

GENDER AND SECURITY POLICIES



A feminist look into the impacts
of militarization in the West

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Author: Nora Miralles



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The rights of women and of non-normative sexual and gender identities are found throughout the world, but also in the West, under a threat which has already begun to erode advances that we thought were solid and which could lead to an increase in gender inequalities in the short term - including the formal ones -, as well as direct and structural violence and, in particular, the impunity that has sustained them up to now. The rise of the extreme right populist, ultraconservative radical right and antiabortion movements and those against the "gender ideology", a euphemism which encompasses the right to one's own body and the denunciation of violence, sexual education and the normalization of sexual diversity, predicts a dark period for liberties. Especially, in regard to migrated and racialized people, because of the deeply xenophobic nature that characterizes and unifies this extreme right, which already governs - alone or in coalition - in the United States and in 10 European countries, led by Italy, Hungary and Poland.

The growth of antichoice options is linked to a return to the idea of national security as a top priority, focused on the protection of the State by military means. The growing militarism, as embodied in a markedly bellicose speech, the general increase in military spending and development of control techniques and mass surveillance within the framework of the Global War on Terrorism, penetrates the bodies and people's everyday lives, deeply affecting relations between them and making them more violent, dehumanizing those considered "the other" and diverting economic resources from social entries. In a time, also, in which states deregulation and capital accumulation have exacerbated the gap between rich and poor.

This impoverishment, which is especially rampant with women and LGBTI persons, has in turn led to these openly racist and misogynist options gaining ground and power, taking advantage of the social discontent, the breakdown of bonds and fear, under the promise of a return to a supposed past of "order and security". A past that inevitably leads to the return to the patriarchal family, a confinement of women to private spaces and of dissenting sexualities in the closet of invisibility and oblivion.

Based on the premise that only a security which puts daily experiences of discrimination and structural violence suffered by people as the focus will allow the bonds to be mended and to live free of necessity and fear, this report gathers the contributions of Feminist Studies in the field of security, to determine the material impacts of the securitization of the West. Impacts which can already be seen in the form of economic insecurity and moving to a sustainability of life; of communities insecurity, persecution of migration and racial and ethnic minority discrimination; of personal and physical insecurity aggravated by the reinforcement of stereotypes which feed gender violence and impunity, and in the form of more insecurity in the access to healthcare. Especially, sexual and reproductive healthcare, the right to abortions being one of the main enemies to fight against for these groups.

CONCLUSIONS

The rights of women and LGBTI people are under attack. A simple analysis of the policies being implemented by the governments of the right and the extreme right-wing populist in the West, beginning by the crusade against gender, it provides a definite idea of the material impacts that these generate and generate in the lives of women and LGBTI people. And, therefore, in its economic, social, health, personal and community security, which is crossed by this militant patriarchal offensive - paraphrasing Rita Laura Segato - globally, in which securitization and sexual and reproductive control become on a battle horse in the name of the recovery of national identity and the return to a strong state. The body is one of the few spaces where the State can demonstrate, still, capacity of government, exercise of power and sovereignty. The borders that these "patriots" protect are not only geographical, but the closure -that generates brutal consequences for thousands of human beings- is symbolically and materially in the identity purity and the continuity of the hegemony of a North where the white and wealthy elites retain power.

It is no coincidence, then, that the governments of the countries analysed express the will to establish even more barriers to entry into their territories, on the one hand, and on the other, more barriers in access to a voluntary interruption of pregnancy, under a moral justification, at the same time that they approve legislation that violates the right to health - in general and also to child maternal health - of migrated women. The control of birth, abortion and sexuality are in this case an indicator of gender securitization. But the patriarchal secretariat offensive in the West is generating many more impacts:

- Impacts derived from the increase in military spending and investment in armaments and the war economy: proliferation of small arms and flexibility in the possession of weapons, which have a direct impact on the risk of femicide and increased personal insecurity. Increase in the production and export of military and nuclear weapons, with an impact on the personal and community security of the countries in which they are used and that generate gender-specific damages in contexts of conflict, such as the systematization and generalization of sexual violence, forced an deprived displacement, marriage and forced pregnancies, sexual exploitation and rupture of community ties.
- Increase of the gap between rich and poor, with global impact and feminization of poverty and extreme poverty, greater exposure to economic insecurity, homelessness, incarceration and violence aggravated by social exclusion.
- The crusade against gender and the dehumanization of the military culture will suppose a reinforcement of the hierarchical social structure and the prevalence of racial and sexist stereotypes that fuel discrimination, as well as a generalized increase in violence in public and private spaces against women and LGBTI people.

- Militarization of borders, with impacts on the right to life and on all dimensions of the security of thousands of human beings and gender specific damages (human trafficking, lack of protection, extreme exposure to sexual assault and abuse, impunity); increase in deportations, separation of families. Violation of the right to asylum and restrictions of this right for reasons of gender or sexual stereotypes.
- Securitization and expansion of mass surveillance techniques, especially in certain ethnic and racial communities. Land for discrimination and humiliation, e.g. of transgender and transgender people in security controls at airports.
- Impacts of cuts or lack of funding for prevention, counselling, protection and accompaniment services for victims and survivors of gender violence or homophobic, lesbophobic and transphobic violence.
- The obstruction and demonization of international and regional regulations regarding women's rights, such as the case of the Istanbul Convention, and the interested association of these with an external evil, can represent a huge setback in terms of protection against Violence, with disastrous consequences for women's security and right to life.
- Grievance in disadvantaged access to health for women, lesbians, gays, transsexuals and intersex people, especially migrant and racialized people, who cannot afford to pay the cost of healthcare in countries without a good public system of health. Greater vulnerability to the physical and medical consequences of violence and abuse: injuries, trauma, mental health problems, a higher ratio of alcohol and drug consumption, chronic digestive and cardiovascular diseases, exposure to sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV, perinatal problems and suicide.¹ 16% have more odds of giving birth to a premature or low birthweight child and twice as likely to suffer an abortion or to fall into a depression.
- Criminalization of sexuality in general and abortion, which generates security risks, on the one hand, by the persecution of homosexual practices, on the other, favouring that women who want to interrupt their pregnancies are subjected to dangerous practices. This criminalization of abortion not only does not prevent them from occurring, but exposes women to clandestine abortions and practices in conditions of high risk to life.

When making demands for greater security, therefore, it is necessary to consider that the securitizing actor, the State, is, in this case, a perpetrator of institutional gender and racial violence, by action or omission, with the intention of maintain the hierarchy and social order, so it will hardly be an ally. However, the context is, at the same time, encouraging. This has been the year, too, of the

1. Report "Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and nonpartner sexual violence" of the World Health Organization (WHO, 2013).

global feminist strike against gender violence, massive marches of women in the street, of the campaigns for the abortion in Argentina and in Ireland, of the massive awareness of the inequalities that women suffer all over the world. New generations grow with a vision of sexual and affective diversity that will hardly allow to take steps backwards in the recognition, respect and assumption of their existence.

In a social context of atomization, only a project that seeks to restore all community bonds, trust, care and affection between people can reverse the impact of the discourse of fear in the identity and literal isolation that it generates, and counteract the offensive reactionary. And only a change of comprehensive perspective on International Relations and security will allow us to address the violence generated by global and local social and economic structures. This project, this change, is called feminism. Through gender, class and race the devices that securitize our lives unfold, and from gender, class and race, the barriers and resistances to face them will be built.

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