

# GENDER AND SECURITY POLICIES

A feminist look into the impacts  
of militarization in the West

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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 mate-

rial 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.





## 1. INTRODUCTION

"Gender and insecurity policies. A feminist look at the impacts of the militarization of the West" is part of the wave of populist governments of the radical right and the extreme right, characterized by an authoritarian and xenophobic discourse, which advocates a return to the paradigm of military security and centred on the State, marked by the victories of Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, Donald Trump in the United States, Viktor Orban in Hungary, Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines or Iván Duque in Colombia. Also by the M5S and the Lega getting power in the government in Italy, whose most visible face is the Minister of the Interior Matteo Salvini, or the current coalition between conservatives and the extreme right that governs Austria. All of them characterized, in turn, by discourses and policies in defence of the traditional family which indicate, as a goal to combat, the sexual and reproductive rights achieved in the last decades by the feminist and liberation movements of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transsexuals and intersex people (LGBTI).

The report, which is part of the Centre Delàs research line on Gender and Militarism and is its third published work, aims to contribute to determining the impacts which the current context of securitization and militarization in the West, initiated after the jihadist attacks of the start of the new century and aggravated by the emergence of this type of government, can generate and are generating in the lives, bodies and rights of women and LGTBI people. Impacts in symbolic terms like equipment, which can aggravate the situation of insecurity and permanent precariousness in which these subjects were already living because in them, violence manifests itself as a continuum.

The starting point of the report is the conflictive relationship between gender and security, the tension between different conceptions of the term and the contributions that feminist studies have made to understand security and insecurity as subjective experiences, determined by social and individual identity and by the different structural violence that conditions our lives. Likewise, it seeks to address the dilemmas that this securitization poses, by analysing different cases within the framework of Western countries.

The report consists of:

- A first chapter, "The government of insecurity and the crusade against gender", in which we analyse the causes of militaristic, xenophobic,

sexist and homophobic political options in the West and in the world in general, the failure of the State as protector and the close relationship between insecurity and economic precariousness, as well as the return to traditional positions on security and gender which have motivated the boom.

- The second chapter, "Shaking the foundations: feminist theories on security", relates gender, militarism and security at a theoretical level, from the response to realistic and liberal theories, which place the state in the centre of security, but also from the critical review of progressive and inclusive theories, such as Human Security. In it, a historical perspective is sought on the contribution of feminist proposals in this field, based on the questioning of power relations, the conception of violence and insecurity as a continuum and the need for a radical transformation of the social structures to achieve security.
- In the third and final chapter, a practical analysis of the current context is carried out from Feminist Studies on Security, centred in the United States and in those countries of the European Union in which the leadership of the right and the populist extreme right, the militarization and securitization of the country and the concrete impacts and experiences of insecurity related to gender are triangulated very clearly such as Italy, Hungary and Poland, with mention of France, Spain and Austria.

Considering the willingness to make this report from an emancipatory position, which conceives security as an absence of threats to the life and integrity of people (Booth, 1991: 319) and not only as an absence of direct violence or threats to the Integrity of the State, only the most representative cases in the West are analysed, consciously avoiding the paternalistic and colonialist attitude that limits security and Human Rights to something that have to be exported to people of the Global South. It also takes a position of responsibility towards the violence that the securitization and militarization in our countries, translated for example in a greater production and export of weapons, generate globally.

Endorsing the different dimensions proposed by Human Security to measure what security and insecurity

are, the report uses the following variables in the analysis of cases, which are considered representative in the situation of gender insecurity in the West:

- Economic security and sustainability of life;
- Social and communities security, centred on the vulnerabilities of migrated and racialized people;
- Personal security and protection against violence for gender identity or sexual option;
- Security in terms of health and, in particular, of access to sexual and reproductive healthcare.

It is based on the premise that gender is essential at a conceptual, empirical and normative level for the study of international security, from a perspective that not only extends what is meant by security, but also the range of subjects deserving of this one (Méndia, 2013). In the case that concerns us, the feminist view as a methodology helps us observe the two faces with which current extreme right-wing populism is related to gender. On the one hand, reinforcing elitism and the exclusionary nature of the decision-making processes and standardizing responses that go by diverting social resources and prevention of violence towards the defence and national security, as well as openly attacking the rights of women and LGBTI people. And, on the other, especially in Western Europe, instrumentalising the discourse of gender equality and even sexual liberation, to implement more restrictive policies against migrated and racialized people.

It also adopts a gender perspective in its broadest sense, not only focused on the women's experiences, but also on subjects equally vulnerable to the violence of state and non-state agents due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. It is a position taken in an unresolved debate about the subject of feminism, given the urgency to break the silence on the specific situation of insecurity of these subjects and an ignorant majority in research on peace and international relations, and even in the Agenda of Women, Peace and Security (Hagen, 2016: 313), which is intended to help overturn this document.

It is intended, in short, to **address the questions and considerations raised by the introduction of gender as a variable in the field of security**, in its broadest sense and in the current context.





## 2. THE GOVERNMENT OF INSECURITY AND THE CRUSADE AGAINST GENDER

### 2.1 INSECURITY AS A FORM OF GOVERNMENT

With the electoral victory of former army captain Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil in October 2018, the wave of radical right and the extreme right populist governments added a new ally. If, on the global scope, this phenomenon is headed by Donald Trump in the United States, Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines and Italian Interior Minister Matteo Salvini, in Europe there are 10 states in which the xenophobic extreme right is part of the government or has obtained a strong presence (Germany, Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Holland, Hungary, Italy, Poland and Sweden) and is part of 18 parliaments of European countries, including the Andalusian regional parliament.

With national security as a main priority of their programs, often filled with martial discourses that equate crime and immigration and solutions that happen -mainly- by an increase in defence spending, the development of new weapons and the internal militarization and borders, all of them champion a return to the state-centric and military vision of security, reborn at the beginning of the 21st century after the jihadist attacks in New York, Madrid and London and the outbreak of the "Global War on Terror".

In Western countries in the last decade, security has been a fundamental dimension of the pact with which the modern State was born, to constitute almost all of what can be expected of it in terms of public policies.

In the words of Michaël Foessel, the security or surveillance system in which we live is so accused, that there is no political discourse or electoral program that does not make the restoration of security, that is, the return to a supposedly idyllic past and free of threats, its sole objective or, at least, the priority for a credible public action (Foessel, 2010: 88-94).

At the macro level of International Relations, this implies a return to the traditional paradigm, a neorealist offensive that assimilates security with the defence and protection of the State and the use and control of military force (Walt, 1991: 212). In Western countries, there is a notion – oversized – of the existence of a permanent risk of suffering terrorist attacks, which will profoundly alter the consensus on Human Rights and civil liberties as a limit to the action of States to preserve national security.

This revitalization of the traditional and military vision of security, as well as the victory of forces of the most reactionary right, is not a purely technical or political issue determined by the situation of global conflict, but is closely linked to an economic phenomenon from the western states which, incapable of offering economic protection and social welfare in a context of fierce globalization, privatization and deregulation and dismantling of the public system, "approach the field of fear of coup of criminal legislation and of walls that hide weakness of the nations" (Foessel, 2011: 89). The liberal state, faced with the loss of national sovereignty by leaps and bounds, leads an aesthetic return to the founding pact, according to which citizens submit to the power of the State to receive security and protection in exchange for legitimizing their authority. But protection, with the global and state economy in the hands of private capital, is transferred to a totally secondary level when the priority is to increase the benefit. And, when this social protection disappears, insecurity and fear skyrocket (Spike Peterson, 2018: 173).

Thus, the current securitization of the West and the world, understood as the deployment of emergency measures, special powers and legitimization of the use of force in response to existential threats (Buzan et al., 1998), is explained in part by the current situation of social decomposition, as explained in a recent interview by the Marxist philosopher Clara Ramas San Miguel. Capitalism based on the accumulation by dispossession of the popular classes worldwide, which has generated an increasingly pronounced inequality gap between rich and poor, and neoliberal globalization, has torn our collective bonds, giving rise to a sense of social disorder and "a feeling of inclemency and helplessness", that progressively leads us to the desperate struggle to feel less fragile,<sup>1</sup> less vulnerable. This sense of precariousness, also reinforced by the daily and permanent economic insecurity, which is aggravated by the defeat of the Welfare State and the dismantling of labour rights (Lorey, 2016), pushes millions of people to social and political exclusion. In this context, ultraconservative, identity and fascist movements capitalize on the need to exorcise fears and uncertainties and to express anger and disaffection towards liberal and social democratic institutional politics,<sup>2</sup> offering simplistic solutions and two perfect scapegoats: migrants, refugees and racialized people who live in the country or cross its borders and the rights of women and LGTBI people.

## 2.2 MASCULINITY, WHITE IDENTITY, SECURITY AND POWER

In this security strategy for material and identity survival of the nation-state, feminism and the reappropriation that this proposes of bodies, lives and reproduction are an existential threat, that is, something that requires emergency solutions within or outside the law (Buzan, 1998), then, as Trump's ex-adviser Steve Bannon said well, "intends to get rid of 10,000 years of history"<sup>3</sup> of the patriarchy.

Thus, the two crusades that more clearly ally all the agents of the new radical right and the far-right populist are the xenophobic defence of white identity and the fight against advances in gender and sexual option, in a racist, sexist and homophobic counter-revolution that aims to restore the hierarchical order assigned to each of the roles and racial and sexual categories, assuming them as natural facts and "common sense" (Garbagnoli and Prearo, 2017).

This ultraconservative reaction, common throughout the West and Latin America, also responds to the fear of subjects that are inscribed in the hegemonic masculinity to the loss of power, privileges and status, precipitated by economic impoverishment, the growing ethnic and cultural diversity resulting from the migrations and by the irruption in the public and political agenda of the feminist struggle and for sexual liberation, with not only a symbolic vocation, but to transform situations of oppression and discrimination, which inevitably go through a change in the economic model and in gender relations, and for the democratic distribution of power and access to decision-making space.

But it is also a consequence of the assumption by the power and capital of the demands of cultural diversity and gender, to neutralize this potential redistribution of economic resources, which has led to an interested identification of the feminist struggle and sexual liberation with the bourgeois institutionalism and the "evils" of globalization contributing to make the misogynistic discourse of the radical populist right pass as avant-garde and "politically incorrect", which begins to be present also in a certain left, giving white men and heterosexuals a message of support and camaraderie in light of the loss of privileges.<sup>4</sup>

1. Fourth Power, interview with Clara Ramas San Miguel, 24/09/2018: <https://www.cuartopoder.es/cultura/2018/08/23/clara-ramas-marx/>

2. Visegrad Insight, Veronika Grzebalska, "Anti-Genderism and the crisis of neoliberal democracy", 7/03/2016: <https://visegradinsight.eu/why-the-war-on-gender-ideology-matters-and-not-just-to-feminists/>

3. Independent UK, "Steve Bannon warns Trump the 'anti-patriarchy movement' will be bigger than the Tea Party, 12/02/2018: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/steve-bannon-trump-tea-party-anti-patriarchy-movement-times-up-bloomberg-breitbart-news-a8206426.html>

4. Open Democracy, "Matteo Salvini, renaturalizing the racial and sexual boundaries of democracy", 1/10/2018: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/sara-garbagnoli/matteo-salvini-renaturalizing-racial-and-sexual-boundaries-of-dem>

In this way, these political leaders embody white supremacy, anti-intellectualism, criticism of the gentrification of social democracy and the dismantling of the welfare state, from an ideological position which, as feminist thinker and researcher Rita Laura Segato would define, stems from a militant patriarchal fanaticism, suspiciously akin to warmongering (Segato, 2015: 17), which waves the ghost of "gender ideology" as a category of accusation. This concept, born in the heart of the Catholic Church, unites groups opposed to the right to one's own body, anti-abortion, ultra-Catholic and extreme right associations since around 5 years ago, in campaigns and global mobilizations that question the "denaturalization of sexual order". An order, better known as Gender, which questions not only the natural and determined nature of the roles of men and women, of masculinity and femininity, considering them social and cultural constructions that change the fruit of the moment and circumstances, but questions also the very existence of two unique sexes. The defence of the patriarchal order and of the traditional family in the face of the threat of gender is manifested in a desire to cut back or go back on the progress made in terms of equality, such as sexual and reproductive rights. The aim is to return to traditional roles, which serve the narratives on national security as protectors - the State at a macro level and men at a micro level - and protected ones, women. The rest does not even exist.

In this same sense, the unquestionability of those who "provide security", the securitizing agents (normally political leaders, bureaucracies, state apparatus, governments, lobbies and pressure groups) who have the power to declare that something is under existential threat and what this thing is - the object, structure or group of people that is referenced - which is threatened and which struggles legitimately to survive (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde, 1998).

These objects can be the State, national sovereignty, an ideology or current policy, national economies, collective identities, communities, species or habitats (Buzan et al, 1998). In the case of the governments analysed with a marked xenophobic character, what is perceived as threatened would be the white identity, the white working class, whose interests they claim to defend, or "our women". When a fact, for example the current migration crisis or jihadism, is considered a "threat to national security", it goes from being a politicized fact which requires management by the State within legal frameworks to securitization, which requires an emergency action, whether inside or outside

of legal frameworks, such as militarizing borders or submitting a specific community to massive and permanent surveillance.

It is the process that the forerunners of critical security analyses, the Copenhagen School, call securitization, where this non-objective character is revealed when it comes to designating what does or does not constitute an existential threat (Buzan et al, 1998), and what is key as a basis for questioning, if the existential threats are not objective, is what the State considers as threats to its security does not necessarily have to coincide with the existential dangers faced by its inhabitants, so state security is not transferred automatically to individuals (Hoggensen and Rotter, 2004: 158).

The threats depend, then, on the decisions that have to do with political motivations and priorities (Sjöberg, 2009). This equation of the interests of State, nation and society as a single indivisible thing supposes a return to the realistic vision of the Cold War and turns aside the focus of security as a cover for the basic needs of individuals and national, religious or ethnic communities, who propose other visions, such as Human Security. The subjective nature of the choice of existential threats with respect to which protection is needed, also, with one of the main contributions from the genre to Security Studies, which opens the doors to visualize and consider the whole range of existential threats that strike people and communities on a daily basis, especially those that suffer the highest levels of vulnerability.

Thus, gender is relevant in this case not only because of the deep misogyny that the discourses of the new leaders of the realistic geopolitics instil, but also because it is cause and consequence at the same time, an inescapable factor to understand the victories of the extreme militarist right and xenophobic and savage globalization that has impoverished the popular classes in the West, while continuing to plunder resources from the Global South, exposing people to a situation of precariousness and growing insecurity on many levels. It is also essential to analyse the return of the State as the only reference of security and defence, as well as of the military and of securitization as an absolute priority before sustaining life. And it is to recognize how gender and sexual identities, along with the rest of the identities that shape us (social class, race and ethnicity, citizen or migratory status, corporal abilities, etc.) determine the experiences of insecurity and vulnerability that we suffer (Mendia, 2013).





### 3. SHAKING THE FOUNDATIONS: THE FEMINIST THEORIES ON SECURITY

#### 3.1 EVERYDAY VIOLENCE AND THE NEED FOR FEMINIST SECURITY

Although there are no updated global figures that quantify, from year to year, the incidence of gender-based violence and sexual choice, some thinkers such as Rita Laura Segato and Silvia Federici talk about a global increase in violence and brutality - especially at the borders between the countries of the North and the Global South - as a manifestation and symptom of a world in which masculinity is permanently tested, a status that must be constantly reproduced and demonstrated before other men. And it is in situations of greater vulnerability when this status is acquired through force, through violence. The most lethal man is an insecure subject.<sup>5</sup>

Others, like Caroline Kennedy, claim that violence against women is more frequent in militarized societies (Kennedy, 2007: 125), for the legitimacy of violence in general when it comes to managing and resolving conflicts and for the dehumanization that it feeds, and that not only permeates the scope of public policies, it also penetrates into homes and human and family relations, taking advantage of the sexual division of labour and the stereotypes that prevail in society. Militarism and the increase in violence associated with it, would be presented from a feminist approach as the greatest threat to the security of people (Méndez, 2013) and, in particular, of women, lesbians, gays and transgender and intersex people, since it is the maximum expression of patriarchal values and, in addition, implies the diversion of resources from social investment to military spending, to the detriment of social protection programs. As we will see in the subsequent case analysis, this could have a devastating impact on the economy and on the support of millions of women and LGBTI people.

A report by the World Health Organization states that, in the region where the present analysis focuses, one out of every four women has suffered or suffers violence from their partner or ex-partner. If we expand

5. Context Magazine, interview with Rita Laura Segato, 03/15/2017: <https://ctxt.es/es/20170315/Politica/11576/Feminismo-Violencia-de-g%C3%A9nero-Rita-Laura-Segato-La-guerra-contra-las-mujeres-Nuria-Alabao.htm>



statistics to violence of a physical or sexual kind, regardless of whether the perpetrator is a partner or ex-partner, 32.7% of women in Western Europe and the United States, that is, one in 3 women, admit having lived through a situation of this kind.<sup>6</sup> The incidence of this threat among women is, therefore, extremely high, but it is not considered a relevant input of Security in capitals that, under the realist paradigm, in the words of Ann Tickner, “try to explain the causes of war through a discourse that privileges visions from hegemonic masculinity” (Tickner, 1992: 3), that is, the experiences of an elite among men. Tickner will introduce the need to connect the effects of violence with everyday experiences of insecurity and to recognize the role of structural violence in them.

Violence is then connected not as isolated phenomena, but based on the premise that they occur in layers that overlap (True and Tanyag, 2018: 16) and that there are multiple links between the insecurity that exists in the domestic space, within the community, in the State and globally, what Cynthia Cockburn calls “a continuum of violence” (Cockburn, 2004). The recognition of this link, of this continuity between the different forms of violence, is one of the main contributions of Feminist Theories on security, especially in the context of the current securitization process, whose narratives isolate violence based on gender or sexual choice from structures of power, inequality and symbolic discrimination, the so-called structural violence.

In the same way that the current global economic system generates a very unequal distribution of authority, privileges and resources, it also generates a distribution – as unequal as the previous one – of insecurity. Taking into account the political and economic structural inequalities that already exist between men and women, gender will contribute to producing a differentiated distribution of insecurities, and experiences of vulnerability will vary depending on whether you are a man, a woman or if you do not identify with any of these two categories. Neoliberal globalization and current securitization intensify these structural hierarchies and the associated insecurities (Spike Peterson, 2018: 179). Therefore, the understanding of gender patterns that act in the deployment of security, from a feminist perspective, becomes essential.

### 3.2 AN INTRODUCTION TO THE FEMINIST THEORIES ON SECURITY

Although gender conditions our understanding of the origin of the vulnerabilities and threats that contribute to insecurity (Detraz 2012: 131), International Relations, and within these Security Studies, have historically been impervious – when not directly hostile – to analysis of gender and the feminist perspective, by questioning the vertebral axes that make up the dominant approaches of International Relations (Mendia, 2013). To the point, in the words of Jonathan D. Wadley, that “nowhere is the silence about gender more deafening than in the field of international security” (Wadley, 2010: 39).

For J. Ann Tickner, a pioneer in the development of the gender perspective on International Relations, the role of women in realistic national and international security has been contradictory and ambiguous. On the one hand, there have always been those to be protected by men and the State, that is, they have traditionally been the justification for many actions in the name of security. Instead, they have historically had zero control over the conditions of their protection. In the name of rationalism and universality, realists have articulated Security in capital letters from a very specific place, the State (Hoogensen, 2004: 161).

Even under the liberal paradigm, whose focus displaces the centrality of war to negotiation, the security needs and the protection framework have been established in many cases based on the experiences of violence in the public space of a specific group of men, in this case, those who have access to state apparatus, excluding any consideration of the experiences and situation of women and without any critical review of the bias of their analysis (Stokes, 2014: 48).

When determining the main existential threats to the members of a society, the feminist perspective focuses on the security of individuals and communities, which affects the security of States and international organizations, applying one of the slogans which best define feminism – “the personal is political” – the international scope and security. The personal is, well, international (Sjöberg, 2010:24). Gender analysis observes and connects the daily violence that happens in the family, in the home and in the community with violence at the macro level and the relations between states and non-state agents (Spike Peterson, 2003).

The Feminist Theories on Security, which are part of Critical Security Studies, question this field in defence of a broader definition of the term Security – coinciding in this sense with the rest of the critical theories with

6. Report “Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and nonpartner sexual violence” from the World Health Organization (WHO, 2013). Latest figures updated globally, showing the global incidence of sexist violence.

realism - that take into consideration the voices and roles of women (Stokes, 2014: 44). Initially, only in a quantitative way, claiming a place for women in security institutions, to move forward towards a more critical and transformative vision, which seeks to question the foundations of traditional theories and break the dogma of the security as something univocal, through questions such as, for example, who determines what are the greatest existential threats and for whom? Who defines and interprets security? Who should receive this security? How is security maintained?

This proposal is summarized in a very clarifying way by Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, now the United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights in the fight against terrorism, when she says that "societies that are not safe for women are simply not safe" (Ní Aoláin, 2011: 62). The categorical proposal that the state of insurance or insecurity of a State depends on the degree of personal and community security of the people who are more vulnerable or more insecure (Mendia, 2013), or who are the object of more frequent attacks on their integrity and life, is one of the most transcendental contributions, while deliberately ignored, of feminist theory in this field. For the teacher and researcher Irantzu Mendia, safety should be defined by the people who are most insecure, taking into account that the existence of women and their experience of (in) security is determined by other factors such as their social class, identity and sexual orientation, abilities, ethnic-racial, legal situation, etc. Security would be articulated, then, from insecure voices (Mendia, 2013). Associated with daily life, liberties and human rights, security would encompass protection against violence in the public and private spheres, economic stability, access to a roof, water and food, freedom to choose when they have sex or when they procreate and many more considerations than the current concept of national security takes (Stokes, 2014: 52), some of them in line with the proposals of Human Security, a theoretical-practical phase of security that has also suffered a very critical review by the Feminist Studies on security.

In short, both militarism, globalization and International Relations, reflect stereotypical constructions on masculinities and femininity and perpetuate artificial distinctions between public and private areas, politics and economics, productive and reproductive economies, and between "crisis" and "non-crisis" contexts (Sjöberg, 2010). In this sense, the feminist perspective helps us question the rhetoric of the moment of current crisis, addressing the pre-existing violence, underlying all patriarchal and capitalist societies (True and Tanyag, 2018: 16), and the injustices that women, lesbians, gays, trans and intersex people suffer on a daily basis, exacerbated in certain circumstances,

helping create a holistic and comprehensive perspective on what security means.

### 3.3 THE CRITICISMS OF HUMAN SECURITY ON GENDER

Towards the end of the Cold War, as was the case again after 9/11, the dominant and hegemonic idea about security were limited, mostly, to the analysis of threats that put at risk the stability and continuity of the State (Detraz 2012: 131). In the 90s and coinciding with the increase of economic inequalities between states and within the states, a theoretical review of Security Studies takes place, in which the questions centred on the state-centric conception and the idea that the only threats are the military (Pérez de Armiño, 2013).

In 1994, Human Security leaps from the theoretical formulation to the application in public policies, the term being adopted by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), which incorporates the term in its Human Development Report, stating that "The concept of Human Security has been defined in a very limited way for too long, (...) forgetting the legitimate concerns of those who sought security in their daily lives" (UNDP, 1994: 22).

It is difficult to establish a definition of Human Security, because it has been conceptualized and defined in multiple ways and under diverse political, theoretical and economic interests. It is not, therefore, a univocal term, but it presents considerable differences of conceptualization and in the policies proposed to achieve it, by the degree of challenge to the traditional views of security and in its critical load towards the existing structures of oppression and power, the latter being an important foundation for the critics that pick up from the most transformed movements of security, and also from Feminist Studies on Security.

Human Security branches into two main approaches (Pérez de Armiño, 2013):

■ **Broad approach:** corresponds to the original UNDP formulation in 1994, closely linked to the concept of human development, and emphasizes the satisfaction of basic needs. Security as a situation in which people are free from all kinds of threats to human integrity, guaranteeing development, life and dignity. Two dimensions: freedom from fear (free from the threat of physical violence) and freedom from necessity (having basic needs covered). The UNDP report of 1994 also breaks down human security into 7 specific types of security: economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political.

■ **Restricted focus:** the easiest version to adopt and assimilate from liberal democracies, which have limited it to freedom from fear, leaving aside the fundamental issue of welfare and development and - with the justification of "making the concept more measurable and operational in the practice of public policies"- neutralizing the most transformative content and the critical potential of this movement.

The Feminist Security Theory (FST) problematizes the dominant concept of security and seeks to explain, and above all transform, the functioning of gender and power in International Relations, which clashes with the inertia of the Human Security, whom the most hard-line critics accuse of having let themselves be captured and instrumentalized by the Western powers (Pérez de Armiño, 2013), especially in the framework of the Global War on Terror, stripped of its critical and transforming content and being used more and more to justify international aid policies linked to national security interests (Mendia, 2013).

One of the biggest criticisms from feminism to Human Security is the lack of inclusion of gender as a variable that determines experiences of insecurity, in a transversal way (Detraz, 2012: 139), beginning with the risk of masking differences under the human term (Hudson, 2005) and making the internal differences and inequalities invisible which are universally hidden, in the same way as conservative proposals on security. Hoogensen and Vigeland suggest the need to provide human security with a gender perspective to show how individual security needs vary from group to group, a vision that reflects the interdependent relationship between the individual and social dimensions as proposed by feminist thinking (Hoogensen and Vigeland, 2004).

### **Further still: the debate on agency and securitization of violence**

Within the feminist theory, as a movement of extremely diverse thought and analysis, divergent views exist regarding the approach to inequalities, and also about the relationship to be established with security, with securitization, with the State and with the management of threats. Although it seems that it is a majority opinion that the main threats against the bodies and lives of women, such as domestic violence and gender violence or economic and food insecurity, generate a situation of vulnerability, there is deep dissent in some movements of feminism on what should be the answer to this observation and if this happens by constraining the demands in normative frameworks.

The limitations of this assumption of security demands from the system and institutional framework have clear translations in the so-called Women, Peace and Security Agenda, which in turn is one of the great victories in terms of recognition of the demands of the international movement of women. Between the 1990s and 2000, a series of normative instruments of international scope were approved, such as the UN Security Council resolutions 1325 and 1820, which addressed for the first time, the need to incorporate women into post-conflict and peace negotiations, protecting their security and considering, in the case of the second resolution, sexual violence in the context of the conflict as gender-specific damage. If, obviously, the public recognition of a situation of invisible discrimination is a very positive development, in practice, the conceptual and normative content of these two resolutions also has a limiting effect, starting with the fact that its content is limited to the framework of armed conflicts, but does not contain criteria or instruments easily applicable to security in contexts of social conflict against women's bodies (Ellerby, 2015).

Also, beyond the securitization of society as a whole, the movements of women, lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans live an internal debate about the relevant response to the uninhabitability of their lives, to the insecurity which they suffer from as subjects traversed by gender, being security. Understanding the securitization according to the proposal of the School of Copenhagen, not only as a fact of politicization, but as a devolution in the State of the need to respond to it. Some strongly masculinized states, in addition, defend the interests of a political, economic, racial and gender specific elite and increasingly problematize sexual and gender rights. Additionally, they respond to security challenges in a punitive manner and, very commonly, through prison policies, with prisons being a tool with a bias of class, gender and specific race, which punishes certain populations with particular severity and that, far from making people's lives safer, can contribute to the perpetuation of inequality and structural violence – and also gender violence – against prisoners.

There are many feminist theorists on International Relations that problematize the action of the States and question their status as "protector of women", for their involvement in the maintenance of cultural constructions and stereotypes that perpetuate gender violence and condemn certain people to inadequate access to healthcare, sexual harassment, impunity, the wage and rights gap, etc. In this sense, Feminist Security Theories do not deny the possibility of obtaining limited protection from the State or its obligation to provide it (Blanchard, 2003), but they

question the notion of "protection", considering it "the attainment of obedience / subordination in exchange for security promises" (Peterson 1992, 50).

Following what Brian Job calls the "dilemma of insecurity", that is, the strengthening of the State's security mechanisms - which can then be applied against certain groups and individuals to the detriment of their safety - has risks (Job 1992: 18). In the current context, an action by the State to protect a specific subject, for example, white women who suffer sexual assault in the street, may end up reducing protection for others or making them more vulnerable. The distorted image that rapes and assaults or femicides occur massively at the hands of foreigners, for example, has led to a strong social and political reaction against refugee and migrant men in coun-

tries such as Germany, contributing to the rise of a xenophobia which also impacts on the insecurity of women in those same communities. The same applies to airport security and detection systems, deployed in the name of preventing terrorism and facilitating violations of rights and the humiliation of transsexual and transgender people.<sup>7</sup>

The risks of securitizing gender threats also happen through the enactment of laws that can turn against the subjects to be protected, such as anti-terrorist legislation or hate speech, and away from objectives such as the transformation of the social structure.

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7. National Centre for Transgender Equality, "Know your rights": <https://transequality.org/know-your-rights/airport-security>





#### 4. METHODOLOGY OF CASE ANALYSIS

In this chapter, two case studies are carried out, based on an analysis of the United States of Trump and the Europe of Salvini, Orban and the Law and Justice Party in Poland. In order to relate the different factors which, in the current context in the West but especially in the chosen territories, would be generating situations of insecurity and vulnerability for the people who inhabit them, the observation of the cases starts from several of the dimensions of human security, such as economic, health, personal or community, adapting these to the **main effects on security in the case of women and other sexual and gender identities in the West**, although it does not address dimensions such as the environment that are already crucial in terms of international security / insecurity.

It also considers the pioneering **Women, Peace and Security Index** that the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security (GIWPS) and the PRIO (Peace Research Institute) presented in October 2018, and addresses the lack of indicators to monitor gender equality in conflict analysis, the fragility of

states, crises and political tensions.<sup>8</sup> The WPS Index relates the propensity of a State to use violence to resolve internal or external disputes, with levels of gender-based violence in the context of the couple and the persistence of discriminatory social norms that justify attacks on women's rights.

To establish a consistent and solid relationship between current militarization and securitization, the xenophobic and ultraconservative offensive and the real impacts of gender, the report has considered both the discursive elements that can fuel discrimination and violence and contribute to dehumanizing, as the material impacts -economic and legislative or normative- on the bodies and lives of women and LGBTI people. The indicators have been developed with an inclusive will, covering the interaction of the variables of sexual identity and gender, social class or economic status, citizenship/irregular situation and racial component, to reflect all the dimensions that condition the experience of a person's insecurity and vulnerability.

8. The Women, Peace and Security Index: <https://giwps.georgetown.edu/the-index/>

## 4.1 STRUCTURE OF THE ANALYSIS AND INDICATORS

To contextualize the relevance and adequacy of the country chosen for the analysis, each case begins with an introduction on the political, economic and militarization situation in the country, as well as the presence of xenophobic and belligerent speeches against women's rights and LGBTBI persons by the respective governments. Taking into account, however, the differences between the countries analysed, which coincide on issues such as legislative reforms

to normalize emergency and in the isolation and persecution of racialized and migrated communities, but which differ in the ferocity of the discourse and the material attacks on the rights of women and LGBTBI people. Especially in the case of Italy or the extreme right of other countries such as France, Sweden or Germany, which present particularities such as the instrumentalization of the discourse of gender equality and sexual liberation at the service of identity policies. Two phenomena called femonationalism and homonationalism are developed in the section dedicated to the centre and south of Europe.

### Dimensions and indicators assessed in the case studies

#### ► SOCIOECONOMIC DIMENSION OF SECURITY

In this case, we consider the balance and prioritization between the expenditure intended for defence and security and the resources invested in sustaining and protecting life and Human Security (social spending). The weight of military and social spending in the public budget and in the GDP of the country is considered, the data of impoverishment of the population and of the female population by origin and where they live, the impoverishment of other sexual groups and identities and of gender, as well as other indicators such as the prison population rate.

Data are collected from institutes and reference centres on military spending, militarization and defence, such as the reports of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and the Global Militarization Index, of the Bonn International Centre for Conversion (BICC), as well as the database of inequalities of the OECD, the statistics of Eurostat and the main documents on the prioritization of expenditure elaborated by campaigns such as the Global Campaign for the reduction of military expenditure (GCOMS).

#### ► COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL DIMENSION OF SECURITY

It includes the exploitation on migrated and racialized population, the normative / legal, police and military or paramilitary persecution towards this, the main security impacts in the borders and in the interior of the country, the protection of migrated women and refugees who are victims of gender violence and human trafficking and the access of these populations and communities to healthcare, education or housing.

The data are extracted from the annual reports of different UN commissioners and international and local organizations defending fundamental and human rights, such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, the ACLU of the United States or the European Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), as well as the denunciations of the entities defending the rights of migrants.

#### ► PERSONAL DIMENSION OF SECURITY AND PROTECTION AGAINST VIOLENCE

The impact of physical violence and threats to life and integrity due to gender and sexual option (femicide, sexual assault and of homophobic, lesbophobia and transphobia quality) and those considered complaints about mistreatment, as well as the existence of protection systems against this violence, their functioning and the impunity indices of the perpetrators, be they state or non- state agents.

The data are collected from the World Health Organization reports, the Eurostat and country statistical databases, the FRA reports in Europe, the state reports to the CEDAW committee (Women's Convention) and the so-called "shadow reports" carried out by organizations that defend women's rights, as well as reports from other groups.

#### ► HEALTH DIMENSION OF SECURITY

Access to health in general, and to sexual and reproductive health in particular, is measured, considering access to family planning and legal and social limitations and obstacles to abortion, as well as the securitization of women with HIV and their access to appropriate treatments.

The data are extracted from the reports of the World Health Organization, the United Nations Agency for the Fight against AIDS (UNAIDS), the latest reports published by Amnesty International and different national reports.



## 5. THE DIMENSIONS OF GENDER INSECURITY IN THE WEST

### 5.1 THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, AN ARMY OF 40 MILLION OF POOR PEOPLE

The first economic, military and technological power in the world, forty million poor people live in the United States, almost half of them (18.5 million) in extreme poverty, one in every 8 of its 326 million inhabitants.<sup>9</sup> With a GDP of almost 19.39 billion dollars in 2017, the United States is the third country with the greatest poverty gap - difference between the poverty line and the median income of people who fall below this threshold - of the OECD, after South Africa and Italy, and the seventh with the greatest income inequality.<sup>10</sup> The arrival of billionaire Donald Trump to the presidency of the country in 2016, appealing for the return to a "strong America" and in defence of the "American way of life," brandishing the flag of isolationist nationalism and accusing the free movement

of goods and people of having exacerbated unemployment and of having lost the purchasing power of the white working class,<sup>11</sup> was only the preamble to an openly securitizing and militaristic strategy that, among others, has led to approve defence budgets for 2019 that are already considered by the Washington Post as the highest in recent American history, more than in the highest spending peak of the Vietnam War.

The increase in military spending is part of the National Security Strategy approved in 2017 by the Trump administration, which is guided "by a return to realism" and which advocates "increasing American influence, preserving peace through force, promote economic prosperity and internally defend the country, the American people and the American way of life";<sup>12</sup> associating these inputs with establishment of commercial tariffs on imports, national-military security, the construction of a wall on the US-Mexico border, and the facilitation of deportations of migrants.

9. Declaration on the visit to the United States of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, 12/15/2017: <https://www.ohchr.org/SP/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=22533&LangID=5>  
10. OECD inequality database: <https://data.oecd.org/inequality/poverty-rate.htm#indicator-chart>

11. Publico, Chronicles Insumisas blog, "The neoliberalism and warmongering of Donald Trump." Tica Font and Pere Ortega, 06/14/2017: <https://blogs.publico.es/cronicas-insumisas/2017/06/14/el-neoliberalismo-y-belicismo-de-donald-trump/>  
12. National Security Strategy of the United States of America, 2017: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>



The strategic document also mentions the need to "promote efforts to advance in the equality of women, in the protection of their rights and in the promotion of their empowerment".

The translation of this commitment has been reflected, in these first two years of mandate, in statements about gender and sexual violence of a certainly self-assured misogynistic nature, the withdrawal of international aid to organizations working for women's access to a safe abortion, the cutting of policies to protect against sexual violence in universities, the suspension of initiatives to promote equal pay, policies against the corporal and reproductive autonomy of women and an obsession with the rights of transsexual and intersexual people that put these historically very vulnerable subjects in a situation of greater insecurity.

In terms of structure, we must also mention the gender impacts derived from a clear commitment to militarism as a model for managing political and social conflicts, and a greater feminization of poverty as a result of the cuts in social spending approved for the fiscal year 2019. Economic dimension of insecurity and sustainability of life Military and defence expenditure The United States is, according to the Global Militarization Index of 2017,<sup>13</sup> the second most militarized country in the American continent and the one that devotes most of the budget to military spending, followed by China and Russia, which is 39% of global military spending. After falling since 2011, the year in which the withdrawal of US troops from Iraq was completed, military spending increased again in 2017 to 610 billion dollars, according to SIPRI data.<sup>14</sup> For 2019, the US Senate approved a budget of 717 billion dollars in June 2018, despite warnings from economists and legislators that this gesture will aggravate the federal deficit and could trigger inflation. Trump has expressed his intention to continue the US military expansion, expanding the army of the country with some 120,000 new soldiers, which would be added to the contingent of 1,300,000 that it has active, plus the 800,000 people who are in the reserve.<sup>15</sup> The expansion of troops is, together with the modernization of military equipment - which Barack Obama has already begun - and the development of new weapons, including new nuclear weapons, Trump's commitment to make the US military "stronger than it has ever been."<sup>16</sup>

Congress also agreed to significantly increase the Pentagon's funds. The approved budget proposal agreed to finance the rest of the agencies in charge of national security with 51,000 million dollars, while the real military and security expenditure, adding the pensions of the war veterans, the interest on debts, the federal budget and other items, would amount to 1.135 billion dollars, according to data from the Centre for Defence Information, part of the Project On Government Oversight (POGO), an independent American organization that investigates and monitors corruption and the waste of public resources. "If the Trump administration moves forward with its defence plans and the GDP values do not increase proportionally - the Global Militarization Index of 2017 recites - the most likely result is an increase in the militarization of the United States."

### Social expenditure

While the country sends the signal of being prepared for war to the world, Trump has initiated a "dramatic change of direction in policies related to inequality and extreme poverty",<sup>17</sup> despite the fact that he presented the budgets for fiscal year 2019 as pillars of "the security of the American people and a higher quality of life for hardworking Americans." According to the Centre on Budget and Policy Priorities, a research institute that works to reduce inequalities and poverty, millions of people could lose health coverage due to the cuts of the so-called Medicaid, a system with national and federal funding that pays part of medical costs to people with low incomes or few resources, in one of the OECD countries with higher ratios of infant mortality, youth poverty and obesity.

The centre also warns of a 30% cut in resources allocated to the SNAP program, which helps with food, in 10 years, which will especially affect people who are unemployed, the elderly and working class families with few resources,<sup>18</sup> as well as public aid for education, access to housing and energy supplies, considering that the United States is one of the OECD countries with the greatest inequality gap between rich and poor and that public aid cuts kept 44 million people out of poverty in 2017, making it slightly lower than in 2016.<sup>19</sup> For the United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Philip Alston, "the fiscal reform package can lead the

13. Bonn International Center for Conversion, "Global Military Index 2017": <https://www.bicc.de/publications/publicationpage/publication/global-militarization-index-2017-785/>

14. SIPRI database: <https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex>

15. World Bank database: <https://data.worldbank.org/>

16. CNN, "What the massive US military budget pays for," 03/28/2018: <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/03/28/politics/us-military-spending-items-intl/index.html>

17. Declaration on the visit to the United States of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, 12/15/2017: <https://www.ohchr.org/SP/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=22533&LangID=S>

18. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, "The 2019 Trump Budget: Hurts Struggling Families, Shortchanges National Needs," 02/21/2018: <https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/2-20-18pb19factsheet.pdf>

19. US Census Bureau, "Income and Poverty in the United States: 2017", Setembre 2018: <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2018/demo/p60-263.pdf>



United States to become the most unequal society in the world and will greatly increase the already high levels of inequality in the distribution of wealth and income between the richest 1% and the poorest 50% of Americans. "

Regarding the financing of foreign aid, considering the impacts for women in other countries, especially in terms of financing sexual and reproductive health, the International Coalition for Women's Health describes the Trump administration's budget as a "global war against women's rights",<sup>20</sup> considering the 32% reduction in the allocation destined to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and proposing the elimination of the contribution from the United States to the United Nations agency for women (UN Women), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the child protection agency, UNICEF.

### How will cuts in social investment affect women and LGBTI people?

The cuts to expected public aid will worsen the situation of the 16 million women and the 12.8 million children living below the poverty line in the United States,<sup>21</sup> and especially of African-Americans and Latinas, further deepening the economic inequalities that they suffer, especially considering that 42% of North American mothers are single mothers or earn the main salary in their homes,<sup>22</sup> a figure that increases to 70% in the case of African-American mothers. Overall, women in the United States are 38% more likely to live in poverty than men, especially women who are racialized and migrated. Thus, 1 in 10 white women lived below the poverty line in 2017, compared to 7% of men in the same group. The figures double for African-American and Native American women, 21% and 20% of whom, respectively, are poor, as is 18% of Latina women. As for migrant women, one in six lived in poverty in 2017.

■ Part of this higher rate of impoverishment is caused by the wage gap, which means that for every dollar a white man in the United States earns, a white woman earns 80 cents, African-Americans earn 63 on average and Latinas earn 54 cents,<sup>23</sup> according to a report by the National Women's Law Centre. Likewise, this inequality in the perception

of wages generates discrimination in access to health and pensions, a factor that helps explain the fact that 2/3 of the elderly in poverty - one of the groups most benefited by the SNAP program - are women, as well as representing 2/3 of the users (40 million) of the Medicaid program, one of those who will suffer the largest cuts. It is important to note, in this sense, that the Trump administration has suspended initiatives to promote equal pay aimed at reversing this situation of discrimination.<sup>24</sup>

Regarding LGBTI people, the American Psychological Association (APA) ensures that the evidence indicates that people who identify themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual and / or trans, approximately 4.5% of the population of the United States, are more vulnerable to poverty and experience a greater economic disadvantage than heterosexual couples, which decisively affects their well-being and safety. Specifically, low-income or working-class LGBTI people are more often users of the SNAP program and other social protection programs. In addition, 29% of bisexual women and 23% of lesbians between 18 and 44 years live below the poverty line, as well as 20% of gays and 25% of bisexual men, compared to 15% of poor heterosexual men living in the United States.<sup>25</sup> Poverty especially affects the 3 million gays, lesbians, bisexuals and trans and intersexual people who recognize themselves as African-American or racialized.<sup>26</sup> One of the main causes of the economic precariousness of LGBTI people in the United States is discrimination in the workplace, which is triggered in the case of transgender people. 90% of transexual and transgender people who participated in the National Survey on Discrimination against transgender people in 2012 claimed to have suffered harassment, mistreatment or discrimination in their place of work because of their gender identity.<sup>27</sup>

### Social and community dimension of insecurity

In the aforementioned National Security Strategy, the protection of the American people, the country and the American way of life is directly associated with militarization (the "strengthening", literally) of borders and the reform of the immigration system. Trump's anti-immigration policy and, especially, the

20. IWHC, "Trump's War on Women, to be Continued in 2018", 2/13/2018: <https://iwhc.org/2018/02/trumps-war-on-women-continues/>

21. National Women's Law Center, "National Snapshot: Poverty Among Women & Families, 2018": <https://nwlc.org/resources/national-snapshot-poverty-among-women-families-2018/>

22. Center for American Progress, "Breadwinning Mothers Are Increasingly the US Norm", 12/19/2016: <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2016/12/19/295203/breadwinning-mothers-are-increasingly-the-u-s-norm/>

23. National Women's Law Center, "The Wage Gap: The Who, How, Why, and What To Do", 10/19/2018: <https://nwlc.org/resources/the-wage-gap-the-who-how-why-and-what-to-do/>

24. CNN, "Ivanka Trump supports ending Obama-era equal pay data collection rule", 1/09/2017: <https://edition.cnn.com/2017/08/31/politics/white-house-ivanka-trump-equal-pay-data/index.html>

25. American Psychological Association, "Sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status": <https://www.apa.org/pi/ses/resources/publications/factsheet-lgbt.pdf>

26. Movement Advancement Project, "Paying an Unfair Price: The Financial Penalty for LGBT People of Color in http://www.lgbtmap.org/unfair-price-lgbt-people-of-color

27. National Center for Transgender Equality, "National Transgender Discrimination Survey: Full Report", <https://transequality.org/issues/resources/national-transgender-discrimination-survey-full-report>



policy of deportation of immigrants and the separation of more than 6,000 families, has become one of the most controversial actions of the entrepreneur's mandate, raising criticism from the international community and from Human Rights defence organizations, such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, especially after they exposed images of the inadequate and cruel conditions in which minors, often children, were kept in detention centres, violating their rights and exposing them to potential mistreatment and abuse.<sup>28</sup>

The adopted measures include:

- Executive orders prohibiting the entry into the United States of Muslims from certain countries;
- The increase in arrests of asylum seekers and their families;
- The 20-day suspension of the refugee resettlement program and the deployment of 5,000 additional Border Patrol agents on the US-Mexico border;
- The proposal to build a wall that separates both countries.

Organizations active in the defence of fundamental rights, such as the Women's Media Centre and the Centre for American Progress, describe Trump's mi-

gration policies as "devastating for deported women and LGTBI people",<sup>29</sup> many of them from countries with very high incidence of femicides and gender and sexual violence and of impunity for their perpetrators, such as Mexico, El Salvador, Honduras or Guatemala.

Changes in asylum legislation and policies, which, among others, consider gender-based violence to be "private", pose, at the same time, more obstacles for asylum-seekers fleeing serious cases of public and private violence, of persecution for gender identity or sexual option or for the action of organized criminal gangs. And the permanent danger of deportation leads women and LGTBI people to endure abuse and violation without reporting it, in a situation of increasing silence and lack of protection,<sup>30</sup> after enduring a trip from Mexico in which at least 6 out of 10 women have been raped, according to Amnesty International data.

Internally, the policy of continuity in the militarization of the police and mass incarceration, which are not the work of the Trump administration but a trend that, not only does not revert, but expands with the

28. Amnesty International Statement, "United States: The systematic separation of families seeking asylum is a violation of international law", May 2018: <https://www.es.amnesty.org/en-que-estamos/noticias/noticia/articulo/estados-unidos-la-separacion-sistemica-de-familias-solicitantes-de-asilo-es-una-violacion-del/>

29. Center for American Progress, "Women and LGBTQ Sports Face Compounded Dangers Upon Return", 08/10/2018: <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2018/08/10/454637/women-lgbtq-deportees-face-compounded-dangers-upon-return/>

30. Time, "Deportation Fears Silence Some Domestic Violence Victims," 05/30/2017: <http://time.com/4798422/domestic-violence-deportation-immigration/>

current president,<sup>31</sup> continues to hit with special severity the black and African-American population and the Latin population. On the one hand, several reports indicate that, between 1997 and 2014, the Department of Defence transferred 4,300 million dollars in military equipment to the police, among other armoured cars, weapons and aviation, without demonstrating that this process of militarization has contributed to reduce crime or insecurity.<sup>32</sup> These militarization policies are linked to what Fanna Gama calls "racial protection policies", due to their contribution to strengthening racial hierarchies in the United States (Gama, 2016).

On the other hand, the United States is the country with the most prisoners, with 2.3 million inmates, 25% of the world prison population. Among these, the African-American and Latino population is between 5 and 10 times more likely to end up incarcerated, which means that one in three black boys and one in six Latino boys will walk into an American prison at some point during their lifetime, compared with one in 17 white boys. Likewise, women are the fastest growing prison population at present, as indicated by a report jointly carried out by the American Union for Civil Liberties (ACLU) and the Prison Policy Initiative and published at the end of 2017, which also provides data which helps explain the phenomenon, such as that 60% of these women are in pretrial detention awaiting trial,<sup>33</sup> and that this is related to the increasingly high bail that judges demand for release and the progressive impoverishment of women.

The American LGBTI population also suffers from a disproportionate prison rate. One of the groups most affected by Trump's policies in this sense is, in fact, the transsexual and transgender prison population, which constitutes 16% of the total population of this group, and who are in prison, mostly, for crimes related with migration, homelessness and poverty, with the victimization that involves going through a markedly transphobic institution such as the criminal one, where almost 60% of transgender people suffer sexual abuse and aggressions at the hands of other inmates or prison officials.<sup>34</sup> If with Obama, the slogan was to imprison the trans population based on their chosen gender identity, the Trump administration an-

nounced a policy change in May, recommending the use of biological sex as a determining feature to designate if they are sent to a prison of men or women.<sup>35</sup>

The militarization and securitization of the United States with the Trump administration is transferred to the community and social dimension of security, not only through the discourse that links national security with the militarization of the police and the border with Mexico, or with the deportation of people, also through the tepidity with the growing white extremism that, among other gender impacts, led to the death of civil rights activist Heather Heyer, in Charlottesville, Virginia, in August 2017. A recently published report from the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) shows that 71% of extremist attacks with victims from 2008 to 2017 in the United States were committed by men linked to the extreme right or white supremacist movements, leaving 274 dead victims, while Islamic extremism was responsible for 26% of the attacks in the same period.<sup>36</sup> The inaction with this threat, which targets the population belonging to racial minorities, the Jewish population and LGBTI people, is linked to the profound structural discrimination of the migrated population and the – always – racial minorities of the United States, and increases its insecurity at all levels.

Linked to white supremacy, and appearing in the United States as well as in Canada, the phenomenon of 'Incels', which come to light in the wake of attacks such as the one that ended the lives of 10 people in Toronto in April 2018, under the notion that feminism has ruined society, forcing many men to stay single, and calling for the revolt of hegemonic and white masculinity.

In the political and social sphere, all these actions seem determined to stop a trend that seems quite irreversible: the white population in the United States will be, in 25 years, another racial minority in a country of racial minorities, according to the census of 2017 National Population Projections.<sup>37</sup> As we have seen throughout the report, the fear of loss of racial and gender privileges in all areas of power could very likely be an element that triggers more violence and insecurity for the migrated and non-white population migrated in the United States.

31. Charles Koch Institute, "Militarization of Police": <https://www.charleskochinstitute.org/issue-areas/criminal-justice-policing-reform/militarization-of-police/>

32. Journal of the National Academy of Sciences of the USA, "Militarization fails to enhance police safety or reduce crime but may harm police reputation", 03/24/2018: <http://www.pnas.org/content/115/37/9181>

33. ACLU i PPI, report "Women's Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2017", October 2017: <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2017women.html>

34. The Century Foundation, "Eight Things You Should Know About Trump's Reversal of Transgender Prison Rights," 05/13/2018: <https://tcf.org/content/commentary/eight-things-know-trumps-reversal-transgender-prison-rights/?agreed=1>

35. Federal Bureau of Prisons, "Transgender offender manual", 05/11/2018: <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/4459297-BOP-Change-Order-Transgender-Offender-Manual-5.html>

36. ADL, report "Murder and Extremism in the United States in 2017", January 2018: <https://www.adl.org/resources/reports/murder-and-extremism-in-the-united-states-in-2017#key-findings>

37. Data from the 2017 National Population Projections Tables: <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/popproj/2017-summary-tables.html>

## Personal and physical dimensions of insecurity

There are some key elements when analysing how violence, physical insecurity and risk to the life and integrity of women and LGBTI people in the United States operate, and the response to this under the Trump administration. It is estimated that

- **One in four women** has been, is or will be a victim of gender-based violence in the United States, according to statistics from the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV).<sup>38</sup>
- More than **23 million women** (19% of Americans) have suffered a rape and one in three women, an attempted rape, 80% of them at the hands of relatives, partners, friends or acquaintances, according to the most complete survey that has been done in the country,<sup>39</sup> conducted between 2010 and 2012 by the National Centre for the Prevention and Control of Violence. If sexual violence has a similar incidence among white, African-American, Latina and Asian women, the percentages soar in the case of Native Americans and women of indigenous peoples in Alaska, half of whom (45.6%) experience sexual aggression throughout their life.
- It is estimated that **between two and three women** in the United States die every day at the hands of their partners or ex-partners, and that of the 3,519 women and girls who were murdered in 2015 in the country, at least half were intimate femicides, that is, committed by partners or ex-partners.<sup>40</sup> The highest rate of femicide prevails among African-American and Native American women and girls.<sup>41</sup>

The proliferation of small arms available to everyone, one of the great debates currently open in American society, following several recent massacres in high schools and universities, also has its role in gender violence, to the point that statistics show that in 19% of situations of domestic violence there is a weapon

involved, while the presence of a gun or weapon **increases the risk of femicide by 500%.**<sup>42</sup>

Despite the fact that President Trump has publicly declared to be concerned about domestic violence, and has assured that the budgets approved for the 2019 fiscal year will suppose an investment in prevention and an injection of funds for the Law on Violence against Women (VAWA), the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence has denounced that the victims and survivors of sexist violence will be severely affected<sup>43</sup> by cuts in key programs and services, such as free and subsidized legal advice and assistance to victims, and by the diversion of these funds to other items.

The perception that women's rights and sexual rights are at risk has generated a strong social and electoral mobilization of women against the policies of the current president, with massive marches on the street or campaigns like #MeToo, with which thousands of women dared to make public the aggressions they had suffered and to point out their aggressors, including prominent figures, such as the recently appointed judge of the Supreme Court of the United States Brett Kavanaugh. Trump's reaction to #MeToo and the public denunciation of the aggressions - which has personally spattered him - has been to affirm that "it is a terrifying moment for men in the United States, in which they can accuse you of something you are not guilty".<sup>44</sup>

The controversial reaction of the Trump government with regard to addressing the extremely high incidence of rape, sexual assault and harassment within university campuses, which is estimated to affect 20-25% of female students and 15% of male students. If, under the Obama administration, student prevention and protection measures had been promoted, the Trump administration rescinded these protocols, expressing concern about the rights of male students and their presumption of innocence.<sup>45</sup>

38. Statistics of the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV): <https://ncadv.org/statistics>

39. NISVS, The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010-2012 State Report: <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/NISVS-StateReportBook.pdf>

40. Journal of the American Anthropological Association, "Gender-Based Violence in the US", 3/4/2018 <http://www.americananthropologist.org/2018/04/03/gender-based-violence-in-the-us/>

41. Centers for Disease control and prevention, "Racial and Ethnic Differences in Homicides of Adult Women and the Role of Intimate Partner Violence - United States, 2003-2014", 07/21/2017: [https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/wr/mm6628a1.htm?s\\_cid=mm6628a1\\_wHomicide](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/wr/mm6628a1.htm?s_cid=mm6628a1_wHomicide)

42. American Journal of Public Health, "Risk Factors for Femicide in Abusive Relationships: Results from a Multisite Case Control Study", Juliol 2003: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1447915/>

43. NCADV, "NCADV Denounces President Trump's FY'19 Budget Request", 02/20/2018: <https://ncadv.org/blog/posts/ncadv-denounces-president-trumps-fy19-budget-request>

44. NBC News, "Trump: 'It's a very scary time for young men in America'", 2/10/2018: <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/white-house/trump-it-s-very-scary-time-young-men-america-n915906>

45. Politico.com, "Obama-era sexual school assault policy rescinded", 09/22/2017: <https://www.politico.com/story/2017/09/22/obama-era-school-sexual-assault-policy-rescinded-243016>



## Violence against LGBTI people: trans and intersex people in Trump's crosshairs

If the current US government has any fixation, it is undoubtedly the rights of transsexual and intersexual people that, according to organizations such as the historic National Organization for Women (NOW), are under what they call a "systematic attack". In the midst of a context of violence against transgender people that ended with 29 people killed in 2017, in some of the cases with a clear gender hate background, in others, facilitated by the risk that this group faces in the United States, such as, for example, a higher rate of homelessness.<sup>46</sup> If activists claim that the increase in homicides of transgender people is alarming, suspicion increases if the racial variable is addressed. Of the 102 transsexual and transgender people killed between 2013 and 2017, 86% of the victims were black, Latina or Native American.<sup>47</sup>

Of the approximately 300,000 homophobic, lesbophobic and transphobic attacks and assaults that are estimated to have taken place between 2012 and 2016,<sup>48</sup> only a small percentage are denounced and persecuted, partly because of the historical and chronic distrust that the LGBTI community professes to the police, which, on various occasions, starting with the Stonewall events that drove the fight for sexual liberation, has led or participated in attacks of this type.

But beyond the aggressions, the daily discrimination and the increasing institutional violence towards the trans and intersex people under the Trump administration takes very different forms, in a clear regression with respect to the previous government, in which a public and social recognition of these identities in areas such as politics or education, introducing protocols - now repealed - to recognize students according to their gender identity, regardless of the gender of their documents. The current president also intends to change the language of the federal civil rights law, which recognized the possibility of a person being transgender or intersexual, by a definition of sex as "the status of a person as a man or woman, starting of immutable biological traits identified at birth or before".<sup>49</sup> And, apparently, Trump's crusade to eliminate gender has only just begun.

46. Human Rights Campaign, "Violence Against the Transgender Community in 2018" <https://www.hrc.org/resources/violence-against-the-transgender-community-in-2018>

47. Transrespect, "The vicious circle of violence: Trans and gender-diverse people, migration, and sex work", October 2017: <https://transrespect.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/TvT-PS-Vol16-2017.pdf>

48. The Center for Public Integrity, Lack of trust in law enforcement hinders reporting of LBGTQ crimes, 08/24/2018: <https://www.publicintegrity.org/2018/08/24/22138/lack-trust-law-enforcement-hinders-reporting-lgbtq-crimes>

49. New Yorker, "The trauma of the Trump administration's attacks on transgender people", 22/10/2018: <https://www.newyorker.com/news/our-columnists/the-trauma-of-the-trump-administrations-attacks-on-transgender-people>

## Sexual and reproductive health dimensions

If, for the most part, women will be the ones who assume the Trump government cuts to the Medicaid budget, at the cost of their access to healthcare, one of the areas in which this disinvestment will have more impact is reproductive health, since it is calculated that Medicaid covers almost half of the births in the country and 75% of family planning services.<sup>50</sup>

The situation is aggravated by the fact that they are already the second assumptions that divest women's control and autonomy over their own bodies. In the 2018 budget, which was rated by organizations and NGOs working on sexual and reproductive health in "global war against women's rights", the complete elimination of reproductive health and family planning funding was proposed, in the country and in foreign aid, in a clear manoeuvre to restrict access to abortion to the extreme, especially of working-class women with a more precarious economic situation. Among other things, because it is left without income, the main service that practices voluntary interruptions of pregnancy, Planned Parenthood.<sup>51</sup>

Another factor that hinders access to healthcare is the criminalization and persecution of women who perform certain activities - legal or illegal - while pregnant. This ties in with the epidemic of opiate use, which seriously affects the most impoverished layers of the American population. Hundreds of women with problems of drug and alcohol consumption have been arrested in recent years in the United States under crimes known as "foetal aggression", which transcends all limits of paternalism and state interference in women's bodies. The criminal prosecution of pregnant mothers with consumption, and the fact that the health centres are the ones who give the warning, to the point of carrying out, in some states, analysis of drugs without consent, encourages these women to avoid medical centres, with the consequences that this can bring to their health.<sup>52</sup>

50. Campaign Health care for America now, "Fact Sheet: Women Pay the Price for Cuts in President Trump's 2019 Budget: [http://healthcareforamericanow.org/resources/factsheets/fact-sheet-women-pay-price-cuts-president-trumps-2019-budget#\\_edn2](http://healthcareforamericanow.org/resources/factsheets/fact-sheet-women-pay-price-cuts-president-trumps-2019-budget#_edn2)

51. Quartz, "What Trump's new abortion rule could mean for women's health", 2018: <https://qz.com/1282288/what-trumps-new-abortion-rule-could-mean-for-womens-health/>

52. Amnesty International, Body Policies: general manual on the criminalization of sexuality and reproduction, 2018: <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/POL4077632018SPANISH.PDF>

## 5.2 GENDER INSECURITY IN EUROPEAN FORGES

The European continent, especially the countries that are part of the European Union, which was born on the values - in theory - of justice, equity and non-discrimination, is immersed in a huge process of internal militarization and borders. The European security strategy contemplates, for the fight against terrorism, standardization measures and the institutionalization of biometric techniques and mass surveillance, especially towards people trying to penetrate the Schengen area and certain communities identified as the cradle of jihadism, but which have an impact on all citizens of the Union. In a report published in January 2017, Amnesty International warned of the risk of making permanent the enactment of measures of legal and political exceptionality in countries such as France, after massive attacks claimed by the Islamic State, and the danger of de facto repealing rights and freedoms based on "the threat to values and fundamentals"<sup>53</sup> that represents the phenomenon of terrorism.

Since 2014, the deep securitization of Europe and its borders has been linked to the emergence and rise of far-right parties, which already govern - alone or in coalition - in Austria, Belgium, Italy, Finland, Denmark, Latvia, Hungary and Poland. Although the programs they defend do not coincide in their entirety, there are three points that allow us to visualize a common strategy: militarism and increased spending on defence and security, the obsession to stop the arrival of African and Middle Eastern migration and the will to cut rights to women and LGBTI people, framed in the defence of the traditional family, "created between a man and a woman," in the words of Matteo Salvini, Interior Minister and Italian Deputy Prime Minister. Salvini is one of the most visible faces of what Sara Garbagnoli, an Italian feminist sociologist, considers a "racist, macho and homophobic counterrevolution,"<sup>54</sup> which publicly opposes the "gender ideology promoted by the feminist and homosexual lobbies that colonize the world".

This patriarchal offensive to re-naturalise sexual difference and discrimination on the grounds of gender, identity and sexual orientation, which the Polish government, the Viktor Orban in Hungary, the FPÖ in Austria, the National Front in France and the current Popular Party in Spain, led by the ultraconservative

Pablo Casado, has material translations in the form of setbacks and threats on the right to abortion and access to contraceptives, of demonization of the Istanbul Convention against violence, which is seen as a Trojan horse to destroy the family, to eliminate sexual education, and to inaction and promote policies that revictimize women and LGBTI people at the borders, exposing them to a higher incidence of sexual abuse and aggression. However, despite the impacts that are contributing to generate the discourses and policies of these new leaders of neo-realist geopolitics in the West, it is interesting to observe the complex, interested and contradictory relationship that they make of gender equality, which does not stop being conceived as a western value. Although they champion the fight against "gender ideology" and the return to the traditional family as a natural entity, the right wing and the European populist extreme right often use the discourse of the protection of European white women against the sexual violence perpetrated by migrants and refugees, perpetuating the stereotype that it is other men who "rape our women". Salvini, in Italy, Xavier García Albiol in Catalonia, the far-right party AFD in Germany or Marine Le Pen in France have taken advantage of aggressions in their countries to make the banner of this speech, which puts the defence of women at the service of a very anti-immigrant policy restrictive,<sup>55</sup> that Sarah R. Farris calls "femonationalism" and that is to invoke gender equality from a xenophobic rhetoric (Farris, 2017: 6) and identity defender. In cases such as Spain, however, the data clearly reflects that most of the aggressors are nationals of the country and in the case of femicides of the last 5 years, for example, between 60.5% and the 73.3% were of Spanish nationality.<sup>56</sup>

The same happens with non-normative sexual identities, since the beginning of the current decade. In this assimilation concerned in sexual freedom with European values, which makes the present homophobia, lesbophobia and the institutional and social transphobia invisible in our societies, the belonging of the former "deviant" to the community is normalized, as long as they are white. Homonationalism, a concept borrowed from Jasbir K. Puar, aligns with the demands of LGBTI movements from racist and Islamophobic positions (Puar, 2007), based on the premise that migrants import homophobia into Western societies, where equality between people prevails. Beyond theoretical discourse, the commitment of the

53. Amnesty International, "Dangerously Disproportionate: The Everexpanding national security state in Europe", gener 2017: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur01/5342/2017/en/>

54. Open Democracy, "Matteo Salvini, renaturalizing the racial and sexual boundaries of democracy",

1/10/2018: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/sara-garbagnoli/matteo-salvini-renaturalizing-racial-and-sexual-boundaries-of-dem>

55. Center for Feminist Foreign Policy, "The populist right in Western Europe. Women's bodies and national belonging", 05/19/2018: <https://centreforfeministforeignpolicy.org/journal/2018/5/6/the-populist-right-in-western-europe-part-1-womens-bodies-and-national-belonging>

56. Statistics of the Spanish Ministry of Equality. Deadly victims of gender violence according to the nationality of the aggressor, 2013-2018: [http://www.inmujer.es/estadisticasweb/10\\_Violencia/10\\_1\\_VictimiasMortalesporViolenciadeGenero/w809.xls](http://www.inmujer.es/estadisticasweb/10_Violencia/10_1_VictimiasMortalesporViolenciadeGenero/w809.xls)



right and the extreme right of Central Europe to the rights of LGBTI people is well documented: on July 2 2017, when the German parliament approved same-sex marriage, the six Muslim parliamentarians, all members of left parties, voted in favour,<sup>57</sup> while the conservative CDU, led by Angela Merkel, voted against and the fascist party AFD, which oscillates between the third and fourth position at present, announced a lawsuit against the new law.

In the current context, a potential regression of the rights of women and LGBTI people is more than likely, and this is foreseen by European rights bodies, as evidenced by the fact that the 2018 annual colloquium of the European Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) will focus on the "Rights of women in turbulent times".

### Economic dimension of insecurity and sustainability of life

The fight against terrorism, the rearmament under the justification of the fear of Putin's Russia and the militarization and modernization of European external borders, internal and in third countries, has generalized an increase in investment in security and defence throughout the continent. If military spending in the

European continent - 342 trillion dollars in 2017 - decreased by 2.2% compared to 2016 due to a reduction in the Russian budget, the European Commission approved in November 2018 a European Defence Fund of 13 billion euros for the period 2021-2027.<sup>58</sup> The British organization Statewatch, which monitors the securitization of Europe and its effects, ensures that the prioritization of military spending in the European Union will lead to cuts in cohesion funds and for agriculture, as well as in programs of outside help.<sup>59</sup> In addition, it warns of the introduction in several civil programs - from structural funds to regional infrastructure, transport or Erasmus Plus funds - of criteria and priorities that respond to the interests of the military industry. In addition, the new budget under discussion proposes to triple the funds allocated to security and border control in this period,<sup>60</sup> including the externalization of "dirty work" from European borders to third world countries, while austerity measures strangle and limit public spending and social spending in several European countries, especially in the south of the European Union.

57. Independent UK, "All of Germany's Muslim MPs voted in favor of same-sex marriage", 2/07/2018: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/angela-merkel-chancellor-germany-same-sex-marriage-vote-lgbt-muslim-mps-berlin-bundestag-cdu-sdp-a7819391.html?cmpid=facebook-post>

58. Declaration of the European Commission on the European Defense Fund: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-18-4121\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-4121_en.htm)

59. Statement from Statewatch, "The risks of the new EU Defense Fund", 11/15/2018: <http://www.statewatch.org/news/2018/nov/eu-enaat-joint-statement.pdf>

60. Transnational Institute, "How the security industry reaps the rewards of EU migration control", 6/5/2018: <https://www.tni.org/en/article/how-the-security-industry-reaps-the-rewards-of-eu-migration-control>

Wherever the radical right or the extreme right governs, these governments are also the bearers of a warlike language with clear readings of gender and a very specific model of military masculinity and, in the case of Hungary and Poland, extreme defenders of interventionist and imperialist alliances like NATO.

## The Italy of Salvini and the M5Stelle

### Military and social expenditures

Italy is, today, under the government of Conte and Salvini, in a differentiated position with respect to other European far-right populist governments. On the one hand, it is still the fourth European country that spends the most on defence, with an increase of 4% in this item for 2018. Thus, the budget of the Italian Ministry of Defence in 2018 was 21,000 million euros, 1.2% of GDP, while the real military expenditure, including other items of defence, calculated by the permanent observatory on Italian military expenditure Mil€x, has been 25,000 million euros, 1.4% of GDP, and this increase of 4%, which in the set of the last three legislatures adds an increase of 26%.<sup>61</sup> The cost of acquiring new weapons also increases significantly, to stand at 427 million euros. But the militarization of Italy goes beyond the commitment to devote more resources to the army. Matteo Salvini announced last summer a possible return of compulsory military service for young Italians, making use of an unquestionable war language and ensuring that "above rights, I want to see a return to homework."<sup>62</sup> We must add the approval, in September 2018, of measures to relax the legislation regarding the possession of weapons, opening the door to more easily possessing weapons such as assault rifles.<sup>63</sup>

On the other hand, the country is immersed in a strong controversy with the European Commission, for the intention of the Italian government to increase public spending by 2.7%, in turn increasing the country's deficit and openly breaching the "structural adjustments" that Europe demands from Italy.<sup>64</sup> This decision, which is one of Salvini's big bets for winning the favour of the Italians, is accompanied by a strongly anti-European rhetoric, which accuses the European Commission of "bringing insecurity and fear to Europe from their seats". Recently, Italy has also approved the

so-called "Dignity decree",<sup>65</sup> which sanctions companies that relocate their production and timidly attacks the labour seasonality, although it also introduces reductions in the income tax of the highest incomes, displaying a more nativist protectionism in line with the electoral motto with which it was presented ("the Italians first"), that with a real transformation of the economic system that favours more than 5 million poor people that Italy has.

### Inequality of economic gender

Italy is the third country in Europe with the largest gap of formal inequality - the so-called Gender Gap - between men and women, and the last Gender Gap Index, published in 2017, places it in the 82nd position out of 144 countries examined.<sup>66</sup> The rate of Italian women in the world of work is less than 50% and it is even lower in the south of the country, where only 30% of women work on a paid basis. Likewise, women occupy jobs of greater temporality and precariousness and part-time work, since it is often the only way to reconcile paid productive work with reproductive work and care tasks, a concerning issue when it is related to the fact that 67% of working women are at risk of poverty and 10% of working women live in a household with incomes below the poverty line, with special incidence among single mothers.<sup>67</sup> According to the Gender Gap Index, approximately 62% of the work that women do every day in Italy is not paid, compared to 30% of men's work, and Italian women produce on average 24 hours a week of care, domestic and reproductive work, while Italian men, on average, devote 9 hours.

A factor of impoverishment of women is linked, precisely, to this naturalized assumption of care and nurturing tasks. After the three-month maternity leave, each father and mother have six months of additional leave at 30% of the salary, in a reduction of the maternity allowance in which the economic value of the care and reproductive work is not compensated and that, in addition, acts as a factor of impoverishment in the family nucleus. Eminently, it is up to women, since only 8.6% of men make use of this six-month low.<sup>68</sup>

On the other hand, the response of the Committee of the Women's Convention (CEDAW) to the last period-

61. Osservatorio sulle spese militari italiane, "Milex 2018: Rapporto annuale sulle spese militari italiane", February 2018: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UDYcskQrQtgJY4H4rnf1ZK7oM7IN9xn/view>

62. Europa Press, "Salvini proposes a military and civil service for young people in Italy", 09/12/2018: <https://www.europapress.es/internacional/noticia-salvini-propone-servicio-militar-civil-jovenes-italia-20180812111734.html>

63. The New York Times, "Italy Loosens Gun Laws as Matteo Salvini Polishes His Tough Guy Image", 11/07/2018: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/07/world/europe/italy-gun-laws-matteo-salvini.html>

64. Euractiv, "EU Commission prepares to reject Italy's budget", 10/9/2018: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/economic-governance/news/commission-prepares-to-reject-italys-budget/>

65. Official Gazette of the Italian Republic, text of the "Decree of dignity", 9/08/2018: <http://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2018/07/13/18G00112/sg>

66. World Economic Forum, The Global Gender Gap Report 2017: [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2017.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2017.pdf)

67. Oxfam International, "Raising their voices against precariousness: women's experiences of in-work poverty in Europe", September 2018: [https://d1tn3vj7xz9fdh.cloudfront.net/s3fs-public/file\\_attachments/full\\_report\\_raising\\_voices\\_eng\\_final.pdf](https://d1tn3vj7xz9fdh.cloudfront.net/s3fs-public/file_attachments/full_report_raising_voices_eng_final.pdf)

68. Study commissioned by the European Parliament, "Backlash in Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Rights", June 2018: <https://www.juridice.ro/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Studiu-ref-egalitatea-de-gen-%C8%99i-drepturile-fetelor-%C8%99i-femeilor-%C3%AEn-UE.pdf>



ic report of Italy, in 2017, expresses the international body's concern about the harmful effects of austerity policies – and the cuts and privatizations associated with they have had on women in all areas of life.<sup>69</sup> As a direct effect of the economic crisis and the cuts, the unemployment rate doubled, from 6.8% to 11.3%, with youth unemployment shooting up to 37.2%, and poverty rates increased from 3.1% to 7.6%, according to OECD data.<sup>70</sup>

However, in the so-called “government change agreement” signed by the M5S and the Lega, references to women are limited to the section where the family and birth are discussed, with proposals such as help in accessing day care centres according to the income “for Italian families” and heterosexuals, as was made clear by the family minister, the ultra-Catholic and far-right Lorenzo Fontana, assuring that the government will only help “natural” families in which children have “a father and a mother”,<sup>71</sup> excluding single-parent and single-sex families from support.

## The Hungary of Viktor Orban

The current Hungarian government has made internal defence its absolute priority, announcing programs of investment in weapons aimed at achieving the mandate of NATO to increase military spending to 2% in 8 years. This will involve doubling the budget allocated to defence, which in 2017 was 1,415 million euros.<sup>72</sup> The objective is, according to the Hungarian Minister of Defence, to build a competitive army at the regional level, under the slogan that “a strong Hungary will not exist without a strong army”.<sup>73</sup>

In terms of social and gender expenditures, since 2011-2012 they have carried out constitutional reforms and from the Workers' Statute that eliminate or obviate references to salary equality, and take this concept away from the focus to transfer it to the family, obviating that the wage gap has remained at a difference of between 15 and 20% difference between men and women.<sup>74</sup> Regarding the gender difference in the perception of pensions, this remains close to 15%.

Likewise, the family perspective, which the Hungarian government boasts of having introduced instead of the gender perspective, making demographic policies the absolute priority, has ended up increasing inequalities, allocating unprecedented resources to families with high and medium incomes, through tax reforms and the maternity subsidy, while families with lower incomes have been impacted by cuts to universal subsidies and the social security system, which also excludes vulnerable groups, such as migrants and others.<sup>75</sup> In this sense, disability pensions have also been eliminated.

## The Justice and Law Party of Poland

Poland is one of the European countries with the highest percentage of GDP dedicated to military spending (1.96% in 2017), a trend that will be increased in the coming years by the plans of the current government to reach, by 2020, 2% of GDP demanded by NATO.<sup>76</sup> Last year, the country's military budget was 10,010 million dollars, according to the SIPRI. Likewise, the government of Poland implements openly militaristic policies, under the justification of the threat posed by Putin's Russia, such as the creation of territorial defence forces – a military auxiliary body of volunteers, some members of paramilitary groups – that in 2019 will integrate 53,000 more people.<sup>77</sup>

It is estimated, however, that some 15 million people, 17% of the population in Poland, are at risk of poverty, according to data from the World Bank. This poverty is especially acute in the case of women and manifests itself in 27% of single-parent families, generally composed of a woman and her children. As in the rest of the cases, Polish women have higher levels of unemployment and more difficulties to find work and reintegrate into the labour market, while the feminization of poverty manifests itself, also, in lower wages, the salary gap being 8%, the global gap in the world of work of 30% and the difference between pensions between 20% –25% difference with respect to men.<sup>78</sup>

Finally, and to give an example of another of the European countries that already has a coalition government with the extreme right, Austria increased its military spending in 2017 for the second year in a row,

69. CEDAW Committee, Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Italy, 24/07/2017: [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=HRI/2017/37&lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=HRI/2017/37&lang=en).

70. OECD data on inequality and poverty: <http://www.oecd.org/social/inequality-and-poverty.htm>

71. Broadagenda, U. of Canberra, “Sexism and politics in Italy: Will anything change?”, 07/26/2018: <http://www.broadagenda.com.au/home/sexism-and-politics-in-italy-will-anything-change/>

72. SIPRI database on military spending: <http://visuals.sipri.org/>

73. About Hungary, “Increasing the defense budget: A strong Hungary can not exist without a strong military”, 6/7/2018: <http://abouthungary.hu/blog/increasing-the-defense-budget-a-strong-hungary-cannot-exist-without-a-strong-military/>

74. UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the question of discrimination against women in legislation and in practice about its mission to Hungary: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G17/097/68/PDF/G1709768.pdf?OpenElement>

75. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, “Welfare for the Wealthy: The Social Policy of the Orbán-regime, 2010-2017”, March 2018: <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/budapest/14209.pdf>

76. Defense24, “Poland About to Increase Its Defense Expenditure up to the Level of 2.5% of GDP. A New Bill Introduced”, 04/24/2017: <https://www.defence24.com/poland-about-to-increase-its-defence-expenditure-up-to-the-level-of-25-of-gdp-a-new-bill-introduced>

77. The Conversation, “In Central Europe, militarized societies are on the march”, 09/28/2017: <https://theconversation.com/in-central-europe-militarised-societies-are-on-the-march-84164>

78. European Commission, “2017 Report on equality between women and men in the EU”: [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/2017\\_report\\_equality\\_women\\_men\\_in\\_the\\_eu\\_en.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/2017_report_equality_women_men_in_the_eu_en.pdf)



spending 2.97 billion dollars, 0.73% of its GDP,<sup>79</sup> while it spends 3% of its GDP on families, a figure above the OECD average. Although it is early to draw conclusions from the influence of the FPÖ on the Austrian government in terms of gender and women's rights, reports such as the recent study "Backlash in Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Rights", published in June 2018 on request of the European Parliament, warn that there are worrying signs,<sup>80</sup> as the reduction of half a million euros in the departure of the Ministry of Women in budgets 2018-2019, compared with the previous year, and an increase in attacks on rights of women who - for now - are limited to the discursive level. The campaign against "gender ideology" has intensified in Austria, through groups that reject feminist discourse and gender studies, and there is strong pressure from groups of ultraconservative parents against the introduction of sexual diversity and of gender in the sex education program that has been implemented since 1990. However, the effects of the presence of the far right in the government are still not very visible.

### Community and social dimension of insecurity

The militarization and fortification of borders, a strategy that is now one of the main sources of community and social insecurity on the European continent, is not

the only one, however. The extreme vigilance of certain cultural and religious communities, in the name of the so-called "fight against terrorism", and the discrimination of communities such as the Rrom (the gypsy people), continue to be in force in Europe, with persecution especially prominent in Italy, Hungary and France. Community and social insecurity impacts especially on migrant and racialized women and LGBTI persons in areas as protection against violence and discrimination in access to public health, a situation that has been the subject of controversy in countries such as Spain.

Far from the values of equality and freedom that could open a margin to conceive security as something more holistic, right now, in Europe, security is narrowly defined by the lines that mark the borders of the European Union. The EU Security Strategy is clear in terms of language: the European security order is threatened by terrorism and the arrival of people from North Africa and the Middle East.<sup>81</sup>

Migration is a securitized phenomenon, which is conceived not as the consequence to be managed of a global crisis, but as a threat to the very existence of the West. Yes, under the Europe of the conservative

79. SIPRI data (ref.72)

80. European Commission (ref. 78)

81. European Agenda on Security towards an Effective Security Union, 4/20/2016: [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-security/legislative-documents/docs/20160420/communication\\_eas\\_progress\\_since\\_april\\_2015\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-security/legislative-documents/docs/20160420/communication_eas_progress_since_april_2015_en.pdf)

and social democratic governments of the last two decades, there has been a process of militarization of borders and territory, which affects not only the people who arrive in Europe, but also all those who are impacted due to the dehumanization that creeps into our societies, the rise of the extreme right drinks from this dehumanization and regime of fear to make overtly racist policies, to the point of contemplating the death of thousands of human beings as a compensatory balance, without official mourning, without supposing a moral commotion for the society.

In terms of material impacts of border policies, especially in Italy and Spain, and in recent years also in countries such as Hungary and Bulgaria, the closure of secure migration routes and the securitization of European borders have favoured the business of traffickers, forcing migrants to cross through more insecure entrances.<sup>82</sup> These policies imply the expansion of European borders to countries that act as an external border - Morocco, Libya, Turkey - and that maintain agreements with Spain, Italy or the EU itself. All this generates gender-specific insecurities, which have multiplied the exposure of women and girls to violence.<sup>83</sup>

According to an Amnesty International report, governments and humanitarian aid agencies fail miserably when it comes to guaranteeing protection to refugee women in Syria and Iraq. Refugee women and girls suffer violence, assault, harassment and sexual exploitation at all stages of the journey, and also once on European soil.<sup>84</sup> In the report, women and girls who travel alone or with their children report feeling especially threatened in the transit zones and camps of Hungary, Croatia and Greece, which were not adapted to gender specificities.

One of the clearest effects in terms of gender of the militarization of borders is the exacerbation of crimes such as the trafficking of women for the purpose of sexual exploitation. The fortification of borders and the persecution of migrants and - in the case of Hungary, also of the people who help them<sup>85</sup> - hinder the identification of the victims of this type of exploitation, which instead of receiving the protection they

require, they are sent to migrant detention centres. One of the populations particularly vulnerable to human trafficking is the Roma or Rrom people, and their minors. This cultural and ethnic community, which is estimated at 11 million people, has been, in recent times, subject to persecution and criminalization that led to the forced expulsion of 10,000 Roma in France,<sup>86</sup> while Matteo Salvini proposed in June the creation of a census of Roma people, in order to facilitate their deportation.<sup>87</sup>

Likewise, with regard to the racialized population living in Europe, the pointing out of certain communities labelled the cradle of jihadist terrorism has a strong impact on the daily life of the people who are part of it. One in three Muslims, men and women, especially the latter when wearing symbols such as the hijab, claimed to have suffered discrimination and racist harassment, as well as police raids based on racial profiling.<sup>88</sup>

In the specific case of Italy, the country's parliament ratified, in November 2018, a decree on security and immigration, promoted by Salvini, which limits the protection of migrants in vulnerable situations, suppressing the criterion of humanitarian protection, which until now was one of the causes for granting asylum, and facilitating the expulsions of migrants.<sup>89</sup>

## Personal and physical dimensions of insecurity

One in 10 women in the European Union has been a victim of sexual violence since the age of 15 and one in 20 has been raped, while 43% of European women have been subjected to violence and psychological abuse, according to a survey of the European Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), carried out in 2014 and containing the most up-to-date data.<sup>90</sup> Only 14% reported the most serious attacks.

By 2017, most of the members of the Union introduced new measures to combat gender-based violence, especially regarding female genital mutilation and harassment, but the survival and reinforcement of gen-

82. TNI and Stop Wapenhandel, "Frontier Wars - The manufacturers and sellers of weapons that benefit from the tragedy of refugees in Europe", in Spanish at <https://www.tni.org/guerras-de-frontera> y en inglés en [www.tni.org/borderwars](https://www.tni.org/borderwars)

83. Journal of Refugee Studies, "Engendering Security at the Borders of Europe: Women Migrants and the Mediterranean Crisis", Volume 29, Issue 4, 1 December 2016: <https://academic.oup.com/jrs/article/29/4/568/2453266>

84. Amnesty International, Refugees suffer physical aggression, exploitation and sexual harassment as they cross Europe, 01/18/2016: <https://www.amnesty.org/es/latest/news/2016/01/female-refugees-face-physical-assault-exploitation-and-sexual-harassment-on-their-journey-through-europe/>

85. New York Times, "Hungary criminalizes aiding illegal migrants", 06/20/2018: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/20/world/europe/hungary-stop-soros-law.html>

86. The Confidential, "Valls, the scourge of the gypsies: Paris has expelled 10,000 since January", 03/26/2013: [https://www.elconfidencial.com/mundo/2013-09-26/valls-el-azote-de-los-gitanos-paris-ha-expulsado-a-10-000-desde-enero\\_32640/](https://www.elconfidencial.com/mundo/2013-09-26/valls-el-azote-de-los-gitanos-paris-ha-expulsado-a-10-000-desde-enero_32640/)

87. ElDiario.es, "The census of gypsies proposed by Salvini is illegal and Justice has already stopped him with Berlusconi", 06/21/2018: [https://www.eldiario.es/desalambre/gitanos-propone-Salvini-Justicia-Berlusconi\\_0\\_784622060.html](https://www.eldiario.es/desalambre/gitanos-propone-Salvini-Justicia-Berlusconi_0_784622060.html)

88. FRA, Fundamental Rights Report 2018, June 2018: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2018/fundamental-rights-report-2018>

89. ElDiario.es, "The Italian Senate approves the security and immigration law promoted by Salvini", 11/7/2018: [https://www.eldiario.es/sociedad/Senado-seguridad-inmigracion-promovida-Salvini\\_0\\_833267111.html](https://www.eldiario.es/sociedad/Senado-seguridad-inmigracion-promovida-Salvini_0_833267111.html)

90. Fundamental Rights Agency, FRA, 2014, "Violence against women: an EU-wide survey", March 2014: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/violence-against-women-eu-wide-survey-main-results-report>

der stereotypes that conceal and perpetuate violence guarantee continuity of the same, both in general and especially in the countries where the extreme security right governs, which publicly transmits this discourse from the government and institutions.

In this sense, Matteo Salvini, leader of the xenophobic and ultra-right-wing Lega (formerly Lega Norte), staged a strong controversy during the election campaign, when at a rally he pointed out an inflatable doll that had been on stage, claiming it was "Laura Boldrini's double", then president of the Italian Chamber of Deputies, former commissioner of UNHCR and very critical of European and Italian migration policy. Far from apologizing later with Boldrini, who was the victim of harassment by social networks with threats of rape included by followers of the far right, Salvini told Sky Italia that she was "the one who should apologize because she is racist with Italians".<sup>91</sup> The speaker of the Hungarian parliament on the other hand publicly assured that the main role of women is reproduction and motherhood and their space is the home,<sup>92</sup> while a strong controversy crossed Poland in 2017, when the wife of a political party politician in the government made public on YouTube that she was a victim of gender-based violence at the hands of her husband, re-launching the public debate on this type of violence.<sup>93</sup>

That 1 in 6 Italians blame women for gender violence<sup>94</sup> is undoubtedly an indicator that would worry any government, considering that, in Italy, a woman was murdered every 72 hours in 2017, a total of 123 women dead at the hands of a known person, in 80.5% of the cases and, 43.9% in the hands of the partner or ex-partner.<sup>95</sup> It is estimated that in Italy there have been more than 3,000 femicides in the last twenty years and, in March 2017, the European Court of Human Rights condemned this State for having created a situation of lack of protection and impunity in the case of a mother and a child, victims of violence, and that ended with the murder of the young man by his father when he protected the mother.<sup>96</sup> Also last year, 4,261 people reported being victims of sexual violence, al-

though it is estimated that the incidence of this type of violence, including harassment, covers almost half of Italian adult women.<sup>97</sup>

Minister Salvini has publicly stated that he will push for the treatment of violence against women to be considered a "red code",<sup>98</sup> so that he will be given the highest judicial priority, in view of the difficulties in access to justice and the lack of education, training and specialization of professionals involved in the circuit of violence and deep inequalities between regions, collected in documents such as the latest "Shadow Report" - entities and organizations of civil society periodically conducted to assess the application of the Convention for the Elimination of Violence against Women (CEDAW). Beyond the contradictory message issued by Salvini announcing measures against violence after having attacked a woman in an election campaign, the xenophobic tendency that crosses the policies of the current Italian government makes it difficult to imagine that the new measures address the other of the large gaps that the report highlights: the obstacles in access to justice in Italy for migrant women and minorities such as the Rrom, "as a consequence of the criminalization of migration and the marginalization and persecution of minorities",<sup>99</sup> beginning with access to free justice in cases of undocumented women or women in an irregular situation. The Sombra report mentions, also, the lack of protection of LGBTI offspring, among others, of the lack of legislation on discrimination and violence against non-normative sexual and gender identities.

### A decade-long retreat in the Poland of the Justice and Law Party

The Piasecki case, mentioned above, marked a before and after in the normalization of sexist violence among Polish women, implicitly legitimized in the discourse of party politicians in government, who came to describe the case against Piasecki as "family drama". Despite the existence of laws against domestic abuse since 2005, the justification of violence is implicit in the government's discourse, which defends the values of the traditional family, and is generating, according to Polish feminist activists, a decade-long setback in women's rights since the Justice and Law Party came to power in 2015.<sup>100</sup>

91. Sky Italia, "Salvini sul palco con bambola gonfiabile: La sosia della Boldrini", 07/25/2016: <https://tg24.sky.it/politica/2016/07/25/salvini-bambola-gonfiabile-sul-palco-boldrini.html>

92. UN, High Commissioner for Human Rights, "UN Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice finalizes country mission to Hungary", Maig 2016: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=20027&LangID=E>

93. Global Dialogue, "Making Domestic Violence Visible in Poland": <http://globaldialogue.isa-sociology.org/making-domestic-violence-visible-in-poland/>

94. La Repubblica, "Violenza di genere: per 1 Italian its 6 è colpa della donna, il 35% fa appello alla prudenza quando nasce in famiglia", 22/11/2017: [https://www.repubblica.it/cronaca/2017/11/22/news/violenza-di-genere-per-il-16-degli-italiani-nasce-da-una-provocazione-della-donna-181840454?refresh\\_ce](https://www.repubblica.it/cronaca/2017/11/22/news/violenza-di-genere-per-il-16-degli-italiani-nasce-da-una-provocazione-della-donna-181840454?refresh_ce)

95. Istituto Nazionale di Statistica, figures on feminicide in Italy: <https://www.istat.it/it/violenza-sulle-donne/il-fenomeno/omicidi-di-donne>

96. El Mundo, "Strasbourg condemns Italy for its inefficient fight against sexist violence", 3/3/2017: <https://www.elmundo.es/sociedad/2017/03/03/58b9a0ed22601dcf678b4579.html>

97. Istituto Nazionale di Statistica, figures on violence against women: <https://www.istat.it/it/violenza-sulle-donne>

98. The Local Italia, "Salvini: 'Code red' needed for reports of violence against women", 11/19/2018: <https://www.thelocal.it/20181119/salvini-code-red-needed-for-reports-of-violence-against-women>

99. Report of the Italian platform "CEDAW work in progress" 2016/2017, "CEDAW Shadow Report": <http://www.aidos.it/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/ItalyCEDAWShadowReport.pdf>

100. Global Dialogue, "Making Domestic Violence Visible in Poland": <http://globaldialogue.isa-sociology.org/making-domestic-violence-visible-in-poland/>



If, according to the European Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), at least 4 million women declared themselves to have been victims of violence in Poland,<sup>101</sup> the party politicians in the government deny the magnitude of this phenomenon, reducing it to an isolated event, under the argument that in Poland "women are treated with respect",<sup>102</sup> and referring to the effectiveness of the law. The institutional violence in Poland does not only materialize in the government's discourse, but has material implications as extreme as the refusal to apply the Istanbul Convention – the European agreement against sexist violence – to Poland, the elimination of the financing of the NGOs dedicated to the accompaniment of victims of domestic violence, under the argument of maintaining a discriminatory activity to help only women and even police raids at the headquarters of these organizations, in October 2017.<sup>103</sup> Government declarations attacking the Istanbul Convention have also been constant in Hungary.

The association between the struggle for the eradication of sexist violence and the attack on traditional values and national identity leads the population to the dichotomy of having to choose between "patriotism" and the right to a life free of violence.

### Offensive against gender and the LGBTI struggle in Central and Eastern Europe

The battle against any vestige of "gender ideology" in the region, which also works as a reaction of the 'enfants terribles' of the Visegrad front to the "liberal" values associated with the European Union, and which are conceived as an attack on the traditional family, is reflected in a circle increasingly accused to organizations and movements in defence of the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex people, and the activists themselves.

In Italy, the impacts against the LGBTI population are not limited to the government's discourse that associates the natural with heterosexuality. Only a few days ago, one of the headquarters of the movement for sexual rights was attacked in Rome by a fascist group.<sup>104</sup> In Hungary, the Orban government has carried out two controversies that make visible the extent to which gender is a symbolic enemy of its government. The first was when the decision of the Hungarian National Opera to perform the play Billy

Eliot unleashed a purge in the main cultural institutions of the country,<sup>105</sup> last summer. The second, when Orban decided to withdraw funding and validation to gender studies that were taught in two universities in the country, because he considered it "unacceptable to speak of gender as a social construct and not of sex as a biological fact".<sup>106</sup> The attack on gender studies was not an isolated incident, but part of a generalized offensive against the feminist, LGBTI and migrant rights organizations, accused of "foreign agents" that threaten Hungarian sovereignty.<sup>107</sup> Like Poland, the Orban government has cut funding for organizations that fight violence, in favour of conservative and pro-government charities.<sup>108</sup>

The Hungarian president, moreover, recently participated in the reception of an international anti-abortion and anti-LGBTI organization, based in the United States, which, among others, assures that we are living a "demographic winter", in which the "purity" of civilization European Union is threatened by the increase in the non-white population.<sup>109</sup> At the conference, Orban links again security and control of the bodies of women, lesbians and trans to say that "the national interest is to restore natural reproduction."<sup>110</sup>

### Dimensions of sexual and reproductive health

Also in Europe, the criminalization of sexual and reproductive behaviours acts as a barrier to full access to sexual and reproductive health and lays the foundations for discrimination based on economic status, as the Amnesty International report states: "Body Policies: General Manual on the criminalization of sexuality and reproduction. "

The convergence between the rise of white identity and the securitization of women's bodies in the European continent also draws from the concern about the decline in birth rates and aging, which is reflected in a growing trend of some governments, being Poland and Hungary the most representative

101. Fundamental Rights Agency, Survey on gender-based violence in Europe: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-and-maps/survey-data-explorer-violence-against-women-survey>

102. Human Rights Watch, Women's Rights Division, "Poland No friend to women", 3/12/2017: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/12/03/poland-no-friend-women>

103. Ibid.

104. Roma Today, "Manifesti omofobi contro Mario Mieli: I fascisti ci attaccano: <http://www.romatoday.it/attualita/manifesti-omofobi-contro-il-mario-mieli-i-fascisti-ci-attaccano.html>

105. BBC, "Billy Elliot 'gay propaganda' row exposes purge in Hungary", 26/06/2018: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-44602026>

106. CNN, "Hungary's PM bans gender study at colleges saying 'people are born either male or female'", 10/19/2018: <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/10/19/europe/hungary-bans-gender-study-at-colleges-trnd/index.html>

107. News Mavens, "Eastern Europe's blitzkrieg on gender equality", 09/14/2018: <https://newsmavens.com/special-review/796/eastern-europe-s-blitzkrieg-on-gender-equality>

108. The Conversation, "How Hungary and Poland have silenced women and stifled human rights", 10/14/2016: <http://theconversation.com/how-hungary-and-poland-have-silenced-women-and-stifled-human-rights-66743>

109. Illinois Family, The New Demographic Winter: <https://illinoisfamily.org/marriage/the-new-demographic-winter/>

110. Independent UK, Hungarian President Viktor Orban hosts notorious anti-LGBT hate group, 05/26/2017: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/hungary-president-viktor-orban-anti-lgbt-hate-group-10f-homophobia-gay-europe-a7758166.html>

cases, to hinder access to abortion and information and education on sexual and reproductive health, labelled as immoral and unpatriotic.<sup>111</sup> Astra, a Polish network for the defence of sexual and reproductive rights, warned in 2016 of the rise of a rhetoric and practice contrary to the right to one's own body in Central and Eastern Europe, which already posed a threat to lives and welfare of women and girls. These rights are not only in crisis, they are directly being attacked practically throughout the continent by the conservative and anti-feminist forces that gain power and influence in several European countries.<sup>112</sup>

Poland has, in fact, one of the most restrictive pregnancy termination laws, since it admits it only when it is a consequence of a sexual assault, when the foetus presents malformations or when the life of the mother is in danger. Compliance with these assumptions, however, is not a guarantee. In 2016, the Polish government of the far right the Law and Justice Party (PiS) tried to introduce an almost total prohibition of abortion, but the mobilization of thousands of women stopped the reform. In September of this year, the Council of Europe urged Poland to ensure access to abortion for women who enter the cases,<sup>113</sup> after the European Court of Human Rights condemned this country for hindering the termination of pregnancy of a fruit girl of a violation. The Council criticized repeated attempts to further restrict women's access to legal abortion, through retrogressive legislative proposals, such as conducting criminal investigations into suspicious natural abortions, and the current debate, generated by a party proposal in the government, that wants to suppress one of the four assumptions that legalize the interruption of pregnancy, in a country in which it is estimated that 150,000 clandestine abortions are performed each year,<sup>114</sup> that is, in a situation of absolute insecurity for women, with thousands more unaccounted for who travel to practice an abortion in Slovakia, more guarantee than the neighbouring country.

But Poland is not the only case. Also in Spain, the ultraconservative government of the Popular Party tried to restrict abortion and return it to the law of assumptions of 1985, introducing administrative obstacles to access services and requiring parental consent

to those under 18, a premise that remains in force. Although, again, the pressure of the mobilization of women in the streets stopped this counter-reform, the ultraconservative right, headed by the Popular Party of Pablo Casado, has resumed the issue of abortion, threatening a return to the previous Assumption law, much more restrictive, in case you win the next election.

If in Italy Salvini said they will not touch the law of termination of pregnancy approved in 1978, the current Minister of Family, Lorenzo Fontana, who is considered the most right-wing member of the government recently recriminated his partners of Movimento 5 Stelle who intend to liberalize the law current, brandishing the speech of the defence of the rights of the foetus.<sup>115</sup>

Beyond legislation, the reality of access to an interruption of pregnancy in Italy begins to run into the presence of the anti-abortion movement, to which Fontana belongs, with the neoliberal restructuring of the health system and with the expansion of conscientious objection among medical professionals. In fact, it is estimated that 7 out of 10 Italian gynaecologists refuse to perform abortions.<sup>116</sup>

On the other hand, both Poland and Hungary have promoted policies of promotion of births among certain segments of the population, demonizing along the way sex education and contraceptive methods, calling them "immoral and unpatriotic." In fact, in Poland, the government banned the sale of emergency contraceptives in 2017, restricting its prescription to the extreme, which generated an impact, among others, on women survivors of sexual violence and women in rural areas of the country.<sup>117</sup>

Regarding the criminalization and securitization of HIV, a recurrent problem throughout the world that has clear impacts in countries such as Norway or Hungary, groups of activists have expressed concern about the prosecution and punishment of people to transmit HIV, and specifically by the disproportionate number of migrants or asylum seekers charged by transmission or exposure to the virus, according to the aforementioned Amnesty International report. With regard to the LGBTI population, and specifically to gays and transgender women, with a higher prev-

111. Amnesty International, Body Policies: general manual on the criminalization of sexuality and reproduction, 2018: <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/POL4077632018SPANISH.PDF>

112. ASTRA Network, "ASTRA Network statement on rising threats to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Central and Eastern Europe," December 2016: [http://astra.org.pl/pdf/publications/ASTRA\\_stmt\\_2016.pdf](http://astra.org.pl/pdf/publications/ASTRA_stmt_2016.pdf)

113. Center for Reproductive Rights, "Council of Europe Decision Calls on Poland to Immediately Grant Women Access to Legal Abortion Care and Services," 09/25/2018: <https://www.reproductiverights.org/press-room/council-of-europe-decision-calls-on-poland-to-immediately-grant-women-access-to-legal-abo>

114. 25 years of women's hell -25th anniversary of the anti-abortion polish Law: <http://en.federa.org.pl/25yearsofwomenshell/>

115. Lega Nord, "Fontana contro i grillini: Vogliono l'indiscriminate abortion": <https://leganord.org/notizie/10898-fontana-contro-i-grillini-vogliono-l-aborto-indiscriminato>

116. El Salto, "Seven out of ten gynecologists in Italy refuse to perform abortions", 06/19/2018: <https://www.elsaltodiario.com/aborto/no-a-la-objeccion-de-conciencia-historia-de-los-derechos-reproductivos-en-italia>

117. The Guardian, "Polish government widely condemned over morning after pill law", 06/26/2017: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jun/26/polish-president-signs-off-widely-condemned-morning-after-pill-law>

alence of HIV, their access to health is determined by factors such as discriminatory attitudes, prejudice and stigma on the part of medical personnel, the fear of revealing the identity of gender or sexual orientation, the lack of specialized knowledge of LGBTI persons and the lack of recognition of the specificities of access to health for this group, as well as the exclusion of some health services for homophobic reasons, lesbophobia or transphobia.<sup>118</sup>

Finally, in several European countries, transsexual and transgender people are still diagnosed as sick and do not receive the specialized attention they require.

## 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.

118. ILGA Europe, “Health4LGBTI: Reducing health inequalities experienced by LGBTI people”: <https://www.ilga-europe.org/what-we-do/our-advocacy-work/health/health4lgbti>

- 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.<sup>119</sup> 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.

119. 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).

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 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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## GLOSSARY OF RECURRENT USED TERMS

<p><b>Gender:</b> Gender is a cultural construction that classifies and categorizes individuals through their sexuality and, at the same time, it is a system of unequal power relations between masculinity and femininity. Because it is a functional and malleable construction, according to the philosopher Teresa de Lauretis, that works through symbolism, representations, values and stereotypes, the meaning of what it means to be and behave like "a man" or "a woman", will depend on the historical, economic, political and cultural moment. It is functional to the extent that it responds to the need to equip those considered men and women with specific social functions adapted to the society, through cultural transmission, education and socialization or force and coercion.</p>
<p><b>Gender identity:</b> Identification with one or another gender or with none in particular.</p>
<p><b>Feminism:</b> Political theory and daily practice that seeks to eradicate inequality and discrimination based on gender, as well as dismantle the social, economic and cultural structures that support this subordination. It is used in the plural to show the diversity of theoretical currents that this term embraces.</p>
<p><b>Transsexuals/transgender:</b> Patriarchal societies sexuate individuals, organizing them socially according to their genitals in two strict categories - "man" and "woman" - and mutually exclusive, leaving out multiple bodies, what is called "sexual binarism". These exclusions are manifested, for example, in the reality of transsexual people, who identify with a gender identity different from that assigned to them at birth (Fundación Triángulo), or transgender people who do not identify with the sex assigned at birth and deliberately introduce themselves into an ambiguity that exceeds the conventional norms of male and female genders.</p>
<p><b>Intersex:</b> For theorists of diversity such as Anne Fausto-Sterling, sex is not dichotomous, but there is a continuum between both categories, and people who do not include themselves in any of the two boxes, and who have been born with physical, sexual or hormonal characteristics of both sexes. Therefore, the dualistic sexual system (two unique sexes, male and female) is not adequate to represent the entire spectrum of human sexuality or human sexual existence.</p>
<p><b>LGBTI people, non-normative identities or sexual dissidents:</b> The term LGBTI includes Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender / Transgender or Intersex people who shape their social and political identity through their sexual orientation or gender identity. They are considered sexual dissidents or non-normative identities because they flee from sexual binarism (see: transsexuals / transgender) and the heterosexual norm, which naturalizes heterosexuality as the only correct sexual and affective orientation and adjusted to the social norm, stigmatizing homosexuality and other practices considered "abnormal" that attempt against "the natural order of things".</p>
<p><b>Racialization/racialized persons:</b> Process of identification and social stigmatization derived from the European colonial system, in which certain bodies associated with racial groups are considered non-citizens and in the justification of different forms of violence, intolerance, humiliation and exploitation (Tijoux, ME and Palominos, S. (2015). One example is the difficulty of people with Arab names to rent a home in some Western countries, or the police devices that detain and identify people on the street based on the color of their skin. It interacts with gender in several ways, for example, through the sexualization of some groups, such as afrodescendants women.</p>

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