, the Sierra Nevada - Perijá PDET zone presents a paradoxical scenario. Despite its robust funding, empirical evidence suggests a lack of commensurate levels of citizen satisfaction with the implementation of peace agreements. Notably, a collaborative study between the UNDP and the PRIO (2020) found that despite receiving more resources than any other PDET region, the area does not exhibit elevated levels of contentment regarding the peace agreement's execution (27). Furthermore, during the same period of 2018-2021 when much of the land was being formalized, a spike in deforestation was observed with over 2000 hectares affected (ART 2023, 3).

In this vein, my thesis endeavors to fill this gap by shedding light on the nuances of peacebuilding efforts within the Sierra Nevada - Perijá PDET zone. By contextualizing the area's historical trajectory, assessing current challenges, and evaluating the efficacy of development interventions, this research aims to contribute to the discourse surrounding Colombian peacebuilding endeavors.

CHAPTER 3: Theoretical Framework

This following section embarks on a nuanced exploration of environmental peacebuilding and transitional justice, two indispensable frameworks in the pursuit of sustainable post-conflict reconstruction. The choice to focus on these frameworks is not arbitrary but stems from their inherent capacity to address the multifaceted challenges posed by conflict. Environmental peacebuilding emphasizes the integration of environmental considerations into conflict resolution processes, recognizing the intricate relationship between environmental degradation, resource scarcity, and conflict dynamics. Conversely, transitional justice grapples with the complex task of confronting past human rights violations, aiming to ensure accountability, serve justice, and foster reconciliation in societies transitioning from conflict to peace. Through the exploration of these frameworks, this section seeks to unravel how they impact Colombia’s post-conflict reconstruction. Most importantly however, this analysis sets

the stage for the forthcoming discussion on the conceptual framework, laying a robust groundwork for the empirical analysis to follow.

3.1 Forging Sustainable Peace: Exploring Environmental Peacebuilding

In theory, peacebuilding operations involve monitoring or implementing a negotiated settlement between two or more hostile parties (Bertram, 1995, p. 388). In practice, peacebuilding is applied only once a conflict ceases and reconstruction efforts can effectively begin, usually after a peace agreement or military victory (Bruch 2016, 3). However, a post-conflict period tends to be challenging to establish because of the sustained presence of violence and instability following a peace agreement (Ibid)[1]. This is notably the case in Colombia, where despite significant strides towards peace, armed groups continue to operate across the country, complicating the transition to a stable and peaceful society. In the PDET of Sierra-Nevada Perijá, armed groups are still present primarily in the municipalities of Cesar and La Guajira, where they continue to exert control and oversee drug trafficking routes (Redacción SMAD, 2022). However, theory dictates that as the intensity of violence diminishes, a post-conflict society emerges and conditions conducive to longer-term political and social stability begin to emerge. Therefore, controlling violence at both interpersonal and inter-communal levels is imperative to the success of peacebuilding processes (Jeong n.d.).

Galtung's (1996) notion of 'positive peace', which goes beyond simply the absence of conflict (coined as 'negative peace') to encompass the resolution of disputes through non-violent means, supports conventional understandings of peacebuilding This idea is echoed in the United Nations' (2010) definition of peacebuilding, which emphasizes the focus on mitigating conflict resurgence, enhancing national capacities for resolution, and applying tailored strategies to achieve sustainable peace and development (5). As such, peacebuilding aims to assist a post-conflict society by not only addressing immediate security concerns and

[1] In the context of Colombia, the primary focus of this thesis, while the nation still grapples with sporadic violence and instability, particularly in certain regions, there has been a marked improvement since the Peace Agreement was signed in 2016. Nonetheless, the determination of Colombia's status as a post-conflict state is beyond the scope of this thesis. Therefore, based on the signing of the Peace Agreement, Colombia will be considered a post-conflict state for the purposes of this study.

providing essential services but also by fostering the development of sustainable governance structures and promoting reconciliation and social cohesion (Bruch et al. 2016). In this manner, it reflects key aims of transitional justice, a parallel that will be expanded on in the next section. Another similarity with transitional justice is the emphasis that peacebuilding places on centralizing civilian voices. Scholars like Adam Curle (1994), John Paul Lederach (1997), and Elise Boulding (2000) spearheaded the development of a peacebuilding framework that positions civilians as active participants in peacemaking processes rather than passive recipients. Their work highlights the transformative potential of empowering civilian voices, advocating for their engagement in reconciliation efforts and grassroots interactions with the state (Leonardsson & Rudd 2015; Mac Ginty & Richmond 2013). Based on the earlier explanation of PDETs, it is acknowledged how they sought to establish themselves as peacebuilding mechanisms by strengthening citizen participation and a bottom-up approach in their creation.

As peacebuilding gains popularity and receives greater financial support, it naturally draws interest from a wide range of actors. In any given time during a post-conflict transition, the presence of governmental entities, United Nations bodies, various international organizations, both international and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private enterprises, and media outlets underscores the multidimensional nature of peacebuilding efforts and the diverse range of stakeholders involved in shaping the peace process (Bruch et al. 2016, 3). Yet aside from engaging with civilians, a similar key component of peacebuilding underlines the importance of engaging various levels of civil society across all stages of peacebuilding implementation (Conca and Dabelko, 2002; Dresse et al. 2016, 13-14), particularly by applying bottom-up processes. PDETs are organized in a manner that aligns with Lederach's (1997) categorization of peacebuilding actors into three tiers: "top leadership," "middle-range leadership," and "grassroots leadership." The top leadership in the context of PDETs includes high-level government officials and policymakers responsible for the overarching design and regulation of the programs. Middle-range leadership consists of regional and local officials, as well as community leaders who act as intermediaries, ensuring that the objectives of the PDETs are tailored to and implemented within local contexts. Grassroots leadership involves traditional leaders and local community developers who directly engage with the affected populations, ensuring that their voices and needs are incorporated into the peacebuilding process. This tiered approach helps to integrate diverse perspectives, promote inclusivity, and

foster a sense of ownership among all stakeholders. Failing to apply this comprehensive approach could result in the exclusion of some groups, creating additional conflicts or tensions. Thus, successful peacebuilding calls for the integration of diverse voices and perspectives in post-conflict transitions.

While there may be overlaps in objectives and methodologies, notable distinctions between conventional peacebuilding and environmental peacebuilding exist. Environmental peacebuilding uniquely emphasizes the integration of environmental management strategies into conflict prevention, mitigation, and resolution efforts, recognizing the interconnectedness between environmental degradation, resource scarcity, and conflict dynamics (Morales Muñoz et al. 2023, 3; Ide et al. 2021, 2). This point of view correlates peace with the degree of empowerment local communities possess regarding decisions concerning water usage and conservation, land productivity, and ecological preservation models (Cairo et al. 2018, 475). Furthermore, environmental peacebuilding disrupts deterministic perspectives by highlighting that the scarcity or abundance of natural resources frequently arises from particular political ecologies (Peluso & Watts 2001). As such, it advocates for the sustainable management of natural resources as a means to address underlying grievances and promote peace (Bruch et al. 2016, 3). In contrast, traditional peacebuilding tends to focus more broadly on socio-political factors, governance structures, and human rights issues without necessarily foregrounding environmental considerations. Therefore, while both approaches share common objectives in promoting peace and stability, their specific emphases and strategies may diverge based on the context and priorities of the conflict-affected region.

Early literature on environmental peacebuilding has been instrumental in delineating its distinctions from traditional peacebuilding approaches and highlighting why Colombia is an exemplary case for this field of study. In their pioneering work, Conca and Dabelko (2002) identified a significant departure from traditional peacebuilding, noting a lack of focus on the biophysical environment as a key actor in post-conflict reconstruction in these paradigms. Their research underscored how natural resources as well as ecosystems and their services are key components in transforming and resolving conflicts. Subsequent literature came to echo this understanding and further argued that leveraging natural resources facilitates the transition from conflict to peace and sustainable development (Bruch et al. 2016, 3; Peluso & Watts 2001; Cairo et al. 2018, 475). This belief has come to shape the definition of

environmental peacebuilding as “the process of governing and managing natural resources and the environment to help lay the foundation for an enduring peace” (Bruch et al. 2016, 3). Graser et al. (2020) further add that the theory of environmental peacebuilding underscores nature conservation as a pivotal tool in fostering mutual understanding and cooperative usage, thereby fostering peace (11). Moreover, Garavito, Franco, and Crane further stress that environmental peace champions both construction and reconstruction by creating policies that the environmental sector has historically lacked (14). In this manner, Colombia, with its environmental challenges such as deforestation, resource exploitation, and biodiversity loss intersecting with ongoing conflicts and post-conflict transitions, presents an ideal context for studying environmental peacebuilding. Additionally, the country's diverse ecosystems and the dependence of local communities on natural resources underscore the importance of integrating environmental considerations into peacebuilding efforts.

Similar to the earlier conceptions of peacebuilding, these definitions still prioritizes efforts to prevent, mitigate, resolve, and recover from violent conflict. However, the critical role of the biophysical environment, including natural resources like land, water, timber, and minerals, is understood as fundamental in sustaining communities and societies (Morales Muñoz et al. 2021, 180). Furthermore, integrating peacebuilding dimensions into natural resource management programs focuses on enhancing the resilience of populations in practical ways (Ibid). In the context of environmental peacebuilding, greater focus is placed on the environment as both a facilitator in improving intergovernmental and community relations as well as fostering collective identities by creating interdependencies within communities (Conca and Dabelko 2002). These pathways for environmental peacebuilding reiterate the importance of enhancing citizen participation in peace initiatives and the integral role that the environment can play in this process. In this manner, the environmental peacemaking framework has grown from merely a tool for conflict resolution into a more holistic approach to peacebuilding. On that note, environmental peacebuilding promotes economic growth to secure livelihoods while ensuring sustainable resource use. Consequently, the management of this natural capital becomes vital for promoting stabilization and recovery following armed conflict (Morales Muñoz et al. 2021, 180). In this thesis, particular attention will be placed on land management efforts as the biophysical environment that underpins livelihoods and thus must be highly considered in peacebuilding efforts.

Across the literature, environmental peacebuilding activities are typically divided into three categories (Dresse et al., 2016; Maas et al. 2012; Conca & Dabelko 2002; Ide 2020, 2021; Graser et al. 2020): security, cooperation, and institutionalization. While they will be revisited in the context of the analysis from a data driven standpoint in later sections, a first exploration is due. The first category focuses on preventing or mediating conflicts related to environmental issues. As previously mentioned, natural resource scarcity can lead to tensions and violent conflicts (Ide et al. 2021; Dresse et al. 2016). This can in turn create insecure livelihoods and destabilize the economy in certain areas. This insecurity further heightens grievances among affected populations, providing opportunities for armed groups to exploit state weaknesses, further degrade the environment, and recruit marginalized individuals (Ide et al. 2021, 3; Graser et al. 2020, 8). However, prioritizing climate adaptation strategies and building resilient livelihoods as peacebuilding initiatives can decrease the risk of violence by ensuring secure and equitable access to natural resources (Ide 2020, 2).

The second application of environmental peacebuilding focuses on building peace through cooperative responses to shared environmental challenges (Conca et al., 2005). In this manner, environmental peacebuilding regards nature conservation as a means to foster mutual understanding between conflicting parties paving the way for conflict de-escalation, political cooperation, social transformation, and eventual reconciliation (Carius 2007; Graser et al. 2020, 11). Environmental challenges tend to cross geopolitical borders and are typically less politically contentious than other subjects, creating favorable conditions for collaboration (Ide et al. 2021, 3). For instance, matters concerning water resources and conservation commonly serve as accessible avenues for cooperation among opposing parties (Ide 2020, 2). This cooperation eventually helps develop regional identities and ensure the creation of sustainable and mutually beneficial solutions to common environmental challenges (Dresse et al. 2016, 9; Graser et al 2020, 3). This collective approach fosters trust-building initiatives and bolsters both political and social ties while promoting long-term collaboration. Given the pivotal role of effective environmental governance in conflict prevention (Graser et al., 2020, 3), political cooperation aimed at safeguarding natural resources becomes imperative.

The final category of peacebuilding activities builds upon the cooperative efforts established through addressing shared environmental challenges. In addition to creating regional interdependencies, environmental cooperation also enhances intergovernmental relations. By

setting a precedent of collaboration in environmental matters, this cooperation transcends into other realms of political discourse, institutionalizing cooperative dialogue and negotiation (Conca and Dabelko 2002; Carius 2007). As such, environmental cooperation creates a space for regular engagement between different community stakeholders, emphasizing the bottom up approach of peacebuilding in general (Carius 2007; Dresse et al. 2016, 14). These open dialogues also offer multiple perspectives in government decisions, creating crucial arenas for reconciliation, a central objective of environmental peacebuilding aimed at ensuring enduring peace and stability (Maas et al., 2012; Dresse et al. 2016, 14). Moreover, this institutionalization approach underscores the fundamental premise of environmental peacebuilding: that environmental change can foster peaceful adaptation and solidarity.

3.1.1 Too Good To Be True? Adverse Effects of Environmental Peacebuilding

The above overview of environmental peacebuilding has presented the term as overwhelmingly positive, having gained popularity through its innovative approach of viewing the environment as a tool in peacebuilding efforts (Conca and Dabelko 2002, 220). While the impact of environmental peacebuilding has had success in both academic discourse and real-world post-conflict societies, it also presents challenges and unintended consequences. Ide (2020) specifically outlines six adverse effects of environmental peacebuilding: depoliticization, displacement, discrimination, deterioration into conflict, environmental degradation, and delegitimization of the state. Aptly nicknamed the six “Ds”, Ide argues that these effects negatively impact each other and, in most cases, serve to reinforce their negative consequences.

Depoliticization

Environmental peacebuilding often views environmental issues as cross-border and low-politics matters, a status that makes them more conducive to fostering cooperation and trust among former adversaries (Ide et al. 2021, 3). As such, scientific and technical solutions tend to be favored over addressing the political roots of environmental problems to avoid resistance from involved parties. While environmental peacebuilding has the potential to unite citizens over political issues eventually, as was described in the previous section, more often than not politics are not taken into consideration in the initial steps of peacebuilding.

Therefore, only technical solutions are employed to manage resource conflicts and climate-related hazards, such as building dams for water supply or developing drought-resistant crops. However, this strategy has significant drawbacks. Environmental issues and their solutions are often deeply political, embedded in long-standing power imbalances and socio-economic inequalities. By focusing on technical solutions, the underlying political and structural causes of environmental problems remain unaddressed. This depoliticization can obscure the root causes of grievances and human insecurity and give rise to prolonged instability (Pankhurst 2003).

This failure of environmental peacebuilding has been witnessed in a number of countries around the world. For instance, the Good Water Neighbors Project initiated by EcoPeace Middle East, involved communities in Israel, Jordan, and Palestine and focused on cross-border water cooperation, emphasizing the shared water resources of the Jordan River Basin. While the project helped foster dialogue and cooperation on water management, leading to improved relations and understanding among the communities, it also diverted attention from underlying structural inequalities like the Israeli occupation and uneven water distribution (Ide 2020). Similarly, international aid following the 2010 floods in Pakistan focused on technical and financial support to enhance resilience but ignored political factors like clientelism and wealth inequality, thus failing to reduce overall vulnerability and potentially exacerbating conflict risks (Ibid).

Displacement

A less acknowledged aspect of environmental peacebuilding involves its connection to displacement. Projects focused on large-scale environmental cooperation and management, often central to environmental peacebuilding efforts, may result in the displacement of local populations. Projects like dams and natural reserves are notorious for displacing residents without their consent or adequate compensation, resulting in negative impacts such as loss of livelihoods, social and cultural disruption, and increased vulnerability to conflict and environmental degradation (Vanclay 2017). For example, cooperation along the Mekong River has promoted regional integration despite political tensions, with Thailand supporting hydro energy dam construction in Laos. These projects have displaced around 9,000 people, many of whom did not receive adequate compensation, leading to environmental degradation, decreased state legitimacy, and increased livelihood insecurity among the displaced. Similarly,

the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park, established as an environmental peacebuilding project, has displaced local communities to prevent poaching and ecosystem damage, which has led to local conflicts and environmental degradation as these communities were crucial for sustaining biodiversity (Ide 2020). In the case of Colombia, following the Peace Agreement, landowners returning to their properties found much of their former land had been converted into protected areas (Graser et al., 2020, p. 11).

Discrimination

Environmental peacebuilding practices can often lead to discrimination based on ethnicity, social class, or gender. This discrimination often comes down to who benefits and who is harmed by these initiatives, demonstrating that while some groups gain advantages, others face disadvantages. This aligns with political ecology perspectives, which assert that environmental interventions often reinforce existing socio-economic hierarchies and divisions (Nightingale 2006). A famous example of discrimination arising from environmental peacebuilding was the Cordillera del Cóndor Peace Park, established in 1998 to promote demilitarization and trust between Ecuador and Peru. Arguably a good idea on paper, it was created without consulting local indigenous populations. Consequently, these communities lost access to vital resources like food, wood, and medicinal plants, leading to local resistance and reduced state legitimacy (Ide 2020). In another example, a water supply improvement project in the Vietnamese commune of Yen Khe, supported by the European Union and the government, was intended to increase resilience to drought and improve local livelihoods. However, wealthier households exploited their influence to tap water illegally before it reached public tanks, exacerbating class-based discrimination (Ibid).

Gender based discrimination also is at risk during environmental peacebuilding efforts. Post-conflict agricultural development schemes often prioritize young men and former male combatants, marginalizing women by providing them with fewer resources, training, and income opportunities (Pankhurst 2003). This exclusion can exacerbate gender inequalities and hinder the overall effectiveness of peacebuilding efforts. Colombia, as will be explored in the analysis sections, is no exception to this form of discrimination. However, there are positive exceptions, such as initiatives explicitly designed for female ex-combatants. For example, in Colombia, the Peace Agreement specifically outlines opportunities for female ex-FARC

members, demonstrating how inclusive approaches can lead to more equitable and successful outcomes.

Deterioration into conflict

Under certain circumstances, environmental peacebuilding can exacerbate rather than alleviate conflicts. Although not the primary cause, depoliticization, displacement, or discrimination can intensify existing grievances, potentially leading to community polarization or violence, especially in politically unstable regions (Ide 2020, 2021). For example, after Sierra Leone's civil war ended in 2002, new environmental laws were introduced, supported by local politicians, NGOs, and international donors. However, the stringent environmental and social standards for mining were unattainable for small-scale miners, leading to discrimination and loss of livelihoods which in turn fueled an escalation into violence. Another instance is the Jonglei Canal project in Sudan during the late 1970s, intended to increase water flow to Egypt and foster national cooperation. However, this depoliticized technical cooperation triggered local conflicts as the canal would drain vital wetlands, threatening local livelihoods (Ibid 2020). These examples highlight the need for conflict sensitivity guidelines in environmental peacebuilding practices.

Environmental degradation

Addressing peace and conflict issues through environmental cooperation can inadvertently lead to environmental degradation, especially in conflict and post-civil war settings where immediate livelihood pressures and short-term goals dominate. The need to create win-win situations for trust-building can also make it difficult to tackle structural or distributional issues, potentially resulting in mere coordinated resource exploitation. This concern was raised early on, suggesting that environmental peacebuilding might lead to further environmental harm if it doesn't challenge the current political and economic systems (Pankhurst 2003; Bruch 2016; Reardon 2020; Graser et al. 2020; Morales Muñoz et al. 2023). Resource scarcity, particularly when coupled with socio-economic discrimination, can lead to additional conflicts and displacement (Dresse et al. 2016). In the case of Colombia, an increase in deforestation was noted following the signing of the Peace Agreement. This can be traced to a number of factors, one being that during the internal armed conflict, certain actors responsible for deforestation, such as ranchers, landowners, and farmers, may have been deterred, indirectly protecting ecosystems (Reardon, 2018). A second argument is that the

departure of armed actors could have created a power vacuum that was not filled by effective state institutions capable of controlling and monitoring deforestation (Bernal Bermúdez, et al., 2023). In any case this example highlights how addressing peace and conflict issues through environmental cooperation can inadvertently lead to environmental degradation.

Delegitimization of the state

Environmental peacebuilding can undermine state legitimacy in two ways. The first is indirect, stemming from practices like depoliticization, displacement, discrimination or environmental degradation. When the state is perceived as complicit in these practices, its legitimacy among citizens, especially those directly affected, decreases. Examples include protests against state-led dam projects in the Mekong region, reduced trust in state institutions by indigenous groups in the Cordillera del Cóndor, and violent disputes over state-managed mineral resources in Sierra Leone (Ide 2020). The second pathway involves a more direct connection between environmental peacebuilding and state delegitimization. Literature on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation notes that neoliberal policies can lead to the hollowing out of state functions, as responsibilities are shifted to international organizations and NGOs (Morales Muñoz et al. 2021, 172). Even in states that retain some strength in environmental and security management, the perception that local or international organizations are more effective than state institutions can undermine the state's legitimacy. Further examination of the delegitimization of the state will be conducted, particularly within the context of the PDET of Sierra Nevada, as part of the analysis of this thesis.

While these significant challenges to environmental peacebuilding may seem to undermine its reputation, it is crucial to recognize that critical reflection and analysis of these negative impacts are essential for the field’s development. Despite these challenges, solutions do exist. Bruch et al. (2016) suggests that peacebuilding actors can undertake several activities to mitigate these negative consequences:

- Establishing security: Ensuring basic safety and civilian protection, reforming the security sector, disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration, as well as demining operations.
- Delivering basic services: Providing essential services such as water, sanitation, waste management, energy, healthcare, and primary education.

- Restoring the economy and livelihoods: Repairing and developing infrastructure and public works.
- Rebuilding governance and inclusive political processes: Facilitating dialogue and reconciliation processes, upholding the rule of law, resolving disputes, maintaining core government functions, implementing transitional justice, and managing electoral processes.

By focusing on these key areas, peacebuilding actors can mitigate the negative impacts of environmental peacebuilding and enhance its overall effectiveness. Not to mention, highlighting the above inefficiencies is crucial for applying a critical analysis of environmental peacebuilding in practice. This approach challenges the assumption that environmental peacebuilding is inherently beneficial and emphasizes the need for deeper consideration of the socio-economic and political contexts within a state. By acknowledging and addressing these challenges, practitioners and policymakers can formulate more sustainable strategies that reflect the complex realities on the ground. This critical perspective fosters a holistic approach, ensuring that environmental peacebuilding contributes to enduring peace and development rather than unintentionally perpetuating conflict and inequality.

Ultimately, environmental peacebuilding efforts must delve into the root causes of conflict and guarantee that the reconstruction process prioritizes economic, political, environmental, and social justice, aligning with the principles of 'positive peace'. Most significantly, peacebuilding should not be understood only as technical tasks like establishing governmental institutions, delivering judicial services, or building economic infrastructure (Jeong n.d.). Instead, it should focus on enhancing participatory approaches, which are fundamental to the success of peacebuilding efforts. While the field of environmental peacebuilding still remains quite young, it continues to evolve and show promising potential for addressing conflict dynamics through sustainable environmental management strategies. However, to address its shortcomings and strengthen its overall impact, it is essential to integrate transitional justice as a complementary framework. The next section will delve into transitional justice, examining how it can address the limitations of environmental peacebuilding and contribute to a more comprehensive approach to Colombia's post-conflict reconstruction.

3.2 Forging Sustainable Peace: Exploring Transitional Justice

Transitional justice navigates the intricate terrain of addressing and remedying past human rights violations in societies emerging from conflict. According to the United Nations, transitional justice consists of all "processes and mechanisms associated with a society's attempt to come to terms with a legacy of large-scale past violations and abuses to ensure accountability, serve justice, and achieve reconciliation" (UN 2010, 3). The International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) defines transitional justice as the way countries emerging from periods of conflict and repression address large scale or systematic human rights violations. These violations tend to be categorized as either being so numerous or so serious that the normal justice system cannot provide an adequate response. This definition highlights transition and justice as two core components that are integral to the pursuit of a post-conflict solution. The idea that transitional justice, at its core, involves overlapping contested concepts is promoted by Zunino (2019). He argues that the process of transitional justice encompasses and urges the understanding of the roles of truth, reconciliation, peace, rights and violations, and victims and perpetrators play alongside transition and justice.

The aims of transitional justice are multifaceted, centering on the recognition of the dignity of individuals and the acknowledgment of past violations, with a primary goal of preventing such violations from reoccurring. Broadly, transitional justice serves as a fundamental aspect of post-conflict reconstruction, seeking to address past human rights abuses and contribute to reconciliation (Taylor 2015).Within the Colombian context, discourse on transitional justice began in 2005 with the demobilization of paramilitary groups through a highly criticized process; this was followed by the 2011 Victim's Law that sought to shift attention from perpetrators to the victims (Meertens 2015, 357). As such, in Colombia transitional justice mechanisms aim to address the legacies of violence and foster a sense of justice among the population (Voytas & Crisman, 2023). To achieve this, transitional justice endeavors to forge accountable institutions and rebuild public trust in them, thereby making access to justice a tangible reality, especially for the most vulnerable segments of society in the aftermath of violations (Hayner 2022). It places a premium on the inclusion of women and marginalized groups in the quest for a fair and equitable society, championing the rule of law (UN 2010). Moreover, transitional justice plays a pivotal role in advancing peace processes and nurturing the lasting resolution of conflicts by tackling their root causes, including marginalization and

systemic inequalities. In parallel, PDETs serve as vehicles for addressing these same underlying issues, providing avenues for marginalized communities to participate in decision-making processes, fostering socio-economic inclusion, and promoting sustainable peacebuilding initiatives (Bachmann 2023; Peace Agreement). Through these integrated efforts, both transitional justice and PDETs contribute to the comprehensive reconstruction and reconciliation necessary for post-conflict societies to thrive.

Following instances of mass atrocities and systematic abuses, such as the Colombian armed conflict, societies are often left devastated and fragile, necessitating the implementation of transitional justice systems. Transitional justice is primarily applied in four main ways: criminal prosecutions, truth-seeking, reparations, and guarantees of non-repetition (ICTJ n.d.). In Colombia, transitional justice was notably championed by the Peace Agreement which applied all four of these mechanisms. In terms of criminal prosecutions, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP), a tribunal especially created to investigate and prosecute crimes committed during the armed conflict by both state agents and the FARC-EP, was created. Through its proceedings, the JEP holds perpetrators accountable, provides justice to victims, and contributes to the country's reconciliation process. Likewise a Truth Commission was tasked with truth-seeking by investigating human rights violations and gathering testimonies to shed light on the atrocities committed, examine the root causes of the conflict, and provide a comprehensive understanding of the events that took place. Reparations were multifaceted, encompassing land restitution policies as well as symbolic measures aimed at acknowledging and redressing the harm suffered by victims. Additionally, reforms of laws and institutions, including of course the creation of PDETs, were implemented to address systemic weaknesses and prevent future abuses, laying the groundwork for sustainable peace and justice in post-conflict Colombia.

To grasp the necessity of a holistic approach to transitional justice, an examination of three transitional justice models is in order. Firstly, retributive justice is defined as the principle of punishing crimes and establishing responsibility at an individual level. This justice focuses on the role of the perpetrator in promoting conflict and places a significant importance on them assuming responsibility for their actions. Moghalu argues this takes a restrictive view of justice which impedes the validity of retributive justice as a whole (Okafor 2006). Likewise, Clark (2008) argues that this interpretation of justice can be challenged by the notion that

justice is a contested concept that has no universal meaning. This allows for justice to be shaped by a variety of factors including personal experiences and group membership, all of which limits an effective justice process. Retributive justices' subjective challenge is best exemplified by Naser Oric who, although was indicted and sentenced to two years of prison by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), many Serbs believed the Tribunal's decision was lenient and failed to provide adequate justice.

Secondly, restorative justice is the notion of repairing harm and bringing together victims and offenders within a community. This is done as a way to not only determine that the crime can be repaired but also that the relationship between victims and the offender can be restored. Unlike retributive justice, restorative justice centralizes the experience of victims. However, like Marshall (1998) outlines, restorative justice involves parties with a stake in a specific offense to not only collectively resolve how to deal with the aftermath of the offense but also with its implications for the future. While this gives a direct and powerful voice to victims, one can argue the measure of impartiality is missing. This can impede effective justice from occurring since the outcome is emotionally designed and sentimentally motivated.

Lastly, distributive justice is understood as the socially just allocation of resources that are given to meet the demands of victims in post conflict. Mani (2002) argues that given the frequent grievances involving distributive injustice, there is strong motivation for addressing distributive justice as a priority issue in the aftermath of a conflict. Once again, this prioritizes victims throughout their process of achieving justice and most directly acknowledges that the conflict they suffered from has origins in previous distributive injustices. However, Mani also mentions how international actors play a leading role in this form of justice. In fact, he argues they need to act as catalysts for other donors and for post conflict governments by demonstrating equal commitment to equity, political stabilization, and economic stabilization. This places an immense importance on foreign actors to act on behalf of victims which may be problematic as it may further distributive injustice rather than dismantle it.

In taking a closer look at retributive, restorative, and distributive justice it is important to acknowledge that their development has played a key role in furthering efforts of global transitional justice. They have established a framework from which justice can be drawn from in at least three different and concise ways. However, these justices fail to fully encompass the

role of societies in addressing and promoting transitional justice. As Staub (2006) argues, when mass crimes to the scale of the Colombian conflict are committed, whole societies are affected. Therefore, it is the responsibility and role of entire populations to be involved in the reconciliation process. Arguably, if justice should contribute to reconciliation then it must be considered more than just retributive, restorative, or distributive. Rather, there should be an emphasis placed on the holistic approach where justice is not limited to three frameworks.

Expanding on this premise, this thesis advocates for incorporating another framework of transitional justice grounded in environmental justice and peacebuilding. It proposes the concept of eco-justice peacebuilding, which responds to the overlap in environmental peacebuilding and transitional justice theories while specifically isolating the intersection between gender and the environment as priority points in post-conflict reconstruction.

CHAPTER 4: Conceptual Framework

The eco-justice peacebuilding framework emphasizes the crucial intersections between land, gender, and justice, advocating for a holistic strategy to address inequalities in gender and land during post-conflict reconstruction. This is particularly appropriate in the case of Colombia as the armed conflict was deeply rooted in issues of land and gender. This framework takes inspiration from Meertens (2012) who argues that successfully achieving gender justice in peacebuilding requires a comprehensive framework that combines humanitarian “durable” solutions and “justice and rights restitution” (5). The eco-justice peacebuilding framework builds on this by considering environmental peacebuilding principles as the humanitarian solutions that must be combined with transitional justice mechanisms. In doing so, it prioritizes an analysis of the role of women in land management procedures based on the understanding that women play key roles in establishing post-conflict peace. To fully understand the eco-justice peacebuilding framework and its applicability in Colombia, it is essential to first explore how it builds on environmental peacebuilding and transitional justice frameworks. Following this, an examination of PDETs as eco-justice peacebuilding mechanisms, particularly in terms of gender and land considerations, will be outlined to establish the framework for analyzing their implementation success in the context of the Sierra Nevada-Perijá region in Chapter 6.

4.1 1+1 is 2: Environmental Peacebuilding + Transitional Justice = Eco-Justice Peacebuilding

Environmental peacebuilding and transitional justice exhibit numerous parallels, particularly in their post-conflict contexts and comprehensive approaches. Both are applied to societies in the aftermath of conflict and recognize the need to address the enduring legacies and root causes of violence. Moreover, both frameworks require a nuanced analytical lens that transcends the scope of any single agency and emphasize the importance of high-quality conflict analysis (Taylor 2015; Hayner 2022). In terms of application, both transitional justice processes and environmental peacebuilding must be tailored to the specific context of each country, considering unique political, institutional, and legal settings, as well as history, culture, and local priorities (Rodríguez Iglesias & Rosen 2022, 92; Hayner 2022). Furthermore, both frameworks advocate for victim-centered approaches, recognizing that the failure to do so can threaten state legitimacy and the consolidation of peace (Voytas & Crisman 2023, 13; Cardozo Lozano, 2023). They recognize that conflict exacerbates inequalities, particularly for marginalized groups like women, therefore prioritizing their inclusion in peacebuilding efforts is crucial. On that note, both frameworks advocate for inclusive community participation and the restructuring of government and policies as forms of procedural peacebuilding (Hayner 2022; Taylor 2015; Rodríguez Iglesias & Rosen 2022).

While environmental peacebuilding and transitional justice share common goals and principles, they also exhibit notable differences that underscore the necessity of integrating both approaches in post-conflict scenarios. Environmental peacebuilding focuses on addressing environmental factors that contribute to conflict and instability, such as resource scarcity, environmental degradation, and competition over natural resources (Bruch et al. 2016; Maas et al., 2012). It places a strong emphasis on restoring ecosystems, promoting sustainable resource management, and addressing environmental grievances, recognizing the critical role of nature in fostering peace and stability. In contrast, transitional justice, primarily through legal mechanisms and guarantees of non-repetition, centers its efforts on redressing human rights violations and promoting accountability to foster reconciliation among affected communities (OHCR n.d.; Hayner 2022).

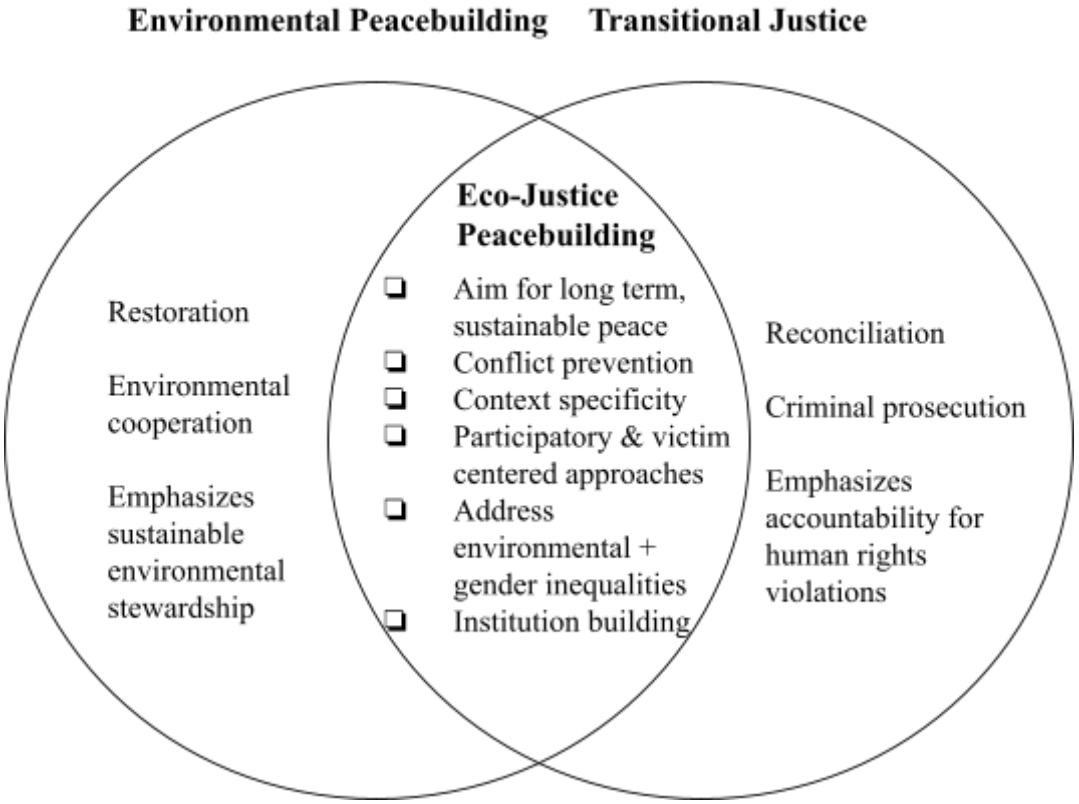

Figure 3: Intersection of Environmental Peacebuilding and Transitional Justice: Pillars of Eco-Justice Peacebuilding

As depicted in Figure 3, eco-justice peacebuilding arises from a profound acknowledgment of the substantial convergence between environmental peacebuilding and transitional justice. The overlapping categories that define the theory of eco-justice peacebuilding were formulated based on the overlap between the four pillars of transitional justice—criminal prosecutions, truth-seeking, reparations, and guarantees of non-repetition—as well as the four pillars of environmental peacebuilding—prevention, mitigation, resolution, and recovery. This integration not only underscores the interconnectedness between environmental and justice-oriented approaches to peacebuilding but also highlights the synergistic potential of addressing both environmental and socio-political dimensions in post-conflict contexts. Building on this, eco-justice peacebuilding's unique perspective is that the identified overlap will be analyzed specifically in regards to land and gender given that they are recognized as fundamental root causes of conflict. For the context of this thesis, this means analyzing the PDET of Sierra Nevada-Perijá as an eco-justice peacebuilding mechanism, with specific attention paid to the extent women and land intersect in the PDET's implementation.

By integrating eco-justice peacebuilding, a transitional justice approach founded on principles of environmental peacebuilding, with a specific focus on land and gender reforms, post-conflict societies like that of Sierra Nevada-Perijá can address the complex interplay between environmental and social factors that contribute to conflict and instability. This approach works dually as it promotes sustainable development, equitable resource management, and environmental justice as part of its overlap with environmental peacebuilding and also has a strong focus on reconciliation, healing, and accountability in living up to transitional justice frameworks. Integrating these approaches ensures that human rights and environmental sustainability are prioritized, leading to a comprehensive and resilient post-conflict recovery. In Colombia, this means addressing issues like community displacement due to resource exploitation, holding perpetrators accountable for socio-environmental damage, and involving affected communities in resource management decisions.

Now that eco-justice peacebuilding has been introduced as the framework through which the PDET of Sierra-Nevada Perijá will be examined in the analysis section, it is important to explain how. Table 2 explains how throughout this thesis eco-justice peacebuilding will be analyzed based on the following four pillars: gender justice and women's empowerment, community participation and ownership, institutional support and governance, and environmental protection and resource management. These are the overarching pillars through which the foundations of eco-justice peacebuilding (long term, sustainable peace, conflict prevention, context specificity, participatory and victim centered approaches, environmental and gender inequalities, and institution building) will be analyzed through a gender and land perspective. These pillars again were selected as they represent the broader overlapping themes between environmental peacebuilding and transitional justice. Table X outlines each of the pillars as well as describes how they will be analyzed in regards to the creation and implementation of the PDET of Sierra Nevada-Perijá.

Table 3: Eco-Justice Peacebuilding Framework: Definition and Analysis

Eco-Justice Peacebuilding Pillar	**Definition**	**Analysis**
Gender Justice and Women's Empowerment	Eco-justice peacebuilding recognizes that women often bear the brunt of both environmental degradation and social inequalities (Pankhurst 2003). It views gender justice and women's empowerment as crucial for addressing the root causes of conflict and fostering sustainable peace.	- examining initiatives that specifically target women's roles in environmental management and peacebuilding -assessing the level of involvement of women in decision-making processes - assessing gender-specific impacts of the environment
Community Participation and Ownership	Eco-justice peacebuilding emphasizes the importance of involving local communities in the peacebuilding process. Grounded in environmental peacebuilding and transitional justice theory guides its understanding that genuine and inclusive community participation leads to more effective and sustainable outcomes (Rodríguez Iglesias & Rosen 2022; Dresse et al. 2016)	-examining community-driven approaches in environmental and gender projects - evaluating the effectiveness of participatory methods in engaging women, fostering a sense of ownership, and ensuring that peacebuilding efforts are culturally and contextually appropriate
Institutional Support and Governance	Effective and accountable institutions are seen as fundamental for both environmental sustainability and transitional justice (Conca & Dabelko 2002; Graser et al 2020; United Nations 2010). Based on this, eco-justice peacebuilding views strong governance as essential for implementing and sustaining peacebuilding initiatives.	- assessing the role of institutions in supporting eco-justice (land and gender) initiatives - examining the capacity of institutions to enforce these policies and mechanisms for ensuring accountability and transparency

Environmental Protection and Resource Management	Sustainable management of natural resources and the protection of ecosystems are considered vital for preventing conflicts and ensuring long-term peace (Ide et al. 2021; Maas et al. 2012). Eco-justice peacebuilding sees environmental protection as intertwined with social and gender justice.	- exploring strategies and practices that promote sustainable resource management and environmental restoration - examining the impact of these practices on gender dynamics and in addressing environmental grievances

These pillars emphasize the integration of ecological sustainability and environmental management, core principles of environmental peacebuilding, with principles of justice, accountability, and reconciliation, pillars of transitional justice. As such, they seek to address environmental grievances and promote sustainable resource management alongside traditional justice measures. In this manner, eco-justice peacebuilding strengthens the effectiveness of transitional justice mechanisms in post-conflict reconstruction. Specifically, eco-justice peacebuilding seeks to highlight how land disputes and environmental degradation can exacerbate social inequalities and perpetuate conflict, particularly affecting marginalized groups such as women (Pankhurst 2003). By integrating gender justice and environmental management, the framework ensures that peacebuilding efforts are inclusive and sustainable, addressing both the root causes and consequences of conflict. This holistic approach allows for a deeper examination of how intertwined issues of land and gender impact the peacebuilding process and offers strategies to foster more equitable and lasting peace.

4.2 Assessing the Role of PDETs in Eco-Justice Peacebuilding: Integrating Land and Gender for Sustainable Development

Before delving into the analysis of the Sierra Nevada-Perijá PDET, a further exploration into how PDETs overall serve as a practical case study to assess the viability of eco-justice peacebuilding is due. For one, PDETs are inherently a land reform, with a focus on addressing territorial, ethnic, and gender injustices, aimed at promoting development in regions affected by conflict (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Colombia 2016, 31). This thesis argues

that the conception and definition of PDETs inherently constitute them as an instrument of eco-justice peacebuilding mechanisms. In terms of the transitional justice component of eco-justice peacebuilding, PDETs fulfill this by facilitating land restitution and improving land tenure security, addressing the grievances of displaced communities and contributing to reconciliation and healing (FARC-EP y Gobierno de Colombia 2016 ; Bachmann 2023). By restoring land to rightful owners and ensuring fair land distribution, PDETs uphold the principles of reparations and guarantees of non-repetition, core elements of transitional justice (Rodriguez Iglesias & Rosen, 2022; Taylor 2015). In the case of environmental peacebuilding, PDETs can be considered a mechanism of such as they address the structural causes of conflict related to land and natural resource management. By promoting sustainable agricultural practices and ensuring equitable land distribution, PDETs aim to mitigate environmental degradation and reduce resource-based conflicts, aligning with the goal of promoting sustainable development and equitable resource management for lasting peace. Furthermore, PDETs incorporate gender considerations by mandating women's participation in decision-making processes, addressing gender-based violence, and promoting equitable access to land and resources, thereby contributing to gender justice within the transitional justice and environmental peacebuilding frameworks.

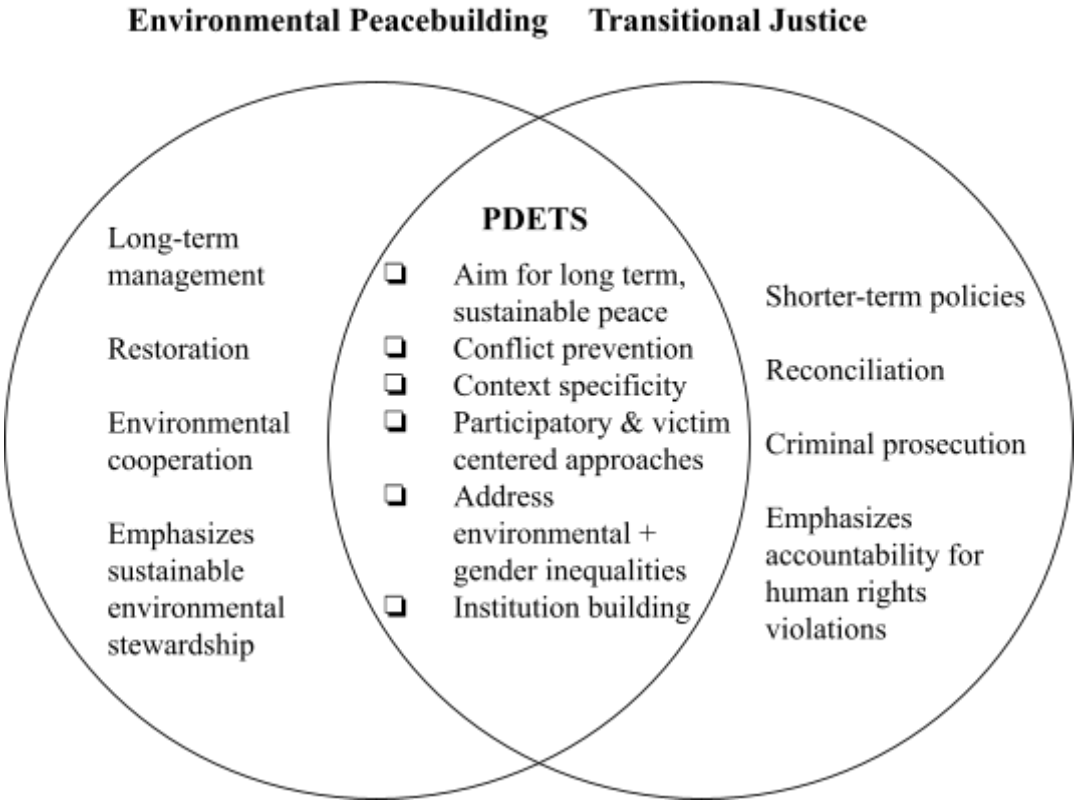

Figure 4: Intersection of Environmental Peacebuilding and Transitional Justice: PDETs

While the effectiveness of PDETs as eco-justice peacebuilding mechanisms will be examined in the analysis section, drawing on my field study experience in Sierra-Nevada Perijá, it stands that on paper PDETs can be effectively analyzed as a mechanism that integrate both environmental peacebuilding and transitional justice frameworks, particularly through their focus on land and gender issues. To fully understand the viability of PDETs as eco-justice peacebuilding mechanisms however, it is essential to examine how deeply intertwined gender and land issues are within the construction and implementation of these plans. Table 3 illustrates the degree to which gender and land considerations are accounted for in the establishment of PDETs, as delineated in the Peace Agreement. They are analyzed in regards to the eco-justice peacebuilding framework to illustrate the extent to which PDETs, in theory, were designed to adopt a differential approach to land and gender in a holistic way.

Table 4: Analysis of PDETs from an Eco-Justice Perspective: Land and Gender Considerations

Eco-Justice Peacebuilding Pillar	**Intersection of Gender and Land Policy in PDETs** (as stated in Peace Agreement)
Gender Justice and Women's Empowerment	**1.** aim to ensure the active participation of women, including rural women, in decision-making processes related to land and resource management (Instituto Kroc de Estudios ;Internacionales de Paz, & de Acuerdos de Paz, M. 2021, 12) **2.** integrate gender-sensitive approaches in programs and policies, acknowledging the differential impacts of conflict and environmental degradation on women and men **3.** promote equitable land distribution and secure land tenure for marginalized groups, including women
Community Participation and Ownership	**1.** facilitate participatory land-use planning where local communities, with an emphasis on women, are actively involved in the decision-making process about land allocation and usage (Bachmann 2023; Cardozo Lozano 2023) **2.** ART began officially incorporating gender perspectives

	in official PDET management in 2020 (Instituto Kroc de Estudios Internacionales de Paz, & de Acuerdos de Paz, M. 2021, 13) **3.** include initiatives like Mujeres Territoriales, which promote women's leadership and participation in community planning and rural development projects
Institutional Support and Governance	**1.** develop institutional frameworks that enforce gender-sensitive policies and protect women's rights **2.** strengthen local governance structures, like the *grupos motor*, to support transparent and accountable land use and management **3.** support the establishment of institutions like the JEP that incorporate gender-sensitive approaches to transitional justice that involve land management
Environmental Protection and Resource Management	**1.** integrate gender perspectives into environmental initiatives, ensuring women's roles in resource management and protection **2.** advocate for socio-historical and cultural understanding of the environment 3. promote reforestation and sustainable agricultural practices to restore degraded lands

Once again, PDETs, as land reforms created with an emphasis on gender inclusion, present the argument that the path to sustainable long-term peace involves gendered land management. Table 3 furthers this by demonstrating how PDETs function as mechanisms of eco-justice peacebuilding, highlighting the crucial intersections between land, gender, and justice in PDET creation. This table sets the stage for the analysis section to assess how well PDETs, in practice, incorporate and advance the integration of women and prioritization of sustainable land management in post-conflict reconstruction.

CHAPTER 5: Methodology

5.1 Research Paradigm

My research journey delved into qualitative, inductive, and deductive methods, aiming to unravel the extent and scope of women's participation in territorial projects in the Sierra Nevada - Perijá, with a particular focus on their contributions to objectives of environmental peacebuilding during post-conflict transitions. Embracing a constructionist methodology, I delved into subjective realities, seeking to comprehend how sociocultural contexts inform a collective understanding of post-conflict societies and their relationship with environmental peacebuilding (Patton, 2014).

Before embarking on my research journey in Colombia, I carefully weighed the advantages, risks, and constraints associated with conducting cross-cultural fieldwork as a foreigner, particularly as a white woman unfamiliar with much of the political and social landscape. One of the advantages of being a foreign researcher is the potential for objectivity and a fresh perspective. Coming from outside the local context, I might notice patterns and dynamics that local researchers, who are more accustomed to their environment, might overlook. However, as an outsider I was at risk of misinterpreting local customs, norms, and power dynamics. This could lead to data that is not only inaccurate but also potentially harmful to the communities involved.

Another critical constraint is the issue of trust. Building trust with local communities can be challenging, especially in areas with a history of conflict or exploitation by outsiders. There is also the risk of reinforcing existing power imbalances. As a foreign researcher, my presence could inadvertently perpetuate a form of neocolonialism, where local voices are overshadowed by an external narrative.

To mitigate these risks and conduct ethical fieldwork, I adopted a participatory and action-oriented research framework, emphasizing a bottom-up approach that acknowledges and addresses prevailing power dynamics while fostering the co-creation of knowledge within local communities (Cornwall and Jewkes, 1995). This framework was crucial in ensuring that the research was not only about the participants but also for and with them. Although I wasn't

able to fully meet the ideal standards of participatory research, I employed participatory techniques to the best of my ability. Despite the inherent biases of my research situated within a Western paradigm, this work hopes to shed light on the gendered dynamics that are often overlooked in studies of transitional justice and environmental peacebuilding.

The triangulation methods applied—combining semi-structured interviews, participant observations, and document analysis—were integral to strengthening the validity and reliability of the research findings. Triangulation allowed for a more nuanced understanding of women's participation in territorial projects, capturing multiple perspectives and cross-verifying data to minimize biases and inaccuracies.

Furthermore, grounding the research within a robust academic theoretical framework provided a solid foundation for the study. The theoretical framework guided the research questions, methodology, and analysis, ensuring consistency and depth in the exploration of environmental peacebuilding, gendered territorial land management, and transitional justice. By situating the research within established academic discourse, I could navigate the complexities of cross-cultural fieldwork with greater sensitivity and awareness.

5.1.1 Positionality

The researcher's perspective, shaped by their worldview and understanding of knowledge, plays a significant role in research endeavors (Darwin Holmes, 2020). Thus, it was crucial for me to acknowledge my varied positions along the spectrum of insider and outsider dynamics, influenced by factors like race, ethnicity, education, gender, socioeconomic status, and culture (Merriam et al., 2001). This recognition involved understanding that my position was relational, relative to both the participant and societal norms. Despite often occupying an external-outsider stance, my position was fluid, molded by prevailing values and norms, as understanding is inherently shaped by power dynamics (Merriam et al., 2001).

Engaging in reflexivity was pivotal in comprehending how different positionalities and power differentials influenced my research process. Unlike mere reflection, reflexivity necessitates a constant state of self-awareness (McGee, 2012). It required me to consider myself as the primary research instrument, acknowledging and addressing potential biases stemming from

my sociocultural and geographical context (McGee, 2012). Additionally, I recognized the significance of what remained unsaid, unobserved, and unrecorded, as these aspects contributed to the research's validity and quality (Patton, 2014).

My approach to reflexivity involved three key methods. Firstly, I embraced experiential learning as a complement to theoretical knowledge-building (McGee, 2012). This entailed remaining receptive to learning and evolving throughout the research process by reflecting on my own values, assumptions, and positionality. Critical reflection post-experience was imperative for understanding how my attitudes and actions may have influenced the research paradigm (McGee, 2012). To facilitate this mindset, I maintained a field journal to document observations, thoughts, and questions before, during, and after interviews. I also committed to sharing research summaries with participants, ensuring transparency and accountability. Furthermore, verbal collective reflexivity was fostered through open discussions on information interpretation, positionalities, trust, and ethical considerations (Ozano and Khatri, 2017). These dialogues, held at various stages of the field research with my supervisor, advisor, and interview participants, enriched the research process and ensured a nuanced understanding of the complexities involved.

5.2 Scope

The scope of this thesis encompasses an exploration of women's participation in land management within the Sierra Nevada - Perijá region of Colombia. As such research was restricted to themes of environmental peacebuilding, gendered perspectives of territorial land management, and transitional justice within the greater context of Colombia but also more specifically the three departments of the Sierra Nevada-Perijá region.

The choice of methods employed in this thesis aligns closely with the research objectives and the overarching aim of contributing to nuanced insights in post-conflict Colombia. This thesis utilizes methodological triangulation by combining semi-structured interviewing, participant observations, and document analysis. While semi-structured interviewing facilitates in-depth exploration of individual experiences, perspectives, and insights from a diverse range of stakeholders involved in territorial planning efforts, participant observations offer a valuable

opportunity to observe interactions and dynamics firsthand, providing contextual depth to the findings. Additionally, document analysis allows for the examination of official policies, reports, and other relevant documents, offering insights into broader trends and patterns within the research context.

By employing these diverse methods, this study aims to bridge the gap in existing literature by focusing on the intersectionality of gender, environmental justice, and transitional justice within the specific context of territorial planning projects in Sierra Nevada - Perijá. Furthermore, the research seeks to contribute actionable insights that can inform more inclusive and effective policies and practices in post-conflict Colombia.

5.3 Methods for Data Collection & Analysis

5.3.1 Data Collection: Semi Structured Interviews

The first interviewees, which were mainly representatives of government agencies, were identified through desktop research before I travelled to Colombia. However, the large majority of the recorded interviews and conversations I had about my thesis happened during my time in Colombia. At that point, interview participants were mainly found through a sequential and emergence-driven purposive strategy (Patton 2014). Specifically, I followed the snowball sampling technique by continuously asking people I interviewed to refer me to any other relevant contacts they had (Patton 2014). This technique allowed me to gain insights from information-rich cases while mitigating empirical generalisations (Patton 2014). However, the first interviews I conducted in my case study area were mainly contacts of my corresponding advisor at the Universidad de los Andes (Uniandes), Dr. Pablo Jaramillo Salazar. Dr. Salazar has conducted extensive research exploring environmental peacebuilding through an anthropological perspective in the La Guajira region, located in the Sierra Nevada - Perijá PDET zone. He has also travelled and conducted interviews himself in two of the cities I also visited: Valledupar and San Juan del Cesar. Before even my arrival in Colombia, Dr Salazar was able to paint a general picture about PDET zones and the differing organizations that have emerged in these regions to tackle the government's administrative failures in the area.

In all, I conducted 15 interviews. Four people were interviewed on one occasion together and another time I interviewed two people together as well, every other interview was on a one on one basis. The majority of the interviews lasted anywhere between 40 minutes to an hour. The interview with four people naturally lasted a bit longer, a total of an hour and a half, while two others only lasted around 20 minutes each.

In the context of my research on women's participation in territorial projects, conducting interviews emerged as the most effective methodology to capture the nuanced voices and thoughts of my subjects. Interviews, especially in-depth ones, provide a platform for participants to articulate their experiences, perspectives, and emotions in their own words, which is crucial for understanding the complexities of women's roles and contributions in these projects. This approach not only facilitated the inclusion of diverse voices but also ensured that the insights gathered were deeply embedded in the lived realities of the women involved. Thus, interviews were not only methodologically sound but also ethically aligned with the participatory and inclusive nature of my research.

Before each interview, I introduced myself, detailing the universities I was working with and the overall objective of my thesis. I also expanded on my interest in learning more about the gendered dynamics of PDETs and territorial land management practices hoping to understand the extent that the interviewees were confronted with these dilemmas. This increased transparency, trust, and equity, while I remained attentive to the unequal researcher-participant power dynamic, reflecting upon this along the way (Cornwall and Jewkes 1995; Arnstein 1969; Webler, Tuler, and Krueger 2001). I used an open-ended semi-structured interview guide that was created before arriving in Colombia based on a preliminary literature review, an applied research pilot study that was undertaken as part of my course work requirements at Lund University, and extensive discussions with my supervisor. While the follow up questions for each interviewee differed slightly, most of the same questions were posed.

The interviews followed a semi-structured format, involving a series of broadly open-ended questions designed to initiate discussions on participants' viewpoints, perspectives, and thoughts regarding PDETs, territorial land management, and how these intersect with female involvement in such contexts. The questions posed ranged from opinions on women’s participation in territorial planning projects to land management practices in Colombia’s

post-conflict state. General opinions about environmental peacebuilding, land management practices as transitional justice mechanisms, and tools to increase women's participation in territorial planning projects were also discussed.

During interviews I established an environment where participants felt comfortable sharing stories that may not have completely aligned with my interview structure but were nonetheless significant. I engaged in attentive listening, posed relevant follow-up inquiries, and employed prompts when seeking particular insights. This approach fostered an inductive and interactive style of interviewing, prioritizing listening to responses prior to analysis. Furthermore, throughout the sessions, I closely observed participant interactions and contextual cues, recording the interviews on my phone for transcription afterward.

5.3.2 Data Collection: Document and Policy Analysis

In addition to conducting interviews, my research methodology included an extensive document and policy analysis to provide a comprehensive understanding of the frameworks and contexts within which women's participation in territorial projects occurs in Colombia. This phase of data collection was integral to forming a robust foundation for my study and was accomplished through a meticulous review of both academic and gray literature, along with pertinent policies and laws.

To compose a detailed literature review, I utilized various databases such as Google Scholar, Jstor, ScienceDirect, and LUBSearch. My focus was on a mix of academic and gray literature, with a significant emphasis on peer-reviewed academic sources. The key terms guiding my desktop research included:

- Environmental peacebuilding
- Post-conflict transitions
- Transitional justice
- Conflict
- Gender
- Land justice
- Territorial planning as a transitional justice mechanism
- Women's participatory approaches
- Territorial defense
- Territorial reforms
- Women environmental defenders
- PDET
- Colombia's Peace Agreement

To ensure a comprehensive search, I also searched for the above terms in Spanish and did further research on Colombian context-specific terms, such as:

- *Juntas de acción comunal* (Community Action Boards - the most established community organizations across Sierra Nevada - Perijá)
- *Conflictos ambientales* (Environmental conflicts)
- *Empoderamiento de mujeres rurales* (Empowerment of rural women)
- *Mujeres en zonas de conflicto* (Women's rights in conflict zones)
- *Desplazamiento forzado en Colombia* (Forced displacement in Colombia)
- *Economía política de la paz* (Political economy of peace)
- *Estrategias de desarrollo territorial* (Territorial development strategies)
- *Ecología política en Colombia* (Political ecology in Colombia)

Overall, these terms were investigated within the Colombian context, particularly focusing on the Sierra Nevada - Perijá subregion.

The policy and document analysis portion of the methodology involved a thorough review of pertinent policies and laws that are crucial to understanding Colombia's peace agreement, territorial reforms, and PDETs. This included reading and analyzing:

- *Acuerdo Final para la Terminación del Conflicto y la Construcción de una Paz Estable y Duradera* (Final Agreement to end the Armed Conflict and Build a Stable and Lasting Peace - Colombia's 2016 Peace Agreement)
- *Pacto Municipal Para la Transformación Regional - PMTR* del municipio de Valledupar (The Municipal Pact for the Regional Transformation of the municipalities of Valledupar)
- *Pacto Municipal Para la Transformación Regional - PMTR* del municipio de San Juan del César (The Municipal Pact for the Regional Transformation of the municipalities of San Juan del César)

These documents provided critical insights into the formal frameworks and commitments made towards territorial planning and peacebuilding, especially regarding women's roles and participatory approaches.

To effectively manage and synthesize the vast amount of information, I created a synthesis matrix. This matrix allowed me to draw out repeating themes and patterns across the literature and policy documents. This systematic approach facilitated a deeper understanding of key concepts such as environmental peacebuilding, post-conflict transitions, and transitional justice. It also highlighted the complexities behind land management practices and women's participation in these forums.

The synthesis matrix helped in establishing environmental peacebuilding as the analytical framework from which to critically examine transitional justice mechanisms in Colombia. It also brought to light the gendered and intersectional dimensions of these initiatives, ensuring that my research addressed the problem from a holistic and multi-faceted perspective.

5.3.3 Data Collection: Field Observations

Aside from the more formal interviews with government agency representatives, community leaders, and youth activists I was also able to engage in several informal conversations with PhD students, other professors at Uniandes, and Afrocolombians. Three contexts that facilitated my field observations and more colloquial discussions were the land grabbing conference I attended in March, the homestay I stayed at in Valledupar, and the PDET administrative meeting I was invited to attend.

A couple of weeks after my arrival in Bogotá I was lucky enough to attend the Land Deal Politics Initiative (LDPI) International Conference on Global Land Grabbing. Hosted at the Uniandes campus, the conference proves to be extremely informative. Being able to attend the seminars and smaller discussion groups to Engage with scholars, activists, and practitioners grappling with land tenure issues broadened my understanding of the complexities surrounding land acquisition and its implications for marginalized communities. Conversations ranged from legal frameworks to grassroots resistance movements, providing nuanced layers to my research.

Secondly, my homestay experience in Valledupar offered a profoundly immersive understanding of local dynamics. Not only was I living at a local family's hotel for the duration of my stay but also I was the only guest. This allowed me to have intimate conversations over meals and evening gatherings with the host and her family members. These informal exchanges illuminated the lived experiences of Afrocolombian communities in the area in navigating both land tenure and PDET implementation challenges, enriching my thesis with authentic narratives and personal anecdotes.

Lastly, the PDET administrative meeting provided a unique vantage point into the bureaucracy behind such an important policy. While the discussions strayed from my focus on territorial land management, I was able to observe how policymakers and community representatives navigate discussions on development initiatives and expand on the challenges of their community in terms of access to resources. This meeting also shed light on the intricacies of policy implementation at the grassroots level.

In social and qualitative research, coding refers to using a word or short phrase to represent and encapsulate a part of qualitative data (Saldaña 2013). In this study, while no particular coding method was rigidly adhered to, the principles of open coding were extensively applied in analyzing the data. Open coding, as defined by Strauss and Corbin (1998, 101), is the analytical process where concepts are identified, and their properties and dimensions are discovered within the data. The interview transcripts and research notes were thoroughly analyzed by examining the text and noting the general concepts that surfaced.

Upon leaving the field, I had 12 interview transcripts and a multitude of field observations notes to analyze. I used NVivo 12 software to apply qualitative discourse analysis to these transcripts. The process was very straightforward in that I first edited each transcript to ensure that minor grammar errors that were incorrectly recorded were fixed and then dissected the contents of each in open coding. This involved identifying individual units of meaning or repeated words. During a second round of analysis I refined the established codes by further dividing the content by themes. This progressed to the final stage of selective coding, where the focus was on conceptualizing the narratives and deriving meaning from the identified themes (Williams and Moser 2019).

In addition to NVivo, another analysis tool I applied was the creation of a mind map to visualize emerging themes. This mind map helped identify and organize the patterns and connections within the data, providing a clear visual representation of the themes that surfaced during the analysis.

To enhance the study design, triangulation was utilized, integrating various methods to uncover different aspects of empirical realities (Patton, 2014). Methodological triangulation was evidenced by the combination of semi-structured interviews, participant observations, and document analysis. The interviews sought to capture women's perspectives on their involvement in territorial projects, their roles in environmental peacebuilding, and their overall contributions to post-conflict transitions. Observations provided key contextual factors for the analysis of the gendered and informal intersections of these themes. Along with both of these methods, the documents analyzed, further deepened my understanding of women's participation in land management practices and environmental peacebuilding efforts.

The use of triangulation enhanced the validity and quality of this methodology, reducing the influence of bias, aside from the unavoidable influence of my own situated knowledge (Patton, 2014). Although not all of the interview data was not directly used in the analysis, overall it played a crucial role in the triangulation process, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the stakeholders and processes related to women's participation in territorial projects within the Sierra Nevada - Perijá region of Colombia.

5.4 Method Limitations

The main limitation throughout my research process has mainly been time constraints. I was only able to be in Colombia for a little over two months, greatly limiting the amount of interviews and contacts I could make. These factors definitely result in data that is not fully comprehensive. Additionally, given the small sample size and focus on one specific region, the findings are not fully representative of the diversity of experiences across all PDETs in Colombia. Moreover, the understanding gained from interviews is context-specific and may not be readily generalizable to other post-conflict settings.

In terms of the interview process, inherent bias clearly needs to be accounted for. Not only did the nature of the questions posed constrain the range of responses I received but also the snowball sampling method introduced the potential for researcher bias in case selection. I aimed to address this by following up on every referral, even if at first I did not think they aligned with my expected informant criteria (Patton 2014). Furthermore, accessing all local perspectives or even a robust enough number of interviewees proved challenging due to the time required to establish trust and understand favourable intercultural approaches in decolonial research contexts (Santamaría 2020). I would have ultimately liked to conduct more interviews in each of the three departments I traveled to to clearly analyze underlying differences in their PDET journeys. Nonetheless, the scope of this thesis and the chosen methodology did not aim for full representativeness and as the research progressed, I even had the opportunity to engage with a broader array of participants than initially envisaged. While this enabled an exploration of diverse perspectives I also must acknowledge that it may not be sufficiently deep to draw definitive conclusions about any specific community.

These limitations are acknowledged, and efforts can be made in subsequent phases of the research to address them by expanding the sample size and ensuring a more extensive engagement with interview subjects.

5.5 Ethical Considerations

5.5.1 Researcher Honesty and Personal Integrity

My research was supported and funded by the Open Society University Network (OSUN), facilitating a two-month fieldwork period in Colombia for conducting interviews and gathering essential data for my thesis. This funding was integral to the realization of my research goals, providing the necessary resources for on-the-ground investigations in the Sierra Nevada - Perijá zone.

While the external support from OSUN is invaluable, it is imperative to address the potential influence of external organizations on the nature of my research and conclusions. The financial backing does not come with any explicit directives or expectations regarding the outcomes of the study (aside from submitting a summary report of my thesis once completed). However, the acknowledgment of this support is essential for transparency.

I was committed to upholding the integrity and honesty of my research results and to recognize the potential for influence from myself, advisors, and funders. To ensure this, I implemented the following measures:

- Transparency: I have and continuously will transparently acknowledge the financial support received from OSUN in all relevant publications and presentations. This transparency is essential for maintaining honesty about the research's funding source.
- Communication: Regular communication with my supervisor and advisor was maintained throughout the research process. This included discussing potential biases, ensuring a diversity of perspectives, and addressing any concerns regarding undue influence.
- Reflective Practice: I consistently engaged in reflexivity, considering how my own biases and perspectives influenced the research. This self-awareness is crucial for maintaining the integrity of the analysis and conclusions.

5.5.2 Ethical Responsibilities: Consent, Confidentiality and Courtesy

In alignment with the ethical guidelines of my thesis supervising institution, CEU, I completed the Checklist on Ethical Issues in Research before conducting interviews and sought approval from my thesis supervisor. This measure guaranteed that the research process avoided coercion, deception, the recruitment of vulnerable populations, or significant risks to both the researcher and participants. Ethical considerations remained a focal point throughout the research to uphold the principles of integrity, respect, and responsibility.

Additionally, interview participants were given an information sheet in Spanish outlining details about the interview process including: explaining that the information gathered will be used for my thesis only, informing participants that their identity can remain anonymous, and emphasizing that they will not be financially compensated for their participation. Participants were also given a consent form that, if signed, allowed me to record our conversation and use the ideas discussed in my thesis.

All documents pertaining to interviews along with transcripts themselves were stored on a password protected Google Folder that only I had access to. All documents, including information sheets, consent forms, and interview transcripts, were stored in a password-protected Google Folder with restricted access only to myself to ensure the

confidentiality and integrity of the data. Within this folder, individual folders labeled as "participant 1,2,3...." contain the corresponding interview transcripts and any individual documents for each participant. Additionally, no data will be shared or made available beyond the scope of the research without explicit consent from the participants.

I also strived to maintain continuous open communication, address participant concerns promptly, and ensure that participants felt valued and heard throughout the entirety of my time in Colombia. The use of pseudonyms and the option for participants to use them helped foster a respectful environment, allowing participants to maintain control over their identity. Additionally, I asked participants during the interview to inform me if they wished to receive a summary of my research findings and will share it with those interested. Lastly, I also provided my contact information so any interview participants or contacts I made could reach out with any comments, concerns, or questions, at any point during my thesis period.

5.5.3 Research Outcomes

The findings of this research will be used solely for the purpose of this masters thesis in collaboration with Uniandes, OSUN, and CEU. Participants were informed that the results would contribute to academic knowledge and understanding of the intersection between environmental peacebuilding, post-conflict transitions, and women's roles in land management in the Sierra Nevada - Perijá region. Any future use of the findings beyond the thesis scope will be communicated with participants and will require additional consent. In the case that the thesis will ever be published, it will be communicated to participants beforehand.

CHAPTER 6: Eco-Justice Peacebuilding in Practice: Analyzing the Sierra Nevada-Perijá PDET from a Gender and Land Perspective

This analysis delves into the success of the Sierra Nevada-Perijá PDET in implementing principles of eco-justice peacebuilding, a framework based on environmental peacebuilding within the broader context of transitional justice mechanisms. This evaluation is guided by the research question: How does the PDET of Sierra-Nevada Perijá integrate women's involvement in and a gendered approach to territorial land management, and how does that impact the region's peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction? Answering this question requires a fundamental understanding of PDETs as land reforms designed with the specific focus on prioritizing women in their implementation.

The examination is structured around the four critical pillars of the eco-justice framework: gender justice and women's empowerment, community participation and ownership, institutional support and governance, and environmental protection and resource management. By critiquing these pillars from a gender perspective, this analysis seeks to understand the extent to which women are integrated into land management projects in the Sierra Nevada-Perijá PDET. This analysis will highlight both the successes and challenges of PDET implementation based on observations and interviews from my two-month stay in Colombia, during which I was fortunate enough to travel to Sierra Nevada-Perijá. Overall, this analysis aims to shed light on PDET implementation and how it interacts in practice with women and land, contributing to eco-justice peacebuilding. By addressing these critical issues, this thesis hopes to contribute to the ongoing discourse of how the intersection of land, gender, and justice is integral for sustainable long term peace post-conflict.

6.1 Everything Is Not Always As It Seems

Unpacking Gender Justice and Women's Empowerment in the Sierra Nevada-Perijá PDET

Like all PDET areas, in Sierra Nevada-Perijá, the inclusion of gendered perspectives in the creation and implementation of PDETs has been a significant focus. While interviews conducted with local stakeholders reveal a marked increase in women's involvement in PDET

management and on the ground coordination, concerns have been raised about whether this involvement is genuinely impactful or merely a quota-driven exercise lacking substantive engagement. This analysis delves into these perceptions, examining the extent to which the PDETs differential, gendered approach contributes to their overall success and legitimacy as mechanisms for achieving eco-justice peacebuilding.

Evidence from interviews conducted in Sierra Nevada-Perijá indicate that women's participation in PDET-related activities has indeed increased. Rafael Montes, co-president of the JAC (*Juntas de Acción Comunal* - Community Action Board) in San Juan del Cesar, specified that in the council he leads, out of the 14 people involved, around 60% are women. This is especially notable in the area given that prior to the region gaining PDET status, community groups tended to be neither as strong nor as inclusive of women. Nevertheless, it is important to note that Sierra Nevada-Perijá lacked a formal record of community group participation prior to attaining PDET status. Hence, a definitive assessment of the extent of increased participation before and after the PDET designation cannot be conclusively determined. Nonetheless, Sandra Yanero, president of a community association in Magdalena, reiterated the notion that currently women are significantly represented in community action groups by mentioning that in certain areas they are even better represented than men. Most notably, this is exemplified in the *grupo motor* of San Juan del Cesar, a municipality I conducted interviews in. There, ten out of sixteen members are women, evidencing the trend in significant female representation in offices meant to coordinate PDET implementation.

Aside from mere feats in representation however, several of my interviewees also pointed out that women take on leadership roles in PDET implementation as well. For example, Catalina Salazar Pedraza, a youth activist, recalled that a group of around 100 women in her municipality of La Jagua de Ibirico, located in the Cesar department, are actively involved in PDET projects. Moreover, these women hold prominent positions in local governance structures within each neighborhood. When probed about why there has been a general increase in women's participation around the region and if it can be associated with its status as a PDET zone, Catalina explained that there seemed to be a general shift in women's opinions about their place in society in general. This was echoed by Yessica Fragoso, co-president of the JAC in San Juan del Cesar. She described an increasingly growing trend within women in her community who have stepped up as environmental defenders and

become more aware of the need to fight for their territory and rights. Yessica herself played a crucial role in getting San Juan del Cesar recognized as a PDET municipality. I was told that she was working on the municipality's application until minutes before the deadline, even knocking on the mayor's door to demand an important signature required for the paperwork. Her bravado and pride in her territory were evident, and she did not shy away from discussing the importance of centralizing women's experiences in PDET policies and educating more female community members on how to participate in discussions at a management level. The interviews largely situated women as leaders in PDET implementation processes, addressing a notable shift in women's roles with increased awareness and activism for territorial and community rights.

This increased participation seems to reiterate what was established in the PDET mandate. As mentioned, the inclusion of women and gender issues within PDET framework is quantitatively significant, with 1,169 initiatives directly addressing these concerns and another 3,239 initiatives listed as tackling gender equity if implemented with a gender-focused approach (Instituto Kroc de Estudios Internacionales de Paz & de Acuerdos de Paz 2021, 34). However, unlike what I was hearing from my interviewees in my field study, literature examining the implementation of gender policies in PDETs argues that women's participation often falls short. This discrepancy raises concerns about the depth and effectiveness of gender inclusion, suggesting that women's roles may be more symbolic than substantive (Ibid). Sonia Gutierrez[2], a lawyer I spoke to from a prominent human rights NGO in Bogotá, emphasized that women are often viewed primarily as victims, and not always seen as the ideal or 'good victim'. As such, they tend to be excluded in community roundtable discussions for being too emotional and fragile. This victimization perspective undermines the value of their involvement and results in higher concentration of men at the discussion and decision tables. Such a situation risks reducing women's involvement to mere compliance with quotas rather than fostering genuine empowerment and meaningful contributions to the PDET initiatives. This tokenistic participation not only undermines the goals of gender equity but also challenges the legitimacy and effectiveness of PDETs as mechanisms of eco-justice peacebuilding. While not necessarily the case based on my interviews in Sierra Nevada-Perijá

[2] Pseudonym for privacy reasons

these reports are difficult to ignore and my limited sample cannot serve as a complete representation of the status quo in the region.

The issue of quotas however came up twice in discussions during my field study. Catalina mentioned that in the Cesar department, the ministry must be composed of at least 30% women. While this represents a significant effort to increase the visibility of women in government, it remains unclear how much this heightened female participation has influenced land policy decisions. Furthermore, Rafael stated that the primary reason for such strong female participation in community based discussion groups is because men cannot attend these meetings. According to him this is largely because many men are employed in private companies and are unavailable to leave their jobs to participate. Apparently, the large percentage of women present in PDET discussion forums do not have other jobs, making them available to engage in these community activities. This reliance on women's availability to meet participation targets can be seen as a pragmatic approach rather than a deliberate effort to promote gender equity. If the primary motivation for women's participation is their availability rather than an inclusive policy, it raises questions about the effectiveness of their involvement. This can lead to situations where quotas are met, but the intended outcomes of gender inclusivity and equity are not fully realized. Moreover, participation in PDET activities is not compensated, making it unlikely that men would give up a day of wages to attend the meetings, therefore further contributing to making community participation more female-led. The compensation system for having attended a meeting, which relies on barter (materials and inputs from the land), may be more appealing or accessible to women who do not have other employment options. This system could inadvertently support quota fulfillment by attracting participants through non-monetary incentives.

The skepticism around the quality of women's participation is further reflected in the literature, which argues that in PDETs female participation lacks substantial influence or impact and can often be simply symbolic. In fact it has been pointed out that when the term 'gender' is included in various programs of the Peace Agreement, it often appears at the end of a sentence without concrete explanation of its implications (Yoshida & Céspedes-Báez. 2021, 21). Despite the *Agencia de Renovación del Territorio* (ART - Land Renewal Agency) explicitly aiming to enhance women's participation by encouraging their involvement and emphasizing the importance of their contributions, these gendered considerations came very

late in the PDET framework construction process and only after significant social pressure (Ibid, 27). Therefore the results emphasized women's involvement focusing more on numbers rather than meaningful engagement (Rodríguez Iglesias & Rosen 2022, 109). Although statistically significant, women's participation might lack the depth and influence necessary for genuine gender inclusion and equity. This is somewhat supported by my interviews, as none of the women could specifically name an official PDET project they had helped implement. Instead, they spoke about the community groups they were working with and the slow yet rewarding process of capacity building.

Moreover, the rush of implementation also meant that issues pertaining to historic patriarchal structures failed to be addressed. International organizations, including UN Women, were involved in supporting the integration of gender components in the Peace Agreement and provided training to enable women to participate actively in assemblies. However, despite these efforts, male leaders ended up dominating the meetings, and women were often invited to speak primarily to fulfill requirements (Ibid). Sonia further explained these common gendered dynamics she has witnessed countless time in her own interviews: "I don't know, it happens everywhere in the world, but in Colombia it is always said that the man is the smart one in the house and the woman is the brute, so when they have to face [...] spaces for participation where everyone is watching you, they usually say no, I can't participate because I am a brute, and this generates many problems, because then many decide not to participate and not to be part of the whole process only because they consider that they are brutes as a macho and patriarchal belief that comes from before, which is not real but still makes it impossible for them to participate". Sonia's experience highlights the significant barriers women face in asserting their voices and contributing to public discourse due to entrenched gender biases. While I cannot say this was my experience based on my own interviews in Sierra Nevada-Perijá, it points to the need for PDETs to continuously challenge and dismantle these harmful stereotypes to foster inclusive and equitable participatory spaces.

While there has been progress in increasing women's participation in PDETs in the Sierra Nevada-Perija region, significant challenges remain. The potential for women's involvement to be reduced to a political and tokenistic tool rather than a genuine effort at inclusivity raises questions about the effectiveness of PDETs. For these land reforms to fulfill their roles as

eco-justice peacebuilding mechanisms, it is imperative to move beyond mere representation to ensure meaningful and effective participation of women.

6.2 All For One and None For All

Analysing Community Participation and Ownership in Sierra Nevada-Perijá Land Dynamics

Community engagement and feedback play a pivotal role in the effectiveness and legitimacy of PDET mechanisms as eco-justice peacebuilding mechanisms. In Sierra Nevada-Perijá, where the scars of conflict and underdevelopment run deep, the involvement of local communities was noted as essential for fostering sustainable peace and addressing environmental challenges in PDET mandates. Interviews conducted in the region reveal a concerning trend: dissatisfaction with the government's oversight of PDET implementation has led to a feeling of being marginalized and unheard in decision-making processes. Despite the government's rhetoric of participatory governance, community members feel that their individual voices are not adequately considered or integrated into the planning and execution of PDET initiatives. This analysis delves into the perceptions of community engagement and feedback in the creation and implementation of the Sierra Nevada-Perijá PDET, exploring the challenges faced by local communities and the implications on eco-justice peacebuilding.

The dominant discourse in Colombia regarding land, especially after the cessation of armed conflict, prioritizes its productivity as a primary concern. Throughout the Peace Agreement, land and territory are predominantly discussed in relation to agrarian issues: specifically, the distribution, tenure, and production of land in rural areas (Cairo et al. 2018, 468). This governmental stance, evident in policies such as the agrarian reform, prioritizes land solely for productive purposes not only nationwide but also within PDETs. This exclusive focus on the economic value of land presents significant challenges to achieving sustained long-term peace. When land is solely viewed through a financial lens, it disregards the diverse and deeply ingrained socio-cultural bonds between land and local communities. Not to mention, this approach contradicts the principles outlined in the Peace Agreement and in PDET mandates which advocate for a “territorial approach to rural communities that takes into account the socio-historical, cultural, environmental, and productive characteristics of the territories and their inhabitants" (FARC-EP y Gobierno de Colombia 2016, 22). This

oversight undermines the potential for land to serve as a transformative tool for transitional justice, leaving it vulnerable to exploitation and perpetuating conflicts rather than resolving them.

Furthermore, disregarding the diverse perspectives and understandings of land among different communities leads to a fragmented approach to environmental peacebuilding. It is essential to recognize and integrate the various socio-cultural perspectives and relationships that individuals and communities have with their land to foster a cohesive and inclusive peacebuilding process (Graser et al 2020; Morales Muñoz et al. 2021). Interviews conducted in Sierra Nevada-Perijá reveal contrasting views on land, reflecting the complex tapestry of associations and aspirations surrounding it. For instance, Ivan Siosi, co-president of the JAC, advocated for a return to prioritizing indigenous knowledge and traditional relationships with the land, emphasizing the importance of living off natural resources and medicines. Similarly, the youth group expressed pride in their Afro-Colombian heritage and desire to sustainably live off the land through subsistence farming, highlighting the economic and cultural significance they attribute to it. Silvia Becerra, a deputy director at the ART, criticizes the arbitrary territorial divides of the PDETs, highlighting the oversight of neglecting socio-cultural factors that might have emerged had the environment had a more central focus in PDET construction. This current government approach, coupled with administrative failures and corporate influence, undermines these community perspectives thereby perpetuating structural inequalities and marginalization.

In essence, the narrow focus on land's economic productivity in PDETs contradicts the diverse socio-cultural values and aspirations of local communities. This discrepancy not only undermines the potential of land as a tool for transitional justice but also exacerbates existing conflicts and gender inequalities, further invalidating PDETs as eco-justice peacebuilding mechanisms. Historically, agrarian policies in Colombia have perpetuated traditional gender roles, resulting in significant underrepresentation of women as beneficiaries of land reform initiatives (Meertens 2015, 361). These reforms prove to be more harmful to women as they hinder their land claims in cases of divorce, abandonment, or domestic violence, and do not automatically challenge male-dominated decision-making processes regarding production, credit assignments, or inheritance practices (Ibid). To truly harness the transformative potential of land in eco-justice peacebuilding, it is imperative to adopt a more holistic

approach that integrates and respects the diverse perspectives and associations that individuals and communities have with their land. It is also crucial to steer away from solely viewing land as an economic commodity which can reinforce gender discrimination and perpetuate traditional gender norms

Community members in Sierra Nevada-Perijá further express dissatisfaction with the government's oversight of PDET implementation by arguing that their individual voices are not adequately heard or integrated into PDET implementation processes. Sandra, and Karen Marquez, a *grupo motor* representative I interviewed, complained about this issue specifically, noting that their interactions with government officials often leave them frustrated since decisions regarding land management are made without ever visiting the territories, sometimes even without consulting them first. The indifferent attitude exhibited by the ART towards local input and concerns is exacerbated by the general perception that it entered the territories with a predetermined methodology that disregarded the specificities of each area (Rodríguez Iglesias & Rosen 2022, 99). This negation of the importance of context-specificity disproportionately impacts women and seems to be a recurring pattern from government officials across PDET zones. Given the little guidance in the Peace Agreement on how to create stronger avenues for participation, this obstacle does not come as a surprise. Like with many of the policies the Agreement hoped to reform, those addressing participation completely overlook existing organizational processes and proposals for territorial planning at the local and sub-regional levels (Ibid; Silva Aldana et al. 2021). This limited conception of participation confines community engagement to diagnostic exercises or consultation processes, excluding local communities from decision-making processes and failing to incorporate their interests across all planning pillars (Silva Aldana et al. 2021). The absence of citizen oversight groups, compounded by a lack of capacity among local leaders further marginalizes community voices and increases the vulnerability of community leaders.

Furthermore, the government also fails to adequately monitor and control PDET resources, depriving communities of the opportunity for meaningful engagement in decision-making processes (USAID & Universidad Javeriana n.d., 4). Jaime Sánchez, a coordinator at the *Agencia Nacional de Tierras* (ANT - National Land Agency), for instance, identifies challenges pertaining to territorial land management, noting that much of Sierra Nevada is embroiled in land ownership disputes with indigenous groups. The government is slow to

intervene in these instances and thus delays processes of land restitution to other local communities. This highlights a fundamental issue with PDET implementation, as unresolved land disputes can lead to increased tensions and hinder progress towards peace and development. Another challenge in regards to land management was pointed out by Sandra, Silvia, and Karen who stress how much of a limitation there is on land ownership among local communities. Without ownership rights, community members lack the agency to participate effectively in decision-making processes related to land use and development. This lack of autonomy over land decisions undermines the principles of participatory governance and community empowerment that are central to the success of PDETs as mechanisms of eco-justice peacebuilding.

Moreover, disparities in accessing resources perpetuate inequalities between municipalities. Smaller municipalities struggle to meet the technical requirements necessary to access funding, leading to a concentration of resources in municipalities with greater financial capacity (USAID & Universidad Javeriana n.d., 4). This disparity was starkly evident between the three departments that make up Sierra Nevada-Perijá municipalities. Cesar and Magdalena have historically received greater funding than La Guajira, the smallest department in the region and the one with the highest presence of indigenous groups. The youth activist I interviewed even pointed out differences between three municipalities in the Cesar department in regards to funding from the state, noting that while the three were underfunded there was one that was noticeably even more left behind. The concentration of resources in select municipalities underscores the influence of political and economic interests in shaping development priorities. Municipalities with the presence of large companies or political connections benefit disproportionately from initiatives like Works for Taxes[3], leaving behind communities that lack such advantageous connections (Ibid; Rodríguez Iglesias & Rosen 2022, 110). The influx of large industrial projects was highlighted by community members like Rafael, who described how an electricity company moved into his community in recent years. While the company provided limited monetary compensation to community members, their primary goal was to proceed with their plans without actively involving locals

[3] The 'Works for Taxes' mechanism was established to allow enterprises with annual incomes exceeding $1 billion COP to fulfill 50% of their tax obligations by funding infrastructure projects, services, education, and healthcare in rural, impoverished, and conflict prone zones like the PDETs.

in any part of the project. Furthermore, despite the relatively small amount of money offered, community members often felt compelled to accept it due to financial constraints, even if they disagreed with the project's objectives. This approach sidelined community input and reinforced the perception that external interests were prioritized over local needs and voices. By providing major tax breaks to businesses that implement PDET projects, the government inadvertently empowers corporate interests over community needs, turning PDETs into profit-driven endeavors rather than genuine peacebuilding initiatives.

The disconnect between government policies and community perspectives underscores the inherent flaws in PDETs as eco-justice peacebuilding mechanisms. By prioritizing economic productivity over socio-cultural values and community empowerment, the government perpetuates a cycle of conflict and exploitation. Moreover, while the PDET framework aims to promote community involvement, it is evident that challenges persist in translating this intention into practice. To effectively address these challenges and realize the potential of PDETs as mechanisms for transitional justice and environmental peacebuilding, there is an urgent need for greater inclusivity in land reforms based on genuine community participation, that includes women, in decision-making processes.

6.3 Left Behind by the State?

Analyzing Institutional Support and Governance in Sierra Nevada-Perijá

As discussed, the relationship between communities and institutions involved in the implementation of PDET projects in Sierra Nevada-Perijá is strained and characterized by significant administrative failures. The divide between urban and rural areas exacerbates this tension, leading to distrust and frustration among community members towards the government. This divide also impacts the way information flows through PDET information chains. Despite the government's emphasis on the importance of PDETs, my most surprising discovery during my time in Colombia was the significant lack of awareness and knowledge about these land reforms, both inside and outside of PDET zones. While the individuals I engaged with in Sierra Nevada-Perijá were generally aware of PDETs and their components, several government agency officials I interviewed seemed unable to provide any information regarding various aspects of PDETs. In one instance, while I was sitting in his office in

Valledupar, the largest PDET municipality in Sierra Nevada-Perijá's largest PDET department, an interviewee did not even know what the acronym stood for.

The reasons as to why the PDETs were not more widely known lent different explanations from my interviewees. Sandra and Karen highlighted the lack of political will, citing a significant information gap between top-level government officials and the realities on the ground in Sierra Nevada-Perijá. They again stressed how rarely, if ever, PDET representatives from the government visit the territory or stay updated with local developments. This disconnect serves as a major obstacle to effective PDET implementation and ignores the comprehensive participatory approach PDETs were supposed to embrace (Silva Aldana et al. 2021). This lack of willingness was highlighted by Rodríguez Iglesias & Rosen (2022), who noted that many institutions showed little interest in implementing certain aspects of the Agreement, particularly those reforms that aimed to facilitate citizen participation (98). Dishearteningly, PDET zones are regions that historically suffered dramatically in the armed conflict, as such to see them be ignored by mechanisms intended to alleviate the burdens left behind by the conflict is frustrating for many.

While my interviews did not directly suggest gender dynamics as a reason for the lack of recognition of PDETs, literature on the subject raises an intriguing possibility. Patriarchal societies may perceive spaces with significant female involvement, such as PDETs, as less valuable or less worthy of serious consideration. This perspective stems from deeply ingrained gender biases and stereotypes that devalue women's contributions and prioritize traditionally masculine domains. According to Butler (2006), patriarchal societies often dismiss activities associated with femininity as less important or less legitimate, perpetuating a cycle of gender inequality. In the context of the Sierra Nevada-Perijá PDET, where women play prominent roles in community engagement and decision-making, this gendered bias could contribute to the marginalization of these initiatives within government circles. Additionally, Kimmel et al. (2005) and Hooks (2000) argue that patriarchal structures tend to prioritize male-dominated spaces and perspectives, further marginalizing initiatives perceived as feminine or woman-led. Therefore, it is plausible that the significant involvement of women in PDETs may inadvertently contribute to their lack of recognition and serious consideration within patriarchal systems. While this hypothesis requires further exploration

and empirical evidence, it underscores the pervasive influence of gender dynamics in shaping perceptions and priorities within governance and development frameworks.

Another reason, that in this case was supported by my interviews, as to why PDETs were not more widely recognized was brought up by Ivan and Rafael. They emphasized the impact of Sierra Nevada's rurality on community participation. The majority of the inhabitants of the region live in areas far from a major city thus making the vast distances and challenging terrain difficult for many community members to travel to PDET meetings. For many, the journey is both time-consuming and expensive, requiring resources that are often scarce in rural areas (ART 2023, 1). While Rafael, Ivan, and Yessica occasionally try to incentivize attendance by offering something small, like a sandwich, they are eager for the government to take action by providing transportation to ensure greater participation. All interviewees were quick to point out that community members were keen to have a seat at the table but to date, the rural urban divide acts as a barrier that limits the ability of rural residents to engage in the decision-making processes that affect their lives and communities. The high cost of transportation and the time required to travel to urban centers for meetings alienates rural community members, reducing their influence in PDET initiatives and perpetuating feelings of neglect and disenfranchisement.

These feelings have only been exacerbated by the Public Works for Taxes program mentioned earlier, which severely undermines institutional relationships and trust in PDET mechanisms. Through this program the government prioritizes commercial interests over genuine community needs. Such practices can pave the way for corruption, as businesses and politicians may exploit these opportunities for personal gain, further marginalizing the communities that PDETs are supposed to empower. Moreover, this approach directly contradicts the principles of environmental peacebuilding and transitional justice. By sidelining community voices and focusing on business and political interests, the government risks perpetuating the very inequalities and conflicts that PDETs aim to resolve. Moreover, the prioritization of corporate interests over small-scale agricultural endeavors, coupled with the lack of comprehensive land reforms, jeopardizes the livelihoods of rural peasants and facilitates "corporate resource-grabbing" (Ide et al 2021, 11). Effective eco-justice peacebuilding, with its embrace of environmental peacebuilding and transitional justice principles, work completely against this narrative by requiring meaningful local involvement

and transparency, ensuring that community members feel heard and valued in the decision-making process (Rodríguez Iglesias & Rosen 2022). Without this, the legitimacy and effectiveness of PDET mechanisms are severely compromised.

Although the PDETs were initially designed as a decentralized approach to give more power and autonomy to local communities in peacebuilding and development projects, it has become evident from my interviews and conversations that this decentralization has been largely ineffective. Karen mentioned that any time she and other members of the *grupo motor* discuss new initiatives and projects, they feel sidelined and unheard by higher-level authorities, further exacerbating the sense of disconnection and disenfranchisement within the community. While the concept of decentralization implies transferring authority and responsibilities from the central government to regional and local authorities, in practice, this transfer has been incomplete or insufficient (Cairo et al. 2018). Sandra, Karen, Ivan urge Bogotá to have a greater presence across PDET regions and be more accessible to local PDET communities so that peacebuilding efforts can really be participatory and more effective. Currently, the lack of effective communication channels and the absence of permanent consultation forums leave communities without a means to voice their concerns, provide feedback, or participate in decision-making processes (Silva Aldana et al. 2021; USAID & Universidad Javeriana n.d.). It also accentuates the government's application of a bottom-down approach in PDET regions, which again negates the community centric focus of successful eco-justice peacebuilding. Consequently, local communities often feel sidelined or overlooked in the implementation of PDETs, fostering a sense of frustration and disillusionment. This failure to adequately involve local institutions and build partnerships with existing community organizations hampers the effectiveness of the decentralized approach, which is a key pillar of transitional justice (Taylor 2015, 106).

In conclusion, the analysis of institutional relationships and trust in PDET mechanisms in Sierra Nevada-Perija reveals significant administrative failures and a substantial urban-rural divide. These issues hinder the effectiveness of PDETs as eco-justice peacebuilding mechanisms. Addressing these challenges requires a stronger commitment to decentralization, increased local involvement in decision-making, and improved governance, transparency, and accountability practices to ensure that the voices of rural communities are heard and integrated into the peacebuilding process.

6.4 Forging Environmental Peace

Analyzing Environmental Protection and Resource Management in Sierra-Nevada Perijá

Although Colombia's armed conflict, as was explored earlier, was without a doubt heavily impacted by the environment, the 2016 Peace Agreement consciously avoided establishing a distinct environmental pillar, opting instead for a transversal approach intended to integrate environmental considerations across all reforms. Arguably, this method inadvertently weakened environmental initiatives, diffusing them across various sectors and diminishing their prominence (USAID & Universidad Javeriana n.d.; Bernal Bermúdez et al. 2023). This dilution is particularly evident in the case of PDETs, where environmental problems were not prioritized and rather environmental considerations were dispersed mainly in pillars addressing the management of rural property and economic reactivation rather than holistically (USAID & Universidad Javeriana n.d., 5). This fragmented approach to environmental issues also makes it extremely difficult to track environmental implementation as it depends on other initiatives, reiterating the little consideration it was given in the Peace Agreement, and subsequently, PDETs (Bernal Bermúdez et al. 2023, 38). Furthermore, the dispersal undermines cohesive and sustainable solutions, hindering efforts to address root causes of conflict and promote long-term peace and stability. This in turn goes against the overarching goals of eco-justice peacebuilding, which recognize the critical role of environmental factors in both conflict escalation and prevention.

Moreover, the marginalization of environmental concerns within the Peace Agreement and PDETs has broader implications for gender dynamics and societal inclusion in peacebuilding efforts. For one, environmental degradation can severely exacerbate gender discrimination, increasing the vulnerabilities faced by women in a post-conflict society (United Nations, 2010; Garavito, Franco, Crane 2017). Conversely, studies show that societies promoting women's rights and their participation in peacebuilding tend to also support environmental protection and reform (Pankhurst 2003). The cursory consideration of environmental issues in PDETs suggests a broader marginalization of women in the peacebuilding process. This is supported by the fact that women were initially excluded from the peace negotiation teams and only included after significant societal pressure (Yoshida & Céspedes-Báez. 2021, 27). This exclusion runs counter to the fundamental principles of eco-justice peacebuilding, which

advocate for the inclusive involvement of all societal members in rebuilding post-conflict regions. Therefore, the limited mention of the environment in both the Peace Agreement and PDETs reflects a broader pattern of limited women's involvement in peacebuilding processes, undermining principles of inclusivity and perpetuating systemic inequalities.

Interestingly, based on my findings in Sierra Nevada-Perijá, community observations on the environment were minimal. In fact, discussions about environmental changes or benefits resulting from PDET projects were scarce, indicating perhaps a broader dismissal of environmental considerations both by the state and local communities. During my interviews the environment was brought up mainly in regards to the socio-cultural importance of land; however the conversation barely translated to how to use the environment to build post-conflict peace. Mainly interviewees pointed to the lack of infrastructure and government oversight in protecting the local community from climate change. This is especially worrisome given how big of an issue deforestation continues to be even after the signing of the agreement. According to data from the Instituto de Hidrología, Meteorología y Estudios Ambientales (IDEAM), deforestation in Colombia peaked in 2017, with 219,571 hectares deforested nationwide, of which PDET municipalities were responsible for 84.4% (ART, 2023). Although a slight increase in deforestation rates occurred from 2019 to 2021, the proportion of deforestation in PDET municipalities compared to the national total remains consistently high, averaging 84% (Ibid). As an extractive industry, the effects of deforestation also disproportionately impact women, further referencing another way that the lack of an environmental pillar has left women behind (Cirefice & Sullivan 2019, 83). Despite the crucial role of environmental sustainability in fostering lasting peace and development, both the Peace Agreement and PDETs have largely overlooked this aspect, relegating it to the periphery of peacebuilding efforts. This neglect poses significant challenges in balancing development with environmental sustainability, as efforts to promote economic growth and infrastructure development may come at the expense of environmental conservation and ecosystem health.

While it's understandable that communities in Sierra Nevada-Perijá may prioritize what they deem as immediate concerns such as infrastructure and government oversight due to their direct impact on daily life, it is crucial not to underestimate the role of the environment in conflict escalation and creation. As has already been heavily stated, environmental

degradation and resource exploitation were significant drivers of the armed conflict, exacerbating social tensions and contributing to the displacement of communities (Garavito, Franco, Crane 2017, Ide et al. 2021). Neglecting the environment in post-conflict settings not only fails to address the underlying causes of conflict but also risks exacerbating environmental degradation, which in turn can lead to further social unrest. Therefore, overlooking environmental considerations in post-conflict reconstruction efforts could perpetuate existing vulnerabilities and undermine long-term peace and stability. It is imperative for the state to intervene and ensure that environmental considerations are integrated into post-conflict reconstruction efforts as part of the comprehensive approach of eco-justice peacebuilding.

This analysis of PDET implementation in Sierra Nevada-Perijá demonstrates significant gaps in addressing environmental sustainability within post-conflict development. The lack of an overarching environmental pillar has resulted in diluted and fragmented environmental efforts, failing to prioritize essential changes. This oversight not only hampers the achievement of sustainable peace but also neglects the intricate relationship between environment and societal stability. Moving forward, a more integrated and inclusive approach that explicitly incorporates environmental sustainability and gender dynamics into PDET projects is essential for effective transitional justice and long-term peacebuilding in Colombia.

CHAPTER 7: Discussion & Recommendations

The above analysis uncovered the extent to which PDET implementation incorporates the intersection of women and land reforms. To address the research question, the analysis focused on how the PDET of Sierra Nevada-Perijá addressed four overlapping themes: gender justice and women's empowerment, community participation and ownership, institutional support and governance, and environmental protection and resource management. Special consideration was given to exploring the gender component of PDETs and the ability of women to participate in any land reform capacity. The successes included increased visibility of women in planning processes and some instances of effective community involvement. However, challenges including symbolic female participation, insufficient consideration of socio-cultural understandings of land, lack of political will, and degraded environmental considerations hinder meaningful post-conflict reconstruction.

Indeed, these challenges may not come as a surprise, as they stem from the broad mandates of PDETs as outlined in the Peace Agreement, which lack specific guidance on how to accomplish most of the intentions it set out to do including integrating female perspectives or enhancing community participation effectively. While the agreement mentions the importance of sustainable land and gender reforms aligned with eco-justice principles, these references remain vague and lack actionable steps for implementation. For example, under the section in the Peace Agreement addressing what should be considered to meet the territorial participation objectives of PDETs this is what is mentioned: “A territorial approach to rural communities that takes into account the socio-historical, cultural, environmental and productive characteristics of the territories and their inhabitants, as well as their differentiated needs due to their belonging to groups in conditions of vulnerability and the vocation of the land, in order to deploy public investment resources sufficiently and in harmony with the tangible and intangible values of the nation” (FARC-EP y Gobierno de Colombia 2016, 22). Similarly when addressing how the active participation of men and women is the foundation of the PDET, the Peace Agreement mentions the following: “to this end, instances will be established at the different territorial levels to guarantee citizen participation in decision-making by the competent authorities, as agreed in the RRI, which will include the representative presence of the communities, including rural women and their organizations, and the accompaniment of control bodies” (Ibid). Both of these examples indicate an intention to embrace principles of eco-justice peacebuilding, yet they fall short in providing concrete guidelines for integrating these reforms effectively. This gap between intention and actionable implementation leaves room for inadequate execution, potentially resulting in the flawed outcomes.

Baring this mind, it must be said that in Colombia's arduous journey towards post-conflict peace, the PDETs emerge as a pivotal instrument with the potential to address the complex interplay between land, gender, and justice in the path to sustainable peace. Despite certain challenges, the legitimacy and validity of PDETs as mechanisms for fostering sustainable peace in Colombia's post-conflict landscape are increasingly recognized. Indeed, a study conducted in 2020 by PRIO and UNDP, which involved over 12,000 interviews in PDET areas, underscores the significance of community satisfaction in Sierra-Nevada Perijá. The findings revealed that over 40% of the population expressed satisfaction with the

implementation of PDETs, positioning them as part of the second group with the highest level of satisfaction (29). Likewise, an ART (2023) survey last year noted that 19.49% of respondents agreed that PDETs have contributed to the improvement of social conditions and about 27.64% of the participants agree that the PDETs have favored reconciliation conditions. These statistics underscore the considerable potential for further development within PDETs to effectively address social and reconciliation challenges.

In light of these findings, it is clear that while PDETs are currently plagued with significant challenges, the fact that they are some of the first and most comprehensive land reforms ever tested proves there is significant room for growth. These land reforms signify a crucial step towards addressing long standing issues of land along with the systemic inequalities and conflicts associated with them. This last section of the thesis aims to highlight areas where there is room for improvement, ensuring that PDETs can evolve and become more effective in achieving their intended goals. By addressing these issues, PDETs have the potential to drive meaningful progress in Colombia's journey towards sustainable peace and development. These recommendations, aimed at enhancing the inclusivity, effectiveness, and sustainability of PDET initiatives by recognizing and furthering land and gender aspects in PDET implementation, will draw from the insights gained through this analysis.

Recommendation #1: Establish Women-Led Environmental Committees

Establishing women-led environmental committees within PDET structures can prove to be essential to ensuring an integration of women's perspectives into decision-making processes related to territorial planning and land management. These committees should be granted specific mandates to influence environmental policies and initiatives in these areas. By empowering women to propose and oversee environmental projects, these committees can effectively advocate for the inclusion of environmental considerations in PDET initiatives. Furthermore, providing training programs and resources to enhance women's capacities in environmental governance will enable them to contribute more effectively to sustainable development efforts. Overall, the creation of these committees represents a crucial step towards promoting gender equality and fostering environmentally sustainable practices within PDETs.

Recommendation #2: Develop Mobile Outreach Programs for Remote Communities

Implementing mobile outreach programs using community vehicles can significantly enhance community engagement in PDET initiatives, particularly in remote areas. By regularly visiting these remote communities, these mobile units can effectively disseminate information about PDET projects and collect valuable feedback from community members. This approach helps bridge the urban-rural divide by ensuring that information flows both ways, enabling remote communities to stay informed and actively participate in decision-making processes. Additionally, these mobile units can serve multiple purposes, such as providing healthcare services through mobile clinics, delivering educational workshops, and facilitating consultation sessions with community members, thereby addressing potential health and educational disparities. Moreover, they can work as a tool for regaining institutional support from women by providing access to reproductive health services, counseling, and resources for addressing gender-based violence. Overall, mobile outreach programs offer a practical solution to improving community involvement and ensuring that the voices of all residents, regardless of their geographical location, are heard and considered in PDET initiatives.

Recommendation #3: Local Accountability Frameworks

To enhance the effectiveness of PDET projects, it is crucial to establish local accountability frameworks that include community oversight boards and regular public audits. Decentralizing decision-making and resources must be accompanied by mechanisms for local accountability to ensure transparency and integrity in project implementation. By creating community oversight boards, mandatorily composed of a certain number of women, and conducting regular public audits, stakeholders can monitor the progress of PDET projects and ensure they align with community needs and priorities. These frameworks serve as safeguards against mismanagement and corruption, promoting trust and confidence in the PDET process. Ultimately, local accountability mechanisms empower communities to actively participate in shaping the development and implementation of projects, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility for their outcomes.

Recommendation #4: Launch Community-Led Environmental Conservation Projects

To promote environmental sustainability within PDET initiatives, it is essential to fund and support community-led projects centered on reforestation, watershed management, and sustainable agricultural practices. By investing in these initiatives, PDET programs can address local ecological concerns effectively and tackle sources that can eventually disproportionately impact women. Empowering communities to lead such projects also gives space for PDETs to foster an understanding and acceptance of land within diverse socio-cultural contexts. Through active participation in these projects, community members can reconnect with traditional practices related to land stewardship and conservation, drawing upon indigenous knowledge and local wisdom. This not only enhances the effectiveness of environmental sustainability efforts but also strengthens cultural identity and resilience within post-conflict regions. Moreover, community-led projects promote inclusive decision-making processes that respect and integrate diverse perspectives on land use and management, contributing to greater social cohesion and harmony within local communities. Therefore, investing in community-led environmental projects not only protects natural resources but can also enrich cultural heritage and fosters sustainable development in post-conflict Colombia.

Recommendation #5: Implement Gender-Sensitive Climate Adaptation Programs

To address the disproportionate impact of climate change on women, it is essential to develop and implement climate adaptation programs tailored to their specific needs within PDET areas. This is an area of focus that I really saw lacking during my time in Colombia. These programs should focus on areas such as water conservation techniques and resilient agricultural practices, which are crucial for sustainable livelihoods in the face of environmental challenges. By prioritizing the integration of women's perspectives through tailored workshops for example, these programs can effectively enhance women's roles in climate resilience. Training in sustainable practices and supplying resources like drought-resistant seeds and water-saving technologies will empower women to actively participate in climate resilience efforts and mitigate the adverse effects of climate change on their communities. Such initiatives not only promote gender equality but also contribute to building more resilient and sustainable communities in post-conflict regions.

By incorporating these recommendations, the PDET initiatives can enhance their effectiveness in advancing both eco-justice and gender-inclusive peacebuilding agendas. This

comprehensive analysis of gender dynamics within PDET land reforms sheds light on how these reforms can contribute to shaping post-conflict landscapes and fostering inclusive and sustainable development in Colombia. Overall, the thesis aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the interplay between gender, land, and peacebuilding in Colombia's post-conflict context.

APPENDIX A

Checklist on Ethical Issues in Research

A. General information

1. Project name/title of thesis/dissertation: Women on the Frontlines of Territorial Peace: A Feminist Environmental Peacebuilding Analysis of Post-Conflict Transitions in Colombia's Sierra Nevada - Perijá PDET Zone
2. Name(s) of Applicant(s): Gabriela McGuinty Cañete
3. Contact information of Applicant(s): mcguinty_gabriela@student.ceu.edu
4. Department/Research Center: Environmental Science, Policy and Management (MESPOM)
5. Research Supervisor (if applicable): Tamara Steger
6. Supervisor's contact information: stegert@ceu.edu
7. Date by which a decision on this application is required in order that the project can proceed as planned, if approval is required: Feb 27, 2024
8. Expected date of completion: Jun 1, 2024
9. Abstract of the project/thesis/dissertation:

This research delves into the complex challenges arising from Colombia's post-conflict scenario following the Peace Agreement with FARC in 2016. Despite provisions for truth, justice, and rural development, Colombia faces persistent issues, particularly regarding territorial and environmental rights. The disarmament of FARC led to the emergence of new armed groups, triggering a militarized response in the absence of effective civil institutions. This power vacuum has allowed legal and illegal extractive activities to exploit resources, displacing communities and hindering the transition to peace.

Land restitution, with over 6 million seized hectares, remains a central challenge, emphasizing its crucial role in achieving justice and sustainable peace. The government's response, the Development Programs with Territorial Focus (PDET), aims to transform the Colombian countryside over 15 years. Covering 36% of the national territory, these programs prioritize development in areas with high poverty, institutional weaknesses, and historical conflict.

This research focuses on the intersection of women, environmental peacebuilding, and post-conflict transition in Colombia. The aim of this thesis is to provide a critical examination of the integration of women's involvement and a gendered approach to territorial land management within the PDET context, with a focus on the PDET of Sierra Nevada-Perijá as a case study. By utilizing an eco-justice peacebuilding conceptual framework, the study seeks to explore how these initiatives intersect with the key aspects of gender and land management in the context of post-conflict reconstruction in Colombia. Specifically, the research aims to investigate the mechanisms through which PDETs incorporate women's participation in land reform processes, evaluate the effectiveness of these mechanisms in promoting gender justice,

and analyze the broader impacts of gendered environmental management on post-conflict stability.

B. Funding

10. Sources, researchers' and their organization's financial interests and ethical issues in case of external funding

My research will be supported and funded by the Open Society University Network (OSUN), facilitating a two-month fieldwork period in Colombia for conducting interviews and gathering essential data for my thesis. This funding is integral to the realization of my research goals, providing the necessary resources for on-the-ground investigations in the Sierra Nevada - Perijá zone. The received grant totals USD $5000 which will be used to cover my travel to Colombia, as well accommodation, food, and other expenses once in the field.

C. Participants

11. Does the study involve human subjects, and how?*[Who will participate in the research? How will the subject/respondent group be chosen, what sampling techniques will be deployed? In which ways will the participants be involved?]*

This thesis will involve human subjects as semi-structured interviewing will be applied. I will be interviewing a mix of women, NGOs, and potential low level government actors involved in territorial planning efforts in Sierra Nevada - Perijá.

The data collection methods for the interviews will follow an open-ended interview structure and active participant observation. A preliminary sample group was identified through desktop research and through contacts from my advisor at the Universidad de los Andes. Through these (maximum one hour) interviews I aim to build connections and gain increasing contacts. In this way a sample will be built through snowball sampling methods where I eventually hope to interview around 10-15 people. I am also reaching out to possible contacts through LinkedIn and was recently told about a land management conference taking place in Bogotá during my research period which I hope to attend.

12. Are there potential benefits and hazards for the participants? *[Are there risks to the subject entailed by involvement in the research? Have procedures been established for the care and protection of subjects? Will the participants be informed of possible risks and hazards?]*

Interview participants will be given an information sheet that will emphasize that they will not be financially compensated for their participation.The aims of the study will also be explained with the hope that participants will be keen to share their experiences based on their belief in the importance of the research.

To my knowledge to date, there are no potential hazards for the interview participants. Proper precautions and responses will be taken in coordination with partner NGOs. In the case that an issue were to arise I will ensure that the participants are informed, that I maintain consistent open channels of communication between myself and them, and loop in relevant third parties including my thesis supervisor and advisor in Colombia who will be assisting me on the ground.

13. Does the research involve any risks or pose danger to the researcher(s)? *[If yes, what procedures will be adopted to minimize the risks? Have the health and safety guidelines relevant to the area and character of the research been consulted and implemented?]*

As of now, the research does not entail substantial risks or threats to myself. However, in the event that ethically sound interview opportunities arise, there is a potential for on-site interviews in the Sierra Nevada-Perijá PDET zone. While certain areas within this zone may pose dangers, precautions will be strictly observed. To minimize risks, I plan to conduct interviews exclusively in areas closer to the border that are deemed safer. Furthermore, I commit to ensuring my safety by potentially securing interview participants or an invitation beforehand, and collaborating with my advisor during field visits or participating in research group activities. I will also never wander into the field alone.

This strategy aligns with a proactive approach to address any potential risks associated with conducting interviews on the ground. Additionally, consultations with relevant health and safety guidelines pertaining to the specific characteristics of the research area have been undertaken, and these will be rigorously implemented to further safeguard the researcher's well-being.

14. Will all procedures ensuring that consent is informed be followed? *[Including the possibility for withdrawing consent]*

Interview participants will be given a consent form that, if signed, will allow me to record our conversation and use the ideas discussed in my thesis.

15. Are the recruitment procedures well planned, and risks of coercion considered? *[Might subjects feel compelled or "obliged" to participate? How is voluntariness ensured? Does the participation of research involve financial or other remuneration?]*

The recruitment procedures are carefully planned and involve the approval of both my supervisor and advisor. Prospective interview participants will receive a comprehensive information sheet that explains that the data collected during the interviews will be solely utilized for the completion of the researcher's thesis. Participants will be assured that their identity will be kept confidential, reinforcing the commitment to protecting their privacy.

Additionally, it will be explicitly stated that there will be no financial compensation or other remuneration provided to participants for their involvement. This documentation serves as a key tool in fostering informed and voluntary participation.

By transparently communicating these details, potential participants are empowered with the necessary information to make autonomous decisions regarding their involvement in the research. This approach aims to minimize any perception of coercion or obligation, fostering an environment where individuals can engage voluntarily and with a clear understanding of the research's purpose and implications.

16. Does the research involve incompetent adults, children, prisoners, other vulnerable groups, or contexts where obtaining consent is impossible (i.e. public context, groups)?

No, the research does not involve incompetent adults, children, prisoners, or other vulnerable groups. Additionally, the research does not take place in contexts where obtaining consent is deemed impossible, such as public settings or group scenarios. The study exclusively focuses on adult participants who are considered competent to provide informed consent. As such participants are fully capable of understanding the nature and implications of their involvement in the research.

However, the research does involve interviewing women that could be put in vulnerable positions as they work in rural settings and in potentially stigmatized work. While the goal of this research is not to exacerbate this, I will do everything in my power to not jeopardize their safety, by working closely with local NGOs and external organizations familiar with their work and only approach interview participants through their established connections.

17. Does the research involve deception – and/ or experiments involving humans?

The research does not involve deception nor experiments. To ensure a lack of deception I will continuously maintain open communication, address participant concerns promptly, and ensure that participants feel valued and heard. The use of pseudonyms and the option for participants to use them fosters a respectful environment, allowing participants to maintain control over their identity. Additionally, I will also send every participant a summary of my research findings and will make them aware of this during the interview. I will provide my contact information to interview participants so they can reach out with any comments, concerns, or questions, at any point during my thesis period.

18. Will confidentiality and anonymity be secured?

Interview participants will be given an information sheet outlining details about the interview process including: explaining that the information gathered will be used for subsequent

publications (e.g. thesis) and potential, informing participants that their identity can remain anonymous, and emphasizing that they will not be financially compensated for their participation. The sheet will also explain how their confidentiality and anonymity will be secured by allowing them to refrain from answering any questions at any point during the interview and decide the extent they wish to be identified by their comments.

19. Will data protection and storage requirements be followed?

All documents pertaining to interviews along with transcripts themselves will be stored on a password protected Google Folder that only I will have access to. Within this folder, individual folders labeled as "participant 1,2,3...." will contain the interview transcripts and any individual documents provided for one participant each. A separate folder will include a spreadsheet of participant details with identifying information including name and corresponding pseudonym, gender, age, affiliated organization, and contact details.

As per European data storage requirements, data will be stored for a period of up to three years.

20. Are there any plans for future use of the data beyond those already described?

The findings of this research will be initially used for the purpose of this masters thesis and any subsequent publications (for example academic journal articles).

D. Other Aspects

21. Dissemination of findings: *What is the anticipated use of the data, forms of publication and dissemination of findings, etc.?*

The findings of this research will be initially used for the purpose of this masters thesis in collaboration with Uniandes, OSUN, and CEU. As such they will be part of a masters thesis that will be submitted as part of my masters requirements. While there are no present intentions to publish it, in the future it could be submitted to academic journals or sent as part of a PhD application.

22. Have you considered how to ensure that ethics considerations are reviewed as the project proceeds?

I am committed to upholding the integrity and honesty of my research results and to recognize the potential for influence from myself, advisors, and funders. To ensure this, I plan to implement the following checking measures:

- Transparency: I will transparently acknowledge the financial support received from OSUN in all relevant publications and presentations. This transparency is essential for maintaining honesty about the research's funding source.

- Communication: Regular communication with my supervisor and advisor will be maintained throughout the research process. This includes discussing potential biases, ensuring a diversity of perspectives, and addressing any concerns regarding undue influence.
- Reflective Practice: I will consistently engage in reflective practices, considering how my own biases and perspectives may influence the research. This self-awareness is crucial for maintaining the integrity of the analysis and conclusions.
- Peer Review: I will seek opportunities for peer review and external feedback with my classmates to enhance the credibility of the research findings and mitigate potential biases.

23. Is there any other information, which you think would be relevant to the reviewers', or your own consideration of the ethical issues raised in this documentation?

Aside from this checklist, if required, a similar checklist from my host institution, Universidad de los Andes, will also be completed under the guidance of the advisor there. These measures will guarantee that the research process avoids coercion, deception, the recruitment of vulnerable populations, or significant risks to both the researcher and participants. Ethical considerations will remain a focal point throughout the research to uphold the principles of integrity, respect, and responsibility.

DECLARATION

The information supplied above is to the best of my knowledge and belief accurate.

Signature of Applicant: .....

Date: January 26, 2024

APPENDIX B

Interview Information Sheet

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Gabriela McGuinty Cañete. I am a Master's of Environmental Science, Management and Policy student at Central European University, conducting research with the Universidad de los Andes. My supervisors are Dr. Tamara Steger and Dr. Pablo Jaramillo. I am interested in exploring the dynamic intersection of women, environmental peacebuilding, and post-conflict transition in Colombia.

The purpose of this study is to examine the Colombian Participatory Development Programs (PDET) as a critical element of post-conflict transitions. It will explore how these programs address issues of land restitution, environmental rights, and women's empowerment within the context of Colombia's peace transition.

I would like to invite you to take part in an interview. If you choose to participate, the interview would take approximately one hour. With your permission, I would like to audio record the interview so that I can go back over what we talk about later. This data will be stored on my computer under password protection, only I will have access to it, and the audio files will be deleted after my research period ends in June this year.

The conversation will be confidential and anonymous unless otherwise agreed. I will not include your name or anything else that could identify you, I will use pseudonyms if you desire. Your participation is voluntary. You can stop being in the study at any time. You do not have to answer any questions if you do not want to. You will not get any direct benefits if you choose to join the research study. Taking part in the research study will not cost you anything other than your time and you will not be paid for being in this research study.

The risks for this research study are no more than what happens in everyday life. If any of the questions asked make you feel uncomfortable, do not feel obliged to answer. Please let me know if this is the case, and we will move on from the topic or stop the interview with the option to continue at a later time. At any time during the interview you may choose to end for whatever reason and, up to 3 days after the interview, you may request that the data not be included in the study and be deleted.

The insights gained from this research will be used to write a master's thesis and a summary report of the findings will be written and can be made available to you after June this year. If at any time you have questions about this research study, feel free to contact me or my supervisors through the contact details listed below. If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical procedures of this research study, you are welcome to contact my supervisors.

Yours sincerely,
Gabriela McGuinty Cañete,
Phone: +33 6 08 84 13 74 Email:
mcguinty_gabriela@student.ceu.edu

Supervisors: Tamara Steger, Central European University
Email: stegert@ceu.edu
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Ficha Informativa de Entrevista

Estimado/a Sr/a

Me llamo Gabriela McGuinty Cañete. Soy estudiante del Máster en Ciencias, Gestión y Política Medioambientales de la Universidad Centroeuropea y estoy realizando una investigación en colaboración con la Universidad de los Andes. Mis supervisores son la Dra. Tamara Steger y el Dr. Pablo Jaramillo. Estoy interesada en explorar la intersección entre las mujeres, la construcción de la paz ambiental y la transición post-conflicto en Colombia.

El propósito de este estudio es examinar los Programas de Desarrollo Participativo (PDET) colombianos como un elemento crítico de las transiciones post-conflicto. Se explorará cómo estos programas abordan cuestiones de restitución de tierras, derechos medioambientales y empoderamiento de las mujeres en el contexto Colombiano.

Me gustaría invitarle a participar en una entrevista. Si decide participar, la entrevista duraría aproximadamente una hora. Con su permiso, me gustaría grabar la entrevista para poder repasar lo que hablaremos más adelante. Estos datos se guardarán en mi ordenador, bajo contraseña y sólo yo tendré acceso a ellos. Aparte, los archivos de audio se borrarán cuando termine mi investigación en junio de este año.

La conversación será confidencial y anónima a menos que se acuerde lo contrario. No incluiré su nombre ni nada que pueda identificarle, utilizaré seudónimos. Su participación es voluntaria. Puede dejar de participar en la entrevista en cualquier momento. No tiene que responder a ninguna pregunta si no lo desea. No obtendrá ningún beneficio directo si decide participar en la entrevista. Participar no le costará nada aparte de su tiempo y no se le pagará.

Los riesgos de este estudio de investigación no son más que los de la vida cotidiana. Si alguna de las preguntas formuladas le hace sentirse incómodo, no se sienta obligado a contestar. Por favor, hágamelo saber en ese caso, y pasamos del tema o interrumpimos la entrevista con la opción de continuarla en otro momento. En cualquier momento de la entrevista puede decidir finalizar por cualquier motivo y, hasta 3 días después de la entrevista, puede solicitar que los datos no se incluyan en el estudio y se borren.

Los resultados de esta investigación se utilizarán para escribir una tesis de máster y se redactará un informe resumido de las conclusiones, que podrá estar a su disposición después de junio de este año.

Si en algún momento tiene preguntas sobre esta investigación, no dude en ponerse en contacto conmigo o con mis supervisores a través de los datos de contacto que figuran a continuación. Si tiene alguna duda o queja sobre los procedimientos éticos de esta investigación, puede ponerse en contacto con mis supervisores.

Atentamente,

Gabriela McGuinty Cañete,
Phone: +33 6 08 84 13 74
Email:mcguinty_gabriela@student.ceu.edu

Supervisores:
Tamara Steger, Central European University
Email: stegert@ceu.edu
Pablo Jaramillo, Universidad de los Andes
Email: p.jaramillo23@uniandes.edu.co

Interview Consent Form

Name and position:

_____

- This research has been explained and the participant has been given an opportunity to ask questions for clarification. The participant agrees that they understand what this study is about.

  YES NO

- The participant gives their consent to participate voluntarily in this study.

  YES NO

- Participants agree that their name and any information they share can be used in a research report.

  YES NO PARTIALLY

  - IF partially:
    - ☐ Participant wants to be referenced by a pseudonym or a general descriptor.
    - ☐ Participant wants to not be referenced at all but agrees that their information can be shared.

- The participant agrees that this discussion may be audio recorded.

  YES NO

Name:

Signature:

Date: ___ / ___ / ___

Formulario de Consentimiento

Nombre y cargo:

_____

- Se ha explicado esta investigación y se ha dado al participante la oportunidad de hacer preguntas aclaratorias. El participante acepta que entiende de qué trata este estudio.

  SÍ NO

- El participante da su consentimiento para participar voluntariamente en este estudio.

  SÍ NO

- Los participantes aceptan que su nombre y cualquier información que compartan pueda utilizarse en un informe de investigación.

  SÍ NO PARCIALMENTE

  - SI parcialmente:
    - ☐ El participante desea que se haga referencia a él mediante un seudónimo o un descriptor general.
    - ☐ El participante desea que no se haga referencia a él en absoluto, pero está de acuerdo en que se comparta su información.

- El participante acepta que esta conversación pueda ser grabada.

  SÍ NO

Nombre:

Firma:

Fecha: ___ / ___ / ___

Table 1: A table of the interviewees and their corresponding demographic data
* pseudonym

	Affiliation	**Interviewee**	**Gender**	**Position & Organisation**
Formal Interviews (majority recorded, two unrecorded)	Youth Organisations	Alix Gabriela Suárez Robles	Female	Activist - APPG
		Catalina Salazar Pedraza	Female	Activist - Youth Council & APPG
		Harold Luis Cadena Gomez	Male	President - Youth Council
		Harold Andres Mindiola Cañizares	Male	Activist - Autonomous Youth
	Community Groups	Ivan Dario Siosi	Male	President - JAC de San Juan del Cesar
		Rafael Montes	Male	President - JAC de San Juan del Cesar
		Karen Lorena Mefia Marquez	Female	Representative - Grupo Motor PDET
		Sandra Milena Yanero	Female	President - Asociación Comunal Sierra Nevada, Departamento del Magdalena
		Yessica Fragoso	Female	President - Junta Acción Comunal de San Juan del Cesar
	NGO	*Sonia Gutierrez	Female	Lawyer - human rights organization
	Government Entities	*Jose Enrique Maldonado	Male	Lawyer - government

				agency
		Itasis Cerchar Avendaño	Female	LGTBIQ+ representative - Santa Marta's mayor office
		Jaime Sánchez	Male	Coordinator of UGT - ANT
		Silvia Becerra	Female	Deputy Director of Territorial Planning and Rural Development - ART
		Carlos Cesar Silva Arauja	Male	Unit Director - ADR
Informal Conversations (mainly for context & to locate interviewees)	Academia	Dra. Ángela Serrano Zapata	Female	Professor - Universidad de los Andes
		Natalia Perez	Female	PhD student - Cornell University
		Natalia Correa Sánchez	Male	Activist - Municipal Youth Platform
	Youth Leaders	Danilo Márquez	Female	PhD student - Simon Fraser University
		Obet Aguirre Ríos	Male	Activist, President - Municipal Youth Platform

Interview Questions

Introduction: Hello, would you mind introducing yourself?
Hola, ¿le importaría presentarse?

- What do you do for work?
  - *¿A que se dedica?*
- Are you from around this area?
  - *¿Vive por la zona?*

Q1: What are your experiences so far with PDETs?
¿Qué experiencias ha tenido hasta ahora con los PDET?

- What was your role in a PDET project?
  ¿Cuál fue su papel en un proyecto PDET?

- What people or organizations are involved in PDET projects?
  Qué personas u organizaciones participan en proyectos PDET?

- Have territorial planning projects made a difference in PDET zones? How so?
  ¿Los proyectos de planificación territorial han marcado la diferencia en zonas PDET? ¿En qué sentido?

- "Im particularly interested in women's involvement…" anything you can say about women in PDET zones?
  Me interesa especialmente la participación de las mujeres, ¿algo que pueda decir sobre las mujeres en las zonas PDET?

- Do you know anything about any territorial planning projects in Sierra Nevada-Perijá?
  ¿Conoce algún proyecto de planificación territorial en Sierra Nevada-Perijá?

Q2: Tell me about your involvement in territorial planning projects.
Háble me de su participación en proyectos de planificación territorial.

- What are your day to day tasks?
  ¿Cuáles son sus tareas cotidianas?

- What has been helpful in your day to day tasks?
  ¿Qué le ha resultado útil en sus tareas cotidianas?

- Who are the people you work with the most?
  ¿Quiénes son las personas con las que más trabaja?

- Can you give me an example of a territorial project you are working on or know about?
  ¿Puede darme un ejemplo de un proyecto territorial en el que esté trabajando o que conozca?

Q3: How would you describe how things are going so far with managing territorial planning projects?

¿Cómo describirías cómo van las cosas hasta ahora en la gestión de proyectos de planificación territorial?

- Any challenges? Surprises?
  ¿Algún reto? ¿Sorpresas?

- What are some key things to consider when dealing with land management practices?
  ¿Cuáles son algunos de los aspectos clave a tener en cuenta a la hora de abordar las prácticas de ordenación territorial?

- Who have you worked with in the past that has made a big impact?
  ¿Con quién ha trabajado en el pasado que haya tenido un gran impacto?

- Can you give me an example of a common challenge/dispute when dealing with territorial planning?
  ¿Puede darme un ejemplo de un reto/disputa habitual al tratar la ordenación territorial?

Q4: How are decisions for territorial planning projects made in PDETs?

¿Qué tanto conoce cómo se toman decisiones de proyectos de planificación territorial en los PDET?

- What, if any, kind of support do you get for these types of projects? From whom?
  ¿Qué tipo de apoyo, si lo hay, reciben para este tipo de proyectos? ¿De quién?

- In the last year or so, this region has received a significant amount of funding to support development projects (including in the infrastructure, territorial planning, health, education, housing, food, and peace and reconciliation sectors), have you heard anything about this? What do you think the impact of this funding will be in the area? (almost 1.2 billion between Sierra Nevada and Serranía del Perijá)
  En el último año aproximadamente, esta región ha recibido una importante cantidad de fondos para apoyar proyectos de desarrollo (incluidos los sectores de infraestructuras, planificación territorial, sanidad, educación, vivienda, alimentación y paz y reconciliación), ¿ha oído algo al respecto?
  ¿Cuál cree que será el impacto de esta financiación en la zona? (casi 1.200 millones entre Sierra Nevada y Serranía del Perijá)

- Who is involved with managing this money and the eventual projects that will arise from it?
  ¿Quién se encarga de gestionar este dinero y los eventuales proyectos que surgirán de él?

- Do you know of any other similar funding awarded to other projects/PDET zones?
  ¿Conoce alguna otra financiación similar concedida a otros proyectos/zonas PDET?

Q5: Tell me about how you've lived through all of these changes in the past years (ex: signing of a peace agreement, the rolling out of the PDET zones, and renewed promises for environmental protection) Have they impacted you in any way?

Cuénteme cómo ha vivido todos estos cambios en los últimos años (ej: la firma del acuerdo de paz, el despliegue de las zonas PDET y las renovadas promesas de protección ambiental) ¿Le han impactado de alguna manera?

- What impact have these recent events had on land management practices?
  ¿Qué impacto han tenido estos acontecimientos recientes en las prácticas de gestión de la tierra?

- How did you navigate the transition? What worked and what didn't?
  ¿Cómo ha afrontado la transición? ¿Qué ha funcionado y qué no?

- What has helped mitigate historical tensions/conflict in recent years?
  ¿Qué ha contribuido a mitigar las tensiones/conflictos históricos de los últimos años?
  - Government leadership?
    ¿El gobierno?
  - PDET zones?
    ¿Las zonas PDET?
  - NGOs?
    ¿Las ONG?

- What kind of projects during these last couple of years have made the biggest difference? Who has been involved with these?
  ¿Qué tipo de proyectos durante estos dos últimos años han marcado la mayor diferencia? ¿Quién ha participado en ellos?

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