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War as a school of hegemonic masculinities: power, control, and the persistence of gender violence in armed and social conflict settings

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ABSTRACT: This article examines the configuration and reproduction of "hegemonic masculinities" as a structuring dimension of gender-based violence in contexts of "armed and social conflict." Based on an intersectional and critical reading of International Human Rights Law, International Humanitarian Law, and transitional justice normative frameworks, it analyzes how dominant masculine models—articulated around control, force, and the subordination of others—are empowered by the logic of war and extend beyond the cessation of hostilities, maintaining patterns of aggression and inequality in the domestic, community, and institutional spheres. The research underscores the need to incorporate a transformative gender approach into truth, justice, and reparation processes that dismantle the symbolic and material structures that legitimize these forms of power. It also argues that militarized "masculinities" constitute not only a functional instrument of war, but also a persistent obstacle to peacebuilding and the effective guarantee of the rights of women and LGBTI+ people in transition contexts.

Keywords: Gender, masculinity, femininity, armed conflict, identity, social relations, power.

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1. Introduction

The need to understand the interrelationship between gender-based violence, *hegemonic masculinities*, and *armed conflict*—with particular attention to the Colombian case—constitutes the starting point of this analysis. Beyond a simple correlation, the aim is to reveal how discourses and practices associated with power, force, and control, when assumed as legitimate patterns of political or military leadership, are not only functional elements of war but also structural factors that deepen and perpetuate various forms of violence, including gender-based, symbolic, and cultural violence.

This logic of domination, embedded in the war structure and validated by a deeply rooted patriarchal culture, has had devastating consequences for the fabric of Colombian society. Its effects are not limited to the period of *conflict* but extend over the long term, leaving traces in interpersonal, institutional, and community relationships. The marks of the *conflict* are not only manifested in the physical or emotional harm suffered by direct victims but also in the intergenerational transmission of authoritarian power models, normalized in daily life—even in scenarios of supposed democratic normality.

In this context, it becomes imperative to critically address the role of gender norms in the reproduction of these forms of violence. The analysis draws on the theory of *masculinities*, particularly the concept of

hegemonic masculinity developed by R. W. Connell. This author argues that such a configuration is based on a set of social practices that legitimize male supremacy and the subordination of women, as well as of other non-normative *masculinities*. Connell articulates her theory around three dimensions of gender: (i) production relations, (ii) power relations—where violence is inserted as an expression of domination—and (iii) affective and sexual relations (cathexis).

Among these, the present study focuses on the dimension of power, considering that in *armed conflict* contexts, this dimension is exacerbated through the militarization of bodies, territories, and identities. Dominant masculinity is then configured as a form of identity nourished by exclusion, aggression, and control—elements that do not disappear with the end of armed confrontation, but rather are transformed and persist in domestic, institutional, and community spaces (Lamas, 2006).

From this perspective, gender-based violence cannot be understood as an isolated or secondary phenomenon in relation to *conflict*, but rather as a structural manifestation of the patriarchal order that intensifies in wartime and becomes normalized in the post-conflict stage. The notion of hegemonic masculinity, as an exclusionary normative matrix, helps explain why certain patterns of violence persist even in times of peace, through institutions that reinforce stereotypes and delegitimize the experiences of those who do not conform to traditional molds of masculinity.

Complementarily, some scholars have deepened this line of thought by distinguishing between *external male hegemony*—referring to the institutionalization of domination over women—and *internal male hegemony*, which suppresses the plurality of *masculinities* (De Martín-Bermúdez, 2013). This dual dimension contributes to understanding the transversal nature of violence exercised by and against men, depending on their alignment with or deviation from the normative ideal of masculinity.

It is understood, then, that hegemonic masculinity not only constitutes a power device that structures gender-based violence in times of *conflict*, but also stands as a significant obstacle to the construction of a lasting peace with gender justice. Dismantling this model involves not only recognizing its operability in war but also promoting alternative, egalitarian, and non-violent *masculinities* as a sine qua non condition for the effective guarantee of the human rights of women, LGBTI+ individuals, and other historically excluded subjects (Díaz, 2022).

Hegemonic masculinity, as a social and cultural construction, operates through the normalization of gender stereotypes that restrict the legitimate ways of being and expressing oneself, both for men and women (Ríos, 2015). This model imposes a rigid expectation on what it means to be masculine—associated with emotional repression, denial of vulnerability, and the exaltation of aggressiveness as a valid means of interaction and *conflict* resolution. In this context, a culture of silence is configured, one that discourages emotional recognition, dehumanizes those who do not fit dominant standards, and structurally legitimizes violence as a manifestation of power and masculinity (Joampere & Morlá, 2019).

Such practices, reinforced in contexts of armed confrontation, take on an even more critical dimension. There is an intrinsic link between gender and *armed conflict*, mediated by a patriarchal order that assigns political, military, and symbolic power to masculinity (Schongut, 2012). This order associates the male body with the figure of the warrior, the citizen-combatant, the defender of the nation, while reserving for women secondary or passive roles traditionally tied to care, reproduction, and the domestic sphere (Sanfélix, 2011). This dichotomous—and fictitious—conception excludes the real participation of women in *conflict* dynamics, invisibilizing their agency both in war and in peace, and perpetuates a binary narrative that reinforces structural gender exclusion.

2. Methodology

This study is framed within the interpretative paradigm, which, according to Martínez (2010), seeks to understand the social meanings constructed by individuals within specific historical and cultural contexts. From this perspective, a qualitative approach is adopted, aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of how war functions as a mechanism for the reproduction of hegemonic masculinities and its link to the persistence of gender-based violence.

The chosen method is hermeneutics, which enables a critical interpretation of the discourses, norms,

and cultural practices that shape the relationship between armed conflict, patriarchal power, and gender constructions. This approach makes it possible to analyze the underlying meanings in historical, legal, and doctrinal narratives, acknowledging their symbolic and structural nature.

The primary technique used is documentary review, which includes the rigorous analysis of both primary and secondary sources: up-to-date research and state-of-the-art studies (Martínez et al., 2024), theoretical frameworks based on classical and contemporary gender and conflict theories (Salcedo et al., 2022), as well as national and international legal norms, relevant jurisprudence, and specialized literature.

This methodology allows for the construction of a critical perspective on how armed conflict has institutionalized male models based on control, violence, and subjugation, perpetuating their effects in post-war social life. It also provides interpretative tools to highlight the challenges faced by public policies aimed at transforming imaginaries and power relations rooted in dominant masculinity.

3. Result and Discussion

Chapter I. Gender violence and militarized masculinities: a critical approach to the patriarchal order in the armed conflict

In war settings, hegemonic masculinity is not only reproduced but also radicalized. Armed conflict provides a symbolic and practical framework to legitimize violence as an extension of male power, reinforcing gender norms that marginalize dissident expressions and consolidate hierarchies of domination—both among men and in relation to women. Within this logic, men are cast as combatants and providers; women, as victims and caregivers (Bourdieu, 2007). This dualism prevents the questioning of imposed roles, limits agency across genders, and reinforces patriarchal dynamics that extend to the social, institutional, and legal realms.

The impact of conflict on gender relations is not confined to wartime. The symbolic and physical violence exercised in the name of dominant masculinity continues over time, reproducing patterns of exclusion and inequality in the post-conflict period. Rather than fostering structural transformation, the legacy of militarized masculinities often undermines gender equality efforts and reinforces cultural resistance to alternative models of coexistence based on respect, equity, and justice.

This does not imply an essentialist generalization that all men involved in armed dynamics embody the hegemonic masculine archetype. Instead, it opens a critical space to reflect on the gender roles reinforced—and often institutionalized—within conflict settings, and how these roles perpetuate violence, not only in physical terms but also through symbolic, legal, and structural dimensions (Godelier, 1983).

Contemporary theoretical contributions, especially Connell's framework, highlight the coexistence of multiple masculinities within a single social order. These forms are not only simultaneous but also hierarchically structured, generating relationships of power and subordination among men themselves. This perspective expands the analysis by recognizing that masculinities are not homogeneous and that hegemonic models operate by excluding, delegitimizing, or subordinating alternative ways of being a man.

Acknowledging this plurality is essential to dismantling the patriarchal order and denaturalizing violence as a masculine trait. From a legal and human rights perspective, this recognition entails the obligation to promote non-violent, egalitarian, and diversity-respecting models of masculinity as a foundation for building sustainable peace and a truly inclusive democratic society.

Within the patriarchal order, hegemonic masculinity not only appears as the dominant model but also functions as a normative regime that excludes and subordinates other forms of manhood (Kaufman, 1989). The social construction of this masculinity—centered on domination, control, and physical

strength—does not exhaust the full range of male experiences; instead, it establishes hierarchies among them (García & Ito, 2009). Men who do not conform to these imposed expectations—due to sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnic background, or socioeconomic status—are systematically excluded from the normative ideal of masculinity (Connell, 2000).

This dynamic of exclusion has direct implications for the analysis of gender-based violence, which is not exercised solely against women. The hegemonic model is also imposed on subordinated masculinities, making violence a tool of hierarchical reaffirmation. Thus, an internal order of male domination is established, where violence serves as a mechanism to consolidate the symbolic and social power of the dominant group.

From a critical legal and intersectional perspective, it is crucial to understand how structural conditions of inequality—economic, racial, and territorial—shape male experiences and define patterns of violence. In Latin America, sociologist Mara Viveros Vigoya has shown how racialized masculinities, particularly those of Afro-descendant and Indigenous men, are constructed in contexts of historical exclusion, poverty, and stigmatization. In such settings, violence can take on a reactive and performative character—functioning both as resistance to the denial of social agency and as a reaffirmation of an identity denied by dominant structures.

This logic becomes more complex within the framework of armed conflict. Beyond the direct violence inflicted on women—which has been thoroughly documented—there is a need to include in the analysis the structural violence that sustains and reproduces violent models of masculinity (Salguero, 2019). This form of violence, defined by Galtung and expanded through a gender lens by Connell, manifests in the organization of institutions, in mechanisms of social exclusion, and in unequal access to rights, resources, and power (Minello, 2002). Military structures and armed groups, both state and non-state, play a central role in this reproduction.

Chapter II. Hegemonic Masculinity as a Power Apparatus in Armed Conflicts: Intersections between Gender, Violence, and War

Hegemonic Masculinity and Power in Contexts of War

Hegemonic masculinity is not merely a normative ideal of male behavior; rather, it functions as a power apparatus that produces and reproduces hierarchical relationships, particularly in contexts shaped by structural violence. In the Colombian armed conflict, this construction serves as both a symbolic and practical matrix that legitimizes the use of force, reaffirms dominance over feminized bodies, and silences identity dissidence (Gutmann, 2000).

From a legal-critical perspective, this form of masculinity is presented as a performative expression of gender, naturalized through its repetition in patriarchal institutional contexts such as the army, guerrilla groups, paramilitary structures, or police forces. As Judith Butler argues, these repeated practices acquire the appearance of truth, despite lacking a fixed ontological basis, thereby allowing the reproduction of a violent, hierarchical, and normative model of "being a man" (Gutmann, 2000).

Masculinity as a Technology of War and Control

In war settings, this form of masculinity is instrumentalized as a genuine technology of war (Gutmann, 2000). The violence exercised goes beyond armed confrontation between combatant actors and includes specific forms of violence against women, girls, LGBTIQ+ individuals, and men who do not conform to the dominant pattern (Coltrane, 1998). Physical punishment, humiliation, and exclusion discipline male bodies and behaviors within armed groups, consolidating an internal hierarchy based on aggressive virility.

Military institutions—both legal and illegal—promote a model of masculinity centered on physical strength, emotional insensitivity, and obedience (Coltrane, 1998). From an early age, those incorporated

into these structures are socialized under the belief that their worth is measured by their ability to exert—and endure—violence. This process normalizes discriminatory practices and turns the male body into both an instrument and a symbol of domination.

Gender-Based Violence as a Strategy of Domination in Armed Conflict

Sexual and gender-based violence in armed conflict is neither isolated nor random. As established in Article 7 of the Rome Statute, it may constitute a crime against humanity. Nevertheless, challenges remain in understanding its structural anchoring in gender hierarchies that operate both on and off the battlefield.

Although International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and International Human Rights Law (IHRL) have progressed in terms of regulation, they are still insufficient to dismantle the patriarchal culture that enables such violence. Transitional justice policies must go beyond the punitive dimension and recognize the enabling role of hegemonic masculinities in shaping these forms of violence.

Institutionalized Masculinity and the Reproduction of Structural Violence

Traditional military training institutionalizes a form of masculinity rooted in the suppression of empathy, the exaltation of control, and the subjugation of others. This logic reinforces violence not only against women but also against other men in subordinate positions (De Keijzer, 2006). Intra-gender violence thus becomes a mechanism for validating male status, reproducing a hierarchical order based on submission.

This configuration cannot be understood in isolation or treated as a matter of "individual behavior." It demands an approach grounded in structural analysis, one that integrates legal perspectives with gender and intersectional categories, acknowledging how factors such as race, class, and territoriality exacerbate forms of exclusion and violence (Vallejo & Miranda, 2021).

Dissident and Alternative Masculinities in the Post-Conflict Context

Although the hegemonic model has predominated, it does not exhaust the possibilities of being a man. There are dissident forms of masculinity that actively distance themselves from this pattern. However, these alternative expressions are often marginalized within institutional systems—civil or military—that privilege aggressive virility as a functional attribute of "conflict."

From a gender-based legal approach, it is essential to make these non-hegemonic masculinities visible and to strengthen them. The promotion of positive masculinities—based on co-responsibility, respect for difference, nonviolence, and empathy—constitutes a fundamental axis for the reconstruction of the social fabric in post-conflict processes.

The struggle for gender equality must include the deep transformation of traditional conceptions of masculinity (Guzmán, 2015). Such transformation requires public policies with a differential approach, pedagogical strategies, and the active engagement of civil society (Lamas, 2000). Experiences such as those developed by GENDES in Mexico demonstrate how it is possible to work with men from a preventive perspective, deconstructing stereotypes and promoting a culture of peace.

Chapter III. Gender-Based Violence and the Militarization of the Female Body: A Critical Analysis from International Law and Intersectionality

War as a Gender Device

Far from being a neutral experience, war acts as a setting where structural inequalities are intensified, especially regarding gender. In the *Colombian armed conflict*, feminized bodies have historically been

transformed into territories of symbolic dispute, political disciplining, and collective punishment. Sexual and gender-based violence has operated as a deliberate strategy—not as a collateral consequence—through practices such as forced carnal access, imposed pregnancies, or mandatory abortions (Lamas, 2000). These actions cannot be separated from the model of hegemonic masculinity, which turns women's bodies into spoils of war and instruments of territorial domination.

Militarization of the Female Body and Patriarchal Order

The violence exercised over women's bodies during the *conflict* responds to a patriarchal logic of gender militarization, in which masculinity is defined in terms of dominance, strength, and appropriation. The appropriation of the female body—as a mechanism of punishment, control, or submission—constitutes a direct violation of the principle of human dignity and a systematic breach of international norms such as CEDAW and the Belém do Pará Convention. Sexual violence has been used as a tactic to send messages of power not only to individual victims but to entire communities.

Intersectional Approach to Violence Analysis

The experience of gender-based violence in armed contexts is compounded by intersectional factors such as ethnicity, rurality, social class, or age. Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and displaced women face additional structural barriers that hinder their access to justice and expose them to more severe forms of violence. This reality demands that institutional and legal responses be differentiated, and that the intersectional approach is not just a methodological option but a legal imperative (Schickendantz, 2011).

Legal Responses and Structural Shortcomings

The Colombian legal system, through rulings such as Constitutional Court Decision T-025 of 2004 and Order 092 of 2008, has acknowledged the seriousness of sexual violence in the *armed conflict*. However, the persistence of impunity, institutional revictimization, and lack of comprehensive reparations reveal that the system remains anchored in an androcentric paradigm (Butler, 2002). The absence of a gender-sensitive legal culture prevents the structural transformation of the conditions that enable violence.

Hegemonic Masculinity and Institutional Culture

An alarming aspect is the involvement of state agents in practices that reproduce the patriarchal logic of the *conflict*. Cases such as the sexual abuse of an Emberá Indigenous girl by members of the National Army in 2020 reveal an institutional culture tolerant of sexual violence and abuse of power. This pattern reinforces the need for deep institutional reforms that go beyond criminal sanctions and dismantle the cultural and symbolic foundations of institutionalized machismo.

Women as Victims but Also as Co-opted Subjects

Although the majority of direct victims of armed violence continue to be young men, women experience differentiated and aggravated forms of victimization: slavery, forced pregnancies, displacement, and systematic sexual violence. Furthermore, many are co-opted into armed groups not as empowered agents but as instrumentalized subjects. Female participation, in many cases, results from direct coercion or a total lack of life alternatives, and cannot be interpreted as empowerment.

Denaturalization of War Roles and Gender Re-signification

War reproduces traditional gender roles: the man as heroic combatant; the woman as passive victim or emotional support. This dichotomy prevents the recognition of female agency and reinforces narratives that exclude their political role. In contexts of extreme violence, decision-making capacity is severely

constrained. The dilemma of "dying or joining" does not represent a free choice, but rather the consequence of structures of oppression and community uprooting (Robles et al., 2021).

State Obligation and the Need for Structural Transformation

Under international human rights law and international humanitarian law, the Colombian State has the obligation to prevent, punish, and eradicate all forms of violence against women. This responsibility also implies adopting comprehensive public policies that denaturalize gender-based violence, promote alternative models of masculinity, and ensure effective access to justice, truth, and reparation. A transformative approach must be at the core of any transitional justice policy aspiring to sustainable peace.

The *armed conflict* has been shaped by a militarized and patriarchal gender regime. Hegemonic masculinity has operated as a power device that reproduces multiple forms of violence, especially against women and girls. Building a lasting and inclusive peace requires dismantling this logic, promoting gender equality at all institutional levels, and recognizing women not only as victims but as political subjects. Overcoming the *armed conflict* cannot be separated from the radical transformation of the patriarchal order that sustains it.

Chapter IV. Female participation in armed groups: between structural subordination and vindication strategies in the Colombian armed conflict

In the Colombian context, the participation of women in illegal armed groups has traditionally been approached from a logic of passive victimization. However, a more rigorous reading from the perspectives of gender studies and international human rights law reveals that such participation may stem from complex motivations that go beyond direct coercion, including dimensions of agency, symbolic resistance, and survival strategies in the face of structural exclusion (Yañez, 2013).

Some women find in their involvement with armed structures a means of subjective vindication in response to personal histories marked by domestic abuse, social exclusion, or the systematic denial of their autonomy. For these women, enlistment may represent, at least in appearance, an opportunity to assume roles different from those traditionally assigned to them, to gain recognition for their capabilities, and to escape environments shaped by domestic violence or socioeconomic precarity.

In other cases, incorporation into armed groups stems from affective ties developed with combatant members, who exert emotional pressures interpreted as tests of loyalty or love. This form of recruitment, though veiled by the appearance of consensual relationships, takes place in contexts where women — particularly young women — lack support networks, economic autonomy, or personal resources to resist these dynamics. In settings marked by structural violence, the normalization of male control, and lack of opportunity, the decision to enlist is often shaped by multiple vulnerability factors.

It is, however, legally unsustainable to assume that the decision to join an armed group — even if formally voluntary — can always be considered a free and informed choice. The existence of symbolic coercion, structural limitations, and persistent violence precludes the notion that these decisions are made outside a patriarchal logic of subordination, which calls for interpretation through a differential rights-based approach.

Specialized literature has noted that the active engagement of women in wartime contexts does not necessarily imply a transformation of gender hierarchies within armed structures. On the contrary, their participation often reproduces traditional logics of the sexual division of labor (Lerner, 1990). Women are assigned logistical, assistance, emotional care, or reproductive roles, and are only exceptionally tasked with combat or intelligence missions (Azamar, 2015). Even when such tasks are performed, they rarely lead to positions of command, strategic decision-making, or meaningful participation in political negotiation processes.

Thus, the "armed conflict" does not dissolve gender asymmetries; rather, it reconfigures and amplifies them. Women who join armed groups, whether through mediated decisions or under coercion, face multiple forms of subordination: imposed discipline, masculinized hierarchical structures, sexualization of their bodies, intra-group violence, and both internal and external stigmatization (Ochoa, 2008). Their passage through these structures is marked by a constant reaffirmation of male power, with gender operating as an organizing device of subordination, as theorized by Joan Scott (1990), who identifies gender as a central category for understanding power and social relations in "conflict" settings.

In this context, gender-based violence increases exponentially, and it is not always recognized as part of the repertoire of violence inherent to "armed conflict." There are still serious institutional omissions in acknowledging sexual assaults, reproductive exploitation, and affective violence suffered by women within these groups. The impunity and silencing of these practices constitute a form of structural violence, whose redress requires not only legal reforms but also a transformation of the transitional justice framework — one that includes the recognition of women as active subjects, rights-holders, and key participants in processes of truth, justice, reparation, and guarantees of non-repetition.

Chapter V. Gender-Based Violence as a Manifestation of Hegemonic Masculinity in the Colombian Armed Conflict

From a historical-structural perspective**,** the configuration of patriarchy as a system of power has permeated social, political, and cultural relations, naturalizing the subordination of women and legitimizing male supremacy through mechanisms of both symbolic and material control (Hernández, O., 2008).

This structure of domination has been reinforced by the notion of hegemonic masculinity, understood as the normative model prescribing ideals of manhood linked to strength, control, ownership of bodies, and the capacity to exercise violence. Within this framework, gender-based violence is not an external consequence of the Colombian "armed conflict" but one of its most entrenched and persistent expressions.

In war scenarios, women are not only relegated to structurally vulnerable positions but are also instrumentalized as spoils of war, symbolic resources, or tools of discipline, serving the male power that dominates wartime dynamics. This instrumentalization translates into various forms of violence: forced recruitment, sexual slavery, non-consensual abortions, imposed pregnancies, appropriation of female bodies, and denial of reproductive and subjective autonomy.

The patriarchal ideology in wartime contexts exacerbates discrimination based on gender, class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, imposing dehumanizing narratives on women, particularly those from rural, Indigenous, or impoverished communities. These women, who should be protected under International Humanitarian Law as civilians, are frequently subjected to violence not only by armed actors—both legal and illegal—but also by their own communities, where misogyny, stigmatization, and social exclusion persist.

In this regard, testimonies from former female combatants and documentary sources reveal systematic practices within insurgent groups like the FARC, where women were recruited and then assigned logistical roles—such as food preparation—and subjected to the sexual demands of male combatants (Cifuentes, 2009). Those who became pregnant were often forced to undergo abortions without consent, and many later recounted having been made to abandon their children born in the jungle after demobilization. According to *El Tiempo*, of the 112 demobilized women in the first half of 2011, 57 reported having left the group in hopes of reuniting with their children. It is estimated that nearly 80% of these women were subjected to at least one forced abortion (Kaufman, 1989).

These data indicate that gender-based violence during the armed conflict was not incidental or marginal but structural. Hegemonic masculinity operated as a logic of war—as a device of power that subordinated women, regulated their bodies, and turned them into instruments of propaganda, punishment, or affirmation of territorial control.

Even when some women actively participated in armed structures—taking on logistical, strategic, or even combat roles—this did not mean a rupture in patriarchal hierarchies, but rather their reproduction in new violent settings. As Cockburn (1999) warns, the presence of women in war spaces does not, in itself, imply a democratization of gender relations.

Therefore, the Colombian armed conflict, permeated by patriarchal power structures, has produced systematic gender-based violence whose manifestations go beyond the physical, extending to the structural, symbolic, and institutional realms. As long as social structures continue to uphold hegemonic masculinity as a normative model, women—especially those living in historically marginalized territories—will remain recurrent victims of these oppressive dynamics.

The eradication of structural machismo and sexual violence as a weapon of war requires not only the legal recognition of victims but also a profound transformation of gender power relations (Huberman, 2012). Transitional justice, comprehensive reparation with a differential approach, and guarantees of non-repetition must incorporate these realities, recognizing gender-based violence as a systematic crime within the framework of the armed conflict, not merely a collateral consequence.

Conclusion

Gender-based violence in contexts of armed conflict cannot be understood merely as a side effect of war, but rather as a systemic manifestation of power relations that shape notions of masculinity and femininity in patriarchal societies. In the Colombian case, hegemonic masculinity—conceived as a normative model of domination, strength, and control—has functioned as a legitimizing mechanism of violence, both in the battlefield and in post-conflict daily life, shaping practices of subordination toward women and toward "masculinities" that deviate from the dominant model.

During the conflict, this masculinity was reinforced by militarist logic and institutional hierarchies that defined male power as an indispensable attribute for war. This logic manifested in the instrumentalization of women's bodies as war spoils, the imposition of subordinate roles within armed structures, and the structural marginalization of women from decision-making and social reconstruction processes. At the same time, men who did not conform to dominant standards of manhood—such as those with diverse sexual identities or who faced economic or ethnic vulnerabilities—were also subjected to exclusion or corrective violence.

After the conflict, these patterns of masculinity have not disappeared; instead, they continue to operate across social, economic, and institutional dynamics, perpetuating inequality and hindering efforts toward reconciliation and gender justice. Structural impunity, the lack of recognition of the multiple forms of violence, and the limited integration of intersectional approaches in truth and reparation processes reveal a persistent resistance to dismantling patriarchal logics.

In this sense, the relationship between hegemonic masculinity and gender-based violence is not accidental but structural. The Colombian armed conflict has exposed this with stark clarity—but it also presents a historical opportunity for transformation. Overcoming this relationship requires incorporating a gender perspective into transitional justice, promoting non-violent masculinities, and ensuring effective mechanisms of comprehensive reparation that recognize women as political subjects and agents of peace. Only then will it be possible to move toward a stable, lasting, and genuinely inclusive peace.

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