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Diana María Salcedo López

Insubordination and Feminist Disobedience, in the Face of a Militarized and Oppressive World
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Updated Patriarchy Is Not Invincible
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For the Liga Internacional de Mujeres por la Paz y la Liber-
tad LIMPAL (Women’s International League for Peace and
Freedom WILPF) in Colombia, it is a pleasure to present this
first issue of the journal Feminist Voices: dialogues from
pacifism and antimilitarism, has been an effort to narrate
experiences, positions and dialogues that we have woven
among us, as a team that commits to the construction of
peace and the transformation of the world, which has been
nourished, in our case, from the 104 years of history of our
WILPF sisters in the world, from the voices and experiences
of the women in the territories where we worked 23 years
ago after the beginning of LIMPAL’s action in Colombia, and
of course from the trajectories of those of us who make up
this political, feminist and pacifist commitment.

Feminisms have been traveling this world, advancing in
the understanding of inequalities, injustices and oppres-
sions on which power relations have been built, and with
this journey they have nurtured multiple frameworks of
interpretation of the systems that sustain societies. These
approaches and practices have confronted us, even within
each of those of us who call ourselves feminists.

One of these paths has laid the foundations of antimilitar-
ist feminisms, of that fringe of thought that invites us to
oppose wars, the use of weapons, militarization patterns,
war budgets, the logic of defence and security from that
hegemonic, militaristic and patriarchal point of view, which
ultimately invites us to oppose the dehumanization that
war thinking has produced. Another world has been pos-
sible from these feminist paths, a world that vindicates
the dignity of peoples, the wisdom and political action of wom-
en and oppressed subjects, a world where a good life is
possible.

This issue seeks to be a proposal for dialogue, which focus-
es on conversations on the part of the system of domina-
tion that for centuries has impacted the lives of women and
men: the militarist and patriarchal system. Therefore, we
are ready to deliver our discussions, practices and feelings
about the enormous challenges that feminist antimilitarist
thought and action imply, as well as the many possibilities
that we have opened from different actors to confront the
oppressive systems of war. Our minds have been colonized
by war, but our practices scream resistance and transfor-
mation.

We choose to grow in the paradigm of feminist and inter-
sectional human security, we choose the work of unlearn-
ing everything that the mechanisms of oppression have in-
stalled in our cultural practices, and we choose to endorse
peace, dialogue and the construction of collective practices
of peaceful and nonviolent resistance.

In the following pages, you will find unfinished reflections,
which border the margins of academia to put into practice
the feminist work of our action. Thus, the multiple voices
weave, what we wish to be, an input to promote the anal-
ysis to dehumanize and contribute to the emancipation of
violent practices, militarization and militarism.

A first voice is represented in the narrative of Cynthia En-
loe, whose valuable contribution, not only in this article but
also in her years of political and discursive action, has made
many of the reflections of antimilitarist feminisms possible.
On this occasion, she highlights the mutations that the he-
gemonic patriarchy has had to undergo in order to adapt
to the tremendous challenges that have been provoked by
the nonstop advance of feminist movements in the world
and that, undoubtedly, gives a major impulse for feminists
to confront these violent practices, also rooted in other sys-
tems of oppression every day.

The second group of voices reflects on a collective journey
that evidences the binomial construction between patriar-
chy and militarism, its impact on everyday life and the use of
weapons as tools to deepen one of the most stable oppres-
sions of the last centuries, which is the oppression against
women. Talking about everyday life implies reflecting on
the impact of the permanence of this system, which has led
us to militarize everything, even our personal relationships,
basing our bonds on distrust, on the enemy, on the search
for reasons to point out the inferiority of the other, on the
argumentation to justify the invasion of privacy, and on
the naturalization of situations of violence. This section is
a clear example of how a system of domination, which coex-
ists and is nourished by others, provokes multiple impacts
and oppressions that deepen inequalities, showing that all
structural injustices are aligned to powerful entities such as
the weapon industry, and that are placed at the service of
this system of oppression and its allies.

Finally, this issue gathers diverse women’s narratives on
peace, security and nonviolence as a way of confronting
the militarized system, and that, undoubtedly, gives us think-
about the possibility of a political stand that manages to remove
one of the oldest businesses in history, whose lives have been
claimed in an inhuman manner: war.

We invite you to read these pages, mostly written by wom-
en, whose stories have also bordered the margins of in-
equalities, and who today build from their own place of
enunciation a new matrix in which life and dignity are at
the center. Let us recognize in their words the crossings
that emerge from our bodies and experiences, in order to
department them and advance in our common purpose: the
demilitarization of life.

Diana María Salcedo López
Director of LIMPAL Colombia.
VOICES FROM AROUND THE WORLD: Updated Patriarchy Is Not Invincible

Feminist Voices: Dialogues from pacifism and antimilitarism

WILPF International Congress, Ghana 2018
This was International Women's Day, March 8, 2017. Together, women and their male and transgender allies around the world were tilting some of the key pillars designed to sustain patriarchy:

- The belief that a lasting peace can be built without guaranteeing women's rights;
- The pressure exerted on women and girls to stay silent—about their experiences of harassment, assault, marginalization, and humiliation; the practice of shrinking the space for civil society, where so much of women's political life is lived;
- The dynamic that keeps women divided from each other—by race, by nationality, by sexuality, or by level of security.

Patriarchy may have succeeded in perpetuating itself, but it is not invincible. In fact, one of the questionable beliefs that has sustained patriarchy over generations is precisely the notion that it is immune to challenge, that it will "always be us." Sometimes that belief is dressed up in stylishly sophisticated garb: it is a sign of supposed worldly maturity to accept that privileging assorted masculinities is an inevitable element of the human condition. The sustaining corollary: thinking that patriarchy can be effectively uprooted is naive. And, of course, to naively be to feminized.

Patriarchal beliefs have informed this book are quite different: that patriarchy is human-made, therefore is vulnerable to challenge. If patriarchy demands constant work of renewal, then patriarchy-sustaining work can be resisted. Absorbing these feminist beliefs enables one to reject resignation in the face of patriarchy's continuing inequities.

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To realize that patriarchy requires perpetual restyling and reconfiguring is downgrading. It fires each of us up to be on the lookout constantly for these patriarchal up-dating efforts. This attentive feminist stance can make us immune to the patriarchal assumption that the new is always liberating.

The beneficiaries of patriarchy have had to repeatedly updated, restyled, and modernized its web of distinctive beliefs, values, and relationships because that web has been so often shredded by feminists and their allies. When New Zealand women first won the right to vote, when British women won the right to divorce, when Korean women won the right to keep control of their property after divorce, when Palestinian, Egyptian, and Algerian feminists declared that anti-colonial nationalism could not justify the re-entrenchment of men's domination of family or public affairs, when Icelandic women first won the right to vote, when British women won the right to control their property after marriage, when Chinese women won the right to divorce, when Iraqi women won the right to keep custody of their children after divorce, when Palestinian, Egyptian, and Algerian feminists declared that anti-colonial nationalism could not justify the re-entrenchment of men's domination of family or public affairs, when Icelandic women called a nationwide strike for gender equality, when Rwandan women won the right to inherit their husband's proper- ty, when Turkish women persuaded judges that a woman beaten by her husband was the victim of a crime, when Indian women convinced reporters and editors to treat rape as an outrage, not a cause for shame, when American women successfully demanded that workplace sexual abuse be recognized as a violation of an employee's labor rights, when a transnational alliance of domestic workers successfully lobbied the International Labour Organization to declare that paid domestic workers had labor rights, when South African anti-apartheid women activists compelled their fellow anti-racists to acknowledge the self-serv- ing dynamic between racism and sexism, when a transna- tional network of feminist environmentalists revealed the ways that distorted notions of masculinity were among the significant causes of climate change, when Liberian women mobilized to force male war lords to negotiate a peace agreement, when Korean women educated us all to re- place the misleading term “comfort women” with the more accurate term “sex slaves,” when Bosnian women and their allies persuaded treat-writers to define systematic rape as an internationally prosecutable war crime—when every one of these activist successes was achieved, relationships between women and men and the state had to be restructured. Each achievement compelled not just elites but ordinary people to rethink their established assumptions about how societies function. Each accomplishment upset dominant gendered values.

No single one of these notable successes alone has toppled patriarchy. Even all together, these achievements have not pushed Humpty Dumpty permanently off his patriarchal wall. Individually and collectively, however, these feminist- driven transformations have forced the beneficiaries of patriarchy—and these are diverse, multiple, and often each other’s rivals—to devise new strategies, often more fragile, for sustaining that complex system of masculiniz- ing privilege. For instance, some of patriarchy’s admirers have promoted women to be television news anchors, but reduced the role to more of a mouthpiece/presenter than a journalist, and insisted that those women squeeze into a narrow mould of feminized ‘beauty’. Others have claimed
to be promoting “girl power” by encouraging young wom-
en to aspire to be senior corporate executives. Still others
have been complicit in the perpetuation of patriarchy.

Patriarchal complicity is not the same as patriarchal power.
Patriarchal complicity can be engaged in by people who
think of themselves as living far from the centers of
influence, inattentiveness is most effective when the one
person is left isolated in noting it and challenging it. Revers-
ing inattentiveness is most effective when the one person
who name is called but the patriarchal smirk is back up by
someone else who may not have noticed that smirk but
now realizes its significance.

A lack of feminist curiosity is closely aligned with inatten-
tiveness. Sustaining patriarchal complicity relies on most people
being lazy. Patriarchy is most easily perpetuated when most peo-
piece that work is—seeking out, listening carefully to, becom-
ing informed about the daily experiences of others—may
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Furthermore, these extremist movements only underscore the

risibility of the center’s male essence. Today, and in any current moment, there may arise a particularly violent or blatant form of patriarchy—blustering misogynist leader, an extreme form of fundamentalism, an out-
rageously xenophobic political party. Each of these catch-
es our attention. Each of these allows us to express vocal
dismay. Insofar as all of these manifestations of patriarchy
are abusive and retrograde, they certainly deserve atten-
tion and condemnation. These, however, are not the chief

updated allures is one of the first steps toward challenging
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rageously xenophobic political party. Each of these catch-
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engines of sustainable patriarchy. Together, they make ordi-
nary updated patriarchy look tame, and thus unworthy of seri-
ous resistance. Perhaps even more helpful to the ben-
eficiaries of patriarchy, when we are prioritizing the most
outrageous (and photogenic) forms of today’s patriarchy,
we slip into imagining that the ordinary patriarchs are the
“rational men” who will protect us and do all the serious
thinking on our behalf.

The antidote to a patriarchally complicit lack of curiosity is
askng new feminist-informed questions. Lots of questions.
Conducting deep and ongoing feminist investigations of the
Institutions apparently at the forefront of modern life is a
crucial form of resistance. It is dismaying how little we
all know about how patriarchal beliefs, values, and rela-
tionships shape the operations of the Bank of England, the
New York Stock Exchange, Hilton Hotels, Microsoft, Face-
book, Shell Oil, Samsung, NATO, the Chinese Communist
Party’s Politboro, the Russian Orthodox Church, the BBC,
21st Century Fox, the Ministry of Defense, the Pentagon,
the US National Security Council. Every one of these Or-
ganizations can be investigated. None of them should be
immune to feminist curiosity. Yes, each of these investiga-
tions will take a collective effort of feminist-informed inves-
tigators with diverse skills. Still, it is possible. Just because
an organization wields exceptional influence does not
mean it is off-limits for curious feminists.

Just because an institution exercises vast power does not
mean it is ungendered. Stopping in their tracks the ef-
forts to sustain patriarchy needs organized, cross-race, in-
tergenerational, transnational resistance. Yet that mobili-
ization—energizing at the most local level but infused with a
global consciousness—needs to be coupled with fresh
thinking. One of the elements of past and current feminist
activism that has been crucial to tilting and shredding pa-
trarchy has been crafting new feminist concepts. When it
works, a concept enables us to see past the allegedly new,
to see what gendered unfairness and inequities are being
perpetuated, and gives us a language to speak about them
with one another.

Here are just some of the concepts that have proved illu-
minating:
• women’s suffrage
• women’s rights
• equal pay
• comparable worth
• domestic violence
• reproductive rights
• militarized masculinities
• date rape
• sexual harassment
• the glass ceiling
• everyday sexism
• systematic wartime rape
• gender-based violence

Any useful fresh feminist concept should make even the
most alluring operations of updated patriarchy newly
transparent for what they are. And patriarchy made trans-
parent is patriarchy made vulnerable. Paying feminist at-
tention, asking feminist questions, conducting feminist in-
vestigations, crafting gender-revealing concepts, creating
diversely welcoming broad alliances, and acting with care
and creativity—patriarchy doesn’t stand a chance.
INTRODUCTION
This article aims to promote a conceptual approach to militarism and militarization, recognising these elements as key starting points for a feminist anti-militarist struggle. In order to fulfill this purpose, the concept of militarism will be explored in-depth, understanding it as a social phenomenon that comes to life in institutional spheres, in everyday practices and that, in addition, is rooted in people's common sense as a culture from which it is often difficult to escape. Likewise, understanding the praxis of militarism as a system requires a conceptual approach to militarization, since it is through militarization that the state and society organise themselves around violence, security, repression, the construction of enemies, among other militaristic values. For this reason, one of the focuses of this article is to make militarist ideology and its practical effects visible, inviting us to reflect on the impact of militarism on everyday life and the construction of subjectivities.

Conceptualising militarism and militarization allows us to understand that the patriarchal system that feminism recognises does not exist autonomously, but is part of a power scheme made up of colonialism, on the one hand, capitalism and - the focus of this text - militarism, on the other. In short, patriarchy would not survive without militarism, as they are irrevocably imbricated in a system that day by day violates the body of someone that exists outside patriarchal, capitalist, colonial and militarist parameters. In a militarized country like Colombia, gender is absolutely affected by these aforementioned aspects, as it is impossible to think about it without understanding that militarism is a tectonic system that traps all kinds of socio-political and cultural constructions, such as masculinity or femininity, for instance. Thus, approaching militarism and militarization conceptually implies constructing the bases for the feminist anti-militarist commitment, in order to go beyond the formations and patterns that Colombian culture has engendered in the name of patriarchy.

UNDERSTANDING MILITARISM
Militarism is a social phenomenon through which military power invades other spheres of society (economic, political and cultural), thus having an effect on civilian life and people's behaviour. As an ideology, it is expressed in values that permeate society such as the use of violence as a resource, discipline, hierarchization, uniformity, submission, machismo and xenophobia. (Peralta, 2005, p. 2 and 3)

Likewise, Gabriela Castellanos (2007) takes up the definition proposed by the World Council of Churches and Brukem, who define militarism as a tendency by which the ideological schemes, values and patterns of conduct of military forces manage to establish themselves in society and governments, influencing the political, social, economic and foreign policy affairs of a state. To understand this concept, the Dictionary of War, Peace and Disarmament of the Center for Peace Studies-Delàs, recognises militarism as: Militarism is expressed in Colombian culture in various ways, for example, in the disproportionate support for the military forces, despite having been involved in various crimes against humanity and human rights violations, as well as the degree of public acceptance of the measure of paying taxes to finance the war. In this regard, Castellanos
(2007) argues that militarism in Colombian culture can also be reflected in the justification and naturalization of assassinations and, under the argument that “the end justifies the means”, which legitimizes the use of all kinds of mechanisms to fight the insurgency.

In the same sense, Duarte (2021) states that a significant expression of militarism in Colombia is that many people claim the need for ever larger military forces, and the involvement of men in armed groups is positively valued, as they accept the elimination of the other, the different, be it in ideological, ethnic, sexual, etc. terms; in the glorification of militarist culture:

On the ideological level, militarization manifests itself, above all, in the imposition of militarist values, militaristic symbols and language; in necrophilia as forms of social and spiritual contamination; in the authoritarian political spirit that rejects to the point of eliminating the other, the different, be it in ideological, ethnic, sexual, etc. terms; in the glorification that goes as far as the adoration of the figure of the collective father of the nation, personified by the president of the state or head of the armed forces; in the rigid separation of male and female roles: wom-an/mother, man/warrior; in the political marginaliza-
tion of women. For instance, in Serbia’s 250-member parliament, there are only four women.

Additionally, militarism positions an idea of security associated with violence, control and surveillance. In this regard, Reardon (2010) argues that militarized security systems limit the guarantee of human rights, do not protect land and privilege military spending, instead of responding to people’s needs, as contemplated from a human security perspective.

This militarist culture is learned and legitimized through various socialization mechanisms and practices that seek discipline and obedience: in schools, the family, advertising, social networks, the media and other cultural devices that transmit militarist values, such as the predominance of security, the use of violence, the construction of hierarchies, discipline, and the logic of friends-enemies, among others. Through various mechanisms, what Cynthia Enloe (2000) calls “militarized subjectivities” are constructed, incorporating these values into their ways of thinking and their conception of the world.

As Espitia (2018) argues, militarism builds a passive citizenry, in that people lose agency and capacity to decide and adopt values such as belief in hierarchy, obedience, the need for the use of force, the justification of military intervention, repression and authoritarianism, with which they are ceding part of their freedom and autonomy, legitimizing arbitrary decisions and measures. According to this author, there are basically four predominant aspects of militarist culture:

a. Friend-enemy logic: A hierarchy is established based on a friend-enemy logic, in which it is established that a given group is a threat and must be controlled and even exterminated, which is a product of the separation between good and bad. The first militaristic characteristic par excellence is then the adoption of a conception of the modern world constituted by Us and Them, where Them are perceived as a threat, and they are conceived as an enemy. (p. 48)

b. Fear: The world is conceived as an unsafe and dangerous place, so that citizens require protection, control, surveillance, discipline and stricter security measures, such as cuffs and repression of social protest. These concepts have also legitimized practices such as “social cleansing”, which are selective assassinations carried out by armed groups in various municipalities and cities.

c. Violent conflict management: From the militaristic culture, violence is legitimized to eliminate threats, risks and even enemies. Nonviolent conflict management and negotiation mechanisms are considered childish or even question the courage, determination and decisiveness of hegemonic masculinity.

d. Dispossession and capitalism: militaristic measures usually mask capitalist interests. Militarism provokes both direct violence (assassinations, disappearances, feminicides, forced displacements, etc.) and structural violence, as it is a mechanism for controlling populations for the benefit of neo-liberal economic policies, for the establishment of mega-investment projects and for the increased presence of transnational companies. (Londoff and Cacho, 2014 p.18, cited by Espitia, 2018)

MILITARIZATION: VIOLENCE, POWER AND CONTROL.

The values that militarism positions are materialized in various practices that make up what is known as militarization. Militarization and militarism are concepts that are held simultaneously and operate in hand as has been known, militarism is a phenomenon that consists of the preponderance of military power over civilian power in political matters, and along with militarism, the military sphere and its logics in state decision-making, beyond the security and defence sector. (Arana and Anaya, 2020, p. 1)

Militarization, according to Hall and Coyne, can occur directly or indirectly. The former refers to when the government deploys and uses its military forces domestically for the control and representation of the civilian population. The latter form occurs when police forces acquire militaristic characteristics over time, i.e. military strategies, tactics and even weaponry (2013, p. 487). Militarization comprises the practices that militarism exerts to position itself in the social imaginary and in everyday lives, for example, when we talk about militarization we talk about military investment (weapons, equipment, soldiers, etc.) and we also talk about other practices such as conscription, compulsory military service, police training with military guidelines and the criminalization of protests.

Militarization is not only deployed with the intention of domination over the citizenry, but also as an expression of power itself, of state power, of its superiority, sovereignty and monopoly of the use of force. This expression of power and control has different aspects through which it materializes in Colombia. On the one hand, compulsory military service (servicio militar obligatorio: SMO), which also promotes militarist ideas of patriotic heroism and reproduces stages of inequality, insofar as there are men who, having to define their military status, are economic or social policy to avoid having to fulfill this obligation, while there is another group of men who, based on militarist ideas, do their service not only out of necessity, but also because of the status and recognition that such an act promises.
Likewise, another expression of militarization are the so-called raids or arbitrary detentions for recruitment purposes, which has made it a routine in the national territory to force young people to perform military service and which have been declared unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court’s rulings C-879 of 2011 and T-455 of 2014.

Various practices that shape militarization are ensured through state military spending, and Colombia is one of the countries with the highest military investment in the region, specifically in Latin America it is the country with the second highest military spending. In 2019, Colombia invested USD 10.168 billion while in 2020 it invested USD 9.216 billion in military spending, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI, 2020).

This is nothing new, as Colombia has historically been a highly militarized country, and furthermore suffers from one of the world’s longest-running armed conflicts. Colombia equates democracy, its development with the security and defence of the state, that is, with the militarization of our lives. For the Colombian state, militarization is not only an expression of power and sovereignty, but also a guarantee of the state per se.

Through militarization, public spaces are controlled, and thus social life as well; as with militarism, militarization filters into all aspects of life. Therefore, we can speak of militarized masculinities, militarized bodies, militarized lives, because these expressions have become established in our cultural DNA, normalizing practices such as seeing highly militarized people as the highest symbol of power. Even this hypervigilance, this need to control and dominate, begins to materialize in other spaces, given that militarization is highly contagious, so it does not only exist within the institutions that promulgate the security and defence of the nation; it is also expressed in spaces such as social protest, social movements and collective resistance, which can become militarized by adopting military structures in their internal organization and in the way they interact with other bodies.

Militarization accentuates violence as a legitimate and normalized means of managing social life. If militarization is an expression of power and the state seeks to highlight and reproduce that power, then militaristic mechanisms and practices are the means to achieve it. It is no coincidence that police violence is so latent in our territories. According to the Bolívar, Dios y Patria report by the NGO Temblores, the security forces are one of the most visible faces of the state. Through the presence of police and military forces in the geographic territory, the state demonstrates possession and territorial dominion and, in so doing, reinforces its sovereignty. The presence of the armed forces in public space is, above all, allegorical and performative, as it triggers a series of effects and emotions on the citizenry and thus ends up being one of the main producers of the social experience of public space: the surveillance function of a patrol car surrounding a city block, for example, can awaken feelings of security in a group of the population, but, at the same time, represent one of the greatest fears for the identities that are commonly persecuted by the police. (2020, p. 18)

Militarization and the violence perpetrated by the security forces are not separate, but rather irreparably overlapping. In Colombia we cannot ignore the effects of this interconnection between security and militarization. According to the NGO Temblores, between 2017 and 2019, the National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences recorded 639 homicides committed by the security forces nationwide, of which 528 were committed by the military, 289 by the police and 4% to the intelligence services (in percentage terms, this equates to 51.3% of cases attributed to the military, 45.2% to the police and 3% to the intelligence services). (Temblores, 2020, p. 26)

In attempting to analyze this picture from a feminist perspective, Cynthia Cockburn (2010) makes clear that militarization and war are constructed by three dimensions of power that influence and signify their existence and development. The first dimension is economic power, the second is national power embodied in community, religious or state structures, and the third is gendered power (p. 150). These dimensions of power are what allow and enable the fertile ground for militarization and war to make sense, to take shape, to be achieved and to be reproduced, and we must remember that power does not operate autonomously, but depends on other dimensions to achieve its potential. In the same sense, militarization operates as a machine driven by these three dimensions: they need each other. For this reason, both Cockburn (2010) and Enloe (2000) remind us that it is essential to study, understand and ground the concept of militarization with a gendered approach insofar as patriarchal power relations are necessarily subject to a gendered dimension that places each gendered person at a different link in the militarization process.

With this in mind, it is essential to understand how militarization operates in the gender dimension. For Enloe (2010), understanding militarization implies moving beyond the imaginary that war only affects men and that men are the only ones who participate directly or indirectly in militaristic systems. While militarization seeks men to be soldiers, to construct the doctrines of war, to support legitimation for the approval of military spending, men’s participation would not be possible without women also embracing militarization. Enloe and Cockburn illustrate how the control and power implied by militarization is not only exerted over masculinized bodies, but also over ideas of femininity, gender roles, female sexuality, female skills, among others, are the targets of decisions that must be made to sustain militarism (2010). Without all this, militarization would simply not be possible and this is why we speak of the militarization of lives specifically, as this process must affect, co-opt, absorb all spheres of the lives of both men and women for it to be an effective strategy.

MILITARIZATION OF WOMEN’S BODIES

Since militarization is an expression of power and since power is one of those responsible for violence against women’s bodies, it is essential to understand the violent effects of militarization on women’s lives. According to the NGO Temblores:

In the logic of war, national sovereignty is protected through the imposition of male domination in which the dominated subject is domesticated through penetration or elimination: the former to appropriate what has not already been dominated and the latter to kill what cannot be dominated. Women’s bodies have been the historical embodiment of this domination and sexual violence the crudest weapon of war to domesticate them. This logic seems to pervert the actions of the National Police, as sexual violence takes precedence over female and feminized bodies and seems to group them all together in a single desity: for women, an encounter with the police always harbours the possibility of rape. (2020, p. 48)

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In this sense, according to the same report by ONG Tem- bliores, during 2017, 2018 and 2019, Medicina Legal regis-
tered 29 cases of sexual violence committed by the se- curity forces. 139 of them were committed by the Military Forces and 102 by the National Police. It should also be taken into account that under-reporting is a pheno-
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INTRODUCTION
This article presents some of the reflections that, from the lens of antimilitarist feminisms, construct paths to confront the strategies of war promoted and perpetrated by the patriarchal system as a prism of reinforcement of systems of oppression.

The very idea of confronting and transgressing implies situating oneself in a political line of opposition, in this case to war, militarization, and to the ways in which masculine subjectivities have been shaped as the axis of the traditional and androcentric model. From this place of enunciation, positions are woven between the contributions of other feminists and these own reflection of an antimilitarist feminist.

Thus, the purpose of this article is to promote contextualized reflections, from a feminist perspective that confronts these oppressive systems and generates evidence of the multiple impacts on the bodies and lives of men and women. Provoking this reflection is urgent, not only to empower the voice of those who have been on the side of unarmed resistance, but also to change the course of the story that is told and educated.

This article, although it reflects the analysis of antimilitarist feminisms, does not seek to identify women as a homogeneous group, nor naturalize women’s practices of care, kindness and pacifism, nor stigmatize those who chose arms as a tool to fight against oppressions. Instead, it seeks to question the impacts of these systems on the minds of human beings who are led to decide for war in the face of profound inequalities.

Demilitarizing, decolonizing and confronting war is an emancipatory feminist approach to stop not only patriarchy, but colonialism, racism, capitalism and the heterosexual system, from a place of insubordination.

1. THE PATRIARCHY-MILITARIZATION BINOMIAL, CONTRIBUTIONS FROM ANTIMILITARIST FEMINISMS

For some decades now, the feminist movement, from different theoretical currents, has been addressing the meaning of militarization. Some approaches have come from pacifist and nonviolent currents, and others from the broad structure of human rights advocacy and peace studies. All have contributed to the analysis for a critical understanding of how militarization is at the base of the patriarchal structure of domination, which, together with other systems of oppression, make up the system that causes and supports inequalities.

Just as patriarchy has mutated, the feminist agenda in the search to respond to the ultimate goal of guaranteeing full rights for women in their diversities, has been strengthened by war and conflict, both at national and international level. Also, militarism implies a high level of warmongering, this being defined as the ideology of the use of armed violence (Calvo Rufanges, 2016, p.14), which complements and enables one of the clearest expressions of hegemonic masculinity.

Patriarchy as an ideological, political, economic and cultural vehicle that allows re-creating and reproducing power asymmetries, sustains coercive structures of domination and exploitation between subjects, imposing a certain way of constructing masculinity and femininity, and determining relations of domination between the sexes, in which women are subordinated to the power of men, but in which strict masculine identities that men must follow are also imposed (Campos-Febrer, 2016, p.23).

Much has been written about the construction of patriarchy, that is, about the reading of gender as inequality (Segato, 2016, p. 92) in societies. This has allowed us to see how the historical process of masculinity is the DNA of the state and how its masculine genealogy is revealed on
Cisnormative masculinity, in coexistence with militariza-
tion, operates as a system of values that imposes itself on
territorial and corporal geographies, establishing a “must-
be”, a single possible or desirable destiny. Of course, mili-
tarism and militarization are evidenced in multiple forms in
democratic and modern states. As analysed in the follow-
ing sections, this duos, traversed by the heroic imaginary,
is immersed in each of the stages of daily and social life,
generating reproductive practices of its values and violent
expressions that generally generate disproportionate im-
pacts for women.

Antimilitarism must not only dialogue with the multiple
feminisms, but must also dialogue with all forms of re-
sistance, and thereby remember what damage has been
done by arms and the military structure that frames the
bases of budgets and public policies of the countries, thus
promoting a removal of the structures that enable the dy-
namics of behaviours and subjectivities that reproduce
these patterns.

2. MANIFESTATIONS OF MILITARIZATION AND MILITARISM

Understanding the multiple manifestations of militariza-
tion and militarism involves highlighting the main ideologi-
cal, political, economic and cultural structures that serve to
currently, often of the hierarchy of uniformed
ciefs through distortion of the media, besides
d of the military system are reinforced. In these series, wom-
s are generally subjected to invisible violence and daily
wash, coming from the hierarchy of uniformed
power, become part of the soundtrack of a story which, like
many events in history, reflects the truth of the strongest.

In the Colombian case, the screens and the media have
served as a channel for the voices of high-ranking military
commanders to activate discourses of defense, justifi-
cation and vindication of the place that heroes occupy in
the homeland. It is now commonplace that in the face of hu-
man rights violations, including sexual violence and extra-
judicial executions, senior military commanders go to the
media with speeches of “bad apples” (Ricartegonzález,
2020), “a few”, “we will not tolerate”. However, the most
recent events involving the military have shown that it is not
just a few, and that behind these acts there are

Culturally, for example, the militaristic and patriarchal he-
gemony also turns into a classist and racist hegemony that
termines some to subordinate bodies. The soldier of the homeland, whose mother and family should
be proud of his role in defending the entire population, is
transmitted to society in small particles that build milita-
risms of the individual. One of the most effective machines for build-
ging public opinion on a given issue is the media. In mili-
tarized contexts these machines allow the transmission of
military ideology to be easily installed in the discourse and
practices of society, so that there is the construction and
manifestation of the heroic imaginary of the military through me-
dia campaigns that highlight their strength, dedication and
honour, and whose mechanisms are reinforced at times of
crisis of legitimacy of military institutions.

For some years now, it has been common to see the con-
struction of television series featuring military personnel
in which, in addition to showing their humanity, the values
of the military system are reinforced. In these series, wom-
en are generally subjected to invisible violence and daily
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2020), “a few”, “we will not tolerate”. However, the most
recent events involving the military have shown that it is not
just a few, and that behind these acts there are

A daily basis (Segato, 2016, p. 94). This patriarchal system has used
sonic weapons that patriarchy has posi-
tioned itself, and that in addition to being an instrument
of power in itself, it has been used as an instrument of ex-
tension of violent masculinity, which exacerbates the dom-
inance of the bearer against those considered powerless
(Marion Young, 2000), often women and racialized popu-
lations, among others. Given that the patriarchal system
has been established from the center of postcolonial so-
cieties, the predominance of the masculine, an expres-
sion associated with the son of colonial seizure (white or white-
ashed, property-based, notion of the “head of the family”)
(Segato, 2016, p. 94), has been associated with the force,
strength and form of the structure that Segato calls ex-
propriating and violent in relation to gender.

Of course, it is not being affirmed that these masculine
traits are constitutive of the nature of being born a man.
What is being referred to here is the masculine construc-
tion that has been made from the traits exalted by the system,
which many men have appropriated and on which they
have built their masculinity. Of course, the correlation
is also the deconstruction that has been taking place in re-
cent years, by critical reflection from groups that address
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ideological artefacts that ignite male virility, exalted by the use of a uniform and weapons, favouring the elaboration of stereotypical and binary representations of men. This produces a homogenization of the male subject, often dehumanized by military training.

Within these cultural manifestations of militarization, the installation of messages through verbal and visual language plays a very important role. Thus, militarism contributes to the formation and reproduction of the hegemonic power of the traditional male model, which has been built from the patriarchal system through its media (Perejón, 2016, p. 68).

Visually, the identification of military codes has positioned power of the traditional male model, which has been built and maintained through the use of a uniform and weapons, favouring the elaboration of ideological artefacts that ignite male virility, exalted by the use of public space, occupying places of socialization, showing their power through symbolic means, becoming the best alternative to escape poverty.

Culture is only one link in the chain of instruments through which militarization is installed in the minds of society. Ideology, i.e. the ideas that construct individual and collective thinking, occupies a place in the militarization-patriarchy that deepens the elements of oppression and domination. Military ideology, in this case, is understood as the set of ideas that position, on the one hand, the imaginary of security and stability, and on the other, the symbolic and sometimes real construction of the figure of the enemy.

The military ideology sells to the collective imagination the premise of security through the permanence of military bodies - legal and illegal - that protect the civilian population at any cost. Its consecration to the military spirit, the enthusiasm and pride of wearing the uniform, the affection for the military forces in whose arms rests the honour, tranquillity and greatness of the homeland (Ministry of Defence, 2015), and the constant call for discipline, as a condition that counteracts the dissolving effects of divergences, creates intimate cohesion and allows the superior to demand that the subordinate is executed with accuracy and without hesitation (Ministry of Defence, 2015). This would seem to make them worthy of social support and perks that, in the case of Colombia, other public officials do not have.

Likewise, the normalization of defence as something mundane and habitual is installed in life by favouring the mobilization of uniformed and armed people in cities and populated centers, by promoting the production of television and film series and reports with military figures as protagonists. This favourable is also accomplished in governmental disease courses that exalt heroism and that grant privileged voices to military personnel in the television media, by encouraging young people to pursue military careers, through the installation of military schools where these indoctrination processes begin, and by promoting the support of military museums to convey the image of protection and security that is reinforced by stereotypes of virility with the use of weapons, the exercise of violence and the performance of an aggressive and often misogynistic masculinity (Theidon, 2009, p. 4), which in contexts of war and violence allows the construction of unequal and asymmetrical power to be enhanced. This adds, among others, to the romanticization of the stability given by having sex-affected relationships with subjects, generally men, who have this social status.

Of course, this cultural construction of the subject, in Butler’s terms, is not static. On the contrary, it is imbricated by subjectification and along these lines, this whole scaffold of discourses, stereotypes, representations, values and beliefs that have already been mentioned. In these territories, where structural inequalities are overwhelming, where opportunities are scarce and the state response is based, in the best of cases, on the supply of the national army, the normalization of men in uniform, making use of public space, occupying places of socialization, their use of a uniform and weapons, favouring the elaboration of ideological artefacts that ignite male virility, exalted by the use of public space, occupying places of socialization, becomes the best alternative to escape poverty.

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Feminist Voices: Dialogues from pacifism and antimilitarism

From the perspective of the feminist movement, security is not a question of violence and the THE册刑事责任, but of new strategies that place the individual and the community at the center of the action. These strategies advocate for the eradication of all forms of violence against them and for the recognition of their rights to a dignified life. This perspective is based on the belief that peace cannot be achieved through the use of violence and that the solution to conflict lies in the promotion of social justice and the recognition of the rights of all individuals.

In Colombia, women have made progress in questioning and demanding a non-militarized response that guarantees dignified living conditions and the free exercise of their rights, thus promoting a feminist approach to the concept of human security. At the individual level, security for women is reflected in their confidence and personal wellbeing when exercising their citizenship and decision-making as well as carrying out actions without a sense of fear or dread, particularly when speaking in public or walking in the street. This subjective confidence combines directly with the importance of integrality between the access to good health care and the need for jobs in dignity.

While states disseminate the idea of militarization as an indispensable strategy to guarantee the life and security of societies, women project transgressive proposals that place humanity and women at the center of the action. These proposals advocate for the eradication of all forms of violence against them and for the recognition of their rights to a dignified life. This perspective is based on the belief that peace cannot be achieved through the use of violence and that the solution to conflict lies in the promotion of social justice and the recognition of the rights of all individuals.

This perspective, not only rejects the maximum exponent of militarization - the security and defence structures of states - but also everything that points to obedience, hierarchy, discipline and the acceptance of violence as a means of conflict resolution (Camps - Febrer, 2016).

From insubordination to war and from the rebelliousness of antimilitarist feminisms, there have been histories and narratives rewritten about war and violence, in order to position other strategies to confront militarisms and violent practices, coming from emancipatory practices, and to position other politics against war that focuses on the dispossession. This generates new vocabularies and new actions (Butler, 2007) as well as another sphere where a dignified life is possible for all human beings.
REFLECTIVE VOICES: Insubordination and Feminist Disobedience, in the Face of a Militarized and Oppressive World

Feminist Voices: Dialogues from pacifism and antimilitarism

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INTRODUCTION

The militarization of life is one of the antimilitarist feminism concerns from which LIMPAL Colombia manifests its position. The implications of militarist structures fail disproportionately on women and feminized bodies, especially in terms of the violence exercised. For this reason, it is essential that a feminist and antimilitarist approach focuses on the analysis of these patriarchal structures that violate women, as well as all the elements that compose women and allow them to keep standing.

One of these elements are weapons, which in addition to propagating the militarization of life, also support the violent hegemonic masculinities that feminism critiques and resists to. Weapons are the sustenance of violence insofar as they allow the reaffirmation of power relations that subject women to the most vulnerable links, where their bodies and lives are under constant threat. The patriarchal system and the continuum of violence are the focus of this analysis, which argues for a life free of violence and, therefore, free of guns.

Thus, in this analysis, feminist concern about arms focuses on three key moments: on the one hand, the proliferation of arms and their relationship with the exercise of violence and the reproduction of militarization. On the other hand, the material, physical and tangible impacts of arms on women and society in general will be examined in depth. And finally, it will address the effects that the proliferation of arms has on women’s lives. This will contribute to the analysis from the antimilitarist approach of resistance to violence and weapons, considering these two aspects as activators of subjugation, oppression and elimination of women on a social, cultural and political level.

1. PROLIFERATION OF ARMS: VIOLENCE AND MILITARIZATION

In Colombia, militarization and violence are factors that have influenced the construction of the social, institutional, economic, political and cultural fabric, in different dimensions and with changing actors. From a socio-political perspective, this multifaceted, complex and constant history of violence has had a particular impact on the women and girls who inhabit the territories. Women’s bodies and the violence exercised against them have been configured as links in the maintenance and reproduction of patriarchal and militarist systems which, in turn, are inextricably intertwined.

Historically, the concern of feminist movements and organizations about the integrity and safety of women, girls and diverse gender identities has been built on several triggers of gender-based violence. Hegemonic masculinities, militarization and power relations are enhanced by colonial and military violence that expanded armed violence and control through weapons as a regularized practice of territorial domination, and which in Colombia, despite being a country that signed a peace agreement, has failed to achieve a sustainable process in which guarantees are provided for the life and dignity of people.

The circulation of arms and the disproportionate impact they have on women’s lives facilitates gender-based violence, sexual violence, violence in the context of families and intimate and ex-partners, massacres, human trafficking and armed conflict (Limpal Colombia, 2018, p. 20). In Colombia, these forms of violence are facilitated by the process of illicit and licit acquisition of arms, which performance and circulation are enabled by key factors such as price, access and impunity. The lack of regulation and the illegal trade of arms are problems that exceed the capacities of the state, and this incapacity makes it impossible to prosecute cases of gender-based violence with arms. In response to this, Small Arms Survey (2020) clarifies that, the financial value of reported small arms exports in 2017 was 6.5 billion USD. While this represents a slight decrease compared to 2016, the reported trade remains at a high level compared to the previous 15 years (p.17).

In the case of the context after the signing of the Peace Agreement, the parties committed to the disarmament of illegal armed actors. Also, women’s movements and organizations collectively focused their attention on this process, especially considering that women and girls experienced the conflict in a differential and profound way, affecting their bodies and lives, because of their gender. LIMPAL Colombia monitored the implementation of this Agreement and found that, in 2016, there were 340 cases of violence against women (homicides and femicides) with firearms and 16 with explosive devices. Armed violence since the signing of the Agreement has not faded, but rather continues to be latent in our society, with fluctuations and a very low number of reports to the authorities.

The threat to women’s lives due to threats to their security and integrity continues to be one of the greatest concerns of LIMPAL’s work in Colombia. Over the years and with the approach to cases of gender-based violence and violence against women, it has been concluded that as long as the proliferation of weapons, the lack of regulation and control by the state and the lack of prevention mechanisms continue, women will continue to be at constant risk and under threat.
2. THE ARMS PROBLEM

Colombia is a country that has normalized violence and security based on the use of arms. The historical remnants of colonial violence and all the conflict scenarios that have resulted since then have provided fertile ground for the proliferation of arms, making access to weapons increasingly less difficult manoeuvre to exercise. According to the Fundación Ideas para la Paz (FIP henceforth), the number of weapons in the hands of Colombians - legal and illegal - is practically the same as it was 24 years ago: 9,497 weapons per 100,000 inhabitants in 1994 versus 10,091 in 2017 (FIP, 2020, p. 9). According to the same source, in 2017 there were 4,971,000 firearms in the hands of civilians in Colombia, 706,210 of which were registered, while 4,264,790 were illegal (IFP, 2020).

Part of the arms problem in Colombia is the possession of weapons by state forces. This is not a minor fact, as it is essential to understand that arms in the hands of any actor - state or non-state actor -, are a problem themselves. In this sense, the FIP (2020) confirmed that the Colombian police, INPEC, the Prosecutor's Office and other state security and defence institutions other than the military forces, possessed 283,000 weapons by 2017 (p. 9). The civilian population and state agencies possess a large number of weapons, and there is a large difference in the amount that each of these two groups obtains.

The Colombian state has failed to regulate the trade and transfer of arms, as exemplified by the UN Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), to which Colombia is a signatory, but which has not been fully ratified. It also has agreements with countries such as Israel for the transfer of different types of weapons. In this case, both states have a Free Trade Agreement that has allowed the lucrative Israeli military industry to penetrate the Colombian military complex and provide armaments that are currently being used against the civilian population. In El Militarismo Israelí en América Latina presented by the BDS Movement in Latin America (iv/a), it is made clear that,

In Colombia, the use of Israeli weaponry and technology continues to be a strong component of the repression exercised by the government. This was exemplified by the use of war vehicles called Sandcat during the mobilization days of the 21 of November 2019 in the framework of a National Strike. This is not the first time that these vehicles have been seen repressing protests in Colombia. They have already been used in Cauca to repress indigenous demonstrations and farmers in the east of the country. However, it was shocking to see these war transports on the streets of Colombia's main cities. The implications of the use of this type of weaponry are more fully understood when we consider that it was created for the rapid mobilization of troops, thanks to which the Israeli army assaults Palestinian villages in the early hours of the morning and illegally detains even children (iv/a).

This type of agreement with countries such as Israel, which have a mega-military industry with global reach, has allowed the proliferation of arms in territories of the Global South such as Colombia to continue to be a lucrative as aspect and, moreover, deeply rooted in the conceptualization and execution of the country's security and defence. Likewise, we see how Colombia has positioned itself as a fertile ground for the promotion and acquisition of high-calibre weaponry at the global level. This is the case with the most important military fair in Latin America, Expodefensa, based in Bogotá. Events such as this promote alliances with global military-industrial complexes that reproduce the conditions for Colombia to remain at the forefront of arms commercialization and transfer.

In the Colombian territory, various ways have been found to ensure that access to civilian possession of arms is possible. For example, according to the FIP (2020), although the military industry in Colombia has the sole authorization to produce and market firearms, there is a type of weapon that has similar characteristics to the firearms that supposedly form part of the state monopoly on production and marketing (p. 26). These types of weapons are called fire- and airguns, and they do not require a special permit for commercialization, sale or carrying by any special entity attached to the Ministry of Defence. It is important to highlight here that, although these weapons are not produced for conventional ammunition, some can be found that were originally fire guns but have been transformed so that they can fire the type of [conventional] ammunition, as well as others whose parts can be used to build makeshift weapons (p. 26).

According to the same source, these types of weapons, which do not require special permits, have accounted for 80% of arms imports since 2014 (FIP, 2020). It is no coincidence that this is the case, as access to arms possession by civil society has been a subject of public debate. It is clear that there are certain limits. However, the existence of weapons that can be modified to receive conventional ammunition trivializes this debate for those in favour of civilians being able to carry weapons freely. As a result, they are, in fact, other ways to make this possible without having to win a public debate or legislate in their favour.

3. WEAPONS AND THEIR IMPACT ON WOMEN'S LIVES

When analysing the proliferation of arms from a feminist perspective, the focus is on how the problem categorized above has differential, disproportionate, violent and precarious effects on women's lives. Weapons are the basis of the militarization of Colombian lives. Whether through intimidatory threats or direct physical violence, they can be used to maintain and reproduce the militaristic system that has historically been established in our territories. The militarization of life has led to the normalization of violence in its different expressions and to the equating of physical security and the defence of property and life with its use. This also has an individualising component, where a person's life and property is worth more than any other life, and arms are the tools to guarantee that this individualism remains at the core of Colombia's socio-political composition.

According to the report by Limpal Colombia Mujeres por el desarme, + vida - armas (2018), a review of the mechanisms used to commit these homicides/feminicides against women shows that firearms occupy first place with 527 cases and 7 by explosive mechanism. Concerning interpersonal violence, in 2016 there were 340 cases against women and 16 by explosive mechanism. There were also 54 cases of stray bullets against women (p. 21).

The correlation between the circulation of arms and the threat against women, their lives and their integrity, stems from the commercial permits that have allowed women to be placed as the most vulnerable links in the face of violence. Militarism is also nourished by the socialization and reproduction of patriarchy, where women's bodies are
used as war riots, for example, or constantly objectified and subjugated within relationships, community relations and socio-political relations. The threat to women’s integrity and wellbeing is constant and is expressed in different ways, from symbolic violence to physical and explicit violence, and for the patriarchal system to be maintained and embraced, different instruments are needed for this to be achieved. These instruments, in the context of militarization, are the weapons that have been used at all levels and in all social spheres to subjugate women and keep them in the place that patriarchy has assigned to them. It is not fortuitous that violence against women is overwhelmingly perpetrated by men, as there is also a connection between the expression of masculinity, violence and weapons. From a feminist analysis, what are weapons if not instrumental extensions of hegemonic masculinity and patriarchy?

LIMPAL Colombia has an long record of tracking, monitoring and denouncing the proliferation of arms because it understands that the feminist struggle for women’s dignity must have an anti-militarist and anti-arms focus. The implications and consequences of arms, from their production to their commercialization - legal or illegal - on the lives of women carry a human cost far greater than any economic loss that the Colombian state may incur by disassociating itself from the production, transfer and commercialization of arms. The violent cycles of patriarchy have always taken a disproportionate toll on women’s lives and wellbeing. It is time that this cycle is broken and new ways of guaranteeing our security as a society can be thought of.

**FINAL REFLECTIONS**

Thus, the commitment to a life of dignity and freedom from violence, from a feminist anti-militarist perspective, implies structural changes in the governmental and social sphere. These changes are necessary to guarantee the full enjoyment of women’s rights, bearing in mind that historically they have been oppressed and violated by these structures, which are nourished by militarism. Furthermore, this political commitment to life implies identifying and recognizing all the factors that influence the operation and development of patriarchy, as has been done throughout this article.

Weapons are the sustenance of the patriarchal cycle of violence, both an affirmation and feminist resistance, since it is not possible to rethink relations of power and domination without first addressing and dismantling the factors that allow this cycle to exist, namely militarism, the colonial system of which it is a part, and the weapons that support it. It is therefore key to denounce and demand, in the first instance, the regulation of the trade and carrying of arms, and in the second instance, the total transformation of this industry that threatens the integrity and wellbeing of women and all those who have been placed as the most vulnerable links of the patriarchal system. LIMPAL Colombia has actively worked for both and will continue to do so, under-standing that it is feminist and antimilitarist work to ensure human security and the construction of a feminist peace that firmly rejects the use and circulation of arms.
MUJERES LIBRES, ESPACIOS SEGUROS, TERRITORIOS EN PAZ

Photo: WILPF Colombia
Mural Feminista Antimilitarista Encuentro Cuidando a las Cuidadoras. Restrepo, Meta 2021
Photo: WILPF Colombia Encuentro Cuidando a las Cuidadoras. Restrepo, Meta 2021
1. Perspective on Feminisms

Talking about feminisms currently brings with it a number of concepts associated with women’s struggles for the recovery of our history, the search for social and gender justice, equity, emancipation, the abolition of systems of oppression structured through patriarchy, and the great social and political struggle for all people to have guarantees for the exercise of our human rights, which, as a whole, allows all perspectives of feminisms to converge within a social and political movement.

Taking into account the great cultural, ethnic, religious, socio-economic and linguistic diversity of the peoples of Latin America, the Latin American feminist movement has been advancing in terms of spaces, agendas, stakes and questions that involve all these diverse forms of intercultural- ity of its peoples. The hegemonic practices of feminism are being questioned from their own places, struggles and re- sistances, as it is the case of the commitment to Afro-fem- inism, which is born from the consciousness of struggle of Black women activists, who, based on the realities they ex- perience, and from their own structures of oppression and exploitation, politicise questions of sex and race.

In this case, the claim occurs due to the need to include the situation of Black women, addressing the category of wom- en as a subject of multiple experience. The demands of the struggles have been nourished from different spheres, which contributed to the construction of feminisms, as theoretical currents, and as social movements. The femi- nisms embrace different conceptual orientations, which start from proposals of community and pacifist feminism and continue with a decolonial viewpoint, which in turn is anti-racist in its basic understanding, but can turn into a radical version or be built around a libertarian feminism.

All these different feminisms have in common the final obj- ective, which is the recognition of women as full subjects of rights, in any of their contexts of life.

It is necessary to recognize that historical premises of femi- nist struggles have contributed to the definitions of today’s struggles from collective action and encounter. Their ac- tions involve a process of construction of political identity of women, who unite to denounce injustices and social op- pressions around them.

In peripheral contexts, the situation is no different; accord- ing to reflections and contributions of Afro-Latin American Black feminism, and as mentioned above, Black and Afro women have seen the need to transversalize their politi- cal identity of struggle, inquiring into the experiences that in the lives of women produce all the intersections between race, class and gender (Lamus, D, 2009, p.11, translated from Spanish), categories that turn the discussion on its head. In the same vein, the forms of construction of femi- nisms, in this case instituted from struggles, ancestral prac- tices and for the defence of territory, emerge as a response to the critique and analysis of the multiple oppressive structures of power that act on the bodies of Black women.

2. Demands in the Territory

Women’s organizations and social movements in the terri- tory, specifically in Bolivar, Colombia, are the result of the articulation of subjects in defence of positions of equity and justice, through pacifist, anti-racist, anti-class and anti-militarist actions with a gender focus. In addition, processes of coming together have been strengthened for the co-construction of new symbolic forms of protest, which create alliances of solidarity for and on behalf of Black women and their capacity for peaceful resistance.

2.1 Women’s Social Movements in Bolivar

Some of the organizations that have been working for the defence of women’s rights in Bolivar include: La Ruta Pacífi- ca de las Mujeres por la Paz, La Mesa del Movimiento Social de Mujeres, Asociación Santa Rita Para La Educación y Pro- moción Funcsarep, Movimiento Por La Paz, Red de Empod- eramiento de Mujeres, Unión de Trabajadoras Afrocolom- bianas del Servicio Doméstico UTRASD, Articulate Mujeres Construyendo Paz en el Territorio, Fundación Grupo Social, among others, who affirm their commitment through the leadership of processes of resistance and vindication of rights against the state and other actors, as Leidy Andrea

SUMMARY

The following article presents part of the stakes and dis- cussions established in the construction of feminism in the department of Bolivar, Colombia. The work of Black, peripheral and neighbourhood women leaders will be anal- ysed from a socio-political perspective, shedding light on the discourse production these women leaders of social organizations have enabled.

In addition, it also looks at some conceptual tools from the frameworks of collective action and resources from Afro feminist theories, which contribute and respond to forms of emerging struggles. Afro-feminism responds to various dynamics and intersections that problematize women’s racialized experiences. Finally, some reflections are present- ed on the stakes and responses of some Black women to concepts such as Afro-feminism and pacifism, interlocu- tions based on their work experiences from social orga- nizations of racialised Black women in the department of Bolivar.

A COMMITMENT TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF A PACIFIST FEMINISM FROM THE TERRITORY

Andrea Lorena Ramirez Osorio

Project Professional. Territorial Support in Bolivar.
LIMPAL Colombia.
Castillo (2021), an activist from Cartagena, points out:

Collective actions and political participation carried out by social organizations in Cartagena are historically and socially positioned, and contribute to new ways of narrating Afro feminisms, feminisms from the neighbourhood contexts of Black, impoverished and racialized women, who have been contributing to the struggle from their own realities.

It is therefore important to recognise that women’s organizations carry out transcendental social and political work at local and regional level, through collective actions, training processes and social mobilizations, through symbolic practices, political proposals, public denunciations, protest and commemoration events, which are nourished by: tasks of accompaniment, monitoring and implementation of plans and projects that contribute to autonomy, freedom and recognition of women’s rights, and at the same time oppose all forms of violent action in defence of their communities and territories.

3. MAIN REPEROURLI EN COLLECTIVE ACTION

The collective action carried out by the women’s social movement in the territory of Bolívar persists and works to strengthen processes developed by the communities of Afro, Black and mestizo women. Through these processes its protagonists seek to take a critical position on the effects of violence against women’s bodies and demand a dignified life in conditions of equality to guarantee their rights to truth, justice, reparation and non-repetition.

These processes are recognized for their demands, their rethinking, their new ways of narrating, protecting knowledge, and for their transgressive actions that are reconfigured in multiple responses to add voices to the discourse of a feminist peace.

3.1 WOMEN’S ORGANIZATIONAL ALLIANCES

To speak of alliances between Black women from their own experiences is to recognise their differentiated historical struggles, their survival strategies that are developed through community gatherings and their own practices, their autonomy, and the positive social impacts of their actions, which are interwoven in a shared discourse based on the capacity for peaceful resistance and the political commitment to a life free of violence.

Women’s organizations in Bolivar have been generating great social impact. Their meetings and struggles are advancing in terms of reorganization, resistance, exchange of knowledge, and increasing their participation, and at the same time, they are acquiring greater political visibility through what Gramsci would call “the collective will”. The collective will is based on collaborative work between organizations, seeks to articulate actions linked to the strengthening of their joint agendas, in which they propose:

- Promotion and defence of women’s human rights
- Peace building
- Accompaniment, denunciation and legal enforceability for women
- Attention and accompaniment in cases of gender-based violence
- Social and institutional advocacy to strengthen territorial processes on grassroots level
- Monitoring and citizen control of plans and public policies on gender
- Alliance and articulation of strategies with a gender focus
- Pedagogies and methodologies through feminist popular education
- Strengthening the leadership of social and community actors
- Consolidation of networks and alliances for the strengthening of pacificist, anti-racist and anti-militarist actions that recognise the ancestral legacy of Afro-Caribbean women’s cultures and new approaches based on their demands

Photo: WILPF Colombia

Apoyo al Paro Nacional. Bolívar 2021
4. BLACK - AFRO-CARIBBEAN FEMINISM FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF WOMEN IN THE TERRITORY

Andrea Saludao Taborda: Afrofeminism for me is a theoretical position, a narrative, an experience that has to do with the experience of being a woman in the world, and of being a Black woman in a country like Colombia and in a city like Medellín. I came to feminism because I was a woman who was being subjected to a certain amount of violence that I needed to understand, and basically it saved my life. (Navarro, C. 2019)

Betty But Lazono: Black Afro-Colombian women have been building, from the legacy of our Cimarronas and Palenquero ancestors, a feminism that questions the universalist approaches of Eurocentric and Andean-centric feminism, transforming and enriching it. (Muñoz, G. 2021)

In my role as a journalist, I sought to get closer to some of the Afro-Caribbean feminist and pacifist proposals, from the perspective of women from organizations in the Caribbean, in the department of Bolívar. To this end, I interviewed two Afro-Caribbean women leaders, activists, pacifists and feminists.

One of them is Juana Franzual Matute, a social leader from the village of Bayunca, Bolívar, and president of the union “Unión de Trabajadoras Afrocolombianas del Servicio Doméstico” UTRASD, made up of women from the Bicentenario neighbour-hood in Cartagena, and the villages of Pasacaballos, Bayunca and Tierra Bomba in Bolívar. The other woman is Estela Mar-de Trabajadoras Afrocolombianas del Servicio Doméstico” UTRASD, made up of women from the Bicentenario neighbour-hood in Cartagena, and the villages of Pasacaballos, Bayunca and Tierra Bomba in Bolívar. The other woman is Estela Márquez, a social leader, Afro-feminist, activist from the village of Bayunca, Bolívar, and representative of the Afro Woman’s Network of Bayunca, Asorembay.

Juana: How did the organization to which you belong emerge?

Juana: The organization emerged in 2013, when some women domestic workers got together to share their stories, almost all of them experiences of abuse and mistreatment in the midst of domestic work. It was born out of the need to demand recognition of the labour rights of women domestic workers, for the formalization of domestic work, for the right to demand dignified treatment by employers, legal working hours and payment of social benefits, and in turn, to stop exploitative labour practices, sexual harassment and psychological abuse, which not only Afro-women have historically and systematically received, but which has contributed in a particular way to their marginalization and dehumanization.

As Black women, we have historically suffered discrimination because of the racism and lack of social and economic opportunities that have been present in our communities. It is very important for us to give new meaning to Afro culture, which is why we fight and unite in a union; even so, our organization is made up of Afro, racial, mestizo, indigenous and migrant women.

Estela: What is the organization’s line of work?

Estela: My organization arose from the need for our rights not to continue to be violated, therefore, the association Red de Mujeres Afro de Bayunca was born out of the organizational process of the organization Red de Mujeres Afro del Corredor, REMA, from Atlántico, with the aim of working for rights, equality and gender equity.

We organized ourselves as Afro women, initially 28 women, with the aim of demanding the rights of Afro-descendant Black women and we finally managed to consolidate as Asorembay in 2012.

Lorena: How did the organization to which you belong emerge?

Lorena: The organization emerged in 2013, when some women domestic workers got together to share their stories, almost all of them experiences of abuse and mistreatment in the midst of domestic work. It was born out of the need to demand recognition of the labour rights of women domestic workers, for the formalization of domestic work, for the right to demand dignified treatment by employers, legal working hours and payment of social benefits, and in turn, to stop exploitative labour practices, sexual harassment and psychological abuse, which not only Afro-women have historically and systematically received, but which has contributed in a particular way to their marginalization and dehumanization.

As Afro-unionist feminists, we have achieved major advances such as ILO (International Labour Organization) Convention 189, which recognizes domestic work as a job with rights. Furthermore, we advance in new strategies to reduce its informality.

According to statistics from the University of Cartagena, most of the women who do domestic work are victims of the armed conflict who had no other employment option. It is worrying that they continue to be exploited, mistreated, discriminated against and have their rights violated at work, which is why we have joined together as a trade union to reclaim and recognize our rights: as Afro-feminists vindicating women’s rights!

85.7% of contracts for domestic workers are verbal, a situation that puts women workers at a disadvantage, because some of us think that because we do not have a contract, most of the time of this type, we do not have the right to claim our rights before the institutions responsible for protecting our rights. (UTRASD 2007)

Lorena: What is the organization’s line of work?

Lorena: As a trade union, we make visible the precarious conditions in which some of the women work, with the aim of making employers understand that domestic work is a job that is worthy of remuneration, and that like any other job, we have rights that should not be violated. Because of our work as domestic workers, our employers also generate resources that they would not be able to have without us. Through our work, we become nurses, carers of children and the elderly, educators, cooks, counsellors, confidants, etc... all for the same salary, without receiving employment benefits, the right to paid holidays, bonuses or severance pay.

Basically, our work consists of training women domestic workers on issues such as: labour rights, domestic work, trade unionism and the vindication of rights through the effort to institute new laws that protect domestic workers and provide them with more access to justice.

As Afro-unionist feminists, we have achieved major advances such as ILO (International Labour Organization) Convention 189, which recognizes domestic work as a job with rights. Furthermore, we advance in new strategies to reduce its informality.
On the other hand, the enactment of the long-awaited premium law (Law 1788 of 2016), the women of UTRASD are proud to say that we were at the forefront of the whole process... Today, thanks to this work, we can say that there is a law that protects the premium for domestic workers. (UTRASD 2007)

The pandemic did not limit us, despite everything, we were able to achieve our work objectives. We communicated constantly among ourselves, and we took advantage of the time to train ourselves in workshops, diploma courses and courses, which we would later share with women.

Estela:

Our vision is to create social impact in the community through the enforceability of Afro women’s rights, through the recognition of women who have contributed to the development of the municipality, also with education on issues such as rights, historical reconstruction, values, human rights, gender equality, self-care, ICTs, intervention in public spaces, and in general training for Black communities that contribute to the visibility of women’s struggles.

On the other hand, we work with Afro girls to strengthen their identity and history; we talk about where we come from and who we are. We also focus on women’s issues such as gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive rights, social rights, environmental and labour rights, self-care, housing, education and health.

Our task is to organise and train young people and women in spaces where there are demanding rights. Another part of our job is to influence places that are restricted for Black women, to open those places up so that their voices are heard and their rights are recognized. We work in the departments of Atlántico, San Andrés, Bolívar, Cesar and Sucre.

Lorena:

What is Afro-feminism about?

Juana:

It’s about working for the rights of Black, Afro, mestizo and indigenous women, and all kinds of women whose labour rights have been violated, it is about feminism or activism for women for whom no one fights, in defence of territory and the recovery of the customs of our Afro ancestors.

We Afro women have historically had our rights unknown, violated and made vulnerable because of our hair and skin colour. Through Afro-feminism - and this is a giant step forward - we are beginning to be recognized in same public spaces, such as in large department stores and chains, through images that represent Black people like us. For these achievements we thank our feminist and Black predecessors, who were mistreated, imprisoned, and even killed for going out to demonstrate. Today we walk in their footsteps, we continue their struggle.

I have always been a feminist, pacifist, activist woman, because I have always liked and been motivated to fight for the rights of other people, but above all for the rights of women. I believe that approaching Black feminism has helped me not to repeat the same history of pain. When we don’t know the laws, we are condemned to repeat ourselves, but when we know that by taking our mission to the streets we can be heard, and our rights begin to be respected and guaranteed, nothing limits us to take action. We are present, showing others the laws, saying: enough violence, enough femicides, and enough abuses that society has committed against women!

Estela:

I must say that our organization is made up only of Afro women, because we realized that our territories are inhabited mostly by Afro women, so those rights that have been violated for 500 years in history had to be vindicated. We had to find an organization that represented us in rights and duties, that made us visible, that the law that we have been winning in space and rights was lived from the Afro body. This is what Afro-feminism is all about. We have come so far that now we are a network that has reached international spheres.

I recognise myself as an Afro-feminist and pacifist woman, because I built from the community, that is what Afro-feminism means to me, to live feminism from an Afro body.

Lorena:

What is pacifist feminism?

Juana:

From my own life experience and through the scenarios in which I have been, such as networks, social movements, community councils and women’s groups, my training has been focused on working for and with women. The focus lays on the defence of the right to territory, to our culture and customs. I choose a path of training and struggle through the construction and recognition of rights,
without destroying or mistreating, but to make visible and open the way for the young people who come after us to have another quality of life, and to have another vision.

Peace is built by all of us, each of us doing our bit, and that is precisely what organizations like UTRASD do, building feminist peace.

**Estela:** To advance and make inroads into rights and spaces for women’s participation and advocacy, to fight for collective rights from the perspective of peacebuilding, is what we have been doing as organizations.

**Lorena:** From your experience, how do you think peace can be built?

**Juana:** Before the peace agreement was signed, we were doing very in-depth work, opening up spaces in our homes, to educate people in values such as respect, the right to life, respect for women, equal conditions in care work, which must be shared between men, women, sons and daughters, and equality and equal rights for all people.

Thus, from a political and social commitment that fights to teach women the value of their own lives, without accepting mistreatment from their partners or other people, maintaining a feminist stance, winning spaces to raise awareness and eradicate injustice, from community security, without the need for militarization of our lands: dialogue may be the best way to gain respect and peace with others.

We as leaders have to do a lot of advocacy so that social decomposition does not increase, our task is to manage resources so that our children and grandchildren are not lost. We women are the ones who make peace.

**Estela:** Through conciliation and advocacy from a gender and differential approach, it is built from within ourselves; from the self, through the family and finally towards society from grassroots organizations. We are dedicated to peace and I know that we are going to achieve it, I know that we are going to build it and we are going to leave it to the new generations.
The contribution made by the organizational processes of Black women in Bolívar, built from their political struggles and community alliances, begins to make sense when racialization and other intersections in the context such as gender and class are problematized. Racialization, gender and class are categories that are politically questioned although being grounded in the realities of women’s lives, their diverse experiences and places of occupation.

The social movements of Black, pacifist, anti-racist women and their struggles are characterized by practices that care, accompany, respect, teach, listen, claim, stimulate, and show solidarity with the pain and similar experiences of oppression that women in their communities have had to endure over their bodies. Meanwhile, they make alliances to claim for others, teach others, and fight for others. Their forms of reclaiming are centered on lines of community thinking, and pacifist resistance, through the co-construction of strategies in favour of community care and the future of their families.

For Black women’s organizations, their ancestral community practices, their imaginary, the occupation of spaces, and the reflections from their organizational work have contributed to their collective struggle, which has meant a great advance and positive impact for the recognition of their rights as women. Through positions of criticism, defense, and political positions that challenge the respect and guarantee for the lives of Black people, the women’s organizations have contributed to avoid reproducing dominant ideological models and structures. Even so, according to the perceptions of Afro women leaders in Bolívar, the implementation of efficient public policies that improve the situation of Black communities in the Colombian Caribbean is not achieved.

In conclusion, I believe it is necessary to highlight the great contribution of Black women’s social movements to contemporary feminism, the subversive ways in which Black women have socially transformed their contexts to reconfirm themselves as peoples in resistance, reaffirming their anti-racist positions, and transforming traditional aspects that have long made them victims of oppression and discrimination. Their ideals are to rethink the relations of hierarchy, domination and historical construction, which they intend to dismantle from their roles as ancestral peace-makers who draw narrative lines to make their current claims and struggles visible.
All wars, including wars of "liberation" and "humanitarian military intervention," are used to serve some political power or economic interest. All war leads to suffering, destruction and new structures of domination.

INTRODUCTION

This article sets out reflections arising from the experiences and work that the Liga Internacional de Mujeres por la Paz y la Libertad has been carrying out in the department of Meta.

It begins by contextualising how antimilitarist feminism has been approached in the context of the internal armed conflict in Colombia, and how LIMPAL as a pacifist and antimilitarist organization carries out exercises of non-violence in the territory with the participation of women human rights defenders. It also makes an urgent call to address the security situations faced by these women in the territory.

Subsequently the article describes the actions that the organization carries out through art as a means of reflecting on peace, the role of women, historical memory and social transformation. These artistic actions take place at meeting spaces that generate collective security for women and are a call for citizen awareness.

It continues with peace in the reincorporation process, from the actions carried out by LIMPAL with reincorporated women, and the commitments of the population with the National Agency for Reincorporation, the offer of different services from the Colombian state and international cooperation, the achievements and difficulties in this regard, and the alarming situation due to the growing recruitment of minors in rural areas of Meta.

The document ends by reflecting on pacifist feminism and LIMPAL’s anti-militarist political commitment as perspectives for action in Meta. Special consideration is given to women as political subjects and peace builders, many of whom have suffered directly from the violence of the armed conflict, and whose activism seeks non-repetition and the acceptance of peace as a mechanism for the transformation of the realities of the department.

ANTIMILITARIST FEMINISM

Colombia, a country that has lived through an internal armed conflict for more than 70 years and that continues to suffer from the indignities of war, is a territory that cries out for peace, a lasting, stable, just and democratic peace.

Thus, as an international organization, LIMPAL seeks to work from the perspective of pacifist and antimilitarist feminism, promoting actions in the territories where it is present - such as Meta - based on the participation and involvement of women human rights defenders in different processes that seek to overcome violence.

According to Carmen Magollón (2016), antimilitarist feminism seeks to disarm society, because it knows that weapons and the violence, they entail are not conducive to a democratic society. This feminism is antimilitarist because it professes for universal disarmament, against weapons and against the overall ideology of militarism, which means trusting that conflict resolution can be carried out through the use of weapons, of violence, of force.

Antimilitarism questions and generates critical reflections on the use of weapons as well as war in the pursuit of power. Based on the above, the women who are part of LIMPAL and all those women from Meta who are part of the processes carried out by the organization, are women committed to peace and justice. They recognise antimilitarist and pacifist feminism, promote reconciliation exercises and the use of tools that legitimise non-violence and dialogue as resolution mechanisms. This is how an idea of power beyond weapons emerges, a power seen from the development of leadership capacities and skills that lead to reconciliation processes from the diverse realities of the territories where they live.

This way of thinking, exemplified in actions of non-violence and the vindication of women’s rights, of redefining the territory one inhabits and the territory one has as a body, leaves behind the notion of women’s bodies as military targets or as spoils of war, instead assigns attributes to them like respect, diversity, worth and autonomy.

These actions and changes are intended to promote pacifist and antimilitarist activism based on the different realities of life of the women of Meta. Mechanisms of solidarity, recognition of otherness and coming together, promote debates of reflective criticism based on the different perspectives, notions, positions and ideas that the women of the territory have in order to carry out stable and lasting peace processes.

In a coherent manner, antimilitarism aims to understand the territory from the perspective of post-conflict and the peace process in Colombia, calling for urgent attention to women and the mechanisms that need to be used to eradicate the gender violence that still exists in the country, specifically and in this case, in the territories of Meta.
It is necessary to generate a process of reflection and recognition of the meaning of war and its damages, mainly those related to the multiple forms of violence against women, many of whom are protagonists of the war from different points of view, but all of whom are ultimately scourged by it. Therefore, LIMPAL, from its actions in the territory, maintains a commitment to all women who want to be part of this change, for all those who dream of a life free of violence and with a territory that recognizes them as part of this change, for all those who dream of a life free of violence and with a territory that recognizes them.

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The department of Meta, like others in the area called Llanos Orientales such as Guaviare, Casanare and Arauca, has been a place where male hegemony has been present since the invasion and colonization of Latin America, which oppressed native peoples, who, as Rivera (1992) mentions, are oppressed but not defeated.

In the case of Meta, colonization and the subsequent violence shaped the municipalities that constitute the department today, which have sought in different ways to survive in the midst of the Colombian armed conflict perpetuated by actors such as paramilitaries and guerrillas. At present, the Havana agreements weave possibilities for peace to prevail in the territories, despite a lot of pressure and actions that seek to delegitimize the process and prevent the achievement of a true environment of peace.

In this department, we have perceived that patriarchy still continues to exert oppression and violence against women, and is naturalized in the institutional inoperability to guarantee rights, including security and justice. Processes developed with women from the arts in expressions such as photography, dance, story-telling, theater and painting, have enabled the approach and the work with women that seek to overcome the processes of armed conflict, social leaders, those who seek redress for women, in political actions and popular feminist education, to generate togetherness and solidarity, to recognize and reflect on common affections and oppressions and to propose and develop creative actions from their realities to solve situations that affect them. For instance, the lack of attention for gender-based violence and other forms of violence in the context of the armed conflict is met by making concrete proposals that break with the logic of the friend/enemy war and that invite to the common and to the care of the common (water, land and diversity).

These actions are mobilized on the basis of feminist pacifist and antimilitarist thinking, which strengthens women's peaceful resistance and the creation of links between those who participate in them. Through art, women are able to express that there are other forms of interaction with human kind to overcome the situations and affections that violence has left in their lives and in the lives of those who have been affected by it.

This has led to awareness and recognition of the work that many of the participants in LIMPAL's actions have been doing in the search for peace, spaces for training, complicity and transformation of women and among women. All of these deep transformations compromise their subjectivities, their identities, their commitments as political subjects, giving daily relevance to the feminist commitment: “the personal is political”.

Furthermore, LIMPAL’s combination of psychosocial work and artistic workshops enable participants to reflect on and reconstruct their conflict related memory. Memory as resistance prevents the women from forgetting what has happened and can be used in their search for truth and justice. Meanwhile resistance as memory is manifested - not in the consciousness of the women - but in and on their bodies, their feelings and emotions. Those exercises of memory and reconstructions of stories traditionally have their origins in oppressed communities, where they are being used to resist, to communicate, to share worldviews, experiences, memories and reasons.

This exercise of citizenship that invites women to be protagonists of their own lives and to defend their thinking gains so much more force that, although oppressed, it frees itself to tell other realities hidden from the masses, with strength and ethical forcefulness, overcoming stigma-tization and the role they have played in history to safe-guard life in one way or another, avoiding the passage to invisibility throughout time which functions as another manifestation of violence and extinction.

Women speaking from their diversities claim the right to be agents of coexistence, resolution and commitment to non-violence, based on popular feminist education, pacifism and anti-militarism.

It is important to maintain a permanent work with the young people of the territory.

The youth of the world are encouraged to accept the army and military values as normal and worthy of their uncritical support. Militarization is a process that goes beyond overt conscription. It includes the presence and influence of the military in education and public military events such as parades and military-themed video games. (War Resisters’ International, 2021)

This is another of LIMPAL’s aims in Meta, to promote actions, activities and spaces where young people can be agents of coexistence, resolution and commitment to non-violence, based on popular feminist education, pacifism and anti-militarism.

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It is worth mentioning that it is necessary to understand the dynamics of the territories and the changes that constantly occur there, along with the lack of security for women and young human rights defenders. It is imminent to maintain a permanent work with the young people of the territory.

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daily life of the work of farmers, which connects them with the land, traditions and respect for their rights.

LIMPAL’s actions, through the arts, sensitize women for reflection and continuous action in the search for social justice, coming from a human rights perspective and promoting the inclusion of women in the economy and in spaces of decision-making.

**PEACE IN THE REINCORPORATION PROCESS**

From the reincorporation process, key commitments were established with the people involved, regarding their participation in training, psychosocial, educational, community and productive processes.

National government and international cooperation agencies participate in these processes, which means that there is a wide range of services available in the reincorporation areas. In this sense, programmes or activities often tend to be repetitive, which is why there is a lack of coordination between the different cooperation partners.

One of the crucial difficulties in terms of productive projects and training for employment is that the territorial spaces are rented, so the reincorporated population does not have real and effective access to land, which limits the sustainability over time of their livestock, agricultural, manufacturing or any other productive projects that may be generated.

These reincorporation actions are characterized by the active and constant participation of women, who, despite the fact that they are mainly responsible for care work in their homes and for productive activities and education, are linked to exercises to strengthen their empowerment, self-esteem and the development of internal and external networks.

Peace continues to be a commitment in reincorporation spaces, an ideal that is latent but which brings with it several challenges for its broad and adequate fulfilment, even more so in a territory such as Meta, where situations of recruitment of minors are once again occurring, as in the case of some rural areas in Vistahermosa, for example the Cooperativa and Santo Domingo villages. (Ombudsman’s Office, 2021)

**REFLECTIONS**

1. The ideal of a true and stable peace may be possible if there are processes that guarantee non-repetition and the establishment of mechanisms for non-violent action, where the importance of territory and the diversity that converges therein is redefined. Peace is also a gradual process that can be achieved through small social changes, for example, by eliminating imaginaries and labels that underestimate women and legitimise violence against them.

Antimilitarism and pacifism are fundamental commitments of LIMPAL to achieve a life free of violence for the women of Meta through empowerment, the vindication of their rights and political activism. These are necessary components to guarantee real and timely access for women to opportunities that have often been limited for reasons of class, race or origin.

2. The actions of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, Colombian section, in the department of Meta, have led women survivors of the Colombian armed conflict to carry out exercises of memory and productive actions that have contributed to the establishment of mechanisms for non-violent action, where the importance of territory and the diversity that converges therein is redefined. Peace is also a gradual process that can be achieved through small social changes, for example, by eliminating imaginaries and labels that underestimate women and legitimise violence against them.

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3. Since the reincorporation process, many women redefine their leadership by breaking patriarchal patterns, constantly fighting against imaginaries, labels and norms that are assumed to be natural for women. The return to civilian life should be an opportunity that generates possibilities for growth and expansion of personal, social, economic and community learning for women in territorial spaces.

It is important that psychosocial and political action can strengthen hope in the implementation of the peace agreements so that those who are part of the process persist in dialogue and in non-violent mechanisms for the achievement of a lasting and stable peace that as resistance and resistance of memory, which are two different processes, and which in populations oppressed by the war, as it is this case for many women of municipalities such as Mesetas, Puerto Rico and Vistahermosa, have managed to make visible what happened to them, the reasons why it happened, how it happened and what happens to life after the events.

These processes have succeeded in deconstructing the stereotypes that were imposed on women by the manifestations of armed hegemonic power, such as victim blaming. Collectively, through women encounters and art projects, survivors were able to question and reflect on what happened. In doing so they achieved to redefine the role they played without blaming themselves, to find strength again, taking their lives into their own hands and becoming active citizens of their community. Without forgetting who they are these actions have helped them to find their voices to demand justice in a peaceful manner as well as calling for no repetition of violence in their territories.
4. From the exercise being carried out in the department of Meta by LIMPAL, it is considered important, from the perspective of the antimilitarist political opposition, to advance the reflection on a collective construction of peace, justice and security, beyond weapons and coercion in the resolution of conflicts and their re-placement in all cases by negotiation and conciliation.

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INTRODUCTION

This article presents some aspects related to the development of the project “Confronting Militarised Masculinities” implemented in Colombia by Liga Internacional de Mujeres por la Paz y la Libertad (LIMPAL) with the support of WILL-PF. This project, also implemented in three other countries with high rates of militarization: Democratic Republic of Congo, Cameroon and Afghanistan, seeks to strengthen the critical analysis of the relationship between patriarchy, militarism and gender-based violence. Therefore, the process of militarization of masculinities and the consequences associated with it are being reviewed. It is crucial to identify possibilities of transformation that can be opened through pedagogical, research, communication and advocacy work carried out by organizations or communities that lead processes of resistance to patriarchy and peacebuilding.

In addition to informing about the advances, reflections and concerns underlying the project and the issues it addresses, this document also aims to serve as a contribution to the analysis of militarization in Colombia. Due to the complexity of the issues involved, it would be better to describe it as a provocative text, focused on the relevance and urgency for our country to take concrete actions and undertake nationwide processes aimed at reducing the level of militarization and the impact that militarism has on the construction of masculinities.

1. MILITARISM AND MILITARIZATION, THE DANGEROUS NURTURE GROUND IN WHICH COLOMBIAN Masculinity DEVELOPS

To begin with, it is essential to start with the important distinction between the concepts of militarism and militarization. Militarism is a cultural system that establishes a social dynamic centered on the promotion, worship and reproduction of values associated with the military, such as the imposition of discipline, the hierarchization of gender roles, violence as a regulating principle, absolute obedience, the exaltation of patriotic symbols, the strengthening of the status of the warrior and other aspects. In other words, militarism can be understood as:

The invasion by military power into other spheres of society with the intention of controlling people’s lives and behaviour. From a broader perspective, it is considered as a social phenomenon present in economic, political and ideological relations that has its origin in the application of the military to civilian life as a whole (Peralta, 2005, p. 33)

A society can also be considered militaristic if it prioritizes armed solutions to social, territorial or border conflicts, that is, a society that prioritizes the use of violence over dialogue, mediation, negotiation, civilian trial or alternative justice. Colombia has a long tradition of waging wars and settling various types of conflicts through this costly, counterproductive and limited method. One need only review the timeline and corroborate that in the 19th century Colombia went through nine national civil wars and at least fourteen regional wars, without counting the numerous armed uprisings or revolts that ended in massacres. All these wars stagnated the social, economic and cultural development of the country, which reached the year 1900 with an illiteracy rate of 66% (the highest in Latin America) and an economic system with almost feudal features, expressed by a high level of concentration of land in a few hands. In the 20th century this issue of unjust land distribution unleashed an odyssey of violence and the emergence of at least eight subversive organizations such as the EPL, ELN, M19 and FARC-EP. The latter is internationally recognized for its size, greater territorial presence and duration, as it is considered one of the oldest guerrilla groups in the world. The militarist tradition of waging and perpetuating war has continued to the present day. Only 13 years have passed since Colombia registered the historic and shameful record of being the only Latin American country to have bombed another country in the last 50 years. “Operation Phoenix” in 2008, through which military actions were deployed in Ecuadorian territory, caused a serious diplomatic crisis that required the mediation of the IACHR.

For this reason, the initiation of a peace process with the FARC-EP in 2012 was considered a historic event, as such initiatives to seek negotiated solutions to armed, social and political conflicts are rare in Colombian history. But attempting to negotiate peace in the midst of the country’s high level of militarization was a huge risk with multiple implications that we will not go into details here.

Militarization is a state dynamic, which generally occurs as a consequence of a government programme or as part of a multilateral agreement. This dynamic is evidenced in concrete and quantifiable actions such as the increase in the number of military personnel and military spending, the expansion of powers for the security forces, the use of military personnel for social, medical or infrastructure tasks, the establishment of military cooperation treaties and other similar actions.

Since 2001, as a result of the implementation of Plan Colombia, a bilateral military-technical cooperation agreement between Colombia and the US, an unprecedented...
The Colombian militarization process becomes more complex when we review the strategies implemented by the state in its logic of winning the war at any cost and the consequences unleashed by these actions. In addition to the public forces, in the last 20 years the number of paramilitary structures, criminal groups and private security companies has also increased significantly, which has meant that at present, approximately one and a half million men and women, including thousands of children and adolescents, are involved in the dynamics of militarization, increasing the scale of the problem:

It translates into the militarization of society, understood as the proliferation of legal and illegal, public and private armed organizations, and of the ideology of militarism, as well as the rise of counter-insurgent propaganda, which seeks to influence the population by different means, such as the media or certain academic talks or collective actions that have been affected by these dynamics and organizations, or collective actions that are developing processes of resistance and transformation in the face of the militarization of masculinities.

From the outset, we wanted the pedagogical approach to allow us to collectively explore a historical dynamic which, as was observed in the previous section, is complex and which includes key aspects that are unknown to a large part of the civilian population. For this reason, we proposed meeting spaces that would invite the exchange of ideas of anyone interested in participating, breaking with the former binary model that has been observed in the past, which includes key aspects that are unknown to a large part of the civilian population.

One of the main challenges we faced at the beginning of the project was to find a bridge of dialogue that would allow us to address this issue with young people from schools, professionals who have worked on the issue, communities affected by these dynamics and organizations, or communal initiatives that are developing processes of resistance and transformation in the face of the militarization of masculinities.

Next, we will delve into some of the militarization strategies and their direct relationship with patriarchal dynamics that have also increased significantly, which has meant that at present, approximately one and a half million men and women, including thousands of children and adolescents, are involved in the dynamics of militarization, increasing the scale of the problem.
It is not possible to speak of independence without recognizing the significant role played by the figure of Simón Bolívar in the independence campaign. In fact, it was a regional, partisan army, which did not aspire to become a national army. This association lacks sense and historical validity, since it completely ignores two things: 1. it was not a national army, but a regional army, which did not aspire to become a national army; 2. it was a regional army, which did not aspire to become a national army.

The commemoration of independence has served as a reference point for the recognition of the "heroes" of the country for independence, in such a way as to link our identity as Colombians with the struggle of the "heroes" of the country for independence, in such a way as to make the association between the military forces and the commemoration of independence a reference point for national identity.

This association lacks sense and historical validity, since it completely ignores two things: 1. it was not a national army, but a regional army, which did not aspire to become a national army; 2. it was a regional army, which did not aspire to become a national army.

However, war and military training, in Colombia or in any other country, far from being the ode to heroism sold by war advertising, is an exercise of degradation of the autonomy, empathy, dignity and rights of men in uniform, and is the only way for them to prove their worth as human beings on the battlefield. (Hedges, 2003, p. 46)

The militarist narrative also omits indigenous resistance to colonialism and the genocide that accompanied it. For this reason, we have never heard or will never hear any representative of the army’s leadership talk about the possibility of demanding that Spain apologise for the ethnocide, spoliation and archaeological plunder perpetrated against more than 300 indigenous communities that inhabited these lands; since for them that part of history has no connection with independence, much less with our roots or our identity.

The militaristic commemoration omits the history of the insurrections and the participation of millions of young men, impoverished and without education, who often go with their children dressed as soldiers or policemen to see the "heroes" of the fatherland parade.

The exercise also generated the room for dialogue about the militarization of masculinities as an institutional project, that we were looking for. Subsequently to the first exercise we posed the question what other types of institutional or cultural militarization practices the participants could detail the sensitivity of this situation in Colombia:

1. The murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020 unleashed a massive wave of protests in 50 US cities against racism and police brutality. These were held for 4 months passing through marches, looting, sit-ins and memorial actions. Although the police reform requested by the Black Lives Matter movement has not yet been achieved, the police officer who murdered G. Floyd, Floyd, was sentenced to 22 years in prison in what was considered a historic ruling against the racism with which the police operate in that country.

2. In November 2020 Inti Sotelo and Bryan Pintado were killed by the police in the midst of protests against the proclamation of Manuel Merino as president of Peru. The murder of the two young men sparked a nationwide wave of protests that escalated until Merino resigned a week after the events; five months later the prosecutor’s office, under pressure from the public, charged eleven police officers with murder.

3. The murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020 unleashed a massive wave of protests in 50 US cities against racism and police brutality. These were held for 4 months passing through marches, looting, sit-ins and memorial actions. Although the police reform requested by the Black Lives Matter movement has not yet been achieved, the police officer who murdered G. Floyd, Floyd, was sentenced to 22 years in prison in what was considered a historic ruling against the racism with which the police operate in that country.

4. Nicolas Neira was 15 years old when he was killed by a police officer from the Mobile Anti-Riot Squad (ESMAD) in 2005 in Bogotá. Since then, according to data from the League Against Silence, the ESMAD has killed 43 more people.
The fact that man is capable of action means that the unexpected can be expected of him, that he is capable of doing what is infinitely improbable (Arendt, 1995, p. 158).

From the panorama described above, one could conclude that we are in bad shape, but in the short and medium term we could be significantly worse off. Poverty, which according to official records affects 28 million people in Colombia, the destruction of the social networks that affects the families and communities of the 220,000 victims of the armed conflict and the 84,900 children that the pandemic has affected. 900 children orphaned by the Covid pandemic, and the multiple catastrophic impacts projected as a result of climate change, are cross-cutting issues that raise the level of complexity of any social phenomenon analyzed so far, and therefore also demand that the initiatives undertaken to transform the current situation take these factors into account, so that the actions or processes developed are designed from the perspective of action without harm, making them available to the entire population and strengthening the capacity to respond collectively to the magnitude of the challenges that lie ahead.

For this reason, as final reflections, I believe it is essential to include two ideas that recur throughout the interviews carried out. The first is that the initiatives that we as individuals, communities, social organizations and academic groups are developing must consider education as the main arena for action and dispute, since cultural transformation is a key aspect in the possibilities of advancing towards feminist peace, the de-militarization of society and the fall of patriarchy as a hegemonic system of power.

Many of the changes that have taken place in recent decades in favour of women's rights are the result of a process of cultural transformation that is still unfolding, and not of normative provisions that seem to frame the historical significance of what is assumed to be a change that has taken place. In other words, using a simple example, it is of little use for the final peace agreement document signed by the government and the FARC-EP to be recognized as the first peace agreement in the world with a gender perspective, if this perspective remains only on paper, while in everyday life the narratives of the warrior, the ritualization of violence, the mandates of hegemonic masculinity and the impositions of patriarchy continue to be reproduced in every sphere of social interaction.

In the same way, it is of little use for schools to have the normative obligation to have a peace and human rights curriculum, while in every classroom stereotypes continue to be nurtured in the construction of gender roles, pacts of silence and daily practices that reproduce and normalise gender-based violence.
The transformation of culture is crucial to break the mandate of silence and make the sound emitted by all the alarm signals that are ignored today become deafening, to the point where this society has to sit down and talk about those things that for decades have been kept in the private sphere, and begin to consider the need to question and change those patriarchal norms that for centuries have been considered the very basis of culture.

The first underlying contribution of the interactions achieved in the framework of this project is the need to offer exercises of collective resistance. The goal is to unite these diversities, perspectives, intersectionalities and purposes to heal and transform the current fractures and power conflicts that facilitate the reproduction of the hegemonic premise “divide and rule”.

The second is how to formulate a theory and practice of the commons that is not a new mode of exclusion of others in the name of community. The question is how the practice of the common can be an opening, which produces the foundation for another way of doing, of producing, of relating. Formulating the common from a feminist point of view is crucial because women are currently the ones who have invested the power conflicts that facilitate the reproduction of the hegemonic premise “divide and rule”.

Our pedagogical, communicative, psychosocial and advocacy efforts should contemplate what we consider to be common, as a horizon and an engine of change, as an end and a means of transformation. Regardless of gender, ethnicity or level of schooling, as communities deeply affected by patriarchy, we must understand that a society that does not worship war or privilege warriors will most likely be a more peaceful society, less violent and above all, less closed to change, less resistant to the recovery and development of its wonderful diversity of knowledge, territories, cultures, beliefs and realisable dreams.
VOCES ANDANTES: La militarización de las masculinidades, una alarma inaudible

Feminist Voices: Dialogues from pacifism and antimilitarism

Foto: Limpal Colombia
Paro Nacional. Bogotá, 2021

+Vidas –Armas
1. En San Jacinto Bolívar, una historia compartida se tejido desde 2009, cada puntada da nuevo sentido a la vida y representa las experiencias de las mujeres rurales que se enfrentan al conflicto armado y abren caminos para el proceso de curación de las y los heridos del conflicto armado.

2. Las mujeres aprenden a encontrar su lugar en los terrazas y en las habitaciones llenas de los ruidos de los animales y de los puestos de venta de la calle. Es como si, entre el hilo y la aguja, las palabras se unían y les permitieran narrar los hechos que hasta hace muchos años no podían decir, porque les costaba la vida.

3. Aún hay historias de dolor, ellas las cuentan con la cabeza baja, sin abandonar la aguja. Pasan tiempo haciendo y liberando puntadas del mismo modo, para ellas, abandonar este arte sería sentirse angustiadas, impacientes y paralizar la construcción de su verdadera historia.

4. Durante el ascenso del conflicto armado en los Montes de María, hombres y mujeres no podían llegar a sus parcelas. En respuesta, las mujeres descubrieron en los oficios artesanales una actividad productiva para satisfacer las necesidades económicas de sus familias y sus hijos.

5. “En el principio fue difícil, muchas querían aprender y no sabían ni cómo tomar el hilo. Somos vecinas y nos ayudábamos para hacer el hilo, si alguna no sabía, alguien la ayudaba y ahora lo hacemos rápidamente, hacemos una mochila en dos días,” Rosmery Moreno.

6. Ya no están asustadas, nada merece su silencio, dicen, son un museo vivo y el conocimiento ancestral que los armas no pudieron borrar, solo tienen la esperanza de que las personas que visiten sus territorios sean multiplicadores de su mensaje en los lugares de donde vienen y inviten a jóvenes para preservar la tradición, aprender sobre su cultura y aprender sobre el tejido.

BULLERENGUERA THERAPY

It is one of the processes that the women of San José del Playón have led to re-signify the wounds of war and position their place as women defenders through the traditional singing of Bullerengue Cancionero: Terapia Bullerenguera de San José del Playón, which through its lyrics, highlights the participation of women as builders of peace and security in the territories.

RESOLUCIÓN 1325 - TERAPEUTICA BULLERENGUERA

Con la resolución 1325,
todas vamos a ganar,
lav paz y seguridad,
lav paz y seguridad (Bis) el camino este derecho, (Bis) derecho hacia la paz,
lav paz y seguridad,
lav paz y seguridad (Bis) de aquellas que están calla’,
y nunca han dicho na’,
lav paz y seguridad,
lav paz y seguridad (Bis) no queremos más violencia (Bis)
lav paz y seguridad,
lav paz y seguridad (Bis) nuestras somos la voz (Bis)
de aquellas que están calla’,
y nunca han dicho na’,
lav paz y seguridad,
lav paz y seguridad (Bis) el camino este derecho, (Bis) derecho hacia la paz,
lav paz y seguridad,
lav paz y seguridad (Bis) no queremos más violencia (Bis)
lav paz y seguridad,
lav paz y seguridad (Bis) nuestras somos la voz (Bis)
de aquellas que están calla’,
y nunca han dicho na’,
lav paz y seguridad,
lav paz y seguridad (Bis) hoy las invitó a hablar,
y hoy las invitó a hablar, (Bis) lav paz y seguridad,
la paz y seguridad (Bis) y las invitó a denunciar, (Bis)
a aquellas que están callar’,
y nunca han dicho na’,
lav paz y seguridad,
lav paz y seguridad

TERAPIA BULLERENGUERA - TERAPEUTICA BULLERENGUERA

Terapia bullerenguera, (Bis)
bullerengue pa’ el que quiera, (Bis)
terapia bullerenguera, bullerengue, terapia bullerenguera, bullerengue bullerengue pa’ sana, bullerengue,
las heridas del pasado, bullerengue,
bullerengue pa’ bailar, bullerengue,
bullerengue pa’ sana’, bullerengue, bullerengue pa’ bailar
Terapia bullerenguera, (Bis)
bullerengue pa’ el que quiera, (Bis)
terapia bullerenguera, bullerengue, terapia bullerenguera, bullerengue bullerengue pa’ sana’, bullerengue,
las heridas del pasado, bullerengue,
bullerengue pa’ bailar, bullerengue,
bullerengue pa’ sana’, bullerengue, bullerengue pa’ bailar.
FEMINIST ANTI-MILITARIST TAROT

The Tarot, historically and colloquially known as a set of cards that are used to mediate clairvoyance or divination on one or more topics, is part of another diverse narrative practiced mostly by women with mystical and spiritual knowledge, by many painted out as profane or mundane. Today we want to give another meaning to the Tarot, not only from the evidence of an uncertain future, but from the present and the practices that as anti-militarist feminists we carry out on a daily basis, which discomfort and question unequal, violent and unjust realities. We want this Tarot to be a source of inspiration when you want to consult it, to give you strength and courage for the present. It’s not just magic, it’s action!

Laura Andrea Sánchez

Angélica Pineda Arévalo

SAFETY
Do I feel at ease walking down the streets? Do I feel comfortable and protected with the people around me? The answers are more than an individual perception. Women feel and experience security differently, and we seek comprehensive guarantees for the exercise of our rights.

SAFETY

SELF-PROTECTION
It’s time to find the best ally within me, that woman full of conviction and wisdom to identify, assess and evaluate risks, ready for the unexpected while recognizing and setting boundaries to put her well-being at the center.

SELF-PROTECTION

JUNTAZANZA (TOGETHERNESS)
Women coming together are more powerful. Recognizing that we are diverse allows us to grow collectively and to build projects in which we all have room for our differences. Thinking and feeling together gives us the possibility to share ideas, to listen and to enter into conflict when necessary.

JUNTAZANZA (TOGETHERNESS)

CARE
It’s time to open doors to let go of what binds us, to allow ourselves to empty ourselves in order to renew our energies, and to recognize the power of interactions with ourselves and with what sets us free.

CARE

RESISTANCE
These are times to generate collective actions that allow us to advance towards the enforceability of our rights and to dispute the practices of war that have done us so much harm. To resist is not to endure, it is to open paths towards new critical spaces where women and life are at the center.

RESISTANCE

TRANSFORMATION
The power of ideas and decisions drives us to change and evolve continuously. The shared knowledge of women is now part of me and all of us, being the support that keeps our desire alive and makes us move in body, soul and spirit. Reflection promotes individual and collective transformation!

TRANSFORMATION

PACIFISM
Pacifism is a practice that invites us to think and act through Nonviolence as a political act. It does not imply being passive, on the contrary, it invites us to join action from another possible place where weapons, violence and wars are not the alternative to world problems.

PACIFISM
Dialogues from pacifism and antimilitarism