

Policy enactment in schools: A culture of gender (in)equality

Exploring the role of the school in the transformation of youth's
gender-related beliefs, expectations and interactions in 'post-conflict' Medellín



Fieldwork sites in Castilla (left) and Popular (right), Medellín 2018 (Photos: Author)

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I, the undersigned, declare that this dissertation is my original work, and has not been presented in fulfilment of other course requirements at any university.

Hannah Kabelka, 1.7.2019

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II Abstract

Set within a 'post-conflict' context, this research project addresses the mutual constitution between violence and the existence of unequal power in gender relations (Confortini, 2006). Hereby, I contrast Colombia's legislature and policy on addressing gender equality in the education system with opinions and perceptions of local policy stakeholders, educational agents and students in Medellín. The main objective is to explore how youth's gender-related beliefs, expectations and interactions can be transformed through a school culture that enacts education policies on gender equality in the complex context of gendered experiences in Medellín. Centred around two case studies, this research is guided by the use of mostly qualitative methods like in-depth interviews, focus group discussions initiated by a Likert-scale activity and photo-elicitation, and a complimentary quantitative questionnaire. I start with positioning youth's heterogeneous gendered experiences as embedded in a religious and *machismo* culture, in response to consequences of armed conflict, displacement and drug trafficking, and at the intersection with class, race and sexuality. Then, I analyse what in revision of Colombia's legislature could easily be labelled a "heaven for gender equality", uncovering how education policies travel into the reality of secondary schools. Lastly, I argue that human rights rhetoric in schools is not sufficient to provide young people with the necessary ability to transform their gender-related beliefs, expectations and interactions. In order to ensure that youth are empowered to challenge deeply-rooted gender norms, education policies, programmes and pedagogical projects need to be more context-specific and inclusive. This ties in with recent theorising on empowering youth as agents for change in their specific context. The policy implication is that we need to disrupt hierarchical structures between state and school, programme and educator, and teacher and student in Medellín.

Key words: Colombia; gender equality; intersectionality; policy enactment; school culture; youth empowerment;

III List of acronyms and abbreviations

EEP	Escuela Entorno Protector
EFA	Education for All
FARC-EP	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia–Ejército del Pueblo
FDG	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender-based violence
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/Transsexual and Intersex
MDG	Millenium Development Goals
MIAS	Modelo Integral de Atención en Salud
MOVA	Centro de Innovación del Maestro
MYP	Meaningful Youth Participation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
STI	Sexually transmitted infections
UAB	Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund

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1 Introduction

In 2016, after having included the perspectives of female victims and representatives of the LGBTI community, “the most inclusive peace agreement in history” (Salvesen & Nylander, 2017) was signed between the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia–Ejército del Pueblo* (FARC-EP) and the Colombian government. Although nowadays sometimes referred to as a ‘post-conflict’ area, Colombia can certainly not be considered an example of positive peace (Galtung, 1969). The country is still dealing with the consequences of its long history of violence and facing severe issues related to reconciliation and social justice. In this complex context, youth face heightened challenges growing up and developing their identities while dealing with different forms of violence. Many young people, including girls, have been recruited by *guerilla* and paramilitary groups (Bouvier, 2016). Hence, youth are directly and indirectly affected by the consequences of conflict, however; they are also perpetrators of violence (Imbusch, 2011).

In this study, I follow Connel’s (2010a) advice to consider education as an instrument for gender equality because I am curious to understand how formal education in Colombia might be used as a platform to empower youth. Consequently, I aim to explore the role of the school when it comes to transforming what young people believe and expect of someone’s gender, or how they interact with each other because of their gender. Before introducing this research project in more detail, it is necessary to know more about the relation between violence and gender, the origin of Colombian feminist movements and how gender inequality started to be tackled by education policies.

When investigating youth in Colombia, it is crucial to address the mutual constitution between violence and the existence of unequal power in gender relations (Confortini, 2006). Hereby, I focus on gender-based violence (GBV) as an umbrella definition for a wide range of expressions of violence that “undermine the health, dignity, security, and autonomy of its victims, yet it remains shrouded in a culture of silence” (UNFPA, 2017). Youth in this context face different forms of direct GBV: physical, psychological and sexual violence, early marriage, exploitation, and human trafficking. As Chapter 1.2.2 illustrates, figures that portray women and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/Transsexual, and Intersex (LGBTI) community as victims are high. In contrast, GBV against men in Colombia is underreported, possibly due to socially constructed ideas of dominant masculinities. Furthermore, patriarchy needs to be understood as a form of structural violence (Galtung, 1996). In its structural component, gender affects the legal, political, social, cultural and economic situation regarding young people’s rights, opportunities, and assumptions of a certain role. In Colombia, patriarchy has shaped the *machismo* culture as a face of sexism, that derives as much from international political and social currents as from cultural artefacts that are peculiar to Latin America

(Gutmann, 1996). Patriarchy and cultural violence are therefore also strongly intertwined and support an environment that legitimises GBV.

While in recent years the legal basis for gender equality in Colombia has been spreading, feminist movements have gone a long way to vindicate equal political and economic rights. The first wave of Colombian feminism started in the 1920s and tackled the politisation of the female body and motherhood in the 1950s (Wills Obregón, 2004). In the 1970 suffrage of feminism, activists claimed women's right to education and property (Elston, 2016). Since its beginning, feminism in Colombia has been scandalised by conservative parties and the Catholic church because of campaigns in favour of the legalisation of abortions. While this corresponds in many ways with western and North American history of feminism, it has to be taken into account that the most prominent feminist discussion in Colombia had and has to do with debates about the state and the armed conflict (Wills Obregón, 2004). Feminist scholars and activists have focused on themes such as the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war, the practice of mass rape during massacres coordinated by the paramilitary groups and the army, the forced recruitment of young women, and the compulsory use of contraception and abortions in the guerrilla forces (ABColumbia, 2013). With the new Colombian Constitution in 1991, ideas of rights, citizenship and civil society became more tangible and feminist movements began to look towards the state, institutions and public policy as viable arenas to change women's status (Alvarez, 2018). While in Western feminist critique the categorisation along sexual differences is being replaced by a narrative that deconstructs gender categories completely, in Colombia the victimisation of women and other marginalised groups still hovers in the air and feminism is continuously looking to resignify patriarchy and female subjectivity (Elston, 2016b). This shows that caution is needed when theories attempt to cross border.

Viveros Vigoya (2007) concludes that several challenges for the Colombian feminist agenda remain: the persistence of gender inequalities despite the institutionalization of equity policies; the gendered effect of forced displacement; the persistent influence of the Catholic church; and the debate of inclusivity in the feminist approach to reclaim the rights of all oppressed groups. Consequently, it was an important milestone for feminist movements that policy-makers acknowledged that a transformation of the country will only be possible when the society recognizes the historical roots of gender-based discrimination (Rothwell, 2017). Since nowadays education is widely seen as the instrument by which gender equality can be achieved (Stromquist, 2006), Colombia has committed to implement several education policies as a structural adjustment for the promotion, guarantee, and exercise of rights. In order to position this research project in the midst of global recognition and national efforts for gender equality in and through education, it is key to consider how this discourse emerged.

The topic of gender equality in education has first appeared in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 when the importance of rights and gender equality came to be associated with institutional approaches to social justice (Unterhalter, 2007). Subsequently, the focus was put on girls' access and participation in school, and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Education for All (EFA) frameworks primarily targeted gender parity (UN, 2015; UNESCO, 2006). With rising numbers and global advances of bringing girls into schools, it has been acknowledged that the approach had to shift onto what actually happens in school. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) consequently promote quality education and effective learning outcomes of girls and boys and further incorporate awareness for gender-sensitive facilities (UN, 2017). By means of the stand-alone SDG on gender equality, finally, attention was drawn to the gender division of unpaid productive and reproductive activity, violence against women and girls and reproductive and sexual rights and health. In addition, the expressed recognition for gender mainstreaming addresses the gendered dimensions of, inter alia, poverty, health, education, employment, conflict, and peace (UN WOMEN, 2018). Yet, I want to point out that the focus on girls' and women's empowerment not only fails a large part of oppressive forms of sexuality, like the LGBTI community but also many heterosexual men. Also, the commitment to women's empowerment seems to occur in favour of economic growth rather than seeking redistribution of gross social inequalities in wealth and income (Kabeer, 2015).

My fascination for Latin American feminist movements, personal research interest in the complexity of young people's (gender) identity building, and my professional background in education policies in conflict-affected settings have clearly guided this research design. In this study, I intend to look beyond the legal rhetoric of what in revision of Colombia's legislature could easily be labelled a "heaven for gender equality", uncovering how education policies travel into the reality of schools. I hypothesize that if we understand gender norms that sustain violence to be learnt through socialization and culture, then they can as well be unlearned. At the same time, I want to shed light on how transformation becomes aggravated when axes of power differentials come together in the gendered experiences of conflict, sexuality, class, race, within a religious and *machismo* culture. Consequently, the main objective is to explore how young people's gender-related beliefs, expectations and interactions can be transformed through a school culture that enacts education policies on gender equality in the complex context of gendered experiences in Medellín.

1.1 Research Questions

This qualitative research study addresses the following research question:

How can the enactment of legislature and education policies on gender equality enable a school culture that empowers youth to transform their gender-related beliefs, expectations and interactions in Medellín?

In order to unpack the main research question, the following sub-questions have been developed:

- 📌 How does the process of transforming youth's gender-related beliefs, expectations and interactions relate to other dimensions of social inequalities in Medellín?
- 📌 How are legislation and education policies on gender equality enacted in secondary schools in Medellín?
- 📌 How can factors and processes of school culture contribute to a transformation of youth's individual sense of empowerment?

1.2 Relevance

This section justifies the scientific and social relevance of this study's objective.

1.2.1 Scientific Relevance

Even when countries pass legislation on gender in the education sector, implementation often remains weak, rather symbolic than instrumental and often keeps reproducing existing beliefs and practices (Stromquist, 1995, 2006). Therefore, I respond to a call for further research on the impact of how policy development actually enhances girls' empowerment (Unterhalter et al., 2014). Beyond that, I use the concepts of gender identity and sexual orientation, since Lopes Cardozo et al. (2015) have criticised that LGBTI youth in conflict-affected contexts have almost universally been ignored within educational interventions about sexual and reproductive rights and health.

In an exhaustive literature review, Rodríguez Pizarro and Ibarra Melo (2013) have elaborated that Colombian gender studies in the past mostly centred around fundamental topics like gendered experiences of conflict, gender and ethnicity, gender identity, women's rights and health, and gender and sexuality. Consequently, this study wants to add to an

existing body of literature that acknowledges the need to tell people's stories that fall out of different kind of equations.

Remarkably, in Colombian gender studies, little academic attention has been given to gender equality in and through education. Some scholars started to discuss gender and education with regard to educational reforms (Domínguez Blanco, 2004; Fuentes Vásquez & Holguín Castillo, 2006), learning outcomes (Calvo, 2016), teacher training (Comisión Interamericana de Mujeres, 2011; Fuentes Vásquez & Holguín Castillo, 2006), higher education (de Sarmiento, de la Calle, Montoyo Londoño, & Rodríguez Camargo, 2013) and a gender-sensitive curriculum (Fuentes Vásquez & Holguín Castillo, 2006; Piedrahita Echandía & Acuña Beltrán, 2007). What is missing and what this research project seeks to contribute to the scientific debate is a nuanced understanding of how multi-faceted experiences of inequalities affect educational processes towards more gender equality, how Colombian policy translates into the reality of schools and the recognition of students' first-hand opinions and perceptions of the empowering impact of this work.

1.2.2 Social Relevance

First of all, I understand GBV as a human rights violation and its dimension can be illustrated with some figures. The national survey on demographics and health in Colombia indicates that 64.1% of women and 74.4% of men reported having suffered from psychological violence by their partner, 31.9% of women and 22.4% of men reported having experienced physical violence from their partner, 31.1% of women and 25.2% of men reported having experienced economic violence, and 7.6% of women reported having experienced sexual violence from their partner (ENDS Colombia, 2015). UNICEF (2016) found that 23% of girls are married before they turn 18. Moreover, according to the World Bank (2015), almost one out of five women aged 15 to 19 in Colombia is pregnant or has already had one child. Studies in schools show that 83% of transgender people expressed feeling discriminated, 20% of children and young people said they did not attend school as a consequence of the discrimination they suffered due to their sexual orientation; and 60% of reported cases of violation of the right to education are due to the students' expression of sexual orientation and gender identity (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, UNFPA, UNDP, & UNICEF, 2016). Consequently, understanding how to effectively address gender inequality as a human rights issue in schools might contribute to transforming youth into more active rights-holders.

Furthermore, GBV is the cause of many sexual and reproductive health problems. SIDA (2015) highlights consequences like sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or unwanted pregnancies, which in return can have serious repercussions including unsafe abortions and ostracism by family members leading to social isolation, suicide or sometimes murder. The

social relevance of this study builds on earlier research like Haberland's (2015) review of 22 studies regarding comprehensive sexuality education that showed that programmes that address gender power relations between men and women were found to be five times more likely to be effective in reducing rates of sexually transmitted infections and unintended pregnancy than those that did not.

Moreover, the UN Secretary-General's in-depth study on all forms of violence against women stresses that "violence prevents women from contributing to, and benefiting from, development by restricting their choices and limiting their ability to act. The resulting consequences for economic growth and poverty reduction should be of central concern to governments" (UN, 2006, p.22). This study will address the complexity of this interlink between gender and poverty in Colombia.

Lastly, I understand GBV as a security concern and a precondition for sustainable peace. The context of Colombia is an example of how GBV often escalates dramatically in relation to conflict and displacement (Bouvier, 2016). As determined in the UN Security Council Resolution 1325, women's rights must be at the centre of conflict prevention and conflict resolution (UN, 2004). This research project adopts this argumentation but frames the underlying problem as a relational issue. This makes it necessary to discuss GBV with boys and girls in order to contribute to more gender equality and more sustainable peace.

1.3 Outline

Chapter Two starts off with the theoretical framework that informs and guides this research project. Hereby, I critically conceptualize gender and intersectionality, youth and gender identity, policy enactment in schools, school culture and empowerment. Subsequently, Chapter Three provides contextual information as it discusses gender relations, reviews the recent political events that affect the gender discourse in the public education system and presents a documentary basis of legislature and education policies that underpin this study. In Chapter Four, I justify the methodological approach to this study, introduce the sample and conclude with reflections on the methodological and ethical challenges faced. Consequently, in Chapter Five, I present and discuss the main findings of this research. I first elaborate on how processes of change are related to other social inequalities. Then, I engage in an analysis of policy enactment in secondary schools. Lastly, I explore how factors and processes within school culture eventually contribute to a transformation of youth's individual sense of empowerment. Finally, in Chapter Six, I conclude the results in order to respond to the main research question of this study, identify areas for further research and provide policy recommendations.

2 Theoretical Framework

This chapter critically examines the main theoretical concepts that guide this research project.

2.1 Gender and Intersectionality

Although second-wave feminists initially referred to sex differences, the underpinning assumption that all subjects have bodies identifiable by natural differences as either male or female was soon identified as problematic (Francis & Paechter, 2015). While sex and gender must not be conflated, neither does sexuality follow from gender in the sense that what gender you “are” determines what kind of sexuality you will “have” (Butler, 2004, p.16). Queer theory hereby has contributed tremendously to feminist discourse, because LGBTI lives in the past have been considered as “fundamentally unintelligible” (Butler, 2004, p.30). Yet, the recognition of all people as humans is still ongoing in front of the law and, as this study will show, particularly complicated in front of the laws of culture and language.

This research adopts the definition by Butler (2004), arguing that “gender is the mechanism by which notions of masculine and feminine are produced and naturalized”, but there is need to deliberate that “gender might very well be the apparatus by which such terms are deconstructed and denaturalized” (p.42). Doubts about deconstructing gender mainly come from scholars in the global South, who argue that the retention of normative gender categories is still important in order to be able to support and implement policies for practical action (Connell, 2010b). Although Castellanos (2007) agrees that Butler’s deconstruction of gender categories seems to be the most desirable proposal from the point of view of abstract analysis, she also doubts the feasibility in Colombia because it would lead to the impossibility of uniting around a concept of woman in order to be able to act politically.

Butler (2004) argues that our sense of personhood is linked to the desire for recognition in the realm of social norms. She describes norms as “a normalizing principle in social practice, they usually remain implicit, difficult to read, discernible most clearly and dramatically in the effects that they produce” (Butler, 2004, p.41). Along with gender norms, beliefs and expectations are formed and certain stereotypes and roles are developed within society. West and Zimmerman (1987) and Butler (2004) have coined the idea of gender performativity, focusing on how gender as a product of naturalized social doings might be revealed through interaction. This means that how we act upon another verbally sometimes is not the same as the meaning we consciously convey. According to West and Zimmerman (2009), gender can never be undone, but might instead be redone. They argue that the accountability structures that maintain gender performativity may shift to accommodate less oppressive ways but are never entirely removed. Consequently, this study will discuss to what extent young people are

able to transform their gender-related beliefs, expectations and interactions, not assuming a transformation into gender equality but a transformation into less oppressive ways.

However, youth's beliefs, expectations and interaction are negotiated not only against gender norms of masculinity and femininity but also at the intersection with other social inequalities. The concept of intersectionality was introduced by the Afro-American lawyer Kimberlé Crenshaw (1990) regarding multiple oppressions experienced by black female workers in the United States. She has hereby created an analytical tool to access the complexity of the world, and of experiences lived by the people within it. In the context of Colombia, Viveros (2007) stresses the problem of ignoring differences between women by illuminating several forms of subordination in the case of women of colour, in terms of social class and sexual orientation. A report by Oxfam (2009) shows that Afro-Colombian and indigenous women are most vulnerable to sexual violence given the triple discrimination that they suffer due to gender, ethnicity and poverty. According to Mendoza (2014), the "colonialism of gender" and its interlink with race, class, and sexuality within societies constitute the guideline for the Latin American feminist agenda (p.102). Similarly, many scholars from the global South have rightly accused western feminists to ignore these multiple exclusions.

Apart from connecting gender with social inequalities based on race, social class and sexual orientation, this study addresses the gendered implications of decades of armed conflict. In the introduction, I have already illustrated how women's experiences of war have formed the Colombian feminist discourse after intra-familial violence and armed gang rape reached alarming proportions (Castellanos, 2007). Furthermore, a comprehensive study on gender equality in Colombia is not feasible without illuminating the influence of religion and the *machismo* culture. Linking gender to religion and *machismo* is interesting with regard to gendered system justification motivations as studied by Ståhl, Eek, Kazemi, Eek, & Kazemi (2010), when, for instance, female rape victims end up getting blamed if they did not adhere to gender stereotypes.

In conclusion, choosing to look through an intersectional lens when studying gender relations in Colombia means to take reflections of experience, identity, culture, and history into account.

2.2 Youth and Gender Identity

Youth are transitioning from childhood to adulthood. This category, therefore, needs to be understood as a fluid concept with no universally agreed definition. The UN defines youth as people between the ages of 15 and 24 years (UNESCO, 2017). In 2017, there were 1.8 billion young people aged 10-24 years old in the world, which is the largest youth population ever

and therefore the SDGs also acknowledged the importance of focusing on development for youth (UN Women, 2017). Youth are often indicated as people between the age where they may leave compulsory education, and the age at which they find first employment (UNESCO, 2017). This definition is useful to this study as it involves participants in their last three years of high school. Further, I understand secondary schools as spaces “where students spend a great deal of time not only learning but also navigating gendered identities” (Davison & Frank, 2006, p.152).

As stressed before, gender is too often considered as a binary without acknowledging the complexity of young peoples’ identities. A person is born with female, male or intersex genitals. Independent of one’s sex, the person can then define their gender identity as female cisgender or female transgender, or as male cisgender or male transgender. Yet, gender identity does not predict action, but by constructing their gender identity youth come to understand and experience themselves as gender subjects (Nayak & Kehily, 2013). A gender identity, therefore, is not necessarily visible or obvious to anyone else, and may not align with one’s gender expression and/or body (Choice for Youth & Sexuality, 2019). Lopes Cardozo et al. (2015) have warned about the risk of basic assumptions about the behaviours of male and female youth. In this regard, Paechter (2006) argues that masculinity and femininity are standing in dualistic relation with each other because one subordinates the other rather than being in equal balance. However, drawing from Connell (1995) it is important to understand how albeit all men benefit from patriarchy, dominant hegemonic masculinities also subjugate other expressions of masculinity. This means that categories of masculine and feminine need to be employed in plural, allowing for a complex hierarchy of power relations. Also, Colombian scholars Arango, León and Viveros (1995) understand the concept of gender at the interplay between masculine and feminine identities, emphasizing the relational dimensions and the cultural character of gender. In line with these considerations, I am, therefore, undergoing a relational study with youth because I understand power relations between different notions of masculinities and femininities to be the foundation of gender inequalities.

2.3 Policy enactment in schools

Braun, Ball, Maguire, & Hoskins (2011) state that policy often comes into practice as an attempt to solve a problem. In this sense, this study discusses legislature and education policies under the premise of solving the problem of GBV in its direct, structural and cultural component in Colombia.

Policy text is encoded in complex ways and needs to be decoded “in relation to history, experience, skills, resources and context” (Ball, 1993, p.12). This means that creative social

actions allow for many possible ways of interpreting and translating policy. Policy as discourse, on the other hand, means that the way in which policy ensembles, exercises power through production of truth and knowledge by those who have the authority to speak about it (Ball, 1993). The scope of this study does not allow to conduct an in-depth discourse analysis, yet I acknowledge that all participants act from a position of being caught in a complex web of discourses. Consequently, this study focuses on how policy as text travels as a subject to various interpretations and how it is enacted “in original and creative ways within institutions and classrooms” (Braun, Ball, Maguire, & Hoskins, 2011, p.586).

Furthermore, Ball (1993) recommends examining the changing relationships between constraint and agency of different policy actors. In line with Archer (1995), agency here is understood as a negotiation of the obligations, authority, and autonomy of various policy actors, and can delimit and define the boundaries of positions and practice in schools. At the centre of policy enactment research lies the challenge of re-contextualising the policy. Braun, Maguire, & Ball (2010) call it the “abstractions of policy ideas into contextualized practices” (p.549), which means that through reading, writing and talking policies are interpreted and translated differently with regards to the internal and external contextual factors.

The tools of policy enactment are interpretation, understood as strategy, and translation, which is about concrete tactics (S. J. Ball, Maguire, Braun, & Hoskins, 2011). Ball (1993) defines interpretations as an initial reading of policy. When policy gets translated into new texts and when these texts come into action, it is when policy is eventually enacted (S. J. Ball, Maguire, Braun, & Hoskins, 2011). This complex work of policy interpretation (decoding) and policy translation (recoding) is carried out by a variety of policy actors, as Table 1 illustrates.

Policy actors	Policy work
Narrators	Interpretation, selection and enforcement of meanings, mainly done by headteachers and the SLT
Entrepreneurs	Advocacy, creativity and integration
Outsiders	Entrepreneurship, partnership and monitoring
Transactors	Accounting, reporting, monitoring
Enthusiasts	Investment, creativity, satisfaction and career
Translators	Production of texts, artifacts and events
Critics	Union representatives: monitoring of management, maintaining counter-discourses
Receivers	Mainly junior teachers and teaching assistants: coping, defending and dependency

Table 1: Policy actors and policy work (as depicted in S.J. Ball et al., 2011a, p.626)

The conceptualisation above mainly focuses on the role of the senior leadership team (SLT) and headteachers in filtering and selecting the focus of policy interpretation inside the school. I further consider it crucial to look at school-external actors as policy narrators, and the

selection and enforcement of meanings within the manual of coexistence. S. J. Ball et al. (2011a) stress that policy narration in schools is aimed at staff and students and operates as “organisational commitment and cohesion” (p.627), which here is understood as school culture.

Secondly, entrepreneurs of policy work are the policy advocates within schools. These are actors who “think about education differently”, who inform institutional thinking and challenge ingrained assumptions about practice (S. J. Ball et al., 2011a, p.628). In this study, the policy entrepreneurs were found to be two teachers who function as gender focal points.

The category of policy outsiders focuses on significant policy actors that are not part of school culture. This study will examine policy narrators on the national level, the Ministry of Education, and local level, the municipal Secretary of Education, Secretary of Health and Secretary of Women. Furthermore, the role of external educational agents will be reviewed.

Policy transactors are responsible to account for, report about and monitor the policy translation. This role is related to the feature of measuring education policy, which means that “policy must be seen to be done” (S. J. Ball et al., 2011a, p.630). In this study, the Secretary of Education operates as policy transactor by means of their unit on school supervision and control.

Policy enthusiasts are actors in schools who invest in policy translation, they are creative and want to embody policy in their practice (S. J. Ball et al., 2011a). Mostly, enthusiasts are also policy translators, who actually plan and carry out the events and processes. They speak policy to practice by embodying policy in the classroom or within other educational responsibilities. Teachers are “constructed in a network of social practices which are infused with power relations” (S. J. Ball, Maguire, Braun, Hoskins, 2011, p.611). I will look at teachers as critical, complex and troublesome policy actors (Vongalis-Macrow, 2007).

Furthermore, the category of policy critics can become significant in the policy process at particular moments when policy translations threaten personal interests (S. J. Ball et al., 2011a). This study will refer to policy critics in the form of union representatives and critical teachers.

Lastly, S. J. Ball et al. (2011a) understand policy receivers as the most junior and newly qualified teachers, who are looking for guidance and direction rather than attempting any creativity (p.632). It is therefore assumed that policy receivers are the consumers of translation work by other actors.

2.4 School Culture

This chapter departs from a discussion by Van Houtte (2005), who contemplated whether climate or culture would be the more suitable concept for examining a school’s cognitive

structure. She argues that climate researchers measure how members perceive the organizational climate, while culture researchers look for “what members think and believe themselves” (Van Houtte, 2005, p.47). Drawing from Hellriegel and Slocum (1974), it shall be emphasised that individual perceptions are never independent of individual experiences and that social characteristics like age, sex, race or socioeconomic status influence the individual’s perception. Following this clarification, it becomes evident that for this intersectional study it is more accurate to apply the concept of school culture because I want to address what individual members of the educational institution believe when exploring youth empowerment.

School culture can be examined at three levels of abstraction (Van Houtte, 2005). The first level concerns artefacts which are expressive symbols, infrastructure, clothing or visible organizational processes. Secondly, the more abstract level she calls espoused values which are joint strategies, goals, and philosophies in the school. To really get a grip of school culture, this study agrees with Van Houtte’s (2005) conclusion that it is necessary to focus on examining the third and most abstract level of basic underlying assumptions and beliefs. In order to illuminate school culture, this study will apply Schoen and Teddlie’s (2008) framework as depicted in Table 2.

I. Professional Orientation	II. Organizational Structure
the activities and attitudes that characterize the degree of professionalism present in the faculty	the style of leadership, communication & processes that characterize the way the school conducts its business
III. Quality of the Learning Environment	IV. Student-Centered Focus
the intellectual merit of the activities in which students are typically engaged	the collective efforts & programs offered to support student achievement

Table 2: Dimensions of school culture (as depicted in Schoen & Teddlie, 2008, p.140)

Schoen and Teddlie (2008) clarify that the first dimension specifically refers to indicators that demonstrate how school members are individually or collectively involved in professional growth and development regarding their profession. For this study, the degree of professionalism of educational agents is being scrutinized. Furthermore, the dimension of organisational structure addresses all organisational factors that might affect the way the school operates on a daily basis. Within the dimension of quality of the learning environment, Schoen and Teddlie (2008) concentrate on the academic achievements of students. This research further emphasizes the personal merit of the quality of students’ learning experiences as an indicator for achievement in relation to change of gender-related beliefs, expectations and interactions. Lastly, Schoen and Teddlie (2008) conceptualise the fourth dimension of

school culture as a student-centred focus by “assessing the extent to which the needs of individual students are met by the school’s programs, policies, rituals, routines, and traditions” (p.140).

In closing, it shall be clarified that Van Houtte (2005) and Schoen and Teddlie (2008) referred to school culture when investigating change regarding school effectiveness and school improvement. This study applies the concept of school culture to examine change in one specific actor within school culture, namely the students.

2.5 Empowerment

Both the MDGs (Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women) and the SDGs (Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) emphasize empowerment when addressing gender equality (see UN, 2015; UN, 2017). In this chapter, I examine how the contested term empowerment is represented in academic literature and how it shall be understood within this study.

The presence of ‘power’ within ‘empowerment’ is hard to devoid. The concept came into use as an approach to transform power relations leading to the ability of the oppressed to make choices that challenge the oppressor. Kabeer (1999) defines empowerment as “the processes by which those who have been denied the ability to make choices acquire such an ability” (p.437). Consequently, empowerment always entails a process of change. Stromquist (2015) refers to different categories of change: economic empowerment, political empowerment, knowledge empowerment, and psychological empowerment, and I would argue that these categories are severely intertwined.

In contrast, sociologist Montero (2010) finds it unnecessary to use the term empowerment and suggests to replace it with *fortalecimiento* (strengthening). Likewise, Silva Mora (2015) raises the concern that since the term empowerment was adopted in the northern development agenda, it has been mainly used to achieve life standards of the more advanced and industrialized countries. She criticises its use for generating distortions in local realities by deconstructing worldviews of these regions. By proposing the term *fortalecimiento*, the focus lies on a process by which the members of a community themselves jointly develop skills and resources to control their life situation in a conscious and critical way (Silva Mora, 2015). Consequently, this study intends to explore empowering processes by shifting the focus of the term ‘empowerment’ on capacitating and enabling rather than on the dimension of power over others.

An important thinker on the question of empowerment is Naila Kabeer, whose framework I use for the analysis of this study. Kabeer (2002) recognises three levels of empowerment: the deeper level, or the understanding of structural factors that operate through

social and cultural norms and practise as addressed in the first sub-research question; the intermediate level, or awareness of institutional rules and resources, which will be discussed within the second sub-research question; and the immediate level, understood as individual resources (pre-conditions), agency (process) and achievements (outcomes). These three inter-related dimensions are addressed by the third sub-research question. Resources and agency together can be understood as what Sen (1985) calls capabilities.

First of all, resources concern not only material resources but also human and social resources allowing to enhance the ability to exercise choice which can be acquired through a multiplicity of social relations based on the different dimensions of school culture. The second dimension of empowerment relates to agency, which Kabeer (1999) defines as the ability to define one's goals and act upon them. It is essential to understand how agency is negotiated by positive and negative meaning in relation to power. In the positive sense, Kabeer calls it "the power to", which refers to people's capacity to define their own life-choices and to pursue their own goals, even in the face of opposition from others (p.438). In the negative sense of "power over", the capacity of another actor is able to override the agency, for instance, through the use of violence, coercion, and threat (Kabeer, 1999). Regarding achievements, Kabeer (1999) points out that it is difficult to find a uniform definition because achievements of change will always represent the values of those who are doing the measuring. Therefore, this study chooses to put youth as the primary actors in the research design, in order to learn about their perceptions.

In conclusion, I intend to approach the main objective of this study by following this conceptual model, as illustrated in Table 3.

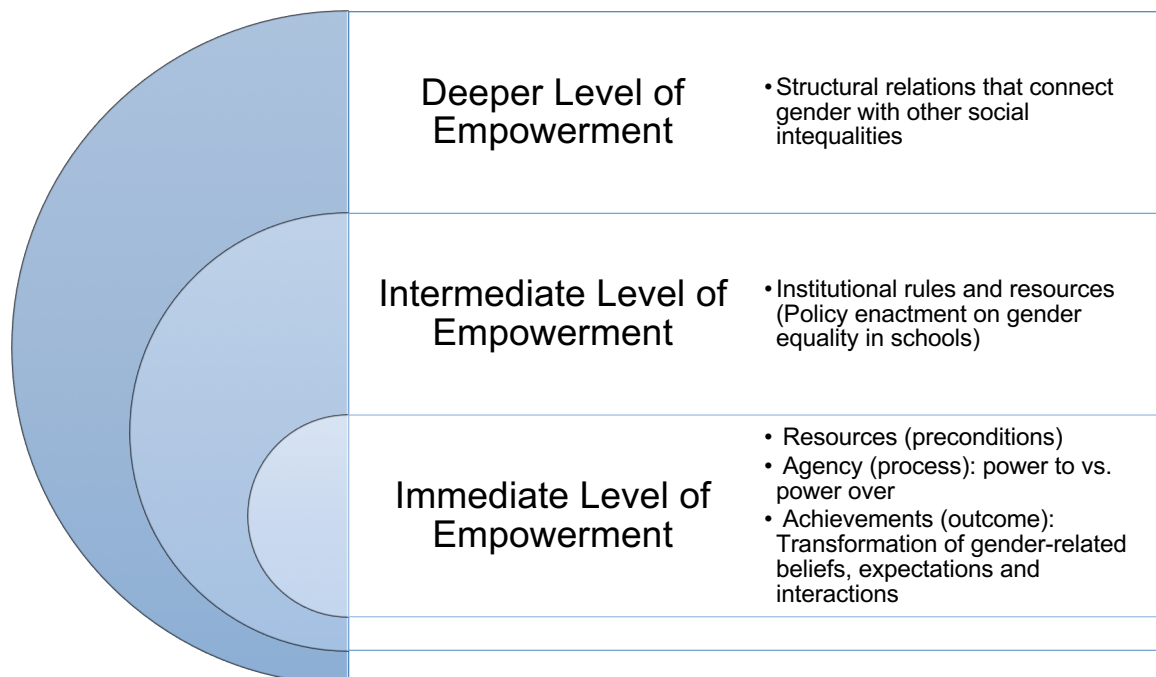


Table 3: Applying Kabeer's (2002) levels of empowerment to this study

3 Research Context

The first subchapter informs the contextual understanding necessary when conducting research on gender and education in Colombia, while the second sub-chapter provides more insight into the local context of Medellín.

3.1 Contextualising Gender in Colombia

This chapter starts off by portraying gender relations in Colombia. Studying gender in Colombia is an intriguing venture since the ‘gender ideology’ seems to have become a political buzzword. On this matter, recent events that explain the discourse around sexuality education in the public education system will be discussed. Moreover, the relevant normative documentary basis that underpins this study will be presented.

3.1.1 Gender relations in Colombia

The *machismo* culture can most clearly be disclosed by comparing the ways socialisation produces different beliefs and expectations about men and women. Primarily, *machismo* is based on the basic belief in complimentary gender roles. In this understanding, men and women possess strengths that balance out their own weaknesses and supplement the assumed strengths of the other group (Kay & Jost, 2003). A study by Olivas-Luján et al. (2009) on attitudes and values towards women in Colombia further shows how achievement-oriented and individualistic values like ambition, capability and intellect led to less egalitarian attitudes towards women, while humanistic and nurturing values like true friendship, forgiveness, helpfulness, obedience, lovingness, and politeness led to more egalitarian attitudes towards women. So men are expected to be masculine, self-reliant and dominant, while the ideal Colombian woman is heavily influenced by Roman-Catholic iconography (Cultural Atlas, 2019). This means women are often expected to follow and embody the symbol of the pure, moral and precious Virgin Mary. While these power imbalances have led to victimisation of women, in line with UN Women Deputy Director Lakshmi Puri it shall be emphasised that gender-related beliefs and expectations also affect men:

Men suffer too because conforming to masculine roles of competitive and ambitious self-seeking can put pressure on them and deprive them of joys that can come from parenting and having intimate respectful relationships. (UN Women, 2011)

Furthermore, the behavioural component of *machismo* shall be addressed. Drawing from Brown and Stone (2016), this can include discouragement, for instance by advising a girl to

take an easier math class; exclusion, by telling a gay boy he cannot play football; teasing, by calling a boy that cries a “pussy”; or sexual harassment, by touching another body without consent.

In line with Lancaster (1990), *machismo* in this study is understood as a system. He compares this idea with systems like racism, capitalism, homophobia and other forms of arbitrary power, arguing that *machismo* is resilient because it is a field of productive relations (Lancaster, 1990). Similarly, Foucault (1997) has also argued that knowledge and power are not clearly separable, but rather work together to establish this set of subtle and explicit criteria for accepting a system where one is entitled to oppression and abuse. The *machismo* system thus consists of power relations, because it structures inequality, but it also operates in form of productive relations because men and women systematically reproduce these values over time (Lancaster, 1990). Gender relations have mostly been studied through the lens of hegemonic masculinities, for instance, homophobia, *machismo*, and misogyny, yet according to Gutmann (2003) these are not solely expressions of male/female relations in families or households, “but also pertain to the very foundations of gender inequalities in society” (p.3).

3.1.2 The Colombian gender discourse, gender ideology and the public education system

On a national level, the responsibility of the school with regard to gender inequality was first publicly discussed after the suicide of Sergio Urrego in 2014. The 16-year old boy was openly gay and killed himself in Bogotá after being denied his right to education based on his sexuality (Herrera Durán, 2014). Unlike in other cases, the state and Constitutional Court became involved in an investigation and it was determined that Urrego had been a victim of gender-based discrimination (Rodríguez Rondón, 2017). The government put a clear emphasis on this new mission and ordered a review of manuals of coexistence to determine whether schools were discriminating against sexual orientation and gender identity of their students.

Hereinafter, the finalisation of the peace agreement in 2016 generated a heated debate due to its included gender perspective. Consequently, threats of a gender ideology were voiced strategically by the opposition to the government. Christian and Catholic churches massively reacted when the “encrypted presence of the gender ideology threatened to homosexualize boys and girls, allowing them to wear the uniform of the opposite gender or to create mixed bathrooms in schools” (Serrano Amaya, 2017, p.161). This debate was incited just at the moment in which the country demonstrated efforts to move from a situation based on hegemonic masculinity, that sustained conflict and violence, to a condition of peace and equality. According to Rodríguez Rondón (2017), days after the Colombian people voted against the peace deal, Christian churches demanded the Government to incorporate a

heterosexual definition of family and a guarantee of the sole autonomy of parents to educate their children in sexuality in the agreement, both of which ultimately did not happen. The agreement was renegotiated for its final version, eventually letting go of the term “gender perspective” and including a “gender approach” (Salvesen & Nylander, 2017).

Yet, a polemic discussion has erupted regarding sexuality education. The cornerstone was the circulation of fake leaflets by conservative sectors in social media, that explicit images featuring homosexuality. These illustrations were drawn by Belgian artist Tom Bounden, who later clarified having no connection to Colombian education policies (Hernández, 2016). This disinformation led parents to believe the Ministry of Education was distributing pornographic material in order to promote homosexuality among their youngsters. Hernández (2016) reported that as a consequence, massive demonstrations against the gender ideology were organised throughout the country and Gina Parody, Minister of Education and publicly outed as homosexual, was directly blamed for this incident. The situation tipped over with the publication of a new teachers manual where it was stated that

gender shall be understood as a set of norms that are imposed on bodies and do not depend on the sex of a subject, and we begin to understand that one is not born as a woman or man, but we learn to be, according to the society and time we live in. (Ministerio de Educación de Colombia et al., 2016, p.19)

The showdown ended with Gina Parody’s resignation and President Juan Manuel Santos addressed the Colombian citizens to ensure them that the national government did not promote the gender ideology (Rodríguez Rondón, 2017). In conclusion, these events reveal the strong influence exerted by religious and political powers when it comes to social and cultural transformation in and through schools.

3.1.3 Legislature and education policies on gender equality in Colombia

In 2015, femicide, defined as the murder of a woman because of her gender, became criminalized and comprehensive measures to prevent and prosecute GBV were established, including the recognition of the rights of victims and their relatives to specialized legal assistance (Human Rights Watch, 2018). Also, in 2015 the Justice Ministry issued a decree allowing people to revise the gender noted on their identification documents without prior judicial approval (Human Rights Watch, 2018). The same year, the Constitutional Court ruled that no one can be barred from adopting a child because of their sexual orientation and in 2016 the court upheld the right of same-sex couples to marry (Human Rights Watch, 2018).

Nevertheless, the culture that allows GBV has not yet obtained true change. As a matter that concerns every citizen and requires effective action, gender equality has been recognised by the sector of education. Based on the reference from public officials interviewed in this study, in Appendix 1, I synthesize the most relevant paragraphs from the following policy documents to illustrate how the Colombian state aims to transform education provision with a focus on gender equality: the Colombian constitution, the general education law, the law on coexistence, the national policy on health care and its methodological manual.

After the first decade of sexuality education in Colombia, an investigation by the University of Los Andes stressed a limitation regarding issues like family planning, STIs, pregnancy and abortion (Vargas Trujillo, 2008). They criticised that the pedagogical projects did not address the implications of constructing gender identities and avoided approaching the issues of romantic and sexual relationships. In the meanwhile, the Ministry of Education intended to fill this gap and developed the *Proyecto de Educación para la Sexualidad y Construcción de Ciudadanía* (Sexuality Education Project and Construction of Citizenship). As a result, three guiding books were published in 2008 and for the first time, sexuality education was directly constructed around the exercise of human, sexual and reproductive rights (Ministerio de Educación Nacional & UNFPA, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c).

With respect to article 77 of the General Education Law, Colombian schools enjoy curricular autonomy and thus the three mentioned books only operate as curricular recommendations. Therefore, the analysis of this study will be based on the policy documents as elaborated in Appendix 1. Given their common denominator, this research project consequently focuses on the promotion, exercise and guarantee of students' human, sexual and reproductive rights, as well as sexual and reproductive health within the public education sector.

3.2 The local context in Medellín

This study was conducted in Medellín, Colombia's second-largest city and the capital of Antioquia. I consider it interesting to focus on the city of Medellín for two reasons: its peculiar history of armed conflict and its recent initiatives for social transformation.

While war in Colombia mostly took place in rural areas, the armed conflict entered Medellín unlike any other city, where it highly affected the urban area. Particularly in the 1970s and 1980s, the city was run by the Medellín Cartel. After Pablo Escobar's death in 1993 homicide rates declined drastically, but militias, *guerrillas* and paramilitaries remained central to Medellín's structures of violence and forced displacement and disappearances increased (Cruz & Durán-Martínez, 2016). The Colombia Reports Data (2019) estimates that the city still has approximately 240 different gangs with about 5,000 members. UN Women (2014) have

called awareness not only to the fact that substance abuse is one of the main causes of GBV, but also stressed that the role of women involved in the drug trade often include domestic labour and prostitution and that especially women from indigenous communities and Afro-Colombian roots disproportionately often act as drug mules. Furthermore, many women have fled to Medellín and intend to assume social and economic responsibility for their families there. These displaced women experience multiple obstacles, including

the assassination of husbands; family ruptures caused by the tensions of violence and uprooting; the burden of an anonymous life in the cities; different perceptions of rural security among women and men; and new labour dynamics in the cities that affect the traditional gender division of labour. (Meertens, 2012, p.7)

Humanitarian policy measures have tried to respond to the conditions of displaced women, mostly in terms of prioritising female household heads in access to services.

Once considered the murder capital of the world, Medellín was elected the most innovative city in 2013 due to its recent advances in politics, education and social development (BBC Mundo, 2013). The process of urban regeneration as a driving force for social transformation was set in motion in 2004. The city has been internationally praised for building a mass transportation system of cable cars that connects peripheral neighbourhoods with the city. This new transportation method also had a gendered impact, since many women who were only engaged in informal work had never visited the city centre before. Esteves (2012) analysed how the city invested in public spaces, opened up library parks and organised cultural and educational activities to contribute to social inclusion of the most marginalised and most affected population by conflict. With regard to this study, school A in Castilla (*Comuna 5*), located at the foot of the mountain and school B in Popular (*Comuna 1*), became directly connected through the construction of the cable car.

Certainly, the contextual underpinning was taken into consideration when elaborating the research design for this study, which will be introduced in the next chapter.



Picture 1: Looking from Castilla up to Popular



Picture 2: Looking from Popular down to Castilla¹

¹ Picture 1 and Picture 2: photos from author

4 Research Design

This chapter justifies the methodological approach to this study, presents the sample and concludes with a reflection on the methodological and ethical challenges faced.

4.1 Methodology

My ontological position could be described as critical constructionist and intersectional feminist. This implies that I prefer to understand social properties as outcomes of the interactions between individuals (Bryman, 2012). I further want to discuss gender relations under consideration of other systems of oppression which can construct multiple identities within the hierarchies of power and privilege (Carastathis, 2014). My epistemological interpretivist position causes me to prefer words over numbers and led me to apply mostly qualitative research methods. Drawing from Bryman (2012), my research strategy, therefore, is constructionist, predominantly inductivist and interpretivist, striving to understand parts of the social world through an examination of the interpretation done by my participants. Bryman also clarifies that qualitative researchers do not always subscribe to all of these features. I, for instance, complimented qualitative methods with a quantitative questionnaire.

4.1.1 Data Collection

For my primary data collection, three types of research participants were involved: public officials, educational agents² and students. My local supervisor acted as a gatekeeper by granting me access to officials within the Secretary of Education. Regarding interviewees from the Secretary of Women and Secretary of Health, I contacted them via e-mail. The access to schools was facilitated with the help of contacts from the Secretary of Education. Subsequently, interviews of the case studies were organised on the basis of purposive sampling, as explained in Chapter 4.2. I visited each school for three to four weeks consecutively, proceeding with my data collection until theoretical saturation was reached (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Stemming from an explorative approach to qualitative research, my methodology was guided by grounded theory. This means that my methods, data collection, data analysis and eventual theory stand in fluid relationship with another (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Within my research design, I have been mixing methods for the purpose of complementarity and triangulation. Triangulation shall here be understood as employed by Denzin (1970), namely

² The term educational agents in this study, and also in clarification with the participants, refers to all members of the school culture that are not students, therefore including teachers, psychologists, the school principal, administrative staff, and visiting educators.

as an approach that uses “multiple observers, theoretical perspectives, sources of data, and methodologies” (p.310). I mostly worked with abduction, which allowed for exploration and flexibility and I adapted my design several times. Furthermore, methodological changes and fieldwork observations were regularly captured in a fieldwork diary.

For individual interviews, I considered semi-structured interviews to be a suitable method that permitted a great level of control since I made sure all key concepts were captured. For each participant, I used interview schedules that were based on prior secondary data analysis. Further, interview schedules within schools were adapted after a micro-analysis of information from public officials. However, I used the schedules more like an interview guide and allowed significant unstructured periods within the interviews.

Francis & Paechter (2015) suggest that the individual respondents’ view about their gender identity can be discovered by providing respondents with options to self-identify. Therefore, I included a questionnaire to receive anonymous information about young people’s age, gender identity, and sexual orientation. Subsequently, I used this method to further introduce questions to gather quantifiable data that could complement the qualitative data from the FGDs. Eventually, the questionnaire included a Likert-scale (1932) that measured the youth’s level of agreement or disagreement with statements related to coeducation, gender-related beliefs, and their perception of interaction between students based on their gender identity and sexuality in school culture (see Appendix 2).

FGDs were regarded as helpful because discussions illuminate understandings that may not emerge in one-on-one interviews or excite individuals to test their own opinion against what other participants stated. While FGDs with teachers were guided by a semi-structured interview schedule, I opened the discussions with youth by using some of the Likert-scale statements from the questionnaire through which students positioned themselves along a laid-out scale on the floor and discussed their stated opinions. When I felt a methodological change was needed, we sat down in a circle and I applied the photo-elicitation method (see Appendix 3), aligned with follow-up questions. A photo-elicitation interview refers to the use of photography as a stimulus during an interview, stemming from the belief that “a collection of photos showing typical scenes from subjects’ lives can be used to stimulate discussion” (Harper, 1988, p. 65). According to Harper (2002), the main purpose of photo-elicitation is to capture how subjects respond to these images when attributing their personal and social meanings and values to it.

In sum, the data collection was guided by the use of mostly qualitative methods like in-depth interviews, FGDs initiated by a Likert-scale activity and photo-elicitation, as well as the complimentary field notes and a quantitative questionnaire.

4.1.2 Data Analysis

All recordings were fully transcribed in Spanish with the help of the software Express Scribe. Afterwards, the data was organised in Nvivo, starting with open coding. After having processed a couple of interviews from different stakeholders with initial “in vivo” codes, I compared them with the at that time established theoretical foundations of the research design. After reviewing these concepts I needed to make decisions about which initial codes made most analytical sense to categorize my data incisively and completely (Charmaz, 2006), which eventually allowed me to go through all data and apply focused coding.

The sets of concepts and codes included narrators and translators of Ball’s theory on policy enactment, the four dimensions of school culture proposed by Schoen and Teddlie, my intersectional view on class, race, sexuality, conflict, religion and *machismo* and Kabeer’s framework of resources, agency and achievement (see Appendix 4). Moreover, throughout the process of coding, writing memos helped to formulate and revise my theory (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The analytic memos and many early-stage comments from my fieldwork diary were also key for the analysis since from the emerging ideas I developed tracks of interpretation and realized the analysis from there.

I printed out all the organized references of participants and started my thematic analysis. The process of analysis was initiated by discussing the data conducted through interviews with public officials and educational agents in order to uncover processes of policy narration and translation. By analysing the interviews with school internal actors, various processes of policy enactment within the different dimensions of school culture were identified. Lastly, I examined how these different processes impact youth’s empowerment by contrasting educators’ statements with students’ self-report. I intended to follow Kabeer’s (1999) advice of bringing multiple sources of information to bear on the interpretation of an indicator, thereby guarding against my own interpretative bias. The additional information gathered from the quantitative questionnaires was analysed in Excel. Since this research is strongly guided by a qualitative research paradigm, the quantifiable data, but also my field notes, were only added complementarily when relevant in the analysis.

4.2 Sample

This chapter presents the sample of participants, containing public officials, educational agents, and students (for more exhaustive information, see Appendix 5). To begin with, Table 4 illustrates the main political stakeholders in education policies on gender equality in Medellín. The criterion was to interview at least one representative from each thematic unit of the local Secretary.

Technical/ legal advisor & Specialist for Supervision and Control EEP	Secretary of Education	2 male
Pedagogical advisor EEP	Secretary of Education	female
Vice-secretary	Secretary of Education	male
Head of Secretary	Secretary of Women	female
Public Official in Education Department	Secretary of Women	female
Vice-secretary	Secretary of Health	female
7 participants 4 female 3 male		

Table 4: Individual semi-structured interviews with public officials

This research project centres around a two case study design.³ School A is situated in the zone Castilla (*Comuna 5*) and was affected by the conflict in terms of invasion of displaced population, the consequent prevalence of disrupted family structures and problems with substance abuse of under-age students. According to the epidemiological bulletin by the Secretary of Health (2018), Castilla has a low-risk factor regarding physical, psychological violence and neglect, grouped as non-sexual violence, but a medium-risk factor in terms of sexual violence.

³ In order to keep the identities of both public schools confidential, they are only referred to as school A and B as well as their location in Medellín.



Picture 3: Classroom, school A in Castilla



Picture 4: Classroom, school B in Popular⁴

School B is located in the zone of Popular (*Comuna 1*). With very high-risk factors regarding sexual and non-sexual violence, this neighbourhood is considered to be one of the two most vulnerable zones (Secretaría de Salud de Medellín, 2018). The neighbourhood of school B is still controlled by gangs, and disrupted family structures and substance abuse were also noted to challenge the educational setting.

⁴ Picture 3 and 4: photos from author

Table 5 presents the anonymous identity of crucial educational agents in each school culture who participated in individual in-depth interviews.

School A (Castilla)		School B (Popular)	
School Principal	male	School Principal	male
Gender Focal Point	female	Gender Focal Point	female
Academic coordinator	female	Informatics teacher	female
Psychologist (EEP)	female	Coordinator	female
4 participants 3 female 1male		Psychologist (MIAS)	male
		5 participants 3 female 2 male	

Table 5: Individual semi-structured interviews with educational agents

Regarding the data collection with teachers, the criteria were to have a balanced sample concerning the teachers' gender and field of subjects. In total, 30 teachers were interviewed in FGDs as illustrated in Table 6.

Focus Groups Teachers	School A (Castilla)		School B (Popular)	
FGD 1	Democracy and politics Mathematics Primary School Teacher ICT & Computer Science (2) Social Sciences (2) Inspector from EEP	6 female 2 male	Spanish Natural Sciences (3) Mathematics and Sports Sports Spanish and English Social Sciences Arts	5 male 4 female
FGD 2	Biology & Chemistry English (2) Arts Philosophy Sports Social Sciences	4 female 3 male	Biology and Chemistry Spanish and English Social Sciences Mathematics (2) Sports	4 male 2 female
	16 participants 11 female 5 male		15 participants 6 female 9 male	

Table 6: FGDs with teachers per case study

Lastly, Table 7 presents the sample of 93 young people. The decision to focus on participants from grade 9 to grade 11 was based on the methodological consideration of self-report. I would argue that students in their last years of high school had more time to experience the impact of school culture on their change of gender-related beliefs, expectations and interactions and deliver clearer opinions and perceptions than younger students. The sample criterion was further based on striving for a balanced gender composition.

Focus Groups Students	School A (Castilla)		School B (Popular)	
FGD 1	Grade 11	6 male 1 female	Grade 9	3 male 6 female
FGD 2	Grade 10	3 male 6 female	Grade 10	2 male 7 female
FGD 3	Grade 9	4 male 5 female	Grade 9	4 male 6 female
FGD 4	Grade 10 and 11	4 male 3 female	Grade 11	3 male 4 female
FGD 5	Grade 11	2 male 6 female	Grade 11	5 male 4 female
FGD 6	Grade 9	4 male 4 female	44 participants 17 male 27 female	
	49 participants 24 male 25 female			

Table 7: FGDs with young people per case study

Remarkably, the questionnaire showed that 75% of the students were older than their grade of schooling would indicate. These young people were between one and four years older than their peers. As Figure 1 illustrates, within the sample of youth there are 82,8% who identified as heterosexual, 11,83% as bisexual and 5,38% as homosexual. All participants indicated their gender identity to be either male or female cisgender, so consequently, the analysis applies the categories of boys and girls.

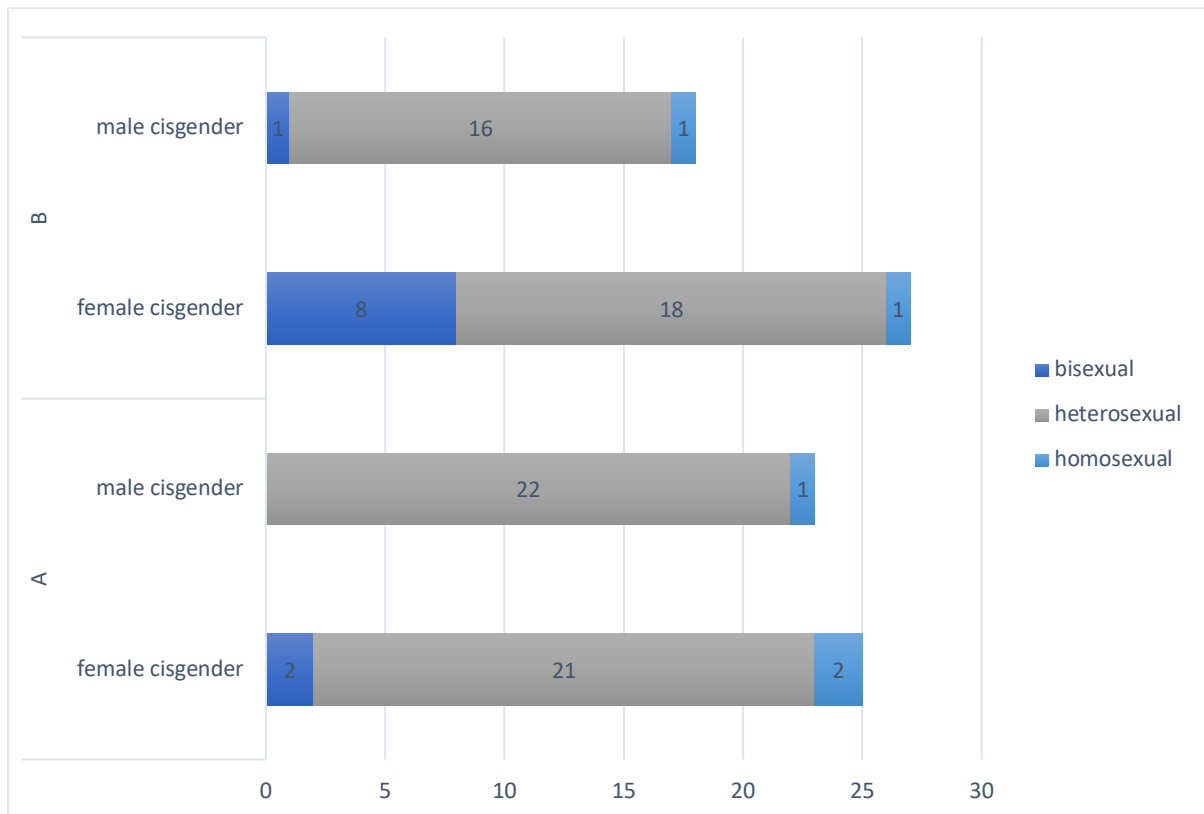


Figure 1: Self-identified sexual orientation of students

4.3 Methodological Reflections and Limitations

There were two major methodological changes in comparison to the initial proposal. First, the original design revolved around one case study whereas early during my fieldwork, it changed to a two case study design. This decision was taken after recognising the purposeful selection of school A by the Secretary of Education in terms of its advanced work towards gender equality. Doubting the representative nature of this school, I judged that either way, this would turn out to be an interesting case: I analysed what is seen as a model example and would either challenge this classification or identify propulsive factors for transformation. However, by including a second case, I believed to generate more interesting findings and increase the applicability of this study. Throughout the research process, I reflected on what could have easily been tagged the successful and unsuccessful case and instead strived for the identifications of factors that contributed or harmed empowering processes in both schools.

The second pivotal change and biggest methodological limitation concerns classroom observations. I had planned to do classroom observations to triangulate the information about school culture and emerge myself into the reality of the school. However, since I found myself in the last weeks of the school year, regular classes were over and I had to let go of that methodological part. Still, I spent full days on campus which allowed me to observe the school cultures between research activities. I collected these impressions in my fieldwork diary.

Furthermore, I realised it was impossible for me as a foreigner to understand the Colombian 'post-conflict' scenario and gender discourse by reviewing policy documents. Consequently, the use of grounded theory was important and moving between theory and data was particularly essential in my first weeks in the field. The interviews with public officials and many conversations with civil society and University professors helped me contextualise the gender discourse and adapt my research design constantly. Eventually, I changed to a less flexible manner when applying focused coding and thematic analysis, which allowed for greater reliability and generalisability. Yet, the generalisability of this research is clearly inhibited by its narrow geographic focus on the historical context and specific programmes of the municipality of Medellín.

Almost all FGDs consisted of class colleagues, therefore I dealt with an already established social environment. Group dynamics often led more dominant students to guide the nature of debates, which often resulted to be students who were more conscious about gender inequalities. Thus, other participants who might have felt they knew or cared less did not speak up that much. This is where the photo-elicitation method came in helpful because it induced also quiet participants to speak and triggered honest and unmindful reactions. Rephrasing and follow-up questions were crucial to challenge the socially desirable responses. In reflection of the group settings with teachers, doing FGDs was a good method to integrate more voices since unfortunately, my tight research schedule did not allow to do many individual interviews. However, I acknowledge the limitation due to interpersonal dynamics and power relations that seemed to remain more present than with students. Only a few times teachers openly challenged other opinions in a group setting and the responses were kept general and not directed towards specific colleagues or situations.

Furthermore, I want to address the language barrier caused by me not being a native Spanish speaker. Luckily, most participants seemed to have no significant issues understanding me and I felt confident with mastering all research activities myself. Nevertheless, I cannot assume that there were no cultural and linguistical misunderstandings during interviews, transcriptions or analysis. Particularly when translating direct quotes from participants, meaning can easily change. Therefore, sometimes I kept the Spanish expression and put my translation in brackets. All factors considered I am glad I was able to operate without a translator because I am convinced the emotional deepness of conversations could not have taken place via a third person.

Lastly, I am aware of the fact that being a European woman with normative claims for gender equality had an impact on how the participants perceived me and interacted with me. For instance, adults were hardly making direct discriminatory statements against women or the LGBTI community and with the students, I needed to negotiate clearly that I was not looking for "right answers". Explaining to participants that my interest lies in contrasting

Colombia's flawless legislature with actual perceptions from the field helped to reduce interviewees' reservation.

4.4 Ethical Reflections

As a researcher at UAB, I guarantee that this project is carried out in accordance with the principles expressed in the University Statutes (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2013). I strived to be honest during all stages and in all activities of the research. I also intended to only use reliable sources for my literature review and during the analysis, my constant and rigorous reflection was needed.

Human participation was indispensable to determine the examination of empowerment, which could not be collected through the analysis of second-hand sources. The main ethical issues thus arose from the involvement of youth, who are considered vulnerable population. All research activities were guided by a "Do no harm" – principle (Bryman, 2012), making clear that neither the school nor teachers or students, were under any obligation to engage in the project and that participation would at all stages remain voluntary. Participants were further well informed about the rationale of the research and were asked to sign a form of consent⁵ (see Appendices 6 and 7). Personal information of all participants was treated as strictly confidential so that no private information could lead to discrimination or stigmatization. However, I am aware that topics like conflict, gender-based discrimination and GBV are sensitive and have the potential to trigger emotional stress or traumatic experiences for all parties involved. In certain cases when I felt that interviews needed debriefing, I stayed longer for individual conversations.

Finally, I am reflecting on the ethical considerations concerning my own positionality as a researcher. Before opening up to me, participants often wanted to know what made me write a Master thesis on behalf of their challenges. These moments triggered reflections on concerns expressed by Corbridge (2007) that Development Studies are regarded as neo-colonial and irrelevant. In response to these doubts, my strategy was to be honest, open and to resign from a claim of prior knowledge. I shared with my participants that studying a political level of problems had made me curious to learn about local realities and by talking to them I hoped to contrast theoretical abstractions. However, as a white, cisgender and privileged European woman, I am aware of the concern that I am telling and discussing complex stories of experiences lived by other people. Other feminists have rightly asked who is allowed to speak in the name of intersectionality? In fact, it was immensely difficult for me to understand

⁵ In school A the consent forms of parents of under-age students were collected, whereas the regulations of a general agreement about research activities between the parents and management of school B allowed me to conduct my study without additional forms of consent. In both cases, all students were informed and asked for their consent before starting the recording.

the implications of growing up and going to school in a context where (gender-based) violence has been normalized over a long period of time. This profound fieldwork experience taught me about the realness of poverty, *machismo* and conflict, and the complex nature of social inequality. Eventually, I chose to use my position of power to speak in solidarity of the girls and boys in this study and I intended to engage in analysis, interpretation, and conclusions in a careful and respectful way.

5 Findings and Discussion

By progressing through what Kabeer (2002) calls the deeper, intermediate and immediate level of empowerment, this chapter intends to respond to the main research question: How can the enactment of legislature and education policies on gender equality enable a school culture that empowers youth to transform their gender-related beliefs, expectations and interactions in Medellín?

5.1 The deeper level of empowerment: How does the process of transforming youth's gender-related beliefs, expectations and interactions relate to other dimensions of social inequalities in Medellín?

I deem it crucial to take the deeper level of empowerment into consideration when exploring youth's capabilities to strive for a fully empowered life. Therefore, in this chapter, I address structural implications of this conflict-affected context in a religious and *machismo* culture and discuss youth's gendered experiences at the intersection with other social inequalities rooted in class, race and sexuality. The aim is to illuminate how these hidden structures shape the distribution of resources and power in a society, which come into play with processes of school culture that intend to empower youth.

During interviews in both schools, the most frequently mentioned effect of conflict on gender relations was the report of "dysfunctional families" and their gendered impact on youth. Many children in Castilla and Popular grow up without their birthfather, sometimes with new boyfriends of their mothers and many times without a man in the house at all. Fathers are often dead, in prison or left the mothers. Thus, as one of many consequences, mothers face work pressure and economic difficulties to sustain their families. Teachers emphasized that youth in conflict-affected families are disproportionately often left alone. Further, many students mentioned that their mothers have to work night shifts and they, therefore, need to prepare meals themselves. Quite naturally they explained that older sisters are set in charge of taking care of younger siblings while older boys are often expected to help bring in money. Regarding the latter, adult interviewees in school B confirmed that some of their students are involved in gang activities. It needs to be considered that child labour in Colombia has a long history in terms of recruiting children by gangs, but as Reuters reports in the period of 2013-2017 the number of Colombian children engaged in labour has fallen by nearly 300,000 (Moloney, 2017). However, some students stated that, as a consequence of the poor socio-economic conditions in single-parent households, they continue to be part of an alternative income generation. Several studies have called attention to the effects of the underage labour force on school attendance, academic performance and over-age (Holgado et al., 2014; Pedraza Avella & Ribero Medina, 2006). All factors considered, it can be assumed that the

capability of youth to change their perception of gender norms - at least in some of the participants of this study - are affected by their engagement in informal work, prostitution or gang-related activities.

Furthermore, disrupted family structures also affect the role of the school for youth empowerment. The questionnaire with youth reveals, that almost two-thirds of students preferred to talk about personal and sexual relationships with educational agents at school, rather than with their families. During FGDs, the most mentioned line of argumentation was the perceived impossibility of talking to their parents because, due to factors such as religious beliefs, talking about sexuality was regarded as taboo. Furthermore, the second most frequent explanation was the absence of a person to talk about these topics at home.

You have to understand that sometimes people do not have a dad, do not have a mother. It is difficult when you do not have a father, or a mother, to talk about these things. So, yes of course, but you have to find the confidence to talk to a psychologist or a teacher.

(Student, school B, grade 9, male)

Therefore, it shall be presumed, that the school could act as a particularly important actor for youth empowerment in this setting because the conflict-affected context contributes to the tendency that youth actively seek information and advice from educators.

Next, it will be illuminated how the drug war shaped young people's perceptions of their mothers and fathers, which consequently impacts their understanding of gender norms. The history of drug trafficking can be directly related to entrenched gender stereotypes in Medellín:

Drug trafficking could be described as the biggest phenomenon of *machismo*. It stands for the easy money, killing means showing strength, picking up the most beautiful woman, but the most beautiful woman is the one he can manipulate, the one he can do with whatever he wants.

(Head of the Secretary of Women, female)

Moreover, in the event of being disappointed by their fathers because they left their families, young people often try to erase them from their mind. This can be exemplified by an occurrence described by the psychologist in school A: Although Colombian last names consist of the first surname of a child's father and first surname of their mother, students frequently refer to themselves without mentioning of the fathers' surname. Also, participants stressed that the image of students' mothers is often war-torn as her being a victim. Many children had

to see their mothers suffer or witness their abuse. Therefore, it can be assumed that youth in Medellín view their parents in a representation of extreme gender roles where the mothers might be seen as weak and distressed, while their fathers were often assigned the role of perpetrator, criminal or war hero. In this regard, Wright (2014) questioned whether the manipulation of violent notions of masculinities by circumstances during wartime is a cause or a result of conflict. I would add that the same confusion applies to the notion of female victimisation. In line with the objective of this study and according to the head of Secretary of Women, it shall be argued that it is the “ultimate responsibility and possibility of education to construct a new meaning to traditional gender roles that still stem from past times of drug trafficking in Medellín”.

Beyond that, it was identified by the majority of adult stakeholders in both schools that violent behaviour of youth can be traced back to living amid intrafamilial violence and gang violence. Teachers in both schools reported that violence is deeply ingrained in young people’s conduct, “which means that also in order to show affection, they hit each other, or if they want to flirt, it ends up being verbal aggression.” Particularly in school B, many educators reflected on the violent everyday life of their students:

I always try to talk with them about their context. Have you had breakfast? Sometimes they tell me, my mum died this morning, the response is no I did not have breakfast, last night they beat me up, I was abused by someone. It’s necessary to also see this part of the student in front of you.

(Social sciences teacher, school B, female)

In addition, youth in Popular have to take on specific roles within groups that fight over the control of the *barrio*, which needs to be understood as the expression of a dominating model of masculinity that is rooted in structures of patriarchy and misogyny (Hume & Wilding, 2015). In both schools, interviewees acknowledged that power hierarchies that are established outside also enter the school. Asked about expressions of violence in their daily experiences, a common response amongst students was: “*La violencia está en todas partes.*” (Violence is everywhere). A teacher in school B framed it: “What repeats itself the most will be naturalised. And from there they also naturalise a violation.” Some accounts of students allow to construct an idea about violent representations at home:

Let’s say his dad always came home drunk and then hit his mother. The dad physically abused his mother. And then, the mother keeps on maltreating the children. And the children, well the bigger brother, who is he going to beat up? The younger one. This is where the murders come from because the son grew up in violence because he went

to the corner to do drugs, because he never talked with his dad about it. And he never talked to his mother about what happened with his dad.

(Student, school B, grade 10, male)

These findings show that a high magnitude of violent handling of relational issues at home and a violent environment in the streets often end up being internalised and reproduced by youth. It shall be argued that this normalisation of violence has a direct impact on youth engaging in GBV and consequently aggravates the transformation of deeply rooted beliefs and expectations.

Further, education provision regarding gender topics in vulnerable neighbourhoods in Medellín is also affected by consequences of social class. To begin with, the principal in school B emphasized the implications of poverty on education. He explained one of the most attractive factors of going to school being the included daily warm meal that otherwise families might not afford. This raises questions about the educability of participants in this study since there is a vital need to also consider conditions outside the students' innate abilities when trying to understand why educational practises are successful or not (López & Tedesco, 2002). Tikly and Barrett (2011) have emphasized how education obtains instrumental value in low-income contexts, where education is understood to support livelihoods, generate income and reduce human insecurity. At the same time, they also attribute education an intrinsic value because it may give people the capability to develop autonomy to be able to make choices for their future. I would argue that the vision of school B, as further discussed in Chapter 5.2, reflects this line of argumentation: A narrative of "*el estudio paga*" (education pays off) is prioritised, while the less vulnerable context in school A might make it more feasible to focus on "*formar el ser*" (educating the human being) as basic needs of students are covered to a bigger extent. It shall be concluded that there is a probability that schools in vulnerable and poor settings like Popular prioritise the academic work over a student-centred focus, in order to promote future working opportunities away from drug trafficking and prostitution, but they might consequently neglect empowering processes.

Moreover, large numbers of displaced population also affect educational processes. Participants stressed that a mainstreaming of gender topics was pushed by the policy entrepreneurs for years before they would be able to perceive processes of change in students' behaviour. Likewise, Wright (2014) assessed that education initiatives that intend to challenge gender norms in a post-conflict setting are more effective when planned as an ongoing process over a period of time. However, a lack of security for displaced women, with consequences such as sexual relations or premature weddings in order to obtain food and shelter, constantly causes many families to return to their place of displacement or displace again (Oxfam, 2009). Therefore, it shall be assumed that a fluctuating population and a high

turnover in students and teachers in this research context slow down potential transformative processes.

Not only in the often socio-economically poor conditions of displaced people, but also in more general terms “there is a logical association between poverty and disempowerment because an insufficiency of the means for meeting one's basic needs often rules out the ability to exercise meaningful choice” (Kabeer, 1999, p.437). For instance, male students pointed to the perceived difference in girls' reactions to street harassment. They suggested that while a “rich offender” would often be socially accepted, catcalling by men of lower socio-economic background meets agitation. Participants further problematised that women remain in violent relationships because of their economic dependence, as illustrated by the following quote:

There are many women that stay, but also because of the economic help. Some keep being abused at night. To generalise, I would say this you see more in poor families, they have four, five children, they keep getting children. It's these people that have not studied, not only because they don't have access, but also because they don't want to. They are not able to change their minds.

(Student, school A, grade 10, female)

The data suggests that these decisions are not only made by young women themselves but also the family's economic interests affect youth's gender performativity. A male student from school A shared how the mother of his girlfriend clarified, that their relationship would only be accepted as long as he provided for the daughter. He added: “But flowers are not worth anything to them. She means nice things, expensive things.” Occasionally, teachers from school A referred to cases from other schools accusing mothers of prostituting their daughters. The gender focal point in school A expressed her criticism of sexual activity between female students and teachers: “They use it. To pass the year, for example, or because of poverty. There are mothers that have allowed these things and the teacher brings the money.” Having stressed the complexity of the ‘power to’ and the ‘power over’ young people's agency, I conclude that the socio-economic conditions of people affect which choices have more significance than others in terms of consequences for their lives. The decision to transform gender norms for youth in this study might also mean to challenge familiar habits and socio-economic security.

Furthermore, the majority of participants linked traditional gender roles to the fact that Colombia is a very religious country and “topics like sexuality have been shut up by the church.”

I cannot give birth to a baby. I cannot breastfeed it, because we are designed differently and this needs to be recognised. I cannot ask my girlfriend to repair the plumbing, because she in her head does not think about these things. [...] So we have to oblige ourselves to nature when it comes to who does what. The man is a man and the woman is a woman.

(English and Spanish teacher, school B, male)

This account demonstrates how a religious narrative, of men and women being shaped differently by nature influences people's expectations towards gender roles in everyday life. It further shows that the discussion on gender equality needs to happen beyond the surface because this same teacher declared approving the promotion of equal rights and opportunities. Some educators also openly addressed that they do not want to adopt policies regarding gender equality because they clash with their personal beliefs. The most common line of argumentation amongst critics was that it should not be their responsibility to interfere with the parents' way of educating their children on sexuality because "parents do not want us to talk about the gender ideology." This finding touches upon the dilemma of expecting teachers who share these religious values to engage in processes of youth empowerment. It must be taken into account that especially the older teacher generation themselves share these religious beliefs and on its basis might also pose a power over youth's agency to transform traditional gender-related beliefs, expectations and interactions.

Discriminatory practises amongst youth also lead back to religious beliefs, which was clearly identifiable when examining their opinions about gender roles at the intersection with sexuality. Students in both schools raised their concerns about spreading homosexuality through sexuality education:

I think sexuality education shall not be inclusive, it must be exclusive – mostly because of religious reasons. I mean, we cannot teach a child of ten years, well it does not seem right to me, to show these things to young children. For example, there are heterosexual relationships and homosexual relationships, no, because they are still in their process of development.

(Student, school A, grade 11, male)

The most emotional responses by students seemed to be triggered by looking at a photo of Kim Zuluaga.⁷ One participant, for instance, remembered that a transgender person had visited the school some time ago. When asked how he reacted, the male student from school B admitted: “Well, I had to laugh a lot. He had long hair, very rare, well it was very funny.” Furthermore, the initial social desirability bias was often overcome when talking about “other students’ interaction” with homosexual, bisexual or transgender people. Since currently, no transgender person went to school in neither of the cases, I asked students how they thought their peers would react to their attendance. While among participants in school A the common narrative was that “here everyone is included”, the majority of interviewees in school B foresaw conflict and discrimination:



Picture 5: Kim Zuluaga⁶

Female student I: Well, I think they would bully that person a lot. People here are very discriminatory.

Female student II: They would talk about them, or beat them, just because of their difference.

Male student: They would for sure criticise them. Here, people judge a lot.

Female student III: I think so too.

(School B, grade 9)

The examination of youth’s opinions in this study shows that the presence of gender-based discrimination in relation to gender identity and sexual orientation urgently calls for a school culture where empowering processes go beyond categories of sexual differences and heterosexuality.

⁶ Photo Source: Noticias Caracol, 2017: Retrieved from <https://noticias.caracoltv.com/medellin/orgullo2017-kim-zuluaga-la-trans-que-paso-de-ser-un-nino-rebelde-embajadora-del-orgullo-gay>

⁷ The case of Kim Zuluaga is introduced in Appendix 3

The data further suggests that beliefs about women’s decision-making over their bodies remain religiously driven. Several students from both schools have spoken up in favour of allowing free choice of pregnancy determination. Yet, a large number of participants coincided with the narrative exemplified by a female student from school A who stated that abortion in consequence of rape would be acceptable, “but in other cases, in this society, more than anything because of religious reasons, you cannot kill a baby.” I would argue that the students’ responses clearly reflect a persisting trade-off between a religious mindset and women’s power to claim their sexual and reproductive rights and health.

Furthermore, it shall be stressed how religious principles in Colombia are framed by the *machismo* culture. Incited by Picture 6, several boys judged it a women’s responsibility to protect herself from the natural men’s instincts of sexual desire.



Picture 6: Catcalling⁸

Comments like the left quote below suggest that many young men in Medellín believe that the way women dress to indicate acceptability of street harassment and abuse, which clearly exceeds a religious argumentation.

<p>I would say that women need to look more organised. In fact, I know a lot of women that look very organised, still very pretty, but with them, you don't see any violation.</p> <p>(Student, school B, grade 9, male)</p>	<p>It has nothing to do with how you dress. Ever since we were young children, how they raised us, they tell us that a man can treat us how he wants to.</p> <p>(Student, school B, grade 9, female)</p>
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Table 13: Opinions about GBV framed by machismo culture

Statements similar to the right-sided quote from girls illustrate how many girls were raised to resign from agency to challenge these gender norms. In accordance with Heep (2014), this

⁸ Photo Source “Catcalling” by Yougov (2014): Retrieved from <https://today.yougov.com/topics/lifestyle/articles-reports/2014/08/15/catcalling>

finding leads back to the religious understanding that being female simply follows nature, and therefore society assigns women biological roles, like being mothers, and does not include the personal and sexual liberation of the woman herself. Men, on the other hand, developed a system of social dominance. The real *machos* in Colombia seem to exhibit hyper-masculine traits of aggression and abuse in order to counterbalance the passive, feminine perception. This can hardly be explained by religious reasons since the church itself condemns infidelity and maltreatment. In conclusion, this study finds that the *machismo* mindset impedes gender equality by making use of religious principles, but pushes the boundaries of social acceptance regarding direct, structural and cultural violence even further, which lastly makes social and cultural transformation a very difficult undertaking.

Moreover, youth in this study created a characterization of women by relating the importance of quality education with the concept of the human body. Gutmann (2003) called it “bodily political economies” (p.10), arguing that bodies provide the currency in which identities and interests are exchanged.

Machismo has its good and bad side-effects. For instance, a woman does not have to worry about killing herself over 20 years of studies if she is pretty, because she can just go with a rich man.

(Student, school A, grade 11, male)

In this sense, interviewees in both schools argued that beauty-conforming women, instead of investing in good quality education, primarily seek to find a husband who cares for them or they use their bodies to make money in either one of Medellín’s booming industries: beauty and prostitution. Although some participants were critical of this reputed occurrence, they judged that physically less attractive women have a higher need to be prepared to economically sustain themselves and therefore tend to value education more. In a FGD in school A, students conversed about young women that sell naked photos of themselves online. Being asked how boys talk about these pornographic materials amongst each other, a male student smirkingly stated: “*Las negras son más activas.*” (Black women are more active). Hereby, students confirmed a widespread phenomenon of the hyper-sexualised image of black women, which is an example of how stereotypes regarding gender, race and sexuality overlap (Vigoya, 2012). The findings, therefore, not only emphasised youth’s expectations regarding the gendered human body but also stressed the connection of gender discourses with discriminatory practises rooted in race and ethnicity.

In conclusion, this chapter has illuminated several personal, social, cultural and economic circumstances that stand in the way of youth’s fully empowered lives in Medellín.

5.2 The intermediate level of empowerment: How are legislation and education policies on gender equality enacted in secondary schools in Medellín?

Kabeer (2002) argues the institution of rights within a legal framework remains meaningless unless these rights have a real impact on the range of possibilities available to all respective individuals. Therefore, the aim of this chapter is to illuminate the work of how different policy actors contribute to policy enactment within these two school cultures, which affects the intermediate level of youth empowerment. As a first step, the actors involved are divided in narrators of policy, who strategically interpret and decode the policy, and translators, who apply certain tactics to recode the policy within the school culture (Braun et al., 2011). The structure of this chapter proceeds from the macro to the micro level, starting with school-external narrators and transactors, discussing the interpretation of policy within the school culture, and, finally, enthusiasts and translators that embody the policy are examined. In addition, minor findings on the receivers and critics of policy enactment are mainstreamed into the analysis.

On a national level, the main policy actor is the Ministry of Education, which developed curricular guidelines for the Sexuality Education Project and Citizenship Education as elaborated in Chapter 3.1.3. With regard to policy narration from the state, several challenges for successful policy enactment were identified. First of all, many teachers stressed that they do not identify with the political mandate “from above”. One reason not to appropriate the policy, which was particularly often set out in school B, has to do with the extent that policy fits with the local context:

They [the political actors] create another elite, but we here in the village, they do not even care what we do in the village for the sake of their own political convenience. And neither do we care what is written on these beautiful papers, in fact very well composed, because we deal with alcoholism, drugs, a lot of homicides, we are put in prisons, but they don't support us here.

(Philosophy teacher, school B, male)

It seems as if the policy narration by the Ministry fails to make policy translators understand how gender policies could be used to target their problems rooted in violence and drug trafficking. Although the Law 1620 from 2013 has coined the idea of healthy coexistence in gender relations, I find that the contextual meaning that would connect this concept to peacebuilding processes is not reflected in the documentary basis of legislature and education policies. As described by Braun's et al. (2011), the degree to which education policies fit the needs and priorities of the school culture has a clear impact on policy translation. Particularly

with regard to the more vulnerable case of school B, it can be assumed that actors within the school who share this criticism personally oppose policy enactment.

Furthermore, interviewees addressed that the priority setting of the Ministry of Education neglects a promotion of educational processes towards gender equality. Rather, the classification of public schools happens according to students' performance results in the national ICFES exams, putting much pressure on academic outcomes. The principal in school A called it "a conceptual contradiction because it is a state that talks about equity but the first thing that they do is generate a foundation of inequality." The principal in school B further confirmed that the utmost importance conveyed by the Ministry of Education are standardized test results, since on their basis schools are classified and reputations defined. This phenomenon needs to be placed within a bigger global discussion on education policy, where states nowadays prioritise and establish standards and evaluation mechanisms that determine whether schools are achieving standards effectively (Neave, 1998). Consequently, it can be presumed that the state does not encourage Colombian schools to emphasize work on gender equality because it cannot translate into a measurable competency.

The technical and legal advisor for the programme *Escuela Entorno Protector* (EEP) problematised that in its interpretation of the policies, the Ministry of Education dictates to mainstream the sexuality education project into all obligatory subjects, in Medellín there being 15 obligatory subjects. Wallace (1991) identified that the form and extent of enactment depends a lot on whether a policy is mandated, strongly recommended or suggested. In this case, I would argue, the construction of a sexuality education project is mandated, but the ideal form of execution is rather a suggestion because the Secretary of Education only examines "whether the sexuality education project is in place" and cannot put sanctions on poor implementation.

Another implication of national policy narration is concerned with the role of teachers:

So the government promotes this discourse in Colombia about being collaborative and everything, but it does not create the real conditions nor invests in teachers. If the teachers want to capacitate themselves, if they attend any educational event, then we lack four or five teachers. That is a discourse that is based on the assumption that there is a goodwill of teachers, that they invest their free time in order not to affect students. With a very heterogeneous population like here, with the working conditions we have, the teachers end up with mental exhaustion!

(School Principal, School A, male)

In line with this account, several teachers in both schools, who personally showed interest in the subject matter of gender, mentioned that the conditions shaped by the Ministry of

Education hinder their in-service training on behalf of gender issues because “there is just no more time”.

We have to do 50 thousand things in the school, well in a public school, but there are not enough people, so we help with the school canteen, now the sexuality education, driving education, we are supposed to solve the armed conflict, bring peace, the corruption, and for each thing they invent a new law, but they do not invest more in the teachers.

(Academic coordinator, school A, female)

In a nutshell, the joint opinion of teachers implies that there are too many responsibilities and expectations put on them that exceed their profession within the classroom.

Next, the Secretary of Education is an important actor because it has a multi-layered function in policy enactment. To begin with, the Secretary was often mentioned as a propulsive factor in establishing partnerships, ranging from lecturers from Universities to visiting exchange teachers. These educators do not adhere to school culture, thus not interfere with existing dynamics between teachers and students. Furthermore, while teachers seemed to struggle with the implementation of different policies at the same time, outsiders mostly are specialists in a specific component of policy (for instance focusing on coming out of the closet, young leaders in schools, planification, STIs etc.). In conclusion, outsiders that occasionally enter the school hold a special role in policy translation due to their loose affiliation with school culture.

Furthermore, the manuals of coexistence serve as a tool to promote the exercise of freedom and fundamental rights and responsibilities of all actors within school culture. It operates as a direct policy translator and can be interpreted as the joint appropriation of the Law on Coexistence by the collective construction of the educational community of each school, namely the leadership, teachers, psychologists, parents and students. Consequently, the manual helps students understand their school’s responsibilities and enables them to actively claim their own rights.

Apart from the manual of coexistence, the data further allows identifying other translators in the form of the production of events and artefacts. Signs and posters centring around themes of equality and diversity, were made visible in both schools. Furthermore, in school A, an exceptional example was found: the students painted a huge mural on school campus which displays a variety of young people, that in their physical appearance showcase diversity. Their speech bubbles claim the social cohesion of all identities. Examples last from “I am pregnant, I am [name of the school]”, “I am a mother, I am [name of the school]”, “I am displaced, I am [name of the school]”, “I am indigenous, I am [name of the school]” to “I am

gay, I am [name of the school]” and “I am trans, I am [name of the school]”. Another way how policy can be translated into reality, was found to be the organisation of a diversity festival in school A. Representatives of the LGBTI community were invited to give talks and share their experiences, while students and family members could ask questions and get engaged in unfamiliar topics.

Moreover, the Secretary of Education also plays an important role as a policy transactor that reinforces an accountability mechanism designed to impel all schools to enact legislation and policies. The technical and legal advisor from EEP clarified that there are sanctions for principals of public and private schools if they do not carry out the sexual education project at all. Furthermore, the unit called “Education supervision and control” responds to all incidents at school that violate students’ human, sexual and reproductive rights.

So yeah, the team enters, assesses the principal, tells him he can’t act like this, he can’t throw this kid out of school, for something like this you can’t expel no one. That’s control, that is supervision and control. Today, the country has all the legal instruments to enforce the law.

(Supervision and Control Specialist for EEP, Secretary of Education, male)

Nevertheless, several educational agents have raised their concern about the misconduct of teachers who sexually harass or abuse students based on their gender. The academic coordinator in school A, for instance, criticised the lack of consequences for them:

So what is the solution that the Secretary of Education brings to a case like this? Relocation! That’s the solution. I promise you, out of the five, six cases that I know, no one went to prison. There was one that resigned himself, but really, I feel like the problem is just transferred to another school. And this happens a lot in this city, there were more than 100 cases last year.

(Academic coordinator, school A, female)

Confronted with this issue, the Vice-Secretary of the Secretary of Education confirmed that relocation is the only measure the Secretary can take because teachers in his country are also “subjects to many rights”. Colombian teacher unions have a strong influence when it comes to teachers’ rights, defence of their public image, and privacy. In conclusion, the Supervision and Control Specialist from EEP stated that his entity has all legal instruments to sanction GBV, which clearly stands in contrast with the problematic nature of not imposing penalty on teachers for gender-based misconduct.

Regarding municipal narration of legislature and policies, the technical and legal advisor of EEP clarified that out of 229 public schools, 175 are accompanied by a psychologist from EEP and 54 schools count with a psychologist from the programme *Modelo Integral de Atención en Salud* (MIAS). EEP intends to accompany and transform all schools into a “protective environment”. Their guiding principles are child protection, participation, joint responsibility and inclusive education (Secretaría de Educación de Medellín, 2019a). In cooperation with the Secretary of Women, they also organize different events during the year within their strategy called *El Líder Sos Vos* (You are the leader), to “strengthen leadership skills in the students of the educational institutions of Medellín and promote their constructive participation in the transformation of their educational communities and the city” (Patino Aristizabal, 2018, p.10). On the other hand, the pilot of MIAS only started only in August 2018 and operates in the north-eastern area of Medellín (*Comuna 1, 2, 3 and 4*), where the biggest health problems and risk factors were identified.⁹ The implementation of this initiative by the Secretary of Health seeks to improve the quality of life of all people, intervening in public schools and directly in households. The conceptualization suggests that better health outcome and the appropriation of human rights by vulnerable population will make a difference in achieving overall equity (Ministerio de Salud y Protección Social de Colombia, 2018).

All public schools in Medellín are equipped with professional psychological support. However, the data suggests that policy translation by psychologists from different programmes happens in distinct ways. It is their responsibility to do a needs assessment at the beginning of each school year. In this sense, they act as policy narrators since based on this assessment they select and enforce meaningful themes and strategies. Table 8 demonstrates the identified problems and strategies within both case studies.

⁹ The Secretary of Education is still partly involved with schools accompanied by MIAS due to its mandate of enacting supervision and control. EEP also accompanies the committee of school coexistence in its functioning and is involved in updating the manual on coexistence in all schools.

Identified problems and strategic focus school A (EEP) based on annual needs assessment by psychologist	Identified problems and strategic focus school B (MIAS) based on annual needs assessment by psychologist
Lack of coexistence by students (Strategies: <i>Construyo convivencia</i> – Project “I construct coexistence”, <i>Ser contigo</i> – Project “To be with you”, <i>Soy mediador</i> – Project “I am a mediator”)	Physical needs based on problems with domestic violence, substance consumption of parents and lack of basic needs like food (Strategy: Activating the protocol and full care circle)
Gender-based violence (Strategy: <i>Mi cuerpo es territorio de paz</i> – Project “My body is a peaceful territory”)	Gender-based violence and teenage pregnancies (Strategy: Providing contraception)
High substance consumption (Strategies: Lectures on Students’ Life Course Project, Cooperation with INDER: Institute of Sports and Recreation)	High substance consumption (Strategy: Lectures on Students’ Life Course Project)

Table 8: Identified problems and programmatic strategies per case study

It attracts attention that the more vulnerable population in Popular causes a focus on what the psychologist called “real and material needs”, which was not identified in the school in Castilla. MIAS is intentionally piloted in the more vulnerable neighbourhoods. This points to the likelihood of this approach resulting into a narration of policies that focuses on the lowest two categories of Maslow’s (1954) pyramid of needs, namely the basic needs of psychological and safety needs. The perceptions of participants demonstrate the prevalence of conflict between students and cases of bullying in school B. I, therefore, assume that themes of coexistence were ignored not due to its insignificance but because of a health-centred focus by the psychologist. While the scope of this analysis does not allow to elaborate on the different pedagogical project lines within the coexistence-strategy from EEP, I found that they are all rooted in a response to students’ needs of the upper three layers of Maslow’s (1954) pyramid. Furthermore, when focusing on the same needs, like prevention of GBV and substance abuse, the strategies differ. The data suggests that EEP intends to tackle GBV through a pedagogical programme that addresses intimate relationships, expressions of masculinities, and works with all students. So their intervention connects Maslow’s category of safety needs with addressing belongingness and love needs. The programmatic strategy by MIAS, on the other hand, is based on safety when providing contraception and information about prevention to

girls only. This line of interpretation is supported by other findings. Almost all male and female students from school A could define the term “consent”, while students in school B had not learnt about it in class but sometimes gave a good guess. A girl from school B criticized: “Here we talk a lot about prevention. But mostly in terms of bad things, like, if you do not protect yourself then something bad will happen.” Some responses from interviews in Popular even suggest, that by emphasizing the importance of safe sexual conduct, the issues of teen pregnancy and sexual abuse get mixed up:

Sometimes we forget the men because they are the sexist ones and the girls should protect themselves. It’s almost as if they prepare themselves for this reality. It results that the kind of sexuality project that the principals do, it aims at the planning of the woman, to empower the woman, but we leave the boys behind. We are showing women that they need to empower themselves, but we are letting the boys be how they are.

(Informatics teacher, school B, female)

In this regard, the supervision and control specialist from EEP emphasized the role of principals’ vision for policy enactment, saying that “the teachers have to implement the content, but what arrives at the school in the first place is the principal’s decision.” The vision of a school is what Ball et al. (2011a) call the narratives that are aimed both at staff and students, as a focus of organisational commitment and cohesion. Therefore, it contributes considerably to establishing a certain school culture.

<p>I have this image of openness, that is visible in this school, that for sure comes from my deeply rooted beliefs because I lived with a person with mental health problems when I was young, so I think I have a sensibility for the topic of inclusion. [...] In other words, the intention of the school is to promote social transformation, transforming the economic and cultural life of the entire northern zone of Medellín. I prefer to have a longer-term mission, not a short-term mission. And so my school is based on the human being and that is why my idea is an educational expedition with a human sense.</p> <p>(School principal, School A, male)</p>	<p>So the school has grown a lot, it was among the least recognized within this neighbourhood. We improved the academic work, the infrastructure, the environmental work, but what the students really want and need is the academy, that's my proposal. As I told you right now, the thinking of the teachers has also changed a lot, we are the best school here by now, which makes us happy that the school is improving. [...] We do not only work in academic content, but also speak about gender, so that young people can get to know themselves truly and can start looking for a peaceful life, to really arrive in a peaceful territory.</p> <p>(School principal, School B, male)</p>
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Table 9: Comparison of principals’ vision

Remarkably, a gender perspective is present in both visions, but closer examination allows to identify distinct approaches. The left-sided quote represents that the principal's vision in school A is driven by his personal dedication to inclusion. Some educators even criticised him for neglecting the academic work by focusing on *el ser* (the human being). On the other hand, the principal in school B seems to reason that improving the status of the school as such is the most important way to tackle problems. Therefore, he prioritises improving the school's infrastructure and academic work over policy enactment on gender equality. With respect to schools' autonomy, this study finds the leadership to be the key policy-narrating actor who defines in which form policies are interpreted and, as the analysis further shows, also impacts to what extent they are translated.

After having discussed various processes of policy narration, the following part will illustrate how legislature and education policies on gender equality are recoded. First, the "uncommon policy role is that of entrepreneurship – that is the work of policy advocacy within schools" (S. J. Ball et al., 2011a, p.628). Participants identified the most prominent agents of change to be an ethics teacher in school A and a biology and chemistry teacher in school B.

<p>At this moment, I work with the body. I work the sensations, the temperament, I work the diversity. What if we help each other? What if you teach me a new masculinity? And what if I generate a new way of being female? So, that's my academic course. Because I feel that this is our practice, and yes maybe for the chemistry teacher, it is going to be more difficult to do this, or for the social professors. But I feel that everyone can add something and they are doing it their way. [...] So what do I do here? I mitigate and I take cases to the committee of school coexistence, well according to the manual of coexistence, verbal aggressions, physical aggressions and so on.</p> <p>(Gender focal point, school A, female)</p>	<p>In this school, this task has started with taking very tiny steps. Three years ago, we started with the activities of how to talk about sexuality with young people, because in their family they do not even talk about these issues. [...] So we started with a transition first. We made plans, for example, I call it the literacy of gender. So they know a little about stereotypes, what is being macho or being a feminist? Or talk about sexual identities or sexual orientations? We can work on these themes from the side of science, we can link a lot to psychology, to biology. But yes, it's not a task of one or two years.</p> <p>(Gender focal point, school B, female)</p>
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Table 10: Comparison of policy entrepreneurs

These quotes from the gender focal points illustrate their agency to bring change and their shared conceptualization of a mainstreamed approach to policy enactment. Both promote the idea within their teacher community that everyone can contribute something to gender equality, starting from their subject. It became clear that they are determined to advance with this agenda although they faced a lot of resistance. Furthermore, while I have pointed out that the gender discourse conveyed by political actors is mostly guided by a rights-based

approach, both policy entrepreneurs relate their work towards more gender equality with peacebuilding processes.

Here we see cases of young people that are not secure about their sexual orientation. At home, their parents do not accept them, so this is reflected by their state of mind and in the way, they resolve conflicts. And why do they become violent? Because they can't be whom they want to be, so they will have problems with themselves and with others.

(Gender focal point, school B, female)

Similar to this account, also the gender focal point in school A stressed that her pedagogical project stems from the belief that "inner peace and outer peace are strongly connected".

Lastly, this section looks at the role of teachers within the school culture, who are crucial policy actors since they embody policy in their practice. Involved teachers are mostly found to be policy enthusiasts and translators at the same time because they not only invest their satisfaction but actually strive to produce something with it. In the most common sense, they produce gender-sensitive teaching and learning. To begin with, the interviewees identified the following areas to translate the legislature and education policies on gender equality into reality: Sports, Philosophy, Informatics, Biology, Arts, Ethics, Mathematics, Social Sciences and Language classes, although for the latter two no concrete examples were stated.

Subject	Example
Sports	For instance, when one makes a mistake, the other shall not criticize the colleague. Very basic things, but hopefully this allows them to develop the capacity to relate this respect to all people later in life. (Sports teacher, school B, male)
Philosophy	For instance, in philosophy we do a lot of debates. I like them because these are debates in a very adequate form, we do not feel uncomfortable. (Student, school B, female grade 10)
Informatics	Here there are some kids, for them knowing technology does not help them. But I also put them to work behind the computer and let them research, for instance about how can men take care of their testicles to not get cancer? (Informatics teacher, school B, female)
Biology	We were talking and we asked ourselves how homosexuality helps the human species. Because they believed, that someone that cannot have children does not contribute to evolution. But there are studies that show, that of course, they can generate familiar connections and that a gay uncle can be a better father than their own father. (Gender Focal Point, school B, female)
Arts	I am a teacher of arts and I always try to treat this topic in a very sensitive way. What is making you sad? What do you feel? How can we express this? (Arts teacher, school A, female)
Ethics	The whole ethics class is based on the concept of the body. From there they start to think about the body as something that needs to be taken care of, and the work in ethics generates a reflection about respect in relation to gender. (School Principal, school A, male)
Mathematics	I know that our students are in the process of an investigation about issues that have to do with human rights, sexual and reproductive rights and other things. They have to do a survey with people they know, afterwards, they do the tables, so they do not only learn about the rights, but it's also about how to work with the results. (Psychologist, school A, female)

Table 11: Ways of embodying policies on gender equality within the classroom

Clearly, there are multiple pedagogical strategies that can be applied by teachers, but the findings cannot confirm a mainstreamed approach in all 15 obligatory subjects. I would argue that this underlines prior elaborated restrictions to policy enactment manifestly impeding successful policy translation.

When being asked why they chose to engage with these topics, some teachers referred directly to the mandate by law, others stated their personal interest in the topic. Remarkably, several teachers in school A admitted that they had slowly grown into the gender-sensitive practise of teaching, inspired by policy entrepreneurs and because the style of leadership by the principal “did not allow” for another behaviour:

When someone hears LGBTI, LGBTI, LGBTI. You know? It becomes naturalized a bit, and then we start talking about it. This openness costs a lot, it is particularly difficult for the teachers, and our very own conservative way of thinking, because we are all result of the same society.

(Philosophy teacher, School A, male)

With regard to the quote above and similar references, I hypothesize that the more a principal puts an emphasis on an issue, and the more teachers actively embody the policy, the more likely it becomes for policy critics to change their attitudes.

The data also demonstrates the use of a couple of strategies by teachers on how to embody policy without teaching in the classroom, but by acting as a gender-sensitive educational agent. Some teachers mentioned that they would actively intervene if they came across discriminatory action between students. One female ICT teacher from school A shared her observation of two “openly feminine boys” that had experienced open discrimination at school: “And I feel like it’s my responsibility to step up, generate respect for each other, I always confront them.” In another situation, a teacher told me about a girl named Valeria that in the attendance list put down the male-associated name Martin.¹⁰ So the teacher agreed to call her Martin from then on. He concluded: “All of this can result in a lot of tasks, I agree. But the truth is, sometimes it’s just little things like this.” Lastly, the ethics teacher in school A told me about their institutional project where collectively with her class, they were taking care of a cat that lives at school. I interpret this project to be very valuable to make sense of egalitarian gender roles and to address the responsibility that comes with caring for another.

In closing, it is up to the next chapter to discuss to what extent mentioned factors and processes were reported to have an empowering effect on young people.

5.3 The immediate level of empowerment: How can factors and processes of school culture contribute to a transformation of youth’s individual sense of empowerment?

So far, I discussed how gendered experiences of conflict, youth’s confrontation of gender with phenomena related to class, race and sexuality, and norms guided by religion and *machismo* culture aggravate the undertaking of school culture to transform youth’s gender-related beliefs, expectations and interactions. Further, I elaborated how secondary schools in the context of Medellín - and specifically within these two case studies - aim at enacting education policies on gender equality. Consequently, I approach the immediate level of empowerment where I explore how school culture might bring change to youth’s set of individual resources, agency,

¹⁰ Names changed by the researcher.

and achievements (Kabeer, 1999). Given the complexity of themes, Table 12 illustrates a guiding structure of the analysis in this chapter.

Chapter 5.3.1 Preconditions for empowerment	Chapter 5.3.2 Tackling agency and achieving transformation
Ensure the same learning experience for all students (Coeducational model)	Introduce students to alternative creations of life plans
Strengthen understanding of personal, sexual and reproductive rights and health (Sexuality education)	Provide youth with a personalized learning experience about personal, sexual and reproductive rights and health
Provide health care (MIAS)	Promote meaningful youth participation
Offer psychological support (EEP & MIAS)	Involve parents/the community
Make the school rules available for all members of the educational community (Manual of coexistence)	Hold members of school culture accountable for discriminatory practices

Table 12: Impact of school culture on youth's sense of empowerment in Medellín

In the third sub-chapter, I complement these results with findings on implications and limitations of a school culture that follows the political aspiration to create an environment of 'healthy coexistence' when tackling gender inequality.

5.3.1 Resources: Preconditions for youth empowerment

At the organizational dimension of school culture, I was interested in understanding how youth experience the coeducational model. In this regard, research projects mostly focus on the impact of coeducation on challenging classroom inequities, inter alia, between boys and girls. Yet, results from coeducational vs. single-sex classroom studies since 1985 show broadly mixed and inconclusive results, as assessed by Arms (2014). What this study can contribute to the debate is the inclusion of youth's opinions. The findings from the questionnaire demonstrate that almost 90% of young people in this study strongly agree with the statement that they enjoy mixed gender composition. The responses in FGDs illuminated that one-third of the participants had experienced single-sex classrooms before, therefore, arguing from a

comparative perspective. However, by reviewing all responses it became evident that there are three different narratives to why students like the coeducational model.

Narrative	Example Quote	School A	School B
Complimentary gender roles	It's very important to learn how to deal with boys and girls, not only with one specific gender because every gender has its different characteristics. Sometimes we complement ourselves really well. (Student, school B, grade 9, female)		Most common narrative
Coexistence	We learn to accept each other more between men and women, but not focus so much on the gender difference but feel not more, not less than men. (Student, school A, grade 11, female)	Most common narrative	
Inclusion	Imagine there is a boy that wants to convert into the other gender, but it is a space just for boys. He would feel very weird and will lower his self-esteem. The same goes for a girl that wants to change her gender, I think that would be much more difficult in a school only for girls. (Student, school A, grade 11, female)		

Table 13: Narratives in favour of the coeducational model per school culture

With insignificant frequency, only one female interviewee each in school A and school B referred to coeducation in relation to inclusion and gender identity, recognising that only a mixed classroom allows for the existence of transgender people. As the example quote demonstrates, participants in case study B in the majority of statements described the presence of the other gender as favourable because a group could use the strengths of the other. Further, students who are growing up without either male or female family members expressed that having a mixed classroom for them implies an important platform to “get in touch with the other gender”. The common narrative, therefore, focuses on gender differences and how a group could profit from seemingly complimentary roles. In contrast, the majority of students in school A emphasized the aspect of learning from each other. As the example quote shows, students frequently commented on an experienced sense of equality. Also, the fieldwork notes confirm that in school A male and female students interacted a lot on campus and were more involved in gender-mixed group activities, while students in school B used to hang out mostly in single-sex groups. This study demonstrates that even when stemming from different reasonings and school cultures, students clearly prefer a coeducational model over single-sex schooling. In relation to the objective of this research, this section has shown several reasons to further reinforce the model of coeducation and, in return, revealed more about the nature of school culture in both case studies. Yet, given the largely traditional narrative based on complimentary gender roles from school B, it can be concluded that the

resource of a mixed gender composition itself is not sufficient to transform gender-related beliefs, expectations or interactions.

Next, knowledge building about personal, sexual and reproductive rights and health will be discussed. It became evident that rather biological and, how students put it, “scientific information” about bodily differences, sexual health and contraception are prioritised in both schools. Nevertheless, the majority of students stated that they enjoyed that certain teachers, mostly referring to the gender focal points and maths teachers, seemed professional in their knowledge about sexuality. A student in school B, for instance, argued: “We are so young, and at home, we cannot address these questions with our parents. So it’s good that they teach us here, like from an academic perspective.” In this sense, the data corresponds with other research projects that found that formal sexuality education is an important resource for youths’ knowledge building process and that it is crucial to critically interrogate young people’s understanding of sexuality and reproductive health (Naezer, Rommes, & Jansen, 2017).

However, students have touched upon a component of the organizational structure in both schools that limits the empowering impact. Their concern is related to the school grade of students at the time of the delivery of sexuality education. Youth often judged that sexuality classes were delivered “too late” because when their teachers start addressing sexual intercourse, contraception and STIs, they were “already sexually active for years”. This opinion can be supported with findings from both schools, where pregnant girls were detected only in 6th and 7th grade. Students voiced that they wished for earlier sexuality education because they reasoned that younger girls were already sexually active or might be sexually abused. Moreover, given the widespread over-age in the conflict-affected setting of Medellín, teenage students are attending primary school which implies a need to start educating them on sexuality at an earlier time in the educational path.

Furthermore, participants indicated that teachers reproduce traditional gender-related beliefs and expectations in sexuality education. In both schools, students voiced that apart from learning about the existence of sexual orientations and gender identities, sexuality education itself remains within the boundaries of heteronormativity:

With all the respect to their open mind, but when we talk about sexuality it always remains to be heterosexuality. So if they talk to homosexual people, well the school doesn’t exclude them, for sure, but they give us sexuality education between men and women, not how is it between men and men or woman and woman. [...] So then yes I feel uncomfortable, I think in this sense the school keeps being very closed.

(Student, school A, grade 11, male)

Concerning this matter, in Chapter 5.1, I have argued that this study is positioned in a context where many teachers act upon a viewing point that was frequently expressed as: “We are born man and woman”. This religious principle wishes to rebiologize sexual difference in the gender discourse and “reestablishes a biologically narrow notion of reproduction as women’s social fate” (Butler, 2004, p.185). This data strongly confirms that people who adopt this principle do not only ignore the existence of transgender identities, it also establishes compulsory heterosexuality and openly excuses discrimination against the LGBTI community.

Moreover, I want to address the disproportionate gender balance of engaged teachers and its relation to teacher training. In terms of generalizability, the technical advisor from EEP confirmed that most gender focal points in schools are women. At the same time, the data suggests a disparity in the professionalism that students attribute the male and female teachers regarding gender-sensitive interaction. Table 14 illustrates different types of gender-based discrimination that students experience:

Gender-based discrimination	Example quote	Identified misconduct
Gender-based discrimination against women	They tell you, no you’re not made for mathematics, what are you doing here. Like we can choose but sometimes they make us feel like we don’t belong in this track. (Student, school B, grade 10, female)	male teachers
Positive discrimination of women	There is this professor, he has certain affection with the girls. So he is always flirting with the girls and makes it harder for the boys than for girls. It’s his behaviour in general, for the boys there are rules and for the girls not. (Student, school A, grade 10, male)	male teachers
Discrimination based on sexual orientation	Well there is some teachers... for example, when they see two girls hugging intimately, they say ugly things, or they say that they’re going to tell the parents. (Student, school B, grade 9, female)	male and female teachers

Table 14: Gender-based discrimination by teachers

Without exception, all accounts within the categories of gender-based discrimination against women, exemplified by a teacher discouraging female students to specialise in mathematics, and positive discrimination, exemplified by a teacher giving privileges to female students, concerned male teachers. When it comes to discrimination based on sexual orientation, in school B also female teachers seemed involved. Students reported that male and female teachers had threatened homosexual couples to tell their parents, verbally harassed gay students or started rumours about members of the LGBTI community. I want to discuss this

finding in relation to teacher training programs by MOVA (*Centro de Innovación del Maestro* – Innovative Teacher Training Institute) in cooperation with the Secretary of Education and Women. They provide diplomas for female teachers and lead a network called “*Red de mujeres por la equidad de género en la escuela*” which translates into network of women for gender equity in schools (Secretaría de Educación de Medellín, 2019b). I would argue, that the decision to disregard male teachers and exclusively improve female teachers’ attitudes concerning gender themes shapes a gender discourse that frames gender equality as a problem of women that can be solved only by women.

To talk about equity, to talk about themes like all the processes of reproductive sexuality, it was first important to talk about *la parte del ser* (the part of being), being a female teacher, being a mother, being a woman who works as a teacher. So from there, the decision was made that this training should be only for female teachers. In fact, there have been a couple of requests by male teachers, but this decision was also based on the fact that primarily it is women who are interested and they keep meeting and share material.

(Pedagogical advisor for EEP, Secretary of Education, female)

This account illustrates a narrative that focuses on motherhood and women’s ways of knowing (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986), but does not treat gender as a relational concept. The tendency that youth framed male teachers to be more discriminatory based on gender seems to be ignored by political decision-making when focusing on female teachers’ professionalism only in Medellín. This problem shall be underlined with a recommendation from the Global Education Monitoring report 2018, to put effort into building a more gender-balanced and diverse teaching workforce in order not to forget about boys’ needs and perceptions when addressing gender equality (UNESCO, 2018a).

In order to improve youth’s sexual and reproductive health, professionals in schools provide actual health care and build knowledge about contraception and STIs. Although only school B works with the programme MIAS who offer diverse methods of birth control to students without the need of parents’ consent, remarkably, the majority of students judged to feel empowered to make informed decisions regarding contraception and family planning. Statements like the following were largely collected in both case studies:

I would say that nowadays, it really depends on oneself if you get pregnant. We all know the consequences, it depends on you whether you protect yourself or not. And if the guy doesn’t bring a condom, well then you can also go get one.

(Student, school B, grade 11, female)

This finding shall be related to how Luis Miguel Bermúdez¹¹ framed the issue. He argues that promoting methods of contraception in schools does not change cultural stigmatization. Thereby, young women would already openly admit to having sexual intercourse which “would be like painting a big *P* on your forehead, so that everyone in the neighbourhood saw you like the *puta* (whore) or *perra* (female dog/slung: slut)” (Bermúdez as cited in Barría, 2018). So, when comparing my participants’ attitudes with the extent of cultural stigmatization of contraception that Bermúdez attributes to the Colombian context in general, I find that through an exhaustive effort of mixed methods in both schools, the discourse about sexual and reproductive health became naturalised. As a result, the majority of youth felt empowered to openly address and make use of contraception without feeling culturally shamed.

Moreover, the data confirms that students’ perception of a high degree of professionalism in the offered psychological support leads to more active use of this resource for empowerment. In school A, youth emphasized that the psychologist worked closely with agents of change and some also remarked individual psychological sessions. Comments regarding the latter were made concerning situations where students received personal merit of the psychologist’s accompaniment through familiar difficulties when outing their sexual orientation or changing their gender identity. The image of the psychologist from MIAS was construed differently. The data suggests that several students did not attribute him a high degree of professionalism, but often referred to him as a person for *locos* (crazy people).

Male student I: I would talk to the psychologist here. Many think that the psychologist is here only to cure the crazy ones. But I know him, he lives in my neighbourhood, he’s a nice person.

Male student II: Well but it’s because no one here knows him, he has very little relationship with the students.

Female student: But that’s exactly what he’s saying: he knows him, therefore he has trust. We don’t, it’s another kind of relationship.

Male student II: Yeah most people aren’t open talking to a psychologist.

(School B, grade 10)

This conversation implies that students have not established a relationship of trust with the new psychologist, who had just started three months before the time of research. When the interaction with students was addressed with the psychologist himself, he stated that he was

¹¹ Luis Miguel Bermúdez is a teacher from Bogotá who was elected amongst the last ten teachers worldwide to win the Global Teacher Prize in 2018.

visited by many students: “They come to look for me a lot.” One way of interpreting this discrepancy between the psychologist’s perception and youth’s accounts is that the scope of the psychologist’s responsibility might exceed his degree of professionalism, both because of the high amount of students, but also because in school B a lot of expectation by other policy actors was put on his role. Furthermore, the secondary school in Popular was located within another venue down the street from the school’s “headquarters” of preschool and primary school, so I would hypothesize that the absence on-site probably also limits psychologists’ reach and impact.

Furthermore, the data suggests that a just treatment of all members of school culture is decisive for youths’ empowerment. The manual of coexistence guarantees that students’ execution of personal, sexual and reproductive rights will not be punished by discriminatory practises. An interesting example of how the manual of coexistence enters into force is discussed in the following quote:

Four years ago, there was a boy in the school, he was gay, and he asked to be allowed to change the uniform. Also nowadays, there is a girl here that uses the uniform of the boys actually. Some teachers, well it generated some reluctance, that they would use the uniform of the other gender. But in fact, this first case has caused that we had to change the manual of coexistence, because before the uniform was for boys and uniform for girls. Now it says option one and option two.

(Spanish teacher, school B, male)

While schools often work with code of conducts for teachers, promoting accountability for adhering to norms (van Nuland, 2009), the quote above illustrates the importance of the manual of coexistence because it also allows youth themselves to hold other members of school culture accountable. Several students in both schools mentioned the flexibility the manual gives them to wear certain haircuts, haircolouring, piercings, and tattoos. Also, in both cases, girls appreciated that they can avoid skirts as part of their uniform by wearing sports pants, and additionally in school A they have the option to wear jeans. The fieldwork notes confirm an observation of at least half of the girls in both schools wearing pants and several boys wore long or girls short hair which suggests that they enjoy this possibility. In the questionnaire, I asked the participants to indicate to what extent they agree with the statement that girls should have to wear skirts. A strong majority of girls in both schools disagreed, many even strongly disagreed, with this hypothetical requirement and also nearly all boys in school A disagreed or didn’t state an opinion. Consequently, I would argue that in school A male and female students seemed to have changed their traditional expectations towards how men and women are supposed to dress like. Also, they reported that particularly during school

festivities, gay and transgender students were using gender non-conforming clothing. However, in the questionnaire, almost all boys in school B stated their agreement with compulsory skirts for girls and only some refrained from giving an opinion. From this finding I deduce that the resource to access and use of flexible school rules empowers young girls to change their gendered outer appearance, but without inciting critical awareness about the freedom of expression boys stick to their traditional beliefs and expectations concerning girls' decision-making about their gender performativity.

5.3.2 Agency and achievements: Processes and outcomes of youth empowerment

Findings from the prior chapter have illustrated that mostly a gender-sensitive organizational structure and the degree of professionalism in school culture are decisive for the provision of resources for youth empowerment. Nevertheless, young people easily reproduce gender norms that govern social behaviour without any apparent exercise of agency (Kabeer, 1999). If being empowered also means feeling agency, then the development of critical awareness of social practices and norms that affect them is essential for youth to determine how to bring change for themselves or for the benefit for the whole society (Jennings, Parra-Medina, Hilfinger-Messias, & McLoughlin, 2006). In this regard, the findings mostly stem from the last two dimensions of school culture, depending on the quality of the learning environment and the student-centred focus. I consider these dimensions as particularly interesting for the objective of this research because they pertain more explicitly the experiences and needs of students. Subsequently, I will discuss the findings that allowed identifying strategies for youth empowerment that go beyond the use of resources.

To begin with, I found that young people start to critically challenge gender norms when teachers manage to accompany boys and girls in the creation of a satisfying life plan.

Female student: You know [name of gender focal point] tells us no matter if you're homosexual or heterosexual, you can finish school. To study is a right for everyone.

Male student: Yeah that's normal. The teachers are not allowed to say this is for men, this is for women. It's normal education, for everybody.

(School B, grade 11)

From these accounts, I deduce that this teacher motivated youth to identify goals and future plans without surrendering to society's gender-based structural violence. This further suggests that in order to process the resources of empowerment, sexuality education needs to go beyond explaining the existence of the LGBTI community but start challenging the cycle of

exclusion and stigmatization in and through education. Another approach that allows youth to critically examine their own life plans was detected in school A:

When they come to 9th grade, the students go visit a presentation from teachers and students from 11th grade, who will present their final projects. So they can choose from the five specializations that we have at school. [...] It's nice because they see the products from each student of the final year, there's also a convention with a university group who does some examinations of their interests and capabilities. So all these experiences make them reflect on which track they want to take.

(Gender focal point, school A, female)

Youth confirmed that they felt stimulated to reflect on their actual vocation during these events. Furthermore, when talking about their agency to act upon gender non-conforming interests, several male and female students in FGDs in school A independently referred to the example of Mileva Marić Einstein. Historians in the past have claimed that Albert Einstein's wife was at least partly responsible for his ground-breaking thesis. However, Mileva's biography suggests that the decision to publish in his name only was taken jointly so he would find a job and could marry her (Milentijevic, 2015). Students must have heard about this story in school, and frequently related their non-traditional future ambitions with "the mistake that Albert's wife made", as one girl put it. Accordingly, students in school A pointed out that they appreciated that their teachers seemed to not bias their choice of school tracks:

People like to classify, the man is better in mathematics and the woman is better in arts. But here, they teach us that everything is accessible for the whole humanity, for everyone, we are all capable to study what we want.

(Student, school A, grade 11, male)

In this regard, I found that the majority of young girls in this study challenges traditional expectations concerning early pregnancy and motherhood. Accounts like depicted in Table 15, where girls voiced a priority of education degrees and their personal future aspirations over the mere mother role, were largely collected in both schools.

<p>Earlier, it was very normal for our parents to have many kids at a young age, it was not necessary to study. But today, I think a high school degree is very important, especially a technical degree with a specialization so you can find a job. If you have a child at a young age, you will not find a job. I think the degree helps us a lot to have a good life.</p> <p>(Student, school A, grade 9, female)</p>	<p>I decide for myself. What am I going to do with a child now? First, my studies! Or well, I want to have kids, I want to love my kid, but with something accomplished, you know, like a safe life.</p> <p>(Student, school B, grade 9, female)</p>
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Table 15: Girls' reflections on their life plan

Yet, I would argue that their realization of these goals in the future will also depend on the extent to which boys and men engage in this reflection and transform their expectations as well. I will expand on this thought in Chapter 5.3.3. In summary, I find that educators can play an important role in inciting the agency in youth to change gender-related attitudes and behaviours. However, drawing from Wright (2014), it is crucial to emphasize the message that this cannot only contribute to the security and welfare of women but that transformative processes are also beneficial for men's personal development and growth.

Furthermore, youth emphasized the empowering effect of classroom-based educational activities that lead to a self-learning experience. Participants especially seemed to enjoy when teachers created a safe space that allows them to critically discuss certain topics with regard to personal, sexual and reproductive rights and health with each other. Students from both schools reported that primarily male teachers managed to establish a situation of trust and positively stimulated them to contribute to debates. In addition to the prior discussion about whether male teachers are suitable to teach about sexual and reproductive health, this finding highlights the possibility for all teachers to enact policy on gender equality, while they do not need to be able to relate to bodily experiences themselves. Students stated that as a consequence from a guided conversation at school, opinions or experiences of their classmates have made them change their stance on sexual orientation and transgender lives, sexual harassment or, as the quote below illustrates, regarding abortion.

Female student I: For instance, last time we had a conversation with [name of the philosophy teacher] about abortion. I really liked hearing different opinions, maybe there was something that just was not clear to you, or you did not know, so you learn more and think about things differently.

Female student II: We contribute a lot of things. Always when we do these debates, it's because we want to learn something so we suggest a topic. It's like self-learning.

Female student III: Like one person says something and we learn from what the others say.

Male student: It's good to do that, so we realise that maybe we can also contribute something to the class.

(School B, grade 10)

The data further illuminates other examples of how youth can be included in their own learning path, for instance through research activities based on discriminatory practices or the execution of a study based on their personal interest in topics related to gender. The fieldwork notes capture a situation where girls on campus asked me about the word gonorrhoea to figure out whether I was familiar with its meaning:

The girls were almost disappointed that I knew the word, I think they wanted to impress me with their knowledge. They explained to me that they used to make fun of each other by calling their classmates gonorrhoea. However, then a teacher initiated a campaign with them, and they had to present in front of the whole class their research on what gonorrhoea actually was about. So I asked them if students are still calling each other the word. One girl said: "Not really, just the stupid ones."

(Excerpt from fieldwork diary)

Consequently, this case suggests that involving youth in investigation on a topic of personal interest can incite critical awareness, which in this case resulted in a change in language. A similar example was found in school A, where students designed, conducted and analysed a survey as part of their maths class. Some participants read out their interview questions, which in order of statement frequency included inquiries of participants' opinions and perceptions about prejudices and gender stereotypes, life aspirations and sexuality myths.

I was surprised to learn how different it is in the family. You know I don't have a sister, so maybe I didn't know. In the survey, we saw that a man can always come home later, at 4 in the morning, no problem. But the girls said they cannot go out alone, they have to be home by 11.

(Student, school A, grade 11, male)

As this account illustrates, this personalised assignment led youth to reflect on topics that had never crossed their minds before. Kim, Crutchfield, Williams and Hepler (1998) have called this approach to learning the youth development and empowerment model, where they attribute the teacher only the role as a guide and facilitator, allowing the youth to take on responsibility for the ensuing activities. This finding coincides with other studies that assessed educational interventions as most effective in challenging traditional perceptions of

masculinities when they allow participants to enter into journeys of stimulation and inspiring self-discovery (Wright, 2014). However, Bernstein (2000) has raised the concern that not all students have the same stake in society and their voices might consequently also not be equally heard in classroom-based activities. Arnot (2009) further problematised the underlying assumption that all male and female students have the capacity, motivation and confidence to intervene in their own learning experience. In conclusion, the findings from this study indicate that eliciting and including youth's voices in educational activities might have a self-empowering effect on some students in line with their expressed needs and interests. However, these learning experiences need to be associated with students' individual capabilities as embedded in the principle of social order (Arnot & Reay, 2007), and consequently, there is also the danger of reinforcing power imbalances between students when using this pedagogical strategy.

Additionally, in the discussed case of conducting a survey on sexuality themes, most students preferred to interview a group of friends or younger students. However, others also used this activity to step into a confrontation with their parents or people from their community.

You know the parents influence a child a lot. But at one point I think you have to come to a point where you can decide whether you are agreeing with what they are saying or not. For instance, in my case, my parents are not accepting the LGBTI community. So when I did the survey with them, we talked about it at home, and now they are okay with it. Or well, they at least respect that I can talk about it at home.

(Student, school A, grade 11, female)

One way of interpreting this quote is, that this assignment enabled a feeling of agency in the student to address a sensitive topic with her family, although she seemed aware of the family's traditional beliefs. While the family has shown reluctance to accept other sexual orientations, I deduce that she felt empowered by being able to openly take another position than her parents.

While discussed student-centred activities were initiated and guided by teachers, the next section of the analysis addresses processes that can be described as meaningful youth participation (MYP). I understand youth participation to be meaningful when young people not only engage critically in a reflection on interpersonal and socio-political processes but also gain understanding about how these issues affect them and develop the agency to bring change for themselves and others (Jennings et al., 2006). MYP can, therefore, be related with what Paulo Freire (1970) coined as the pedagogy of the oppressed: learners must be active participants in their learning processes, the learning experience needs to be meaningful for the student and learning must have a critical orientation. However, MYP is only feasible if the

school culture allows for an equitable power-sharing between youth and adults. In this regard, a difference in the school culture of both case studies was identified since I could only detect few findings in school B regarding MYP in relation to youth's self-report of empowerment. I assume, that this outcome is related to the different preconditions for MYP in both schools, namely capacity strengthening and the enabling environment for young leaders (CHOICE for Youth & Sexuality & YouAct, 2017).

<p>[Name of the democracy teacher] is accompanying the student government weekly, she also helped them with their campaigns. [...] When these guys from the student government leave, they still plan things for the school and make sure that the new leaders continue to work with what they started. Last year they even won the price for the sense of belonging, it's like a promotion from the student democracy movement [...] And what I have done is give them the resources from the school, for instance for the mural.</p> <p>(School principal, school A, male)</p>	<p>A couple of years ago they [the Secretary of Education] capacitated a couple of students. It was great, they were really involved in the sexuality education project. Like the teachers still carried it out, but they consulted the young leaders. But what happened is that two years ago, these guys graduated and well, there were many changes in school principals, and it also has affected us that obviously different principals have different interests. This did not help with the continuation of these processes.</p> <p>(Gender focal point, school B, female)</p>
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Table 16: Comparison of preconditions for MYP

While in school A both the democracy teacher and the psychologist were reported to actively support youth participation, in the case of Popular the inconsistency of engaged adults seemed to have harmed these processes. I would further hypothesize that a high sense of belonging in school A contributes to students' commitment to care about future progression of what they had started. In this sense, it should be considered that a student-centred focus of school culture in turn also positively affects the quality of the learning environment, which in school A resulted to be an award-winning effort. In summary, in terms of commitment from adults and through financial means the preconditions for MYP in school A were more favourable than in school B. Consequently, richer data from case A allows to draw conclusions about how youth-adult partnerships and youth-led processes can affect young people's transformation of gender-related beliefs, expectations and interaction.

To begin with, according to Hart (1992), educational activities are a result of youth-adult partnership when both young people and adults are equally involved and share power. Products of youth-adult partnership, as shown in Chapter 5.2, are the production of the school's mural and the organization of a diversity festival in school A. In both cases, the student government proposed the idea to the principal, who appointed the financial resources and supported them through his social network. Not only the representative meaning of the mural but also the construction itself had an empowering effect on youth:

In my opinion, for us as students, it is really important to realise not only what our teachers do but also what we ourselves can contribute. So I think it has been really great to paint the mural together, you know we all spent a long time with it, we designed it, we wrote the messages, we painted it. It's really big!

(Student, school A, grade 9, female)

What can be deduced from accounts like this is that young people in school A were proud to be part of this project and developed the agency to contribute their personal time and effort to construe this artefact that represents the school's social cohesion of every member. Furthermore, the most significant event for youth in school A, when they reported on processes related to the objective of this study, came down to memories from the diversity festival. The student government invited guest speakers for this event, many of which were adolescents from the LGBTI community. A couple of adult representatives also joined the festival, one of them a displaced transgender activist who participated in the peace negotiations in Havana. In this sense, youth addressed the multi-faceted nature of experienced inequalities through gender, sexuality and conflict in their educational event, while an intersectional approach to gender was rarely identified in pedagogical projects by teachers.

There were so many people at our school, and you know even guys I know that would always criticise gay people, that never wanted to know anything about that, on this day they were also here. How do I explain this? It was not something just for homosexuals, it was for all students, for all parents, everyone wanted to know what it is about.

(Student, school A, grade 11, male)

Not only does this quote allow to assume that the celebration of diversity in the wake of this festivity resulted in a change in some students' attitudes, but foremost this event represents one of the few successful practises within the studied school cultures that included families in the debate. A female student particularly remembered one visitor at the diversity festival: "I think things like this are still very difficult for our parents. But there even was one grandfather who was asking a lot of questions because his granddaughter is bisexual." Participants acknowledged that involving students' families remains one of the toughest challenges.

In conclusion, I would interpret, the youth-adult partnership with regard to the mural or diversity festival resulted in a collective empowerment of youth in school A. Drawing from Jennings et al. (2006), when collective empowerment occurs, members of a community meet each other with the mutual support necessary to affect change and improve their collective well-being. This section highlighted how the realization of a school project, based on youth-

adult partnership, can empower young people to participate in joint action that benefits social integration of all students, independent of their gender identity or sexual orientation. Consequently, this enhances the chances for individual students to challenge their gender-related beliefs, expectations and interactions.

Yet, regarding students' political representation at school, it shall be stressed that all main leaders of the student government in both schools without exception, were male.

They are all men, all four leaders are men, and we also see that in certain working groups in class men are more active. So if we want equity, what is going on with the participation of the women? Until now, they still do not make themselves visible.

(Democracy teacher, school A, female)

Participants reported that female students also campaigned during the governmental elections but were not voted into any major position. So although young girls intended to get involved, eventually the school community preferred to vote for male representatives which in return raises questions about girls' awareness for gender representation at school. At any rate, it shall be problematized that a continuing dominance of men in decision-making posts limits girls' voices in and ability to influence policy design at the level of schools and communities (UNESCO, 2018b). Having said this, the generalizability of this finding needs to be contrasted with statements on part of the Secretary of Education, where participants highlighted that "the majority of young leaders in Medellín are female".

Furthermore, students referred to the impact that other youth have on their perception of gender norms with regard to non-formal conversations and through the organisation of formal events like talks, presentations or interventions. These findings can be framed as youth-led activities since they still benefit from shared decision-making with adults. According to CHOICE for Youth & Sexuality and YouAct (2017), this form of MYP occurs when youth still lack the expertise or experience and ask adults to participate for learning purposes and to enhance the quality of their intervention. To begin with, the meetings within the LGBTI community in school A, seemed to have an official character, described similar to a students' club and led by a lesbian girl. In contrast, the LGBTI students in school B were reported to stick together rather as a result of excluding themselves due to open discrimination. I would argue that the situation in the case studies differs concerning the support the LGBTI community received by an adult member of school culture. In school A, the psychologist not only supported the group by attending their meetings from time to time, but she also played an enabling factor in connecting this group of young people to the whole school community through educational processes. Consequently, the LGBTI students in school A regularly led talks and interventions with their peers.

We try to put ourselves in their shoes a lot. That means, for instance, to understand how it feels if we would be discriminated for being heterosexual. They did a survey with us the other day, and they asked us all sort of things that affect the LGBTI community but they asked how that would make us feel in the heterosexual version. Later we talked about it with them, how it was really helpful that we also learn to think like this.

(Student, school A, grade 9, female)

In reflection of this quote, youth-led interventions by LGBTI youth might have incited some young people to reflect on GBV from a point of view, that they, from their privileged position of social dominance, had not accessed before. Various accounts, in general, suggest that it is easier for youth to challenge their gender-related beliefs, expectations and interactions when relating to their peers rather than learning from adults.

When we talk about the vagina and the penis in sexuality education, here they laugh about it, they make fun of it. However, last week we had a conversation with a young transgender person in school and the guy shared his experience with the students. I was there, all ready to intervene you know, afraid a scandal would happen. But the kids, with familiarity, and respect, they asked him questions, at no point there was laughter. [...] In addition, when the talk ended, I congratulated and thanked this guy for sharing and he gave me a hug. Not the hand, a hug! I was getting very emotional, I tell you, this is really an improvement, for all of them!

(Mathematics teacher, school A, female)

The reaction by the young speaker suggests that giving a talk about his personal challenges and experiences had an empowering effect on him. This can be confirmed by statements of participants from the LGBTI community who emphasized that they appreciated the opportunity to share and acquire further knowledge during these talks. Also, heterosexual students elaborated why they take youth-led talks more seriously than classroom-based conversations about sexual orientations. One male student from school B stated: "Someone my age can have good arguments that help me understand, whereas in contrast a professional makes me feel small and unknowing." I have illustrated before that students appreciate the scientific knowledge transfer by means of sexuality education. However, the data indicates that a more relatable and emotional learning experience led by youth themselves has a bigger potential for them to challenge their gender-related beliefs, expectations and interaction. This assumption can be underlined with the observation by teachers in school A, that "every time a youth-led civic act happens, some more young people are coming out of the closet". This

shows, at any rate, that some students as a consequence of a youth-led event felt empowered to change their gender performativity. Likewise, Harden, Oakley and Oliver (2001) stressed the positive effect that peer representatives from a specific group can have when informing or influencing their student community. In conclusion, this study supports their assumption that young people are a more credible source for information than adults and youth have a higher level of trust with peers of their age which allows for more critical reflection on sensitive issues.

Lastly, the data draws attention to accountability mechanisms that youth themselves have established in their school culture in order to reduce gender-based discriminatory practises. One important factor within school culture in this regard is the mediation programme. A teacher in school A stated: "I have seen other contexts where the police had to settle a dispute. Here they [the students] often intervene themselves, and the mediators handle the situation." The following accounts, however, indicate that conflict resolution through youth-led mediation functions differently in both case studies.

<p>Female student I: I am a mediator in this school and we are not only here to solve conflicts, but also to include everyone. Well, to make sure that no one is excluded.</p> <p>Female student II: The mediators are a big part of the school community. There is always one of them in the mediator's room and we can come to talk to them or leave a message. Then they approach us, and we have a space to talk with them. If there's a problem between two people, they also look for the other person and search for solutions together.</p> <p>(School A, grade 11)</p>	<p>Sometimes if there is a conflict, they go to the committee of mediators. But seriously, it's just because they are aware that then it's easier to get away with it, you know then they don't send it to the coordinator and can't get suspended.</p> <p>(Student, school B, grade 10, male)</p>
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Table 17: Comparison of mediation programme

While several students in school A identified as mediators and emphasized their agency for solving gender-related conflicts in school, none of the participants in school B was active as mediators. I would argue that the latter raises questions about the enabling environment for youth-participation in school B, and certainly illustrates less commitment from young people than in the case of school A. As a result, it can be assumed that the mediators in school B are less frequently accessed as a resource for empowerment by youth. The data does not allow to directly conclude about transformative processes regarding students' understanding of gender norms in relation to youth-led interventions by mediators, but a large part of participants in school A reported to have experienced a collaborative resolution of a gender-based conflict through mediation.

Another case that shows how an accountability system among youth can come into action is illustrated in the following account:

We also once had a critical situation between two transgender girls. However, the diffusion of this video was stopped because the students themselves limited its impact. [...] These kids got into a fight, and the same day one student sent me this video on Whatsapp. "This happened, they share it on Facebook, what can we do?" So when they let me know, I advised them and said that everyone should report this video so that Facebook will delete it. That's what they did, they motivated so many students and after three hours the video was gone.

(Psychologist, school A, female)

This story highlights the importance of youth's sense of responsibility for the topic and consequent youth participation. The transgender girls, without the help of their student community, would probably have ended up being publicly shamed. Furthermore, the fact that the respective girl directly consulted the psychologist points to a high quality of learning environment in this school culture. I interpret the psychologist's availability via Whatsapp as a high degree of adult commitment, which in this case needs to be understood as an enabling factor to enhance MYP. It seems that youth-led advocacy allowed some students to overcome deeply rooted beliefs by not only accepting their existence but actively standing up for their transgender colleagues when reporting the video. In conclusion, this finding shows that not least because of an accountability mechanism between youth the interaction between cisgender and transgender students have changed, and some young people might have challenged their own beliefs about society's treatment of gender non-conforming youth.

As a limitation to the encountered accountability system by youth tackling GBV, no similar finding was detected concerning youth standing up against harassment, maltreatment or abuse in heterosexual relationships. Nevertheless, more than two-thirds of youth in both schools clearly framed their agreement, or even strong agreement, with a statement on the questionnaire that focused on their preoccupation about friends in relation to their personal and sexual relationships. When I asked during FGDs due to which reasons they worry about their friends, youth generally seemed very aware of mentally and physically abusive behaviour in relationships. However, only very few students considered an intervention in, what many of them understood as, their friends' "personal sphere". Girls seemed more willing to intervene in their friends' relationships, mostly referring to the example case of a cheating boyfriend. In cases of physical abuse, however, girls' in the majority of cases reported refraining from addressing the topic among any of the parties involved. The most common argumentation was that they did not attribute themselves the power to bring change to this situation. A girl from school A explained: "The boyfriend treats her bad, she is hurting. You can tell them, but they still stay." Statements like this could be related to the intersection of gender and class, as elaborated in Chapter 5.1. Furthermore, responses from male participants strongly suggest

that within the school culture of these two case studies, young men do not hold each other accountable for violent behaviour.

Male student I: In my opinion, one shouldn't bother to interfere, it only gets worse.

Female student I: It depends, maybe you can help that person?

Male student II: Well but from there you can also generate a conflict with your friend.
So why would I interfere into a problem of this girl?

(School B, grade 10)

Male participants not only showed a lack of sense of responsibility for what is seen as “the girl’s problem”, but this account further suggests that they prioritize their male-male relationship over the mental or physical health of a girl involved. Pease (2017) argues that challenging other boys’ sexism becomes difficult for boys because it undermines male solidarity upon which their relationships are often based. Similarly, Bermúdez (2017) emphasized that the *machismo* system makes it culturally unacceptable for a boy to stand up against violent acts. He argues that calling out friends that are insulting a woman would make a male look gay. In an interview with BBC Mundo Bermúdez talked about his proposal to invent a reporting system where boys and girls report abuse directly to another young person instead of involving adults (Barría, 2018). The prior discussed example concluded the impact of students’ advocacy on a more just treatment towards the LGBTI community. Yet, in both case studies, there remains a specific need to incite young girls’ and boys’ agency to hold their peers accountable for violent conducts in heterosexual relationships. Consequently, one of the biggest remaining challenges is to further transform the expectations of masculinity within the *machismo* culture, so that boys by standing up against violence would be perceived as the ‘good men’ and that they can demonstrate healthy masculinity without being labelled as unmanly (Pease, 2017).

5.3.3 ‘Healthy coexistence’ in schools: Implications and limitations for youth empowerment

In the context of Medellín, the political narrative assumes that if all the reviewed resources for empowerment, namely the coeducational model, sexuality education, health care, psychological support and gender-sensitive school rules, are accessed and used by youth, the school culture would result in, what in line with Law 1620 from 2013 is called, ‘healthy coexistence’. I have further identified institutional and pedagogical strategies that can contribute to youth’s development of agency which might consequently lead to a transformation of gender-related beliefs, expectations and interactions. Finally, this section

will discuss some implications and limitations of school culture regarding the expectation that establishing an environment of healthy coexistence will challenge gender inequalities.

In school A, students reported that the situation regarding GBV has significantly changed over the last years due to the joint efforts of all members of school culture to treat every student the same independent of their gender identity or sexual orientation.

When I was in 8th grade, there was a lot of discrimination against the LGBTI community because the school was full of *barristas*, that's how they call the popular gangs here in Medellín. So they were the ones that mandate what happens if you don't do what I say I hit you, you know. This has been reduced so much, now the school has an environment of extreme peace. Because how just because you are black or gay - the whole world is going to support you. They don't tell you to go to where the black people are, no we really help each other. It doesn't matter, we can all be friends.

(Student, school A, grade 11, male)

As this account illustrates, students in school A experienced a change in school culture in recent years. While the environment in the past was described as segregated spaces and “a lot of fights”, it seems to have moved towards more inclusion. According to participants, espoused gender-related beliefs and expectations have further affected how students interact with each other. A girl from grade 10 commented: “When I was in 6th grade, there was a boy that put on make-up and dressed as a girl. So from then on, I understood that there are people with different tastes and that they also deserve fair treatment.” Since a few students in the FGDs also openly identified as part of the LGBTI community, they personally confirmed that a narrative of coexistence can lead to a positive sense of belonging independent of students' sexual orientation: “I am here only for one year, and if I compare it to other schools, here I feel really good. Well, I am a lesbian, here I feel they help me a lot.” Remarkably, when asked about coexistence, in the majority of cases students in school A referred to the LGBTI community rather than relating gender inequalities to power relations between men and women. Therefore, it can be assumed that the school culture puts more focus on including transgender lives and non-heterosexual students than on challenging hierarchies between masculinities and femininities per se. Nevertheless, fair attitudes from educational agents and espoused beliefs of school culture have resulted in an environment where youth refrain from open discrimination based on students' gender identity or sexual orientation.

The data from school B does not allow to draw such a clear-cut picture. In Chapter 5.2, I have elaborated how the health-centred approach of MIAS neglects a focus on coexistence in school B. Yet, participants agreed that an espoused narrative of tolerance and acceptance

in the school culture has led to the reduction of physical attacks and maltreatment towards the LGBTI community, while verbal harassment remains common:

It's this way of thinking here like "I will not beat him, but I can say something". But this does not turn out well, no! I mean, "I want to kill her but I will not do it because it's not well seen". It's insane!

(Student, school B, grade 9, female)

Youth explained that by opting for non-traditional gender appearance or behaviour they were to expect verbal discrimination or bullying. Students' awareness of discriminatory practises consequently harms their agency to fulfil their right to the full development of personality. Also, the gender focal point assessed that the inclusion of the LGBTI community in school B is difficult: "It's a sectorial integration. Let's say the lesbians here, they have space where they feel accepted, but it's a segregated space." In conclusion, in these two case studies, the extent to which students perceive their school as a safe and gender-sensitive can be directly related to youth's active use of their right to change their gender performativity.

Furthermore, I found that the self-report of young people's tolerance towards the LGBTI community allows for doubt concerning their own family members. A male teacher from school B captured the issue as follows: "It's very complicated, we have started to talk about rights, about gender equity, about respect, but if the case happens in your own home, if it happens to us, well then the problem looks different." This supposition can be visualised with an incident that I captured in my fieldwork notes. After a FGD in school B, two female participants decided to open up to me about their secret romantic relationship, both identifying as bisexual. Consequently, one girl revealed that another participant in this FGD had been her cousin and that her statements upset her:

<p>I do think the situation in school has improved. You know, I would not criticise these people [the LGBTI community] anymore, not make fun at them directly, it's more like coexist. (Student, school B, grade 11, female)</p>	<p>You know, she says she doesn't care, she accepts them [the LGBTI community]. But I could never tell her about me, she cannot understand. In my family, we have a gay uncle and just for that reason we don't invite him anymore. She was all lying. (Student, school B, grade 11, female excerpt from fieldwork diary)</p>
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Table 18: Comparison of espoused beliefs vs. deeply rooted assumptions

The left-sided quote from a participant during the FGD portrays the self-report of accepting students of other sexual orientations. The right-sided clarification from her cousin contradicts this attitude by uncovering the reaction towards another mutual family member after he came out of the closet. This account raises questions about the credibility of some students' self-report as, like van Houtte (2005) warned, it sheds light on a possible discrepancy between

students' espoused beliefs and actual handling based on deeply rooted assumptions. At the same time, this finding indicates that despite apparent advances in school culture, the processes of transforming youth's gender-related beliefs, expectations and interaction remain problematic with respect to family members.

Furthermore, there is reason to assume that change in interaction does not automatically lead to a change in gender-related beliefs and expectations. In general, the academic coordinator in school A observed that "the girls usually support the LGBTI community more, with the boys we see that they are still a bit more reluctant to processes of gender equity. However, a certain degree of acceptance has been reached." This estimation can be further underlined with an account from a young male:

You know people follow what other people do, so even if they are not in accordance with it, they need to show respect because here everyone shows respect. So, for instance, I do not agree with homosexuality, but at least I tolerate it.

(Student, school A, grade 11, male)

What I would call a 'change on the surface' seems to be a widespread phenomenon in both case studies. Many students, and against the coordinator's perception both young males and females, voiced that they do not consider a transformation of gender-related beliefs in their environment could be possible at all due to religious and cultural reasons. In both schools I received plenty of responses, like the following by a female student in school A: "It's two different positions: either you are not okay with it but you can respect it, or you are not okay and you don't respect it." I would argue, that by saying that one does not agree with homosexuality, albeit tolerating the existence, heterosexuality is still put above "the other" and relations remain within a clear hierarchy of power. In conclusion, although many students engage in reducing GBV, at the same time there continues to be a big share of youth that do not believe in gender equality as the final aim of their actions.

While the previous examination focused on attitudes towards the LGBTI community, the data suggests that power imbalances between the ascribed masculine and feminine role also remain in heterosexual relationships. In several statements by boys it became evident that because they assume women are nowadays well informed about consequences regarding health risks and pregnancy, they subsequently put the responsibility to prevent these risks on the woman. A male student from school B commented: "If a woman gets pregnant nowadays, it's her fault. Then she has to live with the consequences." Another male from school A said: "The girl can just tell me if she wants to use a condom. And then it's fine, we use a condom." A variety of references suggest that the majority of young boys in school B hold the woman accountable for safe sex. It seems that even in situations where girls feel

empowered to change gender norms that affect themselves, boys lack critical reflection on joint responsibilities regarding family planning in heterosexual relations and will consequently keep exercising a 'power over' women's sexual and reproductive liberation. In the case of school A, I hypothesize that in the FGDs a stronger social desirability-response bias was established, and only a few statements like the examples given were detected.

Similarly, boys' and girls' expectations of household chores in heterosexual family relations were found to be clearly gendered. Triggered by Picture 7, participants reflected on gender relations. Most of the time, they granted men and women equal rights but did not assume equal responsibilities. This means that students shared the opinion that women shall engage in formal labour "if they want to", but as the accounts below illustrate, boys and girls expect to adopt different roles within a family structure.



Picture 7: Family portrait¹²

Male Student I: Well in Colombia the men are working and the children are looking after themselves. The fathers work in construction, for example.

Female student I: No, in Colombia the woman works more than the man. The mum works more than the dad.

Female student II: Because the woman works and next to her job she also has to take care of the house and so on.

Male student II: Sometimes if they have more money they contract a person to do the household.

Interviewer: And so if you think about the family you would one day like to have yourself, what would be a good solution for this?

Male student I: No, when I arrive, *ya todo listo* (everything should be ready)!

¹² Photo Source: Shutterstock, Retrieved from: <https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/beautiful-family-portrait-isolated-over-white-141863350?src=2rvFtlhXKuD0la1t0d3mLg-1-23>

Female student III: Well that seems unfair to me that only the woman has to do everything. Here we have *machismo* because I know in other parts of the world they do it together. But it's that here also the women are very *machista*.

(School B, grade 9)

Although consequences of decades of conflicts might have provoked a change in traditional stereotypes of gender performativity when it comes to pursuing a career, this conversation represents various aspects of remaining power imbalances in relationships. Critical female participants stressed that girls often settle with a sexist gender norm and lastly also pass it on to their children. This finding can be connected with elaborations in Chapter 5.1 on how women's agency to bring change is often overshadowed by factors of interdependence. When expressing ideas about their personal future, several boys openly admitted that they expect their partner to care for them and reduced their male responsibility to being the breadwinner. Furthermore, the quote from above illustrates how some male participants rather considered the possibility to hire domestic staff than a man helping the woman at home. Similar discussions took also place in case study A:

Female student I: It's always the woman. The woman needs to do the double load of work, they do the cooking, the cleaning and have a job.

Male student I: Both can cook if they want to.

Interviewer: So you would also like to cook?

Male student I: If my girlfriend asks me to, yes.

Male student II: I would also do the kitchen work if the woman asks me to help her.

(School A, grade 9)

This account illustrates that boys that considered themselves as supporters of gender equality still assumed the household chores as part of the female responsibility that they might only support when requested. According to Lancaster (1990), this demonstrates how in a *machismo* system all members reproduce the logic of the system, even when obvious inequalities are under challenge, in this case, because of disrupted family structures and roles.

Subsequently, I want to problematise the political focus on women's rights instead of treating gender as a relational issue. Remarkably, apart from few individual accounts in both schools, the majority of youth was convinced that the feminist agenda in Colombia does not strive for equality but intends to reverse power relations that are typical for the *machismo* culture:

Female student I: Feminism for me is only for women. It's the idea that women can turn around what the men have always done to the woman. A feminist is like the opposite of a *machista*.

Male student: I also think that feminism is the opposite of *machismo*. *Machismo* means that a man beats a woman, right? So feminism is that a woman beats the man.

Female student II: For me, it means that men have to have more respect for women, and not see us as something weak. So that they see us as more intelligent, acknowledge that we are dominating in our intelligence. The men can be our slaves [laughing].

(School B, grade 9)

I am aware of the sensitivity of this finding since I have elaborated before why the feminist movement in Colombia emphasises the need for gender categorisations in order to vindicate legal and political actions for women. However, it needs to be stressed that boys' involvement in transformative processes towards gender equality seems unlikely as long as they understand the consequence to be a change between dominance and subordination of men and women instead of equality. A female student from school A observed: "Let's say a man wants to be part of this movement, he wants to be a feminist, then there's always female feminists that don't let him be part of this because they consider it their fight." This could mean, that often women themselves ban half of the population from participating in a discussion on social and cultural transformation. I further hypothesize that equally many women do not feel addressed by a proposal to change gender relations that puts the woman above the man. In conclusion, the expressed opinions of students indicate that neither of the school cultures has been able to transform the commonly shared understanding by youth that frames gender equality as a fight by women for women, and, sometimes in extension, a fight by and for the LGBTI community.

6 Conclusions and Recommendations

The main objective of this study was to understand how the enactment of legislature and education policies on gender equality can enable a school culture that empowers youth to transform their gender-related beliefs, expectations and interactions. For this purpose, the research project counted with the participation of public officials from the Secretary of Education, Secretary of Health and Secretary of Women, and with a mostly qualitative case study design that centred around two public secondary schools in Medellín. School A from Castilla (*Comuna 5*) represents an environment of low risk factors regarding physical and psychological violence and neglect, but a medium risk factor in terms of sexual violence. On the other hand, case study B from Popular (*Comuna 1*), one of the most vulnerable zones of Medellín, exhibits very high risk factors regarding sexual and non-sexual violence.

I have analysed how policies on gender equality, as stipulated in the Colombian constitution, the general education law, the law on coexistence, the national policy on health care and its methodological manual, are enacted in the realities of secondary schools. In this regard, this study found a disconnection between how the Colombian state, and specifically the local public education sector in Medellín, aim to transform education provision when it comes to the promotion, exercise and guarantee of students' human rights, sexual and reproductive rights, as well as sexual and reproductive health, and how the actual implementation in secondary schools occurs. Drawing from Mcevoy (2007), this discrepancy can be depicted as magical legalism which often happens in transitional societies and characterizes debates amongst political elites.

I have discussed several restrictions to successful policy enactment that affect the intermediate level of empowerment (Kabeer, 2002). Although policy reforms addressed the importance of treating gender themes in a mainstreamed manner in schools, transversal skills like critical thinking, conflict resolution, empathy or responsibility are not measured by the national ICFES examination. Public schools are ranked based on their students' academic outcomes in these standardised tests, which consequently affects school leaderships' visions and priority setting. Beyond that, accountability mechanisms enforced by the Secretary of Education merely sanction schools that do not implement sexuality education at all, since school autonomy allows school principals full curricular freedom of choice. Moreover, strong teacher unions were found responsible for maintaining the problematic nature of not imposing penalty on teachers for gender-based misconduct. Consequently, this study points to the need to reframe education policy when it comes to, what one participant called the "conceptual contradiction" of the Colombian state. If schools are expected to take this normative focus on gender equality seriously, structural changes for their accompaniment, supervision and control must follow.

Secondly, this study highlighted that educational agents in vulnerable neighbourhoods of Medellín often do not identify with the language of policy narration. Guided by western gender theory, the Ministry of Education has scandalised the Colombian discourse on sexuality education when publishing a teachers' guide that called for the deconstruction of gender categories (Ministerio de Educación Nacional et al., 2016). This should remind us that education measures are not applicable globally, but need to take needs and capacities of a certain context into account (Verger, Novelli, & Kosar Altinyelker, 2018). As an intersectional perspective to this study confirmed, addressing gender issues in Colombia must happen in connection to root causes of other social inequalities. Yet, pedagogical projects in both schools that centred, for instance, around Afro-Colombians and racism, were construed separately from gender projects, failing to recognise the mutually influencing ways of oppression that youth can face. Similarly, I stressed the urgency to consider the impact of conflict on gender inequalities and vice versa. Colombia labelled its gender approach with the expression of coexistence, which relates to peaceful conflict resolution. However, even more so should educational strategies on gender equality further align more with peacebuilding processes and a more comprehensive approach to social inequalities needs to be taken. I agree with Dijkema (2001) who argues that gender and conflict should always be studied together and I theorise that ignoring the gender dimension of conflict makes it impossible to reach a truly 'post-conflict' state in Medellín. Work is needed for local policy narrators to engage educators and youth in a discourse that speaks more to the needs of their community and to the complexity of their experiences.

The findings from these two case studies allowed discussing several pedagogical approaches to policy translation in the areas of Arts, Biology, Ethics, Informatics, Mathematics, Sports, Philosophy, Social Sciences and Language classes, as well as strategies by educators on how to embody policy outside the classroom. However, these processes are restricted by the "contemporary teacher subjectivity" (S. J. Ball, Maguire, Braun, & Hoskins, 2011), since policy overloading, lack of time and financial reimbursement, stress and pressure lead teachers to negotiate their hate and love for their profession. Through mechanizing and exhausting educators, education policy seems to have failed to broaden teachers' capacity and personal agency with regards to gender topics. In this regard, I have argued how policy enactment in Medellín is limited by actively depriving male teachers of teacher training and pedagogical networks with a gender focus. This study has shown that to involve boys and masculinities in the gender discourse in schools, and also in order to tackle a disproportionate ratio of discriminatory practises by male teachers in comparison to female teachers, it is crucial to engage male educators.

From a programmatic perspective of policy enactment, the analysis of the municipal approaches *Escuela Entorno Protector* (EEP), enacted by the Secretary of Education, and

Modelo Integral de Atención en Salud (MIAS), enacted by the Secretary of Health revealed to be important resources for youth empowerment. Case study A illustrated how youth benefit from a school culture that focuses on healthy coexistence as fostered by EEP, which resulted in a perceived decrease of GBV against students' on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation and expanded social cohesion for the LGBTI community. The main strength of a health-centred approach, like applied by MIAS, was found to lie in a reduction of cultural stigmatization of girls accessing sexual and reproductive health measures. In its core shortcomings, however, both programmatic approaches to gender equality were found to maintain a twisted version of gender theory by focusing on the acceptance of gender difference rather than on a discussion of unequal power relations.

I consider this research to be useful for local decision-makers since the results pose a need to reconsider the distribution of psychologists and the selection of meaningful strategies for secondary schools.¹³ What programmes like EEP or MIAS have in common is that they emphasise the role of the psychologist. It remains questionable whether one professional alone can psychologically cater to all different needs of up to 2000 students, as encountered in this study. This involves the danger of putting all accountability on one individual actor, whereas it is widely understood that in order to successfully impact youth, all actors of school culture must work together to meet their responsibilities as a collective enterprise (UNESCO, 2018b). For prospective action in Medellín, I consequently recommend expanding on steady cooperation with external lecturers, exchange teachers and grassroots movements when addressing gender issues in school. The findings from this study further suggest to reinvent the role of the psychologist toward the constitution of a mediating actor that contextualises political policy narration, connects it with local needs and capacitates other policy translators. Strengthening these components of policy enactment could potentially counteract pitfalls of unengaged principals or teachers in relation to school autonomy and lacking agency. This study also implies that the reach regarding the promotion, exercise and guarantee of personal, sexual and reproductive rights and health would benefit from interlinking health-centred strategies more with themes of the coexistence narrative. However, eventually, neither of the programmatic strategies was found to sufficiently empower youth to change their deeply rooted beliefs and expectations about traditional gender norms and roles.

Yet, students acknowledged that access to and quality use of an equitable education model, sexuality knowledge building, health care, psychological support and transparent

¹³ After this pilot phase of MIAS, from 2020 on it is expected that both educational programs will be running simultaneously in Medellín, as faced in case study B. This means that a psychologist on behalf of the Secretary of Health will be present in each school and that the Secretary of Education still accompanies all educational institutions in the revision of the manuals of coexistence, in the formation of the school committee of coexistence, and in its function of supervision and control.

school rules are important resources for their empowerment. Due to religious influence, conversations about gender non-conforming identification, outer appearance, behaviour and sexuality have traditionally been suppressed in Colombian families. Thus, gender-mainstreamed resources in the education system have been novel enablers for youth empowerment. Furthermore, effective preconditions for empowerment need to be associated with a quality mix of processes within all dimensions of school culture. While gender-sensitive organisational structures and professionalism present in school culture are crucial to ensure resources for youth empowerment, this study has emphasized the necessity to deal with youth as active actors in order to successfully transform their gender-related beliefs, expectations and interactions. Therefore, the quality of the learning environment and the extent of a student-centred focus in school culture were found to be decisive for youth to develop the agency to eventually become “more fully human” (Freire, 1970, p.44).

This study illuminated the multiple consequences of armed conflict, displacement and drug trafficking that restrict the deeper level of empowerment (Kabeer, 1999), since these structural circumstances affect young people’s family structures, perceived gender norms, naturalised violent behaviour and their educability. Nevertheless, it was suggested that when being introduced to alternative life plans, students start critically thinking about themselves, their rights, responsibilities and options in their specific context. In this regard, I also discussed the logical association between poverty and disempowerment, which means that processes of empowerment are often aggravated by dissociation from socio-economic security and dependency. I found that students tend to connect reflection about themselves with the recognition of underlying norms and socio-political issues when they engage in peer education during classroom-based debates or when students are included in their own learning path, for instance, by conducting relevant research activities. Through these student-centred activities, youth are invited to enter the interactional sphere of empowerment (Zimmerman, 1995) and initiate transformative forms of agency that can be used to cause processes of change in patriarchal structures (Kabeer, 2005). In line with Naezer et al. (2017), it shall be recommended that a student-centred approach to knowledge building and critical awareness of underlying gender norms requires a shift in teaching style that involves both an openness to young people’s experimentation, and a change in existing, age-based power hierarchies. Nevertheless, pedagogical caution should be exercised since Bernstein (2000) and Arnot and Reay (2007) warned that there is also a risk of reinforcing power imbalances between students when using this pedagogical strategy.

Changes in the consciousness and agency of individuals might do little on its own to challenge the systemic reproduction of inequalities in the *machismo* culture. However, this study showed that the institutional character of school culture has the potential to move along the fronts from individual to collective empowerment, from personal recognition to joint action

and from the informal encounters on campus to the formal arena of schooling. In this regard, school culture was assessed to be most influential when enabling and supporting MYP. Particularly data from case study A has revealed how getting involved and actively taking action can affect, what Zimmerman (1995) calls, the behavioural component of youth empowerment. In this regard, the analysis pointed to the transformative potential of youth-led actions (LGBTI club, peer education, mediation programme) and youth-adult partnerships (construction of artefacts, organisation of diversity festival). Consequently, the results from this study call for all members of school culture to reinforce, especially gender-balanced, youth participation in school. Article 45 of the Colombian constitution guarantees the active participation of youth in the education sector and EEP highlights participation as one of their guiding principles. Yet, policy narration and translation regarding gender equality were found to focus primarily on the accompaniment, capacitation and supervision of educational agents. This study uncovered how capacity strengthening of young leaders, adult commitment, financial means and the creation of safe spaces were supportive factors for MYP. In line with CHOICE for Youth & Sexuality and YouthAct (2017), it shall further be recommended to put a bigger emphasis on youth inclusivity on a policy-level, for instance by reinforcing the existing strategy of *El líder sos vos* (You are the leader), and on the school administration level.

Moreover, parental involvement in transformative processes was identified to be one of the major challenges within school culture. From little respective data available, it can be concluded though that youth feel more agency to act upon their goals when being able to share their self-empowerment with family members. Existing links between the school and community (invitation to the diversity festival) or between parents and children (participation in students' survey) indicate that gender-related beliefs, expectations and interactions are likely to be transformed in a more sustainable way when engaging the students' family into the debate. Since this study's scope only allowed to involve school-internal members, this finding urgently calls for further research that takes the role of school-external publics, like families and community leaders, into account.

Lastly, this study illustrated how processes of school culture might lead to less open GBV and identified youth-initiated accountability mechanisms to support the LGBTI community. However, power imbalances regarding ascribed roles in heterosexual relationships at large remain. Girls in this study frequently reported on processes of self-empowerment, while male participants seemed disengaged with a transformation of gender norms. On that matter, I have argued that increasing attention to the impact of conflict, insecurity and patriarchal structures on women and girls might have contributed to a feminist narrative that proposes a change between dominance and subordination of men and women rather than striving for equality. Challenging this discourse is likely to be a long-term endeavour, but on the backdrop of this study's findings, it is recommended to shift the focus

onto a discussion of masculinities and femininities that justify persisting inequalities. Furthermore, updating the manuals of coexistence and a well-functioning mediation programme were assessed to be valuable steps for youth to control and guarantee the exercise of rights themselves. However, similar to Bermúdez (2017) conceptualisation, this study has identified young males lacking a sense of responsibility and prioritising male-male solidarity over getting involved when observing GBV. Drawing from Pease (2017), strategies to engage boys as effective allies in the reduction of GBV in schools could include learning processes about their privilege as men, listening and engaging in dialogue with less privileged groups, creating shared spaces and being a role model when it comes to acknowledging mistakes. While this study identified a need to test and assess these proposed strategies, I also assume that the current Colombian gender discourse contributes to men remaining reluctant to challenge other men, because the party of the oppressed seems to mistrust male allies. On this matter I concur with Wright (2014), arguing that while gender norms often give men power over women, it should be recognised that power inequalities also exist between men and that men are often under pressure to conform to notions of masculinity. Consequently, I recommend policies and particularly processes of school culture to more actively incorporate boys, in order to raise awareness for their diverse roles of perpetrators, as survivors of GBV and as possible agents of change.

Finally, only because gender norms are socially and culturally constructed does not mean that they are simply a matter of attitudes and beliefs (Wright, 2014). On the contrary, as I have highlighted when discussing gender at the intersection with other social inequalities, Colombian gender norms are embedded and constantly reproduced in a social, cultural, economic, religious and political system. Since the scope of this study only allowed to look at school culture in its role of being a product and producer of this system, there is a need to investigate and rethink structures that uphold these gender norms from a multisectoral perspective.

To sum up, this research project illuminated the complex undertaking of school culture to tackle the multi-faceted nature of direct, structural and cultural GBV in Medellín. This study did so by moving away from a victim-perpetrator binary to an understanding of heterogeneous gendered experiences as embedded in a religious and *machismo* culture, in response to consequences of armed conflict, displacement and drug trafficking, and at the intersection with phenomena of class, race and sexuality. The struggle for gender equality in Colombia certainly has called for the vindication of women's rights and several legal steps for the LGBTI community. Yet, when it comes to the political mandate for public schools, this study indicates that human rights rhetoric itself does not provide youth with the necessary ability to transform their gender-related beliefs, expectations and interactions. Rather, in order to ensure that young people are empowered to challenge deeply rooted gender norms, education policies,

programmes and pedagogical projects need to be more context-specific and inclusive. A number of scholars have advanced a paradigm that promotes an empowering portrayal of youth as agents of change for their context (Del Felice & Wisler, 2007; Drummond-Mundal & Cave, 2007; Lopes Cardozo et al., 2015; McEvoy-Levy, 2011). While policy and development actors have started to look at models of peacebuilding that actively engage young people as peacebuilders, little attention has been given to youth participation in a comprehensive approach to conflict resolution that addresses its fundamental connection to gender inequality. Consequently, in order to challenge the naturalisation of Galtung's (1996) triangle of violence, this study identified a need to disrupt hierarchical structures between state and school, programme and educator, and teacher and student in Medellín.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Documentary basis of education policies on gender equality in Colombia

Legislature and education policies ¹⁴	Effective since	Issuer	Description	Focus for this study
Colombian Constitution - <i>Constitución Política de Colombia</i> (República de Colombia, 1991)	1991	Constit. Court of the Colombian Republic	The Constitution legislates the fundamental Colombian principals in order to strengthen the unity of the Nation and assure its members life, coexistence, work, justice, equality, knowledge, freedom and peace, within a legal, democratic and participatory framework that guarantees a fair political, economic and social order, and is committed to promoting the integration of the Latin American community, decrees and sanctions.	<p>Article 13: <u>Equal rights, equal opportunities and no-discrimination</u> in terms of sex, race, national or familiar origin, language, religion, political or philosophical opinion</p> <p>Article 16: <u>Right to free development of personality</u></p> <p>Article 43: <u>Equal rights and opportunities between men and women and no-discrimination</u></p> <p>Article 67: <u>Right to education as a public service</u>, the role of education is to shape the colombian citizens in the respect of human rights, peace and democracy</p>
General Education Law - <i>Ley General de Educación 115 de 1994</i>	1994	Congress of the Colombian Republic	The General Education Law establishes the general norms to regulate the Public Service of the Education that fulfills a social function	<p>Article 5o: 1. <u>The full development of the personality of the student</u> without further limitations than those imposed by the rights of others and the legal order, within a process of comprehensive education of physical, psychic, intellectual, moral, spiritual, social, affective, ethical, civic and other human values.</p> <p>2. <u>Education is bound to respect life and other human rights, peace, democratic principles, coexistence.</u></p>

¹⁴ All information in Appendix 1 originates from the documents cited in the first column. The presented articles and paragraphs were chosen according to the objectives of this study. All translations are provided from Spanish to English by the author of this study.


<p>(República de Colombia, 1994)</p>			<p>based on the needs and interests of the people, the family and the society. It is based on the principles of the Political Constitution: the right to education for all, the freedoms of teaching, learning, research and academic freedom and its character of public service.</p>	<p><u>pluralism, justice, solidarity and equity, as well as the exercise of tolerance and freedom.</u></p> <p>9. <u>The development of critical, reflective and analytical capacity</u></p> <p>Article 13: d) Develop a <u>healthy sexuality</u> that promotes self-knowledge and self-esteem, the construction of a sexual identity with respect for gender equity, affectivity, mutual respect and to prepare them for a harmonious and responsible family life;</p> <p>Article 14: Compulsory education</p> <p>e) <u>Sexuality education</u>, given in each case in accordance with the psychic, physical and emotional needs of the students according to their age.</p> <p>Article 77: <u>School autonomy:</u> Within the limitations of this law, public schools enjoy curricular autonomy.</p>
<p>Law on Coexistence in schools - Ley 1620 de 2013</p> <p>(República de Colombia, 2013)</p>	<p>2013</p>	<p>Congress of the Colombian Republic</p>	<p>The Law 1620 creates the national system of school coexistence and education about the exercise of human rights, sexuality education and the prevention and mitigation of school violence</p>	<p>Article 1: <u>The national system promotes and strengthens civic education and the exercise of the human, sexual and reproductive rights of students</u> in preschool, basic and secondary education and prevents and mitigates school violence and teenage pregnancy.</p> <p>Article 2: This law wants to tackle the following elements:</p> <p><u>Citizen competencies</u></p> <p><u>Education for the exercise of human, sexual and reproductive rights</u></p> <p><u>School bullying</u></p> <p><u>Cyberbullying</u></p> <p>Article 5: <u>The principles of this national system include</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Participation</u> of all children and adolescents 2. <u>Joint responsibility</u> of the family, educational establishments, society and the state from their respective fields of action 3. <u>Autonomy</u> of the individuals, territorial entities and educational institutions in accordance with the Political Constitution 4. <u>Diversity:</u> based on the recognition, respect and appreciation of dignity of oneself and of others, without discrimination based on gender, orientation or sexual identity, ethnicity or physical, social or cultural condition. 5. <u>Integrality</u> oriented towards the promotion of education for the self-regulation of the individual, education for social sanction and in compliance with the Constitution. <p>Article 12: <u>Creation of the committee of school coexistence</u></p>

				<p>Article 13: <u>Functions of the committees of school coexistence</u></p> <p>1. Identify, document, analyze and resolve conflicts that arise between teachers and students, leadership and students, between students and between teachers</p> <p>5. Activate the protocols and full care circle in favor of school coexistence in any cases of high risk of school violence or any violation of sexual and reproductive rights</p> <p>Article 16: <u>Responsibility of the Secretaries of Education</u></p> <p>5. Guarantee the development of update of <u>teacher training</u> and <u>evaluation of school climate</u> in educational establishments</p> <p>9. Accompany the educational establishments to update, disseminate and apply the <u>coexistence manual</u></p> <p>10. Accompany the educational establishments in the implementation of the school committee of coexistence and follow up on the fulfillment of the functions assigned to it</p> <p>Article 20: <u>The pedagogical projects of sexuality education</u></p> <p>The following components of the sexuality education are understood as fundamental elements for the construction of the students' life plan: the body and human development, human reproduction, sexual and reproductive health, methods of contraception, reflections on attitudes, interests and abilities, emotions, the cultural construction of sexuality, cultural gender behaviors, sexual diversity, sexuality and healthy lifestyle</p>
<p>National policy on health care - <i>Resolución 429 de 2016</i></p> <p>(Ministerio de Salud y Protección Social Nacional, 2016b)</p>	2016	Ministry of Health and Social Protection	<p>The Policy of Comprehensive Health Care is adopted by this resolution and it serves the nature and content of the fundamental right to health and guides the objectives of the health system and social security in health.</p>	<p>Article 1: The objective of this policy is aimed at <u>generating the best conditions for the health of the population</u>, by regulating the intervention of sectoral and intersectoral members responsible for guaranteeing attention to the promotion, prevention, diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation in conditions of accessibility, acceptability, opportunity, continuity, comprehensiveness and resolution capacity.</p> <p>Article 3: <u>The Comprehensive Model of Health Care (MIAS)</u> establishes an operational model that adopts tools to guarantee the opportunity, continuity, comprehensiveness, acceptability and quality in the health care of the population under conditions of equity, and includes the set of processes of prioritization, intervention and institutional arrangements that</p>


				coordinate in a coordinated manner the actions of each one of the members of the system, in a people-centred vision.
Methodological Manual for national policy on health care - <i>Resolución 3202 de 2016</i> (Ministerio de Salud y Protección Social Nacional, 2016a)	2016	Ministry of Health and Social Protection	This resolution adopts a methodological manual for the elaboration and implementation of Comprehensive Routes of Health Care.	<p>Introduction: MIAS puts the people at its center and includes both actions aimed at <u>generating well-being</u>, such as those aimed at <u>maintaining health</u>, <u>detecting risks and illness</u>, <u>curing the disease</u> and <u>reducing disability</u>.</p> <p>Conceptual definitions:</p> <p>1.1.1. Focus on Human Rights: It is necessary for health care to incorporate the <u>principles of participation, equality and non-discrimination</u>, in all stages of the process of comprehensive planning in health and in the provision of health services.</p> <p>1.1.2. Focus on Human Development: <u>The generation of necessary conditions for people to expand their capacities</u> and to fully enjoy a long and healthy life, acquire knowledge and enjoy a decent standard of living.</p> <p>1.1.3. Focus on Life Course: <u>The set of trajectories or roles that follow the development of people over time</u>, which are shaped by interactions and the interdependence of the biological and social aspects of the individual; the cultural, social and historical contexts in which life takes place, and life events and individual, family or community transitions.</p>

Appendix 2: Questionnaire for young people (Translated version)

Focus Group Number				
Grade:				
Age:				
For how many years are you already going to this school?				
Gender (please indicate one of the four options)	Female cisgender <input type="checkbox"/>	Male cisgender <input type="checkbox"/>	Female transgender <input type="checkbox"/>	Male transgender <input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual Orientation (Please indicate one of the three options)	Bisexual <input type="checkbox"/>		Homosexual <input type="checkbox"/>	Heterosexual <input type="checkbox"/>

 I enjoy the model of coeducation (a mixed classroom of boys and girls).

I strongly agree +2 1 0 -1 -2 I strongly disagree

 Generally, I think it's easier to talk about personal and sexual topics with educational agents at school than with my parents.


I strongly agree +2 1 0 -1 -2 I strongly disagree

 I feel comfortable when my teachers address personal and sexual topics at school.

I strongly agree +2 1 0 -1 -2 I strongly disagree

 In social networks I am coming across a lot of sexual material.

I strongly agree +2 1 0 -1 -2 I strongly disagree

 Sometimes I worry about my friends because of personal and sexual relationships they are having

I strongly agree +2 1 0 -1 -2 I strongly disagree

 I feel that in this school we work a lot on relationships.

I strongly agree +2 1 0 -1 -2 I strongly disagree

🚦 I would like it better that all girls have to wear a skirt as part of their uniform.

I strongly agree +2 1 0 -1 -2 I strongly disagree

🚦 In this school, I feel heard and respected by the teachers.

I strongly agree +2 1 0 -1 -2 I strongly disagree

🚦 In this school, I feel heard and respected by other students.

I strongly agree +2 1 0 -1 -2 I strongly disagree

🚦 I think that teachers here treat girls and boys the same way.

I strongly agree +2 1 0 -1 -2 I strongly disagree

Do you want to add something that you couldn't contribute to the debate earlier?

Appendix 3: Photo-elicitation method



Family Portrait (Photo Source: Shutterstock, Retrieved from:

<https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/beautiful-family-portrait-isolated-over-white-141863350?src=2rvFtlhXKuD0la1t0d3mLg-1-23>)



Catcalling (Photo Source: Yougov, Retrieved from

<https://today.yougov.com/topics/lifestyle/articles-reports/2014/08/15/catcalling>)



Kim Zuluaga¹⁵ (Photo Source: Noticias Caracol, Retrieved from <https://noticias.caracoltv.com/medellin/orgullo2017-kim-zuluaga-la-trans-que-paso-de-ser-un-nino-rebelde-embajadora-del-orgullo-gay>)

¹⁵ The photo of Kim Zuluaga was integrated after learning that her case of gender-based discrimination in Medellín had shifted public awareness to the role of the school. In 2013, Briham Zuluaga Ríos was 16 years old when going in front of the court to reclaim his right to education, after his school had banned him from campus because he dressed as a woman (Noticias Caracol, 2017). The judge ruled that the school could no longer discriminate against Kim Zuluaga, how she from then on preferred to refer to herself because based on article 16 of the Colombian constitution every student has a right to the free development of personality. Kim Zuluaga became the figurehead of the transgender movement in Medellín and many young people were familiar with her case. Therefore, the use of a photo of her turned out to be very successful as part of the photo-elicitation method with students.



Relationship (Photo Source: Yekpars, Retrieved from: <http://yekpars.com/the-new-marriage/89151/massage-training-and-better-satisfy-their-dildos-18>)



Forms of violence (Photo Source: Childhood Domestic Violence Association, Retrieved from: <https://images.app.goo.gl/TP3R2sti44VylNJ6>)



Pregnancy (Photo Source: Duxiana, Retrieved from: <https://www.duxiana.com/health-back-pain/pregnancy/>)

Appendix 4: Analytical Coding Model

Concept	Coding group	Code
Policy Enactment	Narrators	Discourses on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision of the programme EEP • Vision of the programme MIAS • Vision of the leadership of school • Vision of the School's Manual of School Coexistence
	Entrepreneurs	Discourses on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee of school coexistence • Renewing the Manual of School Coexistence • Teachers advocacy: agents of change
	Outsiders	Discourses on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry of Education • Secretary of Education • Secretary of Health • Partnership between different Secretaries • Partnership with External Educational Agents
	Transactors	Discourses on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secretary of Education (Supervision and control unit)
	Enthusiasts	Discourses on
	Translators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher agency: embodying policy within the classroom • Teacher agency: embodying policy outside the classroom • Production of texts, artifacts and events within school • Opinions about problems with embodying policy
	Critics	Discourses on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher unions
	Receivers	Discourses on

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junior and newly qualified teachers
School Culture	Professional Orientation	Discourses on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree of professionalism of school principal • Degree of professionalism of teachers • Degree of professionalism of the psychologist • Degree of professionalism of external speakers
	Organizational Structure	Discourses on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of the school principal • Priority setting of the school • Gender composition of school
	Quality of the learning environment	Discourses on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student-student interaction • Student-teacher interaction • Student-psychologist interaction • Student-external educational agent interaction
	Student-centred focus	Discourse on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth gender identity • Youth participation • Parental involvement
Intersectionality	Gender and conflict	Discourses on gender and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Armed conflict • Displacement • History of drug dealing
	Gender and religion/ machismo culture	Discourses on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students' views on masculinities and femininities • Teachers' views on femininities and masculinities • Family influence based on religious beliefs
	Gender and class	Discourses on gender and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty • Financial dependency in relationships

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social inequalities based on socio-economic differences
	Gender and race	<p>Discourse on gender and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discriminatory practises routed in racism
	Gender and sexuality	<p>Discourses on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bisexuality, Homosexuality, Transsexuality
Empowerment	Recourses	<p>Discourses on access and use of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good quality education • Health care • A learning environment of this gender composition • Sexuality education • Psychological support • A gender-sensitive learning environment
	Agency	<p>Discourses on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The power to (discourses on self-empowerment) • The power over (discourses on gender power imbalances)
	Achievements	<p>Discourses on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in gender-related beliefs • Change in gender-related expectations • Change in gender-related interaction

Appendix 5: Encoded list of participants

Focus Groups: Students													
Code	School	Focus Group	Sex	Grade	Date of Interview	Duration of Interview	Code	School	Focus Group	Sex	Grade	Date of Interview	Duration of Interview
PA.01	A	FGY_01	male	grade 11	26.10.18	63min	PB.01	B	FGY_07	male	grade 9	13.11.18	40min
PA.02	A	FGY_01	male	grade 11	26.10.18	63min	PB.02	B	FGY_07	female	grade 9	13.11.18	40min
PA.03	A	FGY_01	male	grade 11	26.10.18	63min	PB.03	B	FGY_07	female	grade 9	13.11.18	40min
PA.04	A	FGY_01	male	grade 11	26.10.18	63min	PB.04	B	FGY_07	male	grade 9	13.11.18	40min
PA.05	A	FGY_01	male	grade 11	26.10.18	63min	PB.05	B	FGY_07	female	grade 9	13.11.18	40min
PA.06	A	FGY_01	male	grade 11	26.10.18	63min	PB.06	B	FGY_07	female	grade 9	13.11.18	40min
PA.07	A	FGY_01	female	grade 11	26.10.18	63min	PB.07	B	FGY_07	female	grade 9	13.11.18	40min
PA.08	A	FGY_02	female	grade 10	26.10.18	69min	PB.08	B	FGY_07	male	grade 9	13.11.18	40min
PA.09	A	FGY_02	female	grade 10	26.10.18	69min	PB.09	B	FGY_07	female	grade 9	13.11.18	40min
PA.10	A	FGY_02	female	grade 10	26.10.18	69min	PB.10	B	FGY_08	female	grade 10	14.11.18	70min
PA.11	A	FGY_02	male	grade 10	26.10.18	69min	PB.11	B	FGY_08	female	grade 10	14.11.18	70min
PA.12	A	FGY_02	male	grade 10	26.10.18	69min	PB.12	B	FGY_08	female	grade 10	14.11.18	70min
PA.13	A	FGY_02	male	grade 10	26.10.18	69min	PB.13	B	FGY_08	female	grade 10	14.11.18	70min
PA.14	A	FGY_02	female	grade 10	26.10.18	69min	PB.14	B	FGY_08	female	grade 10	14.11.18	70min
PA.15	A	FGY_02	female	grade 10	26.10.18	69min	PB.15	B	FGY_08	male	grade 10	14.11.18	70min
PA.16	A	FGY_02	female	grade 10	26.10.18	69min	PB.16	B	FGY_08	male	grade 10	14.11.18	70min
PA.17	A	FGY_03	male	grade 9	30.10.18	60min	PB.17	B	FGY_08	female	grade 10	14.11.18	70min
PA.18	A	FGY_03	male	grade 9	30.10.18	60min	PB.18	B	FGY_08	female	grade 10	14.11.18	70min
PA.19	A	FGY_03	male	grade 9	30.10.18	60min	PB.19	B	FGY_09	female	grade 9	14.11.18	56min
PA.20	A	FGY_03	female	grade 9	30.10.18	60min	PB.20	B	FGY_09	female	grade 9	14.11.18	56min
PA.21	A	FGY_03	female	grade 9	30.10.18	60min	PB.21	B	FGY_09	male	grade 9	14.11.18	56min
PA.22	A	FGY_03	male	grade 9	30.10.18	60min	PB.22	B	FGY_09	female	grade 9	14.11.18	56min
PA.23	A	FGY_03	female	grade 9	30.10.18	60min	PB.23	B	FGY_09	male	grade 9	14.11.18	56min
PA.24	A	FGY_03	female	grade 9	30.10.18	60min	PB.24	B	FGY_09	female	grade 9	14.11.18	56min
PA.25	A	FGY_03	female	grade 9	30.10.18	60min	PB.25	B	FGY_09	male	grade 9	14.11.18	56min
PA.26	A	FGY_04	male	grade 11	31.10.18	49min	PB.26	B	FGY_09	female	grade 9	14.11.18	56min
PA.27	A	FGY_04	male	grade 11	31.10.18	49min	PB.27	B	FGY_09	male	grade 9	14.11.18	56min
PA.28	A	FGY_04	male	grade 11	31.10.18	49min	PB.28	B	FGY_10	female	grade 11	21.11.18	63min
PA.29	A	FGY_04	male	grade 11	31.10.18	49min	PB.29	B	FGY_10	male	grade 11	21.11.18	63min
PA.30	A	FGY_04	female	grade 11	31.10.18	49min	PB.30	B	FGY_10	female	grade 11	21.11.18	63min
PA.31	A	FGY_04	female	grade 11	31.10.18	49min	PB.31	B	FGY_10	female	grade 11	21.11.18	63min
PA.32	A	FGY_04	female	grade 10	31.10.18	49min	PB.32	B	FGY_10	male	grade 11	21.11.18	63min
PA.33	A	FGY_05	male	grade 11	1.11.18	72min	PB.33	B	FGY_10	female	grade 11	21.11.18	63min
PA.34	A	FGY_05	female	grade 11	1.11.18	72min	PB.34	B	FGY_10	male	grade 11	21.11.18	63min
PA.35	A	FGY_05	female	grade 11	1.11.18	72min	PB.35	B	FGY_11	female	grade 11	22.11.18	51min
PA.36	A	FGY_05	female	grade 11	1.11.18	72min	PB.36	B	FGY_11	female	grade 11	22.11.18	51min
PA.37	A	FGY_05	female	grade 11	1.11.18	72min	PB.37	B	FGY_11	male	grade 11	22.11.18	51min
PA.38	A	FGY_05	male	grade 11	1.11.18	72min	PB.38	B	FGY_11	female	grade 11	22.11.18	51min
PA.39	A	FGY_05	female	grade 11	1.11.18	72min	PB.39	B	FGY_11	female	grade 11	22.11.18	51min
PA.40	A	FGY_05	female	grade 11	1.11.18	72min	PB.40	B	FGY_11	male	grade 11	22.11.18	51min
PA.41	A	FGY_06	female	grade 9	2.11.18	52min	PB.41	B	FGY_11	male	grade 11	22.11.18	51min
PA.42	A	FGY_06	female	grade 9	2.11.18	52min	PB.42	B	FGY_11	male	grade 11	22.11.18	51min
PA.43	A	FGY_06	male	grade 9	2.11.18	52min	PB.43	B	FGY_11	male	grade 11	22.11.18	51min
PA.44	A	FGY_06	male	grade 9	2.11.18	52min							
PA.45	A	FGY_06	male	grade 9	2.11.18	52min							
PA.46	A	FGY_06	female	grade 9	2.11.18	52min							
PA.47	A	FGY_06	female	grade 9	2.11.18	52min							
PA.48	A	FGY_06	male	grade 9	2.11.18	52min							

Focus Groups: Educational Agents													
Code	School	Focus Group	Sex	Subjects	Date of the Interview	Duration of the Interview	Code	School	Focus Group	Sex	Subjects	Date of the Interview	Duration of the Interview
PA.49	A	FGY_04	female	democracy, politics	31.10.18	52min	PB.44	B	FGT_03	male	spanish	2.11.18	50min
PA.50	A	FGT_01	female	mathematics	25.10.18	52min	PB.45	B	FGT_03	female	natural sciences	2.11.18	50min
PA.51	A	FGT_01	female	primary school teacher	25.10.18	52min	PB.46	B	FGT_03	male	mathematics and sports	2.11.18	50min
PA.52	A	FGT_01	female	ICT and computer science	25.10.18	52min	PB.47	B	FGT_03	male	sports	2.11.18	50min
PA.53	A	FGT_01	female	psychologist EEP	25.10.18	52min	PB.48	B	FGT_03	male	spanish and english	2.11.18	50min
PA.54	A	FGT_01	male	representative from EEP	25.10.18	52min	PB.49	B	FGT_03	female	natural sciences	2.11.18	50min
PA.55	A	FGT_01	male	ICT and computer science	25.10.18	52min	PB.50	B	FGT_03	female	social sciences	2.11.18	50min
PA.56	A	FGT_01	female	coordinator	25.10.18	52min	PB.51	B	FGT_03	female	arts	2.11.18	50min
PA.57	A	FGT_01	female	social sciences	25.10.18	52min	PB.52	B	FGT_03	male	natural sciences	2.11.18	50min
PA.58	A	FGT_02	male	social sciences	1.11.18	40min	PB.53	B	FGT_04	female	biology, chemistry	13.11.18	73min
PA.59	A	FGT_02	female	chemistry	1.11.18	40min	PB.54	B	FGT_04	male	english and spanish	13.11.18	73min
PA.60	A	FGT_02	male	english	1.11.18	40min	PB.55	B	FGT_04	male	social sciences	13.11.18	73min
PA.61	A	FGT_02	female	arts	1.11.18	40min	PB.56	B	FGT_04	male	mathematics	13.11.18	73min
PA.62	A	FGT_02	male	philosophy	1.11.18	40min	PB.57	B	FGT_04	female	mathematics	13.11.18	73min
PA.63	A	FGT_02	female	sports	1.11.18	40min	PB.58	B	FGT_04	male	sports	13.11.18	73min
PA.64	A	FGT_02	male	english	1.11.18	40min							

Individual Interviews: Educational Agents													
Code	School	Interview	Sex	Role in the school	Date of the Interview	Duration of the interview	Code	School	Interview	Sex	Role in the school	Date of the interview	Duration of the interview
PA.65	A	II_01	male	director	23.10.18	59min	PB.59	B	II_05	male	director	2.11.18	38min
PA.66	A	II_02	female	ethics teacher & gender focal point	24.10.18	38min	PB.60	B	II_06	female	informatics teacher	2.11.18	40min
PA.67	A	II_03	female	academic coordinator	24.10.18	40min	PB.61	B	II_07	female	coordinator	20.11.18	25min
PA.53	A	II_04	female	psychologist EEP	25.10.18	25min	PB.62	B	II_08	male	psychologist MIAS	14.11.18	28min
							PB.53	B	II_09	female	gender focal point	20.11.18	38min

Individual Interviews: Policy stakeholders						
Code	Dependency	Interview	Sex	Role in the secretary	Date of the interview	Duration of the Interview
PO.01	Secretary of Education	PO_E01	male	Technical/ legal advisor	18.10.18	72min
PO.02	Secretary of Education	PO_E01	male	«Profesional de Apoyo» in terms of monitoring and evaluation	18.10.18	72min
PO.03	Secretary of Education	PO_E02	female	«Profesional de Apoyo» in terms of pedagogical advisory	24.10.18	38min
PO.04	Secretary of Education	PO_E03	male	Vicesecretary	30.11.18	37min
PO.05	Secretary of Women	PO_E04	female	Head of Secretary	1.11.18	34min
PO.06	Secretary of Women	PO_E05	female	Official	1.11.18	24min
PO.07	Secretary of Health	PO_E06	female	Vicesecretary	26.1.19	54min

Appendix 6: Consent form for parents of students (Translated version)

I am Hannah Kabelka, an Austrian student of the Erasmus Master in Educational Policies for Global Development and I would like to ask for your collaboration in my Master thesis. More specifically, I ask for your permission to allow your child to participate in my research project. In a two case study design I want to explore the impact of a gender perspective in secondary schools in Medellín. The main objective is to explore the needs, perceptions and opinions of the principals and teachers as well as the students themselves. With youth, who are authorized by their parents and are willing to participate, I plan the following activities:

- Focus group discussions: In groups of 6-10 students, I want to talk to them about their recognition of gender equity in and through their school.
- Individual interviews: With young people who prefer to share their views on the subject individually, a small independent interview can also be completed.

I assure the confidentiality and anonymity of the identity of all participants. The participation is completely voluntary and it should be emphasized that participation in this research does not imply any risk or benefit for your child. Despite this, I will do my best to provide a comfortable and safe environment so that all participants can share their views. I also have experience in carrying out research in schools in my country of origin and I worked for many years with teenagers in the education sector.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me.
Sincerely,

Hannah Kabelka
Autonomous University of Barcelona
Email: hannahjasminkabelka@gmail.com

SIGNATURE OF CONSENT

I GIVE PERMISSION for my child to participate in the indicated research, to record the interview in audio and that the data is processed until the end of the project (September 2019).

I DO NOT GIVE PERMISSION for my child to participate in the indicated investigation.

Name of the child: _____

Name of the mother, father or guardian: _____

Date and Signature: _____

Appendix 7: Consent form for adult participants (Translated version)

Name of the researcher: Hannah Kabelka

Name of the research participant: _____

- ✚ The interview will be recorded and a transcript will be produced.
- ✚ The transcript of the interview will be analysed by Hannah Kabelka as a researcher.
- ✚ Access to the transcript of the interview will be limited to Hannah Kabelka and fellow academics and researchers with whom she will collaborate as part of the research process.
- ✚ Any content of the interview in the form of a summary, or direct quotations from the interview will be anonymised so that it can not be identified, and care will be taken to ensure that no other information is revealed in the interview that can identify you as a participant.

By signing this form I agree to the following:

1. I am participating voluntarily in this project. I understand that I have no obligation to participate and I can stop the interview at any time;
2. The transcribed interview or extracts may be used as described above;
3. I have been informed about the objective of this study;
4. I do not expect to receive any benefit or payment for my participation;
5. I have been able to ask any questions, and I understand that I am free to contact the researcher for any questions I may have in the future.

SIGNATURE OF CONSENT

I GIVE PERMISSION to record the interview in audio and that the data is processed until the end of the project date (September 2019)

I DO NOT GIVE PERMISSION to record the interview in audio and that the data is processed until the end of the project (September 2019)

(Participant signature and date)