



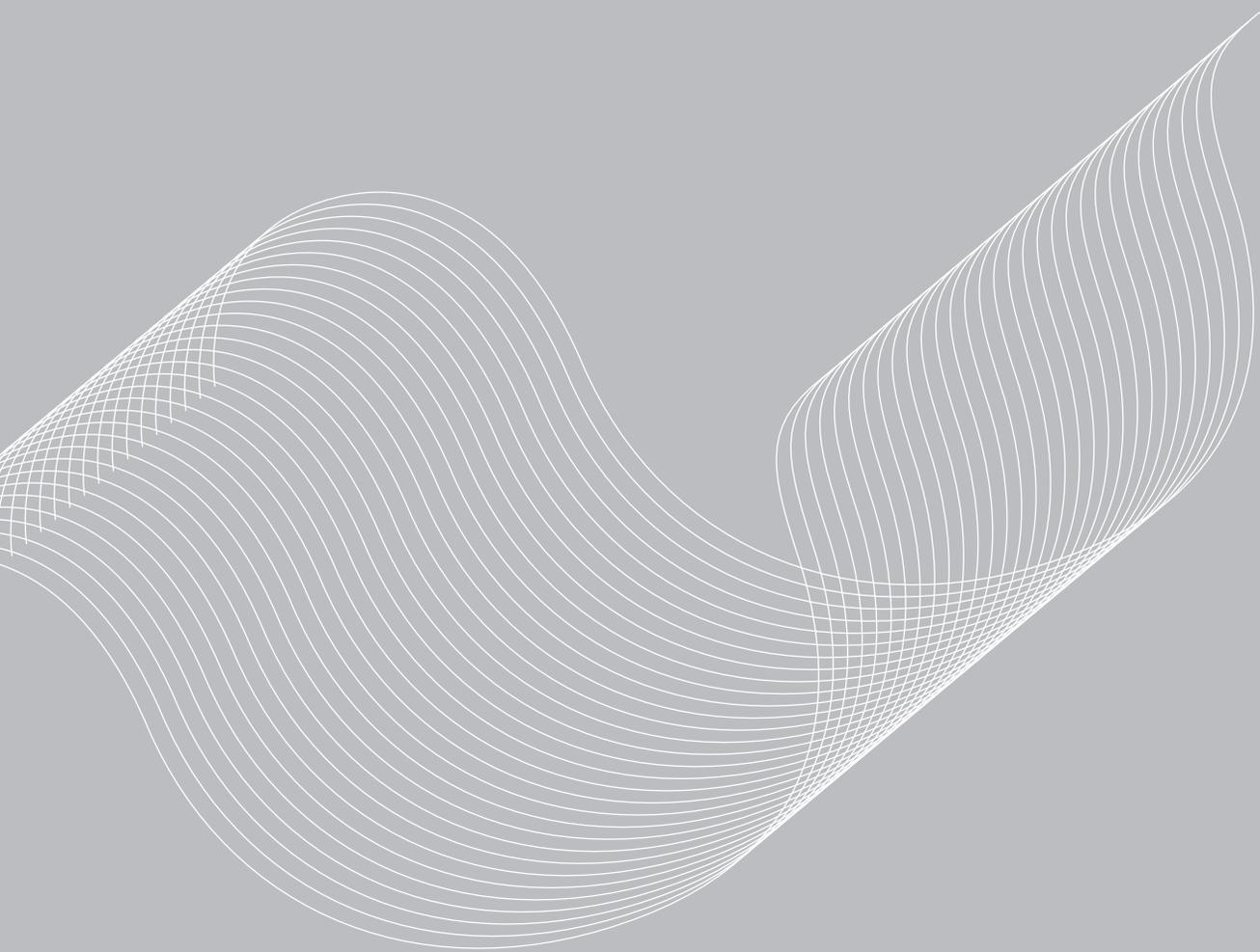
# Regional Programme Cities without Violence against Women, Safe Cities for All

Women and Habitat Network of Latin America and  
the Caribbean

Virginia Vargas

Public Spaces, Citizen Safety and Gender-Based Violence  
Reflections emerging from debates in Latin America in  
2006–2007

*Cuadernos de Diálogos*



# Presentation

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Virginia Vargas Valente does not need any introduction. She is a feminist leader, a politically active woman and an academic who is well-known internationally. As a sociologist, she has been contributing reflections and bodies of work using practices that are committed to Latin American feminism. Her document *Public spaces, citizen safety and gender-based violence: Post-debate thoughts*<sup>1</sup>, was written as a critical contribution to an innovative and complex intersection of issues: gender-based violence, public space and coexistence in cities. By combining these three perspectives, the author tells us, “they provide an expansive and dynamic analytical foundation for addressing the form in which gender relations get interwoven in public and private spaces of cities, and provide important insights for addressing the persistence and impunity of gender-based violence.

This publication opens UNIFEM’s (United Nations Development Fund for Women) “Cuadernos de Diálogo” series. It is one of the products of UNIFEM’s Regional Programme Cities without Violence against Women, Safe Cities for All, which is supported by AECID (Spanish Agency of International Cooperation for Development).

The central objective of the CITIES WITHOUT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN Programme is to “strengthen the exercise of women’s citizen rights in Latin America, seeking to reduce public and private violence inflicted against women in cities”. This is a regional Programme implemented by UNIFEM and coordinated by its Office for Brazil and the Southern Cone. The Programme originated through a proposal of the Women and Habitat Network, which joins together several Latin American non-governmental organisations, and it is being implemented in collaboration with REPEM (Network for Popular Education among Women) and CLADEM (Latin American and the Caribbean Committee for the Defense of Women’s Rights). The Programme draws on a previous Programme that was implemented under the auspices of the UNIFEM-managed Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, executed in 2004, in Argentina by CISCOSA (Centro de Intercambios y Servicios Cono Sur Argentina), and in Peru by the Center for the Peruvian Women Flora Tristán. As such, the Regional Programme is the result of a complex process, with foundations in the years of work and reflection spearheaded by the Women and Habitat Network of Latin America.

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1 This body of work is a Programme output that was elaborated by Virginia Vargas Valente, who systematises and generates discussion regarding the contributions that the Women and Habitat Network, together with other Latinamerican networks and institutions, have developed within the framework of the Regional Programme Cities without Violence against Women, Safe Cities for All. The corresponding documents are available for free download at [www.sitiosur.cl](http://www.sitiosur.cl) and [www.redmujer.org.ar](http://www.redmujer.org.ar).

In general terms, the Programme seeks to build knowledge and broaden public debate on safety and citizen coexistence in order to contribute to reducing violence and building safer cities for all. It refers mainly to violence suffered by women and emphasises those forms of violence lived out in public spaces, highlighting the different ways women and men experience violence. It focuses on the right of women to lead a life free from violence in the private and public spaces; the right to experience and enjoy cities, and all they offer.

To advance the achievement of its objectives, the Programme sets out to: i) develop concepts, strategies and proposals on the issues that constitute its areas of concern: cities without violence against women; ii) develop and disseminate training tools for local actors that allow progress to be made on this matter; iii) develop awareness-raising components directed at municipal police, urban guards and local government officials; and iv) develop participatory intervention model proposals.

Along these lines, actions are being implemented in the cities of Rosario (Argentina), Santiago (Chile), Bogota (Colombia), Recife (Brazil), with the engagement of local governments, non-governmental and community-based organisations, and experts. The Programme was expanded to include Guatemala and El Salvador in 2008. In addition, awareness-raising actions are being developed in other cities and countries of the region.

Our Programme focuses on the new urban agenda. We live in an urban continent. Latin America's population is 82 per cent urban, and this population lives in cities marked by strong inequalities that materialise in social and territorial segregation and fragmentation, both of which are conditions of urban violence and creators of insecurity. This situation is common to the entire social collective. Nevertheless, in the CITIES WITHOUT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN Programme, we are especially interested in placing the emphasis on women and the exercise of their rights, which are undoubtedly different from those of men. To this end, the Programme seeks the commitment of governments and civil society, coordinating actions among them.

In addition, the Programme seeks to influence city government public policies, contributing to improved citizen coexistence. Women, who have gained rights, see these rights encroached upon in practice, which is also the result of increasing levels of violence in cities. Women in particular are constantly fearful of being attacked or assaulted, and the safeguarding of physical integrity is undoubtedly a condition of freedom, a right. The fear of violence, lack of trust, and fear of possible attacks against one's physical integrity are much more prevalent among women. However, insecurity does not only depend on criminality; it is also marked by political situations, institutional weakness, and economic and social conditions and inequalities, which are coupled by naturalised forms of discrimination, such as those based on race, ethnicity, and choice of sexual-orientation, which, when they coincide with being a woman, aggravate situations of fear and the exercise of violence.

While, as Virginia Vargas notes, violence does not discern between social classes, societal inequalities are highly fertile grounds for the cultivation of violence. In cities, these inequalities express themselves in fragmented territories, they create niches of privatised security and areas of exclusion and conflict, and they manifest themselves in poor service provision and infrastructure that is aggravated by the deficiency of their inhabitant's rights, and in particular of women's rights. Any type of discrimination or inequality that perpetuates in society, thus naturalising exclusions, contributes to the multiple forms in

which violence is expressed, particularly gender-based violence, which is exercised as a clear expression of the power of one sex over the other.

Women not only suffer private violence, but they also experience fear of growing violence in public spaces. These perceptions of fear can be linked to the construction of woman-beings in societies in general, and particularly in Latin American societies. Enough elements clearly exist that account for this growing fear: not only are criminality and calamities, such as drugs and AIDS, on the rise, but there are also phenomena that have coined new terms, like femicide. This phenomenon provides an account of a scale of violence that had not before been registered, evident in publicly known cases such as those of Ciudad Juárez in Mexico, or Recife in Pernambuco, Brazil, where murders of women are annually counted by the hundreds. The different forms of violence against women end in murder, and continue to be expressed daily through rape, sexual aggressions and all types of maltreatment.

Inquiry into the impact of the growing expansion of this crime also seems necessary, as well as how it affects women. Studies conducted under the framework of the Programme provide an account of the marked difference in men and women's reactions to what is perceived as dangerous. They refer to fear as subjective constructions that answer to a culture dominated by a socialisation that discriminates against women and positions them as "weak", "defenceless", "vulnerable", thus, not only making them victims of crime, but also of fear. This perception of the environment as threatening obviously leads to limitations in the use and enjoyment of cities; this is proven by empirical evidence showing that public spaces, streets, squares, and neighbourhoods are used more by men, while controlled spaces are used more by women.

Society is marked by different forms of violence, but in our society women are besieged by complex and growing forms of violence due to the mere fact that they are women. The Programme seeks to make these forms of violence visible, unveil subjects and make them deserving of public attention, and contribute new and more complete outlooks on the issue of violence. It is worth mentioning that city governments that promote "safety" policies, who are worried about growing levels of violence, do not consider policies that account for gender-based violence, particularly in relation to dealing with urban violence. It must be made visible that fear and the multiple forms of violence suffered by women encumber their activities. To this end, it is important to know the problem, and rely on statistics that incorporate sex-disaggregated indicators of violence. A central issue in this regard, is the conceptual and propositional debate on how violence-related crimes suffered by women are typified. In general, they are attributed to motivations designated as "passioned", thus pointing to a dimension of the personal and subjective sphere that distorts violence against women and conceals its multiple manifestations in public ambits.

From years of engaged work on the status of women and gender relations in cities,<sup>2</sup> the way in which Vargas highlights and picks up on those who have contributed a vast

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2 See, for example: Ana Falú, "Mujer, Hábitat y Vivienda", in Dagmar Raczynski and Claudia Serrano, eds., *Políticas sociales, mujeres y gobierno local*, pp. 259-261 (Santiago: CIEPLAN, 1992); Jeanine Anderson and Ana Falú, comps., and authors of the Introduction of *Los procesos de reforma del Estado a la luz de las teorías de género*, Colección Cuaderno del Centro Latinoamericano de Capacitación y Desarrollo de los Gobiernos Locales no. 26 (Quito: IULA/CELCADEL, 1997); Ana Falú, "Construyendo el derecho de mujeres y hombres a ciudades equitativas y sustentables", in *Mujer y Hábitat: los caminos a partir de Beijing y Estambul*, edited by Yolanda Loucel, Ullriche Zschaebitz (El Salvador: Fundasal, 1997); Ana Falú, coord., *Guía para la formulación y ejecución de políticas municipales dirigidas a mujeres*, Cuaderno de Trabajo no. 72 (Córdoba: Urban Management Programme / PGU-ALC-IULA-CELCADEL, 2000; 2ª ed., 2002); Ana Falú, "Propuestas para mejorar el acceso de las mujeres a la vivienda y el hábitat", in *Género, hábitat y vivienda*, Cuadernos de Trabajo no. 4 (Quito: CONAMU, 1998).

theoretical and political production of knowledge on women in city spaces, from a rights and democracy-based perspective, is of great value. Agendas of study groups on public spaces in cities are revisited, as well as those of regional and global networks.<sup>3</sup> We now have municipal government experiences that incorporate gender plans into their administration, some of which are innovative, inclusive and democratic.<sup>4</sup> These are significant advances; however, they are not thoroughly incorporated into the logic of public and political practice and operation of cities.

It is possible for us to make more sustainable progress when local governments have strong gender machineries, as well as a committed policy of sectorial mainstreaming that does not leave women diluted in the concept of family, but rather, considers them as citizens with rights of their own.<sup>5</sup>

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After the short account, by way of introduction, of the regional context within which the reflection is situated, the document we present here has two main sections. In the first, the author summarises the reflections that relate to the three analytical dimensions referred to above –public space, violence against women and citizen safety–, made in the Round of Discussion Workshops<sup>6</sup> and from the book *Ciudades para convivir: sin violencia hacia las mujeres* [Living Together: Cities Free From Violence Against Women],<sup>7</sup> as well as the analysis of the settings where social and institutional actors act and make proposals. In the second section, the author gathers together the most relevant clues arising from the discussion on violence against women in cities, establishing a dialogue with them on some of the categories that are present, and absent, from the reflection developed within the Programme's context. Finally, in the Appendix, Virginia Vargas provides a summary of the contents developed by the participants of the Round of Discussion Workshops and the e-Forum "Cities without violence for all in public and private spaces", as well as in the book *Ciudades para convivir*, in order to contextualise the reflections and courses of action presented in the document.

3 Among the most significant are the Women and Habitat Network, the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), the Mercocities Network, the Urb-AI Network, the Federation of Municipal Women, among others. These are spaces from which women have generated a number of initiatives on women and local governments.

4 Among them, some local governments grouped in the Local Authorities Forum, which has a long trajectory of a search for democracy. In Latin America, there are local governments that have made significant progress in this regard.

5 Ana Falú, ed., *Ciudades para varones y mujeres: Herramientas para la acción* (Córdoba: CISCSA – UNIFEM – Women and Habitat Network, 2002).

6 The four workshops referred to in the text as source for discussion, and whose content are presented in the Appendix of this document, are: First Workshop, October 23th, 2006, *La ciudad compartida*, coordinated by María-Ángeles Durán (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Spain); Second Workshop: December 1st, 2006, *Las mujeres y el poder*, coordinated by Dolores Comas (Anthropologist, former deputy of the Parliament of Catalonia); Third Workshop, December 13th, 2006, *Una aproximación a la violencia hacia las mujeres en los guetos de Santiago*, coordinated by Alfredo Rodríguez, Paula Rodríguez, Marisol Saborido, Ximena Salas (SUR); Fourth Workshop, January 23rd, 2007, *Seguridad y Género: convivencia social en el espacio público y el espacio privado*, coordinated by Olga Segovia (UNIFEM).

7 Ana Falú and Olga Segovia, eds., *Ciudades para Convivir: Sin Violencias hacia las Mujeres* (Santiago: Red Mujer y Hábitat de América Latina / UNIFEM / AECID / Ediciones SUR, 2007).

This publication is the sum of the collective efforts of many people, institutions and organisations from different cities and countries. We would like to thank all those who participated, personally or virtually, in the debates, generating and enriching the discussions: Paloma Abett, Angélica Acosta, Anahí Alarcón, Mariana Alonso, Luis Alvarado, Analía Aucía, Paz Bartolomé, Yennyferth Becerra, Daniela Bertholet, Jordi Borja, Verónica Boteselle, Patricia Boyco, Roser Bru, Marcos Bustos, Fernando Carrión, Cecilia Castro, Carmen Colazo, María Jennie Dador Tozzini, Marisol Dalmazzo, Lucía Dammert, Carmen de la Cruz, Verónica de la O, Marie Dominique, Laura Eva, Ivonne Fernández, Roberto Fuentealba, Fanny Gómez, Virginia Guzmán, Paulina Jáuregui, Fernando Jiménez, Paola Jirón, Eugenio Lahera, Claudia Laub, Seawon Lee, Ximena Machicao, Luis Magallón, Alejandra Martínez, Alejandra Massolo, Verónica Matus, Justo Pastor Mellado, Sofía Monserrat, Ivonne Montecinos, Ricardo Montoya, Raúl Morales, Patricia Morey, María Naredo, Claudina Núñez, José Olavarría, Enrique Oviedo, Norma Pena, Moni Pizani, Marle Ponce, Lyvia Porras, Patricia Provoste, Beatriz Quintero, Liliana Rainero, Silvia Ramírez, Carlos Reinaldo, Nieves Rico, Maite Rodigou, Alfredo Rodríguez, Raquel Rolnik, Teodosio Saavedra, Marisol Saborido, Alicia Sadetszki, Ximena Salas, Rodrigo Salcedo, Olga Segovia, Dominique Serrano, Uca Silva, Andreina Torres, Alejandra Valdés, Teresa Valdés, Ximena Valdés, Virginia Vargas, Ana Vaughan, Fabio Velásquez, Paloma Villalobos, Nidia, Oscar Manuel. We would also like to thank Araceli, Clara, Lucy, Mara, María del Rosario and Paulina, who participated in the virtual debate. Finally, our gratitude goes to Veronica Torrecillas for her translation of the original Spanish paper into English.

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# Introduction

## Regional context

In the past few decades, Latin America has faced deep economic, political, social and cultural transformations, as well as significant changes in the subjective panoramas of cities. The generalization of democracy in Latin America – not only as a form of government, but also as the societal aspiration to promote its expansion – has brought about new citizen values and expectations. The different governments, in turn, are experiencing – with more or less intensity, with more or less democratic content – deep reform processes, trying to consolidate governance processes that, at least in theory, aim to improve their functioning, correct their historic shortcomings, and meet the demands of an increasingly diverse, unequal and global world. However, these reforms have generally not been able to provide mediation instruments for the interests and concerns of their citizenship. Widespread globalization with a neo-liberal approach has brought about deep changes in political dynamics, subordinating them to the economy while subordinating citizenship to market interests, thus debilitating institutional stabilization and democratization. Despite their attempts to correct economic distortions, structural adjustment policies have impoverished the citizenship and deepened inequalities as a result of the growing concentration of wealth and the increasing extreme exclusion of most groups. Likewise, the dynamics and field of action of the national States have also changed. Globalization has weakened their scope in relation to citizen demands and concerns, as well as to global dynamics.<sup>1</sup>

Anti-democratic habits are evident in cases of corruption, in the existence of drug dealing as an economic resource, in economies of stabilization at the expense of recession, and in the weakening of the lay character of national States: these habits have negative impact on women's rights (for example, the Church is still a space that resists the equal participation of women). Political parties have also experienced an increasing weakness in their ability to mediate between society and the State. All this has generated the need to consider new forms of representation in a historic moment when not only the crisis of political parties, but also the fragmentation or diversification of social life has implied the fragmentation, or diversification, of representative interests.

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1 As De Sousa Santos says, States appear today too small to respond to global issues such as migration, the ozone layer, the sustainability of the planet, the proliferation of arms or international terrorism among others, as well as to the political decisions at global level; at the same time, they appear too big to respond to the increasingly wide and popular demands of citizens in their respective territories. (Boaventura de Sousa Santos, *Conocer desde el Sur. Para una cultura política emancipatoria*. Lima: Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, Programa de Estudios de Transformación Global, 2006).

Thus, the social orientation of countries has increasingly dwindled, fostering the dislocation of their responsibilities to the private area, which has meant a negative effect on the living conditions and citizen rights of vast majorities of the population. This has had especially serious consequences on women as the privatization of social spheres has increased the burden of reproductive work in order to make up for the services that the State no longer provides. Even though women's participation in the economy has substantially increased over the last few decades – either in the form of paid work or unpaid work, the conditions are still alarmingly disadvantageous, with a persistent invisibility of their contributions and dramatic and widespread gender-based violence. Certainly, there has been significant progress in legislation on gender equality, but its scope is unequal as there are important sectors that remain excluded from access to social and gender justice. Here lies a paradox between the progress in the panorama of citizen rights and the growing conservative and fundamentalist surge that attempts to undercut existing rights and denies the new rights that appear in the subjective panorama of societies.

Throughout this process, there has been a growing privatization of politics, which has lost its centrality and has moved away from the interests of the citizenship in a kind of logic that borders “autism” because of its incapability to reach out to the changes in power that society undergoes or to the initiatives of democratization proposed by social movements and their actors. One of the most evident vices in politics is the hegemony of the masculine logic that still persists in institutions and political parties, which influences political times and power structures from an anti-democratic perspective, a perspective upheld by the “naturalization” of the differences that society sets up between women and men.

For these reasons, democracies are not strong. Democratic regimes are perceived more as the consolidation of the formal structures of liberal democracy than as processes aiming to democratize the relations among the people and between State and society.

In this context, the spaces of cities, of local power and of the social actors participating in such spaces gain great importance. Democracy is built and acquires new meaning in public spaces, and despite great budgetary restrictions and the centralist vices of countries, despite tendencies towards privatization of public spaces, and the like, there is the possibility of a “democracy of proximity” (Castells<sup>2</sup>), from the local towards local citizenship. There are, however, two paradoxes pointed out by Alejandra Massolo<sup>3</sup> to take into account in the case of women and gender relations regarding the conception of “proximity”: one indicates that despite its proximity, the local is not necessarily more accessible (women are still absent in local policy-making; quotas have increased women's presence, but decision-making still remains in the hands of men), and the other shows that, because of its proximity, the local creates confusion by easily inducing to the naturalization of the position of women in the family and the city.

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2 Manuel Castells, “Los efectos de la globalización en América Latina”, in *Insomnia*. Separata Cultural (Uruguay) 247, Friday, June 25, 1999.

3 Alejandra Massolo, “La incursión de las mujeres en los procesos de descentralización”. Red Mujer y Hábitat, 2005.





# | | | Space, gender-based violence, and citizen safety: theoretical, concept-based approaches

## 1 Space, gender, citizen safety/insecurity

### 1.1 Space

Due to accelerated economic, social, technological and cultural changes, the transformation of urban life has brought about substantial changes in public spaces, reformulating social interactions, the use of time, forms of mobility and communications. Different disciplines maintain that we live a fragmented reality, with real and imaginary walls that hinder communication and recognition.

Public space is the scene for social interaction and the development of collective identities. It is the product of social interrelations that feed the process of production and reproduction of such space through social practices of dominance and resistance of social actors. Public spaces are not only geographical places of action (containers), but they also represent the possibility of forming part of such action. Therefore, their dimensions are not only physical, but also social and symbolic. They are not neutral “containers” of social events since although the characteristic of spaces can be a determinant for social behaviour, such behaviour also influences the construction of certain characteristics of spaces. Space, then, is not another explanatory variable, but rather space forms part of the constitution of social relations and is therefore full of power and symbolism (December 13 workshop).

Social phenomena do not take place outside space or outside time. Time-Space is the setting, the physical support for daily activities aiming to meet collective urban needs; it can also be a source of creativity and imagination. It influences the configuration of certain social behaviour and representation, as well as forms of social relations. It is so through this double and interconnected dimension where gender dimensions are located and occur, positioning and organizing women’s roles. For women, this interaction is crucial because space appears as the mediator between women’s social, domestic and individual time, multiplying or minimizing the contradictions among them.

Thus, space is not fixed or stable. It is built and, therefore, it is dynamic and changing<sup>1</sup>. It generates its own history, producing and modifying meanings and appreciations according to actions and interactions with social actors, according to its multiple relations and exclusions on the basis of class, race, age, sex, gender, sexual orientation and geographical residence, in which gender dimensions have a critical expression<sup>2</sup>. However, it is also an exceptional place to generate alternative proposals, since it is in space where practices of resistance are developed and expressed. This makes space an essential aspect for policies of inclusion, “where marginalized groups can confront dominant ideologies”.<sup>3</sup> It has the potential to function as the meeting place to foster solidarity with the other, interconnecting and interweaving relations between unrelated individuals, becoming the place for social interaction and the construction of collective identity. In this process, social and subjective construction develops simultaneously.

Therefore, choosing public space as the core of analysis also implies choosing the field of social subjects, of their identity and autonomy, of their condition as a political force, considering the impact on the production of such space through their practices and discourse. It is in public spaces where subordinate groups can develop as social democratic subjects. From this perspective, democracy and public spaces are organically linked to citizen action. It is there where rights such as the expression of equality of different people get developed and legitimated, expanding the space for the exercise of citizenship. The practice of citizenship decides space quality, where conflicts and struggles for rights, based on ethic principles and values, have an indisputable centrality in the development of a democratic practice. Privileging and appreciating public spaces as a key component of urban organization and the construction of citizenship means echoing some basic citizen rights: the right to association, to an identity, to a *polis*, to the consolidation of new rights. To place the analysis of space and their complexities in a central position and to highlight the urgency of its democratic transformation also means to feed other forms of practicing politics that recognize the other, generating a favourable ground for the construction of the “pedagogy of otherness”.

Likewise, it is also a concept and a ground for dispute regarding the perspectives found in relation to the orientations of spatial policies, where, for example, privileging the private mercantile perspective requires a marginal public space, which does not disturb or interfere with the privatizing and excluding rationale of the market, and where public policies are minimized. From the perspective of social actors and those of ownership of public spaces, the dispute focuses on their use and real and symbolic ownership. This can be democratic appropriation or excluding appropriation. Excluding appropriation is possible because it relies on the legitimacy (in its two variants: legitimacy and power) rooted in the defence of private property – for example, streets or gated parks, institutional use of military facilities – and excluding appropriation, illegitimate and in dispute: gangs or groups of youths in neighbourhoods that hamper access for women, children and senior citizens. This is not only a territorial/geographical dispute, but also a social

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1 Massey points out that the construction of spaces allows that something considered abstract be turned into a place thanks to the experience and actions of individuals who, living in it everyday, humanise it and fill it with content and meaning. Doreen Massey, “A Global sense of Place”, in *Space, Place and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).

2 Historically, the generation of public spaces was marked by multiple inequalities, among which gender differentiation was one of the most important ones. Fraser refers to the new republican public sphere that was built in opposition to an indoors culture, more accessible to women. In Nancy Fraser, “Repensando la esfera pública: una contribución a la crítica de la democracia actualmente existente”, *Ecuador Debate* 46 (1997).

3 Anna Ortiz Guitart, in “Reflexiones en torno a la construcción cotidiana y colectiva del sentido del lugar en Barcelona”, *Polis* 1 (2004).

and cultural one aiming to reclaim a space, avoiding the degradation of the social fabric (January 23, 2007 workshop).

However, the legitimacy of the ownership of public spaces is not necessarily connected with the safety that such spaces can offer. Excluding groups might not cause fear in certain places, because they are “known,” because they can perform functions of defence and solidarity within their specific places of action (“They are drug dealers, but they are *my* drug dealers, from my neighbourhood...”). Similarly, the existence of another type of exclusion is expressed in this excluding appropriation, such as places of difficult access due to the lack of economic resources (e.g. clubs or pubs). In this sense, the excluding and disputed appropriation also expresses frustration regarding public spaces (January 23 workshop).

Challenging and disputing the legitimacy of excluding ownership is crucial for advancing towards the construction of more inclusive public spaces. In this sense, as Jordi Borja says, public spaces can be what people want them to be. There is no public space as such. Through use, people conquer public spaces and make them their own. It is use that defines public spaces, not their legal status. (January 23 workshop, p. 17)

What hampers such challenge to the legitimacy of use and, therefore, of dispute over public spaces?

This dispute over interests and presence reveals a substantial characteristic of public spaces: heterogeneity and the multiple dimensions of the power relations contained in it and produced by it. They do not contain uniform categories of women and men because of differences in age, class, ethnicity, territoriality, as well as because of the differences existing between women and men themselves in specific contexts. Such heterogeneity is ambivalent. On the one hand, it can be seen as fragmentation and isolation, as the expression of a characteristic of the current way of urbanization and of the positioning of social actors. On the other, this characteristic is part of the wealth of public spaces because it refers to the diversity of perspectives, lifestyles, forms of appropriation of spaces and differentiated interests of people, with a plurality of visions and, eventually, meanings of negotiation and reciprocity.

However, reciprocity also implies considering the other – symbolically or effectively – as an equal. It is not possible to develop common interests without this perspective of equality within the group, not only in social uses of public spaces, but also in its production and reproduction. But the limitations for women to be considered as equals are enormous. To understand these limitations, the discussion on contents, scope, articulations and differences between public spaces and private spaces is critical if we want to identify the status and position of women, gender-based violence and the possibility of generating safer cities for women.

## **1.2 The tension between public spaces and private spaces from the standpoint of women's rights**

“The personal is political” is one of the most significant feminist – both theoretical and political – contributions because it gives visibility to power relations in everyday life and understands the subjective dimension as an ethical and political priority. The public and the private are social constructions that carry with them the actors' perspectives and subjectivities. They are spaces of conflict as they hide/contain situations of inequality and

express an initial distribution and positioning of masculine and feminine roles: men in the public sphere, women in the private one, thus being crucial for the conformation of gender subjectivities<sup>4</sup>.

Traditionally, private space and public space have been considered dichotomously, without a relation of continuity or interrelation, which freezes their respective contents: private space is a space for affection and public space is the space for citizen construction. Therefore, the distinction between the public and the private is tinted by the “naturalness” and the invisibility of power relations within private spaces. This leads the imaginary to perceive that private space – women’s space – is the place for protection and affection, concealing its content of violence, exclusion and disempowerment, which in turn conceals the fact that public space is also a space of violence against women while it also hides the fact that public space can also play a role of relief from everyday space and provide temporal isolation from the constraints and inequalities of the private world, playing a privileged role for the enrichment of private bonds, facilitating the development of qualities and capabilities that link private life with the public world. From this perspective, instead of considering public spaces as opposite to private and family life, they enrich these bonds and contribute to socialization, to the generation of demands and dialogue with the authorities, thus promoting the exercise of citizenship and increasing women’s self-esteem, which gives them the chance to get back to the family in a new light.

In this sense, public spaces contain and express not only relations of dominance between genders, but also multiple social, economic, cultural and political dimensions. From a gender perspective, it is possible to promote democratic habits of participation and respect oriented to reduce any kind of social discrimination. The production of public space is a factor that strengthens social bonds that can facilitate the prevention of violence. Refusing to accept violence in public spaces can help to eliminate the violence that women and children suffer in private. However, they are deemed as such dissociated spaces that changes in one space do not necessarily translate to the transformation of the other. It is these power relations and the disputes to face them what makes up the continuity between public and private.

Anyway, the public has entered into the private space forcefully. The media have an impact on everyday life and create a public space that overruns privacy, resulting in an “intimate/public” space (January 23, 2007 workshop) that can be very invasive and violent due to the kind of messages they generate. Although it depends on people’s will to get exposed to their impact, given the lack of communication in public spaces, this is always a resource and a form of escape.

There are also intermediate spaces – semi-public and semi-private – where solidarity and interchange networks occur more intensely (spaces in neighbourhoods). “Intensive privatization of public spaces is somehow counterbalanced in solidarity networks”<sup>5</sup>. That is to say, that even though both spaces are different from an analytical point of view, with a

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4 Privacy is not gender neutral (even in the form of insertion). In the masculine sphere, privacy coincides with individuality; in the feminine one, with domesticity. The denial of what is one’s own, non-subject. Elizabeth Jelin, “Las familias latinoamericanas en el marco de las transformaciones globales: hacia una nueva agenda de políticas públicas”. Reunión de Expertos “Políticas hacia las familias, protección e inclusión sociales”; Santiago, ECLAC, June 28 – 29, 2005.

5 These are not discrete spaces; they can, instead, be considered modular systems of networks that overlap with constant movements to one or the other sphere. In: Néstor García Canclini, “Público Privado: la ciudad desdibujada” (1996), [www.unam\\_antropologia.info/alteridades/alt11](http://www.unam_antropologia.info/alteridades/alt11)

different logic of action and with apparently different debates – it seems that the debate in the public is about changing exclusion and inequality, while the experience in the private is about confronting inequity –, what happens in one space (behaviours and experiences) contributes to shape what happens in the other. They are different, but people are the same in both spaces. Therefore, the analytical separation tends to fade.

A more fruitful approach is to see that there is a sense of continuity and a dynamic relationship between both spaces. The public is built upon knots of consensus and disputation in two spheres: private and public, together with the abilities and experiences acquired or practiced in each one of them. This is also a dynamic process in constant flux.

In this complex and dynamic interrelation of spaces, determining what is public and what is private is what is political<sup>6</sup>.

## 2 Violence

The concept of gender has become a “movable concept” which is arguable in many ways: in its specific application as well as in the orientation of its analysis. It has been used and perceived as a binary opposition of roles which has tended to generalize-universalize an abstract “woman category”, without connections or coordination with other systems of domination and exclusion and without considering the multiple differences of women. All this has contributed to turn gender into an apolitical category, without exhibiting its relational content or its expression of power relations between women and men. It has thus lost its transforming capacity, it has been “domesticated” and become functional to the very dominant systems it attempts to change. The progress made in legislation regarding gender-based discrimination and violence against women is an achievement of women; however, many times they are weakened and trapped by a faulty perspective as they isolate such progress from the construction of the city and public spaces and from the central issues of political debate.

Changes in gender paradigms provide a different foothold to view the concept of gender and gender relations. Even though it was oftentimes done precariously, women have massively entered the labour market, postponed maternity and/or spaced childbirth, allowing for a greater control over their sexuality. A politics of “presence” has increased in political spaces; violence against women is more exposed, more “talked about” by women. This also questions the categorical division with which women’s and men’s presence is perceived in public and private spaces, in productive and reproductive roles. All these processes have also modified the very foundations for the construction of masculinity and femininity, creating uncertainty and fear in men due to their lack of referents (even though it additionally opens the door for the emergence of other sensitivities). Nonetheless, the social imaginary about women’s roles and spaces has not been significantly altered yet.

It is necessary then to recover the political and relational character of the gender perspective and concept through two approaches: “The concept of gender refers to a power relation that cuts across and connects with other power relations such as class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and the like, thus creating subjectivities and a social order of high

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<sup>6</sup> This opens the possibility of incorporating to the public some dimensions of the intimate-private, so as to exercise them in the private (e.g., sexual and reproductive rights).

complexity. Due to its relational character, gender implies not only women and/or the feminine, but also men and/or the masculine, and it requires the analysis of the dynamic between poles, their tensions and intersections<sup>7</sup>”.

A gender approach would try to turn gender equality into an intersecting dimension of (safety) policies so that women and men are equally significant and valued. For women, this view brings about a specific demand: recognizing private space as a space of power relations that discriminate against women and deprive them of citizen opportunities. It is in space, in its form of construction, in its public-private dichotomy, where complex relationships of subordination and domination (and yet also of solidarity and cooperation) take place.

Gender -or feminist- geography refers to a territory, a habitat, and its social and cultural manifestations (December 13 workshop). It explores the complex relations between space, place and gender in the different scenes of social life as well as the way in which power relations between the genders are expressed in the social structures, dynamics and constructions of a city.

From this perspective, the concept of gender refers to bigger processes that are related to democratic processes and the development of women’s citizenship. The receptivity of society and government to the gender perspective introduced by women actors and social movements, as well as the effectiveness of gender policies, depend on the quality of democracy. In turn, the quality of democracy depends on the incorporation of a gender perspective into society and State. Democracy gets weak without a gender perspective, which, in turn, does not find a proper environment/context for development in fragile democracies with weak institutions. The demands for changes in gender relations form part of the democratic agenda of a country. Gender democracy is an approach that gives new impetus to equality between women and men as an unavoidable part of democratic processes. Thinking about policies with a gender approach implies overcoming traditional conceptions about women as a vulnerable or handicapped group, receivers of welfare policies. It implies reformulating the gender perspective in terms of citizenship.

Within this framework, the concept of gender-based violence covers all social practices and relations in which women and men are inserted, not only in public, but also in private spaces. It refers to all violence and insecurity – whether real or imaginary – that restricts the full development of women, their mobility and autonomy. It is a core issue of daily complexity by generating urban segregation, the reduction of interaction and mobilization spaces and resulting in the deterioration of women’s quality of life and citizenship. “Sexual violence, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, abortion, and other forms of degradation become powerful tools of political and symbolic domination that not only threatens women and children’s personal integrity, but are also a violation of their human rights” (De la Cruz, in *Ciudades para convivir*, cit., p. 207).

For this reason it is important to coordinate a gender perspective and gender-based violence within the dynamics of the construction of public space and citizen safety policies, noting that a city is cut across by gender relations.

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7 Claudia Laub, “Violencia urbana, violencia de género y políticas de seguridad ciudadana”, in *Ciudades para convivir: sin violencias hacia las mujeres*, p. 75.

Cultural changes regarding gender relations and gender-based violence in cities imply simultaneous actions of territory democratization through effective public policies, as well as comprehensive policies for addressing and preventing violence and promoting women's rights: the right to a life free from fear and to a full citizenship that facilitate the ownership of a city and its public spaces, as well as the right to have a voice in city planning so as to improve the quality of their daily life.<sup>8</sup>

## 2.1 Gender-based violence

Violence against women as an expression of unequal power relations between the genders has been the great contribution of feminism in the 20th Century. It was not easy. As Dammert notes in her article in *Ciudades para convivir*, this type of violence was so embedded in cultural practices that it could not be recognized within the social fabric. The first political action consisted of giving a name to an existing reality. This labelling allowed for the recognition of a personal and collective experience of exclusion and domination, but also to one of resistance. Designating the personal from a political standpoint allowed for the transformation of personal doubt, anguish, uncertainty and confusion into a collective political proposition, fostering an action transgressive of the limits imposed by a form of knowing and understanding the social reality and opening up a subjective floor which is key for processes of change.

## 2.2 Urban violence and gender-based violence

Urban violence is complex, multifaceted and multidimensional. Its existence is the result of the inequitable social relations of cities within specific historical contexts and undergoing specific historical processes. Cities have become more violent, and violence has become more evident. The existence of many more social actors struggling for access to cities/public spaces has contributed to this visibility, which reveals a number of different causes and experiences of violence. Growing visibility has slowly brought about a multiple institutional framework and a group of public and private institutions that have had an impact upon it: national governments, local governments, women's organizations and human rights organizations among others.

The different dimensions and scales that are part of urban violence allows for different levels of analysis. In a *continuum*, we can find several dimensions that influence and affect one another: between the macro and the micro levels, there is a group of scales that include geographical regions, nations, cities, neighbourhoods, groups and homes, each with its own concrete or symbolic exclusions and violence.

At the macro-structural level – extensive times and spaces marked by the growing globalization of political, economic and cultural spheres –, there are economic systems with rules of accumulation and trade that deepen inequities between countries and regions and emphasize wealth concentration and the exclusion of majorities. Characterized by an unequal democratic development and the resulting weakness of democratic institutions, the macro-regional has had a long history of political violence, with significant effects for countries and the visibility of gender-based violence, as political

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8 E-Forum: "Cities without violence for all in public and private spaces", April 10-17, 2007.

violence tended to conceal violence against women in private spaces (as well as in public ones).<sup>9</sup>

At national levels, some phenomena like the growing weakening of the national state and the growing privatization of welfare services and policies have also weakened the institutions responsible for the enforcement of measures of violence prevention, treatment and punishment.

Cities present a particular conception of urban development evidenced in growth with lack of proper planning, high density of population and precariousness or difficulty in the access to services for wide sectors of the population (in housing, street lighting and/or public transport), which broadens the gap between home and the workplace (October 23 workshop and December 13 workshop). Higher privatization and deregulation of city services growingly impact on women, as the latter are demanded more time to make up for the lack of responsibility of the State in matters affecting children or senior citizens, conditioning and limiting their use of time. All this weakens the dynamics of social cohesion and produces cities fragmented in different zones, classes and cultures, which has had an impact on the spatial organization of inequalities and inequities and prevented people from thinking and seeing each other as equals. In such conditions, direct violence (thefts, muggings, assaults) has a higher real impact on men, but it has a subjective and long-lasting impact on women's imaginary, strongly limiting their mobility and autonomy.

A dimension of violence that is not considered within urban violence is violence against women in private spaces, although it is the most persistent and widespread type of violence, occurring in all social sectors, regardless of class, race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation or historical time.

### 2.3 Persistence of gender-based violence

The queries that have lingered throughout the round of debates has been why gender-based violence persists; what are the causes of such persistence; why women are the victims of so much aggression and what is the specificity of gender-based violence in the urban context.

When it comes to violence shared by both women and men, differentiated impacts on women are related to the sheer intrinsic quality of womanhood: as women, they are immersed in unequal, inequitable gender relations where the masculine is hegemonic. Thus, the concept of gender provides an explanation for this relationship as violence against women is closely connected to their historical subordination, which is evidenced in their lack of access to political, religious or economic power as well as in the norms that provide a *status quo* unfavourable for their personal development. If the concept of gender is seen as power relations that cut across and connect with the other multiple dimensions of exclusion, the concept of gender-based violence covers all the social practices and relations in which women and men are immersed, both in public and private spaces. In public spaces, it combines dimensions of inequity; in private spaces, dimensions of inequality. This inequality is expressed dramatically and specifically in the private,

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<sup>9</sup> As expressed by the rape of women deemed as "every faction's bounty" and that have led the International Court to treat them as "crimes against humanity".

as women are denied their status as right holders and turned into objects of (physical, psychological and sexual) violence.<sup>10</sup> This violence is more intense and frequent than the violence that takes place in public spaces, although it is perceived as such neither by women themselves nor by society.

This violence, which is common to women, has distinguishing effects according to women's social class, age, geographical place of residence and mode of interaction with public spaces. However, despite the growing inclusion of women in the labour market (which is a sign of the changes in gender relations that allow women more room of action), this progress has not found a correlation in the traditional division between the genders in private spaces. Hence the importance of analyzing not only where women participate, but also in what conditions they do; who benefits of this participation, and what contributions they make to modify gender roles (December 13 workshop).

The different expressions of gender-based violence in cities are part of a *continuum* at different scales: within the home and outside the home, in the neighbourhood, in the city, and in the public sphere (January 23 workshop). It has an impact upon women's bodies and imaginary and, thus, it affects their quality of life. It has a precise and cumulative impact along time and space, which allows us to understand the way in which fear gets settled into and develops throughout women's lives. There is a double movement around the dynamics of exclusion and inclusion, each one of which generates specific forms of discrimination and violence: exclusion from the city goes hand in hand with precarious inclusion into city systems (education, labour). Women see the discourse of equality as the referential horizon and the ethical framework for the development of proper social policies undermined when they are immersed within the capitalist relationships of cities in an inequitable way (especially in the case of women head of household) while they are simultaneously excluded from the urban fabric and stripped of the recognition of their rights in private.

The existence of this type of gender-based violence in private spaces is undeniable, and even though its disclosure has been the result of a social process, it is violence that generally goes unrecorded and unrecognized as crime, as it is not always reported. When it is reported, this type of violence is trivialized, both by public authorities and citizens, showing its naturalization and the resulting concealment of the phenomenon. Therefore, it is not easy to report it. It is precisely because private spaces are regarded as places of affection and safety for women that this type of violence is associated with secrecy, solitude, and shame at denouncing the violent actions of those closest. For the same reasons, it is weakly recognized and ineffectively addressed: the fear of being vulnerable to new aggressions for having reported the act of violence hampers their disclosure. However, when visible, gender-based violence in cities also becomes a political action, revealing its mechanisms in the public and the private spheres and showing how gender intersects spaces and practices in cities. The key trap for the recognition of this violence in the private is precisely the fact that the public-private dichotomy acts in such a way that urban violence is considered only when public, excluding this other aspect of violence from city concerns.

The institutionalization of gender-based violence as natural in society is the condition and the reason for its persistence. The fear in women shows that violence is also a subjective expression prior to its existence.

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<sup>10</sup> Traditionally, this type of violence has been considered as "domestic"; however, the domestic refers to a place, the private space of domestic and everyday life. And in that space there are many other forms of violence, for example, violence inflicted by women and men against children.

*A first approach to the definition of gender-based violence in this context would consist of stating that it is all that restricts women's full development, mobility and autonomy, whether out of fear or because of real restrictions in cities or out of illegitimate interchanges and appropriation of city places.*

## **2.4 Violence and poverty, other urban determining factors**

The study on violence in poorer, more peripheral city areas provides elements for a more complex analysis (December 13 workshop). It also allows us to see violence against women from a closer standpoint linked to cultural constructions and conditions of social coexistence.

Women living in the most impoverished and most densely populated areas face double violence: they are immersed in an inequitable relation to the cities and live in spaces constructed by unequal relations that make them objects of violence in private. This contributes to the myth that poor women face more violence. But no factor determines or explains violence on its own. Although class is an important dimension, it can only be seen in combination with other dimensions in concrete situations. Certainly, structural ground rules influence the degree of acceptance of a hostile environment; however, the fact that violence takes place in the homes of women from all social classes makes the weight of class relative, although it obviously does not eliminate it. Nevertheless, it seems it is not a matter of population density, but of how a particular territory is occupied. The type of settlement and the housing characteristics have an impact on violence relations. Ghetto-like housing in big conglomerates or very small and isolated from the urban fabric increase self-stigmatization and devaluing and favour the impunity of violence. Yet, the fact that it is not poorer women who file most reports but those who have certain educational level, a certain degree of participation in the labour market and greater insertion into city systems, forces us to look for alternative approaches (December 13 workshop). We may also associate the reporting to higher levels of empowerment, which leads the women to express and denounce their discomfort. It would also seem that women from more popular strata have other codes of appraisal about "family honour" than women from areas of the middle and higher classes: although reporting for them is a difficult process, they would be more willing to denounce violence.

An especially important fact is the relationship between gender-based violence with space and time: there is greater intensity in the private space and it is higher at certain hours of the day and times of the year. Thus, reports of violence increase in summer, a period in which women spend more time outside their homes and have greater participation in city spaces, which tends to decrease their isolation. Similarly, reports increase about violence at certain times of the day: while urban violence in public spaces generally takes place at night, violence against women in private spaces occurs during daytime and finishes at night (December 13 workshop), hence the importance of incorporating cultural and anthropological perspectives into its analysis and understanding.

## **3 Citizen safety/insecurity**

The social organization of inequalities has generated fractured spaces/cities in areas belonging to different classes and cultures, building real and imaginary insurmountable

ble walls and preventing people from meeting, imagining and thinking of one another as equals<sup>11</sup>.

The reality of citizen safety/insecurity is related to the processes of exclusion and segregation in cities. In the last few decades, these processes have intensified, increasing violence in cities and the perception of the city as an unsafe place.

The redefinition of public and private spaces, as well as of their interrelations, is a key element to approach the concept and the process of citizen safety from a gender perspective. This is a debate in progress that has started to produce knowledge and that has been actively nurtured by the struggle of feminists and women's movements so as to mainstream gender into city policy-making.

### 3.1 Approaches to the notion of security/insecurity

Starting off by asking how a democratic society addresses the problem of insecurity (Laub, in *Ciudades para convivir*), we can start outlining some conceptual framework. Traditionally, security has been understood as the defence of the State territory, order and security. The development of the neo-liberal hegemony and the privatization of security functions brought about an increasing vision of safety as respect for the private property (of the rich), in the form of the security of a place, a house or a space and not as the security of cities. This perception of safety in public spaces is a way of legitimizing the segregated and illegitimate occupation of spaces; hence, the importance of leaving aside the paradigm of order to understand urban security as people's safety and not as the security of the State (criminal policies are different from citizen safety policies).

Security and insecurity in public spaces are related to the consequences in the processes of social exclusion and segregation, where greater insecurity causes the perception/reality of social abandonment, which is increased as a result of poor environmental conditions, public services and citizen welfare. According to this approach, security refers not only to crime and protection against delinquency, but also to employment (in)security, (in)security in public services or the deterioration of the environment.

Undoubtedly, in this context there is a dimension of basic insecurity – shared by public spaces –, which is brought about by dramatic changes in these spaces. Globalization has produced what Giddens calls a “lost of ontological safety”<sup>12</sup> of individuals in their everyday lives, which is also an expression of cultural anxiety. Such fears are key factors for both sexes, a part of their imaginary (which has a greater impact on women) because they influence their behaviour and ways of communicating in public spaces.

Thus, security/insecurity affairs are interwoven with the conditions and imaginaries that people develop during the processes of social coexistence.

In recent years, a new factor has arisen, the meaning/impact of the media, which produce this imaginary (October 23 and January 23 workshops). With an enormous influence on the symbolic universe, with the increasing sensationalisation of information, the media

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11 Gustavo Remedi, “La ciudad latinoamericana S.A. O el asalto al espacio público”, Escenarios 2. [www.escenarios2.org.uy/numero 1](http://www.escenarios2.org.uy/numero 1)

12 Anthony Giddens, *Sociología* (Madrid: Alianza, 1991).

feed the discourse of suspicion and fear of public spaces. The action and orientation of conservative political parties and political forces also have an important influence, as they relate insecurity to the presence of the “other,” people of different origin, ethnicity and/or class. The situation worsens due to the fact that the dynamics of security/insecurity has been commercialized in such a way that there has been a growing and alarming privatization of security, making it one of the biggest businesses today.

Because of its scopes and orientation, security is a disputed concept. There are multiple demands for security, even antagonistic ones: reducing private property to the defence of territorial privileges, or reducing the defence of private property to safety conditions for investments, without considering citizen (in)securities; hence the importance of approaching the concept and exercise of security in urban public spaces from a point of view more suitable for a democratic orientation.<sup>13</sup> Considering urban violence as “abuse of power” against persons or groups of people opens a different perspective for the very definition of the content of security, as it raises issues regarding citizen and human rights. This conception of abuse of power puts the issue of “conflict” at the heart of the discussion, opening spaces for democratic struggle against illegitimate appropriations and more democratic strategies of occupation of space.

Situations of insecurity express “social abandonment” regarding the deficiencies in all these issues and experiences. In order for them to be inclusive, safety policies need to address the different relations experienced by social subjects, the specific ways in which such deficiencies and social abandonment affect them on the grounds of gender, race, social class/sector, ethnicity, age and sexual orientation. The struggle against insecurity aims at ending this abandonment, achieving a security that will allow people to feel free from fear and want, which is called “human security” in contrast to “police security”.

It is within the framework of democratic understanding that we place the concept of citizen safety, which implies a different approach as it includes the perspectives and interests of citizens. It refers to the restoration of democratic institutions in Latin America and to the validity of the rule of law that impedes the exercise of arbitrary, discriminatory measures, measures of “abuse of power” that jeopardize the peaceful coexistence of citizens, who, in turn, demand constitutional rights. Therefore, it refers to the concept of democracy.

For a woman to feel safe, she needs resources for her empowerment and public spaces, and a safe city that allows such empowerment. Consequently, an efficient citizen safety policy must enable, promote and build the empowerment of women as well as women-friendly cities, both in terms of public and private spaces.

However, to turn this into a reality, it is necessary to re-qualify the content and orientation of citizen safety, incorporating other dimensions. Citizen safety has been understood only as safety in public spaces, keeping the private invisible as it is deemed that whatever happens there is not subject to public and political responsibilities. Excluding the private from the security/insecurity dynamics leads to a particular construction of the notion of citizen insecurity based on the perception that private spaces are not only harmonic and free from violence but also that they do not affect public spaces nor are they interrelated to them. Additionally, the imaginaries of fear – stronger in women leading them to feel anxieties that are stronger than the reality that causes them – are perceived as “irrational”.

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13 From this perspective, paraphrasing Nancy Fraser, to ask which differences deserve recognition in the public and which must be considered particular or anti-democratic affairs.

This perception of the irrationality of fear in women obscures the fact that security/insecurity issues are interwoven, both into the conditions as well as the imaginaries that people develop in relation to their environment and in the processes of social coexistence. The invisibility of what happens in private spaces and its links to public spaces “mark” women’s panorama of reference. Without recognizing violence in the private sphere and the way in which it is confined in that space, women themselves tend to echo the “naturalization” of violence against women in the public sphere, translating in their imaginaries the fears of violence in private spaces into a fear of exploring public spaces.

That is to say, fear is produced in the family space but, as it takes place between those closest, it is a type of fear that is denied and unspoken due to psychological and anaesthetic mechanisms attached to the experience of violence and the fear it produces, transposing it to an unknown “other” in another space. Fear is also an imaginary, because people are afraid of something that has not happened yet, but that may occur against them. Like all imaginaries, as they mark the way in which people perceive and access public spaces, they also impact on reality, generating social practices and behaviour patterns in response to such imaginaries.

On this subjective fear falls not only the contingent reality but also subjective experiences underwent when confronting threats and restrictions in the past as well as interactions historically held in public spaces. Gender itself is a “predictor” of fear (January 23 workshop) because the risk of being victims is connected to the historical and persistent subordination resulting from unequal relations between the sexes and from socialization processes full of gender distortions transmitted by institutions such as the family, the Church or the school. Feminine insecurity is pre-existent; it is rather a behavioural expectation passed on from mothers to daughters that simultaneously interweaves women’s “altruistic” dimensions of their role as mothers, such as the preoccupation for their children’s integrity. The “vicarious” impact of the crimes committed against other women also plays a role in women’s insecurity. In this process, the body appears as a recipient of potential victimization. Thus, this is not an individual type of fear; instead, it is shared as a social and cultural construct.

The social construction of insecurity leads women to “abandon” public spaces, thus debilitating social circles and sense of community, losing the possibility of enjoying spaces of social interaction –places where collective identities are built. This isolation and seclusion in the private space tends to increase the insecurity in public spaces. However, it is in private spaces where women undergo more violence. The home has become a space of high insecurity for them. (December 13 and January 23 workshops)

### **3.2 What is the most appropriate concept of citizen safety?**

The core question in relation to citizen safety is how to address it so that it contributes to build more citizenship, more heterogeneity, more coexistence, and not more “protection” (January 23 forum). It is necessary to develop a concept of security that does not limit itself to the protection of individuals and their assets but that instead generates conditions for “citizen to use freedom.”

There are many dimensions that come together at this point. A key aspect is the modification of paradigms and concepts on women and gender relations by overcoming the perception of women as vulnerable victims; they should be treated as individuals with citizen rights. It also implies changes at the legal level, shaping the law from gender

perspective and gender geography, with legislation that ensures their rights and law officials that view and understand women as subjects with full rights and who, for that reason, consider their inalienable rights (Aucia, in *Ciudades para convivir*, p. 171).

A broad term of citizen safety has an objective dimension – victimization – and a subjective dimension – the feeling of insecurity (Alonso, in *Ciudades para convivir*, p. 112). It is both dimensions that are to be considered in a wider conception of citizen safety that means the possibility of making use of freedom in the city. The proposals for policies tackling citizen coexistence, safety coproduction and situational prevention set new trends on citizen safety, making it more integrating and participatory.

## 4 City settings

*The air of the city makes us free.*

The city is a place with multiple processes that combine global phenomena, national phenomena and their respective local impacts. Space is the meeting place for diversity, with all its expression of inequality and difference. The city is the immediate space of daily coexistence of these diversities and of influence on public affairs. For this reason, it is the scene for citizens, the “nearby” space where they exercise their rights or see these rights infringed upon. The development of citizenship has been historically linked to the experience of the city and to participation in a structure of social, organizational spaces and in different organizations, and it combines and expresses different meanings that are open and available for the city (Remedi, “La ciudad latinoamericana”). Latin American women have actively promoted the processes of city urbanization “not only through their demographic presence, but also through their constant participation as effective social managers of collective needs and demands and as producers of habitable spaces” (Massolo, in *Cities for coexistence*, p. 138). The city is also the place where strangers meet and interact.

The development of the city, and the dynamics of exclusion and inclusion that it generates, has always gone hand in hand with the development of citizenship. As the citizen is “the holder of political rights that participate in the government of a country”,<sup>14</sup> the city has also been an expression of the “willpower” to generate processes of inclusion and exclusion and processes of historical accretion of the people who initially lacked citizen status or full citizen rights: the youth, women, non-property owners. The processes of inclusion of these categories have been expressed in the development of the different dimensions of citizenship and its expansion to other social groups that were initially (and for a long time) excluded. It has been a slow historical process, full of ups and downs (e.g. loss of citizen rights in the hands of authoritarian and dictatorial governments) in the process of legitimizing formal equality before the law.

However, despite these changes in access, the removal of the obstacles to a democratic incorporation and the imaginaries that come with them has not been accomplished and, therefore, the differentiated access to the space of cities, to its appropriation and opportunities still persist. That is to say that formal equality has not been expressed as a real

14 María-Ángeles Durán, “El deseo de futuro y los proyectos de cambio”, chapter VII in *La ciudad compartida. Crecimiento, afecto y uso* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de los Colegios de Arquitectos de España, 1998).

democratic exercise for all city inhabitants. In this sense, the city is not a neutral space. It contains inequality and discrimination; it contains, expresses and builds multiple power relations according to the characteristics determined by class, race, ethnicity, age, sex, and gender. Thus, Latin American cities are the scene of deep social inequities and of growing segregation and fragmentation of urban spaces, containing both unfair relations (social and economic differences) and inequalities (cultural differences).

The city structure has changed. The formation of cities has occurred – unlike in the past – through accelerated processes of urbanization. Historically, segregation has been an essential characteristic of the development of the urban structure, which happened through zoning and the use of land, generating different spaces on the basis of social and economic characteristics (rich and poor neighbourhoods, commercial and industrial areas). However, despite these differences and segregations, cities maintained certain continuity in public spaces. Instead, the ongoing characteristic seems to be urban fragmentation: a myriad of discontinuous spaces such as gated and self-contained units, without connection with the urban structure as a whole. This latter feature is also related to the use financial companies make of urban land. They buy and increase the price of urban land, fragmenting and excluding the places of the city.

Unequal access to the city also implies unequal access to the exercise of citizenship. That is why the city is a place where people – women and men – negotiate their recognition and renegotiate the power relations in which they are immersed. Likewise, it is the place for the development of new actors and processes of ownership and discovery of new rights. Thus, cities are also privileged spaces for democratic innovation.

The city – symbolically and architecturally – boosts citizenship; therefore, it cannot be analyzed without its inhabitants. As the city and its space are not given but created by interrelations among their inhabitants, the “habitat” cannot be separated from “inhabiting”. Reflecting upon spatiality implies explaining the practices and discourses that support it. These practices and discourses give city spaces their interactive and ever-changing dynamism, as they reflect the multiple experiences of individuals in the city, which are based on how they perceive cities treat them and shelter them and their possibilities of appropriation or exclusion. As these experiences are very different, depending on other variables affected by processes of exclusion and inclusion – visions and experiences about the city are varied and generate diverse perceptions and practices. That is to say, the different forms of relating with the city combine cognitive elements that have an analytical dimension (the capacity of recognizing, telling apart and placing scales), and a dimension of convergence/synthesis that allows for the harmonization of the different parts and scales into a unique whole. Thus, an emotional relationship of love, admiration, rejection, fear or hatred for the city or some of its spaces and specific expressions starts to develop (Durán, 1998). These perceptions and experiences change over time, according to the forms of inclusion or exclusion and the forms of interaction with the city. This also prompts the analysis of the spatial and temporal dimension of cities and their changes. Places change meaning, openness/intolerance, segregation/self-segregation at different times of the day (e.g. evening, daytime, rush hours, and times with less bustle in public transport), and this is expressed in different forms and types of violence (December 13 workshop).

As the city is the place where people live and coexist, it is also the place where the private and the intimate, the public and the private relate. For the same reason, “the city is crosscut by gender relations; both in the public and the private arenas, it reproduces forms of dominance or, on the contrary, it allows people’s autonomy and the recognition

of diversity” (Olavarría, in *Ciudades para convivir*, p. 84). In the case of women, it should be noted that cities have been built disregarding their needs and interests. Therefore, the city as built space is not gender neutral; instead, it contains and expresses the social relationships between women and men, which are marked by dominance and resistance to such dominance. These relationships are built and transformed over time, but changes towards more egalitarian contents is slow. More democratic dynamics between genders are hindered by the persistence of exclusion mechanisms that are viewed as ordinary, even in initiatives that attempt to be democratic and inclusive. In the structure of the city itself, traditional patterns of femininity and masculinity have a spatial expression and foundation (i.e., legitimate places for/by men and not for/by women). And while all the matters, problems and disputes of the city also concern women (housing, water, citizen safety, transport, environmental pollution and health and political participation in the decisions affecting the direction and dynamics of cities among others), their impact and possibility of access is different for women due to the weight of inequitable gender relations, even further when they are cut across by other dimensions. The city is a social construct marked by the operations of the gender construct.

Cities are also built through imaginaries, which have preponderantly been masculine. That is why we need cities imagined by women, since current cities exclude and inflict violence upon them.

A city imagined by women is supported by the search for more equitable gender relations, a friendly design that takes their rhythms, times, uses and forms of ownership into account. As Massolo says in *Ciudades para convivir*, “a gender perspective applied to the city means much more than taking women into consideration and recognizing their existence; it means detecting and analyzing the differences – not the biological, but the social and cultural ones – between men and women, as well as power relations between the genders. It is a different way of regarding social processes, needs and demands, and the goals of urban development planning” (p. 138-139); “it questions the fact that cities are conceived and organized to suit men” and “it seeks changes that ensure good lives for women in fairer and more equitable cities and societies” (p. 139).

In this sense, instead of oppressive or liberating for women, cities must be considered as spaces of complex and varied pressures and possibilities for “the embodiment of gender” in specific contexts.

#### 4.1 The scales of cities

There are different scales and types of urban public spaces: city scale, neighbourhood scale (striking differences with poor or segregated areas), housing scale and their immediate environment following and interacting with public spaces.

Between the privacy of home and public spaces of cities and the State, there are many intermediate situations of transfer and interconnection between the public and the private. The neighbourhood is one of them. It is the scale that is closer to everyday life in cities, where the distance between public and private spaces somehow blurs.

Depending on their position in city spaces, neighbourhoods can be exceedingly privatized (upper and upper-middle classes), or highly fragmented or territorialized (lower and working classes). This leads to distrust and fear between neighbourhoods, but also within the

neighbourhood itself, especially when it is crossed by violence, urban gangs, micro-traffic and adult and child prostitution. Distrust distorts the neighbourhood as a space and tends to seclude people in the private, a space that – once again – is also a space of violence and overcrowding, the latter in the case of low-income sectors (December 13 workshop)

Inequality and segregation, emphasized by urban public policies –especially housing policies – aggravate fragmentation and hamper integration by generating disconnected spaces, which act as mechanisms for the social construction of exclusion. At the same time, it is in neighbourhoods where women – understood as a popular urban movement in different Latin American cities – found their status as citizens and right holders, challenging family and social authoritarianism and struggling for their inclusion into the dynamics and decisions of the construction of the city.

This intermediate space represented by the neighbourhood is neither fully private nor public. As it is more reduced and manageable, presenting relationships of interchange, affection and solidarity, the neighbourhood works as a space of trust and community. “The neighbourhood as a space is a retaining wall between a privacy that appears as oppressive and a city structure that also appears as oppressive (...) especially in popular sectors and more particularly for women belonging to popular sectors. For this reason, the recovery of the neighbourhood as a space for mediation is key for women, as it maximizes a space where they can feel sufficiently safe to lift off “the burden of their privacy” (December 13 and January 23 workshops) (Rodrigo Salcedo’s comment).

Inside the neighbourhoods, its conceptualization as “ghettos” refers to a peripheral localization, disconnected from the urban fabric, which reinforces the isolation and seclusion of their inhabitants. In general, these places are created through urban policies that fail to recognize their inhabitants’ needs of interaction with the wider urban structure. They are real and metaphoric ghettos, where the social origin of their inhabitants plays a significant role in their characteristics. There are ghettos in the wealthier neighbourhoods – which are fortified and guarded –, and there are excluded and stigmatized ghettos in poorer, peripheral neighbourhoods. Inside these spaces, the levels of necessary interaction – whether for more fluid and democratic interactions with the city or in search of better options – are reduced. In the more impoverished neighbourhoods, to the physical distance and the lack of urban continuity adds the lack of opportunities and the disrepute not only of the place, but also of its inhabitants, both women and men. Other than the ghettos, which function as a kind of “capsule”, there is another capsule in cities, which is determined by sex and the role of individuals. There, women are doubly victimized: by government policies, which fail to recognize their differences, roles or particular uses of space, and on the other hand, as victims of the violence inflicted upon them by their equals at home. Women’s fear is exacerbated in these spaces of double seclusion.

When speaking about the city, then, we must question what type of city we are talking about; which are its actors, and what are the routes, scopes, circuits, scales, forms of transfer and interchange between the public and the private.

#### **4.2 The social actors (a part of the setting?)**

Among the multiple social actors that take part in the city –institutional, private, financial, commercial –, there are two of particular importance: civil society actors, and institutional actors.

#### 4.2.1 Social actors belonging to civil society

*Only when reality is named, there is the possibility of changing it; for experiences do not make evident if they are not linked to a discourse that interprets them.*

Being a subject in the city and, changing from an individual subject to a collective subject is what strengthens the social fabric and the possibility of influence.

In contrast to what happened a few decades ago, it seems that women and men have a growing interest in the city and public spaces. A new perspective of the city has arisen, one expressed in the emergence of new actors and subjects that think and act in a different way in the city. Different social movements are starting to incorporate into their agendas claims for their right to the city, and demands for habitat improvement, town planning affairs and issues related to the redistribution of public spaces. The different scales of the city also open up chances for social movements/actors to operate. A new subjectivity in relation to the city is developing.

Women now have new working grounds due to paradigmatic changes in the new horizon of women's rights (not always for the city). There has been a growing process of de-traditionalisation<sup>15</sup> as women have massively – although in many cases in precarious conditions – entered the labour market. Thanks to positive discrimination policies, they have started to access public office; they have secured the possibility of a greater control over their sexuality due to the generalization of contraceptive methods –even though these may not be used, their presence in the picture is undeniable. It is still an unequal reality that, nonetheless, softens and weakens the vision of women as victims.

Being a subject in the city is also building discourses on the processes of exclusion and inclusion. The excluding perceptions of the city – partial truths of reality – gains ground and legitimacy when there are no other discourses to dispute them. The process of generating “discourses” that challenge deeply-rooted visions is an expression of the work of social actors. In the context of fragmentation of urban life, these discourses are also fragmented, which prevents tensions thus expressed from becoming a problem (i.e. an explicit conflict for which there is a solution). These blurred manifestations can turn into agreed-upon problems about the city – transport, water, traffic, noise – and which can give rise to agreed-upon actions, thus giving “a voice to implicit tensions (...) and allowing a release from its embryonic stage” (Durán, *La ciudad compartida*).

Together with these dimensions of specific claims, there other long-lasting ones such as the position of cities in the processes of production and in global processes, the effects of globalization, the struggle between social classes and disputes between genders, forms of identity configurations and their discourses, and democratic or anti-democratic intellectual climates. These dimensions require more structural changes, slower and of greater magnitude, and although they are key to consolidate democracy, they are not necessarily viewed as problems; hence the need for actors and collectives that produce alternative discourses, proposals, forums of discussion; of spokespersons that maintain the visibility of these issues in public opinion, and that recover a “train of thought complicated by emotions that do not get theorized about or made public” (Durán, *La ciudad compartida*), developing organizational strategies and generating alternative and counter-cultural discourses.

<sup>15</sup> Anthony Giddens, “Reflexiones de Anthony Giddens sobre el Proceso de Mundialización” (Excerpts from his presentation at the UNRISD Conference Mundialización y Ciudadanía), in *Boletín UNRISD Informa* (Francia) nº 15, 1996.

The inhabitants of cities are heterogeneous: their characteristics depend upon the places they occupy, the neighbourhoods where they live, the form and extension of territory appropriation, the use they make of space, the distribution of time between movements and their housing distances, all of which vary according to age and sex. In all cases, it seems that men have much more interchanges and appropriation (generally excluding appropriation) of public spaces. However, in certain territories, young women have their own foray and, while they are frightened, they appropriate the space. In general, however, women have more restrictions, more fear, but they also have multiple ways of approaching and appropriating territorial spaces, generally those closer to their everyday lives (the neighbourhood) (October 23 Workshop).

The processes of appropriation of spaces through collective organization also facilitate the recovery of this vision of women as equals. Urban social struggles – aiming to redefining, appropriating and disputing the repossession of excluding and illegitimate city spaces – generate new discourses and imaginaries, and establish identity and territoriality. Social movements working for the occupation/challenge of public spaces automatically make spaces safer and vice versa: when they abandon these spaces, the latter automatically become unsafe. For women, their efforts to broaden the channels of interaction with the city and to build grounds to feel as equals include their immediate as well as their strategic interests<sup>16</sup> because they require not only a perspective of redistribution (of access, of spaces, of uses, of goods), but also a perspective of recognition (of their status as right holders). The struggle for redistribution – linked to the struggle for recognition – brings women’s interests much closer regardless their identities, thus maximizing their possibility of becoming subjects in the city.

In the case of women victims of violence, it is harder to turn their personal anxieties into collective proposals. To do it, it is necessary to reinforce a feeling of “illegitimacy” regarding gender-based violence, both at home and in the public (the visibility of collective action and the weight of government policies is key), and to generate a discourse that fosters women’s confidence so that they can turn to/accept solidarity and express themselves. This confidence is also sustained by the possibility of the redistribution and recognition needed to develop their autonomy. The number of violence reports that never reach trial, or the instances of women that drop charges, are in most of the cases the result of a painful lack of economic autonomy.

In these processes, the symbolic, counter-cultural, iconographic, and artistic actions play a significant role, as they represent an alternative cultural dimension to confront those that fuel subordination. Cultural changes also produce cities. Counter-cultural contents are important to build public spaces that overcome the imaginary of fear so as to open an imaginary of possibilities for change. They evidence the dispute for filling public spaces with new meanings. In this sense, the importance of their spreading to other urban struggles is also critical: in these processes, heterogeneity becomes a quality of public spaces, especially in cities where movements with urban demands, LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) movements and many other social actors take up the city in different moments of the year, as the Gay Pride Day Parades have noticeably done in the last few years. These dimensions of city spaces can more easily recognize common issues in gender-based violence.

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16 This is the experience of popular organizations regarding food programmes, which are constantly subjected to customer-based practices. However, it has also been a privileged space for the discovery of their condition as rights holders and of their human rights as women.

#### 4.2.2 The institutional actors and their relation with civil society actors

A government body can play a key role in generating proper public policies and favourable public opinion regarding alternative practices and discourses to confront the exclusions and discriminations in public and private spaces.

However, it is not the urgency, but the extension of the demands in the wider public, what makes an agenda reach the State.<sup>17</sup> Once there, they undergo a process of “dissection” and swaying that many times distorts their objectives. The tops and bottoms in the agendas of social actors do not always represent what is legitimated by the State, more so in the case of gender agendas.

This is an argument for a politics of wide alliances and a capacity for autonomous proposals on the part of social actors. The “public” and public spaces are also constructed. This means that social actors/movements should make their strategies more complex, so as to operate not only “within the logic of the political system, but also within the logic of the symbolic context of urban public relations”.<sup>18</sup> These are not demands made to the State, but to the very appropriation of cities. In this way, action opens up the space.<sup>19</sup>

If the actions and discourse of local governments are more influential due to their intrinsic power, and those of individuals are much more numerous –although fragmented and with little capacity of influence – together they are immensely powerful. Their power can intensify even more if they work in a coordinated fashion.

#### 4.3 The institutional dimension of local public spaces

Cities are privileged places of democratic innovation. They constitute the space where it is easier for communities, politicians and local power to converge; where situational policies of social and political prevention as well as policing can be carried out.

We are going through a period of paradigmatic changes that have an impact on cities and that affect local governments, which appear as key spaces for addressing citizen safety, public spaces, and gender-based violence. There are new trends, and different local governments have developed a new institutional sensitive and proactive profile responsive to the different types of violence affecting women and children. These are territorialized institutions of those democracies that are closer to citizens and their daily lives, and that go beyond their traditional functions as basic-service and public-works providers, to better promote integral local development.

One of the central paradigmatic changes has been the transition from a vision of *public safety* to one of *citizen safety*. These policies change the direction of the action of the police

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17 Virginia Guzmán, *La institucionalidad de género en el estado: nuevas perspectivas de análisis*. Serie Mujer y Desarrollo 34 (Santiago: ECLAC, Unidad Mujer y Desarrollo, 2001).

18 It is, as Subirats would say, building the dissidence while influencing the political system. Joan Subirats, “Las políticas contra la exclusión social como palanca de transformación del Estado”, CLAD VII International Congress CLAD on State Reform and Public Administration, Lisbon, 2002.

19 There are many experiences of urban popular women’s movements that openly confront violence against women in their homes by blowing whistles, breaking into the homes, publicly exposing the violent men in the neighbourhood square and the like. By visibly occupying the spaces (the private – the house –, the semi-public –the neighbourhood) where violence against women occurs, they automatically turn them into safer places for women.

because their main function goes from securing law and order to securing the defence of the rights and duties of citizens.

Local institutions have a series of advantages over other institutions: the awareness of the reality of the city, closeness to their inhabitants, greater possibilities of participation, flexibility of action. They can become privileged places for eradicating urban gender-based violence and for reducing poverty.

The emerging new forms of collaboration of institutional actors also facilitate learning and interchange; networks of towns and cities imply an innovative approach to municipal management as they enable overcoming localisms, maximizing resources and connecting different and distant experiences.

At national and international levels, there has been a significant development in legislation on women's rights, violence against women and citizen participation. Many countries have given institutional status to women's affairs in the State, such as Women's Secretaries and Departments, as well as Women's Municipal Offices, which are spaces that can play a critical role in the evidencing and proposal of gender mainstreaming.

Cities are also ambivalent to women, because despite excluding them in many ways, they also give women spaces for liberation and escape from traditional stereotypes, thus opening more possibilities for the development of full citizenships.

#### **4.4 Citizenship, market and State**

To confront violence against women in the context of public spaces and citizen safety, it is necessary to introduce substantial changes in the direction of public policies. Generally this is not the case. During the dramatic changes of the last few decades, public administration has tended to move away from the interests of the majorities. The functions of the State and their orientation clash with a model that favours the market over citizens, privileging access to the market and consumption and not the welfare of cities and their citizens. Under such conditions, the strategies for the peaceful coexistence between citizens conflicts with an orientation towards profit-making and privatization, where government resources are allocated to other priorities and not to improve life in cities. Therefore, we need a stronger State to contest the hegemony of the market, which aggravates gender problems and power relations.

While more women than ever have accessed public and political positions in central and municipal governments, they have not achieved nor been able to develop a hegemonic discourse on women's rights, insofar as the structure and organization of the formal policy of political parties and public institutions is still anti-democratic, with overpowering masculine interests and directions. The weak presence of women in policy-making spheres restricts their possibilities of incorporating the elimination of gender-based violence to government agendas. When this is achieved, it is also possible to see the gap between the times of citizens and the times of politics. Given their ideological and bureaucratic conditioning factors, the State is slower to acknowledge citizen rights; and when it does, citizen proposals go through a process of readjustment and swaying, distorting the meaning and integral direction of policies.

While there have been important advances in some municipal spaces as regards social policies on the use of public spaces (architectural adjustments, parks, bike paths, urban equipment, awareness-raising campaigns and the like), in general, they have not taken into account the dimension of violence in private spaces as the main focus of insecurity. This tends to fragment reality and weaken the effectiveness of public policies. There is the constant risk that citizen safety policies may overshadow gender policies by not recognizing the essential continuity of private space into public space as the basis of effective public policy on violence against women. As there are no effective responses, fear becomes “chronic”, increasing the feeling of despair and resignation, with negative effects on women as a group and a resulting growing fear of the public and retreat into the private. This adds to the city expulsion of women.

The State is central to the issue of citizen safety. On the one hand, it tolerates excluding appropriations of the city, the defence of proprietary rights with hegemony of private law, with little consideration of human rights, and an androcentric perspective that confines women’s concerns in the city to private spaces. On the other, it formulates public policies that tend to increase violence against women – e.g. housing projects that produce overcrowded places –, or public policies that fail to recognize the continuity between violence in public spaces and violence in private spaces or to consider the subjective dimension of women’s fear. Additionally, the State generally directs public policies only to women, without considering a gender-relations perspective that includes men. These policies tend to victimize women and to maintain the impunity of the invisibility of hegemonic masculinity. Anyway, legislation is not always effective. Governments have emphasized punitive over preventive strategies.<sup>20</sup>

Women are then doubly victimized: by a government policy that fails to recognize their gender differences and the differentiated use of public space, and by the violence persistently inflicted at home.

The relationship between the state and citizens is complex. On the one hand, public policy may meddle into private matters to avoid the violation of human rights (thus trampling the right to privacy); on the other hand, the State needs to show violence against women in the hands of private agents as a public, political matter that requires the full attention of the State. For that reason, it is important to distinguish when the intimate and the private is an expression of abuse of power and, therefore, a public problem that requires State intervention.

Affirmative action policies – regarding the operation of services, the specific hours of use for women, and the like – also entail tension and cannot be considered in isolation, but in relation to their effects on the different realities of the lives of women and in the imaginary of society. This is so because these policies can have an impact on the imaginary, strengthening the idea of women’s weakness and their condition of victims. In general, services and programs too targeted remain frozen as specific for women, aggravating the separation of spaces. Similarly, considering security only from an urban perspective is risky as it does not express that public spaces are also meeting places.

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20 In several cities, citizen (in)security has become the focus of conservative and anti-democratic proposals such as death punishment for rapists of minors, with a significant support from the population.

## 5 The proposals – challenges

Policies on citizen safety, violence against women and access to public spaces must have the status of State policies to prevent them from changing with changes in government administrations. They must also form part of democratic agendas. If we take democracy as a starting point and we consider the different types of urban violence as abuse of power, another dimension springs: one that gives more room of action for the exercise of women's citizen rights. It is important not to separate them from broader processes of transformation, linking gender agendas to State reform processes and redefinition of public administration functions, coordinating them with larger issues of national debate such as democratization, social cohesion, productivity, State reform and public administration.

Extending this perspective to security affairs, individual rights as well as social and collective rights must be incorporated into the processes of expansion of women's citizenship while a more complex perspective that treats violence against women as a public and political responsibility must be adopted. Thus, violence against women must be incorporated into the democratic agenda as a human rights violation, as a dangerous and unfair issue, not only for women, but also for society as a whole and it must also be deemed as a problem to be addressed by society and by the different levels of the State. These policies on citizen safety must be inclusive and they must incorporate the different relations that individuals go through in their constitution – gender, class, ethnicity, age, social and economic background, sexual orientation. Additionally, they must not be limited to the protection of individuals and their assets, but rather they must be directed to “the use citizens make of freedom.”

In this process, municipalities play a key role, which requires overcoming their lack of coordinating actions in their territories. They also play a role in women's empowerment for the ownership of urban spaces and the recovery of non-aggressive public spaces. The factor that most helps to reduce gender-based violence is citizen action and the actions of women themselves. This is an action carried out by society that can be promoted by local governments through greater information on constitutional rights, and as part of democratic policies on citizen education.

Thus, the State and society must address the “naturalization” of violence and sexist behaviour, avoiding the dissociation between the public and the private spheres. It is also necessary to create spaces for the coordination of local authorities with women's movements and civil society organizations, educational institutions and the media in order to outline strategies to eliminate gender-based violence in cities.

### 5.1 Gender approaches in cities

To approach citizen safety from a gender perspective enables showing dimensions of reality that are not visible for public policy-makers. It is necessary to develop public policies that incorporate a gender perspective that overcomes traditional conceptions of women as victims and as a vulnerable or handicapped group, and to reformulate the issue in terms of citizenship. In order to design public policies geared toward deep transformations in gender-based violence in cities it is necessary to adopt a complex perspective: one that incorporates public spaces where violence occurs (private/public) and that incorporates urban planning policies (lighting, routes, parks, dwelling, design and location of homes). In order for these policies to be effective, they have the pressing

democratic need to include both women's opinions and the knowledge produced and accumulated by their organizations as well as to include the main producers of fear, insecurity and violence: men, thus evidencing the way in which current concepts of masculinity jeopardize citizen safety.

## **5.2 Citizen safety and social coexistence**

For public policies to address citizen coexistence they must seek to modify behaviour rules governing relationships between the different social actors. Within the notion of coexistence, policies must consider that they include the notion of living in a context of difference (which in heterogeneous and multicultural societies is especially important). It is not about coexistence as such, but rather coexistence within conflict, challenging power relations and illegitimate appropriations while advancing towards the organization of local diversity.

### **5.2.1 Coproduction of safety**

Designing policies for the coproduction of safety requires safety policies that can mobilize and coordinate the different actors of both the State and the civil society. This will allow a better design and enforcement of public policies for a better and greater socialization of women in public spaces, recognizing their degree of vulnerability and victimization and producing a better analysis of the elements that make up women's perspective of insecurity.

### **5.2.2 Situational prevention**

Citizen safety addressed from the concept of situational prevention refers to the appropriate equipment of spaces (lighting, furnishings) as well as to the promotion of social and cultural uses and activities in public spaces. Its goal is to reduce opportunities for the perpetration of crime against the population in general, focusing on critical points, providing formal and informal surveillance and developing policies to improve urban design. In the case of women and gender relations, this is a strategy to introduce changes into their environment, seeking to eliminate or reduce the risks and danger faced by women in cities and in private spaces, introducing measures based on risk prediction, dissuasive measures, strategic analysis of the territory, identification of possibilities and risks in the different spaces where women develop their activities.

The main characteristic of preventive policies and actions is an approach focused on spatial, demographic and thematic aspects and that is associated to risk factors directly concerning individuals – women or men: disintegration, family violence, unemployment, marginality, drug abuse, keeping arms. Prevention also implies those measures related to the environment where crimes are perpetrated: the existence of police or private surveillance, informal social control, use of public spaces, lighting, etc. A key strategy to develop is to promote citizen trust on the institutions.

Along these processes, it is important to regain the city as "a space for solutions." It is necessary to think the city as a space for recognition and dialogue with the State, where the women's struggles are translated into the fulfilment of their rights and the construction of duties, expanding the discourse to include the recognition of other excluded groups, such as LGBT or excluded ethnic groups. In this manner, it is possible to generate

scenarios where rules based on gender differences can be challenged, transformed and reconfigured by different social actors.

Some measures that facilitate the possibility of the city as a solution refer to promoting or expanding the systematization of experiences, national and international studies; to creating a critical mass of knowledge and analysis; to promoting and supporting the development of training material for local governments and NGOs; to generating awareness-raising and training programs in gender equality for authorities; to emphasising the link and exchange among studies on gender-based violence, masculinities, urban violence and city planning.

### **5.3 New legislative orientations: the regulatory and the cultural-subjective**

The construction of urban spaces for women's development requires reconfiguring the law in the light of a gender perspective, through a legislation that guarantees their rights as much as through the commitment of the judiciary that they will treat women as holders of full and inalienable human rights.

Along with legal rules, cultural changes are essential to face impunity, women's fears and society undervaluing of women. These changes are policies directed to affecting subjectivities and the way in which imaginaries are built. They are necessary counter-cultural strategies that focus on challenging the forms in which power is exercised, which requires a medium and long-term horizon, as these changes mean to change frames of mind in order to foster the recognition of diversities and the democratisation of the social construction of gender. Counter-cultural strategies do not emerge at first sight from the State, but rather from the actors of civil society in public spaces, in a democratic struggle to place their rights in the State.



## | 2 | Clues: Theoretical and political standpoint

### 1 Political focus: the democratic framework

*If we think of democracy as the starting point, we can accept complexity, as the democratic system is a useful tool to face abuse of power.*

Claudia Laub, "Violencia urbana, violencia de género y políticas de seguridad ciudadana", in *Ciudades para convivir*, p.68.

*The fight to end violence against women is another way of struggling against all injustice, not only gender injustice, but also race, class and nation injustice. It is another way of demanding a more egalitarian and democratic society for all.*

Patricia Morey, "Introducción", *Ciudades para convivir*, p. 35.

The approach behind the reflections of the Workshop Sessions and Discussion Forums in the Safe Cities: Violence against Women and Public Policies Regional Program considers democracy as a perspective of analysis and as the foundation of its political reflections. It is built upon criticism of the existing democracy and of the possible contents of a democracy envisioned from the debate over the construction of public spaces as negotiated and inclusive of diversity.

To recover democracy in this light also implies to recover the inevitably controversial nature of democratic politics, as there are differentiated and clashing interests that strive for their recognition. It is this dimension of the conflict – and not its denial – what gives democracy its pluralism (which Chantal Mouffe calls the constitutive axiological principles of contemporary social relations). Democratic politics does not deny the existence of the other with their differentiated interests: it turns the other not into an enemy to be destroyed but into an "adversary" that shares a symbolic common space and who wants to organize it in a different way.<sup>21</sup> From this perspective, there is the creation of public spaces "where new political relations can be built and where it is also possible to set up conditions for building new currents of public opinion and a new critical and participatory political culture as well as to build new power relations".<sup>22</sup> Democratic

21 Chantal Mouffe, 2003. *La paradoja democrática* (Barcelona: Gedisa).

22 Jorge Almeida, "Convergencia tecnológica, espacio público y democracia". 2001, *Efectos. Globalismo y Pluralismo*, GRICIS, Montreal, April 24 - 27 2002. Available at <http://www.er.uqam.ca/nobel/gricis/actes/bogues/Almeida.pdf>

politics is about feeding a cultural ethos, which forms part of everyday culture, of the forms of relating with others, internalized and in relation with the construction of citizenship (Rico, in *Ciudades para convivir*, p. 62). It is not only a place for debate, but also one of cultural and political assertion and hegemonic dispute. For this same reason and from this perspective, the choice of the sphere of public space, citizen safety and gender (and its manifestations of violence) also implies the sphere of democratic dispute among social actors that struggle for expanding citizen rights, especially women's rights, maximizing their democratic disputes, adopting a critical view of reality and a praxis challenging the sexual and social arrangements that it contains.

All this implies a constant revision of the categories and concepts of the organization of coexistence and the institutions governing this common life. Public space, citizen safety and gender-based violence are dimensions of democratic struggle that, in coordination, maximize each other. Conceptualizing urban violence as "abuse of power" in the public and the private opens up a different perspective, as it places the existence of conflicting power relations at the core of the definition. Public spaces and access to public spaces are seen as basic citizen rights as opposed to appropriations deemed as illegitimate for their antidemocratic character. In turn, citizen safety refers to the restoration of democratic institutions in the national States of Latin America, to the validity of the rule of law that prevents the exercise of arbitrary and discriminatory measures that jeopardize the peaceful coexistence of citizens, citizens who, in turn, demand constitutional rights. The concept of citizen safety refers thus to the concept of democracy (Alonso, in *Ciudades para convivir*, p. 112). Security expands when the use citizens make of freedom expands. The gender perspective introduces other demands to public spaces and citizen safety: the recovery of its continuity within private spaces, expanding the notion of safety as a public asset to include also the confrontation of violence in the private.

## 2 Categories of analysis: building a discourse

### 2.1 Epistemological perspective

*... under the present conditions, social sciences that do not contribute to the social transformation necessarily contribute to the persistence of privileges.*<sup>23</sup>

Raising the issue of the coordination between public spaces, citizen safety and gender (and its expression of violence in urban spaces) opens up a complex and enlightening dimension for the analysis of gender relations within realities that also prove complex, such as that of cities. These are mutually determining realities, but the analysis of their interconnection has been limited.

A first approach consists in recognizing the originality of linking the three dimensions, which are, in turn, complex processes and changing realities. The changes in one dimension facilitate and bring into relief the chances of change in the others. These changes depend on particular moments and situations, which are not easily predictable under the

<sup>23</sup> Juan Carlos Monedero, "Conciencia de frontera: La teoría crítica posmoderna de Boaventura de Sousa Santos". Presentation of the book *El milenio huérfano: Ensayos para una nueva cultura política*, Boaventura de Sousa Santos (Madrid: Editorial Trotta, 2005).

highly complex situations of cities, the social practices that challenge them and the unequal citizenship development. That is why its understanding implies the building of knowledge on the basis of action itself, combining academic reflection with perceptions and enunciations of the actors involved. This is the way in which the constitution of gender-based violence as part of the public agendas has historically taken place: as a process supported by the production of knowledge building upon women's experiences and practices (Valdés, in *Ciudades para convivir*, p. 197). It is thus an epistemological discourse that springs from specific experiences, both from the intellectual practices of "intellectuals" as much as from the intellectual practice of social actors/movements. It is knowledge that is both theoretical and political<sup>24</sup> in which subjectivity plays a key role and that generates new forms of challenging reality as it enlightens generally invisible aspects of the sensitivity of the traditional social sciences.

Another approach along this line of thought shows that the phenomena analyzed in regards to violence and its interrelations cannot be expressed only by one theoretical paradigm or only by one discipline, at the risk of producing uni-causal explanations and serious ideological omissions by hiding the key factors contributing to its production. An interdisciplinary outlook is necessary together with an epistemological approach: there is no one single great theory; instead there are many complementary theories. Therefore, there is no privileged knowledge, but "constellations" of knowledge. And "if theory is necessarily global as it has to combine all social practices, subjectivity then must also learn to mediate with all social practices" (Monedero, "Conciencia de frontera", qtd., p. 37).

It is within this theoretical approach where a gender dimension is situated, as an expression of a multiple power, located in different social spaces in the public and in the everyday of the private. Progress must be made paying attention not only to women in their specific societies where their lives take place, but it is also necessary to broaden the scope in order to analyze and interconnect all levels, spheres and times of the relationships between men and women, between women and between men, and in the different spaces-times where these relations occur.

## 2.2 Space and its articulations

In these three coordinated dimensions – public space, citizen safety and gender – (*public and private*) space is the "container" of a transforming action, as a strategic place for action. It includes the processes taking place both in the struggle for transforming gender relations and violence as much as in the struggle for cities that implement policies appropriate for the democratic demands of their citizens (in this case, the right to a life free from violence). It is in public and private spaces where citizen praxis for the expansion of rights and the transformation of gender relations in both spheres takes place. Public space is an associative fabric, a political culture, a capacity of resistance (the "trenches") and initiative, all basic conditions for the existence of citizenships. Hence the importance of identifying the possibilities and limits of public spaces, their contents and contradictions and their forms of interaction-denial of private space.

Another central idea in the analysis is the *intrinsic relationship between space/territory and social actions/behaviour*. The territory is not just another explanatory variable, but rather

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24 Boaventura de Sousa Santos. *Conocer desde el Sur. Para una cultura política emancipatoria* (Lima: Programa de Estudios sobre Democracia y Transformación Global - Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, Unidad de Posgrado, 2006).

it belongs to the very constitution of actions.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, social structures and dynamics are created by human subjects; although they present obstacles at certain times for these subjects, they can also be adjusted or changed and even defeated by the social actors themselves (Giddens).

*The space-time relationship* gives the analysis a huge dynamism. The placement in space and time determines the form of relating with others. Time and space cannot be considered in terms of causality, nor can they be regarded separating the location and the moment of events (violent actions), but rather both are a constitutive part of the phenomenon, part of the same indissoluble reality. According to Massey,<sup>26</sup> it is a fluid and dynamic relationship that expresses the multiple forms in which space and time are inscribed in the conduct of social life.

The space-time dimension – which in fact it is not only one, but rather multiple social spaces-times that correspond to the plurality of dynamics configuring a complex and fragmented society – is specially important for women. The spatial and temporal division of the activities and functions of the city, the division between (invisible) domestic space and time and public space and time, makes women combine their different domestic, intimate, public spaces and times and the spaces and times of the neighbourhood and of the city, among others. For women, the distribution of their activities in (public-private) space and time gives a peculiar characteristic to time – both present and historic. In relation to violence, Carrión tells us that “just as violence has its geography, society, and economy it also has a temporality and a historicity”.<sup>27</sup> This makes reference to the relationship between geography and history. Places are full of history, which affects, fetches or repels current social practices and feeds into an imaginary. Time is also a historic memory (patterns of rural violence and urban violence against migrants, vicarious experience of women in relation to violence, and the like).

### 2.2.1 The body as public space

The central idea of this approach is that social phenomena are not outside space and time, nor are they outside the effect of gender. It is a combination of multiple factors that elide the abstract character of space and generate more complex elements for analysis and policies. “Temporality is also spatial: geography, places, dwellings, settings where bodies are outlined, and which is often the stronger mark of chronology, the more obvious anchorage of affectivity. Space thus turns into biographical space.”<sup>28</sup>

And the *body* is the recipient of that biography for women. Women’s bodies, with their times and spaces of violence (current and historical, but also of resistance), is key to this analysis. Some interventions and analysis in the “Cities without violence for women, safe cities for all” Seminar – whose presentations and comments were collected in the above-mentioned book *Ciudades para convivir: sin violencias hacia las mujeres* – made reference to

25 In this regard, Giddens discusses the complex and dialectic interactions between structure and social action, highlighting that social systems are systems of interactions between structures and the activities of capable and informed human subjects. A. Giddens, *La constitución de la sociedad. Bases para una teoría de la estructuración* (Buenos Aires: Amorrortu Editores, 1995).

26 Doreen Massey, qtd. in Mara Rodríguez and Iván Alvarenque. “Las espacialidades abiertas de América Latina. Otro análisis crítico al ordenamiento territorial de la iniciativa IIRSA” (December 2006), available at <http://www.lafogatadigital.com.ar/planeta/lasespa.pdf>

27 Fernando Carrión, “Tiempo y violencias: nuevo espacio para la seguridad”, available at [www.henciclopedia.org.uy](http://www.henciclopedia.org.uy)

28 Leonor Arfuch, qtd. in Mara Rodríguez and Iván Alvarenque, “Las espacialidades abiertas...”

the body. According to Massolo, urban planning and women's insecurity in public spaces must bear in mind the fact that women "are exposed to invading conducts to the corporal space" by means of fondling or sexual harassment on the street or in public transport (p. 139). Teresa Valdés says that women's rights are strongly centred on the physical body and all it represents. José Olavarría maintains that if a woman or a man is conditioned by learning and culture, "what is required is to transform culture in relation to bodies, so that while differences are recognized, rights and equity in difference are recognized as well" (p. 83).

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault explained this process very clearly from the point of view of the signifier of the body, which, ultimately, is the one that receives the aggression. The body is a political field disputed by the power relations that act upon, leave a mark, limit and punish it. Violence is the mechanism through which bodies with less power are subjected to the burden of the punishment imposed by those who have power.

*If this is so, the struggle for recognition of the body as political space-place is fundamental.*

In its current context, the body is understood as the material, specific and deep foundation of dominance and suffering, as a territory of commodification and colonization, and as one of violence. However, the body is also – and actively – the substance of practices of freedom and democracy that generate new signifiers of transformation. The body is the place where I live, the first place of my existence, my instrument for relating with the world. From this perspective, Wendy Harcourt and Arturo Escobar<sup>29</sup> maintain that a new reconceptualisation of the "body" as a political place is necessary, which is not only linked to the private or the individual being, but also entirely to the place, the local, the social and the public space. Additionally, Betania Ávila says that the body has become a "field endowed with citizenship" and, therefore, with rights to confront violence and the denial of women as subjects.

Explaining what they call the "politics of place", Harcourt and Escobar consider that as a new form of doing politics, women have their bodies, their homes, their environment and the social public spaces as a focal point. It is in women's bodies where their political struggle begins; a struggle for their autonomy, their reproductive and sexual rights, for a safe motherhood, against sexual violence and oppression and the like. As a field of much struggle, the body is not linked then to the private or the individual being, but rather entirely linked to the community and to public spaces, insofar as it acts as a mediator of the experiences of social and cultural relations, which have historically been separated from political discourse. Home is the space where many women still get their most important identities and social and political roles. It is then the space of a struggle for eliminating those practices that perpetuate inequality, for redistributing economic and social values, and for defining the relationship between private space and public space. The environment is the nearby place, the one of the relations that define women's every-day landscapes, and where the home and body are also incorporated. Public space is where women incorporate the three dimensions, negotiating their inclusion. They incorporate private space as well as their most daily interactions. It is the space where what is discussed and valued must be negotiated. This renegotiation is strengthened by collective action through the building of networks and partnerships that grant new meanings to those brought by the voices of the social subjects that have long been absent from the public. The conflicts

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29 Wendy Harcourt and Arturo Escobar, "Mujeres y política de lugar", in *Desarrollo 45. Lugar, política y justicia: las mujeres frente a la globalización. Revista de la Sociedad Internacional para el Desarrollo* (Rome), 2003.

experienced by women in these different spheres entail new forms of cultural and political relations. For the same reason, the greater political changes occur when women act simultaneously in all the spheres of a place.

From these perspectives, the body appears as an analytical, political and biographical category, full of historic memory. That is why women have a “vicarious” sensation regarding rape, although they may not have experienced it. Susan Brownmiller, quoted in De Miguel,<sup>30</sup> analyzes rape as a strategy of dominance through the fear it instils in all women.

Finally, this also brings us closer to a more flexible meaning of a place. It is important to address the scales of inhabitation more explicitly (the individual body, the home, the city, the neighbourhood, the blocks, and the like), studying the links and the types of actions generated in each one of them, so as to know how women use them and to give an account of other social practices: a way of avoiding “victimism” and frozen images of women as fully disempowered. According to Massey (and here lies the richness of flexibility) the place simultaneously has no scales: a street, a square, the neighbourhood, a specific landscape can become a place after a time of frequenting, interacting and identifying the territory.<sup>31</sup>

Other interesting dimensions of space, which are emphasized by Borja,<sup>32</sup> refer to the importance of the construction of accessible public spaces for multiple uses. The utilization of these uses to vent out the pressures of the private have already been noted (Borja calls them “refuges”). So has the importance of public spaces as safe for everyday life. However, as Borja notes, these public spaces are also deemed as safe for exceptionality. He refers to spaces that represent not only safety, but also risks, facilitating transgression. The dimension of risk, conflict and transgression is fundamental for the construction of democratic public spaces.

As suggested in the discussions, it is important to analyze how time and space are experienced and signified in the configuration of certain behaviour and in relation to the different types of scales. However, it is also important to study which are those spaces that can feed a transgressive and counter-cultural perspective.

### 2.2.2 *Subjectivity and its interrelations: citizenship and autonomy*

Space is an integral part of the formation of political subjectivities. There, people develop the awareness of belonging to a community as well as the feeling of being excluded from them.

Fear as an analytical category places subjectivity as a key fact in the outlooks of the world and of social practices. “What people define as real, is real in its consequences”<sup>33</sup> because it is significant for their action. Women’s fear and insecurity are real as regards their consequences, as they drive them away from social interaction and coexistence. Women

30 Ana de Miguel, “El movimiento feminista y la redefinición de la realidad”. Universidad de la Coruña. Mujeres en Red, available at [www.mujersenred.net](http://www.mujersenred.net)

31 Qtd. by Anna Ortiz i Guitart, in “Reflexiones en torno a la construcción cotidiana y colectiva del sentido del lugar en Barcelona”, *Polis* 1 (2004). 116-183, available at <http://www.juridicas.unam.mx/pública/librev/rev/polis/cont/20041/art/art9.pdf>

32 Jordi Borja, “La ciudad y la nueva ciudadanía”, in *La Factoría*, February—March 2002.

33 Pedro Güell, “Subjetividad social y desarrollo”. Jornadas de Desarrollo y Reconstrucción Global, SID/PNUD (Sistema Integrado de Indicadores para el Desarrollo / Programa de Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo), Barcelona, 1998.

are not the only ones that experience fear. According to various studies, men also express fear of violent acts, a fear that is greater than the actual experience of fear, but that does not prevent them from occupying public spaces as it happens to women.<sup>34</sup> Certainly, the differentiation of roles, with the attachment of women to the private world and men to the public, is part of the explanation.

But why do women transfer their fear to public spaces when it is in the private space where they experience greater insecurity? (Forum, January 23).

Perhaps it is important to broaden the dynamics that form or aggravate such fear in the public. In addition to the “vicarious” perception – women are raped on the streets but men are not – there are other dimensions connected to the changes in the dynamics of society: the weakening of social collectives, the precariousness of the labour market, the increasing differentiation of social groups, the unequal forms of citizenship development and the transformations of the gender paradigm among others. All this is the expression of a set of greater paradigmatic changes that lead to – according to Lechner<sup>35</sup> – the public not being fundamentally a space of citizenship, but rather it is the market and its criteria of efficiency, competitiveness and productivity (which establishes the references for the relations with the public) what increasingly produce a sensation of uncertainty. And insecurity increases in this atmosphere of uncertainty. It is no longer about fear of specific dangers, but rather a more general anxiety, as Paolo Virno says,<sup>36</sup> without a precise object, which is the sense of precariousness itself.

For women, their actual and symbolic exclusions also express their own precariousness in their status as subjects, thus debilitating the dynamics of mutual recognition. And such precariousness is also expressed/fuelled by the fact that this violence is underestimated, made socially invisible, encapsulated as part of the private sphere, naturalized by society and even by women themselves, thus reinforcing their sensation of vulnerability. As public spaces do not account for women’s fear of the private, women’s possibilities of being recognized – by themselves and by society – as subjects whose rights are violated diminish. Double movement: Distrusting the public that does not recognize them and denying their persistent and recurrent experience of violence in the private, because under such conditions women suffer the private, the violent and the antidemocratic as the closest experience, as what is known, predictable, even in their intimate forms of violence.

Identifying fear as an analytical category implies considering subjectivity as a fundamental fact for understanding the world, for knowledge building and for public policies. Feminisms provide this outlook with their reflection upon the political dimension of the personal summarized in the motto: *the personal is political*. This assertion was the most forceful boost to politicize everyday life and slowly position it in women’s and society’s referential horizon. Other authors have also contributed to this perspective: for Boaventura de Sousa Santos, being a subject means being recognized in one’s subjective experience (in “Conocer desde el Sur”, quoted). In *Las sombras del mañana*, Lechner notes that the sacralisation of the system rationale excludes social subjectivity. As everyday emotions and feelings have no room of expression and no

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34 Men’s fear is an issue that goes unregistered, making it difficult to compare it to what happens to women.

35 Norbert Lechner, *Las sombras del mañana. La dimensión subjetiva de la política* (Santiago: LOM Ediciones 2002)

36 Paolo Virno, “Crear una esfera pública sin Estado”. Interview by Héctor Pavor, originally published in *Suplemento Cultural Ñ*, of *Diario Clarín*, Buenos Aires, Argentina; available at [www.sindominio.net/contrapoder](http://www.sindominio.net/contrapoder)

name, they do not enable a reflection and do not generate a subjective foundation on which to build social cohesion. Policies that are not accountable for the aspirations, fears and subjectivities of everyday life, he says, become insignificant.

*There is, however, another dimension of subjectivity*, which is expressed in different dimensions. On the one hand, it is expressed, for instance, in the new visions of the city, in the new visions of public spaces, in their continuation/coordination with the private, in its democratic meaning and in the new visions of politics. All this refers to the building of a more democratic new subjectivity that recognizes diversities, differences and inequalities of social actors. On the other, it is expressed in the social practices of social actors that strive for redistribution and recognition. In the book we are quoting, Lechner says that given the devaluation of the contents of the public due to the effects of the market rationale, many issues that were part of the private world come to light: gender discrimination, ethnic identities and sexual diversity among others. In these circumstances, he concludes, the public agenda is marked by private experiences, vindicating the political dimension of everyday life. This opens up new meaningful possibilities to reflect about politics from the most important dimensions of everyday life.

Extended to politics, the actors' subjectivity becomes a foundational dimension of other way of conceiving and performing politics, multiplying spaces of democratic dispute, expanding it beyond its manifestations in the public to recover/connect its coordination and continuity with the private. This new subjectivity also feeds from the transformations of the needs into citizen democratic rights, thus starting to destroy the logic of exclusion, as it generates subjects and social actors.

This subjective dimension of citizenship tackled by Lechner is not necessarily based on the reality of existing rights, as that is what makes people feel they deserve more or fewer rights. There are people who feel they deserve many more rights than others, and there are others, generally women, generally indigenous, and generally poor, who feel that they deserve much fewer rights than they should. Men, over and above being good and even democratic, generally feel they deserve more rights than women.

These processes of the construction of subjective citizenships are neither linear nor automatic, and they change with time. Some citizen dimensions can contribute to the awareness of rights more than others. For women, the process of feeling that they deserve more or fewer rights depend on the direction of public policies (in that they may reinforce victimization or reinforce a sense of freedom). It also depends on their capacity of coordination and struggle. For example, the subjective dimension and the imaginary of women's citizen rights have also been modified and expanded in many spheres as the result of the struggle of social actors. This is the case of sexual and reproductive rights, environmental rights or the rights to a global citizenship, which are all part of the new disputes and struggles for exercising these rights in everyday life and to incorporate them into political public spaces.

Thus, the transformation of citizen subjectivity into a democratic perspective that includes equality and the right to difference is fundamental. The transformation goes beyond the struggle for a specific right to delve into the development of a new awareness of the "right to hold rights," thus qualifying the way in which women take a position, assume and take responsibility for their citizen rights.

The modification of citizen subjectivity faces strong limits in women, as they echo the lack of women's autonomy. Conflict is not related to the lack of rights, but it is rather the result of the women's difficulty to perceive themselves as entitled to rights and the weak recognition of women in society as autonomous social subjects. It is then necessary to recover autonomy as a complex democratic category with multiple dimensions: physical, economic, political and socio-cultural. And to recover it as a political practice that maintains and widens the possibilities to generate democratic subjectivities. Recovering the political practice of autonomy means also recovering many more spaces for democratic expansion that broaden women's self-awareness as subjects and social actors. This also basically means to recover the possibility to develop what Julieta Kirkwood<sup>37</sup> said many years ago: *an awareness of being for themselves and not for the others*,<sup>38</sup> which is the basis for an awareness of being right-holders.

Although physical autonomy is the one that faces violence, the complexities of autonomy is expressed in the fact that none of its dimensions can be achieved in itself, but rather in relation to all the others and in the intersection of all the other discriminations and exclusions experienced by women. The exercise of political autonomy – a dimension that is more developed in Latin America – varies for example in the case of illiterate women who, while they can vote, they do not have identification papers. Its extension also varies: it can be only the access to the right to vote, or an active participation in decision-making regarding solutions for the city, with demands for transparency and accountability. In any of its expressions and levels of development, women's degree of economic autonomy plays a key role. Similarly, physical autonomy is a fundamental dimension of citizen rights, as it asserts the right to personal safety, to a life free from violence, to the capacity to make decisions about their own body, to having informed access to reproductive rights, including the right to freely decide about pregnancy and pleasure. However, a lack of economic autonomy strains and limits physical autonomy and leads women – as we have seen – to accept situations of violence and exclusion due to their lack of paid work or because they have no access to land tenure or the right to own a house. Socio-cultural autonomy, closely linked to the expansion of the democratic and institutional fabric, is expressed in policies of recognition, the exercise of their right to paid work, to a life free from violence, to an active participation in city affairs and to a democracy that is not controlled by religious institutions and discourses. As Eugenio Lahera states in *Ciudades para convivir*, it is then based on the “unacceptability of turning issues of conscience into matters pertaining public policies for society” (p. 64). And in this process, the role of public policies is fundamental. The Individuals' autonomy depends on the range of choices and resources made available to them by society.<sup>39</sup>

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37 Julieta Kirkwood, *Ser política en Chile; las feministas y los partidos* (Santiago: Flacso, 1986).

38 This means very specific things: for example, not taking for granted the role of being exclusively at the service of the family and the children, but to accept that this is also men's responsibility and right. Not to treat women as minors who have to ask for permission – real or imaginary, to others or to themselves – to do what they want to do. Not to consider them as dependent of their husbands or of the State or Church. To recognize their economic and social contribution by recognizing their reproductive work. To recognize also that they have sexual and reproductive rights, and that have an autonomous capacity over their lives and bodies.

39 Lechner, qtd. in Nieves Rico's artistic intervention in *Ciudades para convivir*. (Norbert Lechner, “Contra la naturalización de lo social, el deseo de ser sujeto”, in Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo [PNUD], *Desarrollo humano en Chile. El poder: ¿para qué y para quién?* [Santiago: PNUD, diciembre 2004]).

### 2.2.3 *The global*

*Space is the result of interrelations. It is formed through interaction, from the immense of the global to the infinitesimal of privacy (...) because space is the result of relations, those that are necessarily implicit in material practices that must be performed. This is always a process of formation, of becoming, never finished, never concluded.*

Doreen Massey<sup>40</sup>

This is a dimension which was dealt with in several interventions and analyses of the above-mentioned seminar, but which is absent from the framework and horizon of reference.

The global is a constituting part of the local. This is not only the result of economic distortions and the primacy of the market brought about by neo-liberal globalization and the way in which it impacts on the local. Not only because local and national agendas are oftentimes designed according to global phenomena (migration, drug dealing, corruption) and to global agendas (those belonging to the most powerful). Not only because some cities relate more closely to other cities and other continents than to their own country, but basically because time and space and their interrelations – maintaining their articulation – have also changed over globalization. Current phenomena are marked by the contraction of space and time in their different scales. In the case of space-time, there is a gradual break of the co-presence and locality of the exercise of social relations (Giddens), insofar as the more distant events take place in real time, in the vision of the city and in the imaginary of its inhabitants. The traditional geographical meaning of borders fades off, spatial identification widens, the territory enlarges, combining local, national, regional and global elements. The media invade and treat news and politics in a sensationalist fashion, but – together with information technologies – they also have the capacity to generate a fabric of virtual relations that feed new types of relations in the places and with the social actors that connect them.

This dimension has to be incorporated into the “thinking” and “acting on” the city. Global and regional networks with global prospects (for example Women and Habitat Network, global and regional networks against gender-based violence) connect local experiences and aspirations. Cities are also the setting for simultaneous global actions<sup>41</sup> and the emergence of new movements around deeply local affairs (preservation of coca leaves) that have generated global impact and coordination.<sup>42</sup> Also, global networks of cities, networks of fraternity or cooperation agreements and agreements between town councils from different regions of the world, the formation of global networks of local authorities with active participation in alternative global spaces such as the World Social Forum –WSF– (where the [world] Forum of Local Authorities has been held for many years now), are spaces that must be considered to broaden the understanding of this interrelation and also to show that the global is – somewhere on the planet – local.

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40 Doreen Massey, in “La filosofía y la política de la espacialidad: algunas consideraciones”, in L. Arfuch (comp.), *Pensar este tiempo. Espacios, afectos, pertenencias* (Buenos Aires: Paidós), p. 104-105.

41 Such as the one that occurred on February 15, 2003 against the war in Irak, launched in the World Social Forum, and which had an expression in most of the major cities in the world.

42 It has given rise to several urban and rural movements, in the defense of the coca leaves. It has generated an alternative counter-public in universities and social movements and it has reached the national and local governments because many of its leaders – women mostly – have parliamentary positions or are representatives in local governments.

Incorporating a global perspective is not only a matter of scales. Instead, as Beck says,<sup>43</sup> it also implies a change of imagination that goes beyond the state-nation to focus on a cosmopolitan imagination, which does not eliminate but which relocates the increasingly interconnected global-local scales. Although privileging one scale over another is a political decision taken according to specific political conditions and contexts, the cosmopolitan outlook is according to Beck, however, the closest to current reality, as it opens possibilities of action that the national view alone and by itself, closes.

Borja's approach in "La nueva ciudadanía" (quoted above) summarizes this definition well by stating that we also experience globalization in the local territory: "We form part of virtual communities; we relate to the world. Living the local-global dialectics is essential for not turning ourselves into marginal beings. Coming to terms with identities of proximity and virtual relationships is to provide ourselves with the instruments to exercise citizenship and to interpret the world so as not to get lost. And knowing the others through virtual proximity may be a crucial contribution to accept and understand the others, physical neighbours not culturally unknown. Global culture should eradicate local xenophobia."

It is within this context of global horizons, dynamics and movements that we can bring about an issue that is absent from reflection: that of women's migration to cities. It is not the classical countryside-city migration, which has been historical and substantial in the formation of existing cities, but rather globalised migration among countries, regions and continents and that is territorialised in cities. There are studies on female migration processes to cities and their impact on the horizons and imaginaries of cities, generating "local xenophobia" and the tendency to place upon the Other - different and strange - the excluding fears and prejudices of cities. It is important to inquire how violence in the private sphere occurs and is experienced by women; how much access they can have to city services and violence prevention policies; which are the emotional mechanisms that they can develop in a strange and not always friendly city when they suffer violence, among other issues. It is interesting to note that the labour insertion of migrant women, no matter their previous occupation, is usually performing domestic work. This benefits women in the short term, but it has distorting effects in the medium and long term on their capacity to renegotiate their gender roles within private spaces.

## 2.3 Gender approaches and their interrelations

### 2.3.1 *Changes in the gender paradigm*

Different analysis and interventions give an account of the transformations experienced by gender relations over the last few decades as a result of phenomena linked to a greater insertion of women into public and political spheres. It is important to place these changes within a much wider context of paradigmatic transformations in terms of gender, which are brought about by changes in the very gender paradigm out of the transition from industrial capitalism to a globalised, network capitalism. The specific paradigm of production and labour relations (based on full-time employment and a specific sexual division of labour among others) is eroded by the disappearance of the concept of child benefits, the lack of

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43 Ulrich Beck, *Poder y contrapoder en la era global. La nueva economía política mundial* (Barcelona-Buenos Aires-México: Paidós, Col. Estado y Sociedad 124, 2004).

male job security (that eliminates the notion of the male breadwinner),<sup>44</sup> the growing incorporation of women to the labour market (although generally under precarious conditions), all of which thus widens in many ways their reference horizon. More than ever, women are exposed to ideas of individuation and autonomy. It would be important to consider which other paradigms that organize meaning are changing and which are the effects of these changes on the gender paradigm.

### 2.3.2 Gender geography

*Space and place and the sense we have of them, together with other factors such as degrees of mobility, are recurrently structured on a gender basis in thousands of different ways that vary from culture to culture and throughout time. And this gender structuring of space and place simultaneously reflects the ways in which gender is built and understood in our society, and the effects it has on it.*

Doreen Massey

The analysis of the three articulated dimensions – public space, citizen safety and violence against women in urban spaces – deserves a closer approach to the concept of gender, within a framework more appropriate to the articulation of the three processes in specific manifestations and a particular socio-cultural territory and habitat (December 13 and January 23 Forums). Gender geography examines how socioeconomic, political and environmental processes create, reproduce and transform not only the places people inhabit, but also the ways in which social relationships between women and men affect such processes and their manifestations in their environment.<sup>45</sup>

To analyze women's situation and gender relations in urban policies and in the case of analyses of gender-based violence, it is essential to examine how gender identities – geographically specific – are built in specific spaces of family units, work places, the community, the neighbourhood, the city, the country, the global. It is necessary to give an account of what produces local differences in the places, highlighting that gender inequalities and the power relations they generate have different forms of manifestations in a territory. This allows to widen the analysis of the different manifestations and specific contents of violence against women in the public and the private, to see more clearly its continuities, the different forms of violence against women in the different spaces of the city and its neighbourhoods, and to identify differentiated reactions (e.g. how much weight “family honour” and social shame have; in which social sectors it takes place limiting intolerance of violence on the part of women themselves).<sup>46</sup> The analysis of spatial differentiations and the relation between time and space from the example of social experiences is an interesting illustration of the dimensions in the geographical gender analysis.

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44 Rosalba Todaro, “El género en la economía global”, document presented at the Panel Regional de Desarrollo, Globalización, Mercados y Derechos; La Perspectiva de las Mujeres, organised by Iniciativa Feminista de Cartagena during the World Social Forum, February 3, 2002.

45 Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994). Translation taken from *Debate feminista*, 9 (17), April 1998.

46 In a study on violence against women on November 25, international day against violence against women, in Lima. The results according to neighborhoods were amazing. In municipal health care centers of middle-class districts, women arrived with no bruises on their faces and legs but with otherwise fully bruised bodies. In public health care centers in the neighborhoods, the beating was clear on the whole body and face.

### 2.3.3 *Masculinity*

The incorporation of the social and ideological construction of masculinity is not only one constitutive element of the gender perspective, but it also forms part of women's strategic interests. Insofar as there are huge variations in women's situations and/or degrees of subordination or autonomy in the different scales, Bayline<sup>47</sup> puts forward the idea of a "geography of gender relations" so as to go into men's studies and studies on the construction of masculinity in these differentiated dimensions as well. Analyses have given priority to several entries to the expression of hegemonic masculinity, which also express the ambivalent dynamics of the processes of transformation/resistance of gender relations: on the one hand, those who force the more isolated women, without strong social references; on the other, those who force women because they have started to break the traditional relation structure (because women are more actively involved in public spaces or because they have accessed to the labour market, etc.). These are changes that in turn reveal transformations in the traditional gender paradigm and that produce a crisis in traditional masculinity.

It is important to know which are the dimensions of fear in men that produce this crisis in masculinity since they enable the visualization of how traditional gender relations are being reconstructed and which are the new "knots" of losses and preservation of privileges that are taking place. There are important studies on masculinity developed in several Latin America countries (particularly in Chile) that provide weighty knowledge and input to generate better grounds for new gender agreements. However, as Gomaris and Garcia say, there is a disconnection between studies on masculinities and gender studies that address safety issues (Forum).

### 2.3.4 *Redistribution policies and recognition policies*

A relevant political and conceptual orientation for the analysis is that of redistribution justice and recognition justice policies:<sup>48</sup> with redistribution justice deeply rooted in society's political and economic structure and recognition justice deeply rooted in cultural dimensions of appreciation; while they are coordinated they are not uncompromising one to the other. One emphasizes equality and the other the recognition of differences. This double and simultaneous movement not only recovers the various forms of exclusion, but it also enables a more complex analysis of reality. The democratic foundation gets weakened without the simultaneous impact of both dimensions. Both are key political concepts and dynamics in terms of social struggles, the contents of gender policies and economic and cultural changes. This is not a classification of struggles; instead, it is a horizon for the interpretation of such struggles and their connections.

### 2.3.5 *Women's interests*

An approach for the analysis of the gender complexities is the classification/differentiation of gender practical and strategic interests,<sup>49</sup> which has been used in the interventions

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47 Mireia Baylina and Isabel Salamaña, "El lugar del género en Geografía Rural", *Boletín de la Asociación de Geógrafos Españoles – A.G.E.*, 41 (2006): 99-122.

48 Nancy Fraser, *Justicia Interrupta. Reflexiones críticas desde la posición postsocialista* (Bogotá: Siglo del Hombre Editores, Universidad de los Andes, 1997).

49 Maxine Molyneux, "Mobilization without emancipation? Women's interests and revolution in Nicaragua", *Feminist Studies*, 11 (2) (1985).

and papers. It is an interesting approach but it can be risky<sup>50</sup> if it is taken as another form of classification instead of as a perspective for approaching the complex realities of women's lives, experiences and struggles. The main risk lies in considering interests as something fixed or selected/classified beforehand. The huge diversity of experiences displayed in specific historical contexts of material and emotional deficit and in processes of interaction with society, with other women and with men produce multiple and changing interests, thus making everyday and public interactions not only among women, but also inside each woman more complex. Perhaps a more encompassing definition should consider gender concerns as everything that expands the room of action; everything that helps to renegotiate gender interactions in the short and long term, in the private and in the public; everything that feeds the different dimensions of women's autonomy. From this perspective, the *content* is not as significant as the *orientation* of interests. As regards gender-based violence, for example, one thing is to take it for granted that women need protection against violence and the other is to assume that women have citizen rights to live a life free from violence.

This also leads us to see the different positions of women, preventing us from making their involvement in or absence from spaces rigid. Not all women are – or not always – victims or vulnerable in their social relations and perceptions. Neither are they all secluded in the private space; however, they are also victims of violence. Private spaces are also ambivalent. Women have power in private spaces as well. Reproductive work is not only a monotonous repetition of activities; it also generates knowledge and abilities. Hence the importance of inquiring about other forms of women's (and men's) situations and imaginaries as well as about the existence of significant situations that reject radical segregation between spaces. This was one of the examples dealt with during the sessions and it refers to women peddlers, who develop a specific relation on the street and certain development of the public. And it is possible that many of them are also victims of violence.

Teresita de Barbieri alerts against dichotomous and rigid visions that occur if all women are considered as subordinated and all men as dominant, especially now that gender paradigms and the way women interact in public and political spaces are changing.

### 2.3.6 *Gender-based violence*

Violence against women is an expression of gender relations marked by power inequalities, which in turn have an impact on all the other structures and imaginaries of society. It is a multisectoral and integral issue that has to do with human rights, citizen safety and public health. But it is above all – or because of all this – an issue of the democratic agendas and horizons of societies, as its solution in turn requires a myriad of other democratic changes. State responsibility is fundamental, as it is first and foremost the responsibility of civil society and democratic movements of women and men as well.

If our approach relies on a democratic perspective and on the construction of democratic citizenship, it is important to recover some dimensions that have had little visibility. As the risk of isolating violence in the private sphere without considering its interrelation and continuity in both spaces is overcome,<sup>51</sup> it is also important to incorporate a

50 Jeannine Anderson, *Intereses o justicia. ¿Adónde va la discusión sobre la mujer y el desarrollo?* (Lima: Ediciones Entre Mujeres, Proyecto de Cooperación Sur-Norte, 1992).

51 Otherwise we could not understand women's murders in Ciudad Juarez or Guatemala.

dimension that has been almost absent from reflection: sexual violence in the public and the private. It is also important to allow for the possibility of incorporating other brutal expressions of violence – also made invisible – such as political violence, the “complex violence” (Carmen de la Cruz, *Ciudades para convivir*, p. 203), which in the case of women is generally expressed as a violation in the form of a torture, so as to include women in the democratic and human rights agendas of cities.

A constant risk that incapacitates women who suffer violence is the deep devaluing of their citizen subjectivity, which leads them to accept the discourse of victimization. This is probably one of the most persistent limitations. Of all the feminist struggles developed in Latin America, this is the one with the strongest response, undoubtedly because of its dramatic character and injustice. However, if this is the reason, then why is there no greater effectiveness? Why do laws not address dimensions such as marital rape yet? Why are women still being forced to keep up family relationships of aggression and death? This is so perhaps because violence against women is a dimension that brings us closer to victimization, thus enabling the isolation of the victim from her condition as a person, without providing her with the conditions to be a subject.<sup>52</sup> The condition of “victims” in the imaginary of society and law enforcement creates a double standard of rights, where one sector of the population receives no rights but, as Fraser and Gordon say,<sup>53</sup> “a plain and unilateral donation to which the receiver has no right and to which the donor is not obliged, being similar to exchanging rights for charity.” This is done by exposing women to a double victimization: on the one hand due to the gender bias and limitations of judicial and police institutions and, on the other, to the attribution of violence to women’s behaviour – for going out, for the way they dress, for not playing their domestic role well. Victimization and guilt end up isolating violence against women from the cultural context, thus inhibiting and limiting women’s mobility in the city and influencing the choices of activities, hours and/or places of transit.

The transformation of needs into democratic citizen rights is crucial to start breaking apart the rationale of exclusion by generating social subjects and actors. That is to say, language creates orientation.

### 2.3.7 *The complexity of filing reports*

Talking about violence has been the result of a social and political process, that of naming something that did not exist in the eyes of society and State despite its dramatic existence. Experience does not seem to exist if it is not linked to a discourse that interprets it. And this is still valid for women suffering violence.

It is true that reporting is a way of decreasing the degree of tolerance. However, its effectiveness cannot be seen in itself. It can “hold back” men’s violence for a while, but

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52 Considering a woman as a victim obscures the situation of conflict between the sexes, sustained by men’s disdain, intolerance, superiority towards women, and by institutions in regards to women’s rights. Otherwise, the so called “indulgent laws” would not exist: freedom for gang bangers if one of them marries the “victim”, which still exists in several countries of the region. There would not persist, in some countries, mitigations for the murders of women such as the legal figure of “honor killing”. There would be more countries with laws on sexual violence in marriage (today, only Cuba and Costa Rica have this type of laws) A dramatic and recent example is that told by Silvia Rivera: until 1995, the labeling of domestic violence as a crime punished the aggressor only if the woman had spent thirty days in hospital or resulted as incapacitated.

53 Nancy Fraser and Linda Gordon, “Contrato versus caridad. Una reconsideración entre ciudadanía civil y ciudadanía social”. *CON/TEXTOS*, 2 (Lima: Programa de Estudios de Género, Facultad de Ciencias Sociales de la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 1997).

not necessarily. Reconciliation practices are terribly ambivalent and they are linked to the degree of women's (in)security, their capacity to establish relationships with other "peers", their degree of autonomy – mainly economic – the role of the State and its judicial mechanisms among others. If the purpose of reporting is to be an "instrument of negotiation" or an expression of greater levels of intolerance cannot be decided by a judge with gender prejudices against the role of women.<sup>54</sup>

In order to analyze its meaning, we need more cultural and anthropological hypotheses. We also need to restate the existing strategies that seem to be ineffective. In this sense, some authors suggest that the persistence of gender-based violence perhaps expresses that we are failing to make the proper questions and establishing the proper links: the risk of reinforcing police procedures, legal definitions, greater punishment, redress, judicial vindication and the like have limited the effectiveness of a policy aiming to prevent rape. In this way, their purpose has been to persuade men not to rape or assault (out of fear of punishment) instead of providing women with elements that allow them to snatch the capacity to rape and kill out of men's hands. Providing women with elements means overcoming the discourse of victimization to widen their room of autonomous actions upon their lives and circumstances. This movement from punitive strategies towards prevention and empowerment strategies has been present along the whole reflection process.

### 2.3.8 *Violence, poverty, labour market*

It is illuminating to analyze how poverty is not a determinant of violence. This unchallenged relation tends to "naturalize" violence in the poorest and to obscure the endemic character of violence against women in all social classes.

It is important to go deeper into the correlation between women's work, organizing capacity in the public and public and private violence. Gender problems and power relations worsen – as one of the interventions notes – when market politics wins. That is why it is necessary to see power relations between women and men also within the context of economic power relations, in their double dimension: i) as an excluding inclusion, given the type of work to which in general women have access, their lower wages in relation to men, without recognizing their contribution to reproductive economy; ii) on the impact it can have on higher levels of autonomy for women. On the one hand, we have seen how women suffer violence when they are isolated in their homes, without social networks to bring them under their umbrella, and on the other, how information shows us that when women start to go out to the public space, whether to perform a paid job or to organize themselves as women, they also suffer male violence due to the destabilization of traditional male standards.

However, this is not a static reality, hence the importance of tracking the reactions of women when faced to violence in the private world when they start to conquer the public world. How they express the benefit of generating new interrelations and greater economic empowerment resulting in greater room of action. If masculinity is in a state of crisis, so is traditional femininity due to the greater presence of women in public spheres.<sup>55</sup>

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54 During the International day against violence against women Campaign on November 25, there was a judiciary study on cases of women murdered by their husbands. In many cases, there have been three and even four reconciliation processes; the judge had simply obliged women to stay, thus jeopardizing their lives.

55 As regards their survival, the first women leaders of grassroots organizations clearly express that their leaving home and placing their domestic and private roles in the public generated an enormous physical, psychological and sexual violence on the part of their partners. Many of them are still leaders, many of them broke up their relationships, many others renegotiated the terms of the relation more democratically.

Emphasizing violence without considering this more dynamic perspective tends to obscure other routes and explorations of women in public spaces and their resistance strategies in the private: what it means that public spaces are spaces of “refuge;” which dimensions of the near space facilitate or hinder their being deemed as spaces of freedom.

## 2.4 Actors in the city and in local government

### 2.4.1 Actors/movements

Taking into account the interests of women and the generation of inclusive policies of citizen safety, in order to expand public spaces to address violence, “a strong women’s movement at local level as the social actors who monitor and demand a constant oversight of gender agendas – in this case, an agenda against gender-based violence in cities – is necessary” (Alonso, *Ciudades para convivir*, p. 114).

An important change for the emergence of social movements and actors is the existence of multiple everyday life affairs striving for their recognition and installation in the public. This is confronted with the dynamics of a growing individualism characteristic of the current hegemonic culture. They are marked by what Lechner calls the “the ego culture”, suspicious of getting involved in collective commitments, thus hurdling the imaginary and reality.<sup>56</sup>

However, it is in motion. That is to say, there is a constant dispute, categorical mobilizations and constant processes of space ownership. The enriching contribution of research on violence in urban ghettos of Santiago sheds light on the impacts of public policies on violence and the paralyzing seclusion of women in private spaces, all of which form a dramatic part of reality. It is not, however, the whole reality. Women from densely-populated neighbourhoods have strategies for their nearer spaces: they take up the neighbourhoods and they confront violence.<sup>57</sup> Recovering this dimension also implies recovering the “city as a solution,”<sup>58</sup> thus maximizing those factors that better contribute to women’s autonomy.

Additionally, the conditions and contents of collective action have changed; they are not the same as in the past, neither do social movements and actors express themselves with the same extension and organizational modalities as in the past. There are other patterns of action, which would be worth exploring in relation to the case of urban struggles against violence, considering these new forms of organization taking place in urban spaces as well as the forms that are generating new discourses and imaginaries of the city from the perspectives of women and men.

Similarly, it is also important to analyze the other “rationales” of actors and their collective movements or expressions that do not necessarily deal with institutional political spaces. There are innovative and different forms of appropriating public spaces and

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56 Norbert Lechner, “¿Cómo reconstruimos un nosotros?”, in *Las sombras del mañana. La dimensión subjetiva de la política* (Santiago: LOM, 2002), p. 99-124.

57 In San Juan de Miraflores in Lima, women from the blocks were organised to go out collectively every time they perceived situations of violence against women in the homes, with whistles, alerting all the people, calling the police, and even, on some occasions, getting into the houses and taking the man to the public square. This is an example of a private issue turned into a political affair by the action of women.

58 Fernando Carrión, “El centro histórico como proyecto y objeto de deseo”, *EURE* 31, no. 939, p. 89-100 (Santiago de Chile, agosto 2005).

“performing” the demands – to turn them into visible and transgressive events. In cities and densely-populated neighbourhoods there are counter-cultural interventions nowadays<sup>59</sup> expressed through graffiti, music, poetry and various manifestations of urban art. This is an imagination that must be captured in order to expand the intolerance to the persistence and impunity of gender-based violence in cities. These forms are different, open, circumstantial, lighter and more transient, with horizontal structures and public manifestations related more to the “passers by” in the city; they do not negotiate the right to space, which is expressed in the very action they seek to demand.<sup>60</sup> That is to say, action generates ownership and rights. They are specific dimensions, but also more “general” dimensions and tensions: as Durán says in *La ciudad compartida*, they do not only express issues of redistribution and recognition in cities, but also issues of configuration of identities and generation of changes in the long term.

All these dynamics give us grounds to recover the possibility of constructing “particular” public spaces in public spaces, ones that contribute to generate what Nancy Fraser calls the “subaltern counter-publics” in “Repensando la esfera pública” (quoted above). They function as retreat and regrouping spaces and, therefore, as the basis and training field for activities of agitation directed to wider audiences.<sup>61</sup> The construction of particular public spaces would seem to encourage democratic coexistence and be part of the process of “recognition” of heterogeneous views, proposals and problems. Coexistence from this perspective is more feasible. They are disputes over recognition and dialogue that spring from differences and an effective way of incorporating new issues into the public democratic agendas. Certainly, there is the risk of fragmentation of spaces and audiences. However, it can also contribute to the coordinating dimension of diversity that heterogeneity contains, and not its paralyzing dimension.

#### 2.4.2 *Institutions/institutional actors*

“Revealing the forms of mistreatment inflicted by the State” is an important clue to deepen the analysis of social policies and reproduction on the part of the State and the conditions that give rise to violence as they show the relation between policies (on citizen safety) in public spaces and the way in which it is interwoven – with unwanted effects – with gender exclusions and discriminations.

There are two useful entries to show the mechanisms in place by those public policies that fail to consider the specificities in the construction of gender in cities. On the one hand, spatial design as a device of social control and exclusion (between spaces/places of the city, and between private and public spaces) with negative effects on gender relations as it isolates and disempowers women, and with perverse effects on city public spaces as well. On the other, the tensions that for women the dynamics of exclusion-inclusion in cities have, which aggravate the tendency to being excluded from the city and precariously included in the systems of the city. This forms part of the fabric that undermines from the start the discourse of equality involved in social policies.

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59 In 2000, the city of Lima woke up full of provocative billboards on violence against women. “Perra Habla” [Speak bitch], whose central message was: if you are beaten, it is your fault. It had a sharply provocative intention, exactly to raise social awareness and public debate. And they made it. There were various reactions, from those who felt it was an offensive message (several feminist organizations and even the Ombudsperson), to those who grasped the exact meaning: a creative provocation. The campaign gave rise to discussion forums, articles in newspapers, artistic exhibits, and it undoubtedly put the issue of gender-based violence at the heart of the public debate.

60 Urban Architecture Workshop.

61 Jorge Ribalta, “Contrapúblicos. Mediación y construcción de públicos”, available at [www.republicart.net](http://www.republicart.net)

Both dimensions require policies for citizen safety with a gender perspective in all state public policies: health, education, urban services, all that means to broaden women's opportunities to generate more autonomous relations. They are not only policies on violence against women, but also the confirmation that social policies without a gender cross-cutting dimension restrict the impact of public policies against violence within the framework of democratic construction. The integral and interrelated perspective of existing public policies is essential, as it is also to incorporate into them new dimensions that strengthen the perspective of women's rights such as sexual and reproductive rights given their key implications for women's physical autonomy.

In order for them to be effective, social policies require considering the voice of social subjects as we are reminded by many interventions and analyses. A voice not only to report, but also to show different uses of spaces in space-time dimensions so that women can incorporate their times, routes and demands into the city. These are policies that must combine dimensions of redistribution and dimensions of recognition.

It is with this approach – more prone to dialogue – that we can place the strategies of “citizen coexistence” understood as recognition of diversity: the recognition of the other as a peer. However, in view of the existing deep economic, ethnic, gender and racial inequalities, how can this relation among peers take place? Undoubtedly, coexistence refers to the democratic negotiation of conflict, but for women to get involved in this negotiation, they need to strengthen their right-holding status. They will not be treated as equals because coexistence demands so, but rather because they demand it. And heterogeneity with an active recognition of differences (which is what ensures the expression of diversity in plural public spaces) also communicates its ambivalent content as the expression of fragmentation, where unqualified differences have a value of their own and not in an interrelation. If a citizen safety policy must tend to modify the rules of behaviour that guide these relations for reducing violence levels, this raises the political question about which differences deserve recognition to avoid the risk of “depolitised differences” (as pointed out by Fraser) such as the negotiation of a democratic pluralism.<sup>62</sup> How can we distinguish democratic recognition demands from antidemocratic ones, fair from unfair demands? Which identity demands are deeply rooted in the defence of dominance and inequality relations? Which must be abolished and which must be promoted? Which identity demands are significant for democracy and which are not? This opens up an important range of citizen disputes and negotiations.

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62 Chantal Mouffe says that it is democratic politics the one that establishes the limits to pluralism, and that the establishing of such limit is a political question, resulting in pragmatic and contingent results that need constant negotiation and justification. In *La paradoja democrática*, qtd.



# Appendix

## Summary of the knowledge produced

As discussed in this paper, three concrete outputs of the work related to public spaces, citizen safety and gender-based violence are the following:

- Workshop Sessions
- E-forum on “Cities without violence against women in public and private spaces”
- Book *Ciudades para convivir: sin violencias hacia las mujeres* [Living Together: Cities Free From Violence Against Women]

### 1 Workshop Sessions<sup>63</sup>

**First Workshop, October 2006.** The first workshop, *The Shared City*, was in charge of Maria Angeles Duran,<sup>64</sup> and the participants discussed Chapter 7 of her book *El deseo de futuro y los proyectos de cambio* [The desire for a future and projects of change]. One of the most important issues addressed was the analysis of the context of development in cities over the last few years, which has been marked by the impact of big financial corporations on urban business, which raises the value of land and produces widespread practices of corruption and increasing exclusion and fragmentation. This, in turn, has facilitated the transition from processes of spatial and territorial (socioeconomic) segregation to processes of urban (socio-cultural) fragmentation, which are expressed in a myriad of discontinuous spaces, lacking coordination with the urban structure as a whole. There was a discussion on the “sexed” nature of the processes and forms of urbanization (a city that simultaneously includes and excludes); the division between the public and the private in cities; the way

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63 The workshop sessions were organised by SUR Corporación de Estudios Sociales y Educación, the focal point for the Women and Habitat Network in Chile.

64 Cum Laude Doctor in Political and Economic Sciences, specialty in Social Sciences, Universidad Complutense, research professor in Social Sciences at the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas and author of *La ciudad compartida. Conocimiento, afecto y uso*.

in which women's symbolic seclusion in private spaces together with women's difficulties to access the public impact upon the urban imaginary, and the recognition that, despite the fear felt by women in public spaces, the higher risk of violence and abuse is in private spaces. It was acknowledged that fear is a social and cultural construct, an imaginary that generates anxiety of something that has not occurred yet and that nonetheless produces distrust of specific spaces in cities that are seen as unfriendly towards women. The security/insecurity dynamics is related to the "ownership" or "abandonment" of city spaces; hence the importance of the generation of social actors and movements that occupy these spaces. When occupied, such spaces automatically become safer, whereas if we abandon them out of fear, they automatically become unsafe. Citizen organization and the use of strategies of cultural resistance are key to move towards this ownership.

Although the "shared city", that which offers more possibilities for all, is still an aspiration more so than a reality, there has been important progress in this respect. The emergence of new actors has produced a new vision of the city. These new subjects deem it in a different manner and generate strategies to act in the city differently.

**Second Workshop: December 1, 2006.** The *Women and power* workshop was in charge of Dolores Comas,<sup>65</sup> who put forth an article based on her paper "Mujeres, las otras políticas" [Women, the other politicians]. There was a discussion on the masculine power structure in political times and structures, which is expressed in the dynamics of political parties, governments and institutions, all of which contain and express gender stereotypes, thus limiting women's real participation. For this reason, it is imperative to transform the ways in which gender relations are built into other ways that facilitate the development and exercise of individual and collective capabilities of communication and cooperation so that an inclusive public space may be constructed. There was a debate about the meaning and relevance of struggling for greater women's participation in political public spaces, not only by confronting the existing power structures – to which they have to adapt –, but also in times of political crisis and scepticism. It was recognized that politics does not take place only in formal spaces; that it also thrives in social movements (as they raise other issues such as the reproductive or the ordinary), and in other spaces (civil society). In this sense, participants maintained that, together with supporting affirmative action policies (quotas), it is also necessary to promote other cultural changes to achieve greater gender equality. The workshop highlighted the importance of introducing a proactive perspective about women's participation instead of insisting in women as victims. To this end, the workshop proposed to move away from traditional discourse so as to introduce a discussion on new matters into formal politics such as everyday-life problems, the recognition of reproductive work, sexual rights, reproductive rights, abortion, and violence against women as a way of moving towards a politics that calls for greater participation which current politics cannot do.

The workshop also underlined the importance of once again tackling the question of the traditional sexual division of labour, seeking to incorporate men into the domestic so to allow women to better participate in politics. Another point stressed was the importance of recognizing diversity, introducing difference as an added value and as an expression of a plural and innovative society. Women's participation enriches politics through difference and is also an issue of democratic justice and legitimacy.

All these dimensions are gaining importance because women are discussing and vindicating them.

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65 Spanish Anthropologist, former PM of Catalonia in representation of the Iniciativa Cataluña Verde.

**Third Workshop, December 13, 2006.** *Una aproximación a la violencia hacia las mujeres en los guetos de Santiago* [An approach to violence against women in ghettos in Santiago] was in charge of Alfredo Rodríguez, Paula Rodríguez, Marisol Saborido and Ximena Salas, who presented the paper “Perspectiva de género para enfocar la violencia en los guetos de Santiago” [A gender perspective to address violence in ghettos in Santiago] for discussion.

The debate was on the impact of housing and urban policies in the city of Santiago on the issue of violence against women. On the one hand, the workshop discussed how urban policies generate places and spaces – both public and private – that hinder the integration of their residents – women and men – into the urban and social structure of the rest of the city as an expression of the symbolic violence practiced by the state. On the other hand, the debate focused on how housing policies generate spaces and places – public and private – that, given their constitution, favour forms of physical and psychological violence that affect women in particular and that find an explanation in the asymmetrical power relations in which women are immersed. The spatial design also functions as a mechanism of social control and exclusion. For women, relocation to spaces generated by housing policies frequently means the loss of previous social family networks and the disappearance of emotional and communicational ties among neighbours, and their own previous organizational and leadership experience.

The workshop identified a double movement: exclusion from the city goes hand in hand with a precarious and inequitable inclusion into city systems (education, labour, health). These “inclusions” are based on inequitable relationships that “undermine ‘the discourse of equality,’ weakening the redistributive and democratic character of public policies.” They favour the formation of ghettos, scattered neighbourhoods separated from the rest of the city, which concentrate marginalized groups who, in turn, perceive themselves as excluded and coerced by stigmatization, segmentation, distrust, fear, lack of opportunities and precarious participation in public spaces.

An interesting clue is questioning the “natural” relationship between violence and poverty. Proportionally, it may be not poorer women the ones who report family violence, but those who are better immersed in city systems: when there is participation in public spaces, the lesser the isolation, the more reporting of violence there seems to be.

This discussion revealed the importance of disclosing the mechanisms used by the State to exercise violence against citizens (and particularly against women), the analysis of the factors involved in the production of certain behaviours, the deconstruction of the discourses that interpret violence, and the importance of the territory in the development of hypotheses.

**Fourth Workshop, January 23, 2007.** *Seguridad y género: convivencia social en el espacio público y el espacio privado* [social coexistence in public and private spaces] was in charge of Olga Segovia, who presented her paper by the same title. The workshop debated the importance of promoting and protecting public spaces as meeting places, places of solidarity and of interest and respect for the other, places where unknown people can forge relationships. The workshop analyzed the process of degradation of the social fabric as a result of an excluding appropriation of public spaces at the expense of the use of other city sectors and subjects, as well as the need to challenge such spaces, not only territorially or geographically, but also in the form of a social or cultural dispute. This implies the empowerment of other social subjects so that they can challenge excluding uses. The perception of

security/insecurity in the public spaces in the city is a learned process that corresponds to the actors' reality, imaginary and subjectivity. While for women, the greater insecurity comes from the private space, it is against public spaces that they manifest their fear and so they abandon them, debilitating their relationship with other social subjects and actors. The workshop considered the need to reduce this fear and to promote a strategy for the joint production of safety in which women can also be actors that seek to extend public spaces. The role of the media in the generation of the perception of insecurity in cities was also analyzed.

The dichotomous division between public and private spaces was addressed both in terms of its continuity as well as of the recognition of their different rhythms and logic of action. Although public and private spaces are differentiated, they have an impact upon each other as "people are the same in both spaces." The content and types of violence affecting women was expanded beyond criminal violence to tackle all the spheres where there are power relations – be it physical, psychological or sexual. Violence was defined as everything that upsets people's quality of life. The workshop also examined the different dimensions and uses of public space, which, despite the fear it produces, can also be deemed as a "refuge" from the violence and contradictions of private life. The character of dispute in the construction of public space was emphasized in as much as there is no public space as such, but rather people conquer public space through use. In this process, the space of the "neighbourhood", as a space of mediation, appears as more immediate for the development of citizen interactions. Then, the workshop highlighted the importance of recovering heterogeneity in cities as a vital expression of the convergence of diversities. Finally, the possibility of generating more equitable public policies was discussed so as to recognize the limitations that result from the process of selection the State carries out as well as State red tape in matters of citizen demands.

## 2 E-Forum<sup>66</sup>

The e-forum on "Cities without violence against women in public and private spaces" (10-17 April, 2007) analyzed the aspects discussed in the previous workshops and tackled some of the assumptions dealt with in the context of the debate.

Every day, participants discussed a specific question:

**First day. The guiding question was** *Which are the mechanisms and tools that could allow increasing women and men's use and production of public spaces?*

There was a discussion on the different scales and types of urban public policies: the scale of the city or metropolis and the scale of the neighbourhood, differentiating poor and wealthy areas, separated one from the other, each one with specific forms of exclusion

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<sup>66</sup> The moderation of the E-Forum was carried out by different institutions from various countries. In Argentina, CISCASA, the Regional Coordinator for the Latin American Women and Habitat Network moderated the E-Forum on April 11th. In Chile, SUR Corporación, a focal point for the Women and Habitat Network, coordinated on April 10th, 13th and 17th. In Colombia, the E-Forum was moderated by AVP, a focal point for the Latin American Women and Habitat Network, and by the Colombian National Women's Network and UNIFEM, on April 12th. On April 16th, the Forum was moderated from Uruguay by REPEM, and from Ecuador by the Programme of Studies on the City, FLACSO-Ecuador. The E-Forum was realized as part of the collaboration between the Regional Programme of UNIFEM and the UNDP *América Latina Genera* Project.

and inclusion of city dwellers. The forum analyzed the “naturalization” of violence and of sexist behaviour projected on all spaces, generating a cycle of greater violence and discrimination and reinforcing the dissociation between public and private worlds. As regards the initiatives to confront violence against women, the forum pointed out the risk of addressing only the private space, disregarding its continuity in the public. This is the reality that public policies and social actions must address.

The forum focused on the question of citizen safety and security approaching it from the concept of situational prevention through the adaptation of city equipment (street lighting, materials) and the promotion of use and activities for stimulating social and cultural interchange in public spaces. The forum brought to light the importance of generating public spaces to offer meeting places, open to women and men, that facilitate the combination of entertainment, public awareness and reflection, recognizing the role of local governments in this process.

**Second day. The guiding question was** *Can the increase in the use and production of public spaces help us eliminate violence against women and children in private spaces? How?*

The forum brought to light the importance of incorporating subjectivity in policy-making, in view of the need of implementing policies designed not only to reduce and eliminate violence, but also to reduce women’s perception of fear. It was also recognized that public space is not the only one that requires changing, but that it nonetheless constitutes a dimension that can either promote new behaviour and break stereotypes in favour of more democratic relations – contributing to the development of rights – or generate social, sexual, ethnical, and generational discrimination among others. However, given the marked dissociation between the public and the private in the city imaginary, there is the risk that the changes introduced in one space may not necessarily translate into changes in the other. For that reason it is important to develop explicit mechanisms for the establishment of relations between both spaces and influence the strategies of communication and report in public spaces, thus facilitating their recognition in the private.

**Third day. The guiding questions were** *Can the strengthening of socialization in public spaces contribute to the reduction of the different forms of violence against women and children in private spaces? What are the characteristics that such spaces must have?*

The forum advanced towards the location and production of public spaces as an element to strengthen social ties that facilitate violence prevention. However, despite the fact that gender-based violence has a common origin – regardless its place of occurrence – its concealment and naturalization are also expressed in urban safety and security policies, which do not address gender-based violence as a crime and public spaces as places of violence and predictors of fear. Public spaces must be deemed as places of encounter with the “other” and conceived as learning places of social redistribution and tolerance and, in this sense, as capable of transforming social relations. It is essential to ensure the emergence of new actors to advance the process.

It is important to examine city expansion policies from the perspective of citizen interests in order to strengthen public spaces: public squares, playgrounds, bike paths, specific spots for reporting crimes, research on the cases of abuse of women and children in such spaces. This is also important to generate open and appealing public spaces that are used in a friendly democratic context to promote lively and visited spaces

and to generate integrating and non-punitive dimensions. The underlying notion is that safe cities for women and men are cities of coexistence instead of cities of police security.

**Fourth day. The guiding questions were** *how should women and men participate in the production and use of quality public and private spaces? What are the roles that women and men should share in public and private spaces?*

The participants discussed the importance of women and men as contributors to the production and use of public and private spaces in cities, which would facilitate the democratization and interchange of roles as well as the generation of new coexistence agreements between women and men. It is important to work with men in the creation of new meanings of masculinity, looking for mutual recognition and points of contact as well as the promotion of public policies that foster cultural changes.

The forum analyzed the complex interest of public policies in private spaces. On the one hand, non-state intervention in private lives is a citizen right; on the other, the violence inflicted upon a women by private agents becomes a public issue that requires State mechanisms to protect the victim.

**During the fifth day, there was a discussion on how to build an agenda.** Participants analyzed the importance of incorporating into the public agenda the construction of safer cities for men and women, introducing to the notions of safety and security dimensions that go beyond punitive or police measures as well as the importance of helping women and men to become active actors in the different spheres of social action (the media, local governments, ownership of public spaces) and processes of city reconstruction and democratization. The forum carried on with the analysis of the role that men can play in the democratization of gender relations and the importance of considering the generational factor as a dimension that must be incorporated in the reconstruction of the meaning of a city. Participants insisted on the importance of continuing the debate on the interrelationship between public and private spaces, understanding that they are not fixed and completely separate spaces, but that they are rather in constant construction with their own specificities.

Finally, participants recognized the importance of working with those responsible for the managing of social resources in the government, the private sector and the social sector as well as with women and men in the communities, neighbourhoods, colonies throughout the gamut of social diversity (socioeconomic, ethnical, age, sexual orientation, migrant situation, territorial origin, ideology, religious beliefs). The forum emphasized the importance of incorporating the symbolic and ludic dimensions that are present in the processes of city ownership and visibility of private spaces, seeking to "give cities other meanings that transcend fear and gender, race, ethnic and class discrimination".

**During the sixth day, participants summarized the discussions held throughout the Forum and discussed different proposals.** There was a summary of the discussions and a debate of proposals for influencing public policies from the perspective of the issues dealt with by the Program. Participants also proposed various issues for future analysis: the relationship between the public and the private and their constant reconstruction and resignification; public policy initiatives; the resignification of public spaces through institutional mechanisms, and the role of the media in this matter.

### **3 Book “*Ciudades para convivir: sin violencias hacia las mujeres* [Living together: Cities free from violence against women]**

The book *Ciudades para convivir: sin violencias hacia las mujeres*, edited by Ana Falú and Olga Segovia (Santiago: Red Mujer y Habitat de America Latina/UNIFEM/AECID/Ediciones SUR, 2007) gathers the presentations made at the International Seminar on “Cities without violence for women, safe cities for all” that was held in Santiago de Chile in August 2006.

The issues dealt with in the book show a production of knowledge that attempts to give an account of a complex analysis of violence against women, understood not as dramatic and isolated events, but rather as an inherent part of the democratic and citizen-based construction of cities.

The book provides a very rich discussion on the complexities and the richness of regarding the gender perspective from other viewpoints and articulations: academia, research centres, representatives from cooperation agencies and national and local governments of the region, social activists and women’s organizations that have produced a wide range of knowledge on a wide range of issues related to violence in private and public spaces, its relation to other proposals and democratic agendas on city safety and the construction of public spaces that are inclusive and responsive to women’s needs and proposals such as the possibility of more equal gender relations.

A first, introductory article on a global understanding of gender-based violence by Patricia Morey, “Violencia de género: hacia una comprensión global,” provides a general framework for understanding gender-based violence and its multiple dimensions. Later, the book is organized around six groups of articles and comments, a Final Conference and an Appendix.

The first group of articles – Gender policies in Latin America: political context, challenges and opportunities – includes an article by Jannie Dador and comments by Nieves Rico. Dador gives an account of the institutional and regulatory advances made over the last few decades, the direction of public policies and the limitations that existing democracies impose upon the implementation of such regulations as they are not directed to consolidate citizen and human rights or to democratize the relationship between civil society and State or to generate spaces for dialogue in society and between society and the State. Nieves Rico contributes to the discussion emphasizing the intrinsic articulation between democracy and development in the region, incorporating economic justice, the struggle for equality, policies of recognition, and the importance of gender policies as public policy.

Eugenio Lahera deals with the relentless changes in the gender paradigm – despite evident obstacles – due to the growing access of women to the labour market, the new problems and violations of rights brought about by the new situations in women’s lives such as sexual harassment, as well as the need to reveal the dimensions that were not achieved yet (such as choosing motherhood) in all these improvements because of the resistance against them.

The central article of the group on *Insecurity and gender-based violence in cities* was written by Claudia Laub and commented by Jose Olavarría. Laub refers to gender-based violence as a form of “abuse of power” and links it to the democratic horizon, widening the approach

to citizen safety/insecurity to incorporate the conflicts brought about by the dynamics of exclusion-inclusion and social segregation. She considers citizen safety as a public asset, central to the democratic agenda both in the public sphere as in everyday life.

Olavarría deals with the perspective of cultural change. He states that it is necessary to transform culture in relation to bodies, recognizing differences and equality between people. Cities are intersected by gender and have the potential to reproduce forms of dominance or to be a space for the construction of self-esteem and recognition of diversity.

The third group, which addresses *insecurity and fear in cities*, includes the article “Entre el temor difuso y la realidad de victimización” [fear and victimization] by Lucia Dammert and comments by Ivonne Fernandez, Mariana Alonso and Enrique Oviedo. Dammert proposes an approach that considers fear as a social and constructed category – in the case of women –, which is supported by the historical subordination that women have felt, perceived and transmitted. This is a process that has been learned, socialized and reinforced by powerful institutions such as the family, the Church and the school. It is necessary to incorporate these hidden dimensions into public policies that are closer to women’s realities and that must be the object of research.

Ivonne Fernández’ commentary adds an important dimension to the understanding of this type of women’s fear, such as the “vicarious” sensation, which assumes the historical crimes and attacks suffered by other women. It challenges the existence of a lineal causality between crime and fear, which would lead us to treat the fear that has not been experienced yet as irrational; hence the importance of incorporating a definition that recovers the diversity of experiences that women’s perception of fear entails. Mariana Alonso recaptures a dimension of security such as the “use of freedom” and the responsibility of local governments for favouring the conditions for such freedom, mainstreaming a gender perspective into citizen safety policies. To this end, not only the political and institutional feasibility of a gender agenda is important, but also the existence of women’s movements that monitor the enacting of the agenda. Enrique Oviedo makes reference to the importance of developing categories of analysis that permit the comparative development of the causes of violence and policies against gender-based violence in Latin America. To this end, it is necessary to get back some descriptive categories that characterize the phenomenon of violence, and develop explanatory categories that place violence as a product of the socialization of women and men. He also says that these forms of socialization are starting to change – according to him, today there are women that are also violent in the private and public sphere.

The fourth group addresses the question about *How to live together: Installation art* through the artistic expression of three Chilean artists: Yennyferth Becerra, with Solución Habitacional; Dominique Serrano, with the series Mamelas 2, and Paloma Villalobos, with the series Bajo la Tormenta. Justo Pastor Mellado’s commentary explains how art gives new meaning – in its own language – to the concerns about violence and gender, about public and private space. Some artistic practices, he concludes, deepen the discussion because they incorporate a healing perspective based on the narration of crisis situations.

The fifth group addresses the issue of *Government, citizen safety and gender* through the article “Analyses and proposals for local government measures in favour of women’s safety in cities,” by Alejandra Massolo, with the commentary by Fernando Carrion and Andreina Torres together with Patricia Provoste. Massolo addresses gender-based violence as an infringement of women’s citizenship, as it inhibits and erodes women’s rights.

According to Massolo, local governments are essential if they are considered within a new institutional framework regarding citizen safety and equal opportunities, as well as in the matter of the coordination with different social actors. Even though this is still an exploratory field, it is already generating more democratic propositions between municipalities and between municipalities and citizens.

Fernando Carrion and Andreina Torres address violence in its plurality, tackling the violence supported by inequitable gender relations. They explain the importance of urban spaces and cities – where conflict is expressed – to introduce actions that address gender-based violence as well as the importance of de-centralization processes to devise more appropriate solutions for this reality.

Patricia Provoste considers that a gender approach is a theoretical and conceptual contribution that allows for explaining gender-based violence and the way it is expressed in different spheres and intervention modalities of public policies. It is, however, citizen action and the action of women that can mainly contribute to reduce gender-based violence; therefore, it can and must be promoted by the municipality through legislation, the assurance of its enforcement and processes of citizen education.

The sixth group is devoted to the issue of *citizen safety and security and gender-based violence: Indicators, regulations and instruments*, which was developed in Analía Aucia's presentation with a revision of the legal aspects and proposals of transformation related to gender-based violence in the region. The commentary is in the hands of Teresa Valdés. Aucia's article examines the relationship between law and the possibility of effectively addressing gender-based violence, showing the limitations of existing legislation – national and international –, which, even though it is a step forward in the evidencing and punishment of violence against women, it presents obstacles to considering gender-based violence as a human rights violation. In her comment, Teresa Valdes emphasizes the importance of considering the historicity of the process of the evidencing of gender-based violence as an expression of power relations. Regulations must be complemented with knowledge that not only provides a quantification of the phenomenon but that also moves forward in the identification of its causes and solutions, emphasizing the knowledge provided by women themselves.

The book finishes with a final Conference on *Citizen Spaces, gender-based violence and women's safety*, by Carmen de la Cruz, which addresses the difficult and complex reality of political violence (in the case of Colombia) and its impact on women. The Conference provides a set of conceptual evaluations that promote a model of intervention for the safety of women in cities as well as elements for public policy-making. The book concludes with an Appendix developed by Patricia Morey that summarizes the central issues of gender-based violence, including those dealt with in the book.