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Guerrilleras in Latin America: Domestic and International Roles*

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This analysis identifies two different categories of guerrilla organizations and the roles of women within each. Guerrilla movements with 'international' agendas typically oppose US imperialism, capitalist expansion, or Western culture in general. 'Domestic' guerrilla organizations usually take action against perceived forces of oppression *within* their own nation. These different agendas have a direct impact on the role of women within them. Internationally oriented guerrilla groups assign traditional, limited gender roles to their female members, while domestic guerrilla organizations challenge domestic prohibitions, including those imposed on women, and encourage full and active participation of female members at all levels of guerrilla activity. This hypothesis is supported by comparative case studies of the groups in question. The study of women's roles within guerrilla movements provides insight into modern political issues, such as insurgencies and other non-traditional methods of warfare. The support of half a population can enable a guerrilla organization to further its objectives considerably, and as female participation increases, the group itself gains power. Thus, an in-depth understanding of women and their relationship to guerrilla movements contributes substantially to peace and conflict studies as well as studies of non-traditional warfare.

Introduction

The attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on 11 September 2001 caused a resurgence of interest in guerrilla warfare, insurgencies, and terrorism studies throughout the world. Although scholars have examined many factors related to unconventional warfare, the influence of gender has received comparatively less attention. Bairner (2001: 21, 26) contends that such studies 'have endeavored relatively successfully to neglect the issue of gender', but adds that they cannot 'be fully understood without reference to gender'.

In an effort to contribute to this area of inquiry, this study focuses on the relationship between women and guerrilla movements in Latin America and the role of the female guerrilla warrior or *guerrillera*. This analysis argues that women are more active and participate at much higher levels in guerrilla groups that espouse domestic objectives and act against a national government than women in guerrilla organizations with an international agenda that targets globalization, imperialism, or foreign influence. My argument is not that domestic groups are necessarily more open to women's issues, but that women choose to become active and involved in domestic groups because they anticipate a greater potential for change in

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their hierarchical status. As such, this inquiry approaches the topic of women and guerrilla warfare from the perspective of international relations theory rather than feminist theory.

Much of the extant research on guerrilleras provides in-depth analysis of only two or three guerrilla organizations, primarily in the post-World War II era. This study also confines its examination to the postwar period, but examines a wider variety of Latin American nations with well-documented female guerrilla activity. The limited time-frame also confines the study to guerrilla movements that have emerged since the postwar initiation of the women's movement, eliminating comparisons between pre-feminism guerrilla movements and post-feminism movements. This analysis employs six case studies of domestic guerrilla organizations and two of international groups; while equal numbers of case studies would be ideal, the fact is that additional relevant cases simply do not exist, therefore, this study confines its examination to empirical phenomena.

Other studies have focused on individual personalities among guerrilleras; because this study addresses the level of guerrilla participation among female members in general rather than individual anomalies, it does not include guerrilla organizations with only one or two noteworthy high-ranking female cadres, such as Norma Ester Arostito of Argentina's Montoneros.

Defining Terms: Terrorism and Guerrilla Warfare

Because this analysis includes women engaged in activities ranging from guerrilla warfare, revolutions, and separatist movements to organized militia movements, it is necessary first to clarify the use of the terms 'guerrilla', 'guerrillera', and 'terrorism'. Not surprisingly, debate continues to rage over the definitions of these terms. Literally, the

word 'guerrilla' means 'little war', originating in the 19th century to describe the small groups of rebels who opposed the Napoleonic occupation of Spain and their methods of warfare (Castro, 1999: xvi). The corresponding feminine version of the noun is 'guerrillera'.

Laqueur (2002: xvi) explains that the term 'guerrilla' has 'been applied to all kinds of revolutionary wars and wars of national liberation, insurrections, peasant wars, and terrorist acts' to the point that 'the term has become almost meaningless'. He defines guerrilla warfare as harassing the enemy, avoiding traditional military battles, interrupting enemy communications, and carrying out surprise attacks, noting that these tactics may vary considerably, and adds that guerrilla warfare should not be used as a synonym for terrorism.

Beckett (1999: ix) defines guerrilla warfare as 'a set of military tactics utilized by a minority group within a state or an indigenous population in order to oppose the government or foreign occupying forces', noting that guerrillas may also be described as 'revolutionary guerrillas' or 'insurgents' if they use guerrilla methods in an effort to seize political power. O'Neill (1990: 24–25) distinguishes between guerrilla warfare and terrorism, contending that 'most analysts define terrorism as the threat or use of physical coercion against non-combatants to create fear in order to achieve political objectives'. As Taber (2002: ix) explains, 'Guerrilla warfare, by contrast, consists of hit-and-run attacks against police and military and the physical infrastructure that supports them'.

Despite the subtle distinctions between the many definitions of guerrilla, these definitions are consistent in that they define guerrillas as small groups who engage in unorthodox attacks on the state or its military apparatus, while terrorists target civilian populations in an effort to generate chaos and fear (Mao, 1961: 42–43; Osanka,

1962: 1, 25; Paget, 1967: 14–15; Porzecanski, 1973). Therefore, terrorists may employ guerrilla tactics by attacking the state authority as well as their civilian targets, and guerrillas may become terrorists by attacking civilians in addition to the state, but the two are not necessarily equivalent. Examples of terrorists are included in this study only if they engage in guerrilla warfare.

Domestic vs. International

This study distinguishes between guerrilla organizations with domestic agendas and international agendas. International guerrilla movements typically oppose US imperialism, globalization, the expansion of capitalism, or Western culture in general. In these groups, however, women function in primarily supportive roles, cooking, sewing uniforms, and providing shelter and sometimes sex to the males in the organization. In this sense, these women's roles deviate very little from the traditional gender roles of females in a developing state. Such guerrilla organizations challenge the global hierarchy and its distribution of power and wealth, but they have little effect on domestic policies, particularly those pertaining to women. Women may participate, but their activity is controlled and limited by the entrenched gender roles of their culture and by the male leaders of the guerrilla movement.

Women who are actively engaged in organized guerrilla activity at the highest levels of command and policymaking are associated less with internationally oriented groups than with domestic guerrilla organizations. The term 'domestic' is used instead of 'nationalist' to avoid confusion with other common interpretations of nationalism. Other studies may use the terms 'regional' or 'ethnic' guerrillas, but in the interest of maintaining the distinction between domestically oriented guerrilla organizations and those with international agendas, this study

employs the terms domestic and international. While international groups may necessarily include some degree of domestic activity in their home base, and domestic organizations may exhibit some influence on international or external actors, both domestic and international groups tend to emphasize one of the two areas of focus: domestic or international.

Domestic guerrillas usually take action against what they perceive as the forces of oppression *within* their own nation, economy, or societal structure. Because the organization itself is often revolutionary, challenging tradition and the ruling regime, the group is much more likely to challenge the conventional view of women and their historical gender roles. This provides much more opportunity for females to actively participate in the group's activities, such as guerrilla warfare, policy formation, and even leadership roles.

Guerrilla activity in the developing nations of Uruguay, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Peru, Colombia, and Mexico has organized into domestic movements of largely homogeneous political or ethnic groups combating what they perceive as the oppressive and discriminatory behavior of the nations' governments. Guerrilla ventures in these nations are not directed toward the ouster of US troops, the withdrawal of foreign capital, or the elimination of Western culture. This internal focus on restructuring the nation's society includes the restructuring of traditional perceptions of women as well. Women function in a wide variety of roles within these domestic guerrilla groups, from support operations to active command of guerrilla warfare troops and policymaking.

Guerrilla operations in Cuba, as well as the Tri-Border Area of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay, exhibit a decidedly more international agenda. The guerrilla cells in these cases emphasize the removal of external sources of conflict. They sought, or seek, to

end what is, in their view, an exploitative relationship between Western powers and their nation. The termination of these ties includes the goal of overthrowing the capitalist economic system within the nation, or even throughout the world. These operations also focus on the removal of foreign influence from national politics, the economy, and society, and in that sense, even international groups share domestic interests and perhaps local bases of operation, but their broad agenda is international in scope, and their targets are representatives of forces outside the nation. Such goals center not on changing the internal structures of the nation, but on restructuring the nation's relationship to the outside world. This external, or international, orientation does not include the reorientation of the traditional role of women within the nation nor within the guerrilla group, except in the most superficial and temporary manner.

This study contends that high levels of female guerrilla activity appear predominantly in domestic guerrilla organizations because the characteristics of these groups are more conducive to the rejection of traditional gender roles and the acceptance of active female participation. Conversely, guerrilla organizations that focus on external opponents do not attempt to transform the conventional behavior patterns of the sexes within, or outside, the guerrilla group or nation.

Models of Women's Participation in Guerrilla Movements

Although women account for a much smaller proportion of guerrillas than do men, scholars in recent years have begun to focus their attention on the growing numbers and importance of women in these roles. Laqueur (1977: 398) contends that women have participated in almost all terrorist and guerrilla movements. Cunningham (2003:

186) agrees, but finds that most female terrorist activity has been limited to support roles. Georges-Abeyie (1983) argues that women actually played a very minor role in terrorism from the 1950s until the 1980s, but anticipated in 1983 that women would become much more active in terrorism in the future. He also argues that female guerrillas will emerge predominantly within organizations that espouse feminist or socialistic principles. Hasso (1998: 441–442) agrees, stating that female terrorism is supported by feminist ideology.

A feminist agenda draws more active women members, and a high percentage of active female membership generates more commitment to women's issues. Reif (1986: 154) explains that past studies have argued that 'women face greater barriers to participation and hence should participate less extensively than men. . . . Women should tend to perform support roles'. Like Reif, Griset & Mahan (2003: 158) challenge traditional views, arguing that women fill a variety of roles within guerrilla organizations, from merely supportive to active leadership functions.

Griset & Mahan present a typology of women in guerrilla organizations based on their levels of participation, distinguishing among Sympathizers, Spies, Warriors, and Dominant Forces. They characterize Sympathizers primarily as camp followers who provide money, time, sewing, cooking, and even sex to the males in the guerrilla organization. Spies are a more active group, serving as decoys, messengers, and intelligence-gatherers, and contributing strategic support to the men as well. Sympathizers and Spies are linked by the lack of any return on their investment in the movement; they help to elicit political change but are not expected to share in, or benefit from, that change.

Warriors are more active participants who are recruited and trained to use weapons and incendiary devices in guerrilla warfare. They

may fight alongside their male counterparts, but they are not allowed to become leaders and have little, if any, input in policy formation. Furthermore, there is rarely any anticipation of change in their status once the group's goals have been achieved. The Dominant Forces participate at the highest level, providing leadership, ideology, strategy, and motivation. These women often fill commando positions at the core of the group. Griset & Mahan (2003: 158) contend that dominant forces may engender more fear than men in similar positions, because this powerful and violent status is so unlike the traditional female role. Dominant Forces expect to share fully in the benefits and changes wrought by the guerrilla movement.

Although de Cataldo Neuburger & Valentini (1996: 8) deny that women ever benefit from terrorist participation, they do acknowledge that women sometimes act as dominant forces within terrorist organizations, planning strategy, claiming responsibility for terrorist actions, deciding where to plant bombs, training in terrorist camps, and deciding whom to kidnap or assassinate.

Galvin (1983: 20–23) examines the female guerrilla from a sociopsychological perspective and argues that the traditional role of women and its corresponding lack of political, economic, and social power directly influences political violence by women. As she states,

Simply being a woman, thinking and experiencing life as a woman, will often have a decisive impact on the decision to enter, remain in, or leave a terrorist organization. . . . There is almost a natural progression towards terrorism. . . . Women take up terrorism on their own initiative because it seems to accord with their own interests. . . . Intense frustration is a strong motivator. When attempts to change socio-political situations by conventionally accepted means fail . . . women . . . have turned to terrorism.

Another contributing factor in the mobilization of guerrilleras is the phenom-

enon known as *marianismo*. Because Latin American men traditionally dominate the public sphere and fulfill their roles of *machismo*, women have assumed leadership within the private sphere, the home (Skidmore & Smith, 1997: 63). This control is reinforced by a moral and spiritual superiority, linked to the Catholic doctrine surrounding the Virgin Mary (Kryzanek, 1995: 34). Kampwirth (2002: 30–32) cites a more controversial religious influence, Liberation Theology, as allowing women to reject traditional roles and embrace the status of guerrillera. Kampwirth also emphasizes the strategic pragmatism of recruiting women along with the rejection of the Cuban model, which diminished women's roles.

Chinchilla (1997: 207) contends that Latin America experienced few politically active women prior to the late 1960s and that female guerrillas subsequently emerged as a result of restive urbanites, frustration with leftist political parties that ignored women's issues, reaction against the failure of women's activism in Cuba, and anti-colonial nationalism. While these factors certainly contribute to the development of the guerrillera, this study argues that anti-colonial fervor and its resulting nationalism far outweigh any other factors.

In an extensive analysis of gender and Third World politics, Waylen (1996: 74) suggests that women became more active in guerrilla warfare during the 1970s because they were more inconspicuous than males, represented broader community participation, and imparted a feminist agenda to the cause. As she states in her discussion of Latin American nations in conflict, 'Some of these . . . had high levels of female participation'. However, Waylen's study does not seek to address the question of *why* some nations exhibited high levels while others did not.

Several scholars have proposed that women are more active in national liberation movements than in traditional military

forces. Sharoni (2001: 86) states that, 'National liberation movements have been portrayed as the least hospitable places for women, despite the fact that women in national liberation movements . . . seem to have had more space to raise questions about gender inequalities'. Alison's (2004: 452) in-depth study of female combatants concurs, finding that such 'anti-state nationalisms are more likely to be receptive to women's non-traditional involvement . . . than institutionalized state nationalisms'.

This study agrees that non-traditional combat forces are more open to women's participation and, in addition, argues that levels of female participation in both guerrilla activities and terrorism are determined by the goals of the organization as a whole and the group's opponent. Domestic oppression breeds higher levels of participation among women, while guerrilla groups focused on battling international factors such as imperialism, capitalism, and globalization fail to elicit this heightened intensity of activity among women.

Domestic Guerrilla Activity

This study examines select examples of domestically oriented guerrilla movements from Latin America in the post-WWII era. Uruguay's Tupamaros used guerrilla warfare as well as terrorist attacks on civilians in an effort to overthrow the national government in the 1960s and 1970s (Porzecanski, 1973). The Farabundo Marti Front for National Liberation (FMLN) and the Frente Democrático Revolucionario (FDR) or Democratic Revolutionary Front of El Salvador joined five opposition groups in a guerrilla war against the national government. Nicaragua's Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN) or Sandinista Liberation Front successfully overthrew the Somoza regime through a guerrilla war lasting 18 years (Reif, 1986: 158). The Sendero Luminoso (SL) or

Shining Path of Peru provides an example of a guerrilla organization recognized worldwide as one of the most brutal. Colombia's Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionario de Colombia (FARC) or Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces is acknowledged as one of the largest and best-equipped guerrilla forces in history (International Policy Institute for Counterterrorism, 2004). The Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) or Zapatista Army of National Liberation provides a model of one of the best-organized and politically effective guerrilla movements today.

These groups are representative of the most effective guerrilla movements in the post-WWII world. They do not oppose the external forces of imperialism or the inequities of global capitalism; rather, they target the governments of their own nations and seek to overthrow, reform, or secede from the state. In rejecting the traditional power structure and its control, these groups also challenge its restrictions on women's activities and limited gender roles.

Uruguay

The Tupamaro guerrilla movement formed in 1962, seeking to overthrow the oligarchic rule of Uruguay and eliminate government repression through the establishment of a socialist society. These goals concentrated on domestic objectives rather than international goals. Georges-Abeyie (1983: 75) notes that although Uruguay did not exhibit a strong feminist tradition, it experienced 'considerable feminist input in terrorist organizations'. Within the Tupamaros, women participated at all levels, from supportive roles as Sympathizers and Spies, to more active service as Warriors and leadership roles of Dominant Forces. Reif (1986: 157) states that all squads had at least one or two women as members, and that their duties encompassed both support and combat functions. Actual reports from the Tupamaros indicate

active participation of female members, particularly in robberies and kidnappings. Other sources demonstrate a wide range of activities for women, including guarding prisoners, distributing propaganda, and engaging in robberies to generate revenue for the group's terrorist activities.

The Tupamaros strongly encouraged the active participation of women in battle and command positions as well. According to Reif (1986: 157), 'women participated in substantial numbers in the Tupamaros'; she cites Tupamaro arrest records from 1966 that show fully 10% of the membership was female; by 1972, that percentage had increased to over 25%. Other sources have verified the high level of female involvement as well. Jaquette's (1973: 344–354, 352) study reports 'a large number of women . . . [taking part] in robberies, kidnappings, and other operations, including an assault on the Women's Prison which freed twelve female revolutionaries' and the kidnapping of British Ambassador Geoffrey Jackson.

The fact that the Tupamaros developed specific policy positions on women's issues lends support to the assertion of active female involvement at all levels. The Tupamaros' political platform advocated the direct participation of women in guerrilla activities, as well as the elimination of gender discrimination in society at large. Reif (1986: 157) argues that the Tupamaros' goals of free access to education and fair distribution of income, as well as the nationalization of health care, elderly care, and food production, were 'effectively adopted strategies to recruit women'. The causality may be reciprocal as well, in that the large and active female membership may well have contributed to the creation of these policies.

El Salvador

The principal opposition to the military and industrial oligarchy of El Salvador emerged in the civil war of 1979–92 and was com-

prised of two guerrilla movements, the Farabundo Marti Front for National Liberation (FMLN) and the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR). The FMLN itself was actually a merger of five extant political and guerrilla movements that sought direct democratic political participation by the people, land reform, economic reform, government intervention in the economy, and restructuring of the military and police (Reif, 1986: 157; Montgomery, 1995: 103–105). These goals were domestic, focusing on the internal reorganization of the El Salvadoran government and society, rather than on any international changes.

The FMLN–FDR reportedly had 40% female membership in the total group, and records indicate that between 30% and 40% of the armed combatants were women as well. During the demobilization process at the end of the civil war, United Nations observers reported approximately 5,000 female members out of 15,000 troops. Among the women, 55% served as guerrillas in armed combat, while fewer than 30% performed organizational and domestic duties, and only 15% engaged in health and medical care (Heyzer, 2004: 2). Other sources record significant numbers of women in high-ranking command positions and that women comprised 40% of the revolutionary council (Reif, 1986: 157). In accordance with the model of domestic terrorists proposed by this study, the women of the FMLN–FDR functioned as medics, warriors, and leaders, in addition to providing basic support. They shared in decision-making processes and the performance of tasks that were traditionally gender-assigned, thereby filling not only the basic roles of Sympathizers and Spies, but Warriors and Dominant Forces as well.

Nicaragua

The revolutionary Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) formed in 1961 to

overthrow the repressive dictatorship of the Somoza family and its brutal National Guard and establish a liberal reform government. Again, the goals of the FSLN were domestic in nature, limited to internal change rather than external transformations beyond the national borders.

The Association of Women Confronting the National Problem (AMPRONAC), established by a leader of the FSLN, helped recruit many women into the Sandinista army. Scholars estimate that women comprised one-third of all heads-of-households during this period (Reif, 1986: 158). Disenfranchised politically and economically by their national government and forced into assuming full responsibility for their families, they were promising candidates for the cause. High unemployment, low standards of living, and political unrest created many of the conditions conducive to terrorism identified by Georges-Abeyie (1983: 84), and women quickly moved from support positions within the FSLN to battle and command roles, sometimes filling as many as half of the leadership posts in battle. By the end of the 1970s, women comprised 30% of the Sandinista guerrilla army and functioned in combat and leadership roles in addition to support positions (Reif, 1986: 158). Although they served in the more limited participation of Sympathizers and Spies, many functioned as Warriors, commanding troops, and Dominant Forces, contributing to policy formation and strategy. Former rebel Gioconda Belli recalls that she routinely carried a sub-machine gun 'like a handbag' and engaged in gun-running and casing foreign embassies for possible hostage-taking opportunities (Campbell, 2002: 7).

Reif (1986: 158) credits the success of the Sandinistas' appeal to women to its willingness to establish internal policies of respect and support for women, made all the more significant by their deviation from the traditional Latin *machismo* of Somoza society.

Like the women of the Tupamaros, logic suggests that the highly active female members of the Sandinistas contributed to, in addition to being recruited by, the FSLN's egalitarian approach to women.

Peru

The International Policy Institute for Counterterrorism (2004) identifies the Sendero Luminoso (SL), or Shining Path, as one of the most ruthless guerrilla groups in existence. Approximately 30,000 Peruvians were killed in the government's ongoing battle with the SL (Kopel, 2002). The SL rejected ethno-nationalist guerrillas, notably the Tupac Amaru; however, its goals were primarily domestic in that the organization sought to overthrow the institutions of the Peruvian government and replace them with a revolutionary peasant regime (International Policy Institute for Counterterrorism, 2004; Griset & Mahan, 2003: 162; Kopel, 2002; United States Department of State, 1999).

Many scholars contend that the SL was initially led by a guerrillera, the late Torre Guzman, known as Comrade Norah (International Policy Institute for Counterterrorism, 2004). Although other sources credit her husband, Abimael Guzman, with its founding, the data clearly indicate that, throughout the 1980s, 'a large number of women [were] involved at all levels of the organization, right up to the top positions in both the regional commands and the National Central Committee' (Palmer, 1995: 277). Records from 1987 indicate that over half of all SL members arrested and charged with terrorist activity were women (Gonzales, 1987: 83). In her study of the SL, Tarazona-Sevillano (1990: 76–78) finds that the group strongly encouraged female membership and that women 'historically played a leading role' in the SL, particularly lower-class women for whom the SL embodied 'a battle for gender equality', allowing women

'to strike back violently at the traditional system that oppresses them'. She attributes the SL's strength and longevity to its widespread female participation, noting that women were 'frequently charged with the responsibility for delivering the fatal shot in the assassination-squad operations'.

Police reported 'the presence of large numbers of women in the guerrilla organization' in the 1980s and claimed that the group's second-ranking commander in Lima was a woman, Juana Saavedra, known as Sara (Ruiz, 1988). In addition, inside sources revealed that Abimael Guzman 'relied heavily on a select group of female cadres' (Speck, 1992). Although critics argued that the women were valued for their loyalty rather than their intellect and that their roles were those of administrators, not strategists, information surfaced after Guzman's arrest in 1993 that SL leadership had long been controlled by women such as Edith Lagos, Laura Zambrano, and Elena Iparraguirre, who could 'maintain order and keep a secret' (Speck, 1992). Maria Jenny Rodriguez, or Comrade Rita, assumed Guzman's position of leadership after this capture, and her actions equaled his in brutality, as she continued the SL policy of killing all rival leftist groups (Gamini, 1994). The high level of participation that women enjoyed in the SL helped recruit more female members, not only as Sympathizers and Spies, but as Warriors and policymaking Dominant Forces. Clearly, the SL lived by Abimael Guzman's 1970 statement, 'The success of our revolution hinges on the active participation of women' (Ruiz, 1988).

Colombia

As of 2004, the four-decade civil war in Colombia continues as the longest in the Americas with over 150,000 casualties, including over 5,000 police, and 2.5 million displaced persons (Padgett, 2004: 45; Gruner, 2003: 30). The Colombian conflict

has spawned a variety of communist, socialist, peasant, and reactionary right-wing political groups, but four major domestic terrorist organizations emerged in the 1960s and 1970s. The 1960 Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) or Army of National Liberation, modeled after Fidel Castro's guerrilla army, grew from the conviction of Camilo Torres, the 'revolutionary priest', that significant reform was possible only through violence. The Ejército Popular de Liberación (EPL) or People's Liberation Army formed after Torres's murder. Both groups were domestic in that their goals were confined to the overthrow of oligarchical rule in Colombia (Gott, 1971; Reif, 1986: 156; von der Walde & Burbano, 2001: 25). Although reports conflict regarding the engagement of women in combat, evidence supports the assertion that women were instrumental in policymaking, indicating that many guerrillas were serving as Dominant Forces. The EPL permitted women to join auxiliary units, and witnesses reported a woman firing at army troops who had killed ELN leader Camilo Torres, suggesting that the guerrillas participated as Warriors as well (Gott, 1971: 533).

A far more powerful and long-lived guerrilla and terrorist movement in Colombia is the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC). FARC began in 1964 and is currently considered one of the largest and best-equipped guerrilla armies in history. Like its predecessors, the ELN and EPL, FARC's objectives are domestic in orientation; its goals include political reform, elimination of government corruption, more investment in rural social programs, and reduction of Colombia's military and defense spending. It attempts to promote these policies through guerrilla attacks on the Colombian government and civilians, funding its efforts through occasional kidnappings and extortion, but primarily through control of the illegal cocaine and

heroin industry. FARC operates from its 42,000 square-kilometer jungle enclave, but, by 2000, had been credited with controlling 'about two-fifths of Colombia' (Hodgson, 2000a: 11).

Many of the FARC members responsible for its guerrilla warfare and terrorist activities are women. In 1974, FARC had fewer than 900 members, and a mere handful were female. By the year 2000, approximately 30% of the 15,000 FARC members were women; within two years, women comprised between 40% and 45% of the 18,000 FARC members. Female guerrillas cite the grinding poverty and lack of economic, political, and social rights for women in Colombian society as incentives to join FARC (Hodgson, 2000b: 6; Cala, 2001). Colombia's nationwide unemployment rate exceeds 20%, and rural traditions reject education for girls, both of which are classic pre-conditions for guerrilla activity, according to Georges-Abeyies (Hodgson, 2000b; Georges-Abeyie, 1983: 84).

According to FARC guerrillas, the movement offers them freedom and equality from the repressive macho culture of traditional Colombian society. Anthropologist Maria Eugenia Vasquez states, 'In a country where women are usually ignored, [guerrillas] are surrounded by symbols that give them an identity' (Hodgson, 2000b). Joaquin Gomez, leader of a FARC battle division, says that women are essential and valued in the 'people's war'; as such, FARC has actively recruited women since the early 1990s (Cunningham, 2003: 179). The guerrillas contend that their roles are equal to those of the men in FARC, performing guard duty, patrolling, gathering intelligence, fighting in combat, and serving as field commanders (Cunningham, 2003: 179; McDermott, 2002). Within FARC, the guerrillas do not operate as mere Sympathizers; instead, they collect intelligence information as Spies, lead guerrilla troops in

combat as Warriors, and make policy decisions as Dominant Forces.

Mexico

The Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) of the southern state of Chiapas gained worldwide attention in 1994 when it declared war on the executive branch of the Mexican government and the Mexican Army for political and economic discrimination against the indigenous peoples of Mexico and announced the establishment of political, economic, and social equality throughout Mexico as its major objective. This announcement was made to coincide with the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) because the EZLN sought to protest the discriminatory trade practices against the Mexican poor that NAFTA exacerbated. Although the EZLN opposes the effects of globalization in Mexico in general and the state of Chiapas in particular, their activities are confined primarily to Chiapas. They pressure the Mexican government to exclude their agricultural products from NAFTA regulations, but, unlike international guerrillas, they do not cooperate with anti-state forces in other nations or seek to spread the anti-globalization revolution beyond their national borders. Thus, the goals and targets of the EZLN are domestic; they do not engage in international attacks against the United States, multinational corporations, or other external targets.

The extreme poverty of the Chiapas region has contributed to the high levels of female participation in the EZLN because the women of Chiapas suffer disproportionately from the burdens of poverty and discrimination (Camp, 1996: 91; Goetze, 1996: 4; Millan, 2002: 3). As Mansbridge (2001) notes, 'the indigenous women of Mexico are the most marginalized group in that country'. Considering their relatively subordinate positions in society, Mexican

women may seem 'unlikely candidates for leaders of armed rebellion, and furthermore, unlikely to protest the structure of the rebellion to create their own demands as women . . . [yet] they are participants in the Zapatista movement' (Goetze, 1996: 4).

Women have been active in the EZLN since its inception and have brought with them a strong desire to protect the opportunities not afforded them in the external community. In fact, they often function as Warriors, rising to high-ranking levels of the guerrilla army, where they command both male and female soldiers (Millan, 2002: 3). They also become Dominant Forces, creating policy on women's social and economic rights and contributing to negotiations with the Mexican government (Cevallos, 2001; Franco, 2001; Goetze, 1996: 6–7; Rashkin, 1996: 12–13). The wide range of activity among the guerrilleras as Spies, Warriors, and policymaking Dominant Forces has created entry-level positions for local women in Chiapas who move into support roles as EZLN Sympathizers, providing food, relaying communication, and sewing uniforms. This division of labor, in turn, frees the guerrilleras to serve as combat soldiers and battle commanders, or Warriors (Goetze, 1996: 7).

International Guerrilla Movements

While the guerrilla movements discussed thus far exhibit a domestic orientation, seeking to change or reject their national governments and reform domestic policies, the Cuban revolutionaries of 1959 and the Islamic Jihad cells operating in the Tri-Border Area (TBA) of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay represent organizations with a more international agenda. Fidel Castro's Communist guerrillas targeted the Batista regime of Cuba, but only as a component of the attack on US imperialism and the forces of international capitalism. Islamic Jihad

focuses on guerrilla activity against what it perceives as the excesses of Western culture, US imperialism, and pro-Israeli politics by establishing operations in South America, a region strategically located in relation to the United States.

The objectives of international guerrilla groups do not attempt to restructure their relationship to the national government or influence domestic policy; instead, these groups struggle to alter the relationship between their national government and what they perceive as external forces of international economic or political oppression. Because such movements focus on the external, they devote little attention to overcoming traditional gender restrictions on women. While these groups may recruit women, female members serve primarily in limited support roles and rarely rise to the more active levels of leadership and decision-making positions.

Cuba

Harkabi (1985: 19) states that 'in the twentieth century, it [terrorism] has become a device for launching revolution', and Cuba's revolution of 1959 was no exception. Though it included the ouster of the Batista regime, Cuba's guerrilla activity movement was internationally oriented, directed against Western capitalism and the forces of US imperialism that had dominated Cuba since the Spanish–American War of 1898. This international focus became even more evident only three years after the revolution with the discovery of Soviet missiles in Cuba during the Cuban Missile Crisis. In letters written prior to the revolution, Fidel Castro wrote that it was his destiny to 'wage war against America' (Ehrenfeld, 1990: 21).

Although admirers credit the spread of international socialism and Castro's Communist Revolution with mobilizing Cuban working-class women, even Cuba's revolutionaries acknowledge that Cuban women

did not actively participate in the guerrilla activities of the uprising. The President of the Federation of Cuban Women and Fidel Castro's sister-in-law, Vilma Espin, stated that very few women actually participated in the Cuban struggle and that 'campesino [rural peasant] women were generally not organizationally active until mobilized by the Federation after the insurgency period' (Reif, 1986: 155–156). Jaquette's (1973: 346–347) study of women in revolutionary movements in Latin America discusses only three Cuban women who were active in combat: Fidel Castro's secretary, Celia Sanchez; Vilma Espin, wife of Castro's brother, Raul Castro; and Haydee Santamaria, the wife of a Communist Party leader. Jaquette describes the revolution as a 'conscious attempt by Fidel and other members of the elite to transform the status of women in Cuban society', but does not address the converse, the attempt of revolutionary women to transform society. While the cadre of female elites was small, 'peasant women probably participated [even] less frequently' (Reif, 1986: 155).

Though Rowbotham (1972: 223–225) discusses the formation of a Red Army battalion of women in Cuba, she states that battle conditions were deemed unsuitable for women and quotes Che Guevara as stating that the men were not accustomed to following a female commander. In his celebrated work, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, Guevara (1962: 57–58) devotes only two pages to the role of women in guerrilla activity, although he states that 'women can play an extraordinarily important role in the development of the revolutionary process', that 'they are capable of the most difficult deeds, of fighting with the troops', and are 'no less resilient than men'. However, he also asserts that women are 'weaker than men'. He adds, 'Of course, there are not too many women soldiers', and emphasizes using women 'particularly in communications', noting that 'They can cook for the troops and perform other duties

of a domestic nature, teach, . . . perform the functions of social workers, nurse the sick, help sew uniforms'. Thus, even the writing of 'el Che' reduces the role of women in the Cuban struggle.

Reif's (1986: 155) analysis of interviews and letters from Cuban revolutionaries concludes that 'women performed basically support and relief roles, providing 'support rather than combat performance', as 'women in the guerrilla army did housekeeping and supply assignments'. She notes that broadcast excerpts from the primary radio station of the revolution, Radio Rebelde, 'reveal no attempt to mobilize specifically women'.

In her study of women in the Cuban Revolution, Cole (1994: 299–307) discusses the plight of women prior to the revolution and the subsequent impact on women, but offers no evidence of any female participation in revolutionary activities. Similarly, Molyneux's (2000: 293–294) examination of the Federation of Cuban Women illuminates the effect of the revolution upon women rather than their role in the revolution. As part of the international socialist revolution against capitalism and US dominance, Castro's Cuba perceived changes in women's status as a result of the revolution, rather than an active force within the political transformation.

Tri-Border Area: Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay

The nations of the Tri-Border Area, or TBA, as Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay are known, experienced short-lived domestic uprisings against military regimes or socio-economic conditions in the 1960s and 1970s. Since the 1990s, however, the internationally active Islamic Jihad guerrilla wing of Iran's Hezbollah, or Party of God, has established operations in the TBA (Middle East Newline, 2002). Islamic Jihad formed in 1982 in reaction to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and has been active in the kidnapping,

bombing, and murder of Americans and other Westerners since that time (United States Department of State, 2005: 99–100).

Within the TBA, Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for the March 1992 attack on Israel's embassy in Buenos Aires which killed 29, as well as a July 1994 bombing that killed 86; still other attacks remain under investigation (United States Department of State, 1998). US officials contend that both ' Hamas and Hizbullah operate undisturbed in the tri-border area' despite concerted efforts by the TBA nations, the Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism, the Organization of American States, the Mercosur Working Group on Terrorism, and the United Nations to counter such forces (Barbrosa, 2004; Federal Research Division, 2003; Middle East Newline, 2002; Marcelo de Lima e Silva, 2001). Hezbollah's objective of combating Western imperialism and pro-Israeli foreign policies are clearly international. Though Hezbollah is suspected of drawing support from local criminal organizations in the TBA, it is internationally oriented in its goals, opponents, operations, and virtually every other aspect.

Another striking factor is Hezbollah's lack of female participation in the TBA. Even though Hezbollah established operations in the TBA during the 1980s, long after the political mobilization of women in the 1970s, women have not joined forces with Hezbollah. As Gonzalez & Kampwirth (2001: 73) note, politically active Argentinian women have turned to left-wing political parties instead of guerrilla movements or terrorist activities. The absence of women is particularly noteworthy since the TBA's economic problems of unemployment, inflation, and poverty fall disproportionately on the region's female population. According to studies conducted by the Inter-American Development Bank in 2000, the wealthiest 10% of Argentina's and Brazil's populations controlled 40% of the wealth in those

nations, while the poorest 30% accounted for only 7.5% of national income, and the majority of those living in poverty were women (Moghadam, 2005: 65). Yet, despite this motivation to challenge the status quo, female participation in Hezbollah is non-existent.

Hezbollah's foreign origin cannot fully explain the lack of women, as there are approximately 500,000 Muslims in Brazil and 800,000 in Argentina, most of whom have immigrated in the past 25 years (United States Department of State, 2001). The TBA governments and public opinion are not hostile to Arab political causes, as demonstrated by the May 2005 summit in which leaders of 12 Latin American nations and 22 Arab nations declared a united position on trade policy and Arab–Israeli borders (Aljazeera, 2005; CNN, 2005; El-Tablawy, 2005). Although often credited with restricting women's activities, Islam does not account for the absence of women in the Hezbollah any more than traditional Catholic doctrine; *marianismo* and *machismo* explain the varying levels of activity among women in the groups previously discussed. Women have declined to join the ever-growing guerrilla conflict because they, as women, have nothing to gain from an international guerrilla movement. A domestic opposition might be more successful in attracting women, but the highly internationalized nature of Hezbollah in the TBA does not sustain female support.

Conclusion

Clearly, domestic guerrilla movements such as the Tupamaros of Uruguay, FMLN and FDR of El Salvador, Sandinistas of Nicaragua, Shining Path of Peru, the ELN, EPL, and FARC of Colombia, and the Zapatistas of Mexico actively recruit and foster the participation of women at all levels of the organization, providing upward

mobility from service as Sympathizers and Spies to the higher ranks of Warrior and Dominant Forces. The domestically oriented guerrilla movements in this study incorporate women's issues and concerns into their group's internally focused agenda, further encouraging female participation. The rising numbers and levels of women's involvement have a cyclical effect, causing the group to become more responsive to women's objectives, thereby attracting still more women.

Those guerrilla organizations that reject women or relegate them to subservient support roles demonstrate a focus on international agendas and external enemies. The Communist revolutionaries of Cuba allowed female participation, but in a form strictly regulated by the males of the organizations. Much as the dominant society assigns women a traditional gender role, these internationally oriented guerrilla groups also restrict women's activities. Like the society at large, the international guerrillas operate within the context of certain traditional paradigms, such as *machismo* and *marianismo* in Latin America, rather than rejecting them as the domestic guerrilla movements do.

Future Research

While the study of women in guerrilla activity is a fascinating topic, partially because it counters traditional views of women, it is made all the more difficult by the paucity of available information. Although numerous databases on guerrilla activity in general have been compiled by governmental, academic, and private sources, there is a paucity of empirical data on women in guerrilla activity. The most abundant information is typically available on the most inactive and outdated guerrilla groups. Obviously, groups that are currently engaged in violent and illegal political activities are more secretive about their identities, the details of their operations, and the

structural characteristics of their organizations, but the lack of data seriously hampers efforts to study female participation in guerrilla activity.

Studies abound on the significance of personality in political movements. It is commonplace to study legitimate national leaders through the application of these models. These tools could readily be applied to guerrilla leaders – if accurate data on the leaders' identities and personalities were available. The strategies and decisionmaking processes so frequently employed in examinations of bureaucracies could prove instrumental in the study of organizational hierarchies within guerrilla groups as well. These models could also explain the external relationships between guerrilla groups and inter-guerrilla cooperation. As a policy tool, studies in this area could encourage government institutions to provide gender equity and opportunities for women in economic, political, and social arenas, thereby reducing the guerrilla movements' appeal to women, and thus diffusing the infrastructure of such movements. If it is viewed as a means to build stability in a society, governments may be more inclined to seek equality for women and provide them legitimate avenues of dissent, as well as a voice in politics and policymaking.

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