

Ellen-Rae Cachola is of Ilocano descent and from Maui, Hawai'i. Her doctoral work in the Department of Information Studies examines how women's demilitarization groups have community based archival practices that redefines research and inspires socially relevant knowledge production. She has participated in the International Women's Network Against Militarism biennial gatherings since 2004 and has published articles in *InterActions*, *Walang Hiya*, *Foreign Policy in Focus*, and *Peace Review*. She received a CSW Travel Grant in 2012.

Accessing Community Archives of Political Histories

*The International Women's Network Against Militarism
8th Gathering in Puerto Rico*

by **Ellen-Rae Cachola**

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS produce records because they engage in organizational functions¹ and have archives of historical value.² Although they do not have the resources to create climate-controlled, high-security archives—like, for example, academic archives, government archives, or established heritage institutions, communities find ways to get their messages across to wider publics. The International Women's Network Against Militarism

(IWNAM) (previously named the East Asia–U.S.–Puerto Rico Women's Network Against Militarism) has been organizing biennial international meetings since 1997, bringing together women who are activists, policymakers, teachers, and students to strategize about the negative impacts of militarism and to redefine security. The meetings initially included women from Okinawa, South Korea, the Philippines, and the U.S. but expanded over time to include

women from Puerto Rico and Vieques, Hawai'i, Guåhan³, Australia, and the Marshall Islands.⁴ I have been a participant of the IWNAM since 2004 as a delegate, video documentarian, meeting organizer, note taker, and conference-call coordinator. In my doctoral work, I am also studying archival systems. In February 2012, I attended the IWNAM 8th Gathering, titled “Forging Nets for Demilitarization and Genuine Security,” in Puerto Rico to understand how

its archives create historical understanding in order to share with others their interpretation of reality.

Traditionally, information in IWNAM has been transmitted orally. Sometimes paper flyers and e-flyers have been created to bring together communities, in which information is transmitted orally or performatively or through other externally produced records—such as film—that transmit information visually, auditorily, and textually.⁵ The IWNAM meetings have been made possible by grants to fund international gatherings, which included travel support for low-income participants. Agendas for meetings have been created. Partner organizations have produced reports or brochures for exchange at the gatherings. Correspondence from phone calls, faxes, letters, and emails have addressed logistics, accommodations, meeting locations, and plans for community visits.⁶ News clippings have been translated and sent after a gathering to show how a particular meeting was represented in various types of media. Other types of ephemera about local campaigns have also been exchanged. Final statements synthesizing the information exchanged have been written during the meetings and disseminated to public networks.⁷ These grants, agendas, reports, correspondences, notes, statements, and ephemera are archival

records because they are traces of IWNAM's function and history.

The content of records is as important as their material form.⁸ The meanings of records are produced through the context of their creation.⁹ For more than fifteen years, IWNAM has been bringing together women who have been organizing, researching, and discussing the negative impacts of militarism across the Asia-Pacific, U.S., and Caribbean. Their research and communication has identified structural imbalances of power between countries and understandings of history. In previous meetings, participants at IWNAM meetings have discussed the impacts of militarism in the Asian region, such as the Status of Forces Agreements in South Korea and Japan and the Visiting Forces Agreement in the Philippines, which prioritize the hosting of military bases for U.S. geopolitical interests because of the political-economic dependencies these countries have with the U.S.¹⁰ and their own nation-state development.¹¹ These areas—Puerto Rico, the American West and Southwest, Guam, and the Philippines—all have a history of being occupied by Spain.¹² In 1508, Puerto Rico was transformed into a node within the Spanish imperial network¹³ expanding into North,¹⁴ Central, and South America¹⁵ and the Pacific region.¹⁶ Then Puerto Rico, along with Guam

and the Philippines, was transferred to the U.S. after the Spanish–American War and the Treaty of Paris of 1898.¹⁷ The occupation of Hawai'i by the U.S. was a byproduct of U.S. expansion into the Pacific after the Spanish-American War.¹⁸ As a result, these lands were incorporated into global imperial schemes, such as hosting military infrastructures, missions, and homes of military personnel.

IWNAM's community archives, for example, are filled with the histories and experiences of people upon whom these imperial infrastructures were imposed.¹⁹ In 1997, the IWNAM brought together women's organizations from Okinawa, South Korea, and the Philippines that provide services and counseling to prostituted and civilian women and children who have experienced sexual abuse by military personnel. They also advocated for Amerasian children who have been born from these interactions and who often have been abandoned by their military fathers.²⁰ There are also cases of women and children being raped and killed by military personnel.²¹ Because courts in South Korea, Japan and the Philippines are tied by legal agreements that facilitate the military presence, legal justice for many of these women and children is difficult to achieve.²²

IWNAM materials also document the experiences of those who are recruited into the

military and then witness injustices and power imbalance during and after their service.²³ For example, Oscar López Rivera, a Puerto Rican immigrant living in Chicago, served in the military during the Vietnam War. During his service, he witnessed injustices against both the Vietnamese and Puerto Rican peoples. When he was honorably discharged and returned to the U.S., he observed drug abuse and problems in education, health, housing, and unemployment in the Puerto Rican community, problems that state services failed to address. In response, he became a community organizer and worked to implement bilingual education, integration, and educational programs for the incarcerated. In addition, he founded an alternative school and started health and drug rehabilitation clinics. Rivera joined the Puerto Rican Independence Movement. In 1981, he was imprisoned for seditious conspiracy for being part of the Armed Forces of National Liberation and was sentenced to 70 years in prison, although he was not accused or convicted of causing harm or taking a life.²⁴ Puerto Rican Human Rights activists continue to advocate for Rivera's release,²⁵ arguing that Rivera's was trying to further the right of Puerto Ricans to self-determination and independence from colonialism, which is a crime against humanity.²⁶

International Women's Network Against Militarism 8th Gathering: "Forging Nets for Demilitarization and Genuine Security"

Thursday, 05 April 2012 12:18

DECLARATION

**International Women's Network Against Militarism
8th Gathering: "Forging Nets for Demilitarization and Genuine Security"**
February 19-25, 2012 – Puerto Rico



The 8th Gathering of the International Women's Network Against Militarism, the 19-25, 2012, reunited 26 women from 26 countries gathered in Puerto Rico. Participants included women from the Philippines, Guahan (Guam), Jeju Island, South Korea, Hawaii, and the United States. The gathering was held in Puerto Rico to address the global military threat and develop strategies to reduce the impact of militarism, military conflict, and systems of oppression and discrimination based on gender, race, class, nationality, and other factors.

First, we express our dissatisfaction with the situation faced by our colleague from the Philippines, Corazón Valdez Fabros, who was

International Women's Network Against Militarism featured on www.isiswomen.org

At the IWNAM gathering in Puerto Rico in February of 2012, a declaration was developed and disseminated that addressed the global nature of militarism and described simultaneous military infrastructural developments in Jeju Island, South Korea, Okinawa, the Philippines, Guahan, and Hawaii.²⁷ In all these locations, the military has become part of the infrastructure, made possible by histories of imperialism

that have become normalized partly because of legal systems that do not question militarism. Even though Puerto Rican social movements have advocated for the closure of U.S. naval bases in Vieques, for example, Roosevelt Roads continues to be controlled by the U.S. Navy. The community of Ceiba is dealing with the "commercial auction of land at the former Roosevelt Roads Navy Base and the exclu-

sion of the people of Ceiba from future use and control of this land.”²⁸ Even though it is contaminated, the land is set to be sold for a luxury tourist resort called the Caribbean Riviera.²⁹ In addition, Vieques continues to deal with unexploded U.S. Navy ordnance on and surrounding the island.³⁰ The recent case *Sanchez et al. v. United States* was an effort by Vieques residents to sue the U.S. government for negligence, due to the health problems allegedly caused by military exercises and weapons testing on Vieques. The case was dismissed by the Court of Appeals for the First Circuit. Chief Judge Sandra Lynch, one of the three judges on the panel, commented that courts should be cautious about interfering with the exercise of military authority. The protests of another judge on the panel shed light on “sovereign immunity,” or the protection of the U.S. government from being sued for the impacts of military activities on civilians, and even for injuries claimed by soldiers and their families as stemming from their service.³¹

These examples highlight the political context and reality that underpins the communication efforts of IWNAM. At IWNAM meetings, women can share information at grassroots and international levels about how militarism functions in their own contexts. IWNAM produces records that educate its members and the public about the interconnections between the issues they

research and address. The community archive, in this context, is in the historically and culturally informed organizational structure, values, and intentions through which the IWNAM organizes activity and produces records that embody the development of their collective knowledge. This community prioritizes research, communication, and action that facilitate deeper understanding of how to intervene and reconfigure the ways in which the lands, oceans, and people of the world have been integrated into dangerous, systemic relation to one another. Community archiving respects each organization’s existing modalities for context creation and preservation and for exchange and access to knowledge. Recorded information is created and passed on through oral, written, and visual forms. Community experience is gained through engaging with the functions and development of the organization and witnessing the lived evidences. In turn, community-based archival access triggers an embodied cognition to the implication of this knowledge about the current reality. The vision of this global community is still ongoing and seeks more people to join in this inquiry into how security can be redefined now and for the future.

—

NOTES

1. Italian archivist Luciana Duranti has written about records as being integral to organizational functions. However,

her focus was that institutional records of the state were archival because of their legal value. See Duranti, Luciana. *Diplomatics: New Uses for an Old Science*. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1998. However, I argue that communities’ records are archival from a postcolonial historical perspective. Postcolonial Studies, particularly the work of the Subaltern Studies Collective, has articulated that there are different understandings of time that coexist in societies that have been colonized, because colonialism creates stratified hierarchies within society. See Fernández, María. “Postcolonial Media Theory.” *Third Text* 13.47 (1999): 11-17, and *Selected Subaltern Studies*. Ed. Ranjith Guha and Gayatri Spivak. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1988. As such, institutions and institutional record creators were not the only ones existing in society: there were also those who lived outside or resisted the institution. My concept of community archives is based on the historical perspectives that are outside or resist the institutional narratives, and these groups also have their own organizational systems that produce records. While appraising the records of communities, I found that they too are associated with functional, procedural, historical, and research aspects of the organization’s development. See Penn, Ira A, et al. “Records Storage.” *Records Management Handbook*. 1989. 181-212.

2. Archival scholar Andrew Flinn researched the archives of radical community organizations in U.K., recognizing the records that they have kept and preserved over time but were wary of deeding to the university or other established archival institution due to issues of trust and access for the community. Also, the community’s desire to keep the records within the community was part of maintaining the value of the information within the community. Flinn, Andrew. “Community Histories, Community Archives: Some Opportunities and Challenges.” *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 28.2: 151-76. 2007.
3. Indigenous name for Guam. In Chamorro, *Guåhan* means “we have.”
4. Women for Genuine Security. Projects: International Network Meetings. *Women for Genuine Security*. Accessed 27 September 2012.
5. A film that is associated with women who are part of the International Women’s Network Against Militarism is *Living Along the Fenceline*, produced by Lina Hoshino.
6. I would like to thank Gwyn Kirk for access to her personal and professional archive in order to identify records connected to IWNAM’s history. Gwyn Kirk is the cofounder of Women for Genuine Security (WGS) and IWNAM. WGS is the U.S.-based partner of IWNAM.

7. Most of these statements are archived at Women for Genuine Security's website within each of the descriptions of the past meetings.
8. Drucker, Johanna. "Entity to Event: From Literal, Mechanistic Materiality to Probabilistic Materiality." *Parallax* 15 (2009): 8-17.
9. The idea of records' context of creation draws from the Recordkeeping Continuum Model. An aspect of this model illustrates how an event can spark documentation into a record; the record is then archived, which then becomes a source that informs collective memory. I draw from this conceptualization to understand the phenomenon of the IWNAM's record creation process, and how they build a discourse about the issues they face as they engage and integrate data coming from countries of partner organizations into their framework. For the Recordkeeping Continuum Model, see McKemish, Sue, Michael Piggott, Barbara Reed, and Frank Upward, eds. *Archives: Recordkeeping in Society*. Wagga Wagga: Centre for Information Studies, Charles Stuart University, 2005.
10. Kirk, Gwyn, and Carolyn Bowen Francis. "Redefining Security: Women Challenge U.S. Military Policy and Practice in East Asia." *Berkeley Women's Law Journal*.
11. Morgan, Joseph. "Porpoises Among the Whales: Small Navies in Asia and the Pacific." *East-West Center Special Reports* 2 (1994): 5.
12. From an archival history perspective, Spain is an example of a highly bureaucratic government that left behind archival traces of its imperial and colonizing activities. For a history of Spanish in the American West, see Stawski, Patrick Alexander. "Records for God and King: The Documentary System of the California Mission Period." Thesis. University of California, Los Angeles, 2006. The American Southeast, South, and Southwest are also documented as being impacted by Spanish contact. Evidence of this can be found in the Archivo General de Indias. A traveling exhibit of records from this archive presented this information. See Historic New Orleans Collection. *Threads of Memory: Spain and the United States*. Exhibit. New Orleans, LA: November 2010.
13. Reinat-Pumarejo, María and Mariluz Franco-Ortiz. "Report on Puerto Rico." International Women's Network Against Militarism. February 2012: 8-9. Also, the evidence of Spanish imperial development can be found the infrastructural and architectural design of San Juan. See Rodríguez, Edwin R. Quiles. "San Juan Tras La Fachada: Una Mirada Desde Sus Espacios Ocultos (1508-1900)." Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña: 2007.
14. Historic New Orleans Collection. *Threads of Memory: Spain and the United States*. Exhibit. New Orleans, Louisiana: November 2010. This collection exhibited archival records from Archivo General de Indias, the main institution in Seville, Spain, that managed records coming from the Spanish colonial territories in the New World, particularly North America.
15. El Camino Real is an example of Spanish colonial legacy that linked South, Central, and North America, as it was the vein of commerce and evangelism that served Spain's imperial presence in that region. Dutton, Davis, ed. *Missions of California: A Westways/Comstock Guide*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1972.
16. The Manila-Acapulco Galleon trade, under Felipe II, facilitated the investment of expeditions to expand trade routes between Spanish colonies in the Americas into the Pacific in order to engage with trade with China and the Moluccas. Guam and the Philippines are among the islands utilized by Spain as stepping-stones to Asia, and were turned into its colonial possessions. See Moriarty, James R. and Mary S. Keistman. "Philip II Orders the Journey of the First Manila Galleon." *The Journal of San Diego History* 12.2 (1966); Schurz, William Lytle. *The Manila Galleon: The Romantic History of the Spanish Galleons Trading Between Manila and Acapulco*. New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1939; and Shaw, Carlos Martinez. *Volumen 1: La Formacion De Una Colonial: Filipinas*. Ed. Dolores Elizalde, Josep M. Radera, and Luis Alonson. Consejo Superior De Investigaciones Cientificas, n.d. Print. Imperios Y Naciones En El Pacifico.
17. Thompson, Lanny. *Imperial Archipelago: Representation and Rule in the Insular Territories under U.S. Dominion after 1898*. University of Hawaii Press: Honolulu, 2010.
18. Wei, Deborah and Rachel Kamel, eds. *Resistance in Paradise*. American Friends Service Committee: Philadelphia, 1991.
19. Enloe, Cynthia. *Manuevers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives*. University of California Press: London, 2000.
20. The Amerasian Immigration Act was passed in 1982, providing the opportunity for Amerasian children in Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Kampuchea, or Thailand to be given high preference to immigrate to the U.S. if they were born between 1950-1982 and if they could prove their biological connection to a U.S. military father. In addition to the limits of the criteria, the Act did not include Amerasian children in the Philippines and Japan. See Kirk, Gwyn and Carolyn Bowen Francis. "Redefining Security: Women Challenge U.S. Military Policy and Practice in East Asia." *Berkeley Women's Law Journal* (2000): 259.
21. Sturdevant, Sandra P. and Stoltzfus. (1992) *Let the Good Times Roll: Prostitution and the U.S. Military in Asia*. New York: New York Press. p. 48-165.
22. Kirk, Gwyn and Carolyn Bowen Francis. "Redefining Security: Women Challenge U.S. Military Policy and Practice in East Asia." *Berkeley Women's Law Journal* (2000).
23. According to the National Priorities Project (NPP) analysis of U.S. Discretionary Spending, FY 2013 looks to be distributed in these ways: 1) Military 57%, 2) Education—6%, 3) Government—6%, 4) Housing and Community—6%, 5) Veterans' Benefits—5%, 6) Health—5%, 7) International Affairs—4%, 8) Energy and Environment—3%, 9) Science—3%, 10) Labor—2%, 11) Transportation—2%, 12) Food & Agriculture—1%. *National Priorities Project*. 2011. "Federal Budget 101: Where Does the Money Go? National Priorities Project: Bringing the Federal Budget Home." Website. Accessed 28 September 2012. In addition, NPP found that during FY 2010 there was not a strong correlation between an increase in military recruitment and unemployment; rather they found that there was an increase in applicants, and the applicants were better qualified than in the past. See *National Priorities Project*. 2011. "Military Recruitment 2012. National Priorities Project: Bringing the Federal Budget Home." Website. Accessed 28 September 2012.
24. National Boricua Human Rights Network. "Oscar Lopez Rivera: Biography." Handout. *International Women's Network Against Militarism*. February 2012.
25. "Statement for 8th Gathering." *International Women's Network Against Militarism*. Accessed 27 September 2012.
26. Comite Pro-Derechos Humanos de Puerto Rico (Committee for the Human Rights of Puerto Rico). "Campaign Letter to Present Barack Obama." *International Women's Network Against Militarism*. February 2012.
27. "Statement for 8th Gathering." *International Women's Network Against Militarism*. 2012.
28. "Statement for 8th Gathering." *International Women's Network Against Militarism*. 2012.
29. Reinat-Pumarejo and Franco-Ortiz. "Report on Puerto Rico." *International Women's Network Against Militarism*. February 2012. 8-9.
30. Statement for 8th Gathering. *International Women's Network Against Militarism*. 2012.
31. Baynes, Terry. "Court shields U.S. military from health suit." *Thomson Reuters News & Insight*. (2012). The Supreme Court ruling that protects the U.S. government from being sued by military servicemen and/or their families for injuries incurred through their service is called the Feres Doctrine.