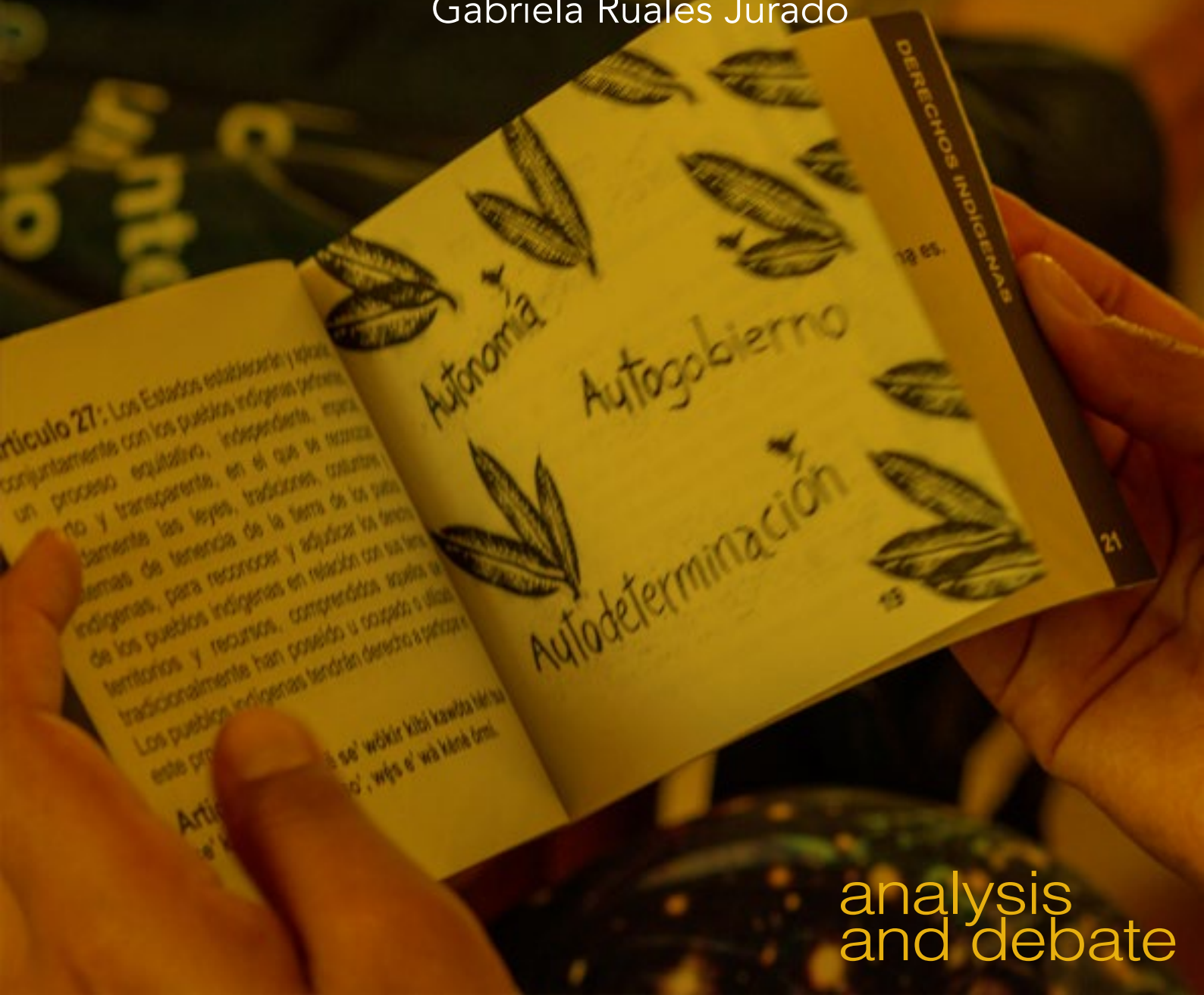


# Climate justice from the perspective of Latin American and other Southern Feminisms

Melissa Moreano Venegas, Miriam Lang,  
Gabriela Ruales Jurado



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## 1. Introduction

The most recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) corroborated what had already been said in previous reports, but with more precise and more robust data: that the process of global warming is affecting both land and ocean, and that the scale of the recent changes is unprecedented in the history of the planet (IPCC 2021). In recent years it has also been recognized that the impacts of climate change on human populations are determined, or strongly influenced, by pre-existing social inequities that produce “more vulnerable populations, with differentiated risks created by social, economic, cultural, ethnic and gender marginalization” (Arana Zegarra 2017: 1, see also IPCC 2001). In

this sense, gender-differentiated impacts of climate change are now recognized, as are the gender-differentiated contributions to climate change, that is, the differentiated contribution of women and men to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (CIM 2008, Stock 2012).

The central proposal of this document is that having emerged within the dominant notion of climate change, the prevailing gender approach is concerned with how climate change will affect societies’ ability *to develop, adapt and mitigate* (Stock 2012, Arana Zegarra 2017). That is, by highlighting gender inequalities, its goal is to propose pragmatic solutions as components of the strategies set out by global climate change governance, while **ignoring the underlying structures**

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Cover: Maricela Rivera.

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**that simultaneously produce climate change and gender inequalities**<sup>1</sup>. In contrast, we note the emergence over the last few decades of multiple feminist trends in Latin America, which along with feminisms from other geopolitical and geo-epistemic southern regions, offer more comprehensive criticisms, based on intersecting perspectives, with regard to the causes of the global environmental crisis, while also developing multiple strategies of struggle to oppose them.

The feminist critical approach we present in this document is a result of questioning a climate change management that overlooks the systemic and civilizational crisis caused by the modern colonial patriarchal capitalist system, of which climate change is a symptom. In addition, our critical approach brings together the knowledge and conceptualizations of the feminist praxis of Latin American and other southern regions. We hope these approaches will nurture debate about integrating a gender approach into climate change action.

### **The failure of global climate change management**

The extraction and burning of fossil fuels (oil, gas, coal and derivatives such as diesel, gasoline, etc.) and the globally dominant

agri-food model, are the main sources of the greenhouse gases (GHG) that produce climate change. Fossil fuels themselves account for 80 percent of the current primary energy demand worldwide, and the global energy system accounts for about 60 percent of global emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>, one of the most important GHG (Foster and Elzinga 2020). In 2018, coal burning was responsible for 40 percent of GHG emissions from fossil fuels, while burning oil accounted for 34 percent and natural gas accounted for the remaining 20 percent. Overall, fossil fuel consumption grew by 3 percent between 2000-2009 and 0.9 percent between 2010 and 2019; a notable exception in this trend was the first semester of 2020, in which global emissions decreased by 8.8 percent compared to 2019, due to the global COVID-19 lockdown (Liu et al. 2020, Global Carbon Project 2020)<sup>2</sup>. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has estimated that “the Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use sector” (AFOLU) is responsible for 23 percent of anthropogenic GHG emissions: the main sources include livestock production; the use of nitrogen fertilizers; and deforestation caused by the agricultural and livestock expansion associated to the dominant agri-food model. The effect of these emissions is to place significant pressure on ecosystems, and to increase risks to biodiversity, agri-food

1 An exception to this prevailing view are the NGOs that form part of the international network Climate Justice Now! (CJN!) that take a critical view of globalization: “Although not all CJN! member organizations lobby for gender issues to the same extent, all of them are governed by the principle ‘There is no climate justice without gender justice’” (Schalatek 2010: 19).

2 The reduction in emissions will not last, as most of it is due to the decline in the use of private cars and air travel, which is rapidly recovering. Moreover, in order to achieve climate objectives, the reduction in emissions must be sustained: about 7.6 percent per year until 2030 (Le Quéré et al. 2020). Re-structuring of the global economy is consequently required, but this has not happened. Studies indicate that economic activity, which has been suffering a major crisis, will recover in 2021: according to the International Monetary Fund, after falling 3 percent in 2020 the world economy will grow by 5.8 percent in 2021 (IMF 2020). This growth will be the result of the consumption of goods that will produce large amounts of GHG due to emissions from transport and production, and will require vast amounts of natural resources: oil, water, minerals, forests, and land.

systems and human health (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2020: 17).

The burning of fossil fuels to transport food from one part of the globe to the other, and the increasing urbanization of the planet are also important sources of GHG emissions. Today more than half of the world's population lives in cities, and the trend is growing. The demand for materials and energy that this creates far exceeds the cycles of regeneration of ecosystems, and thus exacerbates the increasingly alarming global ecological crisis. While cities occupy only 3 percent of the planet's surface, they consume two-thirds of the energy and produce 80 percent of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. As Mina Lorena Navarro points out (2018: 352), the social metabolism of capitalist cities is simply unsustainable.

The activities described above are part of a productive and civilizational model characterized by the expansion of capitalism across the globe, and are subsumed by a global commodities market that acts as the engine of extractivism in all its variants (oil, mining, industrial monoculture, fisheries, forestry, etc.). Extractive activity, as the primary phase and instrument of the accumulation process, takes forms and demonstrates intensities according to each historical moment and geographical space, setting up particular accumulation patterns "fundamentally defined by the historical accumulation of a growing technological pattern" (Galafassi and Ruffo 2018: 112) and creating particular needs. The current era is defined by the increase in the intensity and scale of extraction (Svampa 2019), which now covers the entire globe and penetrates all territories. However,

for Bolivian sociologist and activist Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, extraction has its roots in

[t]he process of capitalist colonization [and continued] in the successive structuring of the creole elites based on their rentier inclination is, therefore, deeply entrenched in the colonial character that was transferred to the Republican states. A number of historical analyses demonstrate that this rentier nature has been associated with a modernization project that hides, time and again, the elites' archaic and predatory style, that is dependent on global capital's metropolitan elites (Rivera Cusicanqui 2018 in Gago 2019: 102).

Verónica Gago, Argentine feminist, continues:

Today, this critical archive has been re-organized and further developed by the feminist criticism of extractive dispossession, and by the way in which its organic relation to violence against women is analyzed... The continuous extraction of raw materials in Latin America has a global history of five centuries. It is a history that connects forms of accumulation, specific labor force exploitation dynamics, simultaneous violence, and increasing scales of extraction; and in that sense, we can say that it always involves a political structure. However, we realize that today this requires a new analysis. ... that extractivism is not only an economic model but also a political structure" (Gago 2019, 102-103) whose goal is the accumulation of capital.

In short, overcoming this pattern of production and consumption –the capitalist, patriarchal, modern-colonial system of production and consumption addicted to fossil fuels - is the formula for slowing climate change. However, the trends on all sides point to *managing* the impacts of the capitalist system in order to rebuild it, and to channeling social struggles into new forms of ‘green economy’ that represent little more than the reworking of old formulas for legitimizing an impossible ‘sustainable development’.

According to Brand and Görg (2008), the global governance of climate change, which has been guided since 1990 by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Conferences of the Parties (COPs), makes a fundamental error of analysis by assuming that stakeholders would voluntarily begin to negotiate solutions to problems as serious as climate change. By promoting an idealized view of the rationality of the stakeholders involved, and thus concealing the correlation of forces, global climate change governance pretends that countries are willing to cooperate at the international level, while the globalized economy is simultaneously forcing them to compete with each other in economic, geostrategic and military arenas. Notwithstanding, what is being put forward is a type of global social contract based on the myth that management mechanisms are ideal for governing a world composed of international institutions, states, transnational corporations, NGOs, or social organizations. These are presented interchangeably as “stakeholders”, “parties” or “players” even if they sometimes have drastically opposed

interests, or are far from playing in the same league. The withdrawal of the United States from the Paris Agreement under the Donald Trump administration is only one example that illustrates how false these premises are.

Now, five years after the signing of a Paris Agreement once celebrated as an unprecedented diplomatic success within the context of global climate change governance, GHG concentration in the atmosphere continues to rise. Meanwhile, the global climate change governance, led by the global elite, developed a strategy launched at COP17 in Durban, where parties agreed that instead of establishing an international binding agreement that sets a limit on emissions, such as the Kyoto Protocol, each country would be allowed to set its own emission reduction targets or commitments. Such goals are reflected in the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). According to a UNFCCC report, the quantifiable targets set so far are not sufficient to maintain the Paris Agreement objective of keeping the rise in the planet’s temperature below 1.5°C (UNFCCC 2015). In addition, the emergence of so-called false solutions has displaced the conversation about changing the fossil-fuel-dependent production and consumption model, to the need to maintain and increase carbon sinks: ecosystems, crops and agricultural lands managed through complicated carbon quantification and trade mechanisms (Moreano 2015, WRM 2015).

### **The false solutions**

So far, the strategies adopted within the international climate change institutions, have

led to a series of measures many authors claim to be *false solutions*. False solutions are those actions that concentrate on activities whose capacity to reduce or capture GHG emissions is doubtful, while simultaneously diverting attention from actions leading to an effective decline in fossil-fuel extraction and burning as a central solution to climate change. They are nothing more than actions proposed as a way to avoid the urgent need to reduce dependence on fossil fuels (a struggle that is essential to Latin America), and to move our societies away from the imperative of abstract and unlimited economic growth. In other words, they are measures aimed at continuing the commodification and expansionist pattern of our dominant mode of production and consumption, while allegedly reducing GHG emissions at the same time.

Examples of false solutions include carbon markets and their compensation systems, market mechanisms related to ecosystem services of carbon capture and storage, plantations as carbon sinks, nuclear energy, hydropower or agrofuel-based energy, 'natural' gas, waste incineration, geoengineering, among others (Forero Torres et al. 2012; Rising Tide North America et al., Lang 2021, in press). The concrete mechanisms put into motion are, for example: Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+), Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES), Climate-Smart Agriculture and Livestock, and the entire set of mechanisms now covered by the so-called Nature-Based Solutions.

The false solutions are then configured within neoliberal environmentalism which states

that the ecological-climate crisis must be overcome by the development of capitalist market instruments that will regulate environmental devastation through the law of supply and demand. In this narrative, the capitalist market will make natural resources consumption and waste production 'rational' (Zarref and Durão 2011: 11). Critical voices argue that neoliberal environmentalism implies transforming the ecological problem of climate change into an opportunity to expand capital accumulation, thus favoring large transnational corporations, and reproducing patterns of class, race and gender domination.

For example, for the network GenderCC - Women for Climate Justice, integrating a gender perspective into "financial instruments that does not include a critique of liberal market mechanisms, such as the CDM or REDD" (Schalatek 2010: 20), does not offer a mechanism for overcoming the climate crisis. Furthermore, GenderCC points out that the blindness of such mechanisms to structural inequalities in access to resources and power –and its insistence on promoting carbon markets and compensation– creates incentives for deforestation, while facilitating territorial appropriation by national elites, the privatization and concentration of land appropriated from indigenous and local communities around the world, and expanding monocultures as carbon sinks (GenderCC 2008).

In short, without a critical look at these problematic aspects of climate change governance, including a gender perspective, can lead to legitimizing false solutions; for

example, by establishing certain gender safeguards that projects must comply with, without questioning their orientation or effects beyond gender inequalities.

## 2. Perspectives of Latin American and other Southern feminisms

From the heterogeneity of feminisms — not without internal conflicts — we address here the diverse reflections, analyzes, proposals, demands, actions and forms of living that do *not necessarily* arise from the enunciation of climate change, but from the identification and analysis of both the activities that produce climate change and those that are proposed in order to face the phenomenon. Expressions and actions from feminisms and women's organizations related to environmentalisms, the defense of territories and/or anti-extractivisms, and the fight for food sovereignty, together with concepts such as care-work, and the sustainability and reproduction of life. Diverse voices provide greater strength in making visible the work, reflections, actions, and analyses that take place in communitarian, indigenous, afro, peasant, urban and rural spaces.

### Critique of positivist science and the quantitative imperative

The aim of this document is to question the dominant perspective of gender and climate change from the standpoint of Latin American popular and indigenous feminisms. To be fair, the dominant perspective has in fact made numerous precise diagnoses of the interactions between gender inequalities and

vulnerability to climate change. For example, studies have been produced that analyze gender roles: the gap in the access of women to land, water, health and education; the unequal distribution of house workload; and wage gaps (CIM 2008, Stock 2012, Jungehülsing 2010, 2011, Schipper and Langston, 2015, Arana Zegarra 2017, UNFCCC 2019). Research has also been carried out, amongst many other issues, on unequal representation and political participation in climate change governance (Gay-Antaki and Liverman 2018, McSweeney and Pearce 2017), while innovative analyses also address dominant masculinity and the impacts of climate change on men (Söderström 2015, Kato -Wallace).

Overall, efforts to integrate a gender perspective into global climate change management have sought to balance women's presence in climate change decision-making, and to mobilize funds, training, and technology transfer to women. Above all, they have sought to influence the hegemonic diagnosis of climate change, rather than questioning its omissions and reductionisms. As Rita Segato says, gender mainstreaming should be done from a *real theoretical and epistemic precept*, not as a mere addition of the category: “[...] It is not merely a question of introducing gender as one of the themes of de-colonial criticism, or as one of the aspects of domination in the pattern of coloniality, but of giving it a real theoretical and epistemic status” (Segato 2011: 30-31 in Ulloa 2016: 125). In line with this idea, in this document we turn to the popular and indigenous feminist perspectives of Latin America in order to reveal and question **the structural causes of**

**both gender inequality and climate change** —namely, the capitalist, patriarchal, modern-colonial system of production and consumption addicted to fossil fuels — as well as the impacts of false solutions to climate change.

The gender and climate change perspective emerges from the same dominant paradigm that separates the environmental sphere from the social sphere. It compartmentalizes and fragments environmental problems and applies technocratic solutions based on positivist science. This epistemological approach ultimately reduces the multidimensional environmental crisis to a quantification of tons of CO<sub>2</sub> and other GHG (Moreno, Speich and Fuhr 2015). Starting from the same episteme that prioritizes quantification alienated from context, the gender approach has commonly become a category that quantifies to what extent women are the most affected by climate change. This view presents women as passive victims or recipients of external policies, no matter whether the goal is to empower them, to promote their participation in workshops and plans designed by external experts, or to alleviate the effects of climate change. However, this approach contains two fundamental omissions. Firstly, there is no real understanding of global warming as the effect of a form of social and economic reproduction based on the burning of hydrocarbons; a system that constantly expands its demand of natural goods, matter and energy in order to continue functioning, and that has built an agri-food system that methodically destroys its own reproductive base: biodiversity and soil fertility. Secondly, the dominant gender approach does not analyze

the ‘women’ category in a complex way, or go deeper in order to understand, beyond its effects on women, what role androcentric reasoning and patriarchy play in this mode of social reproduction, which has led us to the current environmental and climate crisis. A technical-only approach to gender threatens to treat climate change simply as another political field to be managed by adding some variables in order to complete an image, thus ignoring or hiding the structural causes and what is at stake. Proposing to mainstream the gender approach into policies that do not question the dominant mode of social reproduction could even reinforce the patriarchal reasoning that looms over women’s bodies, sexual/gender diversities, nature, land and territories. This position leads to proposals that attempt to encourage female participation in climate change plans and projects, but do not propose changing the subordinate relationship that may be preventing women from fully participating, for instance due to overload of care work or gender violence (Jungehülsing 2011).

The feminisms of the South and some critical feminisms of the North, “question, for example, the research, interventions, and climate change adaptation policies that have focused on technocratic management approaches based mainly on natural sciences” (Ravera and Iniesta 2017:41). As described by Bee et al. (2015) feminist intellectuals from different parts of the world are challenging the discursive framework of climate change policy and science:

For example, in her analysis of the 2°C warming target set by the G8 in 2009,



Joni Seager (2009) argues that seeing a 2°C benchmark, or any benchmark for that matter, as an acceptable level of damage, refracts reality “through a prism of privilege, power and geography” (2009: 14). In particular, it suggests that the notion that global warming may stop at a certain point is based on male aspirations to control or dominate the environment (Keller 1982; Merchant 1980; Plumwood 1993). On the basis of this criticism by Seager, Israel and Sachs (2013) also explore the technoscientific framework of climate change and the emphasis that climate management gives to environmental and social engineering as a result (Bee, Rice and Trauger 2015, 4).

Based on feminist philosophies of science, other critics have explored the implications of disassociating the “impersonal, apolitical, and universal imagery of science-backed climate change” from situated experience (Jasanoff 2010: 235). The framing of climate change as a global problem in Western scientific terms, has not only prioritized views from the Global North over those from the South in terms of interpretations of the environmental crisis, it has also led to the conception of climate change as a spatial and temporarily distant topic, while replicating the epistemological separation between nature and culture that operates within modern western civilization (Slocum 2004). This separation reinforces the idea that nature can be controlled, in tune with androcentric and anthropocentric narratives (Ulloa 2013, Bee et al 2015).

Therefore, the fact that the low representation in scientific research of women and forms of knowledge such as local environmental knowledge, specifically in environmental and climate change studies, is a dominant topic of environmental policies today, is attributable to the fact that credibility and authority in scientific and technological work has been framed by male discourse of nature control and management. This is the case with the forecasts of complex computerized models of the “2°C global warming target” and its technological and economic measures of scope, which have been coopted by institutions dominated by elite men (MacGregor, 2009, in Ravera and Iniesta 2017:41).

In this context, post-colonial feminisms question the absence of other voices, and of other non-masculine and non-commodified relations with nature, land and territories. In addition, those feminisms “highlight how women, indigenous peoples and local knowledge systems have been silenced and historically marginalized in the construction of propositions, narratives and representations on global environmental change” (Schnabel, 2014 in Ravera and Iniesta 2017: 42). There are obvious exclusions in the context of negotiating false solutions to climate change, which is also where global and public policies are defined which have an impact on the public policies of countries where colonial forms of application operate. As Astrid Ulloa, Colombian anthropologist, says: “unequal power relations in vulnerability and impacts in the face of global environmental

changes – mediated and co-constituted through gender dynamics – have silenced the manifold knowledge of the people most affected and marginalized by a neoliberal, colonial and patriarchal system” (Ulloa 2013, Buechler and Hanson 2015 in Ravera and Iniesta 2017: 42). This multiple knowledge, based on other worldviews or concrete needs based on different relationships with nature and territory, is also scientific.

Feminist criticism has also proposed a re-reading of global climate change from the body and the intimate perspective, exploring its everyday and embodied effects. The day-to-day perspective on climate change governance, for example, by analyzing everyday power relationships in the decision making by capital and the state, shows how climate policy is not a grand global narrative. It rather consists of a series of decisions taken on different scales, including the small, that affect individuals in a way that is differentiated according to their social class, gender, or racial positionality, among others.

By prioritizing technical and scientific forms of knowledge, the neoliberal governance of climate change downplays the importance of other types of knowledge based on the experiences of other subjects and areas such as movements, organizations, territories and bodies, reducing them to “zero carbon citizens” in the context of the administration of a “climate-based nature” (Ulloa 2013). In order to understand how power is effectively reproduced around climate change, Feminisms consequently propose multi-level readings of heterogeneous and everyday spaces

that differ from the analyses of the major diplomatic events focused on climate change, such as the COPs, (Bee et al 2015).

### **Territorial feminisms & peasant and anti-extractive struggles of women facing climate change**

Feminist economists and 1970s feminists in general were pioneers, raising the need to think about care as a central issue for the whole of society and not only for women (Vega, Martínez-Buján and Paredes 2018:18). Based on a profound critique of *homo economicus* as an androcentric ontological subject of the dominant neoclassical economy, feminist economics first introduced the notion of the economy of care, and later that of sustainability and the sustaining of life, concepts that were then taken up by other trends such as ecofeminism or feminist political ecology (Carrasco 2003; Esquivel 2012; Rodríguez Enriquez 2015).

The feminist economy is characterized by putting life sustainability at the center of analysis, decentralizing markets. Consequently, the objective of economic functioning from this perspective is not the reproduction of capital, but the reproduction of life. The concern is not about perfect allocation, but about the best provision to sustain and reproduce life (Rodríguez Enriquez 2015, n.p.).

In this process, which also includes back-and-forth dialogues with Western feminisms and their internal struggles, in Latin America other feminist identities flourished

based notably in the defense of territories, in which indigenous, rural and afro-descendant women have become leaders, and achieved great prominence. The characteristics of these feminisms are that they are “linked to anti-extractive struggles, which are historically peasant and indigenous struggles.” In Veronica Gago’s words, this convergence of struggles shows that “the notion of body and territory is key in understand why patriarchy exploits and oppresses some of them with particular viciousness” (Castro 2020).

Thus, for feminisms situated in the Global South, particularly in Latin America, that connect with environmental issues, climate change is neither a central issue nor a priority of their struggles. Rather, their major preoccupations concern the predatory practices in specific territories that relate to climate change’s causes and effects, in the context of a broader understanding of society-nature relations in globalized neoliberal capitalism. These predatory practices include the forced introduction of “development” or “modernization” projects, as well as an agri-food model that creates dependence on a few multinationals, displaces women from food production, and contributes in a major way to global warming, as well as having other devastating effects that directly impact the livelihoods of many women in the Global South. The systematic policy of peasantry-disintegration that has been widespread since the green revolution of the 1960s, is a policy directed against a predominantly female economy that is articulated

around the reproduction of life and not the production of abstract value. This is precisely because peasant economies have been labeled as poor, backward, and miserable, etc., as their forms of production and exchange reduce the availability of resources for the accumulation of capital. Among the first comprehensive criticisms of this policy, eco-feminist voices of the Global South such as that of Vandana Shiva (1989, 1991), stood out.<sup>3</sup> From a more recent Latin American eco-feminist perspective, Diana Trevilla summarizes that:

women feed the world and have done so through experimentation for millennia. Activities such as hybridization and seed improvement, selection and domestication of edible species, preservation of food, and creation of varied diets, according to local contexts, gastronomy and culinary art. On the other hand, the development of processes and tools for both food production and preparation are important contributions (Trevilla Espinal 2018: n.p.).

Indeed, official United Nations sources corroborate the fact that “small-scale producers cultivate about 40 percent of the world’s traded agricultural products, but about 70 percent of the world’s food” (United Nations Global Compact 2013:11), with the vast majority of these small-scale producers being women. The women of La Via Campesina (the International Peasant Movement) talk about the importance of defending their

3 For a critical discussion of the essentialisms present in some trends of ecofeminism and environmental feminisms, see Armijo Canto and Benítez López, 2020.

right to food sovereignty<sup>4</sup>, which they define as “a principle, the ethics of life, a way to see the world and build it based on social justice and equality... that includes women, their needs and demands to enable capacity-building in agricultural and food production” (Via Campesina 2009: 10). For them, self-determination and gender justice are key elements in the struggle for food sovereignty, understood as a political project of integral social transformation, which includes cooperation rather than competitiveness, solidarity relations, and the fair distribution of the material goods necessary to reproduce life (Trevilla Espinal 2018). In sub-Saharan Africa, according to Kenyan feminist political ecologist Ruth Nyambura, agricultural production is the livelihood of 60 percent of the population. In addition, women carry out more than 70 percent of agricultural work, especially on family farms (Merino 2017), while in Latin America, agro-ecosystems such as *milpas*, coffee plantations, *chacras* and orchards help maintain a balance with nature:

Women sow and collect medicinal plants and vegetables in addition to raising domestic animals (Trevilla 2015). Their participation in agroecosystems and agrosilvopasture systems are of the utmost importance for food sovereignty, genetic conservation, agrodiversity, and is linked in turn with the reproduction of culture, worldview, and biocultural conservation. And at the

same time, it is one of the ways to guarantee the social reproduction of indigenous and peasant families through food and self-supply of production (Trevilla Espinal 2018, n.p.).

Peasant women of the Global South who practice agroecology insist on *other* modes of living. They reject the parameters of modern capitalist “productivity”, which have masculinized agriculture and depleted soils due to the expansion of industrial monoculture plantations, livestock farming and beef consumption –all activities that contribute significantly to climate change. They reject genetically modified seeds and the intensive use of pesticides and herbicides, and defend the central importance of the health of bodies and relationships between humans and the environment. From their situated practices, they resist the global narrative that a growing world population cannot be fed with peasant production, insisting that they are the ones who in fact feed the world in small and diversified production units (Via Campesina 2009; ETCgroup 2017). They also generate alternatives, with a profoundly transformative potential, to increasingly commodified relationships with nature: for example, participatory guarantee systems and peer-to-peer certification systems of agro-ecological production that build trust relationships between producers and consumers, thus making the costly and commodified practices of corporate certification obsolete (Torres 2019).

4 The Declaration of Nyéléni in 2007, defined food sovereignty as “the right of peoples to healthy and culturally-appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts the aspirations and needs of those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations.” (Available at: <https://www.nyeleni.org/spip.php?article290>)

As with other feminist trends in the South, ecofeminists rarely explicitly name climate change. For them, global warming is only one dimension of a much broader structural problem related to the “model”. As Camila Miranda explains:

Ecofeminism is based on the premise that climate change and the current socio-ecological crisis are the result of historical processes of domination and power struggles. Faced with a discipline guided by an androcentric, central-state, colonial and patriarchal model, ecofeminism has emerged as a new ontological and epistemological approach that adopts a political, environmental and de-colonial position. Starting from approaches rooted in social movements [ecofeminism] consequently enables broader problems to be pointed out... Therefore [rejecting] reducing environmental issues to an anthropocentric and purely scientific matter [that] downplays the historical, social and cultural contexts that positioned nature, the Amazon, and women as wild states/entities, waiting to be domesticated by an alleged higher culture (Miranda 2020, n.p.).

The work of the different trends that bring feminisms and environmentalisms together in urban spaces is hardly incipient, and has already exercised an enormous influence on a territory as urbanized as Latin America. In 2016, a paper published in the journal *Ecología Política* (Political Ecology in English) proposed including a gender perspective as an analytical category in the Urban Political

Ecology proposal (Quimbayo and Vásquez 2016 in Ulloa 2020: 86). Recently, the Latin American feminist critical geography began to reflect on urban spaces from an intersectional perspective, drawing from ecofeminist reflections also concerned with climate change. For example, the demands of women in cities are related to integration in the city, equal access to public services, and the improvement of public spaces. Feminist critical geography places into question the capitalism-oriented production of urban spaces - devoted to the production of value for global capital - and an urbanism that assumes an alleged universal neutral citizen, while ignoring that among the variables which determine the urban experience are those related to class, age, sex, race, migratory status, disability or reduced mobility, for example. The high rates of air pollution in Latin American metropolises are highlighted, as is their constant expansion based on the logic of urban extractivism (Pineda 2020).

In other words, the various feminisms of the South –ecofeminisms, grassroots and community feminisms, and the struggles of diverse women to dismantle patriarchy– do not focus their actions on climate change. They are mainly concerned with extractivism, and other capitalist activities that obstruct their local economies and ways of relating to land and the non-human, and are also closely related to global warming. It is on this basis that the defense of territory, the land, and the body-land is undertaken, as expressed by Lorena Cabnal with regard to the epistemic thinking of the indigenous feminist communitarian women of Abya Yala:

It is a feminist proposal that integrates the historical and daily struggle of our peoples for the recovery and defense of the land-territory, as a guarantee of concrete territorial space, where the life of bodies is manifested. This is one of the reasons why the communitarian feminists in the Xalapán mountain have initiated the fight against metal mining. Because the expropriation of the land for the hegemony of the patriarchal capitalist development model is seriously threatening the relationship to the land that we, women and men, have with life (Cabnal 2010: 22, 23).

These positions arise from the embodied experience, from bodies that experience the effects of predatory capitalism on their immediate environment and their daily lives, and that have consequently established historical processes of resistance and new ways of developing strategies for the care and reproduction of life. As has been said, this type of politics on the part of women who are facing immediate problems of oil extraction, mining exploitation, and monoculture plantations implies the existence of other types of knowledge; that is to say: scientific, technical and, in turn, affectional knowledge (that is, based on feelings and affection).

A gender perspective on climate change must therefore necessarily consider the impacts extractive mining and oil projects have

on land-bodies-territories, as well as the impacts of false solutions to climate change, which operate similarly in local communities<sup>5</sup> and allow the GHG producing system to continue to operate.

The territorial transformations produced by the arrival of extractive projects in local communities have been analyzed as processes of masculinization and re-patriarchalization of space that reinforce previous patriarchal structures (Cabnal 2010). Masculinization refers to the presence of large numbers of men attracted by the prospect of employment, as well as military personnel to ensure the implementation and operation of the project, in communities located near extractive projects (mega-mining, oil, monoculture plantations, hydroelectric) (Colectivo Miradas Críticas del Territorio desde el Feminismo 2014). Militarization is not the exclusive prerogative of extractive projects; it also related to false solutions to climate change. For example, in Nigeria REDD+ has established a “militarized protectionism” that secures a “new exclusionary forest economy,” namely, “a carbon-based exclusion for accumulation by elites”, (Asiyanbi 2016: 152); in Kenya this caused the violent eviction of Sengwer people, mainly women, from their territories (Chepkorir 2016). This floating population of men alienated from their place of origin and often exploited by extractive companies, tends to generate dynamics of sexual exploitation and harassment, and of making

5 This section was constructed largely on the basis of the “Manifiesto of Ecuadorian Women for Climate Justice”. The manifesto was the result of the meeting “Women’s Struggle against Climate Change: Extractivism, False Solutions and Climate Justice” which brought together 30 women from all over Ecuador on November 2-4, 2018 in Amupakin, Archidona, Ecuadorian Amazon. More information here: <https://geografiacriticaecuador.org/2018/12/20/las-luchas-de-las-mujeres-frente-al-cambio-climatico/>

public spaces insecure for local women. The re-patriarchalization of space refers to the intensification of gender hierarchies and the subordination of women and other feminized bodies (including sexual/gender diversities, but also indigenous men) to “certain men and male forms of power” (Colectivo Miradas Críticas del Territorio desde el Feminismo 2017: 53).

The way in which companies set up their projects demonstrates similar explicit exclusion mechanisms to those adopted in many cases by the climate change projects that we previously referred to as false solutions. Such mechanisms exacerbate the exclusion of women from decision-making spaces when companies assume men to be the sole interlocutors, thus intensifying the subordination of women (Colectivo de Investigación y Acción Psicosocial 2017). This is also common in projects related to carbon capture and storage, whose initial complexity and level of abstraction prevents a full understanding of the activity, and that do not consider the sexual division of labor, nor the different uses and access that genders have to the resources being managed (Kariuki and Birner 2016, Samndong and Kjosavik 2017).

Another explicit mechanism is gender-differentiated access to paid labor, which modifies local relations of production and reproduction of life. Paid labor is generally carried out by men, which exacerbates the subordination and stigma of autonomous production of food in gardens, domestic work and care, whose burden consequently increases (De La Puente 2017, Colectivo de Investigación y Acción Psicosocial 2017,

WRM 2018). In the absence of men, women are often obliged to take responsibility for all food production; to walk longer distances to obtain water because the closest rivers are contaminated; and to care for children and the elderly, who become ill more frequently due to pollution from oil, mining or agribusiness activities. Changes due to the flow of money from carbon capture and storage projects, which monetize economies, also exacerbate gender inequalities (GenderCC 2008, Howson 2017).

In addition to the impacts of the activity itself, there is increasing evidence of a higher incidence of pollution-induced diseases that directly affect women. Some examples include uterine cancer and spontaneous abortions, which are much more common in oil extraction areas (Beristain et al. 2009), as well as precocious puberty in girls and congenital malformations in infants exposed to agrottoxins from monoculture plantations (WRM 2018).

As we mentioned, an important feature of the masculinization and re-patriarchalization of territories in the context of extractivism in all its forms is the increase in gender violence, which we will discuss in greater depth in the next section. Here we would like to mention that the increase in domestic violence is caused by local men who access paid labor in extractive companies, where they are often exploited, receive low wages, work for long hours away from home, and are exposed to high levels of noise and pollution. In addition, through contact with male workers from other areas these men may also be exposed to masculinities that

differ from those of their local culture. On the other hand, men who do not work for the companies but live near extraction sites, face expropriation of land, pollution and, if they oppose the project, criminalization by the companies and/or the state. The masculinization of territories also increases harassment and sexual violence toward women in public spaces (streets, squares, parks, markets), increases teenage pregnancy and violence through human trafficking for the provision of sexual services (ISHR 2015, WRM 2018, 2019).

### **The eradication of all forms of gender violence and the fight against climate change**

As part of the concurrence between Latin American feminisms, environmental struggles and other historical processes for territorial defense, the fight against violence has been a major source of agreements and disagreements. While this topic has been present through the history of feminisms of any tendency, and any part of the world, it is an issue that has implied the need for listening and understanding within feminisms and women's organizations that do not necessarily take the feminist standpoint, given that this struggle has led to the identification of forms of gender violence *within* social organizations.

In this area, most contemporary Latin American feminisms could be described as forming part of two major trends, distinguishable but not unconnected: those whose objective is the defense of life and territories, and those that fight against all forms of patriarchal

violence. It is in the process of struggle that the commonalities between the two objectives become evident, when in their "political strategies, [women] must overcome patriarchal relationships in households, communities and indigenous organizations, as well as with the state and extractive enterprises" (Coba & Bayón, 2020:145). It is precisely when women who are fighting some expression of extractivism raise questions, when they "subvert and often go beyond the agreements and negotiations admitted by their male partners", and face up to the obstacles inherent in mixed spaces, that they can challenge the sexual and gender structures in the communities themselves. Here they demonstrate that anti-extractive struggles clearly involve an anti-capitalist dimension, but also an anti-patriarchal dimension (Gutiérrez and López 2019: 408). Raquel Gutiérrez Aguilar and Claudia López Pardo state:

From there begins an unstoppable cascade of ruptures and readjustments at various levels: women elude and confront patriarchal efforts that silence their voices and thoughts, recognize the violence that sustains such practices; and move forward. They state that they are deploying their struggles against all the patriarchal violence. The entire social building trembles: the uncommon alliance between diverse trends that sustain each other in order to state their desires and exhibit their struggles, literally "shakes the floor" on which the entire structure of domination-expropriation-exploitation stands (Gutiérrez and López Pardo 2019:411).



In a dialogue not without tension, the fight against gender violence that was initially situated in urban feminisms, has permeated the community of women who defend local –and usually, rural– territories against extractivism and against the causes of climate change, under the banner of “Recovery and defense of our body-land territory!” (Cabnal, 2010: 22). These three elements - territory, body and land - are fundamental to the struggle against *all forms* of violence imposed on individual and collective bodies (i.e. communities) by both patriarchy and the colonial capitalist system dependent on fossil fuels that promotes monocultures. For Verónica Gago, the power of the body-territory neologism that has become more important in the last decade:

speaks for itself: it says that it is impossible to detach and isolate the individual body from the collective body, the human body from the territory and the landscape. Body-territory put together as a single word “de-liberalizes” the notion of body as individual property and specifies a political, productive and epistemic continuity of the body as territory ... Struggles against neo-extractive mega-projects show that *dispossession* is part of a continuous logic as a second moment after *possession* ... The power of the feminisms that talk about body-territory is that they present another concept of possession, one centered on *use* rather than *ownership*. This illustrates the destructiveness of the logic of the commons as something that can be dispossessed and exploited. Finally, those feminisms allow a political cartography

of conflict to unfold... we “have” in the sense that we are part of. We do not have property; we do not own. Being part then implies recognizing the “interdependence” that makes life possible... Life signifies a vital key: it involves both defending and safeguarding the commons, and the production and expansion of shared wealth (Gago 2019: 95-99, our emphasis).

Undoubtedly, when fighting against these structural situations in terms of climate change –extractivisms– women have increasingly become the subjects who dismantle power relations within and without their living spaces. They have demonstrated the contradictions that exist within the territorial defense movements: the fact that women living on land-territory are affected by sexual, economic, psychological, symbolic, and cultural violence, because their bodies are still expropriated (Cabnal 2010: 23, 24). It is worth mentioning that although post-colonial relations interwoven with patriarchal relations cannot generally be seen in community relations, they have become more evident in the political processes generated by women. These processes distance themselves from masculinist styles of politics and resistance (Moreano and van Teijlingen 2021), as well as emphasizing “other geopolitics” and “alter-geopolitics” such as alternative territorial visions and care work on various levels, starting with the body-territory (Ulloa 2016: 126) and continuing with the non-human (Ulloa 2013). Overall, when speaking of body-land-territory, indigenous and community feminisms make a demand on behalf of all feminisms: decolonization

as a practical dimension that is integral to de-patriarchalization (Gago 2019: 101).

On the other hand, women's political organizing against extractivism and violence also denounces physical, verbal and psychological attacks (intimidation, threats, disqualification, discredit and defamation, death and rape threats, prosecution) that organized women receive from policing forces and pro-extractive groups (ISHR 2015). In view of this, the fight against climate change cannot occur if the patriarchal system remains intact in the spaces and the organizations that defend the land and territory, and if we do not also put names and faces to the violence suffered by women who challenge and question the system. Ending gender-based violence becomes a precondition for organizing and participating in struggles for climate justice and the defence of territories threatened by extractivism, as well as participation in projects to adapt and reduce vulnerabilities to climate change (Ecuadorian Ministry of Environment, GIZ, UNDP 2020).

Another vital aspect of women's struggles against patriarchal violence and extractivism, is the visibility of women's role in the history of territorial defense, for example through ownership titles for collective territories (Coba and Bayon 2020: 143), or through the embodiment of these struggles, and a sense of having stood up for defense of the territory (Zaragocin 2019). Making these stories visible is fundamental to strengthening real responses to climate change on the part of communities and peoples, responses that presently exist and have done so for decades.

It is important to mention that not only feminist positions enable a critique of the model of domination and control of land, territories and bodies. It is vital to stress that in this diversity of Latin American voices there exist anti-patriarchal struggles that are not necessarily feminist. In 2006, indigenous women who gathered at the International Forum of Indigenous Women used the term violence to name a set of oppressions, criticizing the gender perspective they know through international cooperation programs, for as being barely accessible. They consequently introduced the terms environmental violence and spiritual violence:

[The] IFIW presents the concept of environmental violence to describe the ways in which the health, lifestyles, social status and cultural survival of indigenous women are being threatened by policies and practices that negatively affect land, its climatic stability, and its different ecosystems. In addition, the category of spiritual violence seeks to highlight the relationship between violence against women and the systematic attack of indigenous spiritual practices (FIMI 2006: 20 in Macleod 2018: 45).

Fifteen years later, Moira Millán, a Mapuche leader from Argentina who is recognized as anti-patriarchal but not feminist, questioned very clearly the epistemic framing of climate change policies when she said:

Currently, the focus is on reducing intensity of the problem; the definition of climate change has an intentional systemic reductionism to that hides the

origins and consequences of the civilizational model. It is not only about the relationship between production and consumption, but about the anthropocentric view imposed by the dominant culture, abstracted from the cosmic order. (...) The struggle must not be against “climate change” but against the terracide that occurred when the human being, imbued with egoism, individualism, materialism, was put at the top of the pyramid. It made us unnatural and convinced us that nature was at the service of our comfort. For indigenous peoples there is no pyramid: there is a sacred circle of life, inviolable and perpetual. But if we continue to walk blindly and foolishly, the earth will kick us off the top for being predators. The current movements must therefore be permeated by our view: that of the indigenous peoples (Millán 2019 n.p.).

Vanessa Dourado, a Latin American feminist, uses the term “terracide” coined by the Mapuche warrior:

Nation-states and “corporatocracy” have committed crimes that kill the Earth ... Terracide points to the responsibility of states and businesses the genocidal criminal practices they have perpetrated against different levels of existence and life. ... Given the fact that it is human actions and the commodification of the world that are responsible for the climate and social collapse the world faces, recognizing that other forms of existence are urgent – and that this begins by recovering ancestral knowledge – is also

essential to building the necessary transition towards guaranteeing the right to life. This is a deeply political debate of great relevance in these times of “*green-washing*” (Dourado 2020, n.p.).

Finally, it should be emphasized that fighting against violence that originates both in the root causes of climate change and in its false solutions, also implies profound changes in patriarchal economic and scientific hegemonic paradigms. For example, “disarming the political economy based on the calculation of GDP means shedding light on the opacity of post-colonial relations in order to restore the enchanted character of the world and recognize the violence of dispossession” (Federici 2004, Viveiros de Castro 2013 in Coba and Bayón 2020: 153). The transformation of diverse ecosystems into tradeable natural resources –such as raw materials or promises of carbon capture– because they are essential for national development and feeding the metabolism of the global economy, turns these ecosystems into “empty territories”, thus concealing the social life that develops within them, and propagating the reproduction of extractive political violence (Rose 1993: 153). These conflictive forms of relationship with territories constitute one of the strengths of women’s struggles, which as we can see, are involved in resisting the different types of violence occasioned by the capitalist-patriarchal rationale.

### **3. Building the future and dignity from the feminisms of the South**

Important contributions have undoubtedly been made to the climate change debate

from a gender perspective; for instance, making clear that the patterns of masculinity and femininity that structure patriarchal societies matter both for understanding the causes that have provoked climate change, as well as revealing other impacts of climate change that were previously misunderstood or ignored. As pointed out at the beginning of this text, the gender perspective has helped to develop more differentiated views regarding the responsibilities and vulnerabilities of certain social groups.

This text is an invitation to move from a risk-management approach to one that looks at environmental devastation in relation to the sociopolitical aspect and the power relationships that structure our societies, as is proposed by political (and in particular by feminist) ecology. We have argued that despite the explanatory potential of the gender and vulnerability approach, the technical application of the gender perspective –as often promoted by NGOs, in areas of international cooperation such as the UNFCCC itself, and in inter-agency arenas at the national or subnational level– is insufficient in the face of the enormous challenges of the systemic crisis we are experiencing, of which global warming is an indicator, as is the coronavirus pandemic. It is insufficient because it does not consider that to date, the paths taken by the global governance of climate change have led to blunt failure, and that we have detailed scientific information about the multiple dimensions of environmental crises that are continually deteriorating. Not only is the destruction of our habitat not reversing at the expected rate, it is being aggravated despite all the declarations of intent. The

inclusion of a gender perspective does not provide any guarantee that an action, a project, or a policy will help sustain life; which, in the light of the systemic and civilizational crisis we face, is the greatest challenge today for human societies. Being able to demonstrate that a policy has a gender perspective can even help legitimize false solutions that destroy biodiversity, ecosystems, and climate.

Unlike technological and management solutions to the ecological crisis, illustrated by key transition discourses such as ‘sustainable development’ and ‘green economy’, the transformations we mention involve political, socio-economic and cultural changes that go far beyond incremental modifications, and challenge the current hegemonic forms of production and ways of life (Pichler, Brand & Görg 2020, Brand & Wissen 2020).

The feminisms of the geo-political and geo-epistemic South in their enormous diversity –among them Latin American feminisms and women who fight patriarchy without labeling themselves as feminists – confront climate change from their experiences and knowledge. They do not speak the same language as the institutions that strive to design climate change policies, or the scientists who warn about the urgency of such policies. For them, to paraphrase the black feminist Audre Lorde, no struggle can be monothematic, because we do not live monothematic lives. The fight against climate change must analytically connect patriarchal and femicidal violence with economic, labor, institutional, police, racist and colonial violence: that is to say, the current form of capital accumulation. Feminisms

today are radical in denouncing the contemporary conditions of valuing capital, and expanding what is generally understood as economics for defending life. We have managed to build bridges between very different struggles. But we have also helped to experience embodied dimensions of the longed-for society, weaving spaces of counter-power: in the street, in assemblies, in neighborhoods and other urban spaces, and in rural communities (Gago 2019).

Concrete experience shows that everything is indeed related, which leads us to intersectional thinking and action in a way that makes it impossible to isolate the gender perspective from class, race, and the society-nature relationship that sustains life. It also makes it difficult to isolate climate change, as an abstract global problem, from the destruction of specific territories, and to defend its being legitimized in the name of ‘development.’ It is our situated place of enunciation that leads us to reject a compartmentalization of reality that, supposedly, would help us to better understand it, as is proposed by modern science when it separates the political from the social and the economic from the environmental, etc. On the contrary, as feminists we insist on “mixing everything up”, as certain critics say, precisely because this exposes the relationship between aggression against the body, against nature as land and territory, and against *other* forms of life. It is precisely this interrelated diagnosis that “produces a strategic shift: leaving behind the condition of victim and permanent mourning that the necropolitical counting of femicides tries to impose” (Gago 2019: 18). This broad mapping has enabled

us to expand our view and get to the roots of the connection between patriarchy, capitalism and colonialism. Such a connection provides a shared common-sense that enables collective action and multiple alliances, and has made it possible for the different trends of feminisms of the South to be increasingly visible and interrelated in their struggles.

Concrete experience and its effects on bodies, on farms, on forests and rivers leads us to reject infrastructure mega-projects, mining, oil exploitation, and industrial monoculture plantations, and to identify false solutions to climate change, and the imperative of a constantly expanding productivism that is the engine of capitalist civilization. It is from experience that we perceive that the megalomaniac dreams of dominating and controlling nature, of always expanding the scale of intervention, are dreams closely linked to the mandate of hegemonic masculinity, which simultaneously seeks omnipotence and the independence or disassociation of all things. It is experience that tells us that this mandate of masculinity makes male leaders more susceptible to the temptations of individual-interest deals, bribery, or to aspire to certain quotas of power and status within their milieu. It is experience that shows that fellow men seek to limit or marginalize fellow women in their struggles so as not to lose their own status. It is from these experiences that women who struggle for the defense of territories incorporate the need for de-patriarchalization into their strategies.

At the same time, it is important not to essentialize narratives about diverse women in the South when speaking about climate

change or environmental justice. Women do not have an innate connection with nature, nor are we necessarily victims and vulnerable, nor do we automatically organize ourselves against injustices, nor, when we do, do we necessarily do it as women or with a feminist perspective. Women also exercise power in multiple forms and situations, and reproduce the relationships of domination that beset us. Organizing is a path that is patiently built, with successes and errors, paying a great deal of attention to differences of all kinds. As Kenyan feminist political ecologist Ruth Nyambura says:

It is important that we not only recognize the (mental, emotional and physical) work of women in protecting environmental commonalities. We also need to transform and compensate [women] for their work by destroying patriarchal and essentialized notions of work, and by raising issues of gender-assigned roles, even while we remain aware of the specific contexts in which this work is done (cit. in Merino 2017 n.p.).

Today, the convergence between feminisms and the diverse environmentalisms of Latin America, is proposing a discussion that will take us beyond descriptive conclusions about the sexual division of labor in socio-environmental systems. It will also enable us to fully understand the many social and power relationships established by societies, and how they work in accordance with the multiple social contracts that underlie them. Relations upon which human societies build forms of social production and reproduction that deepen inequalities, including gender

inequalities, and which accelerate climate change (Velázquez Gutiérrez 2020:10).

In these times of climate change, voracious extractivism, the poisoning of the air, land, aquifers and food, the abuse of non-human living beings, and the massive predation of species and cultures, there are multiple (eco) feminist forms of dealing with the colonial legacy of destruction of nature that need to be recognized, made visible and strengthened:

environmental activism, agro-ecological practices, the defense of animals, the creation of networks of eco-friendly production, the distribution and consumption in solidarity with nature, the struggle for territories, recycling activities, environmental education, among many other possibilities, are actions of resistance/confrontation, contrary to the dominant model of consumerist and predatory development (Armijo & Benitez 2020: 66).

As Veronica Gago says, the massive, radical feminist struggles of the South are driven by the desire to change everything. Although it is not necessarily stated in this way, often using the opaque terminology of “transforming the model”, these struggles are a result of the embedded experience of a multiple, systemic, and even civilizational crisis. That crisis is based on certain epistemic assumptions of the capitalist, modern-colonial, and patriarchal civilization in which we are immersed: the hierarchical binarisms of culture-nature, masculine-feminine, public-private; its eagerness to dominate and control the ‘wild’; its blind faith in the ability

of science and technology – although their evolution is subject to the imperative of capital accumulation and not to the imperative of sustaining dignified life– to always provide solutions to the problems we generate (Lander 1992, 2019).

On the contrary, the Latin American feminist trends we discuss in this text are based on another episteme, which, as Rita Segato said, gives a theoretical and epistemic status to gender, and at the same time questions androcentrism or patriarchy, anthropocentrism, colonialism and capitalism.

The production of the commons requires organizing the collective use dimensions of life that remain outside the logic of private property, commodification and accumulation. For these feminisms the above represents a central tenet of the struggle to overcome a crisis that the constant expansion of precisely these same logics –patriarchal, capitalist, and typical of colonial modernity– has led us. The commons, not as common goods but rather as a network of relationships that work together to sustain life, is the response of many feminisms of the South to the systematic dispossession, sacrificial territories, mechanism of looting, dispossession and conquest they face. From Africa, Ruth Nyambura talks about building ecological commonalities that provide hope for liberation (in Merino 2017). From India, Vandana Shiva invites us to “claim the commons: biodiversity, indigenous knowledge and the rights of Mother Earth” (Shiva 2020). And in Latin America, Gutiérrez, Navarro and Linsalata are some of the feminist thinkers who explore the production of

the commons by inviting us to rethink the political domain:

The common is produced and made by many, through the generation and constant reproduction of multiple associative patterns and collaborative social relationships that continuously and constantly enable the production and enjoyment of a large amount of material and intangible goods of common use. Those goods that we often call “commons” such as water, seeds, forests, irrigation systems in some communities, some self-managed urban spaces, etc., could not be what they are without the social relationships that produce them. Rather, they cannot be fully understood while separated from people, organizational practices, processes of collective significance, affectionate bonds, and relationships of interdependence and reciprocity that shape them on a daily basis, which produce such goods as commons (Gutiérrez, Navarro and Linsalata 2016: 388).

Ecofeminisms, indigenous or communitarian feminisms, and feminist political ecology of geo-political and geo-epistemic Southern regions, as well as many grassroots women who fight but do not call themselves feminists, invite us to open up to a broader perspective. A perspective that focuses on the relationships between climate change and gender mandates, and on the other relations of domination that have equally important effects on our social interactions with nature. They invite us to move the focus from impacts and vulnerabilities to action, resistance, and the

expansion of other forms of living, both in urban and rural areas. They converge in showing that in order to fight climate change effectively, it is necessary to look at the processes of environmental destruction through an intersectional lens that allows us to get to the roots of the civilization in crisis and to question and fight its erroneous assumptions until it recovers the capacity to defend life by progressively eliminating the imperatives of capital accumulation from its dimensions, from its spaces, and from its relationships.

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## **Climate justice from the perspective of Latin American and other Southern Feminisms**

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