

FEMINISM AND THE URBAN PRACTICE: THREE LINES OF ANALYSIS FEMINISMO E O FAZER URBANO: TRÊS EIXOS DE ANÁLISE LARISSA CHAVES, GIOVANNA MAGALHÃES, SORAYA NÓR

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Abstract

In this article the authors propose reflections regarding the power of feminism over the urban practice as an activity by counter-hegemonic architectures. Grounded on historical-dialectic materialism, our study started with reflections on the material production of concrete social relations which, as their contradictions unfold, engender the counter-hegemonic emancipatory process. For such, three lines of analysis are presented. In the first one, we discuss how the logic of accumulation and violence, intrinsic to capitalism, imposes itself over body-territories, asserting itself as the rule and belittling life and those pieces of knowledge that are not guided by profit and patriarchal domination. In the second line of analysis, by mapping the downtown area in Florianópolis, we will show how this system manifests itself both symbolically and in terms of space. Only ten of all streets in the city center have received the name of women, showing that the patriarchal standard is settled in the territory. The third line reveals itself as a synthesis of the other two. We introduce the women in urban agriculture as individual and collective body-territories building a counter-hegemonic praxis in urban spaces and on social movements. They take political action with the construction of alternatives that foster care, reproduction of life, reconnection with nature, protection of popular traditions, as well as issues of gender and the right to the city. These women carry with them the power to bring social and urban transformation.

Keywords: Feminism, Genre, City, Body-territory

1 Introduction

Capitalism establishes itself as a mode of production that sets up systemic oppression based on violence and the exploitation of bodies, territories, and nature, often institutionalized oppression. Such a process can be analyzed from a feminist non-eurocentric perspective, highlighting structures and individuals who have been historically obliterated (Federici, 2017)

The quest for unlimited accumulation, inherent to the capitalist system, sets itself ideologically as, supposedly, the only possible alternative. This is how the views and values of dominant classes become culturally hegemonic. A lifestyle has been gestated and based on the logic of a market that, among other impacts, favors and naturalizes the privatization of common lands, of the infrastructure meant for the maintenance of life, apart from seizing all of the deviant forms and subjectivities (Federici, 2017). In this process, it seeks to eliminate opposition, and rebelliousness along with autonomy, disobedience, and the possibility of rupture (Rolnik, 2011). This historical context also reverberates to the production of architecture and urban spaces. The concept of space as something uniform that reflects the movements of society, hides the sexist (Guitart, 2007) and racist (Santos, et al., 2017) character of urban design. In this respect, hegemonic architecture as much as urban planning stands as an instrument of power for a class, through which the bourgeoisie controls the production of space (Harvey, 2014).

Feminist urbanism integrates the critique to such outlook as much as it integrates the construction of new viewpoints and perspectives that concern subjectivities, bodies, and territories (Villagrán, 2016). Thus, one of the possibilities for feminism is to get back to the movements — urban and social movements —, in other words, to collective spaces that gestate praxis that question cultural hegemony. In the analysis, we presented the notions that cover the body-territory. It is an issue of feminist epistemology, which transcends the hegemonic western reasoning and encourages the construction of a logic that overcomes its intrinsic binary aspects such as subject/object, reason/emotion, mind/body, culture/nature, production/reproduction, public/private and urban/rural.

The reflection is grounded on the historical-dialectic materialism, as well as on the theory of feminism, in other words, we looked to reveal concrete issues of the society and its contradictions, which emerge from the material production of life, relating them to the historical and emancipatory processes abided by them. For that reason, we held a theoretical discussion about patriarchal capitalism, a priori, as the means to substantiate a cartographic analysis of the downtown area in Florianópolis, and also to ground the statements and protagonism of women in urban agriculture on the production of a counter-hegemonic urban space.

The studies presented in this paper have been carried out in the city of Florianópolis, the state of Santa Catarina, Southern Brazil. Such a choice happened because it is where the authors live, study and work, which made it possible for expressions of hegemonic values, beliefs and behaviors to be found in this territory.

The research presents the cartography of the downtown area of Florianópolis, since this area has a range of historic and symbolic layers representing the occupation of the territory over time. Thus, these consolidated areas express the power of the dominant patriarchal ideology, in what concerns the production of architecture and urbanism.

Likewise, Florianópolis has a particular feature in relation to the Urban Development Plan, following the extinction of rural zoning from 2014. It is an aspect that still provokes discussions between social movements and public authorities. This fact represents, above all, the hegemonic thought of the local elite, which defends the interests of corporate real estate groups, whose project for a city is not consistent with the morphologic, ecological and social features of the municipality, especially those of the island of Santa Catarina. Hence the relevance of the movements in favor of urban agriculture, especially by women. As a way to qualify the work and the discussions presented, the article brings statements by militant women on the tackling of motions that place profit above nature and above life with human dignity (Chaves, 2022).

Thus, this article brings reflections on the urban practice in the sphere of feminism in order to reveal its counter-hegemonic power, by presenting three lines of analysis. The first one takes into account the historical materiality of social relations within the capitalist system. On this line, we discuss how violence and epistemicide are fundamental for the capitalist process of accumulation, by subduing female bodies and territories. The second line seeks to show, through a cartographic gender analysis of the downtown area of Florianópolis, how such intermingling can be expressed in the city. The third line represents the convergence of the first two lines of reflection, which emerge as resistance as well as an alternative to a system that commodifies life and socio-environmental relations. Protagonism and the perspectives of women in urban agriculture are presented in this topic.

2 Accumulation, Violence, and the Androcentric City

In order to understand the reality one needs to necessarily go through the process of understanding the historical conditions and structures that materialized in our society. It is from such conjuncture that we establish a relationship with the world, with nature, with the territory, apart from conforming to the construction of our subjectivity.

The process described by Marx (2013) as the primitive accumulation of capital¹, in the mercantilist period, consisted of those actions that engendered capitalism. Among them were the enclosures that expropriated peasants from common lands, making it impossible for lifestyles based on the community to stand, in order to impose private property and the submission of individual waged labor. This process also includes the colonization of the Americas, Africa, Asia, and Oceania, slavery, the subjugation of peoples and their cultures as well as the strengthening of the separation of humanity-nature.

Rosa Luxemburg (1970) states that this logic of violence is intrinsic to the capitalist system and that the features of primitive accumulation have unleashed a continual process that is not limited to a specific time in history or a geographic location. The capital needs to destroy what the author calls the *natural economy* — socioeconomic forms based on subsistence and the reproduction of life — to take over the production resources, especially the land and the workforce of those populations. For capitalist relationships to maintain, a State apparatus is needed, one anchored on police and military forces. With this, another kind of violence emerges, the epistemicide (Santos, 2019). Behind the idea of a pretense of civil respect, the mechanisms of oppression are hidden. The practice of civilizing is part of an ideologically fabricated process conducted in parallel with the notion of progress and development, conditional for the expansion of capitalism, founded on the rise of modern science. As the values of this western civilizing science expanded, in a hegemonic way, all over the world, the knowledge of women and oppressed peoples was ignored and repressed.

[...] this happens because it is not possible to disqualify the forms of knowledge of dominated peoples without disqualifying the peoples themselves, both individually and collectively, as cognizing

¹ De Angelis (2001) observes two meanings for the primitive accumulation of capital, the historical meaning employed by Marx, in which "primitive" applies to the processes in the origin of the capital, and the one that regards it as an ongoing event in the capitalist mode of production. This last approach allows the connection of violence to colonialism and to the body-territory.

individuals. [...] It is a twofold way of kidnapping: by denying somebody else's rationality or by the cultural assimilation that is imposed on them in other cases [...]. [The epistemicide] is no longer meant for the individual and collective body, but for the control of minds and hearts. (Carneiro, 2005, p. 97, our translation).

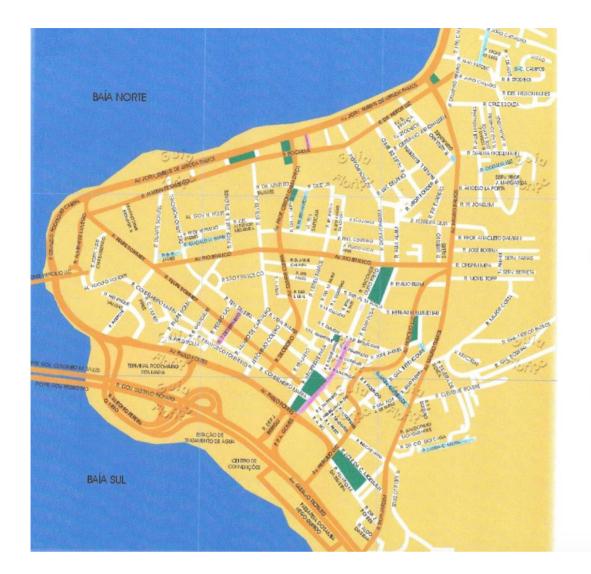
This process, which reinforces the dichotomy of rural-urban, also includes other issues. The first one relates to the place where the food we consume is produced - rural or urban - and to the socio-environmental characteristics of vicinity. The second issue concerns the form and means of how agriculture is developed. In other words, regarding the use of agrochemicals, the instrumental use of nature, the artificial production of seeds and seedlings, and the acquisition process of farmed lands. The agribusiness and large farming estates undertake practices that perpetuate the logic of accumulation and of violence that affect nature, the native, *quilombola*, and traditional populations, delegitimizing them as bearers of knowledge, apart from intensifying the nutritional and dietary insecurity of these populations (Mies; Shiva, 2021).

The same logic happens and affects the urban space. The privatization of urban spaces, segregation, peripheralization, and unlimited expansion of the real estate market affecting areas of nature with rural characteristics are examples of these processes materializing in spaces. Therefore, the dawn of the modern city took place in a sphere of accumulation, violence, and exclusion of individuals, when it was possible to establish a connection with urban planning and the production of an androcentric city. In this urban practice, where man is the measure of all things, marketing spaces of goods and services are the priority, to the detriment of those that favor the reproduction of life (Valdivia, 2018).

The urban space gains pedagogical character in what concerns the ideological issue of a hegemonic patriarchal capitalist model. By means of a specific definition of uses for the urban land, there is the establishment of which movements are allowed and which are restricted, which territories are valued, and which bodies can occupy certain spaces. Our cities have been built based on this dominant logic, and the relations concerning genre, race, and class are expressed on the urban outline. In this regard, there is a range of codes that portray the relations of power (Kern, 2021).

To make these interconnections evident, we have proposed the neologism *feminage* in contrast with the word homage. The latter being, etymologically, a word derived from *man*. It used to denote a vassal as a man of arms, one owing his loyalty to his liege (Houaiss, 2001). *Feminage*, in turn, makes the contradiction evident and denounces it, the submission of meaning in paying homage to a woman.

Departing from the problematics presented, we proceeded to the cartographic analysis of downtown street names in Florianópolis, represented in Figure 1. In the comparison between the number of men to have been homaged and the number of women to have been *feminaged*, a clear unbalance reveals the ideological valuation of the genre. According to Figure 2, only ten (5%) out of 208 streets have received the name of women, and none of the main streets have a feminine name.



NAME OF THE DOWNTOWN STREETS IN FLORIANÓPOLIS

MAIN STREETS HOMAGES (masc.)

SECONDARY STREETS HOMAGES (masc.)

SECONDARY STREETS FEMINAGES (fem.)

NEUTRAL SECONDARY STREETS

Fig. 1: Downtown street names in Florianópolis. Source: elaboration Nór, adapted from *Guia Floripa* (2022).

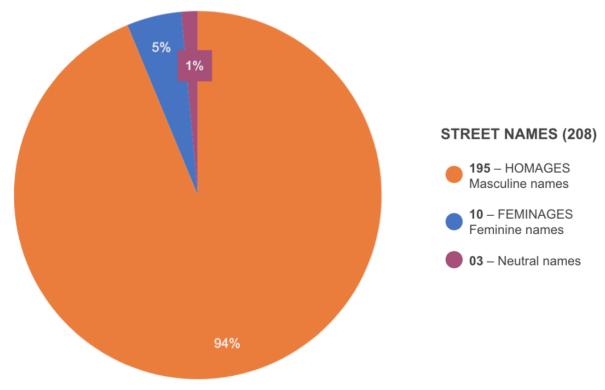


Fig. 2: Percentage of streets referring to homages and feminages. Source: elaboration Nór.

According to Table 1, it is worth highlighting that, among those ten names of women, four of them actually represent indirect homages to the husband or father, thus lessening the acknowledgment of the feminine protagonist's power in society and the city's space management. There is a clear inconsistency between what a woman needs to accomplish in order to deserve distinction and to receive acknowledgment in her public life and what a man needs to do. On the other hand, the masculine has always prevailed, by forging beliefs, values, and behaviors of supposed superiority, and, even today, names of men keep going on designating street addresses, references, memories, and urban identities.

	NAME	FEMINAGE	ACTIVITIES DEVELOPED
1	Adelaide Lane	Adelaide Pereira Oliveira	Governor Pereira Oliveira's widow*
2	Anita Garibaldi Street	Ana de Jesus Ribeiro	Fighter in Farroupilha Revolution and fighter for the Unification of Italy
3	Benvenuta Barlet James Street	Benvenuta Monteiro James	Revolutionary, politician
4	Irmã Benvarda Street	Maria Michele	Religious
5	Corália Ferreira da Luz Street	Corália dos Reis Ferreira da Luz	Second wife of Hercilio Luz*
6	Etelvina Luz Square (Round Bench)	Etelvina Cezarina Ferreira Luz	First wife of Hercílio Luz*
7	Laura Caminha Meira Street	Laura Caminha Meira	Public employee, active in Philanthropy
8	Madalena Barbi Street	Madalena Destri Barbi	Orthopedist practitioner
9	Margot Ganzo Araújo Street	Margot Ganzo Araújo	Daughter of Juan Ganzo/ director of the Telephone Company*
10	Ondina Alves Pereira Lane	Ondina Alves Pereira	Housewife

Table 1: Downtown Streets in Florianópolis that received the names of women. Source: elaboration Nór, adapted from Silva (1999).

Such cartography is paradigmatic for it demonstrates how ideological constructions founded on the public-private dualism are printed onto the urban design and territory (Villagrán, 2016). Men are supposedly public figures who are free to use and get hold of public space whereas women are not. The domestic chores, caring for the home, and work related to reproduction, undervalued and invisible work, are reserved for the women. This language is written in the urban space and is experienced by generations of citizens. Such code is printed on the territory and its subjectivities, demonstrating and reinforcing the relations of power. This power is also expressed by the political representativity of those who choose the names for places in the city, most of them men, thus reflecting the patriarchal structure of the society. In a movement of resistance to this oppressive logic, counter-hegemonic practices arise such as feminism and agroecology.

When defining hegemony as the instrument used for the maintenance and internalization of dominance by those who dwell in the subaltern condition, according to Ouviña (2021), Gramsci as much as Luxemburgo maintain a crucial aspect in their horizon: the possibility of ideological rupture by means of the popular and autonomous counterculture. For the author, this practical-pedagogic view lays the foundation for the construction of a resistance that is not limited to changes in the economic sphere but finds, in the dispute of senses and behaviors, the possibility to engender, on a daily basis, movements for the expression of ideas, bodies, and affections.

When the territories and collectively established everyday policies are observed, policies that value life, eco-dependency², and care, women stand out as the ones who weave alternatives to the dominant logic and resist oppressive structures. These

^{*} Even though these are names of women, they represent homages to their husband or father.

² Svampa (2019) states that the term *ecodependency* marks the fact that we, the human society, are part of nature, and establish a relationship of interdependency with it. For the author, ecofeminists and women's movements are, among other social movements, leading the re-signification, or rather the re-establishment of the relationship between humanity and nature by means of caring as a collective principle.

daily arrangements have a radical power to transform how we conceive and produce urban space. This is how the women in urban agriculture are integrated, as individuals who build up transformation for the collectivity.

3 The Body-territory and the Women in Urban Agriculture

We aim to highlight the relevance of processes and experiences of the global South which, focused on the agroecological logic, build up resistance to property, to violence, and to the subjection of body-territories. This is a power-concept able to accommodate a new notion for the building of spaces and relations.

Proximity with decolonial studies gives us the necessary tools to help and understand the complex realities imposed by the hegemony of the coloniality of power³, of genre⁴, of knowledge⁵, and of being⁶, making it possible for the approach of references such as agroecology and body-territory, highlighted by a feminism that lays on popular and community-based grounds.

Also, with the revival and the renewed valorization of cosmovisions over originary peoples, it has been possible to confront modern precepts founded on hierarchical dichotomy and on the approach to other knowledge, based on relations of complementarity and codependence (Carvajal, 2020).

On indigenous cosmovisions, such a concept of an embodied world is nothing new. A hill, for instance, has a name and personality; mountain chains are composed of a mother, father, and son, and they talk to other families of mountains nearby (Krenak, 2019). The same happened to the voices of indigenous women who spread throughout Latin America and the Caribbean to defend their territories. Sentences such as "my body is my territory" and "neither us women nor the land are territories for conquest" (Cruz Hernández, 2016, p. 36, our translation) resounded all around the continent, becoming an inspiration for the political enunciation that permeated the feminist and other social movements.

[...] the body perceived as a territory is in itself a space, territory-place, it too occupying a space in the world and can experience all emotions, sensations and physical reactions, to find in it [body-territory] a place of "resistance" and re-signification. (Cruz Hernández, 2016, p. 42, our translation).

Cruz Hernández (2016), as much as Gago (2020), states that it is possible to understand the body-territory as an idea-force able to overflow its own origin in the fight of originary peoples onto other spaces and territories, even on the urban space. The notion of body-territory claims the right to the reproduction of life and to the communality. At the same time, it questions the grounds that sustain capitalism and the very meaning of private property linked to lack, scarcity and deprivation (Gago, 2020). In that sense, day-to-day life surpasses abstraction and reconnects to essential aspects, to social reproduction.

This reference to life is not abstract, but linked to the spaces, to times, to the bodies and to concrete combinations in which this life develops, becomes possible, dignified, visible [...]. Life has a vital meaning: it involves the defense and care towards what is common, and the production and expansion of shared wealth. (Gago, 2020, p.109, our translation).

³ Coloniality refers to a new standard of power of the global capitalism, resulting from colonialism, in which the idea of "race" was established to neutralize and legitimate the colonial relations of dominance, giving rise to a new global structure of labor control which is racialized and geographically differentiated (Quijano, 2005).

⁴ For Lugones (2019), apart from race, also genre is a colonial imposition that produced new classifications, introducing a modern colonial system of genre used for the control of sex, its resources and products.

⁵ Coloniality of knowledge is also a fruit of the Eurocentric Western modernity which lays down the model of knowledge based on neutrality, objectivity, universality, and positivism, thus creating an allegedly universal narrative centralizing and valuing the production by the global North (Curiel, 2020).

⁶ For Maldonado-Torres (2007), coloniality of the self is humanity's denial towards certain populations that are considered an obstacle to modernization.

⁷ From the original in Spanish: "[...] el cuerpo visto como territorio es en sí mismo un espacio, un territorio lugar, que ocupa, además, un espacio en el mundo y puede vivenciar todas las emociones, sensaciones y reacciones físicas, para encontrar en él, un lugar de "resistencia" y resignificación." (Cruz Hernandéz, 2016, p. 42).

It is in this context that women in urban agriculture can be found, their farming activities, participation in community vegetable gardens, in collective initiatives and in spaces of militancy. Thus, they make caring and social reproduction visible, countering the layout of a profit-oriented productive city. Thought the daily perspectives of these women, we consider it possible to expose the overlapping of the body-territory, as feminist epistemology, and the study of space. The potentiality to break with the patriarchal ownership logic made the emergence of a new spatiality possible, a new mode of being and acting in the world, which brings tension to hegemony and binarisms.

In this scenario, it can be taken into consideration how women in urban agriculture act politically, building alternatives. They do so by prioritizing the production of organic food, for neighbors and vicinities, in harmony with popular cultural traditions, with the preservation of local ecosystems. At the same time, issues of genre and of right to the city are stimulated (Chaves, 2022). This is a deviating feminist practice, settled on the individual-collective body, on the body as territory and on the territory as body, which subverts the binary, individualist, ownership logic, asserting itself as a utopic horizon facing the neoliberal advances of the capital (Gago, 2020).

The statements by women in urban agriculture from Florianópolis demonstrated that their daily experiences with agriculture allowed the setting of relationships of the overture. In other words, through processes of subjectivation, it has been possible to nurture possibilities of reconnection with nature. Personal motivations such as the search for wellness, a healthy diet, and therapeutic activities have favored involvement with agroecological social movements, unveiling the process for the formation of an individual and collective body-territory (Gago, 2020). With this experience, a spacial and subjective practice emerges, bringing with it the power for its expansion so that "new forms of life-in-common and a culture of sharing" (Stavrides, 2016, pp. 4-5) can be created.

I think that agroecology, in general, is something very revolutionary and very political. So, I think that when you start entering it, you get more and more involved with the movements, and not only with one but with several. As if the whole world started opening up, this has been a very important change. It was roughly about then that I started getting involved with various movements, and it was something I had been meaning to do for quite some time already. [...] And then I think that when I started with agriculture, I started learning about it all and researching about agroecology, it was as if this a new road opened up. I started getting involved with all those movements which was something that I wanted. And one thing leads to another.8 (Chaves, 2022, p. 104, our translation).

The territorial practices that derive from these relations, such as the joint efforts and the agroecological street markets, bring other ways of living to the city, transforming not only the spaces but the people for the practices and exchange of experience. These experiences illustrate the importance of the humanity-nature immanence over processes of daily reproduction.

[...] practice, to put it into practice from the experiences. We cannot work in a situation where we have no understanding that everything we do is for us ourselves: we, human beings who are on the planet. I am not an environmentalist who will put the environment first, above the people. I am not one of those people. I understand that people are for the environment just as the environment is for the people. In order to think environmentally we have to think of people, so the focus of my work is the people [...]. And experience, joint efforts, friendships, all come from the people. (Chaves, 2022, p. 83, our translation).

In these events, the empowerment of women is revealed, as they constitute active social forces that guide the right to the city, to food sovereignty, and to a life worth living (Chaves, 2022).

[...] Women are always the majority! The joint effort undertakings, the two that I have been to, were only women! When you realize that the majority are all women, I think we are much more willing to engage and change things, we are a lot more defiant, and I feel that we are a lot more radical than men. We are more willing to take action and I also think that we have a vocation towards collective

⁸ In this article we have used excerpts from interviews with women of urban agriculture movements in the macro-region of Florianópolis, as presented in Chaves (2022).

In this way, life gains sensibility that goes beyond the retina-eye (Rolnik, 2011), with such complexity that surpasses the neoliberal capitalist compartmentalization and the necessary obedience for the maintenance of the hegemonic thought. The rhizomatic multiplicity is allowed and there is an opening for the unpredictability that comes along with the becoming, which is never individual, separated from the world or from the relations established with it. From the becoming a micro-political logic emerges, a cartography that holds the bordering and unstable space. It breaks free from the fixed structures of macro-politics, for macro-politics and micro-politics are codependent forces. However, because they have different natures, they also need different strategies. Whereas in macro-politics there is fighting to achieve equal rights and action within a programmatic sphere, in micro-politics "the invisible and unpredictable movements of the earth are followed — here, they are movements of willingness —, which keep transforming, imperceptibly, the current landscape" (Rolnik, 2011, p. 62, our translation).

It is in micro-politics that other forms of living can be created. When subjectivity is de-territorialized, there's the possibility of re-territorialization, moved by willingness, by the power of life to remain and take root. The forces acting over the bodies produce vibrance, and can be expressed by a new form of life, a new art, new sexuality or a new body, a new territory (Rolnik, 2011, 2018).

When the feminist key is used to understand space, it becomes possible to trace a history of anti-patriarchal and anti-capitalist resistance, in articulation with these women in the cities, in the rural areas and in the forests who, since the rise of capitalism and colonial occupation, resist to the violence that go with the processes of dispossession and extermination of their beliefs, values and modes of life (Federici, 2019).

4 Final Considerations

In this article, we present three lines of analysis, for reflection about feminism as counter-hegemonic praxis. With the first line we showed the patriarchal capitalist mode of production as a system that imposes itself, through accumulations and violence against bodies and territories, capturing not only subjectivities, but also processes of resistance. With the second line, by means of a cartographic analysis of the downtown area in Florianópolis, we reveal how this system is printed on the urban space. Discrepancy was found between homages and feminages, referring to the names of downtown streets. Such analysis highlighted forms of symbolic perpetuation of structures of patriarchal power within the society and on the production of space, just as the duality of public-private printed on the territory. The third line of analysis was the one to embody the others, representing the protagonism of women as body-territories that encourage a counter-hegemonic anti-capitalist praxis, which emerge from social movements and collective spaces of fight for urban agriculture in Florianópolis. This line complies with both processes of resistance and the emergence of alternatives to the patriarchal capitalist system.

The women in urban agriculture build up alternatives aimed at breaking up with the dichotomy and the humanity-nature alienation, prioritizing care and the reproduction of life. Those alternatives harbor an epistemological turn, a counter-hegemonic praxis rising from existing experiences (Kern, 2021; Lefebvre, 2001; Solón, et al., 2019). Agroecological practices emerge as resistance to a context of established systemic violence against bodies and knowledge. They give rise to manners of thinking, feeling, existing, and being in the world that allows a glimpse of radicalism, the power of broad transformation (Gago, 2020), and even urban transformation.

In this respect, such spatiality looming from urban agroecology incorporates the unstable materiality that permeates day-to-day living where the body becomes territory and the territory becomes a body. The individual and the collective are no longer sites of dispute but start establishing a relationship of complementarity and codependency, making it evident that there are no such things as a lack of body or territory (Gago, 2020). Thus, among territories and bodies, the existence of the life pulse mentioned by Suely Rolnik (2019) as well as the transformation-willing power presented by Verónica Gago (2020) is revealed. Those perspectives allow the expansion and diffusion of insurgent practices of territory, as opposed to the hegemonic order — proprietary, individualist, and androcentric — to which we are subjected all the time, and which is supposed as the only existing logic and the only way of understanding the world.

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Studying these correlations allows us to think about counter-hegemonic architectures, as decolonial and feminist thought is brought to the field of architecture and urbanism. When we think and project our spaces from our experiences, subjectivities, and bodies, we assimilate the social and collective dimension, in a simultaneous process of deconstruction of the dominating thought and construction of a new possible reality (Ouviña, 2021).

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