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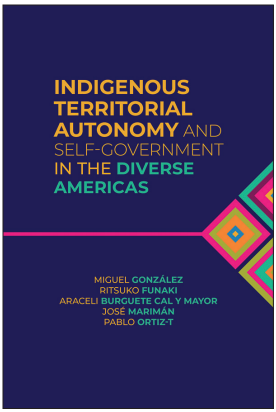

INDIGENOUS TERRITORIAL AUTONOMY AND SELF-GOVERNMENT IN THE DIVERSE AMERICAS

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ISBN 978-1-77385-463-2

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Autonomy, Intersectionality and Gender Justice: From the "Double Gaze" of the Women Elders to the Violence We Do Not Know How to Name

Dolores Figueroa Romero
Laura Hernández Pérez

The stories of our grandmothers and mothers
are what encourage us to continue walking through painful situations
that we do not want repeated and experienced by other sisters;
and because it is important for us to stay alive,
with our cosmovision, our spirituality,
in this world that is so turbulent and so full of things.

(Norma Don Juan, Carrillo Puerto, 2018)

There are some forms of violence we have always known, and other new ones
we don't know how to name. It's not the same violence
we experienced 10 years ago. It's the violence of organized crime
that grows stronger every day in community spaces.

(Norma Don Juan, CIESAS,[1] Mexico City, 2017)

Introduction

In the late 1990s, "the double gaze of Indigenous women" was a widely used and referenced metaphor to show the complexity and positionality of Indigenous women in debates about power/gender, autonomy and self-determination in both Mexico and Latin America (Sanchez, 2005). Since then, there has been a transformation of Indigenous women's activism in relation to institutional and non-institutional actors for recognition of Indigenous peoples' rights and the rights of Indigenous women to have access to a life free of violence. In this essay we want to offer an analysis of the exercise of political articulation and changes in the agendas of the organized Indigenous women's movement due to the force of generational change, the impacts of neoliberal dispossession and the transformations that have occurred both at the community level and in government policies.

We recognize in the voices of the protagonists — of the women Elders and young women — a heritage and a cumulative process of struggles that question the State and the national Indigenous movement. These struggles have achieved the visibility and recognition of Indigenous women as subjects and political actors with their own particularity and rights (Valladares, 2017; Bonfil, 2017; CONAMI-ONUMujeres, 2012; Rivera, 1999). An important element in the formation and political learning of Indigenous women is their relationship with international spaces, cooperative agencies and global Indigenous activism where women from several Latin American countries have participated in training, worked with each other and organized into networks (Rivera Zea, 1999; Centro de Estudios e Información de la Mujer Multiétnica-CEIMM, 2005). The existence of transnational networks of Indigenous women has been vital to ensure the circulation and mobilization of knowledge and resources to strengthen their organizations at different levels and in different regions. However, despite these advances, there is a growing unease today among Indigenous women activists who seek a change of strategy to open up new areas of political work and renew agendas to respond to current challenges, which are considerably different.

The reading of generational and social changes that this essay refers to is the product of an exercise of co-authorship between a feminist *mestiza* academic woman (Figueroa Romero) and a young Indigenous professional woman and leader (Hernández Pérez). The conversation I have had with Laura Hernández Pérez about power, violence and gender has taken place

within the framework of my collaboration with the National Coordinator of Indigenous Women in Mexico (CONAMI - *Coordinadora de Mujeres Indígenas de México)* for the strengthening of an activist work initiative called the Community Gender Emergency (ECG - *Emergencia Comunitaria de Género*), which seeks to consolidate a platform for documenting violence against Indigenous women that critically dialogues with institutional policies for the prevention of gender violence. This dialogue with Laura and other young women leaders has allowed me to learn about the political work they are doing as a network, their political concerns and their trajectories of struggle as young women who are part of an Indigenous women's organization that has clear autonomy with respect to the mixed-gender Indigenous movement. As an academic, I feel the commitment to give an account of the organizational process of the Indigenous women's movement, recognizing that this implies not only analyzing the origin and past but also asking questions in the present, and questioning my own understandings about the new generation of activists' constitution of female political subjectivity.

Today's CONAMI is nourished by leaderships of different ages and regional origins, which have a very intense and diverse organizational life, ranging from advocacy in spaces of dialogue with the State to local actions for violation of the human rights of Indigenous women and their peoples. The Community Gender Emergency (ECG) initiative, for example, promotes internal reflection to understand the connections between old and new forms of violence against Indigenous women prevailing in Mexico. The ECG initiative is nourished by the concerns of women leaders of various generations — old and young, urban and professional, all with different sensibilities — who recognize the connections between criminal violence, sexuality, identity, territory and migration.

Looking at generational differences, the dialogue with Laura Hernández Pérez seeks to give a reading on gender justice from the young women's arenas of action and the constitution of diverse and porous communities. We see the change of era in relation to three mutually conditioning elements: (1) a generational change of leadership, especially of young women who move between the rural and the urban and have developed a critical reflective discourse towards intra-community violence,[2] always in dialogue with the Elders to put the struggles of the past into perspective; (2) a change of public policies towards Indigenous peoples that has moved from neoliberal multiculturalism to the current "post" moment that some have called violent pluralism, or

post-recognition of rights (Valladares, 2017; Zapata Silva, 2019). This change of era is marked by the resurgence of capitalist dispossession despite the existence of laws that dictate respect for Indigenous territorial and patrimonial rights. It is an era in which contradictions are so acute that the State itself is imbricated with and tolerates extreme violence and the generalized crisis of human rights violations of Indigenous peoples (De Marinis, 2019; Mora, 2017; Hernández, 2017); and, finally, (3) by short- and long-term effects of public policies of gender equality and prevention of feminicidal violence in Indigenous communities (Mora, 2017; Figueroa, 2017, 2019). These policies are seen by many as intrusive of community space as they essentialize derogatory and racist notions of local culture by mandatorily imposing forms of participation (Valladares, 2018) and "proper and modern" behavioral norms for family care (Mora, 2017; Seodu Herr, 2020).

To discuss these changes from an intersectional feminist perspective, we take two key frames of reference and two moments that account for Indigenous women's political positionality. The first reference is an Indigenous feminist reflection published by Margarita Gutiérrez and Nellys Palomo (1999) on the priority issues of the Mexican Indigenous movement. "Autonomy from a Woman's Point of View" (*"Autonomía con mirada de mujer")* is a work that echoes the revolutionary importance of Zapatista women and articulates a feminine reading of the Indigenous political project for self-determination, self-government and autonomy. This work summarized early on the complexity of the commitment to build community and self-government that considered women's social spaces and demands. It is a text about the ways in which Indigenous women do politics and project their voice to make their feelings known about the social construction of equity. In our opinion, the text has the particularity and analytical richness of conceiving autonomy from a feminine perspective that interconnects various levels of power ranging from the private and the community, to the national and the international.

Autonomy as a political project, a horizon of self-determination and self-government, cannot be conceived without considering the inclusive participation of men and women (Gutiérrez & Palomo, 1999); and these transformational processes must take place starting at home, but also in the community, in political organizations and in the nation. Autonomy with a woman's perspective includes a gradual notion of change and strategic involvement that nourishes and inspires Indigenous women's activist work to build networks and agreements with other women, but also with their peers.

What is profoundly transformative about this approach is that it contains a disruptive notion of power that starts in everyday feminine spaces, those spaces that are outside of community governance and ensure the reproduction of life (Mora, 2017).

Feminine autonomy starts from the most intimate core of community life to make a transformative multilevel call that connects and drives women's participation in decision-making and public spaces that are normally alien to their presence. This notion of connection invites a reversal of and challenge to prohibitions and discriminations that prevent women from raising their demands and taking part in decision-making processes. It is an approach that expands the very concept of autonomy by feminizing and depatriarchalizing it, as it makes visible the mechanics that deny spaces for women and promotes an appreciation of the feminine gaze to geopolitical debates and discussions where only male-specialized knowledge about territory and power reigns (Blackwell, 2012). Indigenous women, by simultaneously embracing their peoples' struggle and their own gender struggles, escape the imposition of the institutional feminist discourse. They reject being treated as "objects of equality rights," the stigmatization of their community identity and being seen as incapable of seeking social and gender justice for themselves. "Never an autonomy without us" demand these voices, this gaze that claims a leading place in the dignified resistance and in the political debate on the rights of Indigenous peoples (CONAMI, 2012).

The second framework of enunciation is in the approach to the political positionality of Indigenous women, in the metaphor of the "double gaze" (Sanchez, 2005). The double gaze of Indigenous women is a reflective exercise of a double nature, located at the intersection of the collective rights of peoples and women´s rights against gender discrimination. In this sense, it is a new generation of double gaze, where gender oppression is added to other discriminatory dimensions such as class and ethnic-racial and cultural identity. If the Indigenous double gaze in the 1990s invited solidarity with the exploited *campesinado*[3] and oppressed Indigenous nations (Hernández, 2005), the female double gaze adds yet another dimension of oppression, that of gender, intersecting with all the previous ones.

We find that the double gaze of Indigenous women activists implies a critical and reflexive intersectionality that engages in a constant questioning with the mixed Indigenous movement and hegemonic feminism. On the one hand, this interpellation with Indigenous activism involves deconstructing

the sexism of peers and, in the case of liberal feminists, the critical dialogue reveals the *mestizo* racism and ethnocentrism that judges and prejudices community living spaces as backward (Seodu-Herr, 2020). The task is complex, requiring a kind of vast dexterity to legitimize voice, show the specificity of the demands, and reverse the interstices of discrimination and its negative effects in the political and social field.

The activism of Indigenous women is one that emerges from within the communities and is symptomatic of the transition from a passive voice to an active one that has its own character (CONAMI, 2012). It is an activism that seeks to disrupt family arrangements and normative systems and confronts and questions male leadership in order to make their demands possible and legible (Sánchez, 2005). It is a scaled view that disrupts several orders and looks at the community, but it is constituted in reference to, and in concert with, national policies that threaten the lives of peoples. That is why Indigenous women respond critically to the State, which tries with its contradictory and racist policies to impose a minimalist version of rights on the peoples of Mexico on the one hand and criminalizes the Indigenous community for violating women's human rights on the other. By simultaneously embracing their peoples' struggles as well as their own gender struggles, Indigenous women avoid the imposition of institutional feminist discourse that stigmatizes their community identity and minimizes their capacity to seek social and gender justice (Blackwell, 2012; Seodu-Herr, 2020).

The political positionality of Indigenous women is complex and commonly silenced, which is why it requires the lens of intersectionality to make sense of the multiple (mis)encounters with non-Indigenous actors and activist discourses. The feminist concept of intersectionality has the potential and flexibility to make sense of the combination of discriminatory violence and orders, the construction of differentiated social identities, and the conjunctural interweaving of social, economic, political and gender justice activisms (Crenshaw, 1993; Suzack, 2017). Conceptually and methodologically, intersectionality offers several fruitful analytical lines: it explores the intersectionality of identities — social, ethnic, racial, age — of marginalized social groups; reveals the intersectionality of structural and historical oppressions and determinations of specific contexts; analyzes the political intersectionality of activist work that makes Indigenous women invisible (in the case discussed, pro-political parity/anti-feminicidal violence feminism versus Indianism for the sovereignty of Indigenous peoples); and helps push constructive and

revealing dialogues of the blinders and blind spots of political actions and vindicatory lexicons (Wright, 2017).

Specifically, this chapter takes up the concept of political intersectionality — a concept coined by Afro-descendant feminist Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) — as it has the potential to illuminate the complexity of the positionality of Indigenous women's collectives that face diverse forms of violence on the margins of hegemonic activisms — whether feminist, ethnic or human rights. This perspective refers to the intersection of activist agendas that, in general, take parallel or contradictory paths and generate silences about the different ways of conceiving justice, as well as the routes to access it. Activisms are born and organized to seek justice, and in the case of hegemonic feminism, gender justice[4] contains Western epistemological blinders that deny Indigenous women the ability to seek their own ways of building equity between genders, in concert with local institutions, and from the cultural references of their communities (Seodu-Herr, 2020; Goetz, 2007).

The following sections of the chapter are organized as follows. First, we will address the background and origins of CONAMI in concert with political events in Mexico in the 1990s, following the Zapatista uprising. The second section will discuss the nature of distinct genealogies of Indigenous women's leadership and especially what these distinct life experiences mean for dimensioning generational change. The third section includes the narratives and thoughts of three young women leaders from CONAMI who were selected based on their divergent and complementary ways of addressing the internal contradictions of their communities. We will close with a section that discusses community emergency work and the challenges of gender justice from an intersectional and intergenerational perspective.

CONAMI and the Double Gaze 23 Years Later

CONAMI was founded in 1997, within the framework of the First National Encounter of Indigenous Women held in Oaxaca on 29-30 August. This meeting was attended by more than 800[5] Indigenous women from all over the country with the intention of formalizing a space for organized women to grow as a collective with their own identity and in dialogue with the national Indigenous movement. Inspired by the leadership of Commander Ramona[6] in the liberating imaginary of the Revolutionary Law of Indigenous Women, the founders of CONAMI opened a very important chapter in the

political and public life of Mexican Indigenous women (Espinoza Damian, 2009). This foundational moment was the result of the multiplier effect of Zapatismo throughout the country: "contemporary Zapatismo had exacerbated the enunciative field of and about Indigenous women, provoking a change in their self-awareness and self-representation ..." (Millán, 2014, p. 67 in De Marinis, 2019, p. 110). All the Zapatistas, but specifically Commander Ramona, inspired other Indigenous women to not be afraid, to leave their homes and set an example of rebelliousness to exercise a leading role.

Following this invitation, many of the women leaders who attended had already been participating in the mixed-gender organizations of their peoples and in the regional organizations that questioned the State about the alleged celebration of the 500th anniversary and the "Encounter of the Two Worlds." The mission was to legitimize a space to talk about sensitive issues for the Indigenous movement but also issues relevant to women, such as the right to political-social participation within the community, to make visible their contribution to the Indigenous political project, their freedom to make decisions about reproductive sexuality, have the right to land, achieve economic independence and have access to a life free of violence.

The women leaders who answered the call at that time were partners and/or wives of men who had a prominent role in some regional or national organization, and therefore, being close to the mixed collective, they found it appropriate to consolidate an autonomous space to meet as women. In order to achieve conflict-free meeting conditions, it was agreed that they would not get involved in the discussions of their mixed organizations and would concentrate their thoughts on discussing issues of common interest as Indigenous women (CONAMI, 2012). The women Elders recall that getting together was not an easy task, as many left their homes secretly, carrying their children, even if they later had to endure reprimands for failing to fulfill their household responsibilities (Jurado et al., 2018). But perhaps the most difficult thing to face was the criticism from within, from the male gaze that questioned the relevance of the process and threatened with divisionism the female initiative to achieve autonomous organization.

Twenty-six years have passed since then, and the existence of CONAMI has been marked by several milestones and various pathways (CONAMI, 2012). The founding women Elders, in addition to ensuring political spaces for women only, were also forerunners and actors in the transnational Indigenous movement, participating in forums, meetings and international

human rights training courses. During all these years they have maintained a healthy autonomy with respect to the mixed Indigenous movement and in dialogue with allied feminist organizations and international cooperation for procuring resources for training and political advocacy work. The tasks have focused on influencing national public policy in order to mainstream the concern for addressing the specificity of Indigenous women, generating training spaces for women who attend to the needs of their communities at the local level and actively strengthening continental networks such as the Continental Network of Indigenous Women of the Americas (*Enlace Continental de Mujeres Indígenas de las Américas* — ECMIA) (ECMIA, 2008).[7] At the national level, CONAMI is present in 17 states of the Mexican Republic through 23 community, municipal and/or regional organizations, with and without legal status, mixed or made up solely of women. CONAMI is currently governed through three decentralized regional coordinating bodies in the north, center and south, and has several working commissions that require the contribution and commitment of young women leaders, such as the Commissions for Children and Youth, Communication and the Eradication of Violence.

In terms of leadership genealogies, CONAMI has notable women founders and leaders such as Margarita Gutiérrez (Chiapas), María de Jesús Patricio "Marichuy" (Jalisco),[8] Tomasa Sandoval (Michoacán), Martha Sánchez Néstor (Guerrero), Felícitas Martínez (Guerrero), Fabiola del Jurado (Morelos), Ernestina Ortiz (State of Mexico) and Sofía Robles (Oaxaca), who have played an outstanding role in revealing the "voice and double gaze" of Mexican Indigenous women in international spaces on the subject of Indigenous women's issues, making visible the correlation and overlapping of these two levels of rights in specific contexts. During these years, several Indigenous women leaders have shown great abilities to carry out actions and processes autonomously, diligently and with scarce resources. In addition to the older women, there is a generation of young women who are taking on various responsibilities that are central to the organizational life of CONAMI. They know they are inheriting a political agenda that was outlined in 2012 within the framework of an accompaniment process provided by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

This agenda consensually encompassed five thematic areas: 1) cultural rights (identity, education and technology); 2) right to territory and natural resources; 3) political rights and free and informed prior consultation; 4)

economic rights and food sovereignty; 5) right to health, sexual and reproductive rights, and the right to a life free of violence. Without denying the relevance and centrality of these areas, we would like to point out that there is a new generation of demands, needs and work areas that young Indigenous women are developing, and that urgently need to be included.[9] The contemporary leadership of CONAMI demands the passing of the baton and the establishment of more consistent intergenerational communication channels.

An important input for the analysis of intergenerational dilemmas is to know to what extent organized Indigenous women recognize diverse positionalities within themselves and adapt their political reading to national problems. The longstanding social effects caused by modernizing development policies, territorial dispossession and the precariousness of the rural economy have detonated realities in rural and Indigenous communities that are already part of a naturalized reality (Bonfil et al., 2017). Rural-urban migration, loss of language, unwanted pregnancy, symbolic and media violence, disconnection with the world of the community and sexual and feminicidal violence against Indigenous women are some examples. What are the differences between the 2005 call of the double gaze and the gaze of young women leaders? The answers to this question are linked to the transformations that have taken place in the community as a geographical and metaphorical space for thinking and living Indigenousness, the migration and mobility of the new generations of Indigenous youth and the politicization of rights and identity from the intersectionality of contemporary violence.

Genealogies of Leadership and Intergenerational Change of CONAMI

At CONAMI's 20th anniversary celebration in 2017, held at the Central Library in Mexico City, the inaugural speech was given by Laura Hernández Pérez, a member of the Children and Youth Commission. Laura, of Nahua origin, of migrant parents in the Mexico City Valley's metropolitan area, and a social worker by training, was in charge of welcoming the regional participants from all over the country, as well as observers and visitors from abroad. Laura took the microphone to read the collective and political positioning of CONAMI, respectfully taking up the teachings of the Elders and honoring the path opened by Commander Ramona. It was highly symbolic that Laura, with her young voice, was the spokesperson of CONAMI's position after 20

years of work. At the celebration she emphasized that the struggle of women for the collective rights of peoples and the rights of Indigenous women to enjoy a life free of violence(s) is still very much alive. "What are our demands today? No to discrimination, racism, poverty, violence, death, dispossession, exclusion and repression" (August 2017).

In terms of political subjectivity, Laura said that participating in CONAMI taught her to get rid of her fear of speaking in public, to form collectives and to insist on defending the rights of Indigenous peoples and the human rights of Indigenous women in rural and urban areas. To continue promoting the transformation of relations between men and women from different fronts and from the community-local to the national and transnational levels. Laura pointed out that it has not been easy to have continuity in 20 years as, like any other organizational process, CONAMI has had crises. But together they have retaken the path thanks to the incorporation of youth leaders who are fighting with renewed interest, not for their own personal interests but for the interests of all Indigenous women in Mexico.

Continuing with the reading of the positioning statement, Laura pointed out:

> ... today there are many laws and specific programs aimed at benefiting Indigenous women. The Mexican State has been reactive to the lobbying and advocacy work of Indigenous organizations. As CONAMI we will always stand for the recognition of Indigenous women as subjects of rights and to have access to justice, health, education, employment and opportunities to participate in the political life of both our communities and our peoples. But after 20 years of existence as a coordinator group, we denounce that the changes have been few. Although there has been progress in legal matters in the international and national sphere, this is not reflected in the daily life of the communities and Indigenous peoples. Worse yet is the violence that has raged against social fighters for the defense of territory (August 2017).

Laura began her involvement with CONAMI doing grassroots work in technical support areas. She is now an outstanding leader who has assumed the role of Communications Coordinator. In addition to her leadership role within CONAMI, Laura is the founder of a collective called Yehcoa Um of urban

Indigenous youth who work with Otomi children and youth who live with their parents on a property in the Roma neighborhood of Mexico City, and sell handicrafts and sweets on the street. Their concern has been to prevent mistreatment, abuse and drug addiction through rights education with at-risk urban Indigenous youth. In reference to the women Elders, Laura also mentioned that:

> … the seeds have borne fruit; they have been seedbeds of several Indigenous women's organizations. They are all sisters with whom we make community, share information and accompany each other in this walk until dignity becomes a habit ... ! (August 2017).[10]

With these words she took up the clamor for justice of Indigenous women who have been unjustly imprisoned, and whose condition of poverty and defenselessness makes them prey to a police system that acts with impunity. The injustice of these cases not only harms the social life of the people but also represents clear events of gender injustice.

In Laura's words there are clear signs of a transformation in the political discourse, which at certain times insists on responding to the precarious living conditions in contexts where the experience of ethnicity is threatened. In this tenor we take up the work of anthropologist colleagues such as Laura Valladares (2017) and Paloma Bonfil (2017) who have documented the leadership formation processes of young Indigenous women and have published referential works for this analysis. For us, there are two key questions to answer after reviewing this literature: first, what has been written about the generational change of Indigenous women and the elements of analysis they provide? And second, what does the literature say about young Indigenous women?

For Valladares (2017), generational change, broadly speaking, is conceptualized in relation to three temporal segments that are also emblematic of different political-social epochs. The first segment refers to older adult women, 50 and older, whose life experience is closely linked to the domestic space, with little participation in community life, and a melancholic feeling towards the quiet and simple life, but with little possibility of questioning or even naming injustices against them. An epoch marked by industrial development promoted by the Institutional Revolutionary Party, rural political clientelism

and hegemonic nationalism. The next segment is of women between 35 and 50 years of age, which is a generational group that stands out due to the influence of Zapatismo and the times of the emergence of ethnicity as a salient banner of struggle. As negative structural factors linked to the neoliberal economic opening, the crisis in the *campesina* economy, the increase of migratory flows and the incorporation of Indigenous women into the paid labor market. Moreover, the feminization of poverty and the emergence of new gender roles within the communities and in the political and productive spheres are beginning to reemerge as a result of male migration to the northern region of the country. The positive aspects for Indigenous women at this time are related to access to formal and informal education, training programs on economic empowerment, human rights training and leadership. As a result of neoliberal multicultural recognition policies, outstanding Indigenous women leaders selectively entered government programs in areas of social attention with an intercultural and gender focus, as well as in programs financed by national and international cooperation agencies.

The last temporal segment is that of the new millennium generation, young women between 15 and 35 years of age, who are living survivors of the constitutional post-recognition era. This era represents the loss of Indigenous peoples' interlocution with the State, the marginalization of Indigenous demands in the Congress of the Union, the proliferation of network activism, the decentralization of mobilization towards the territories and the hyper-judicialization of Indigenous rights in the electoral field.[11] This generation is witnessing a paradoxical situation that Laura Hernandez pointed out in the anniversary speech, in which there are many legal frameworks that recognize the rights of women and Indigenous peoples but their impact on daily life is tenuous due to the huge gap in implementation and even more to the nonexistent guarantee of their justiciability. In terms of the country's economic and structural condition, young generations are affected by the lack of employment, the precariousness of agricultural work, the presence of organized crime and the impacts of the drug economy and criminal violence. Indigenous youth live in a country where expectations of having a dignified life free of violence are scarce.

For Bonfil (2017), even with all these negative elements already mentioned, the new generations of young Indigenous women leaders are resisting on many fronts. Partly because they are the granddaughters of old-style women leaders and partly as a result of their parents' efforts to provide them

with education in the cities, they are a generation that readapts tradition and identities from their hybrid and modernized experience. In many ways, they challenge the adult-centric bias that marks young people as apolitical and uninterested in community issues. The important themes of change in youth political discourse touch squarely on five nodal issues: (1) that the construction of community and autonomy is invariably crossed by the experience of migration and the porosity in the rural/urban divide. The community in the imaginary of young women is planned in more fluid, porous and spatially multi-situated terms; (2) that the experience of power and participation is posed in more contentious terms, more in the face of seeing substantive changes in community structures and traditional governments not very receptive to the demands and participation of women; (3) that reproductive sexuality and sexual/gender identity is conceived from more diverse, inclusive and autonomous terms; (4) that the experience of Indigenous identity is reclaimed from the scenario of urban socialization, in dialogue with other external cultural influences and in resistance against racial and spatial discrimination; and (5) that the experience of new, extreme and lethal violence, linked to different migration processes (whether forced or labor), has new names and new impacts on young people, and flows through social networks, drug use, human trafficking and criminal circles.

It is for this reason that Indigenous youth issues now have a more central place in CONAMI's agenda. In recent years, women leaders have shown receptiveness to and interest in incorporating young leaders, young professionals who are present in the speeches, debates and intergenerational dialogue. Political discussions between Elders and young people are now a common pedagogical practice, both in national events and in small-scale sub-regional meetings; but there is still much to learn.

When Young Women Speak Up and Make Demands: The Dilemma of Weaving Continuity or Dissent

In this section we would like to introduce the thoughts and experiences of three exceptional young women, members of the Yehcoa Um Collective, each with her own individuality and trajectory.[12] They represent different positions with respect to sensitive issues such as community, identity, rights and (gender) justice. In our perspective, even though all three share a commitment

to the consolidation of CONAMI, they have a different political subjectivity due to their life experience and the way they were inserted into organizational processes. We have selected their interventions based on three different perspectives with which these young women relate to the political community of "women Elders and men Elders," either seeking to weave continuity with them and listening to their teachings or, on the contrary, questioning the paradigms of unity within the communities and their impact on the lives of young women, women and community.

Weaving Continuity and Community

Laura Hernández Pérez, co-author of this essay, is a mother of a young girl, from a migrant family of Nahua origin from the state of Puebla and Veracruz. Her parents and their siblings lost the Nahuatl language due to discrimination in the city, but she remembers that both her maternal and paternal grandparents spoke it, and she, not being a speaker, feels there is a root pulling her to recognize herself as Indigenous. Laura, interested in social sciences, chose to study social work at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). Laura's self-recognition process came about when she began accompanying Otomí children and young people living in a lot in the Roma neighborhood who sold goods on the street and were vulnerable to the violence of urban life. Laura saw in them many things in common with her own life experience, to the point that she recognized herself in them. Later, her search for resources to work with the urban Indigenous population led her to meet other young women leaders who, like her, were putting together proposals, seeking resources and knocking on the doors of government institutions in the city. The principle that mobilized an ethnically diverse group — Mazahua, Otomí, Totonaca, Nahua — was to build community in diversity and fight against discrimination in all its facets.

Trained in a diploma course on human rights by the Francisco de Vitoria Human Rights Center, Laura began to organize discussion groups and forums where she had the opportunity to meet leaders such as Fabiola del Jurado and Norma Don Juan. In 2016, Laura received an invitation to participate fully in CONAMI's Logistics, Management and Communication Commission, together with other young women such as Lynn Ramón Medellín and Patricia Torres Sandoval. Gradually the weight of responsibility she had taken on grew and became more complex, leading Laura to develop greater expertise and

the poise to attend international events where the Indigenous youth agenda was discussed.

For Laura, the participation of young women in CONAMI is vital because it allows them to make visible and position issues that are present in their personal lives, the lives of other young people and their community, such as sexual diversity, violence in networks, suicide and abortion. Airing and discussing these issues helps CONAMI's women Elders detect the problems and understand the need to position them. The young women push issues that concern them and that are an integral part of their experience in the cities, in many cases far removed from community life. Much of the young people's life experience has to do with the struggle to survive in the city, confronting racism and developing defense mechanisms. Laura points out reflectively that life in the city tends to develop an individual perspective in the sons and daughters of migrants, and that, in her experience, can lead them to act immaturely and break away from their own collectives.

For example, the issue of gender identity diversity is a complex terrain to address in community settings. Some older women leaders are reluctant to understand the diversity of identities and the political demands that derive from it. Laura considers that there is a responsibility in being a young leader, since one must learn to weave the new demands with the benefits that their discussion would bring to the community as a whole, that is to say:

> … that we are not only won over by positioning ourselves individually, but one wonders how this relates to or benefits your organization. There are some sectors of young Indigenous women who are critical and have reflected on the forms of relationship between women and men in their communities and find it difficult to accept sexist, unequal attitudes and/or attitudes that violate the rights of young women and Indigenous women, so the position at times is very hard, but I think that instead of postponing change we should learn to weave in community to generate good living. There are ways to make it compatible; we need to look for these ways, steps, and if in a given case there is no way, we need to opt for the most conciliatory path (Hernández, 2019).

Laura recalls that at the beginning of her participation in CONAMI she was very rebellious and radical, and little by little she listened to the teachings

of the women Elders, learning from them, and they offered her a community where she felt supported and not lost in the city. Now she recognizes CONAMI as her community:

> … it is my collective, because they have 22 years of organizational self-management and autonomous work. And that is enough. This experience makes me situate myself with a different perspective. The collective builds me up, but I contribute to the collective, we are walking together (2019).

Laura is a mother, and her responsibilities at home consume her time and energy, but she feels the need to continue working for the continuity of CONAMI by engaging new partners in the work. She is concerned about the task of renewing CONAMI's policy agenda, which was published in 2012. This agenda, according to Laura, needs to incorporate new issues. The ones on the agenda are rights and advocacy, territory and autonomy, education, political participation, reproductive health and gender violence. What is missing?

> … well, there are many problems that are very deeply felt in the communities — both urban and rural; for example, violence in social networks, alcohol and drug addictions, mental health issues such as suicide and self-inflicted injuries. All these are new things that didn't happen before. Similarly, there is the whole chapter on extreme violence such as femicide, trafficking, forced displacement, all related to militarization and organized crime. In the labor field there is a debt due in terms of labor exploitation of both agricultural day laborers and domestic workers (Hernández, 2019).

Much remains to be done, but Laura is always in a good mood. She leads her words and feelings with kind gestures and, although the problems she talks about seem immeasurable, she always keeps her tone of voice slow, giving herself time to think and reorganize her thoughts.

Indigenous Women's Sexuality is Not Just a Reproductive Issue

I met Yadira López at the CONAMI Central Region meeting in the city of Morelia in 2019. My task was to facilitate the reporting of the working group on sexual and reproductive rights organized by the Commission for the Eradication of Violence, and Children and Youth. Yadira was seated next to other colleagues from the region when it was her turn to participate and she began by introducing herself as follows: "I am a Zapotec woman from the Oaxacan Isthmus, and I am a lesbian." From the beginning of her intervention, she suggested to her colleagues that the discussion on the sexuality of Indigenous women should not be limited only to reproductive issues and violence. She was uncomfortable that Indigenous women's sexuality was limited to the issue of motherhood, and the experience of obstetric and sexual violence. She argued that the social order imposes social roles on the female gender such as motherhood or caring for the sick. Early marriage and unwanted pregnancies are a reality in the life experience of many Indigenous women in the country.

For Yadira, these issues should not restrict the topic of sexual rights to the reproductive sphere. Reproduction is only one part of human sexuality and, therefore, should include other issues such as pleasure and non-heterosexual sexual-affective orientation. From her perspective, it is a violation to see Indigenous women as alien to the enjoyment of sex. These concerns represent an important part of Yadira's socialization experience as a Oaxacan woman from the Isthmus. She explained that in the Oaxacan imaginary about the Isthmus there is a construct from the narratives of visitors and foreign anthropologists or naturalists who have represented Zapotec women as hypersexual. Hence, there is an external gaze that exoticizes the region, and above all hypersexualizes both female sexuality and sexual diversity. But this margin of tolerance towards sexual diversity is restricted to the figure of the Muxe. Muxe transsexualism is socially accepted within the community, but not so other diversities such as lesbianism among Indigenous women.

From Yadira's perspective, it is important to open the discussion among Indigenous activists about sexual experience from places other than just violence. In Indigenous languages there is no way to translate the Western meaning of sexual rights, but in Zapotec there is a word to name the enjoyment of both eating well and having a full life with a partner, and free of violence. To be full in all senses.

For Yadira, talking about sexual rights should include the right to pleasure and not only be restricted to the issue of motherhood and family reproduction.

> It is understood that a very important part of our activism is focused on making it a reality that Indigenous women have the right to be assisted in their births in a dignified and culturally appropriate manner. But they must also have the right to exercise a sexual and pleasurable life with dignity and free of violence. Reproductive rights should cover all facets of women's sexual and reproductive lives, including giving birth without suffering violence, not being discriminated against for having children of different fathers, living motherhood voluntarily and not forced, having the right not to choose motherhood, procreating with same-sex partners, knowing how to plan their family and having children in a spaced manner. All these rights are the most intimate, the most pertinent of being a woman, and there is no way to exercise them if they are not known. (Morelia, July 2019)

Pleasurable sexuality for women is also a right, but it is rarely exercised, because most of the time it is seen as an obligation, a sexual obligation for being a wife, and it is lived with violence. Yadira asked:

> How should Indigenous women make a distinction between these two spheres: reproductive and sexual rights? How can we understand our own sexuality? There is a lot of work to be done, to dialogue among ourselves and try to reach agreements on what is favorable to the movement and sexual rights education for boys and girls. These reflections should be part of the educational perspective to address these issues with Indigenous youth, from the right not to be raped to the right to live a pleasurable sexuality and decide the number of children to have or not to have. (Morelia, July 2019)

Yadira is a young university student who, thanks to a scholarship program for Indigenous students at Metropolitan Autonomous University (UAM), has been able to reach other social circles and develop intellectually and

organizationally, although a salient element of her passage through the university campus has been to experience sexual harassment by professors. I have had the opportunity to see Yadira participate in other CONAMI forums and political events, and it seems to me that she is an articulate and brilliant young woman in her reflections, although her words are sometimes not well received by leaders unfamiliar with these issues. Her open positioning of her sexual orientation breaks down the social fabric and imaginaries that I have not witnessed very often in my role as an external observer of the movement. I have seen the strength of Yadira's testimony in the public participation of young Indigenous women and professionals who use it to show their lesbianism, and talk about the experience of abortion, or the mistreatment of childbearing out of wedlock. Yadira is the daughter and granddaughter of healers, with medicinal wisdoms who suffered persecution and violence for using their knowledge in their traditional land in Oaxaca. Later, in a very difficult moment in her adolescence, depression took her prisoner, and her mother's knowledge of healing helped her move forward. Sexuality lived from other nontraditional referents is a point of rupture with the community and leaders like Yadira remind us that autonomy is also claimed from such intimate spaces as one's own body.

When Lethal Violence Disrupts the Community

Lizbeth Hernández Cruz is included in this review of voices of CONAMI's new activists because she is a young professional who has cultivated a strong bond of connection with her community despite migration. Her childhood was very close to her mother's family, with high demands for excellent school performance and experiences working in the fields collecting prickly pear cactus with her grandfather. Her good grades allowed her to earn scholarships and awards and to have several training opportunities in Mexico City. Her professional preparation has not been a pretext that has kept her away from "her people" — as she says — but always looking for a way to work for the community.

Originally from El Sauz, a community that is part of the municipality of El Cardonal in the Mezquital Valley region of the state of Hidalgo, Liz is the daughter of a well-known Indigenous education teacher, and her maternal grandfather was once elected municipal president. Liz has had a very successful educational trajectory, having studied everything from law to political

science, disciplines that have helped her critically analyze her relationship with her community's political order and her identity as an Indigenous woman. Liz has had four very important formative inheritances: one is her family, from which she has learned the discipline of studying; the second is the commitment to help her community in administrative and secretarial functions in community assemblies; the third has been her training as a feminist in dialogue with academics from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) who are experts on these issues; and fourth, the connection she made with young leaders of CONAMI.

She says that between 2014 and 2016 she was very involved in the assemblies, following up on agreements, taking minutes and participating in the assemblies on behalf of her brother and her mother. Her mom is a "community citizen" (this is the denomination instead of *ejidataria*[13]) and has the right to participate in the assembly plenary sessions. In the case of Liz, her participation is in a representative capacity since she cannot be elected to positions and her name cannot appear on the signature of the minutes. Her mother has the same rights and obligations as any other citizen.

Involved in community politics because of her mother's privileged position, and partly out of self-interest, Liz also got involved in the celebration of the patron saint's day. She participated in the drafting of the community's internal regulations, although once she learned the rules of inclusion and exclusion, she became disenchanted because in her opinion there was no equal criterion for participation and commitment of community members. "The community assembly is a small state, with its internal rules of participation, hierarchies and functioning orders that go through consensus but are governed by the criteria of the male Elders" (Hernández Cruz, December 2019).

I met Liz during an internal workshop with CONAMI on issues of documenting violence in 2017, and on that occasion, she was part of a research team from UNAM that was doing data collection and recording life stories about leadership and power. In the dynamic of presentations during the workshop, she spoke of her work as a rapporteur in the assembly of her village and of a study that was about to begin on structural violence against Indigenous women. With her slow speech and attentive gaze behind light-colored glasses, I was pleased with her positive attitude toward sharing.

A year later, in 2018, I met her again at an event organized by CONAMI at the headquarters of the National Institute of Indigenous Peoples (INPI) in the task of supporting the political process, participating as a speaker in a

conversation on CONAMI's political agenda, but carrying a bitterness whose origin was difficult to guess from off stage. A resentment had grown in Liz that was noticeable, and once installed with microphone in hand, she made it clear to all listeners. Liz was struggling with feelings of great anger against the traditional authorities of her town because in her opinion they had not responded adequately to the femicide of a relative that took place in the middle of the patron saint's day dance at the beginning of 2018. A close aunt of Liz's was murdered in the town square by a jealous ex-boyfriend who shot her dead. Once the event took place, there was growing confusion, the murderer fled, the murder weapon was left in the custody of the traditional authorities, the evidence was lost, and the Public Prosecutor's Office was informed of the facts too late. The murderer was apprehended some time later. In her desperation to seek justice, Liz went to an extraordinary assembly convened just after the events took place, in which the authorities and stewards of the festival were more concerned about the expenses and economic losses of the festival that was affected by the femicide. Liz, for her part, could not believe the insensitivity of the authorities; she could not believe that what worried them the most were the monetary losses and not the life of her aunt. With an altered voice she sought to call the attention of the Elders. In her anger she hurled insults at everyone, and tears ran down her face at the lack of empathy and response. Liz wanted a plaque to be placed in memory of her aunt in the square where she was murdered. These efforts continue.

The traumatic moment described here happened more than two years earlier. When interviewed, Liz recalls that the authorities complained about the lack of respect and tact with which she confronted them. For Liz the pain of losing her aunt was very intense, so much so that she believes there is no going back. Her love for her people was affected and something in her was broken. She does not know if it will be forever, but for now it is damaged. For now, her community is not in Hidalgo, but in CONAMI where she finds friends who help her to understand and digest what happened.

Gender Justice, Autonomy and Community at the Scale of Femininity

In this section we would like to reflect on the life experiences of young women and their perspectives on "the community" — whether Indigenous or of a more metaphorical nature — as a social and political space. The activism of

organized young Indigenous women in Mexico plays a very important role in revealing and unveiling the most salient contradictions both within the mixed Indigenous movement and in the communities to which they belong (Bonfil, 2003, 2017). Autonomy in "young" women's eyes in CONAMI expands much more the senses of radicality embodied in the revolutionary Indigenous Women's Law enacted by the Zapatistas. The Zapatista effect on gender justice continues to inspire Indigenous women to achieve better conditions of equality and justice options for both their peoples and themselves, from the intersectionality of their identity, and politicizing demands such as control over their bodies, the right to have a presence in leadership positions, legitimize their youthful voice in adult-centric spaces and achieve economic and political empowerment.

As we have shown, the struggle for autonomy from the experience of young women has several interconnected levels: the body/person; the community/sociopolitical; and the organizational /praxis/strategy dimensions. This trilogy of spaces combines the complexity of the dimensions and spaces where Indigenous women's activism takes place and marks in a differentiated way their demands and expectations, either with respect to the community and/or in dialogue with institutional actors (Gutiérrez & Palomo, 1999, p. 59). In the foreground is the body/person dimension, which in Yadira's words is concretized in the new way of approaching the subject of female sexuality, reproductive life and sexual rights. Sexuality in the lives of Indigenous women is the inauguration of their adult life: in many cases it is a matter of motherhood and marital life that comes at an early age. Sexuality is a terrain of life and struggle that should not be seen in an oppressive way — as perhaps the older women experienced it — and that now represents for young women a terrain of dispute for change. Indigenous sexuality seen through the lens of enjoyment, sexual diversity and respect for the biological and mental maturity of women can help change from within social uses of early marriage that are harmful to women's proper physical and mental development. Diversity of sexual orientation is linked to enjoyment and the right to live loving relationships outside the heterosexual canon, and in the voice of activists like Yadira it becomes a central issue to discuss, review, reflect on and explain until it is naturalized within the collectives.

On a second level is community autonomy. A very important part of the political life of the Indigenous community passes through the functioning of the traditional power-decisional spaces, the community assembly, the

leadership positions system, the communal land authorities and even those of the municipal councils. This is a vital space for the political reproduction of Indigenous life, and a space of resistance against the State and its economic and developmental interference policies. Regarding this in particular, we would like to return to the idea of Eduardo Zárate (2005) referring to the community where the rationality of the collective is recreated as an opposition to modern individualism. Community is a powerful social ideal that inspires Indigenous populations to form collectives, but it is impossible to achieve due to the existence of conflicts, contradictions and power relations. Linking the idea of the impossibility of the ideal collectivity due to internal contradictions — such as gender and age — we wonder about the possibility of other imaginaries of community (fluid urban-rural, physical and virtual, local and global); other subjects of rights (migrants, women, girls, youth, lesbians, transgender) where individualism is not a pretext for exclusion but an invitation to include "other" collectivities.

The third level is organizational and political praxis. CONAMI is undergoing a generational change, and these new generations are taking on the challenge of fighting for women's rights with new arguments and technological resources at hand. This is the political intersectionality of CONAMI activists who react creatively to national issues and institutional policies that affect them. An example of this is an initiative called "Community Gender Emergency," which is a virtual space that has a portal on Facebook that allows all CONAMI affiliates and colleagues to feed this site with journalistic notes and complaints from family members — in order to document and disseminate the worsening conditions of violence in the country.[14]

CONAMI embraced the issue of gender violence in 2012, after the social and human impacts of the fight against drug trafficking in Morelos. Its purpose was to make the Indigenous reality visible in a context where national policies aimed to increase the militarization of Indigenous territories and those considered as drug producers (Mora, 2013). The open and frontal war against organized crime quickly began to take on particular dimensions in the forms of incorporating women into the political economy of drugs and the precariousness of the campesino economy (Tlachinollan, 2017; Jiménez Estrada et al., 2019).

The objective of the initiative was twofold: on the one hand, to compile notes from local and regional newspapers to gather information from different territories, and on the other hand, to respond to the need to document the

issue of gender violence from local spaces. CONAMI's network of Indigenous women is conducive to developing this task because each of the regional coordinators is a node in a dynamic spectrum of resource and information exchange. Each leader is in turn part of another state or local organization that is located on a geopolitical scale smaller than the national one. The CONAMI-node leaders simultaneously respond to local interests and national calls. This way of working enhances their presence throughout the national territory and at different organizational and geographic scales. This initiative that emerged in 2012 needs to be enriched through technical and methodological support, so much of the collaboration the young CONAMI leaders seek is to identify the means to develop methodologies for recording and collecting information on acts of violence against Indigenous women in various territories and migratory routes.

The literature points out that the new violence in Indigenous areas is partly due to militarization, and that the violence and sexual torture exercised by the army against women is a strategy of territorial control against the population in order to prevent them from organizing (Hernández, 2017a; De Marinis, 2020). For its part, domestic violence now has other, more dangerous connotations. Men at home are armed, part of groups of armed men whether they are hired killers or police or military. In this context of hyper-masculinization of violence, it is harder to do advocacy work both for young people victimized and used by organized crime and for women terrorized by violent partners (Hernández, 2019, 2017).

Young women have been at the forefront of pushing this reflection on the new violence, the extreme violence that afflicts the communities — trafficking, femicide, forced disappearance, ethno-porn networks — due to the presence not only of the army, but also of organized crime. Likewise, violence within the communities plays a role that can be explained by the patriarchal order of Indigenous households, by the paternal figure in the home. Normally, this violence is not talked about; it is silenced. In addition, it is very difficult to raise it within the community, as Liz showed in her testimony.

Within CONAMI, all these issues are aired and documented through the ECG portal, and in recent years they have promoted various methodological and technical efforts to systematize this information. Generating their own data for CONAMI is crucial politically because it allows them to have instruments to let the State know of its failure to prevent gender-based and feminicidal violence against Indigenous women. Public policies such as the Gender

Violence Alerts against Women mechanism of the National Commission to Prevent and Eradicate Violence (CONAVIM: *Comisión Nacional para Prevenir y Erradicar la Violencia)*[15] have been pointed out on several occasions as inadequate to understand and address violence against Indigenous women due to the insensitivity to distinguish the particularity of the problems and patterns of violence in rural contexts (Figueroa, 2019; Figueroa & Sierra, 2020). State policies against gender-based violence are of a universalist, unidimensional character, barely adopting intersectional, intercultural and contextual perspectives. CONAMI has insisted that in order to make public policies that respond appropriately to sensitive issues for Mexican women, it is necessary to start from the principle of consultation. In order to respond to the demands of Indigenous women, research must be done in the territories to improve information and inspire laws and institutions that respond to the popular mandate of service, since "... nothing about us can be published unless it is consulted" (Hernández Pérez, 2020).

Conclusions

We would like to conclude this essay by returning to the issue of the change of era, of generational change and the bridge that unites the activism of older women with the young women of CONAMI. We would like to show the preeminence of the structural forces of the present era because of the human rights crisis the country is going through and the social effects of post-recognition public policies. We believe that the greatest contribution of this reflection lies in what the women of CONAMI, from several generations, do and weave together, even despite speaking from different points of view and double gazes. The generational change of leadership means the opening of spaces and opportunities for young people in formation and entails dialogue and rapprochement. CONAMI has implemented it in the creation of work commissions that expressly include young people to position their topics and reflections, and not take for granted what could be taken away from them at the stroke of change.

The activism of CONAMI's young women incorporates and mobilizes notions of gender justice more clearly. Their political life experience brings them closer to organized women-only spaces, and to a lesser extent to mixed collectives. Working with women, whether in grassroots or health care spaces or with organized urban groups, makes them more involved in public policies

for gender equality and the prevention of feminicidal violence. The experience of the women leaders behind the ECG portal speaks of their agility to implement and explore strategies that open new areas of political work using tools such as virtual activism. The political intersectionality of young women draws on the contributions of older women and the benefits of past struggles, but it certainly requires dissecting the issues of now and what it implies for their lives today. The dignity of the women Elders' struggle, their ideologies and example are as present as the Revolutionary Law of Indigenous Women and with all the ideology of liberation that it implies inwardly and outwardly. But the generational handover also implies the change of baton and transferring the responsibility to understand and confront the "violence we do not know how to name" (Don Juan, 2017).

In the same vein, Sánchez (2005) would argue that the double gaze of young Indigenous women contributes to the contradictions of the community paradigm from the most sensitive point, the community citizenship of women. In what ways should it be exercised so there is an appropriate inclusion of women's demands — both in the traditional community and in the imagined communities? What forms of participation should be sought and what discourses articulated to make their contribution more visible? Perhaps there is no one answer, but rather an ethic of dialogue based on the heterogeneity of each community and built with the elements of each organization. Taking as a reference the diversity of local power spaces, the work of women is always — by principle — for the benefit of the community, and it would be ideal if gender violence and feminicide were also seen as a problem that threatens people's very existence.

Gender justice — or feminist justice — is biased from the State's point of view when approaching and looking at the community space, in terms of both traditional justice and Indigenous women. The country is very diverse, and some Indigenous women at the local level seek different mechanisms to make their claims and notions of justice heard, but such mechanisms do not take place in State institutions. The mediation, advocacy and mobilization of information carried out by CONAMI from an intersectional and intergenerational perspective is crucial to alert against the State's hypervigilance of the community, because without knowing the specificity of these spaces and how they culturally settle problems, mechanisms are designed that can potentially interfere negatively in the communities (Sierra, 2017; Valladares, 2017). Our appreciation as authors is that young Indigenous women from their double

gaze are eagerly seeking to mobilize discourses of inclusion, dignity and justice at a difficult time for organized communities disrupted by violence. Their voices challenge the adult-centeredness of the Elders and demand special attention from the organized Indigenous movement and State institutions, for the good of their peoples as well as themselves.

NOTES

1 Center for Research and Advanced Studies in Social Anthropology (CIESAS- *Centro de Investigación y Estudios Avanzados en Antropología Social)*

2 This critical thinking with respect to Indigenous gender orders could be called Indigenous feminism, but it would be advancing a statement that does not represent all Indigenous women leaders. What is important to mention is that there is a broad diversity of positions about this, from leaders who call themselves Indigenous feminists such as Alma Lopez (2005) or community feminists such as Julieta Paredes (2008) or Lorena Cabnal (2010). This critical thinking goes beyond the conceptual limits of Western feminism and reveals the complexity of the positionality of Indigenous women in emancipatory discourses of both feminism and Latin American Indianism.

3 *Campesinado* refers in Spanish to rural workers and small-scale food producers. It is also a social class and social actor that has played a central role in the popular rebellions, uprising and revolutions in Latin America. We use this term in Spanish to praise their assertive action and agency.

4 'Gender justice' is often used in reference to emancipatory projects that promote women's rights through legal change, or advance women's interests in social and economic policy. However, the term is rarely given a precise definition and is often used interchangeably with the notions of gender equality, gender equity, women's empowerment and women's rights (Goetz, 2007). However, in contexts where there is a cultural diversity of perceptions about what is fair in gender relations, the predominant definition of gender justice is the norm of Western ideology.

5 The organizations participating in this seminal CONAMI congress were UCIZONI, *Servicios del Pueblo Mixe, Mujeres Olvidades del Rincón Mixe* (Oaxaca), *ARIC-Democrático, Jolom Mayaetik, J'Pas Lumetik*, CIOAC (Chiapas), *Masehual Siuamej Mosenyolchicauani*, (Puebla), *Unión de Mujeres Campesinas de Xilitla* (San Luis Potosí), *Consejo de Pueblos Nahua del Alto Balsas* (Guerrero), Sedac-Covac (Hidalgo), *Comisión de Mujeres de la ANIP*A and the *Comisión Nacional Indígena*. In Sánchez (2005, pp. 93-94).

6 Commander (*Comandanta*) Ramona was a Tzotzil Indigenous woman and commander of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation in Chiapas, Mexico. She was one of the most important public figures of the first stage of the Zapatista uprising and central to the Zapatista Women's Movement and Indigenous women at the national level.

7 A strategic element of CONAMI's founding women's movement has been the link with Indigenous women's activism at the continental level (Valladares, 2008) in networks such as *Enlace* (ECMIA) where Mexican women leaders have contributed to the

formulation of agendas, the political training of cadres, attendance at international events and the organization of two international meetings on Mexican soil (Sixth Continental Meeting of Indigenous Women of the Americas in Hueyapan de Morelos in 2011 and the Eighth Meeting in 2020 in Mexico City).

8 María de Jesús "Marichuy" Patricio Martínez (of the Nahua People), intended to be the first Indigenous woman to run for president of Mexico but was unable to gather enough signatures to register her candidacy – see Mora in this volume.

9 An important precedent of the Sixth Continental Meeting of ECMIA in Hueyapan, Morelos, in 2011 was the decision that each region of Latin America would have a commission for Indigenous Children and Youth with the intention of involving young people in the formative processes and encouraging their participation. The main concern was to combat the adult-centrism of the movement and open a door of dialogue with the concerns and problems of young people that were marked by processes such as rural-urban migration, loss of language, symbolic violence, drug abuse, suicide, unwanted pregnancies, etc. By 2016, following a General Assembly of CONAMI, statutes and agreements on an internal governance structure of CONAMI were instituted, from which the Children and Youth Commission was created within CONAMI. Its mandate was to contribute to enriching the agendas and political work that was distant and alien to the reality of young people. This commission was formed by Patricia Torres Sandoval, Lynn Ramón Medellín and Laura Hernández Pérez.

10 "Until dignity becomes a habit" is a phrase expressed by Estela Hernández at the official public apology ceremony of the Mexican government for the imprisonment of three Otomí Indigenous women falsely accused of kidnapping six agents of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA). They were arrested in 2006 in Santiago Mexquititlán, municipality of Amealco de Bonfil, Querétaro. Jacinta Francisco Marcial, Teresa González Cornelio and Alberta Alcántara are the names of the three people arrested. Estela, Jacinta's daughter, fought tirelessly with her sister Sara for their mother's freedom. The official apology by the Attorney General's Office (PGR) in 2017 was offered eight months after the third collegiate court in administrative matters of the first circuit ordered it to do so. https://bit.ly/2HQxaC7

11 This turn to the judicial-electoral in Mexico is a characteristic feature of the policies of recognition, which decentralized forms of election by customs and practices (*usos y costumbres)* to the municipal level, where autonomy and self-government have been recognized at the local municipal and community level. This type of legal conquest has been possible to achieve in several states of the republic but require the intermediation of lawyers and experts in strategic litigation, making this right inaccessible to those collectives or communities that do not have this support. We are grateful for the contribution of Araceli Burguete Cal y Mayor in this particular annotation (2020).

12 The narrative of the sections is written in the first person as they are interviews conducted by Dolores Figueroa Romero, although they are part of a working material that we have discussed and reviewed together with Laura Hernández Pérez, co-author of the chapter.

13 Ejidataria refers to an individual who is part of a group that collectively owns land. The collective ownership of land is called "Ejido" and it is an historical legacy of the

Mexican revolution that aimed to allocate land into the hands of peasant members of close-knit communities, regularly Indigenous.

14 Available at: https://bit.ly/2JxzRcb

15 Available at: https://bit.ly/37ldTBB

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