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Pedagogies of Permanence:

Ecofeminist Resistance, Territoriality, and Peasant Education in Colombia



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Abstract

The field of environmental education in Latin America faces a profound dilemma: it either instrumentalizes education to serve skills development dictated by global agendas, or it abandons formal schooling altogether to pursue a radically communitarian and decolonial education. To challenge these dichotomous logics, this paper makes two core contributions. First, it produces a conceptual cartography that complexifies the theoretical and political work of Latin American ecofeminism within the context of ongoing regional processes of reprimarization and neo-extractivism. Second, grounded in this epistemic-political framework, it situates a five-year research program conducted alongside grassroots peasant women's organizations resisting these dynamics. The methodological approach unfolds in three distinct phases: a genealogy of the intervention category "rural woman" to deconstruct the institutional assemblage organizing relations among the State, academia, and international cooperation; a cartography that interrogates the local territorial arrangements produced by this intervention while highlighting its cracks and fractures; and a pedagogy—the study's central finding—which reveals the situated, everyday practices through which life is reproduced as an ethical and political commitment to enacting Pedagogies of Permanence.

Keywords: Ecofeminism; Feminist Political Ecology; Pedagogies of permanence; Neo-extractivism; Popular Education

JEL codes: Q56, O13, J16, I21

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1 Introduction

In recent years, much of the academic discussion on environmental education has reproduced an epistemic gesture that feminizes, instrumentalizes, and subalternizes education in relation to the major conclusions and findings of the natural and social sciences. This gesture is evident in the extensive literature devoted to identifying the most effective educational means of achieving objectives established in advance by other fields of knowledge—objectives that now form part of the global agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) concerning environmental issues (Aikenhead et al., 2011; Barth et al., 2016).

In this paper, I challenge this logic of knowledge production—or, more precisely, of knowledge reproduction—within the field of education. I do so by presenting the findings of a research program on rural women that we have conducted over the past five years as part of the academic and political commitments of the Feminist Ecologies Collective. Within this research, we identified a series of territorially grounded popular-education practices that articulate a complex critique of both the contemporary ecological crisis and the strategies developed to address it in the Global South.

These pedagogical practices are not instruments derived from prior theorization, detached from and opposed to political action. Rather, they constitute a form of pedagogical knowledge embedded in the everyday practices of resistance carried out by communities, organizations, and movements that are coming together to propose possible alternatives to narratives of ecological collapse—narratives that assume that no viable alternatives remain. This article argues that ecofeminist peasant education constitutes a pedagogy of permanence: a collective practice through which rural women defend territory, reproduce life, and create alternatives to extractive and patriarchal forms of development.

To demonstrate the depth of the critique articulated through these pedagogical practices, and to establish a conceptual framework for the analysis, I first outline the interconnected set of references, tensions, frictions, agendas, contexts, and concepts that have shaped these processes within academia over several decades. I then present the methodological gestures that have accompanied the research process, before turning to the findings.[1]

[1] English translation assisted by artificial intelligence and reviewed and revised by the author, who assumes responsibility for the final text.

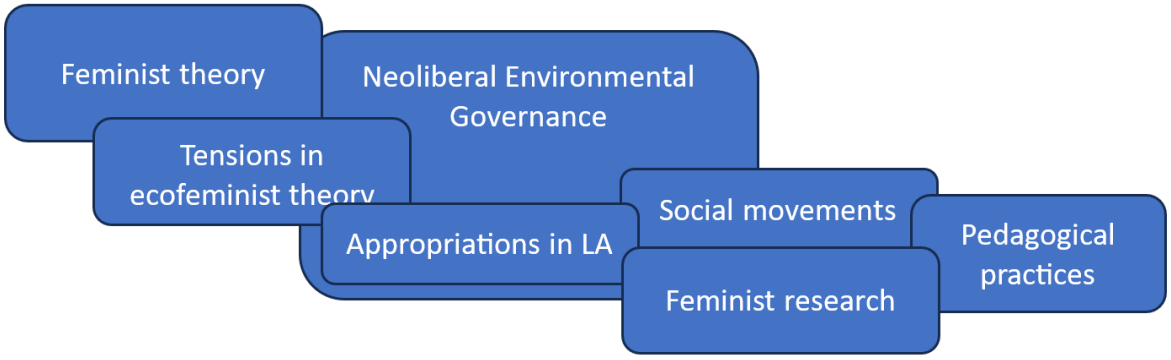
2 Conceptual framework

Ecofeminism in the 1970s provided the context in which questions began to emerge concerning the social, political, and economic arrangements underlying feminist understandings of nature. In her book Le Féminisme ou la Mort, Françoise d'Eaubonne coined the term ecofeminism, which has since come to designate a broad spectrum of positions, debates, research, and activism around the world (D'Eaubonne, 1974).

Although ecofeminism emerged in the Global North, this conceptual framework enables me to examine the tensions generated by its conceptualization among different feminist traditions, as well as the ways in which it has been appropriated—and resisted—in different geographical contexts, particularly in Latin America. My primary interest is to show how, around this field of knowledge, repertoires of political action have emerged from which substantive theories of social and cultural change have been developed. In other words, these processes have generated pedagogies understood as situated pathways of learning and transformation.

To this end, I map this complex assemblage by tracing lines of continuity as well as rupture (Tsing, 2005) among conceptualizations, geopolitical analyses, institutional logics, and social mobilizations. The purpose is to clarify what is at stake when we engage in discussions of ecofeminist pedagogies. This cartography seeks to complicate linear accounts of environmental education and to show that the issue is fundamentally political: it requires us to examine the position we occupy within a complex web of power and knowledge relations.

Figure 1: Conceptual cartography



2.1 Ecofeminist theory: anti-patriarchal, anti-capitalist and anti-colonial

Ecofeminism, like feminism more broadly, is first and foremost a sociocultural practice of transformation and only secondarily a theory. It draws on key repertoires developed by the many social movements that denounced structural injustices during the 1960s and 1970s. These included not only environmentalist and feminist movements in the Global North, but also the numerous peasants, workers', post-colonial, and Indigenous movements that, at the time, proposed alternative perspectives for the Global South. These perspectives sought to denaturalize the apparent inevitability with which the modern, colonial, patriarchal, and capitalist project ordered people's lives and shaped their subjectivities (Lander, 2000; 1996).

A key text that brings these processes together is the book published by Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies under the title Ecofeminism in 1993 (Shiva & Mies, 2014). The authors' materialist analysis draws attention to the spatial conditions that sustain capitalism. On the one hand, capitalism depends on the opening of new frontiers as part of a colonial project of unlimited growth. On the other, it depends on the patriarchal exploitation and domestication of feminized bodies in order to reproduce life in all its forms.

This articulation of capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy calls into question the culture–nature dichotomy on which the modern project as a whole rests. This dichotomy not only enables modern science to objectify, know, and instrumentalize all beings and forms of knowledge associated with the state of nature; it also enables the market economy to exploit them for the purposes of accumulation.

The nature–culture dichotomy does more than objectify, control, and exploit everything subsumed under the category of nature. It also establishes a direction, or horizon, that defines what counts as civilized, superior, desirable, and productive within a culture that is unmistakably white, Western, and patriarchal. Culture, as produced through this process, is affirmed, while everything else is defined in relation to what it is not: neither white, nor Western, nor masculine, nor productive, nor civilized (Castro-Gómez, 2005; Fanon, 1983; Lugones, 2008; Subirats, 2012; Walsh, 2010).

> "Our critique of the emancipatory logic of the Enlightenment was not solely driven by the perception of its consequences for women, but also by a concern for those victims who, since the ascent of the white male into the realm of freedom, have paid for this freedom with the denial of their own subjectivity, their autonomy, and often their means of subsistence. Beyond women, these victims include nature and other peoples, the colonized and naturalized, rendered exposed and available for unconstrained exploitation and subordination, and who have been transformed into the Other, into objects, during the process of the European subject's (man's) emancipation from the realm of necessity" (Shiva & Mies, 2014, p. 79).

For Shiva and Mies, the problem with this project is that it has established the escape from the constraints imposed by the satisfaction of basic needs as its ethical and political horizon. Once the effects of this emancipation from necessity are historicized and situated geographically, it becomes clear that the emancipatory project has benefited a limited group of people in one part of the world, while much of the rest of the world continues to struggle to preserve the material foundations of subsistence. It is precisely in these struggles, mobilizations, and forms of resistance that Shiva and Mies locate the repertoires of articulation, political action, and relationality through which alternatives can be imagined.

The subsistence perspective emerges as an alternative anthropology that places life and its reproduction at the center of human priorities, while treating practices of cooperation and care as principles that organize relations. It does not entail surrendering to necessity. Rather, it involves recognizing the material conditions and everyday practices that make the continuation of life possible—conditions and practices that have been actively rendered invisible and subordinated within the capitalist logic of accumulation (Mies & Shiva, 1993). The subsistence perspective therefore presents relationality with nature and among human beings as a potentially universal principle. It invites us to trace the ontologies, economies, and political practices already operating around the world to reproduce life—practices that currently sustain subsistence in the face of capital's encroachment (Federici, 2019).

2.2 Tensions in feminist theory

The subsistence perspective has not been free from tensions and disputes. It constitutes one of the contexts underlying the split between the feminist movement and feminist theory at the end of the twentieth century. This divide emerged alongside the rise of so-called Feminist theories of difference in centers of knowledge production in Europe and the United States.

According to this feminist perspective, the struggle for gender equality had proved insufficient because the recognition of equality before the law failed to account for the everyday, material, and institutional practices that reproduced the subordination of femininity across all spheres of society, culture, and the

state (Scott, 1986). Moreover, drawing on theories of power associated with post-structuralism, scholars argued that it was necessary to examine the conditions under which patriarchal discourse was produced and to understand how that discourse constituted women as subordinate subjects. This, in turn, required articulating alternative forms of relation that could subvert the discourse of gender (Butler, 1990).

From a constructionist and post-structuralist perspective, ecofeminism's apparent identification of women with nature was criticized for reproducing the essentialist logic embedded in the discourse of subordination:

> "(...) the majority of ecofeminist writings at the time, and the popular projection of ecofeminist ideas, rested on assumptions about women's closeness to nature based on biological differences between the sexes. The equation of motherhood and environmental values played a major role in ecofeminist discourse and in discourses from outside about ecofeminism, whether pro or con (Harcourt 2009; Underhill-Sem 2003). *What was missed at the time* was a nuanced evaluation of cultural chauvinism and the inherent sexism and adherence to dominant categories implied in dismissing relationships to female bodies and motherhood as negative. For example, there was a strong presence of Native American women authors and activists in ecofeminist circles in North America, and the separation of FPE from ecofeminism occasioned an inadvertent loss of connections with indigenous authors and activists" (Rocheleau & Nirmal, 2015, p. 797) (emphasis added).

For Rocheleau and Nirmal, the critique of ecofeminist assumptions during the 1990s contributed to the emergence of Feminist Political Ecology as a field that was both critical of and derived from debates within Political Ecology. This field engaged with questions concerning gender and the production of knowledge in the sciences of survival, rights and responsibilities relating to access to and ownership of land, and decision-making on environmental issues (Schroeder, 1997; Jarosz, 1991). By incorporating a gender perspective into analyses of the social, political, and cultural production of nature and space, Feminist Political Ecology brought to light a dimension that had remained invisible in discussions of labor, land distribution, and the ways in which academic and political discourses on environmentalism are produced and operate.

Several aspects of this rupture in discussions of the relationship between feminism and ecology are worth emphasizing. First, the distance established by several feminist currents from ecofeminism—on the grounds that it offered an essentialist account of the relationship between women and nature—captures only a superficial layer of the critique at stake. More specifically, it focuses on the connection between women and nature as a basis for organizing its care (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2023). This, however, is not the ecofeminism I draw on here. The continuity established among feminized entities refers instead to the socio-cultural and historical construction of "the feminine" as inferior, instrumental, and objectified in relation to the supposedly superior interests of "culture".

Second, it is important to revisit Rocheleau and Nirmal's (2015) reference to "*what was missed at the time*". Their observation demonstrates that, at that point, feminist scholarship in the Global North lacked the conceptual—and, I would add, political—tools necessary to understand the ecofeminist project that was circulating among, and being reappropriated by, social, Indigenous, peasant, and workers' movements in the Global South.

> "Latin America also experienced an early ecofeminist trajectory, albeit with less diffusion and a limited capacity for influence on global feminist theory (LaDanta LasCanta, 2017). For Latin American ecofeminists, this invisibilization is not coincidental and can be attributed, among other factors, to 'the epistemic governability of the Global North,' characterized by its substantial mobilization of financial resources, even within currents of critical thought" (Arriagada & Zambra, 2019, p. 16).

The rupture between theory and social movements, together with the unintelligibility that prevents knowledge produced by social movements and peripheral academic institutions from circulating, reveals an additional dimension of the distance created by the geopolitics of knowledge in relation to ecofeminism. In the specific case of Feminist Political Ecology, this rupture reveals the conditions under which it becomes possible to articulate meaningful knowledge within institutionalized academia. It is only now, as decolonial and postcolonial studies have acquired sufficient influence within academic circuits, that scholars have begun to debate how knowledge is produced in peripheral locations. These historical tensions within feminist theory reflect, of course, both a coloniality of seeing (Barriendos, 2011) and a coloniality of knowledge (Castro-Gómez, 2005).

Third and finally, it is important to emphasize that the distance between difference feminism and ecofeminism cannot be reduced to the epistemological dispute between constructionism and essentialism. Beyond the debate over how knowledge is produced and how it relates to power lies a critique of the modern logic within which this question is framed. Postcolonial ecofeminism offers more than an analytical framework for criticizing the political and scientific project of Enlightenment modernity and its feminist formulations. It also provides a relational framework for imagining alternative ontologies and other ways of understanding nature.

2.3 Re-interpretations of ecofeminism in Latin America

It is within the framework of this ontological turn (Coba et al. 2022) that the question arises of how these debates were appropriated and/or resisted in Latin America. Maristella Svampa (2015) argues that a number of ecofeminist claims in the Global South are not articulated or identified using that term, even though they advance positions within the same field of knowledge:

Several authors also refer to a feminism of the South—including Vandana Shiva and Magdalena León—associated with the current of popular ecology. Some refer to this as “ecofeminism of survival” because it is connected to women’s diverse experiences in defending health, subsistence, and territory. These experiences have generated an awareness of the strong connections among gender and the environment, women and environmentalism, and feminism and ecology. More recent in emergence and situated in the Third World, this perspective is characterized by the anthropological basis of its discourse and by an attempt to move beyond the feminism of equality and the feminism of difference through the notion of interdependence—that is, through an understanding of human relations as in-relation. Ecofeminism of survival seeks to orient the relationship between men, women, and nature around their shared participation. This entails abandoning the conception of the self “as an autonomous subject that constructs itself by emphasizing its separation from others and replacing it with a relational subject that recognizes itself as distinct from others and from nature but, at the same time, acknowledges its continuity with them” (Svampa, 2015, p. 131 [translation by the author]).

The plural, diverse, and emergent ecofeminisms of the Global South do more than propose new relational ontologies through which to understand the articulation of capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy in specific contexts. They also propose alternatives to their further entrenchment. These emerging ontologies are not concerned solely with resolving the conceptual problem of essentialism. More fundamentally, they accompany the struggles, resistances, and social movements that, under neoliberalism and neo-extractivism, have compelled many women to put their bodies and lives on the line to defend their territories.

Regardless of the theoretical category that serves as the analytical umbrella—whether ecofeminism, feminisms of the South, ecosocialism, or another framework—an underlying process is under way. From this process, political repertoires are emerging to confront the exploitation of feminised bodies and territories in the Global South, as well as the global politics of intervention in colonised spaces carried out under the environmentalist guise of neoliberalism.

2.4 Environment and Neo-extractivism

The backdrop to the resistances unfolding in Latin America over the past three decades has been shaped both by the institutionalization of the green economy as a paradigm for addressing the ecological crisis and by the reprimarization of Latin American economies since the turn of the millennium. These two apparently contradictory phenomena have emerged in recent years as two sides of the same project for managing global decarbonization—a project originating in the Global North and based on the technical and technological management of climate change through market mechanisms such as privatization and financialization (March, 2013).

The neoliberal reforms introduced in Latin American countries during the 1990s entailed the adoption of the institutional architecture prescribed by the World Bank. This architecture rested on three pillars: "a 'small state' through deregulation; 'incentivizing the market' through privatization and liberalization; and 'participation' through decentralization and NGOs" (de Castro, Hogenboom, & Baud, 2015, p. 18). The hegemonic character of this architecture is evident in the ways in which it continues to define both what can be debated and how debate takes place (Aparicio & Fernández Pinto, 2022). This includes the management of the ecological crisis, the terms in which the crisis is defined, the scope attributed to the problem, and the solutions considered possible.

It is precisely within this neoliberal management of economic, political, and socio-environmental crises that the green economy paradigm emerged. Taking market incentives as its starting point, the green economy proposes the commodification of natural resources through markets for water, carbon, and environmental services, as well as through the creation of "new natures", such as genetic information—including genetic sequences associated with diseases—and genetic material from genetically modified organisms (GMOs). The premise is that turning these resources into scarce commodities and assigning them a market value will generate incentives for private actors, rather than the state or local communities, to manage their conservation while sustaining economic growth.

This enclosure of the commons (Federici, 2019) not only extends the frontier of capitalism once again, incorporating new goods and territories into violent chains of exploitation and extraction. It also produces a monopoly over both the interpretation of the problem and the identification of possible solutions. Expert knowledge—particularly in its most technical forms—is assigned the task of defining, with technological precision, the scope of the crisis, its causes, its variables, and the strategies for containing it. In this way, the concepts of nature and conservation are homogenized, while global arrangements are established that once again place the Global North at the center of knowledge production and allow its ideas to circulate throughout the rest of the world.

The epistemic repertoire of climate change finds an ideal setting in the institutional arrangements of the neoliberal architecture for implementing this new phase of capitalist expansion. Within this context, Latin America entered a new extractivist cycle at the beginning of the millennium:

> "Extractivism runs through the long historical memory of Latin America and defines a pattern of accumulation associated with the emergence of modern capitalism. It is linked to the demands of metropolitan centers and to the subordinate incorporation of the region as a supplier of raw materials within the modern world-system. Neo-extractivism, or twenty-first-century extractivism, has entailed an expansion of the frontiers of commodification and a mode of appropriating nature based on the overexploitation of natural resources, most of them non-renewable. It is characterized by large-scale operations, an export orientation, and the incorporation of new territories previously considered unproductive or undervalued by capital. Consequently, neo-extractivism refers to more than those activities traditionally regarded as extractive, such as mining and monocultures. It encompasses new forms of open-pit mining; the expansion of the oil and energy frontier, including extreme energy projects such as fracking and offshore extraction; the construction of large hydroelectric dams and other infrastructure projects,

> including waterways, ports, and bi-oceanic corridors; the expansion of agri-food models based on monocropping, such as soy and oil palm, as well as biofuels; overfishing; and forest monocultures" (Svampa, 2021, p. 4 [translation by the author]).

The revitalization of extractivism in the region has been described as the reprimarization of national economies. In response to the export imperative surrounding environmental goods and services, most Latin American countries have expanded their extractive frontiers, intensified exploitation, and generated major disputes among states, corporations, and communities over control of territories and resources. The intensification of socio-environmental conflicts in the region reveals the convergence of at least three major processes:

> 1. **The reconfiguration of the North–South dynamic** through the production of peripheral, enclave economies that supply raw materials for the Global North's energy transition and sustain long-chain agri-food production systems, at the cost of expanding sacrifice zones in the Global South (Pacto Ecosocial e Intercultural del Sur, 2023).
>
> 2. **The militarization of territories** to protect corporate extractive interests. This process elevates security discourse to a position of high priority on states' political agendas and contributes to the reconfiguration and renewal of contemporary forms of warfare (Pureza & Cravo, 2009; Moura, 2010).
>
> 3.**The expansion of extractive activity and military and paramilitary securitization,** which together produce what the Urgent Action Fund (FAU) has called the masculinization of territories (Fondo de Acción Urgente, 2015). This concept refers to the marked continuity among physical, sexual, and political forms of violence directed at feminized bodies and subjectivities.

In this way, neo-extractivism operates in articulation with the patriarchal ordering of territory and its neoliberal management. Although these phenomena frame the terms in which environmental issues are currently discussed at the global level, they do not determine that discussion entirely. Despite its hegemonic status, this discourse does not operate uniformly. It encounters a range of resistances, alternatives, and processes that seek to disrupt the supposed inevitability with which sustainable development is currently advancing.

2.5 Social movements and feminist research

Local resistance to neo-extractivist models in Latin America has been predominantly led by women, Svampa (2015) argues. It is important to emphasize that the feminization of environmental struggles in Latin America is not a consequence of women's supposed proximity to nature. Rather, it reflects the fact that women are on the front lines of the sacrifice zones produced by the patriarchalization of territories. The Colectivo Miradas Críticas del Territorio desde el Feminismo (2017) identifies five ways in which territories are (re)patriarchalized:

1. Political dimension: the masculinization of decision-making;
2. Ecological dimension: the disruption of the cycles through which life is reproduced;
3. Economic dimension: the formation of patriarchal labor structures;
4. Cultural dimension: the intensification of sexist representations and stereotypes; and
5. Bodily dimension: social control and gender-based violence (Gonzaga et al. 2022, p. 102).

Feminist social research on this process of the re-patriarchalization of territories (Coba et al. 2022) demonstrates that sacrifice zones are produced through the introduction of intensified extractive models. These zones are evident in mining, agribusiness, and infrastructure development, where the disciplining and control of bodies associated with extractive labor, the dynamics of militarization, and the dispossession of the commons recur throughout the region.

Many of these territories have a history of dispossession—whether legal or illegal—which has involved militarizing the territory in order to protect a new spatial arrangement and to implement a range of practices of social control. Rita Segato (2018) links these processes to a new apocalyptic phase of capital, one that deploys "pedagogies of cruelty" to govern bodies and territories.

The continuity between body and territory provides the point of attachment both for the everyday, situated forms of violence experienced throughout the region and for the processes of social organization that have emerged in response to them. Lorena Cabnal (2018), a member of the Network of Ancestral Healers of Territorial Community Feminism, argues that the collective memory of bodies, and their continuity with territory-as-land, allows us to anticipate the possibility of healing as a political act.

This process begins with indignation at the violence inflicted on one's own body, understood as the primary site of struggle and resistance and as the first ground for *acuerpamiento*—the collective inhabiting and embodying of political action. Political actions take diverse forms because they draw on the specific characteristics of each territory as a basis for imagining alternatives to extractive development (Ulloa, 2017). It is precisely in spaces where social movements and community-based experiences come together that several common features have become visible:

⇒ Although these processes have been led by women, most do not explicitly identify with feminism. Instead, they maintain a considerable distance from both liberal feminism and its institutionalized and interventionist forms within the state, international cooperation, and NGOs (Galbiati et al., 2022).

⇒ Their claims concern the historical and cumulative dispossession of the commons: not only material resources such as land, water, and forests, but also forms of communal labor and collective management of life (Federici, 2019). Neoliberal privatization does not merely appropriate resources; more fundamentally, it produces subjects subordinated to individualism and competition.

⇒ They involve a diversity of situated praxes of resistance, including the defense of food sovereignty; the preservation of non-capitalist economic practices; the cultivation of agroecology as a science, a practice, and a movement; community-based water management; the ruralization of cities; and agreements aimed at securing energy sovereignty (Galbiati et al., 2022).

Political action emerging from struggles and social movements, from the defense of territory and confrontation with the state, is increasingly being documented by scholars who have aligned themselves with processes of resistance and who are challenging established modes of scientific knowledge production. These challenges concern both the explicit political engagement of women researchers involved in such processes and the epistemologies and methodologies they have developed to conduct research (Coba et al., 2022).

This entails a shift both in the locus of knowledge—in other words, in assumptions about where knowledge is located—and in the mediations through which knowledge is made explicit. Expert knowledge relinquishes some of its interpretive authority, thereby creating space for new conceptualizations emerging from situated praxis. It also gives up its centrality in recording and analyzing social reality and instead opens itself to the production of complex cartographies in which the languages, strategies, and understandings emerging from praxis can be inscribed. At the same time, this approach makes visible the researcher's commitment and responsibility in relation to the models of reality that research produces (Haraway, 1995).

This research on developments in Latin America over the past two decades seeks to make visible forms of knowledge, agency, and practice erased by the patriarchal organization of bodies, spaces, and knowledge. It is therefore clearly indebted to the epistemological and methodological premises of feminist theory. The relationship between processes of struggle and resistance, on the one hand, and feminist academia, on the other, has nevertheless generated diverse and often conflicting understandings of the feminisms that are named in relation to Latin America. It has also been a deeply tense relationship. Feminist research has been, and continues to be, perceived as a threat within various movements and communities.

In the peasant movement, for example, tensions with urban and academic feminists generated a broad debate that, after more than twenty years, led to the emergence of peasant and popular feminism. This feminism sought to resist both feminist interventionism and the deeply entrenched patriarchal structure of peasant trade-union organizations (Vía Campesina, 2018). For many Indigenous communities, feminism represents an ongoing threat to Indigenous forms of resistance and to their social and political organization. In recent years, however, discussions have emerged that, whether or not they explicitly use the language of feminism, interrogate the "patriarchal entanglement" between colonial and Indigenous forms of patriarchy (Tzul Tzul, 2015).

My argument is that feminist research on social movements in Latin America over the past two decades has played a central role in articulating a substantive theory of the Global South's eco-social just transition. Its emphasis on an ethic of care as a basis for disrupting the identification of women with nature denaturalizes the patriarchal matrix of neoliberal extractivism (Coba et al., 2022). In doing so, it constitutes a site of knowledge production in its own right, rather than merely a reflection of what takes place in particular territories.

I argue that this dimension of knowledge production constitutes the main Latin American contribution to the field of ecofeminist studies. Territorial struggles and claims are diverse, and many of them are not articulated under the rubric of feminism at all. Yet the analytical frameworks introduced to study these processes represent a significant contribution to, and development of, the work of Mies and Shiva (2014). My intention here is to assert that this locus cannot remain unexamined, while assuming the premises of ecofeminism to discuss the findings of our research.

3 Methodology

The conceptual cartography outlined in the previous section is intended to foreground two epistemological and methodological gestures that underpin this research. The first consists in making explicit the place occupied by feminist theory within the field of knowledge. In this paper, feminism is understood primarily as an analytical framework rather than as the political language through which the collective subjects of environmental and territorial struggles in Latin America necessarily articulate themselves. This distinction clarifies both the distance that many organizations, and communities currently maintain from feminism (Cabnal, 2018; Tzul Tzul, 2015) and the epistemic violence that this political theory continues to produce in many territories of the Global South (Mohanty, 2008; Mahmood, 2006). At the same time, distinguishing feminism as an analytical framework enables me to show how this framework incorporates praxes of ontological, epistemic, and methodological struggle and resistance against colonial, patriarchal, and capitalist modes of producing scientific knowledge.

Although I have discussed the many debates involved in the constitution of feminist theory as an analytical framework, as well as its various tensions and disagreements, it is also important to note that a feminist epistemology has emerged in the region over recent decades. This epistemology has linked academic institutions with the work of social organizations and movements (Svampa, 2021). It has required a reassessment of the premises informing the design, implementation, and publication of social research, as well as of the ways in which institutional spaces within academia are contested. In a period of enclosure produced by the neoliberal form of cognitive capitalism, defending this kind of socially engaged research from the position we occupy is an epistemic and political commitment that should be made explicit.

The second gesture consists in making visible the complex network of knowledge–power relations within which our locus of enunciation is situated. Making this locus explicit is an attempt to resist the notion of an objective and neutral science that claims to see everything while remaining itself nowhere: unmarked, and untouched by the relations of oppression and privilege in which it participates (Harding, 1986/1996). This locus, however, is not an identity. As Haraway (1995) observes, “self-identity is a bad visual system”, because it produces the impression of something fixed, stable, homogeneous, and identical to itself. Nothing in the production of our subjectivities is organized in this way. On the contrary, the effects of our relationships, research, activism, and political commitments—both within and beyond academia—produce us as “dirty” subjectivities (Espinel, 2023, [personal communication]).

These subjectivities are situated both within the disputes specific to a field of knowledge and within the contextual, historical, political, and geographical conditions of particular territories. From this position, they reveal the interests, commitments, and responsibilities associated with the models of reality they produce, as well as the tensions they generate with academia’s own symbolic space and institutional apparatuses.

Such subjectivities exceed the binary descriptions through which knowledge is often categorized and classified. In the analysis presented here, our locus of enunciation is also fractured. This fracture emerges both from the dilemmas involved in being perceived, in our relationships with social organizations, as “blanco-mestiza, urban, middle-class academic women”, and from the tensions generated within our “own” spaces by our renewed political and epistemic commitments to other forms of science and other forms of socio-political organization.

It is from this fractured position—shaped by ongoing debates about nature, science, and feminism—that we established the following objectives:

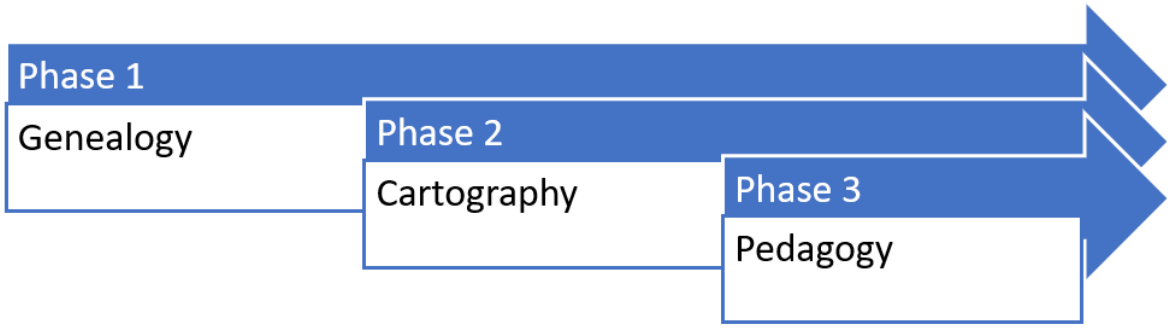
1. To understand the ways in which the neoliberal project of peace, development, security, and sustainability becomes anchored in interventions targeting the lives, bodies, and territories of rural women, particularly in Colombia following the signing of the Peace Agreement.

2. To identify the practices and strategies through which peasant women's organizations appropriate, resist, and engage with this hegemonic discourse in the southern regions of the country.

3. To collaborate with pedagogical and didactic practices centered on the situated knowledge of peasant, popular, and community organizations concerning their own forms of resistance, understood as processes of sociocultural transformation.

The research from which the findings relating to these three objectives are drawn was conducted in three phases, each of which involved a distinct methodological approach[2].

Figure 2: Phases of the methodological process



3.1 Genealogy

This paper has shown that the terms available within a field of knowledge are not simply confined to theoretical and research production. Rather, they emerge from a complex assemblage involving the relationship between knowledge and the dynamics of power within geopolitics, North–South relations, the production of peripheries, the effects of these relations on public policy, and disputes involving diverse social actors, among other elements.

It is precisely this genealogical gesture (Foucault, 1986, 1988, 2003; Shiner, 1982)—a gesture that historicizes in order to denaturalize the discourse currently circulating as inevitable within research agendas around the world—that characterized the first stage of this research. The objective was to understand the context in which the category Rural Woman emerged as a category of intervention: that is, as a dispositif for diagnosing, intervening in, evaluating, and monitoring feminized bodies and territories in the Global South.

[2] Corresponding to 3 research projects funded as follows: 1. *Rural women at the crossroads between politics and peace* most directly addressed the first objective. This research was carried out between 2019 and 2021 and was funded by La Salle University through an internal call for research project funding. *Feminist Peasant Economies in Recovery with Gender Equality and Climate Justice: A Colombian Approach* focused more clearly on the second objective. This research was carried out in 2022 and was financed with resources obtained through a research grant awarded by CLACSO. 3. *Feminist economies in community-based organizations* set out to develop the third objective more directly. This research was carried out in 2023 and was financed by the Institución Universitaria Colegio Mayor de Antioquia through an internal call for research project funding.

3.2 Cartography

The cartographic approach, in turn, sought to examine the ways in which this discourse becomes spatialized in specific territories. More precisely, it aimed to understand how territorial ordering operates under these logics while also revealing their fractures, cracks, and limits (Massey, 1994).

The cartography produced through this process makes visible what remains concealed in descriptions of the general, the universal, and the predetermined. This invisibilized dimension reveals both the particular ways in which the discourse is appropriated and its cracks, forms of resistance, and everything that remains outside the instituted order. In this case, we were interested in examining more closely how peasant organizations act in relation to this discourse on rurality, particularly in relation to the position assigned to rural women.

3.3 Pedagogy

To understand the third methodological phase—the pedagogical analysis—it is necessary to clarify that we conceive of pedagogy as a social practice involving both a critical understanding of the world—an epistemology—and a theory of its transformation—an ethical and political perspective (Gadotti, 2012; Freire, 1970; Walsh, 2010).

The pedagogical phase therefore sought not only to identify the social practices of knowledge developed by these organizations, but also to examine the ways in which those practices are reproduced as repertoires of political action through which organizations endure over time and remain rooted in their territories. It also sought to work collaboratively with these practices and to build committed, long-term relationships between academic institutions and local organizations.

4 Findings

The details of the findings and their analysis have been published previously in the books associated with each of the research projects[3]. Below, I present a concise account of the conclusions emerging from each phase, in dialogue with the methodological gestures described above.

4.1 Genealogy

Both academic literature and state and international-cooperation funding programs have shown growing interest in development projects concerning rural women (Miguel, 2020; UN, 2015). In Colombia, this interest can be traced to the early 2000s, when the Rural Women's Law was enacted (Law 731 of 2002)[4]. However, the signing of the Peace Agreement between the Colombian state and the FARC-EP in 2016 gave this issue particular impetus. It was in this context that we set out to understand how the neoliberal project of peace, development, security, and sustainability became anchored in interventions targeting the lives, bodies, and territories of rural women.

The first step involved denaturalizing the act of representation through which the collective category of "Rural Women" is brought into being whenever the expression is used. Suspending this representation allowed us to ask which dispositifs were being used to signify rural women in the context of legislation, public administration, international documents, measurement frameworks, and intervention processes. More specifically, we were interested in the operation through which people become populations for the state: that is, through which social formations become objects of quantification, control, and government (Bourdieu, 1997).

> "The process by which people become populations should not be understood as a simple epistemological shift. In practice, it meant and continues to mean a direct and often coercive intervention in people's lives and, above all, in women's lives, given that women have been identified as primarily responsible for population growth" (Mies & Shiva, 1993, p. 189).

When this process of population control in so-called "developing countries" is historicized, one of its first points of reference is the set of programs derived from the "Fair Deal" proposed by President Truman after the end of the Second World War (Escobar, 1996). These programs sought to develop, modernize, and civilize populations considered backward—particularly rural populations in countries of the Third World—through technical assistance, training, and intervention. Women were—and continue to be—the principal targets of many such interventions because they were considered "the most backward in educational terms, while at the same time providing access to households, family hygiene practices, and traditional customs" (Coba et al., 2022).

The publication of the Meadows report in 1972 inaugurated the call to place "limits to development", particularly in relation to the development of emerging countries. The argument concerning the planet's carrying capacity was used to advocate birth control in countries of the Global South and, in this way, to reduce women's poverty. This approach was disseminated in 1975 at the First World Conference on Women, organized by the United Nations. It also facilitated the export of a white-

[3] Book: *Rural women at the crossroads between politics and peace*. And book chapter: *Economías feministas campesinas en la recuperación con igualdad de género y justicia climática: Una aproximación desde.*

[4] The expression is used in capital letters when referring to the intervention category mentioned in the text, and in lower case and in plural when referring to the population group of rural women.

feminist discourse on sexual and reproductive rights as a mechanism for compulsory intervention in the lives, bodies, and reproductive practices of millions of women in the Global South[5].

The category Rural Woman was first used in 1979 in the context of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). It was introduced to identify the particular forms of violence and discrimination faced by women and girls in rural contexts. According to the Convention, these forms of violence are distinctive because they arise from the intersection of three forms of discrimination: being a woman, being poor, and living in a rural area. Although the Convention recognizes the existence of rural women in both the Global North and the Global South, it prescribes mechanisms of evaluation, intervention, and monitoring only for countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America (ILC, 2010).

It is at this point that rural women began to be understood as victims: victims of patriarchy, poverty, illiteracy, and, in Colombia, internal armed conflict. Their victimization thus provided an ideal justification for intervention:

> "as an example of the victim-subject at work in development feminism, [the category] demonstrates how gender equality and empowerment are legible through Western eyes as long as they conform to so-called universal models of both gender and of economic power. Furthermore, narratives of victimhood serve to obscure the market logic that drives development interventions. That these women need help and transformation as women, becomes an unquestionable common-sense. It is also a logic that is blind to local social configurations where this relatively new form of identity contrasts starkly with relational and intersectional modes of gender" (Alexeyef, 2020, p. 6).

The category Rural Women thus condenses both the universalist version of institutional feminism—which transforms gender equality into a development indicator—and the renewal of the colonial pact governing development in the Third World after the Second World War. Moreover, within the framework of neoliberal environmental governance, rural women are assigned a fundamental role in food security and in the care of environmental services. In Colombia, they also constitute a key site for consolidating peacebuilding in territories most affected by armed conflict.

In the name of "saving rural women", a complex technical, financial, and logistical assemblage is mobilized. This assemblage intervenes not only in women, their bodies, and their subjectivities, but also, more fundamentally, in the organization of the territories in which they live. It is precisely these "Cinderellas of the South" (Cunha & Casimiro, 2019)—women produced as lacking everything—who become eligible for rescue through a "fairy-tale economy" (Alexeyef, 2020). For them, a broad repertoire of training programs, workshops, and productive projects is made available, provided that they remain within the boundaries of the category created for them.

Historicizing the discourse of Rural Women reveals the complex network of knowledge–power relations within which knowledge about them is produced. Feminist science—that is, a form of science attentive to relations of power (Haraway, 2018)—requires us to trace the connections among apparently fixed propositions and assumptions, as well as the ways in which these may reproduce violence through intervention practices often carried out from within academia itself.

[5] "Farida Akhter of Bangladesh is one of the most unreserved critics of this coercive depopulation policy. In numerous speeches and articles, she has convincingly shown that population control programs have been designed to serve the commercial interests of the pharmaceutical multinationals; that they have been imposed on the people of Bangladesh as a precondition for aid and credit; and that coercion is increasingly being used in their implementation. In addition, sterilization in Bangladesh is carried out without prior examination of the women. Even pregnant women are sterilized." (Shiva, V., & Mies, M., 1998, p. 195)

This is why the genealogy also turns back towards us: towards the academic women who readily employ discourses that correspond to our own systems of value. Ultimately, what the genealogy reveals are the conceptual dispositifs we have produced in order to operationalise feminism within the large-scale global arrangements of cooperation and development.

4.2 Cartography

Perhaps the most significant finding of the genealogical analysis of the Rural Woman intervention category was the way in which it produced specific institutional arrangements in the Colombian context. As part of the research, we documented the programmes and projects developed by the state, cooperation agencies, and NGOs, which began operating in the territories in accordance with this new agenda at the turn of the century (Sánchez-Corrales, 2023). We also examined the emergence of an academic research agenda aligned with this policy framework and its findings in specific territories. Despite some attempts at critical engagement, academic research on the Rural Woman category also benefited from the growing availability of funding for projects in this field (Pierre et al., 2016; García et al., 2006).

These institutional arrangements produced a common language concerning the causes of triple discrimination, the mechanisms of diagnosis and intervention, the channels established for dialogue with the state, and the protection of rights. This common language is used not only in negotiations with public institutions, but also to secure funding for the networks, movements, organisations, and platforms that have consolidated around this emerging field. It was within this context that, during the second phase of the research, we sought to identify the practices and strategies through which Colombian peasant women's organisations appropriated, resisted, and engaged with this hegemonic discourse.

As part of this process, we worked with two organisations that entered this conversation through entirely different political repertoires: the Asociación de Mujeres Campesinas Siemprevivas and the Instituto Agroecológico Latinoamericano (IALA) María Cano. Siemprevivas emerged as an association in the early 2000s through training processes financed by the Mayor's Office of Medellín, Antioquia, and implemented by a local NGO that offered productive projects. The training programme focused on agroecology and women's empowerment. It was available exclusively to women's organisations and aimed to provide alternatives for the economic autonomy of women affected by domestic violence.

The IALA María Cano, for its part, was founded in 2017 by Fensuagro—the Federación Nacional Sindical Unitaria Agropecuaria—in alliance with the Coordinadora Latinoamericana de Organizaciones del Campo (CLOC–Vía Campesina) in Viotá, Cundinamarca. It was conceived as a peasant university that promotes agroecology as a means of resisting the agro-industrial and extractivist model operating in the territory. It is directed towards organised peasant youth and, although it is not a peasant women's organisation, it has supported peasant and popular feminism for several decades.

Siemprevivas obtained legal status as a peasant organisation in 2003, only one year after Operation Orion[6] became a symbol of what the counterinsurgency war had already been producing in other parts of the country: territories devastated by joint actions involving the army and paramilitary forces, massacres, and the displacement and disappearance of millions of people. The corregimiento of San

[6] "Operation Orion was one of the seventeen military operations of the urban war in the Comuna 13 of Medellin carried out between October 16 and 17, 2002. The operation sought to put an end to the presence of Urban Militia groups of the guerrillas of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia - People's Army (FARC-EP), the National Liberation Army (ELN) and the Armed Commandos of the People (CAP). It was carried out under the declaration of a State of Emergency. There were 80 civilians wounded, 17 casualties committed by the Public Forces, 71 people killed by the paramilitaries, AUC, 12 people tortured, 92 forced disappearances and 370 arbitrary detentions, according to Corporación Jurídica Libertad." (Centro de Fe y Culturas et al., 2021)

Cristóbal—the territory of Siemprevivas—lies behind Comuna 13[7], and served as an entry corridor for the paramilitary blocs that have since occupied, monitored, and controlled the region's social and political activity. It was precisely during this period of state and para-state persecution of popular, trade-union, and social organisations that Siemprevivas and many other women's organisations emerged through programmes promoted and funded by the state, with the support of international cooperation agencies and local NGOs.

After years of persecution, surveillance, and selective killings targeting Fensuagro's leadership, the IALA represents an effort to recover the history of Colombian peasant struggles since the beginning of the twentieth century and to connect that history with the internationalist agenda of Vía Campesina as a global counter-hegemonic movement. The IALA positions itself against the violent seizure of land that, in recent decades, has facilitated the expansion of agro-industrial monocultures in the areas most affected by the armed conflict. Its members identify a continuity between the intensification of paramilitary violence, massacres, and displacement, on the one hand, and the increasing concentration of land and the imminent disappearance of peasant life, on the other[8].

For Siemprevivas, the relationship with feminism is mediated by the institutional codes through which its members accessed training in this field. They identify as feminists because they learned to recognize gender-based violence in their everyday lives, and many undertook processes of emancipation, whether through divorce or through renegotiating roles with their partners. These processes of emancipation from intimate-partner relationships and domestic violence have been supported by entrepreneurial activities that the women also learned through institutional programs, particularly the production and sale of products made from aromatic plants. Although this set of practices recalls critiques of developmentalist feminism (Alexeyef, 2020), Siemprevivas distinguishes itself by centering its pedagogical and political work on the connection between its members' bodies and the territory. Their recognition of a continuity between the violence experienced in their homes and the violence produced by the reorganization of their territory has led them to undertake advocacy aimed at changing the way in which life, food production, and political participation are organized in their community.

For the IALA, the relationship with feminism begins from a position of contestation towards academic, middle-class, and *blanco-mestiza* feminists. Its members discuss gender relations within the organisation—particularly because the trade union is deeply patriarchal—but not through the analytical lens of women who do not understand the struggles they have faced alongside their *compañeros*. This context gave rise to the conceptualisation of peasant and popular feminism as:

> "a construction by grassroots women who articulate our demands and struggles collectively" (Vía Campesina, 2018).

This feminism resists both the invisibilization of women within the organization and the erasure of peasant women and land struggles in the liberal discourse of Rural Women. It is therefore a structural analysis that connects forms of domination rooted in capital, gender, and race in order to confront them in an articulated manner. It also establishes a continuity between the feminization of women's bodies and the feminization of nature, while affirming the need to reclaim women's knowledge and practices—often treated as secondary or subordinate—as resources for resistance.

Despite the different positionalities of these organizations, both begin to reveal a series of cracks in the way the hegemonic discourse of Rural Women takes shape in specific contexts. The first crack, and perhaps the most significant, consists in their refusal to treat the hegemonic discourse as a binary

[7] Popular neighborhood in the city of Medellín where the events related to Operation Orion took place.

[8] This is verified in the refusal of the Colombian State to recognize peasants as subjects of special protection and to sign the international agreements that have been made in this regard. All this has changed with the election of the first leftist government in the history of the country in 2022.

opposite, as academic accounts often do. In other words, they do not construct a false opposition between the common institutional language and the language they use in particular contexts:

> "We have also taken our voices to the Medellín council, and at present we are discussing the rural peasant district. This is the designation included in the land-use plan to ensure that the countryside remains and is preserved. It is intended to allow those of us who live in the countryside to remain there, and to ensure that the countryside itself endures. We do not want peasant culture and the peasant economy to disappear. It is called a rural peasant district because, if we called it an agrarian district, it would not directly convey what the rural district is or reflect the realities experienced by peasants. The women in the network are therefore working to bring our voices and our experiences from rural areas into the discussion.
>
> Regarding land tenure, we have proposed shared land titling, with 50 per cent of the title assigned to men and 50 per cent to women, so that the arrangement is more equitable and women do not lose access to important benefits such as credit and housing improvements. There are many legal issues surrounding land tenure that prevent women from accessing these benefits. Our strategy has been to mobilize, hold sit-ins, and organize demonstrations in defense of our rights. We demand active participation and that we be directly represented in development plans and land-use plans. We are not mentioned or named as peasant women, yet we need to be named as women so that our needs and projects become visible in development plans, particularly in relation to the rural peasant district" (Carmen, President of the Asociación de Mujeres Campesinas Siemprevivas, interview, 2021; translation by the author).

Given both the continuing violence against peasant communities—which increasingly resembles extermination—and the systematic erasure of peasants from the country's institutional documents and economic policies, it is clear to both Siemprevivas and the IALA that their struggle today is a struggle to *remain*: to *remain* despite everything[9]. This struggle unfolds across several dimensions. One of them continues to be the struggle for institutional recognition, using the institutions' own logics and common languages. Participation in local institutional spaces to demand recognition of peasant subjects, their rights to own and use land, and their inclusion in development plans and territorial planning is essential, even if it is clearly insufficient.

For this reason, the two organisations have participated for several years in transnational platforms through which they highlight the historical and geographical continuities connecting peasant struggles across countries of the Global South. This commitment to de-endogenizing the Colombian armed conflict—to showing that it forms part of a broader pattern of political and economic violence that must be debated more widely and denounced more explicitly before global institutions—has become a fundamental component of their resistance:

> "It was here in Colombia, in Bogotá, that a continental meeting was held. It was there that the idea began to take shape of articulating peasant struggles internationally in relation to international institutions: how we position ourselves before the United Nations and how we confront the capitalist policies that have historically shown themselves to be harmful to the countryside and equally harmful to cities.
>
> These policies do not generate employment. They encourage foreign investment, cheapen our labor, and produce social disintegration. As civil society, we are fighting

[9] In Spanish, the terms permanecer ("to remain") and permanencia ("permanence") are etymologically and conceptually connected. In English, however, this relationship is less immediately apparent, since the corresponding forms are not morphologically related. The translation therefore uses remain and permanence to preserve the conceptual distinction between the verb and the noun while making their connection explicit.

> against this. Through CLOC–Vía Campesina, we achieved recognition of peasant rights last year. In other words, we now have a declaration approved by the United Nations. This is the result of a struggle that the international movement has pursued for many years and that has secured a place in a series of instruments and institutions, including in Europe.
>
> This immense structure fought for that recognition, and this is why we now have recognition from the United Nations. Unfortunately, Colombia abstained from the vote, and this is a problem that must be examined seriously: why did Colombia abstain? Other countries voted for or against the declaration, but they voted. Colombia adopted a neutral position and stated that it viewed peasants as an economic activity. We therefore need to continue analyzing why the state refuses to recognize our identity.
>
> Our internal struggle now is to establish that declaration and that recognition of our rights" (Yira, Academic Coordinator, IALA, interview, 2020; translation by the author).

This struggle for permanence as a form of institutional recognition is a crucial arena. In it, the organizations deploy the codes of the common language while also showing how intervention discourses—such as the discourse of Rural Women—have been central to reproducing symbolic, epistemic, economic, political, and existential forms of violence. This reveals something essential about resistance as a practice and as a repertoire of political action: in order to remain, these organizations must create a place for themselves within the common language. This point is fundamental, yet it has historically been rendered invisible by critical theories that understand resistance primarily as a dialectical exercise and therefore struggle to account for these forms of synthetic resistance.

Symbolic permanence within the dominant institutional language of Rural Women is reinforced by a commitment to epistemic permanence in the production of academic knowledge—hence the relationship with us—and, most importantly, by territorial permanence. Remaining in the territory is the greatest challenge confronting these lives, bodies, and struggles. Continuing to reproduce the peasant way of life, its social and political organization, its knowledge and practices, its material conditions, and the everyday forms of living through which it is sustained constitutes the central arena—and the most important analytical key—of resistance.

It is this that I call the **pedagogy of permanence as resistance.**

4.3 Pedagogy

The most significant finding to emerge thus far has been the identification of a form of resistance that, as noted above, is neither dichotomous nor oppositional. Our prevailing understandings of resistance as contestation (Butler, 1990), counter-hegemony (Gramsci, 1970), and even the more recent notion of the alternative (Escobar, 1996) tend to assume a movement towards the margins or the creation of radically "other" totalities. What emerged from this research, by contrast, was a pedagogical practice of resistance as permanence: a practice that entails becoming entangled in the complex relationality between one and the other, the hegemonic and the alternative, the institutional and its outside, in order to remain.

The commitment to permanence emerges in educational contexts and in popular schools that are both material—such as Fensuagro's peasant university—and symbolic, encompassing the settings, relationships, and imaginaries involved in the practice of teaching and learning how to remain. Within these popular schools, we have identified continuities between the experiences of Colombian peasant organizations and those of peasant organizations elsewhere, including Brazil and Mozambique, with which we exchanged knowledge during the International School of Feminist Ecologies of Knowledge[10].

[10] International School of Feminist Ecologies of Knowledge: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5BW4g7XV6eodKOTkBpSmzA

These continuities center on pedagogical practices aimed at securing institutional, epistemic, and territorial permanence.

> "At IALA, the territory is built through the territorialization of agroecology. There is a methodology, a modality called alternation, through which our students learn a way of living and producing here, and then take that same way of life, internalized here, back to their own territories. In this way, they collectively construct territory. We are carrying out a process of territorialization with our students. It is simple—yes, it is simple—but what matters is beginning so that we can move forward. Some people refer to the well-known 'point-and-circle' techniques, or to the idea of endogenous development, which is staged—or, to put it in an image, when a drop falls into a river and generates a series of waves. That is a process of territorialization" (Yaser, IALA educator, interview, 2020; translation by the author).

What Yaser suggests is that remaining requires the reproduction of a particular way of organizing life within the territory. This struggle finds a key setting in food sovereignty, through which resistance can be made part of everyday life and through which the social, cultural, and economic worlds in which people participate can be invited to recognize that food is a political act. Each time we eat, it becomes necessary to weave together the settings, resources, relationships, forms of labor, bodies, territories, disputes, and policies involved in making food possible.

To weave food together as a political act means making visible everything that sustains it, including all that has been feminized within the logic of patriarchal capitalist accumulation. This act of making visible is itself pedagogical. At the same time, pedagogical practices are emerging in many territories to display, teach, reproduce, and sustain the relationships, knowledges, commitments, bodies, and artefacts that make it possible to feed communities. Fensuagro's peasant university is one such example, as are the agroecological farms that have become an important political commitment in many peasant territories.

In their efforts to remain in their territories, many peasant communities are establishing popular and community schools as key settings for educating new generations. This popular education is grounded in traditional knowledge that communities have recovered from their elders through collective memory practices, or that has been preserved despite the modernizing efforts of the Green Revolution[11]. This knowledge enters into dialogue with contemporary agroecological practices that do not dichotomize agroecology as a science from agroecology as a social movement. These practices understand food production as an exercise in territorialization because they involve a situated understanding of the context, the ecological and social relations within it, and the development projects against which the community's permanence is asserted.

These pedagogical practices are not inward-looking. On the contrary, they are designed to occupy a place within the common language, within the epistemic repertoire of knowledge concerning food production, and within political debates about who belongs to rural life. They create a space that depatriarchalizes the relationship with the territory by affirming the care and sustenance of life—biological, social, bodily, cultural, and ancestral—as a fundamental basis for imagining possible futures amid our escalating crises.

[11] The Green Revolution refers to the transformation of agricultural production, particularly in the Global South, through the widespread introduction of high-yielding crop varieties, synthetic fertilizers, chemical pesticides, irrigation, mechanization, and other input-intensive technologies from the mid-twentieth century onward. Although it increased yields in some contexts, it also intensified farmers' dependence on external inputs and contributed to soil degradation, biodiversity loss, water depletion, unequal access to land and resources, and the marginalization of small-scale and peasant farming.

5 Conclusions

This paper has sought to demonstrate the conditions under which pedagogies of permanence emerge as an ecofeminist key and as the central finding of a research program conducted over the past five years. I conclude with several considerations concerning what it means to focus on pedagogies. First, the emergence of pedagogies of permanence is not intended to essentialize or idealize the ideas and practices associated with these educational contexts. On the contrary, the analysis has shown that they are emerging amid a wide range of tensions, interests, and disputes. These include, above all, debates concerning how to remain in territories whose ways of life have been systematically reshaped by a colonial–patriarchal–capitalist discourse that treats such practices as backward, inferior, insufficient, and, in many cases, dangerous to global food-production systems.

This finding also challenges the notion of alternativity and the idea of otherness, both of which are widely used in critical studies of development, coloniality, and capitalism. The idea of making resistance part of everyday life in order to remain suggests that the issue is not simply one of inhabiting radically different ontologies amid contemporary crises, as though these were identities capable of existing entirely outside politics and history. Rather, it involves being recognized as occupying those places and participating in those contested spaces.

For these reasons, I understand the production of these educational practices as a political account of the future. Read through an ecofeminist lens, they announce the emergence of experiential and situated forms of meaning in which the sustenance of life, care, and relationality become central to imagining the future. They bring that future closer by weaving it into everyday life. This does not mean assigning popular schools the responsibility for resolving the contradictions of the present, since doing so would constitute another form of colonization. It means recognizing that these schools already offer important points of reference that challenge conventional schooling in new ways.

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