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Editorial

Editorial Introduction to New Directions in Gender Research

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There have been many transformations in intellectual scope, in theories and methods, which have also marked research in the field of gender studies. In this Special Issue, we were confronted with what could be considered some of the old themes in the field, but which we can easily see have new lenses, new ways of looking at and problematizing them. At the same time, some new themes emerge and develop, showing that this is an increasingly interdisciplinary area that reveals the complexity and diversity of social reality. The article's selection presented here is the result of a thorough review that leaves out many other works from all around the world that seek to show that we are dealing with an area in great development and vitality.

The Special Issue *New Directions in Gender Research* comprises 19 articles that cover various themes and geographical contexts, as well as presenting a multiplicity of epistemological positions, conceptual frameworks, and methodological approaches. This diversity reveals the complexity of the field of research, which intersects and calls on multiple disciplinary areas. Many of these articles are pivotal contributions to thinking, research, and intervention in these fields. They reveal the need for more studies, especially in a world that is changing on many levels. It is a field of many changes, but we also need to be aware of setbacks and paradoxes.

Several articles have looked at the COVID-19 pandemic and revealed that it had repercussions in multiple spheres, contributing to increasing or making gender inequalities more visible. The impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the labor market in multiple professional areas, on situations of violence, among other cases, are evident, and, as with other crises, these have mainly affected the most vulnerable people, including women. In addition, some women who are more oppressed due to their multiple social belongings are even more affected. Crisis situations like this open up new research perspectives in the field of gender studies and reveal the importance of working from situated knowledge (Haraway [1988] 1991), as can be seen in the articles that make up this Special Issue.

The article by Omar Mazzucchelli, Claudia Manzi, and Cristina Rossi Lamastra on "*Women's Working Conditions during COVID-19: A Review of the Literature and a Research Agenda*" includes, as the title suggests, a literature review that systematizes the main findings of studies on women, a minority power group who, according to scholars, are among the people who were disadvantaged before the pandemic and suffered the most from its effects.

Ana Lúcia Teixeira, Dalila Cerejo, Maria do Rosário Rosa, and Manuel Lisboa analyzed the "*Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Lives of Women with Different Socioeconomic Backgrounds and Victimization Experiences in Portugal*". Using 2021 survey data from a random sample of 1541 Portuguese women, they found that the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown did not equally affect all facets of women's social lives.

Cristina Soeiro, Rita Ribeiro, Iris Almeida, Rosa Saavedra, Sónia Caridade, Ana Oliveira, and Manuela Santos focus on "*Violence against Women during the COVID-19*

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Pandemic: From Children to the Elderly". Although we are still in the early stages of understanding how the pandemic will affect this situation, the findings reveal that the requests for help increased.

Focusing on the COVID-19 pandemic, Seulkee Heo, Pedro Diaz Peralta, Lan Jin, Claudia Ribeiro Pereira Nunes, and Michelle L. Bell authored an article about "*Disparities in COVID-19 Impacts on Work Hours and Career Satisfaction by Gender and Race among Scientists in the US: An Online Survey Study*" to conclude that the pandemic has inequitably affected allocation of workloads and career satisfaction by gender and race in scientific fields.

In the article "*Lived Experiences of Mothering and Teaching during the Pandemic: A Narrative Inquiry on College Faculty Mothers in the Philippines*", Alma Spartinez includes a study conducted from a qualitative perspective and conclude that concluded that the academy and family remained inhospitable to professing mothers in this country.

Focused on the same pandemic period, the article by Eduardo Antunes, Rita Alcaire, and Inês Amaral is dedicated to "*Wellbeing and (Mental) Health: A Quantitative Exploration of Portuguese Young Adults' Uses of M-Apps from a Gender Perspective*", concluding that there is a low usage of overall health and wellbeing apps, particularly among single respondents who do not have children.

Not about the pandemic, but about periods of crisis, in the article "*Young Women, Employment and Precarity: The Face of Two Periods of Crisis in Spain (2008–2021)*", the authors Àngels Cabasés and Miquel Úbeda focus on Spain to conclude that the working conditions for young women have deteriorated in recent years.

Another group of articles focuses on the various gender asymmetries that persist in higher education institutions, a sphere that needs more research. In this Special Issue, the authors take a look at geographical contexts and different issues within this sphere.

With a focus on Higher Education, the article by Josilene Aires Moreira and Catarina Sales Oliveira "*Quantifying for Qualifying: A Framework for Assessing Gender Equality in Higher Education Institutions*" provides a new methodological model to measure gender inequality in higher education institutions based on easy-to-obtain data, distinguishing itself from global indexes by its ease of application and interpretation.

The article "*Big Girls Don't Cry: An Assessment of Research Units' Leadership and Gender Distribution in Higher Education Institutions*" by Ricardo Morais, Clara E. Fernandes, and Valeriano Piñeiro-Naval focus on academia, looking at decision-making positions in Higher Education Institutions, specifically in Portuguese academic research. The results depict resisting differences in fields of research and coordination and role distribution among R&D units, as well as in fundamental relations between power positions in academia and research.

In their article "*Gender Equality Impact Drivers Revisited: Assessing Institutional Capacity in Research and Higher Education Institutions*", Lut Mergaert, Marina Cacace, and Marcela Linková present the development and piloting of the Impact Driver Model, an innovative tool to assess the sustainability and impact of institutional change towards gender equality and provide recommendations for the use of this tool.

The intersectional approach (Crenshaw 1991) in gender studies is beginning to be more present in many studies, and this is also reflected in the articles that display this perspective both in theoretical terms and in the analyses carried out.

Raquel Alexandra Ferreira and Maria Helena Santos analyze the experiences and strategies of white and black women in positions of power, in which they are able to strive to reduce inequalities and promote social change. In their article "*Gender and Ethnicity: The Role of Successful Women in Promoting Equality and Social Change*", the authors conclude that the interviewees represent "agents of change" and deploy their power to promote equality in a variety of ways.

In their article on "*Gender, Class, and Ethnicity: Perspectives of White Portuguese and Black African Women on Labor Dynamics in the Cleaning Sector*", Maria Helena Santos, Núria Romão, and Carla Cerqueira focus on groups of women who are usually on the margins to understand the dynamics that operates in this feminine context of low social status,

mostly employing women of African origin, concluding that although they verified some of the discriminations associated with tokenism, the intersections of gender, class, and race/ethnicity generated dynamics that also contradict this phenomenon.

Another group of articles looks at the dynamics of the labor market and domestic work from a gender perspective. In these cases, the economic, political, and social contexts are fundamental to analyzing how gender inequalities remain or are reconfigured.

Focusing on the corporate world, the article by Sara Falcão Casaca, Susana Ramalho Marques, Maria João Guedes, and Cathrine Seierstad on "*Gender-Balanced Seats, Equal Power and Greater Gender Equality? Zooming into the Boardroom of Companies Bound by the Portuguese Gender Quota Law*" seeks to analyze the potential for change in the gender quota law on corporate boards in Portugal. From a quantitative and qualitative perspective, it shows that there have been some changes in terms of descriptive representation, but fewer in relation to substantive equality, seeming to be far from a truly transformative institutional change.

In an article focusing on South African about "*Misogynistic Influences of Female Managers in Local Governments: A Social Construction or Lived Experience*", Josephine Ahiante and Emeka Ndaguba found that innovation and a creative mindset are overlooked by male leaders in local government, just because they came from a woman, concluding that the transformation of gender relations may not be dramatic, but disruptions can quicken the process.

In the article "*Achieving Gender Equality through Paid and Unpaid Work: An Exploration of Mothers' Perspectives on Work*", Sarah Madörin and Sofia Jacinto explore their perspective on domestic and paid work from the context of Switzerland and interviews with mothers who work part-time. The findings show that these mothers do not share the expectation that all women should take primary responsibility for domestic and care work, nor the expectation that all women should have a full-time paid job.

The Special Issue also features an article that discusses the current backlash against the progress made towards gender equality in various fields. Anne-Marie Parth's article on "*Backlash by Men against the Socio-Economic and Political Promotion of Women in Europe*" compares the effect of four different spheres of gender equality on the gender gap in far-right political orientation, finding that the visible field of representation (measured by the share of women in parliament and women on boards) is associated with a gender gap in far-right orientation.

The theme of femicide in intimate relationships also appears in one of the articles developed by a research team from Portugal. In "*Death Threats and Attempted Femicide in the Context of Domestic Violence in Portugal*", Sofia Neves, Emília Silva, Joana Topa, Janete Borges, Alice Pereira, and Estefânia Silva admit that domestic violence is a serious problem in this country, affecting mainly women, and seek, with the study presented, to address the scarcity of research on death threats and attempted femicide. They identified weaknesses in the application of current legislation and the adoption of effective measures in situations where victims experience death threats.

Finally, it should also be noted that two articles focus on issues related to LGBTQIA+ people and their experiences of intimacy and parenthood.

In their article named "*Looking at Resilience among Transgender and Gender Diverse People in Portugal: Gender Affirmation Paths and Parenting Aspirations*", Carla Moleiro, Violeta Alarcão, and Alain Giami conducted a study with the transgender and gender diverse (TGGD) population in Portugal on the association of the various family-parenthood aspirations of TGGD people with distinct affirming paths and identities remaining scarce. The survey revealed that the majority of participants (69%) had no children, 10% had children of their own, and around 20% had no children at present but mentioned their intention to have children in the future. The results were discussed, highlighting the heterogeneity found in terms of sociodemographic characteristics, gender identification, and gender affirmation paths (social, legal, and medical), with a focus on the participants' parenthood aspirations.

Ana Cristina Santos and Ana Lúcia Santos authored an article titled "*Intimate Lovers, Legal Strangers—The Politics of Dissident Relationality in Portugal*". The first part of the chapter involves an outlining of developments regarding law and relational diversity in Portugal. The second part deals with the visibility of non-normative sexuality that is often a target of abject gaze, rejection, and other cultural practices of discrimination. The article finishes with reflections that move beyond the examples provided to dialogue with dissident relationality as a concept that describes the intimate experiences of aging LGBTQ+ people.

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