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POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF EVANGELICALS IN COLOMBIA 1990 – 2017

Abstract

The political participation of evangelicals in Colombia has been the consequence of two waves of religious mobilization. I hypothesis is that religious mobilization in the political field has been based on the demand for religious equality (in the 1990s) and the defense of Christian morality (in the 2010s). My objective is to describe the two wave of evangelical political mobilization in Colombia and its implications for the political arena. I have used diverse documentary sources (internal documents of some parties, books, dissertations, journals) and interviews with political and religious leaders, as well as some years of participant observation in some religious services and political meetings.

Keywords: religious mobilization, evangelical political parties, politics and religion, Colombia

In Colombia, one of the more surprising phenomena in the last decades is the religious pluralism. The Catholic church that was the hegemony actor in the religious field now competes and shares this space with the other Christian currents like the Protestantism. According to Beltrán, "in 1960 there were 33.156 Protestants in Colombia, who were equivalent to 0,23% population"². Currently, according to Observatorio de la Democracia³, the 9,8% of the Colombian population identifies itself as *Protestants*⁴. The Graph 1 shows the religious affiliation. Remarkable is the dominance of the Catholicism, the growth of Protestantism as a second preference, and the importance of the tendency of believing without belonging.

This pluralism has been significant effects in other fields as the political arena where the protestants presence gained visibility from the election of a Constituent Assembly in 1990. Before, political participation was minimum because like other countries "believers don't mess with politics"⁵. In 70s CEDEC (La

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2 Beltrán Cely, William Mauricio, *Del Monopolio Católico a la Explosión Pentecostal. Pluralización religiosa, secularización y cambio social en Colombia*, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá, 2013, p. 76.

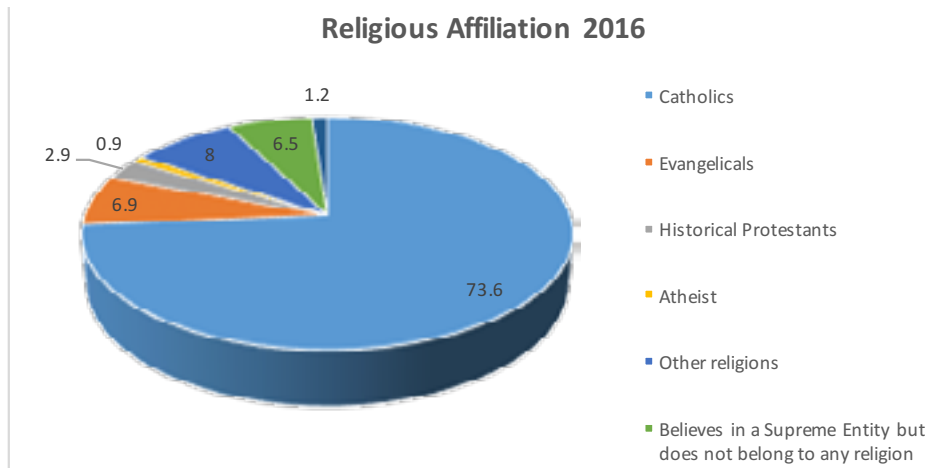
3 „Dato de la Semana“, *DePolítica*, Septiembre 15 2017.

4 With this expression I understand the historical Protestants as Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptist, and Evangelicals currents as Pentecostalism.

5 Paul Freston, *Evangelicals and Politics in Asia, Africa and Latin America*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 21.

Confederación Evangélica de Colombia -now CEDECOL-) prevented that Orlando Fals Borda, Augusto Libreros, and Gonzalo Castillo, who formed a group of reflection and action called La Rosca, participated in the name of that organization in public and political events because CEDEC declared itself “apolitical”⁶. However, at the end of the 1980s, this apolitical posture changed and the religious mobilization started the political arena.

Graph 1. Religion Affiliation in Columbia 2016



Source: Observatorio de la Democracia (2017)

In other words, the political involvement by Protestants has resulted from two factors. First, the changes within the Protestant community, especially in the Pentecostalism that embraced what is called the “prosperity theology”. According to Beltrán, this theology asserts that “both economic prosperity and political power are legitimate aspirations of the children of God. Therefore, they do not condemn politics, but encourage the faithful to participate in it as part of their mission to “establish the kingdom of God on earth”⁷. As a result, the most important churches as Misión Carismática Internacional (MCI) used this discourse to persuade his followers on the need to Christianize politics:

“My participation is not due to any political appeal, but rather to the extension of our ministry to the public service, for in these spheres we must also be salt, light, and ferment in the midst of the society in which we live and witness”⁸.

6 Pablo Moreno, Participación Política e Incidencia Pública de las Iglesias no Católicas en Colombia, *Historia y Espacio*, Vol. 43, 2014, p. 174.

7 Beltrán Cely, William Mauricio, *Del Monopolio Católico a la Explosión Pentecostal. Pluralización religiosa, secularización y cambio social en Colombia...* p. 306.

8 “Campana Colin Crawford”, in: *Por qué aspiro al Concejo por Santa Fe de Bogotá*, Partido Nacional Cristiano, 1992.

Consequently, this theological change impact on the biblical reinterpretation of the politics. The new interpretation used biblical texts as Pr. 11: 11a “By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted” or Pr. 29:2a “When the righteous increase, the people rejoice”⁹. This interpretation helped justify the political participation either political advertising campaign or at Sunday service. For instance, in the service of March 9, 2014, the day of the national elections, a minister asserted “so then, as we have the opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith” Ga. 6:10, about the reference to the candidates for the Congress of the church¹⁰. Indeed, this year the new attempts to create political movements for the 2018 national elections talked about the biblical theism¹¹.

Another change inside the religious field was the consolidation of mega-churches. According to Beltrán, a set of events favoring its rapid growth. At the end of the 80s, David Yonggi Cho visited the country promoting his method of “iglecrecimiento” based on the use of familiar cells. During this same decade, a liturgical renewal was introduced in the Pentecostal cults; for example, the use of musical instruments with contemporary rhythms and dances was allowed¹². In the meantime, a generational change in leadership that included not only an improvement in the quality of life but also the educational level contributed to the openness towards society¹³. In brief, these events explain the growth of churches as MCI, Iglesia Cristiana Manantial de Vida Eterna, Centro Misionero Bethesda, among others.

On the other hand, the second factor is the institutional change. This change allowed the emergence of new political actors. In Colombia, in a context of political crisis due to multifaceted violence perpetrated by drug cartels, guerrilla groups, self-defense groups, common crime¹⁴, and strong and closed two-party system¹⁵, a new constitution was seen as a mechanism to deal with such crisis¹⁶. As a result, the Political Constitution of 1991 sought to deepen democracy through the expansion of tools for participation, the recognition of rights and

9 “Carta a los hermanos”, in: *Movimiento Unión Cristiana*, 1991.

10 Luis Bastidas, Bibiana Ortega, *Las elecciones nacionales y locales en Colombia 2014-2017. Polarización y Postconflicto*, Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá, 2017, forthcoming.

11 “Gran Convocatoria Nacional para Discipular la Nación e Impactar las Elecciones de 2018”, film by Mark Beliles, 2017.

12 Beltrán Cely, William Mauricio, *Del Monopolio Católico a la Explosión Pentecostal. Pluralización religiosa, secularización y cambio social en Colombia...* p. 227.

13 Bibiana Ortega, *Evangelicos y Política. Origen y Trayectorias de los Partidos Políticos Evangélicos en América Latina (1980-2017)*, disertación para optar por el título de Doctora en Ciencia Política. Sin defender, Universidad de los Andes, Departamento de Ciencia Política, Bogotá, 2017.

14 Daniel Pecaut, Colombia: Violencia y democracia, *Análisis Político*, Vol. 13, 1991, pp. 40-61.

15 Francisco Leal Buitrago, *Al filo del caos. Crisis política en la Colombia de los años 80*, Tercer Mundo Editores, Bogotá, IEPRI, 1990.

16 The Coordinadora Guerrillera Simón Bolívar in 1990 stated, in the middle of the negotiations, that a National Constituent Assembly could possibly become the tool of political change if it was based on a broad consensus of all sectors of society - including guerrilla groups, see: David Rampf, Diana Chavarro, *La Asamblea Nacional Constituyente de Colombia de 1991 – De la exclusión a la inclusión o ¿un esfuerzo en vano?* Inclusive Political Settlements, Berghof Foundation, Berlín, 2014.

the reduction of barriers to entry into the party system¹⁷. This new scenario took advantage by traditionally excluded religious and ethnic minorities¹⁸.

Since then, political involvement by Protestants has increased. This participation has sometimes been given through protestants political parties, others as a pressure group; however, this participation has always been concentrated in defending in the public sphere the main demands of the Protestant movement. I hypothesis is that religious mobilization in the political field has been based on the demand for religious equality (in the 1990s) and the defense of Christian morality (in the 2010s). My objective is to describe the two wave of evangelical political mobilization in Colombia and its implications for the political arena. I have used diverse documentary sources (internal documents of some parties, books, dissertations, journals) and interviews with political and religious leaders, as well as some years of participant observation in some religious services and political meetings.

First wave Political Mobilization: the struggle for religious equality

In the early 1980s, the role of Protestants in a country in crisis was amply debated in religions meetings between the members of CEDECOL. According to Moreno¹⁹, the growth of the guerrillas in their zones of influence, the murder of religious leaders and the social crisis was touching the lives of the churches, "that sparked the idea in the churches to think the reality of the country and do something about it. Thus began to think about the need to organize to participate in the political and promoted the idea of training evangelicals in politics with the management of CEDECOL". Although this project was not implemented, it was evident the awareness of establishing a clear stance on the issue²⁰.

Also, various events contributed with this idea. Between 1983 and 1987 World Vision promoted a series of workshops on the Integral Mission of the Church²¹. In 1985, some pastors appointed by CEDECOL participated in the peace process initiated by President Belisario Betancur²². In 1987, CEDECOL submitted a constitutional reform bill on religious freedom and a change of the preamble of the constitution that recognized the Catholic religion as the official religion of

17 John Dugas, "La constitución política de 1991: ¿un pacto político viable?" In: *La constitución política de 1991: ¿un pacto político viable?*, John Dugas (ed.), Departamento de Ciencia Política, Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá, 1993, pp. 15-45.

18 Eduardo Pizarro Leongómez, "¿Hacia un sistema multipartidista? Las terceras fuerzas en Colombia hoy", *Análisis Político*, Vol. 31, 1997, pp. 85-108.

19 Pablo Moreno, "Cuestionario para Expertos Evangélicos sobre Partidos Evangélicos en América Latina", Interview with Bibiana Ortega, Septiembre 15 2015

20 Pablo Moreno, *Del Cementerio al Palacio, Creación de un Imaginario Religioso*, in: *Diversidad y Dinámicas del Cristianismo en América Latina*, GIERSP, Universidad de San Buenaventura, Bogotá, 2009, pp. 144-158.

21 "Carta a la Honorable Representante viviane Morales", CEDECOL, Septiembre 25 1992, Bogotá.

22 Pablo Moreno, *Del Cementerio al Palacio, Creación de un Imaginario Religioso...* pp. 144-158.

the State. Although it was approved in the first debate was rejected in the following²³. In 1990, Claudia Rodríguez de Castellanos (minister of MCI) participated in the presidential elections²⁴. In brief, these events allowed the idea of active involvement in politics to mature.

As a result, when President Cesar Gaviria issued presidential decree No. 1926 that established the legal framework for the first publicly elected Constituent Assembly²⁵, the possibility of participating was discussed in Cali in the middle of an Assembly of CEDECOL²⁶. In this space, the minister Hector Pardo, chairman of CEDECOL, asked about the opportunity to participate in the elections to choose delegates for the constituent assembly to about 50 pastors who participated in the meeting²⁷. The Assembly agreed to participate and to submit a single list²⁸. This as result of the negotiation between CEDECOL and the MCI through its newly created Partido Nacional Cristiano (PNC)²⁹.

The electoral campaign to the Assembly was the first and only time that evangelicals joined together. Indeed, denominations such as Iglesia Pentecostal Unida de Colombia and Iglesia Adventista supported this process³⁰. According to Munévar³¹, the Protestant campaign was carried out among the members of CEDECOL. The use of evangelical radio stations and press were the leading advertising medium. As well Pastors were also asked for support to mobilize the congregation³². CEDECOL with the slogan of religious freedom and cult got the national unity around the issue³³. The religious leaders were clear “our slogan will be: to Christianize politics without politicizing Christianity”³⁴.

Due to its prestige, Jaime Ortiz was chosen as head of the list³⁵. Ortiz was a Presbyterian minister and director of Seminario Bíblico de Colombia. Further-

23 Daniela Helmsdorff, *Participación Política Evangélica en Colombia*, Monografía para optar por el título de Politóloga, Universidad de los Andes, Departamento de Ciencia Política, Bogotá, 1995.

24 Una sorpresa los candidatos de Dios, *El Tiempo*, Redacción El Tiempo, 11 de Diciembre de 1990.

25 David Rampf , Diana Chavarro, *La Asamblea Nacional Constituyente de Colombia de 1991 – De la exclusión a la inclusión o ¿un esfuerzo en vano?*, Inclusive Political Settlements, Berghof Foundation, Berlín, 2014.

26 Pablo Moreno, Evangelicos y Política en Colombia en la Década del 90, in: *A Diversidad y Dinámicas del Cristianismo en América Latina. Memorias del Primer Congreso Internacional “Diversidad y Dinámicas del Cristianismo en América Latina”*, E. González Santos (Ed.), Bonaventuriana, Bogotá, 2007, pp. 186-198; Pablo Moreno, Participación Política e Incidencia Pública de las Iglesias no Católicas en Colombia, *Historia y Espacio*, Vol. 43, 2014, pp. 169-185.

27 Jorge Gustavo Munévar, “Transformación Doctrinal y Actitudinal de la Participación Política de las Iglesias Cristianas Evangélicas en Colombia”, in: *Mirada Pluridisciplinar al Hecho Religioso en Colombia: Avances de Investigación*, G. I. GIERSP, Universidad San Buenaventura, Bogotá, 2008, pp. 375-399.

28 “La Confederación Evangélica de Colombia”, *El Tiempo*, Redacción El Tiempo, 2 de Septiembre de 1990.

29 Daniela Helmsdorff, Participación Política Evangélica en Colombia (1990-1994), *Historia Crítica*, Vol. 12, 1996, pp. 79-86.

30 Jorge Gustavo Munévar, “Transformación Doctrinal y Actitudinal de la Participación Política de las Iglesias Cristianas Evangélicas en Colombia”... pp. 375-399.

31 Jorge Gustavo Munévar, “Entrevista sobre evangélicos y política”, interview with Bibiana Ortega, 5 Noviembre 2015.

32 Carlos Mario Correa, “Somos Juristas Cristianos”, *El Espectador*, 12 de Diciembre de 1990, p. 12A.

33 Jorge Gustavo Munévar, “Entrevista sobre evangélicos y política”...

34 Dario Silva Silva, “La Fuerza Callada”, *El Tiempo*, 23 de Diciembre de 1990.

35 „Listas para la Constituyente puede llegar a más de 90. Habrá candidatos para todos los gustos”, *El Tiempo*, 31 Octubre, 1990.

more, in a negotiation, the second place was given to Arturo Mejía, who was a lawyer postulated by the ministers Castellanos³⁶. Both candidates are registered under the name of the Movement Unión Cristiana³⁷. This movement arose in the middle of the electoral campaign; it fulfilled the number of required signatures collected among the evangelical denominations³⁸. On December 9 they were elected delegates with 115.201 votes³⁹. This list achieved the sixth majority in the country⁴⁰.

National Constituent Assembly

“Once the constituents were defined, the ANC began its work on February 5. The assembly was subdivided into five thematic commissions responsible of discussing the reports presented by the preparatory committees and preparing a final proposal to be discussed and approved in two debates in the plenary sessions⁴¹. Jaime Ortiz was designated president of the First Commission⁴² and from there influenced the debate of the most important subjects that formed the Constitution⁴³. According to Ortiz, his participation sought to humanize the laws, political and economic institutions and dignify Colombians⁴⁴.

For evangelicals, “the main objective of participation in the constituent assembly was the dismantling of the confessional state and the establishment of real freedom of worship and religious equality⁴⁵. Therefore, Ortiz submitted a draft bill about the preamble⁴⁶. CEDECOL took several attempts trying to modify the preamble of the constitution⁴⁷. His proposal maintained God as the source of all authority⁴⁸; however, Ortiz questioned the privileges of the Catholic Church such as concordat with the Vatican, the relationship between the State and

36 Jorge Gustavo Munévar, *Transformación Doctrinal y Actitudinal de la Participación Política de las Iglesias Cristianas Evangélicas en Colombia...* pp. 375-399.

37 Daniela Helmsdorff, *Participación Política Evangélica en Colombia...*

38 Héctor Pardo, “Evangélicos y Política”, interview with Bibiana Ortega, Febrero 2010.

39 Daniela Helmsdorff, *Participación Política Evangélica en Colombia (1990-1994)*, *Historia Crítica*, Vol. 12, 1996, pp. 79-86.

40 “Una sorpresa los candidatos de Dios”, *El Tiempo*, 11 de Diciembre de 1990.

41 David Rampf, Diana Chavarro, *La Asamblea Nacional Constituyente de Colombia de 1991 – De la exclusión a la inclusión o ¿un esfuerzo en vano?* Inclusive Political Settlements, Berghof Foundation, Berlin, 2014. p. 12

42 “Minorías coparon mesas directivas”, *El Tiempo*, 13 de Febrero de 1991.

43 Jorge Gustavo Munévar, “Transformación Doctrinal y Actitudinal de la Participación Política de las Iglesias Cristianas Evangélicas en Colombia”, in: *Mirada Pluridisciplinar al Hecho Religioso en Colombia: Avances de Investigación*, G. I. GIERSP, Universidad San Buenaventura, Bogotá, 2008, pp. 375-399

44 Carlos Mario Correa, “Somos Juristas Cristianos”, *El Espectador*, 12 de Diciembre de 1990, p. 12A; “Actuaremos como fuerza espiritual: Ortiz”, *El Tiempo*, 15 de Diembre de 1990.

45 Jorge Gustavo Munévar, “Transformación Doctrinal y Actitudinal de la Participación Política de las Iglesias Cristianas Evangélicas en Colombia...” p. 396.

46 “Preámbulo con Dios, pero sin Religión Católica”, *El Tiempo*, 20 de Febrero de 1991.

47 “Una sorpresa los candidatos de Dios”, *El Tiempo*, 11 de Diciembre de 1990; “La Voz de Dios”, *Revista Semana*, 1 de Julio de 1991.

48 “Dios, como fuente de dignidad humana, a la Constitución”, *El Espectador*, 19 de Marzo de 1991, p. 11A.

church and the until then religious tolerance⁴⁹.

This discussion was central in the Assembly because two blocks were facing each other. The first, formed by Misael Pastrana, Álvaro Leyva, Augusto Ramírez Ocampo of Partido Conservador and Jamie Ortiz, who defended the name of God as the “supreme source of all authority”. Specifically, Ortiz’s proposal consecrated the name of God as the foundation of human dignity and source of life and authority for the common good⁵⁰. The second block was formed by María Mercedes Carranza of Alianza Democrática, M-19, and Rojas Birry, representing the indigenous movement who defended that the sovereignty resided in the people and it is the source of authority⁵¹. In contrast, they invoked God as protector of the people of Colombia.⁵²

The result was the maintenance of God in the preamble but was invoked his protection.⁵³ Indeed, this meant the elimination of the official state religion⁵⁴ and for some, the end the privileges of the Catholic Church⁵⁵. However, the most important consequence was that this change opened the possibility not only religious pluralism in Colombia as a legal reality but also sociological. In practical terms, this helped to change the imaginary of second-class citizens and build religious equality in the country⁵⁶.

From this position, the evangelical delegates defended the following rights: freedom of religion and worship, recognition of conscientious objection, education rights, protection of the family, regulation of marriage, rights of the young person, the child and the elderly. However, according to Helmsdorff⁵⁷, the purpose of this defense was to ensure that all religious confessions enjoyed the same privileges as the Catholic Church. For instance, in the article about the marriage, the Evangelicals defended the idea that the State should regulate all types of nuptials, not the Catholic Church⁵⁸. Then, they also received authorization to celebrate marriages with civil effects. In fact, this was evidenced with the so-called Evangelical Concordat of which I will speak in the next section.

49 S. Figueroa, Hernando Helwar, El protestantismo colombiano: sus orígenes, luchas y expansión (1856-1991), *Revista Cultura y Religión*, Vol. X, No. 1, 2016, pp. 66-87.

50 “Preámbulo con Dios, pero sin Religión Católica”, *El Tiempo*, 20 de Febrero de 1991; “Dios pasaría de fuente de autoridad a protector”, *El Tiempo*, 9 de Abril de 1991.

51 S. Figueroa, Hernando Helwar, El protestantismo colombiano: sus orígenes, luchas y expansión (1856-1991), *Revista Cultura y Religión*, Vol. X, No. 1, 2016, pp. 66-87.

52 “Dios pasaría de fuente de autoridad a protector”, *El Tiempo*, 9 de Abril de 1991.

53 Ibidem.

54 Daniela Helmsdorff, Participación Política Evangélica en Colombia (1990-1994), *Historia Crítica*, Vol. 12, 1996, pp. 79-86.

55 “Fin a los privilegios de la Iglesia en la Constitución colombiana”, *El Espectador*, 23 de Abril de 1991, p. 2B; “Religión Católica no será la oficial”, *El Tiempo*, Abril 25 de 1991.

56 “Actuaremos como fuerza espiritual: Ortiz”, *El Tiempo*, 15 de Diembre de 1990.

57 Daniela Helmsdorff, *Participación Política Evangélica en Colombia*, Monografía para optar por el título de Politóloga, Universidad de los Andes, Departamento de Ciencia Política, Bogotá, 1995.

58 “La Constituyente en los últimos 100 días” *El Espectador*, 25 de Marzo de 1991, p. 5A.

Evangelical Political Parties

To consolidate what has been achieved in the National Constituent Assembly, the evangelical leaders decided to enter the electoral contest to elect members of Congress. On the one hand, they had to give continuity to the new discourse that supposed their participation in different social spheres, not only in the religious field. For instance, the pastor Pardo in an interview had claimed that participation in the Constituent Assembly had been “just the beginning of the participation of evangelicals in all other areas of the country’s activity”⁵⁹. On the other hand, they needed to implement religious freedom through statutory law, to defend and strengthen the principles enshrined in the Constitution⁶⁰.

As a result, key religious sectors encouraged the creation of political parties (to consult the religious origin of these parties see Appendix 1). For example, in December of 1990, pastor Silva claimed: “shortly the Confederación Evangélica de Colombia will present a proposal for the Movimiento Unión Cristiana to become a permanent political movement”⁶¹. And in February of 1991, the Electoral Council recognized the party⁶². Table 1 shows the evangelical political parties created from the 1990s and the reason for the loss of legal status. What I hypothesize is that these parties were a means to claim their participation as a political actor, to counterbalance the influence of the Catholic Church in society.

Table 1. Evangelical Political Parties in Colombia 1989-2017

Evangelical Political Party	Formation	Cancellation	Reason for cancellation of registration
PNC	1989	2006	Strategic decision by increasing the threshold. Currently participates through secular parties as Centro Democrático
MUC	1990	2006	Strategic decision by increasing the threshold. Some leaders participate in secular parties
C-4	1992	2006	It did not reach the threshold in national elections 2006
FE	1994	2006	Viviane Morales change to Partido Liberal
MIRA	2000	In coalition	
PACTO	2007	2010	It did not reach the threshold in national elections 2010

Source: the table above was made by the author using different sources (peer-reviewed papers, books, dissertations and official records).

59 “Una sorpresa los candidatos de Dios”, *El Tiempo*, 11 de Diciembre de 1990.

60 “Pugna de iglesias en tiempos indréculos”, *El Espectador*, 19 de Noviembre de 1991, p. 16A.

61 “Una sorpresa los candidatos de Dios”, *El Tiempo*, 11 de Diciembre de 1990.

62 “El Consejo Electoral reconoció a”, *El Tiempo*, 18 de Febrero de 1991.

The first evangelical party was Partido Nacional Cristiano (PNC), organized in 1989 by pastors Castellanos of the neo-pentecostal megachurch Misión Carismática Internacional. According to Munévar⁶³, Claudia was encouraged by her father, a political leader of the Partido Liberal, to enter the political arena. She participated in the local elections of 1989 and the presidential elections in 1990 unsuccessfully. However, according to Helmsdorff⁶⁴, this experience was used for making religious proselytizing. In the middle of the National Constituent Assembly, the differences between the faction of the PNC and the MUC due to internal disputes, force both parties to present separate lists for the legislative elections⁶⁵. From that moment on, they will be two different evangelical forces in the political arena.

The PNC achieved its best results in Bogotá, where MCI was strongest⁶⁶. In general, their electoral results allowed them to reach seats in Senate or House of Representatives until 2006 as can be seen in table 2. In 2006, the party made the decision not to participate in national elections as a result of the electoral reform of 2003. This change established a set of measures to address the hyper-fragmentation of the party system⁶⁷. The main threat that minority parties had to face was the establishment of a threshold⁶⁸. In consequence, the PNC withdraws from the electoral arena as a party. Nevertheless, the PNC continued participating in electoral politics through secular parties as Cambio Radical, Partido de la U and recently with Centro Democrático.

63 Jorge Gustavo Munévar, "Entrevista sobre evangélicos y política", interview with Bibiana Ortega, 5 Noviembre 2015.

64 Helmsdorff Daniela, Participación Política Evangélica en Colombia (1990-1994), *Historia Crítica*, Vol. 12, 1996.

65 "Se altera el mapa político colombiano", *El Tiempo*, 28 de Octubre de 1991.

66 Pablo Moreno, Participación Política e Incidencia Pública de las Iglesias no Católicas en Colombia, *Historia y Espacio*, Vol. 43, 2014, pp. 169-185.

67 Francisco Gutiérrez Sanín, *¿Lo que el viento se llevó? Los partidos políticos y la democracia en Colombia 1958-2002*, Grupo Editorial Norma, Bogotá, 2007.

68 "The threshold it consists of establishing a minimum proportion or quota of votes that each party must overcome in order to enter the process of assigning seats. The 2003 Reform introduced three thresholds according to the type of collegiate body: for the Senate elections the threshold was set at 2% of the votes cast for that corporation. For the other collegiate bodies, the reform defined a threshold equivalent to 50% of the electoral quotient. Finally, for those electoral districts that elect two representatives, the electoral threshold was defined at 30% of the electoral quotient", according to: García Sánchez, "La Reforma Electoral y su Impacto en las Elecciones Locales del 2003. Un Análisis de las Elecciones del Concejo de Bogotá", in: G. Hoskin, & M. García Sánchez (Eds.), *La Reforma Política de 2003. ¿La Salvación de los Partidos Políticos Colombianos?*, Uniandes – Ceso, Bogotá, 2006, pp. 116-117.

Table 2. Evangelical Politicians of EPP in the Congress 1990-2018

EPP	Congressman	Corporation	Period
PNC	Claudia Rodríguez de Castellanos	Senate	1992-1994
PNC	Colin Crawford	House of Representatives	1994-1998
PNC	César Castellanos	Senate	1998-2002
PNC	Enrique Salas	House of Representatives	2002-2006
PNC	José María Villanueva	Senate	2002-2006
MUC	Fernando Mendoza	Senate	1992-1994
MUC	Viviane Morales	House of Representatives	1992-1994
MUC	Jaime Ortiz	Senate	1994-1998
C-4	Jimmy Chamorro	Senate	1994-1998
C-4	Jimmy Chamorro	Senate	1998-2002
C-4	Jimmy Chamorro	Senate	2002-2006
FE	Viviane Morales	Senate	1998-2002
FE	Nelly Guzmán	House of Representatives	1998-2002
MIRA	Alexandra Moreno Piraquive	Senate	2002-2006
MIRA	Alexandra Moreno Piraquive	Senate	2006-2010
MIRA	Manuel Antonio Virguez	Senate	2006-2010
MIRA	Gloria Stella Díaz	House of Representatives	2006-2010
MIRA	Alexandra Moreno Piraquive	Senate	2010-2014
MIRA	Manuel Antonio Virguez	Senate	2010-2014
MIRA	Carlos Eduardo Baena	Senate	2010-2014
MIRA	Gloria Stella Díaz	House of Representatives	2010-2014
MIRA	Carlos Eduardo Guevara	House of Representatives	2014-2018
MIRA	Guillermina Bravo	House of Representatives	2014-2018
MIRA	Ana Paola Osorio	House of Representatives	2014-2018 ⁶⁹

Source: Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil

As a counterpoint to the PNC, the Movimiento Unión Cristiana (MUC) was born. It was the only party with the corporate support of CEDECOL. According to Pardo “the MUC was formed as a response to the conjuncture of the constituent. Then, the party continued before the necessity to reaffirm the achieved thing in the Constitution”⁷⁰. The immediate context for this was the discontent felt by CEDECOL leaders with PNC. These leaders did not agree with the PNC claiming to represent the interests of the evangelical community. Thus, MUC was born primarily as an instrument of the CEDECOL for implementing religious freedom. Its initial organization was attended by the most prestigious pastors as Dario Silva, Hector Pardo and Enrique Gómez⁷¹, and it had a national presence thanks to the

69 On February 9, 2018, the State Council decided to recognize three seats to the Senate for the Mira party. The Board determined that the Registry incurred in severe irregularities in which there were unjustified changes in voting records, the disappearance of electoral material and manipulation of the software with which the scrutiny took place. According to: Diario del Huila, MIRA recupera curules, 9 de Febrero de 2018, <https://diariodelhuila.com/mira-recupera-curules>,

70 Héctor Pardo, “Evangélicos y Política”, interview with Bibiana Ortega, Febrero 2010.

71 “Asamblea Movimiento Union Cristiana”, MUC, Bogotá, 1991, p. 4.

country presence of CEDECOL.

However, the diversity of the evangelical movement began to generate internal discussions about the objectives party and decisions about who would head the lists for the next elections⁷². Despite this, Viviane Morales leads the religious liberty bill known as the law 133 of 1994. Similarly, Fernando Mendoza dismissed presiding over the Ethics Committee of the Congress⁷³. Members of the party presented the unconstitutionality claim of the 1974 Concordat⁷⁴, and in 1997, the President Samper signed the agreement of public domestic law 354⁷⁵. Therefore, the agenda around religious freedom guaranteed sure electoral support to maintain representation as shown Table 2.

In 1998 elections, to prevent it from reversing the progress of the law of religious freedom and the rise of power the conservative Andres Pastrana, MUC leaders invited to vote for the candidate liberal Horacio Serpa⁷⁶. However, the evangelical candidates for the Congress, Jaime Ortiz, Víctor Velásquez and Colin Crawford, did not reach seats. “This provoked a crisis in the movement that had already lost some of its most outstanding leaders due to unresolved internal conflicts”⁷⁷. Some low-profile ecclesiastical leaders continued with the project until 2005 when the electoral changes they left the party without the possibility of maintaining legal status. In 2006, some of them adhered to Partido Colombia Viva and Enrique Gómez obtained a seat for the loss of investiture of the head of the list⁷⁸.

In sum, the joint work of the evangelical delegates, representatives of the MUC and PNC, stood out mainly against the dismantling of the concordat between the State and the Catholic Church and religious freedom⁷⁹. Consequently, the goals were achieved because they established the legal basis for evangelicals had the same privileges and possibilities as the Catholic Church. As I mentioned, the evangelical politicians presented draft bills to development some rights. For example, the Law on Religious Freedom and Cults submitted by Viviane Morales. This bill sought equal tributary treatment to all religious confessions, that is to say, the exemption of taxes for all, and the achievement of the legal status of the evangelical churches⁸⁰. In 1994 the law of Religious Freedom was sanctioned.

72 “Comentarios a los hechos ocurridos en Unión Cristiana Unión Cristiana”, Barranquilla, 1 de Septiembre de 1991; Pablo Moreno, “Cuestionario para Expertos Evangélicos sobre Partidos Evangélicos en América Latina”, Interview with Bibiana Ortega, 14 de Septiembre de 2015.

73 “Carta a los hermanos”, Movimiento Unión Cristiana (MUC), 1991.

74 “Carta a los hermanos”, Movimiento Unión Cristiana (MUC), 1992.

75 Héctor Pardo, “Evangélicos y Política”, interview with Bibiana Ortega, Febrero 2010; Pablo Moreno, Participación Política e Incidencia Pública de las Iglesias no Católicas en Colombia, *Historia y Espacio*, Vol. 43, 2014, pp. 169-185.

76 Pablo Moreno, Participación Política e Incidencia Pública de las Iglesias no Católicas en Colombia, *Historia y Espacio*, Vol. 43, 2014.

77 Pablo Moreno, “Participación Política e Incidencia Pública de las Iglesias no Católicas en Colombia”... p. 190.

78 Javier Duque Daza, Las comunidades religiosas protestantes y su tránsito hacia lo político-electoral en Colombia, 1990-2007, *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*, Vol. 72, No. 1, 2010, pp. 73-111.

79 Pablo Moreno, “Participación Política e Incidencia Pública de las Iglesias no Católicas en Colombia”... pp. 169-185.

80 Daniela Helmsdorff, Participación Política Evangélica en Colombia (1990-1994), *Historia Crítica*, Vol. 12, 1996, pp. 79-86.

However, the evangelical's politicians continued working for achieving the equality religious. Thus, in 1997, President Ernesto Samper signed an agreement which he called the Evangelical Concordat with some denominations⁸¹. This concordat involved issues as for validity before the law of marriages celebrated by pastors, spiritual assistance in conditions of equality in prisons, hospitals and battalions, freedom of worship in public educational establishments, juridical personality, tax exemption and so on⁸². On the other hand, also presented some draft legislation about moral issues. For instance, they submitted various bills for the prohibition of pornography, the criminal treatment of abortion, strengthening and protection of the family, norms for the consumption of tobacco and alcohol, among others⁸³.

Notwithstanding the above, the evangelical movement did not manage to stay cohesive. Once the right to religious freedom was guaranteed, some religious leaders and churches were marginalized from the political arena. Others, on the other hand, decided to launch their political parties. Even PNC and MUC had different political projects. According to Helmsdorff⁸⁴, these parties since the 1992 legislature was already considering different political goals:

“while for the Unión Cristiana it is to present the path of God to the temporal order, which includes a fight against corruption, the Partido Nacional Cristiano included as goals the protection of children's, elderly and women, the combating drug addiction and achieve more welfare for the workers.”⁸⁵

Consequently, Compromiso Cívico y Cristiano con la Comunidad (C-4) arrived on the scene; its founder was Jimmy Chamorro, son of the pastor of the Pentecostal church Cruzada Estudiantil y Profesional de Colombia. Chamorro was elected in 1994 by more than 54 thousand votes, exceeding the number of voters to the MUC and doubling the PNC⁸⁶. The C-4 from its birth it maintained an attractive political speech to educated urban sectors and programs coherent with its religious principles⁸⁷. The C-4 was characterized by expressing their opposition to abortion and the law of unions of same-sex couples. Additionally, they hold a sense of crusade and “rescue” of lost values and a call to order and harmony in society under the principles of coexistence based on Christian beliefs.⁸⁸

81 CEDECOL and sixteen churches that are not members of CEDECOL.

82 Pablo Moreno, “Participación Política e Incidencia Pública de las Iglesias no Católicas en Colombia”... pp. 169-185; Paul Freston, *Protestant Political Parties A Global Survey*, Ashgate Publishing Company, 2004.

83 Daniela Helmsdorff, *Participación Política Evangélica en Colombia (1990-1994)*...

84 Ibidem.

85 Ibidem.

86 Beltrán Cely, William Mauricio, Jesús David Quiroga, *Pentecostalismo y política electoral en Colombia (1991-2014)*, *Colombia Internacional*, Vol. 91, 2017, pp. 187-212.

87 É. Murillo, *Política y Religión: el caso del Movimiento Compromiso Cívico Cristiano por la Comunidad C4*, Monografía en Sociología, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Departamento de Sociología, Bogotá, 2005.

88 Javier Duque Daza, *Las comunidades religiosas protestantes y su tránsito hacia lo político-electoral en Colombia, 1990-2007*,

In the three periods legislative (see Table 2), Chamorro was characterized by proposing initiatives against some of the most complex national problems, such as the degradation of the armed conflict, corruption and the weakness of the judicial system⁸⁹. Indeed, the most important law that Chamorro submitted was Legislative Act 02 of 2001, which incorporates the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court into Colombian legislation.⁹⁰ For 2006 elections, unlike MUC and PNC, Chamorro decided to participate in legislative elections and try to overcome the threshold. Although its closed list obtained more votes than candidates in the open list, it did not reach a seat.⁹¹ As a result, PNC lost the status legally. Currently, Jimmy Chamorro is a member of Partido de la U since 2014, and he seeks to remain in office.

Another political party was Movimiento Independiente Frente de Esperanza y Fe (FE). According to Calderon⁹², FE was defined as a movement based on Christian principles whose aspiration was to reduce poverty and participate in all spheres of power. Although it was proclaimed independent, it was closely linked to the Partido Liberal. FE was a dissidence of MUC that arose as a result of problems with the configuration of lists for the legislative elections 1994–1998.⁹³ In this elections, Viviane Morales was elected with 11,447 to the House of Representatives for Bogotá⁹⁴ and participated in caucus Alianza por Colombia.⁹⁵ In this period, she stands out for her role in the process to President Samper called the 8000 process. With this visibility, she participated in the legislative elections 1998–2002. Morales won a seat on Senate with just 40.864 votes, and Nelly Moreno earned a place on House of Representatives with 29.645 votes.⁹⁶

However, according to Morales, in 1999 FE joined the Partido Liberal⁹⁷ where she was a member of the Party leadership.⁹⁸ Although the party lost legal status in 2006, they did not present candidates for national elections since 2002⁹⁹.

Revista Mexicana de Sociología, Vol. 72, No. 1, 2010, pp. 73–111.

89 Beltrán Cely, William Mauricio, *Del Monopolio Católico a la Explosión Pentecostal. Pluralización religiosa, secularización y cambio social en Colombia*, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá, 2013.

90 Pablo Moreno, "Participación Política e Incidencia Pública de las Iglesias no Católicas en Colombia"... pp. 169–185.

91 Javier Duque Daza, *Las comunidades religiosas protestantes y su tránsito hacia lo político-electoral en Colombia, 1990–2007*, *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*, Vol. 72, No. 1, 2010, pp. 73–111.

92 Esteban Calderón Suárez, *Partidos Políticos Protestantes en el Sistema Político Colombiano: periodo 1990–2015*, Trabajo de grado para la obtención del título de Politólogo, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Carrera de Ciencia Política, Bogotá, 2016.

93 Javier Duque Daza, "Las comunidades religiosas protestantes y su tránsito hacia lo político-electoral en Colombia, 1990–2007"... pp. 73–111.

94 Beltrán Cely, William Mauricio, *Del Monopolio Católico a la Explosión Pentecostal. Pluralización religiosa, secularización y cambio social en Colombia*, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá, 2013.

95 "Pelear de Viviane Morales", *El Espectador*, 22 de Febrero de 2015.

96 "Los Votos de la Fé", *Semana*, 13 de Abril de 1998.

97 María Isabel Rueda, "¿Lo suyo fue por cristiana o porque la querían sacar del camino?", *El Tiempo*, 25 de Septiembre de 2017.

98 "Me hicieron trampa": Vivian Morales al retirar candidatura del partido Liberal", *Canal 1*, 21 de Septiembre de 2017, <https://canal1.com.co/noticias/politica/hicieron-trampa-vivian-morales-al-retirar-su-candidatura-del-partido-liberal/>

99 "Vigencia de Partidos Políticos", Resolución 1057 de 2006, Consejo Nacional Electoral, 13 de Julio de 2006.

Recently, the agreement between FE and the Partido Liberal has come to light because Morales has denounced the rules established by the Partido Liberal as a form of exclusion from his presidential candidacy for the 2018 national elections¹⁰⁰. Morales claimed, “for over twenty years, when we agreed to the Liberal Party and my FE Movement our political integration in liberalism, my status as a Christian woman was already public and was accepted”¹⁰¹. As a result, Morales resigned the Partido Liberal and announced his candidacy by Partido Somos.¹⁰²

On the other hand, in 2000 the Movimiento Independiente de Renovación Absoluta (MIRA) was created. This party, led by Carlos Alberto Baena and Alexandra Moreno Piraquive, relatives of María Luisa Piraquive pastor of the church Iglesia de Dios Ministerial de Jesucristo Internacional, is currently the only party with legal status in Colombia. Unlike the other parties, although its founding myth is related to a prophecy¹⁰³, its electoral publicity outside the religious community did not evoke or address spiritual aspects until the media scandal of 2014¹⁰⁴. However, after the scandal, the party has defended its religious origin and has outlined as one of its programmatic lines the defense of religious freedom in Colombia.

The MIRA began its electoral participation in the 2000 local elections, and since then it has maintained a tendency towards the nationalization of the party, that is, to distribute its electoral support throughout the national territory¹⁰⁵. This strategy has led him to generate mechanisms of participation and internal democracy such as the course-contest and the zipper list¹⁰⁶ (Reyes, 2010). The legislative dynamism of its caucus has been highlighted with bills mainly on issues such as fundamental rights, commerce, industry and tourism, social security, transit and transportation, security, defense and justice, and family issues¹⁰⁷. The electoral changes, especially the threshold increase¹⁰⁸, it has forced him to

100 The party established a denominating Liberal Manifesto in which the liberal principles were ratified. However, three elements outside the ideals and close to the position of some party leaders were included: “It was established that religious convictions could not have expression within the expressions of the party, that the implementation of the peace agreements must be total and without space for criticism, and the defense of the Constitutional Court’s rulings on consecrated rights for minorities discriminated against because of their sexual orientation (Rueda, 2017). These elements are contrary to the well-known position of Morales.

101 “Me hicieron trampa: Vivian Morales al retirar candidatura del partido Liberal”, *Canal 1*, 21 de Septiembre de 2017, <https://canal1.com.co/noticias/politica/hicieron-trampa-vivian-morales-al-retirar-su-candidatura-del-partido-liberal/>

102 “Viviane Morales oficializa su candidatura a la Presidencia por el Partido Somos”, *El Espectador*, 15 de Enero de 2018.

103 Javier Duque Daza, “Las comunidades religiosas protestantes y su tránsito hacia lo político-electoral en Colombia, 1990-2007”... pp. 73-111; Bibiana Ortega, De Movimiento Religioso a Partido Político, *Gestao e desenvolvimento*, Vol. XI, No. 2, 2014, pp. 27-45.

104 In the scandal the media leaked some recordings with alleged claims of Maria Luisa in which she prohibited the participation of people with disabilities in the service as ministers. Luis Bastidas, Bibiana Ortega, *Las elecciones nacionales y locales en Colombia 2014-2017. Polarización y Postconflicto*, Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá, 2017, forthcoming.

105 Bibiana Ortega, De Movimiento Religioso a Partido Político, *Gestao e desenvolvimento*, Vol. XI, No. 2, 2014.

106 Gina Marcela Reyes, Dinámicas de crecimiento y comportamiento electoral del Movimiento Independiente de Renovación Absoluta, in: *El pentecostalismo en Colombia. Prácticas religiosas, liderazgo y participación política*, Universidad Nacional de Colombia. Facultad de Ciencias Sociales. Centro de Estudios Sociales-CES, Bogotá, 2010, pp. 289-319.

107 Ibidem.

108 In 2009, a new political reform increased the threshold to 4%.

make interparty alliances to stay in the party system. Thanks to them, MIRA has implemented freedom of worship committees in the municipalities where their coalition triumphed.¹⁰⁹

Finally, in 2007 arose the Partido Cristiano de Transformación y Orden (PAC-TO). This party was composed of more than 50 religious organizations throughout the country, and the majority of candidates were pastors or evangelical leaders¹¹⁰. However, the most outstanding figure was Páez who was a councilor in Bogotá by MUC in 2004¹¹¹. According to Gustavo Páez, this party sought “to collect the flags that the Christian parties lost in the past elections and reach the Council with a theist and political proposal that has as its main axis the family (foundation of society), the church and the rejection of corruption”¹¹². Pacto obtained less than 20 thousand votes, did not pass the threshold and, as a result, it lost legal status.¹¹³

In summary, the legislative work of these parties was guided by its Christian values established in its statutes as shown in Table 3. These laws provide a defense of human dignity and human rights, of the right to life and protection of the family and the fight against corruption. In consequence, his political agenda revolved around four issues. First, its guarantee religious freedom and legal equality with the Catholic Church. Second, these parties legislate with base and in defense of Christian values as protection family and life right. Third, they presented projects to favor women, and finally, its sought to purify and Christianize politics¹¹⁴. The exception has been MIRA, which has presented a more extensive range of issues as mentioned above.

109 “Libertad Religiosa: Un paso histórico hacia una cultura de Paz en el país”, Partido MIRA, 7 de Julio de 2016, <https://partidomira.com/libertad-religiosa-paso-historico-hacia-una-cultura-paz-pais/>,

110 “Los pastores de Dios en la política”, *El Espectador*, 22 de Febrero de 2010.

111 “Gustavo Paez Merchán”, *La Silla Vacía*, 13 de Julio de 2016, <http://lasillavacia.com/quienesquien/perfilquien/gustavo-paez-merchan>,

112 “Nuestro interés es fortalecer la familia”: pastor y concejal Gustavo Páez Merchán de Pacto”, *El Tiempo*, 19 de Octubre de 2007.

113 “Gustavo Paez Merchán”, *La Silla Vacía*, 13 de Julio de 2016, <http://lasillavacia.com/quienesquien/perfilquien/gustavo-paez-merchan>,

114 Daniela Helmsdorff, *Participación Política Evangélica en Colombia...*; Pablo Moreno, “Participación Política e Incidencia Pública de las Iglesias no Católicas en Colombia”... pp. 169-185; Beltrán Cely, William Mauricio, Jesús David Quiroga, Pentecostalismo y política electoral en Colombia (1991-2014), *Colombia Internacional*, Vol. 91, 2017, pp. 187-212.

Table 3. Relevant objectives according to its Statute

PPE	Objectives
PNC	The PNC defends the right to life and highlights as contrary practices abortion, research on the human genome and euthanasia. Recognizes the family as the fundamental nucleus of society and is committed to its defense and protection. It encourages the participation of young people, women, the elderly, the disabled and ethnic groups. It assumes the advocacy of human rights and international humanitarian law. The property must fulfill a social function. The party champions political control as a way to uproot corruption. Preamble (Partido Nacional Cristiano).
MUC	The ideological framework from which it is proposed to carry out its public management has as a fundamental principle the teachings contained in the Holy Bible. The party tends to defend the dignity of man and his rights based on an integral vision of the Holy Gospel (Movimiento Unión Cristiana, pág. Art. 6).
C-4	The party wanted to contribute to the integral solution of the individual, social and family problems and to advance educational programs to sow principles such as service, freedom, justice (C-4, pág. 3).
FE	The party sought to contribute to reducing poverty, combat corruption, contribute to the development of fundamental principles and essential purposes of the rule of law, work in defense of human rights, strive for peaceful coexistence, contribute to the development of citizen participation mechanisms, seek the integral education of the citizen. (Movimiento Independiente Frente de Esperanza, pág. 7).
MIRA	Its purpose is to influence the transformation of political, economic, social and environmental reality, through acting based on moral behaviors that seek to achieve respect for human dignity, the improvement of the quality of life and the consolidation of a harmonious society (MIRA, pág. 7).

Source: Statutes of parties.

Second wave Political Mobilization: the defense of Christian morality

As in the rest of Latin America, the Colombian evangelical movement in this last decade has turned to the public sphere in advocacy of the right to life and the traditional family. According to Chesnut "they oppose abortion, gay marriage, the legalization of marijuana and favor traditionalist models of the family and traditional gender roles"¹¹⁵. In Colombia, rulings concerning in favor of abortion and the rights of the LGBT community by Constitutional Court, as well as the debates around the so-called gender ideology, it has consolidated a new interest

115 "Voto evangélico abre la puerta a ola conservadora en Latinoamérica", *El Espectador*, 16 de Octubre de 2016, <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/elmundo/voto-evangelico-abre-puerta-ola-conservadora-latinoamer-articulo-661491>, Acceso em 21 de Octubre de 2016.

which is transversal to the different Christian currents. This scenario has allowed them to unite to mobilize in the public sphere and have an impact in the political field. As a result, evangelical and conservative Catholics work together to defend of Christian principles.

Although “since 2005 several organizations of the Colombian LGBT movement have been implementing a constitutional impact litigation strategy to obtain legal equality”¹¹⁶, the religious mobilization only started when the Constitutional Court began to change its jurisprudential position against the concept of family. The article 42 of the Political Constitution states: “The family is the fundamental nucleus of society, it is constituted by natural or legal ties, by the free decision of a man and a woman to marry or by the responsible will to form it”¹¹⁷ Based on a historical and literal interpretation of that article, the Court had repeatedly indicated that the constitutionally protected family was the heterosexual and the monogamous that was formed by marriage or by the de facto marital union between a man and a woman.¹¹⁸

However, the ruling of the Tutela action T-716/11 determined for the first time, clearly and precisely, that same-sex couples are family¹¹⁹. That same year, the ruling by the Constitutional Court C-577/11, the Court gave Congress a term of two years to fully legislate a deficit of rights evidenced for the LGBT community. The Court noted that if that did not happen, same-sex couples could go to judge or notary to formalize their unionized¹²⁰. As a result, these rulings opened the debate around the concept of family and religious mobilization in public arena. This mobilization began in Congress where four bills were presented to regulate what was established by the Court¹²¹.

The pressure of religious groups on the congressmen, as well as the outstanding figure of the attorney, focused on preventing the approval of the bills. For example, Cardinal Rubén Salazar sent a letter to all senators arguing that marriage should be heterosexual by “procreation”¹²². Likewise, the attorney, representatives of the Catholic Church and evangelical organizations in the country formalized an alliance against gay marriage led by senators Edgar Espíndola Niño

116 Lina Malagón Penen, *Movimiento LGBT y Contra Movimiento Religioso en Colombia*, *Revista de Estudos Empiricos em Direito*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 2015, pp. 162-184.

117 “Constitución Política de Colombia”, Legis, Bogotá, 1991.

118 Lina Malagón Penen, “Movimiento LGBT y Contra Movimiento Religioso en Colombia” . . .

119 “Los triunfos jurídicos de la comunidad gay en Colombia en los últimos años”, *El País*, 6 de Abril de 2016, <http://www.elpais.com.co/colombia/los-triunfos-juridicos-de-la-comunidad-gay-en-en-los-ultimos-anos.html>.

120 “Corte reconoce como familias a parejas del mismo sexo”, *El Tiempo*, 27 de Julio de 2011; “Los triunfos jurídicos de la comunidad gay en Colombia en los últimos años” *El País*, de Abril de 2016, <http://www.elpais.com.co/colombia/los-triunfos-juridicos-de-la-comunidad-gay-en-en-los-ultimos-anos.html>.

121 “Se hundió en Colombia iniciativa sobre matrimonio igualitario”, *El Tiempo*, 24 de Abril de 2013; Mauricio Albaracín, Julieta Albaracín Lemaitre, “La cruzada contra el matrimonio entre personas del mismo sexo en Colombia”, in: M. Sáez, & J. M. Morán Faúndes (Eds.), *Sexo, Delitos y Pecados. Intersecciones entre religión, género, sexualidad y el derecho en América Latina*, American University, Washington, D.C, 2016, pp. 90-119.

122 “Iglesia hace “lobby” pidiendo hundir matrimonio igualitario”, *El Espectador*, 16 de Abril de 2013.

and Claudia Wilches Sarmiento¹²³. Also, the attorney since 2011 claimed: “the child has the right to a family, a father, and a mother, it is a fundamental right of children that prevail over those of parents and society”¹²⁴. Accordingly, Colombia Diversa, the leading organization in favor of the rights of the LGBT community, initiated a new legal strategy in the Constitutional Court.

Also, the religious mobilization was promoted by secular organizations as well as Christian denominations. These groups have defended the idea that the family composed of a man and a woman is the first institution society. According to Malagón¹²⁵, the Red Familia Colombia, the Fundación Marido y Mujer, and 1H+1M were associations that sought and influence public authorities and tried to stop the advances obtained through jurisprudence. The strategy of these organizations was double. First, they defended the concept established in the constitution from the defense of constitutionally recognized rights. Second, they have accused this Court of having usurped the legislative power and threatened to promote a referendum by popular initiative to prohibit same-sex couples from marrying, forming a family and adopting.

At the same time, Colombia Diversa promoted marriage requests of same-sex couples before the judges and to carry out campaigns that would strengthen the legitimacy of these marriages.¹²⁶ However, according to Albarracín & Lemaitre the attorney also initiated a strategy to prevent such marriages:

First, he insisted that the 2011 decision could not be applied without a new ruling by the Court and that, while that second decision was pending, judges and public notaries who officiated marriages between same-sex couples were, in fact, violating the law. Second, he threatened to take disciplinary action against those who did. Finally, he ordered his delegates in the civil courts to formally oppose any request for a marriage license for same-sex couples. As a result, the Unión de Notarios decided to promote the solemn union contract.¹²⁷

The second milestone of religious mobilization was the ruling by the Constitutional Court in which the adoption for same-sex couples was recognized (C-071/15). This verdict defended the rights of the minor to have a family¹²⁸ and argues that no gay can be considered unqualified to submit to the adoption process.¹²⁹ In contrast, in an official statement CEDECOL claimed:

123 Espíndola and Wilches are members of Pentecostals churches; “Procurador, católicos y cristianos crean bloque anti-matrimonio gay”, *El Espectador*, 3 de Abril de 2013.

124 “Procurador insiste en que una familia estable es entre hombre y mujer”, *El Tiempo*, 13 de Mayo de 2011.

125 Lina Malagón Penen, Movimiento LGBT y Contra Movimiento Religioso en Colombia, *Revista de Estudos Empíricos em Direito*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 2015, pp. 162-184.

126 Mauricio Albarracín, Julieta Albarracín Lemaitre, “La cruzada contra el matrimonio entre personas del mismo sexo en Colombia”, in: M. Sáez, & J. M. Morán Faúndes (Eds.), *Sexo, Delitos y Pecados. Intersecciones entre religión, género, sexualidad y el derecho en América Latina*, American University, Washington, D.C, 2016, pp. 90-119.

127 Mauricio Albarracín, “Complot de notarios para negar matrimonio igualitario”, *La Silla Vacía*, 22 de Junio de 2013, <http://lasillavacia.com/elblogueo/blog/complot-de-notarios-para-negar-matrimonio-igualitario-45080>.

128 “Corte Constitucional da vía libre a adopción gay en Colombia”, *El Tiempo*, 4 de Noviembre de 2015.

129 “Trascendental decisión: homosexuales pueden adoptar”, *Semana*, 4 de Noviembre de 2015.

“The ruling of the Constitutional Court on the adoption of children by same-sex couples is an attack against democracy and the dignity of the Colombian people ... CEDECOL encourages all Christians not to lower their arms; now we will raise them with greater force. I invite the national church in a peaceful but firm way to make public demonstrations in all our cities and towns of the country for expressing our disagreement with the right of a people that is being subjected to the dictatorship of a Court”¹³⁰.

In turn, the General Attorney said that action of nullity would begin¹³¹. Congressmen like Jimmy Chamorro claimed “I want to express my rejection of the decision of the @Constitutional to endorse # adoption of girls and boys by same-sex couples. Where is the concept of family consigned in our Political Constitution?”¹³². Consequently, Catholic and evangelical sectors began to work on the possibility of holding a popular initiative. Indeed, Viviane Morales presented the proposal *Firme por Papá y Mamá*. It was a campaign to collect the necessary signatures to start a referendum¹³³. This campaign began in April with the inscription in the Registry of the Promoter Committee that would collect the citizen support, and it was presented on November 5 at the Congress.¹³⁴

This campaign was promoted by CEDECOL and different Christian currents, too. Cedecol organized the process of collecting signatures and encouraged “it is time to remember more firmly that our reference is the Bible. Male and female he created them, firm by dad and mom, everyone on the streets!”¹³⁵. The media and networks of the churches were the platforms to spread the arguments in favor of the traditional family¹³⁶. Platforms like *Unidos por la Vida* in defense of the family and against gay adoption did Street demonstrations¹³⁷. Also, the Catholic Church joined the process of collecting signatures and public events together with evangelicals.¹³⁸

Nevertheless, another milestone for the LGBT community was reached. In ruling SU214/16 Court Constitutional decided to recognize marriage for same-

130 “Comunicado”, CEDECOL, 5 de Noviembre de 2015, www.cedecol.net, Bogotá, Acceso em 9 de Septiembre de 2016.

131 “Las posibilidades del arsenal jurídico contra la adopción gay”, *El Tiempo*, 6 de Noviembre de 2015.

132 “Voces a favor y en contra de la adopción por parejas gay; Iglesia Católica colombiana pide un plebiscito”, Radio Santa Fe, 15 de Noviembre de 2015, <http://www.radiosantafe.com/2015/11/05/voces-a-favor-y-en-contra-de-la-adopcion-por-parejas-gay-iglesia-catolica-colombiana-pide-un-plebiscito/>

133 “Firme por papá y mamá”, Viviane Morales, <https://youtu.be/k71CunvvcE>;

134 “La batalla de Viviane Morales contra la adopción igualitaria”, *Semana*, 5 de Noviembre de 2015.

135 “Evangélicos se levantan contra adopción gay aprobada en Colombia”, *NoticiaCristiana*, 6 de Noviembre de 2015, <http://www.noticiacristiana.com/sociedad/iglesiaestado/2015/11/evangelicos-se-levantaran-contra-adopcion-gay-aprobada-en-colombia.html>;

136 “¿Adopción de niños por parte de parejas del mismo sexo?”, G12 Radio, 28 de Agosto de 2014, <http://g12radio.com/adopcion-de-ninos-por-parte-de-parejas-del-mismo-sexo/>;

137 “Masiva manifestación en defensa de la familia y contra adopción gay en Colombia”, *Aciprensa*, 12 de Noviembre de 2015, <https://www.aciprensa.com/noticias/video-masiva-manifestacion-en-defensa-de-la-familia-y-contra-adopcion-gay-en-colombia-88976>;

138 “Manifestación en Defensa de la Familia”, Arquidiócesis de Manizales, Enero de 2016, <http://www.arquidiocesisdemanzales.com/page/index.php/manifestacion-en-defensa-de-la-familia>,

sex couples.¹³⁹ In this decision, the Court studied four Tutela actions presented by activists of the LGBT community. These activists sought that unions between same-sex couples not be classified as a solemn union, but as a civil marriage, with the same rights and duties as those of heterosexual couples.¹⁴⁰ The legal strategy of LGBT activist paid off. The reaction did not wait. For example, the congressman Jimmy Chamorro claimed: “the decision of the Court violated the substance of what the Constitution defines as a family, which must be made up of a man and a woman”¹⁴¹.

Since the public hearing on same-sex marriage organized by the Court in 2015, the so-called counselor of the family Marco Fidel Ramirez and CEDECOL presented arguments against such union:

“The sexual orientation of the people is a free choice that must be guaranteed, as well as the freedom of those who follow Jesus Christ, without being discriminated against or marked with pejorative qualifiers for declaring the convenience of heterosexual marriage. The marriage is constituted by a man and a woman only”¹⁴².

Also, the General Attorney Alejandro Ordóñez criticized the ruling of the court, noting that violates the concepts of marriage and family established in the Constitution¹⁴³.

However, the most critical religious mobilization in public arena was a few months later, on August 10, 2016, when the Christian current manifested itself in the streets against the sexual education booklets. They rejected the so-called “confusing gender education”¹⁴⁴. Religious groups, associations of parents of the family, Christian platforms, political leaders were mobilized throughout the country to denounce that the Ministry of Education (MEN) would have formulated for the inclusion of gender ideology in the manuals of coexistence of schools¹⁴⁵. According to Ministerio de Educación, the document includes recommendations for educational institutions and parents to foster inclusive environments. It also responds to a mandate from the Court that seeks to eradicate the bullying of schools that have been victimized by several students.¹⁴⁶

139 “Corte Constitucional de la de el “sí” al matrimonio igualitario”, *El Espectador*, 7 de Abril de 2016.

140 “Histórico: Colombia tiene matrimonio homosexual”, *El Tiempo*, 7 de Abril de 2016, <http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-16557410>.

141 “Corte Constitucional de Colombia da espaldarazo final al matrimonio homosexual”, BBC, http://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias/2016/04/160407_colombia_matrimonio_igualitario_nc;

142 “Evangélicos piden a Corte Constitucional de Colombia no avalar matrimonio gay”, *Noticia Cristiana*, 8 de Julio de 2015, <https://www.noticiacristiana.com/sociedad/moralidad/2015/07/evangelicos-piden-no-aval-ar-matrimonio-gay.html>;

143 “Corte Constitucional aprueba matrimonio gay en Colombia”, DW, 8 de Abril de 2016, <http://www.dw.com/es/corte-constitucional-aprueba-matrimonio-gay-en-colombia/a-19172677>;

144 “Oswaldo Ortiz, el youtuber abanderado de la heterosexualidad que critica el “matoneo” LGBTI”, *El Espectador*, 9 de Agosto de 2016.

145 “Así fue la marcha contra supuestos cambios en manuales de convivencia”, *El Tiempo*, 10 de Agosto de 2016.

146 “Iglesia colombiana convoca a marcha contra ideología de género que “destruye a la sociedad””, CNN en español, <http://cnnespanol.cnn.com/2016/08/10/iglesia-colombiana-convoca-a-marcha-contra-ideologia-de-genero-pues-asegura-que-destruye-a-la-sociedad/>;

The apple of discord was the term “gender ideology”, which according to the document states that “you are not born as a woman or man, but you learn to be, according to the society and time in which you grow up”¹⁴⁷. From the positions in front of it, a wave of confrontations began between Minister Parody and evangelical leaders. First, Angela Hernández, a deputy in Santander, made the public denunciation of the sexual education booklets. She affirmed that the Ministry took advantage of the context of Law 1620 of 2013, which promotes the fight against bullying in schools, to impose gender ideology in schools.¹⁴⁸ Then, Oswaldo Ortíz, an evangelical YouTuber, promoted religious mobilization and questioned the role of the Santos government in defense of the traditional family and Christian principles.

According to Ortíz, manuals were advised by UNICEF, an Italian cooperation agency, and Colombia Diversa so on, without consulting with heterosexual parents.¹⁴⁹ Minister Gina Parody and UNFPA were clear in saying that the booklet was only an unofficial technical work document, not endorsed by the Ministry. The problem was that it was already circulating, although it did not have the government’s approval, and critics reinforced the idea that a gender ideology was being implemented in the classrooms.¹⁵⁰ In contrast, Ortíz said that the booklet was registered in the Cámara del Libro on behalf of the Ministry of Education and questioned who made the registration on behalf of the Ministry of Education.¹⁵¹

President Santos had to leave to affirm that neither the Ministry nor his administration have promoted or will promote the so-called gender ideology. And he recalled that the Government is obliged to comply with the rulings of the Constitutional Court and to comply with its obligation to combat discrimination and bullying against children.¹⁵² Given this response and the tone of the debate, the half-truths, the religious mobilization, the evangelicals began to request the resignation of Minister Parody.¹⁵³ In the political discussion in Congress, the Parody minister said that the debate in front of the booklets was a personal attack because of her lesbian sexual condition.¹⁵⁴

Consequently, Gina Parody received a license and was commissioned to lead the Yes campaign in the plebiscite for peace.¹⁵⁵ This decision surprised the

147 Ibidem.

148 “Entrevista con Angela Hernandez sobre la Colonización Homosexual en Colombia”, Super00 tv 28 de Julio de 2016, <https://youtu.be/Z1L-CUcRXAI>;

149 “Gina Parody nos sigue mintiendo?”, Super00 tv, 11 de Agosto de 2016, <https://youtu.be/7Y3lxQSNtSI>;

150 “Cartilla sobre discriminación sexual en colegios dividió al país”, *El Tiempo*, 14 de Agosto de 2016.

151 “El Gobierno de Colombia, ¿no ha promovido la ideología de género?”, 13 de Agosto de 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8cl4p4kUXWI>;

152 “Cartilla sobre discriminación sexual en colegios dividió al país”, *El Tiempo*, 14 de Agosto de 2016.

153 “El Gobierno de Colombia, ¿no ha promovido la ideología de género?”, 13 de Agosto de 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8cl4p4kUXWI>;

154 “Por lesbiana me acusan de todo: Parody dice que Uribe también publicó cartillas”, Noticias Caracol tv, 17 de Agosto de 2016, <https://noticias.caracoltv.com/colombia/cuantos-muertos-se-necesitan-para-acabar-la-discriminacion-gina-parody>;

155 “Gina Parody deja su cargo un mes para encabezar campaña por el Sí en el plebiscito”, *El Espectador*, 30 de Agosto de 2016.

public opinion because the Minister did not have the best levels of popularity. Also, among the religious movements, there was already the idea that gender ideology would be incorporated into the Peace Process Agreement.¹⁵⁶ Then, his appointment in the Yes campaign was counterproductive. Opponents of the Agreement, such as former President Uribe and former Attorney Ordoñez, joined religious groups in defense of the traditional family. As a result, the Minister resigned before the results of the plebiscite and the mismanagement of the crisis product of the marches against the sexual education booklets.¹⁵⁷

The plebiscite

In July 2015 a select and diverse group of religious leaders presented to the public a letter called: “Las armas son el fracaso de la palabra”. In this document, representatives of different currents addressed especially the negotiators of the government and the FARC in Havana to request an agreement that would leave the war behind¹⁵⁸. However, the plebiscite campaign was politicized in religious terms around the inclusion or not of the gender ideology in the Agreements.

Among those who supported the yes, there were some churches of historical Protestantism such as the Methodists and the Presbyterians, who since the sanction of the decree that established July 4 as the national day of religious freedom expressed their support for the Agreement and the post-conflict.¹⁵⁹ Colombia, his work in favor of peace is publicly recognized, as well as that of his centers of thought such as Justapaz. Likewise, religious platforms like Mesa EcuMénica por la Paz (MEP), Diálogo Intereclesial por la Paz (DIPAZ), Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular (CINEP), World Vision Colombia so on, actively participated in the dissemination of the Agreements and the Yes campaign.

Although recognized pastors supported the Yes as Dario Silva-Silva of Iglesia Casa Sobre la Roca, Pastors Rodríguez of Avivamiento para las Naciones and MIRA leaders, another changes his position. For example, Ricardo Arias, who in August had met with former president Gaviria to express the support of several churches and denominations to the Sí¹⁶⁰, in September claimed:

“We have always seen with great pleasure the termination of the conflict. But our displeasure with the peace agreement is with the additions, specifically with what has to do with gender ideology, because it touches the institution of the

156 “El Gobierno de Colombia, ¿no ha promovido la ideología de género?”, 13 de Agosto de 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8cl4p4kUXWI>;

157 “Gina Parody renuncia como ministra de Educación”, *Semana*, 4 de Octubre de 2016, <http://www.semana.com/educacion/articulo/renuncia-de-gina-parody/497734>;

158 “La batalla de Viviane Morales contra la adopción igualitaria”, *Semana*, 5 de Noviembre de 2015.

159 “Las iglesias que le dieron el sí al plebiscito por la paz”, *Caracol*, 5 de Julio de 2016, http://caracol.com.co/radio/2016/07/05/politica/1467697282_221045.html;

160 “Iglesias cristianas le dieron la bendición al Sí”, *Semana*, 8 de Septiembre de 2016, <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/plebiscito-por-la-paz-iglesias-cristianas-le-dieron-la-bendicion-al-si/486255>;

family and leaves us no alternative but to go out and defend it”¹⁶¹.

Other institutions appealed to the conscience of their members for the definition of their vote highlighting the importance of the moment. Thus, the Catholic church claimed:

“We call on the Colombian people to participate in the consultation on the Havana Agreements. Responsibly, with an informed and conscientious vote, that freely expresses their opinion, as an effective exercise of democracy and with due respect for what the majority finally determine”¹⁶².

However, they did not take a position on one or the other tendency because of his internal disagreements. Likewise, CEDECOL through its president, Edgar Castaño, claimed: “CEDECOL is not committed to the yes, or the no. CEDECOL is committed to peace...Cedecol is to form, inform and prepare the church to vote in conscience in the direction of the Holy Spirit”¹⁶³. In other words, CEDECOL established that was not going to take a corporate position because its members did not have a similar view but they invited to vote in conscience.¹⁶⁴

In contrast, some megachurches pastors campaigned for the No. For example, Pastors Castellanos of MCI; Héctor Pardo of Tabernáculo de la Fe; Jhon Milton Rodríguez of Misión Paz a las Naciones and Eduardo Cañas of Iglesia Manantial de Vida Eterna. These pastors were fervent defenders of the argument that the Peace Agreements would include the gender ideology. Thus, they began to implement a strategy to mobilize their congregations. Among the actions that stand out are first, the celebration of a national meeting of pastors held in Bogotá on September 12; second, a call for national prayer for September 30 in the public squares; finally, the formation of the Pacto Cristiano por la Paz.

With the results of October 2, the religious groups that led the No, emerged as a relevant political actor to take into account for the new cycle of negotiations between the government and the opponents of the Agreement¹⁶⁵. In other words, the “gender ideology” term will be central to understanding the political realignment of Evangelicals and conservative Catholics in the face of Plebiscite. The little assertive responses of Minister Parody, as well as the support of President Santos, allow us to understand the critical role that conservative religious sectors played in the results of the Plebiscite.

Consequently, CEDECOL led the reception of proposals for adjustment of the Agreements to present to the government as well as the formation of working groups by themes that systematize and unify them. In its motion, CEDECOL

161 “Plebiscito por la paz: el decisivo voto de los evangélicos”, *Semana*, 17 de Septiembre de 2016, <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/plebiscito-por-la-paz-el-voto-de-los-evangelicos-es-decisivo-para-la-campana/494042>;

162 “Comunicado de la Comisión Permanente de la Conferencia Episcopal Colombiana”, Conferencia Episcopal de Colombia, Bogotá, 9 de Septiembre de 2016.

163 “Comunicado Cedecol”, CEDECOL, 28 de Agosto de 2016, <https://youtu.be/1clsJYNkMs>;

164 “CEDECOL ante los medios”, CEDECOL, 29 de Septiembre de 2016, <https://youtu.be/Dq1wQkBc01A>;

165 “El Fenómeno Cristiano detrás del No”, *El Espectador*, 22 de Octubre de 2016, <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/el-fenomeno-cristiano-detras-del-no-articulo-661678>, Acceso em 24 de Octubre de 2016.

presented alternatives that made possible the recognition of the differentiated approach towards women victims of the conflict. This as a consequence of their appreciation that the Agreements contemplated the gender ideology in different sections of the text.¹⁶⁶ Additionally, they proposed that the government recognize them as victims of the conflict, that freedom of worship is guaranteed, and that evangelical groups be accepted as main actors in the post-conflict period to contribute to the restoration of the social fabric.¹⁶⁷

In parallel, the Pacto Cristiano por la Paz, on October 12, brought together more than 700 pastors from all over Colombia. This movement presented another proposal to the national government to modify the Havana Agreements, as did other religious groups. Its representatives, Eduardo Cañas – Héctor J. Pardo– John Milton Rodríguez, were present in Havana on October 28 to support its eight recommendations¹⁶⁸. However, the new agreements only recognized three proposals of 9 submitted by the religious sectors¹⁶⁹. As a result, they expressed dissatisfaction with the Agreements presented by the government and the FARC on November 12. Mainly because according to them the new agreements maintained the gender ideology.¹⁷⁰

In 2017, while the country was following the process of implementing the new agreements, the referendum against the adoption of same-sex couples proposed by Senator Viviane Morales continued its legal procedure before the Congress. On May 10, the First Commission of the House of Representatives denied the legislative initiative that sought to call Colombians to the polls to decide if only heterosexual couples were allowed to adopt.¹⁷¹ This historic decision was set by demonstrations in the streets of both religious groups and members of the LGBT community, by debates among members of Congress, by the public position of the government's rejection of the proposal.¹⁷²

Although Morales was defeated in Congress, the religious groups that supported her became increasingly aware that they can only do the defense of their values and principles. On the one hand, the experience of the Plebiscite was

166 "Colombia: Pastores crean mesa de diálogo sobre acuerdo de paz", Cbn, 6 de Octubre de 2016, <http://www.cbn.com/mundocristiano/Latinoamerica/2016/October/Colombia-Pastores-crean-mesa-de-dialogo-sobre-acuerdo-de-paz-/>;

167 "El Fenómeno Cristiano detrás del No", *El Espectador*, 22 de Octubre de 2016, <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/el-fenomeno-cristiano-detras-del-no-articulo-661678>, Acceso em 24 de Octubre de 2016.

168 "Las ocho peticiones de los pastores del No", *Semana*, 15 de Octubre de 2016, <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/las-ocho-peticiones-de-los-pastores-que-votaron-no-en-el-plebiscito/499219>; "Pacto Cristiano por la Paz", Valores Cristianos, Octubre de 2016, <http://valorescristianos.net/pacto-cristiano-la-paz/>;

169 "El pastor que gana atractivo en el Valle", *La Silla Vacía*, 16 de Diciembre de 2016, <http://lasillavacia.com/historia/el-pastor-que-gana-atractivo-en-el-valle-59147>;

170 "Los pastores del No a los que no les gustó el nuevo acuerdo", *Semana*, 17 de Noviembre de 2016, <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/los-pastores-del-no-inconformes-con-el-nuevo-acuerdo-de-paz/505689>;

171 "Se hundió referendo de Viviane Morales, el No ganó en tercer debate", *El Espectador*, 10 de Mayo de 2017, <https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/se-hundio-referendo-de-viviane-morales-el-no-gano-en-tercer-debate-articulo-693218>;

172 "Cristianos y LGBTi: ambos sienten que ganaron con el Acuerdo", *La Silla Vacía*, 18 de Noviembre de 2016, <http://lasillavacia.com/historia/cristianos-y-lgbti-ambos-sienten-que-ganaron-con-el-acuerdo-58838>;

unpleasant for some, who felt manipulated by certain established parties that made use of the discourse of gender ideology for that electoral event but did not accompany them in the referendum vote. On the other hand, they understood that the LGBT movement was organized and had representatives in Congress, that put them at a disadvantage when it came to defending their interests because they had to depend on traditional politicians.

As a result, the proposals for Morales to be the candidate of the religious sector did not wait¹⁷³. Likewise, a considerable number of denominations and churches began to organize to participate in elections through established parties and significant movement of citizens. Of the religious mobilization, some religious sectors happened to the participation in the electoral competition.

New (and old) Political Movements

The result of the new peace agreement and the religious mobilization against gender ideology and the defense of the traditional family constituted the political opportunity for electoral participation. From that moment, the involvement of some evangelical sectors in the 2018 national elections began to be discussed and planned. Consequently, the supposed unity achieved as a consequence of negotiations with the government after the triune of no gave way to the emergence of a set of movements and political alignments of the most prominent leaders of the Pentecostal churches.

On one side were César Castellanos and his wife Claudia Castellanos, who together with Pastor Arrazola, supported the Partido Centro Democrático. Although the Pastors led the Pacto Cristiano por la Paz, they stayed inside the party. However, one year later, Pastors Castellanos announced that left the party arguing disagreements in the formation of the lists to the Congress.¹⁷⁴ Currently, they are part of the lists by the party Cambio Radical, the party in which they had already participated between 2006 and 2010.¹⁷⁵ The evangelical quota left by the Castellanos was occupied by Oswaldo Ortíz, an evangelical YouTuber who was instrumental in the campaign against sexual education booklets and the plebiscite.¹⁷⁶

On the other hand, although the Pacto Cristiano por la Paz has brought together a significant number of pastors, at the beginning of 2017 emerged the Movimiento Nacional para Discipular a la Nación led by Héctor Pardo, Jhon Mil-

173 "La victoria de Viviane y los cristianos después del referendo", La Silla Vacía, 25 de Mayo de 2017, <http://lasillavacia.com/historia/la-victoria-de-viviane-y-los-cristianos-despues-del-referendo-61080>;

174 "Álvaro Uribe pierde un aliado clave: la Misión Carismática Internacional", *El Espectador*, 21 de Noviembre de 2017, <https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/alvaro-uribe-pierde-un-aliado-clave-la-mision-carismatica-internacional-articulo-724432>;

175 "Cristianos, como el hijo pródigo, vuelven a Cambio Radical", *El Colombiano*, 7 de Diciembre de 2017, <http://www.elcolombiano.com/colombia/politica/claudia-rodriguez-de-castellanos-vuelve-a-cambio-radical-DA7828621>;

176 "La unidad cristiana no aguantó hasta 2018", La Silla Vacía, 26 de Septiembre de 2017, <http://lasillavacia.com/la-unidad-cristiana-no-aguanto-hasta-2018-62710>;

ton Rodríguez, and Eduardo Cañas.¹⁷⁷ In this movement, the Pastors Castellanos did not participate, and the meetings were moved to the headquarters of the Iglesia Manantial. These meetings were not only spaces for prayer but also of formation in biblical theism by international preachers such as Marcelo Díaz, as well as planning spaces for the electoral strategy.¹⁷⁸

As a consequence, in the first convention, the Movement decided to support the Movimiento Libres. Libres was a significant movement of citizens, who achieved representation in the local elections of 2015 led by Ricardo Arias. However, in the third convention of the Movement, some pastors decided to separate from Arias, who was charged by the Prosecutor for alleged irregularities in the purchase of the headquarters of the Fondo Nacional del Ahorro.¹⁷⁹ Some months later, Pastors Cañas and Rodríguez presented the Movimiento Colombia Justa. Nevertheless, the response at the local level to the proposal did not yield the expected results, and over time the Movimiento Libres and Colombia Justa gave way to the significant movement of citizens called Colombia Justa Libres.¹⁸⁰

Currently, Colombia Justa Libres says to represent 70% of the evangelical churches.¹⁸¹ They presented a list to the Senate with 56 candidates led by Jhon Milton Rodríguez and 24 lists to the House of Representatives.¹⁸² According to Rodríguez, the Movement:

“It is made up of men and women who have assumed the mission of seeking for Colombia a culture of good government, defense of the law and institutions, guarantees for all citizens, defense of life, fight against corruption, poverty, and peacebuilding. In this commitment are the living forces that participated in the August 2016 mobilization that avoided the imposition of an educational model that went against Christian principles. Also participating are the leaders who achieved the revision of the peace agreements signed between the Government and the FARC”¹⁸³.

Other representative’s leaders presented themselves through established parties. For example, Jimmy Chamorro of the missing C-4 party is part of the Partido de la U. Chamorro tries reelection with this collectivity proposing family-centered values legislation.¹⁸⁴ Similarly, Gustavo Paez founder of missing Pacto

177 Ibidem.

178 “2 Gran Convocatoria Nacional”, Movimiento Nacional para Discipular la Nación e impactar las elecciones 2018, 22 de Marzo de 2017, <https://es-la.facebook.com/Movimiento-Nacional-para-Discipular-la-Naci%C3%B3n-1313926105339838/>;

179 “La unidad cristiana no aguantó hasta 2018”, La Silla Vacía, 26 de Septiembre de 2017, <http://lasillavacia.com/la-unidad-cristiana-no-aguanto-hasta-2018-62710/>;

180 “Unión Colombia Justa Libres, Hagámoslo Juntos!”, Colombia Justa Libres, 5 de Septiembre de 2017, <https://youtu.be/4cjKE8B0uk>;

181 “Colombia Justa-Libres, la apuesta electoral cristiana”, *El Espectador*, 28 de Octubre de 2017, <https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/colombia-justa-libres-la-apuesta-electoral-cristiana-articulo-720411>;

182 “No podemos quedarnos diciendo que somos apolíticos’ Pastor Rodríguez”, *El Tiempo*, 23 de Diciembre de 2017, <http://www.eltiempo.com/elecciones-colombia-2018/congreso/pastor-habla-de-las-candidaturas-cristianas-al-congreso-de-la-republica-164648>;

183 Ibidem.

184 “Conozca algunas de mis propuestas para este nuevo periodo legislativo”, Jimmy Chamorro Web site, 5 de Enero de 2018, <https://>

party is part of the list of the traditional Partido Conservador.¹⁸⁵ The slogan of his campaign is centered on a #Bogotá sana in defense of the right to life. Also, Esteban Ramírez, son of the so-called counselor of the family, participates as a candidate for the House of Representatives for Bogota for the party Opción Ciudadana. The slogan of his campaign is to defend the family from communism and the gender ideology.

On the other hand, MIRA remains the only political party with evangelical orientation. Its primary challenge is to overcome the electoral threshold to maintain legal status. Your campaign slogan is with MIRA the policy is making. Baena in the inscription of candidates insisted that the party has always been based on policy with values, in enhancing the role of women, of the family, of the elderly, of children, of young people.¹⁸⁶ Although there were attempts to revive the legal status of another evangelical political party, the Partido Nacional Cristiano, Claudia Castellanos has to look for other options for their political aspirations.¹⁸⁷

Moreover, in May 2017, the Partido Somos Colombia appeared. This party arose as a result of the authorization given by the Consejo Nacional Electoral to former party Alas Equipo Colombia to change its name.¹⁸⁸ According to Mabel Hermida, the party has a new executive Council that organized its assembly, changed the title, and built a new platform.¹⁸⁹ Somos Colombia has a significant presence of both Catholic and evangelical believers.¹⁹⁰ They say to defend the family and respect the values.¹⁹¹ As a result, in January 2018, they presented the candidacy of Viviane Morales to the presidency.¹⁹²

Morales resigned from the Partido Liberal after refusing to sign a “liberal manifesto” that opposed his religious beliefs.¹⁹³ The acceptance of the manifesto was necessary to be able to participate in the internal consultation of the liberal party to choose a presidential candidate.¹⁹⁴ Since then Morales met with differ-

youtu.be/F_rlnDQ81EQ;

185 “El regreso azul y en solitario del ‘apóstol Gustavo’”, La Silla Vacía, 14 de Diciembre de 2017, <http://lasillavacia.com/silla-cachaca/el-regreso-azul-y-en-solitario-del-apostol-gustavo-63980>;

186 “Candidatos Congreso 2018”, Partido MIRA, 5 de Diciembre de 2017, <https://youtu.be/2jJNQsMatQ>;

187 “Cristianos, como el hijo pródigo, vuelven a Cambio Radical”, *El Colombiano*, 7 de Diciembre de 2017, <http://www.elcolombiano.com/colombia/politica/claudia-rodriguez-de-castellanos-vuelve-a-cambio-radical-DA7828621>;

188 “Viviane Morales oficializa su candidatura a la Presidencia por el Partido Somos”, *El Espectador*, 15 de Enero de 2018.

189 “El partido Somos está renovado: representante legal”, La W Radio, 17 de Enero de 2018, <http://www.wradio.com.co/noticias/actualidad/el-partido-somos-esta-renovado-representante-legal/20180117/nota/3691972.aspx>;

190 “Somos un partido de gente creyente”, Caracol Radio, 15 de Enero de 2018, http://caracol.com.co/radio/2018/01/15/politica/1516038255_038272.html;

191 “El partido Somos está renovado: representante legal”, La W Radio, 17 de Enero de 2018, <http://www.wradio.com.co/noticias/actualidad/el-partido-somos-esta-renovado-representante-legal/20180117/nota/3691972.aspx>;

192 “Viviane Morales oficializa su candidatura a la Presidencia por el Partido Somos”, *El Espectador*, 15 de Enero de 2018.

193 “La unidad cristiana no aguantó hasta 2018”, La Silla Vacía, 26 de Septiembre de 2017a, <http://lasillavacia.com/la-unidad-cristiana-no-aguanto-hasta-2018-6271>; “Viviane Morales renuncia al Partido Liberal y va por la Presidencia”, *El Tiempo*, 15 de Enero de 2018, <http://www.eltiempo.com/elecciones-colombia-2018/presidenciales/viviane-morales-anuncia-candidatura-presidencial-171230>;

194 “¿Lo suyo fue por cristiana o porque la querían sacar del camino?”, *El Tiempo*, 25 de Septiembre de 2017.

ent religious and political sectors until decided by Somos. Its political campaign seeks not only to represent the voice of Evangelical but also that the Christian sector identifies with the political proposal and the values and principles that support it.¹⁹⁵

To summarize, the second wave of religious mobilizations has made possible the electoral participation of some denominations and evangelical churches. Similarly, it has also allowed the rapprochement between Catholics and Evangelicals to be based on the defense of the traditional family. The consequences of his political activism are not yet clear. What is clear is that they became a political actor that can expand the representation of citizen preferences and account for religious pluralism in the country.

Conclusion

In this paper, I argued that Colombia has experienced two waves of religious mobilization that have had implications in the political field. The first wave has to do with the struggle for the recognition of other religious minorities against the State. This mobilization led to the organization of political parties and participation in the electoral competition. The representation achieved both in the National Constituent Assembly and in the legislative periods allowed the consolidation of religious freedom in Colombia. Likewise, it facilitated some agreements with the State that allowed progress regarding of religious equality.

The second wave of religious mobilization has occurred in the last five years. This wave has developed as a counter-movement against the LGBTI community's defense movement. The advocacy of the traditional family, the right to life and the opposition to the so-called gender ideology has allowed them to deploy a repertoire of action that goes through the mobilizations in the streets until the creation of new political movements to have the capacity to influence the political field. In this exercise, various Christian currents, as Catholics and Pentecostals, have come together to carry forward a common agenda.

Given the nature of the demands of the religious movement, recognition and defense of values and principles, action in the electoral arena have been fundamental. Although in some legislative periods some religious sectors have made agreements with traditional politicians, the representation of their political preferences has not always been achieved. As a result, the nature of these claims in these periods manages to articulate religious identity over religious belonging. In other words, when the Christian movement has defended what it considers its fundamental rights, it has managed to unify churches, denominations, and currents behind the same objective.

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Appendix 1

Evangelical Political Party	Institutional support	Megachurches	Cristian Current	Corporate support	Leadership
MUC	No	Confederación Evangélica de Colombia		Yes	Pastors and lay leaders
PNC	Yes	Misión Carismática Internacional	Neo-Pentecostal	No	Pastors
C-4	Yes	Cruzada Estudiantil y Profesional de Colombia	Pentecostal	No	Pastors
PACTO	Yes	Various	Pentecostal	No	Pastors
FE	No			No	Lay leaders
MIRA	Yes	Iglesia de Dios Ministerial de Jesucristo Internacional	Pentecostal	No	Pastors and leaders

Source: the table above was made by the author using different sources (peer-reviewed papers, books, dissertations and official records).

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ПОЛИТИЧКА ПАРТИЦИПАЦИЈА ЕВАНГЕЛИКА У КОЛУМБИЈИ 1990 – 2017.

Сажетак

Политичка партиципација евангелика у Колумбији је последица два таласа верске мобилизације. Моја хипотеза јесте да је верска мобилизације у политичкој сфери заснована на захтевима ка верској једнакости (у време 1990тих) и на одбрани хришћанског морала (2010тих). Циљ мог рада јесте опис два таласа евангеличке политичке мобилизације у Колумбији и њихове политичке импликације. Користила сам документарне изворе (интерне документе неких партија, књиге, дисертације, часописе) и интервјуе са политичарима и верским лидерима, као и неке налазе учесника у верским праксама и политичким састанцима.

Кључне речи: верска мобилизација, евангеличке политичке партије, политика и религија, Колумбија

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