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**Gender and politics**

**Guest editorial team:**

Lina Álvarez, Professor, Department of Political Science, Universidad de los Andes

Angelika Rettberg, Professor, Department of Political Science, Universidad de los Andes

José Fernando Serrano, Professor, Department of Languages and Culture, Universidad de los Andes

**Objective:**

In this special issue, we aim to include different perspectives on the relationship between gender and politics. We are interested in contributions that allow us to understand whether and how the inclusion of a gender perspective in the economic and political transformations the world has experienced in recent decades has transformed politics (both at the level of state institutions and international cooperation, and at the level of political parties, social movements, and as reflected in voter preferences); how the exercise of politics varies according to gender; on what type of political agendas the gender variable has had more (or less) impact, and how different social sectors (churches, young people, educational communities, among others) have reacted to including the gender variable in social priorities. The special issue aims to attract views from different countries around the globe, seeking to offer perspectives from diverse cultural, social, political, and economic contexts.

**Keywords:**

Gender, feminism, politics, social movements, State, social change

**Background of the proposal:**

While feminist conquests have come from decades ago, the last twenty years have seen a new transformation in the relationship between gender and politics in Latin America (Chant & Craske, 2003) and the world. It seems that it is no longer enough to open and occupy spaces previously closed to women (such as voting, the world of work, or life outside marriage) to ensure a place at the table. The current relationship between gender and politics poses a challenge to the very structures and power relations of societies (Mies, 1998; Segato, 2016; Gutiérrez-Aguilar, 2017), raises identity discussions, and demands more and more equality. The debates have further expanded with the developments, contributions, and criticisms made by movements that question gender and sexuality norms and that pose challenges to traditional understandings of politics, power and how it is or should be exercised (Curiel Pichardo, 2010; Encarnación, 2011; Namaste, 2012;

Pecheny & Dehesa, 2011; Richardson & Monro, 2013; Serrano-Amaya et al., 2020). Obviously, this is not a harmonious process. On the contrary, the process has been marked by confrontations, harsh discussions, and conservative reactions (Corrêa, 2018; David & Roman, 2018). The spaces in which these transformations occur are institutional, cultural, economic, and social.

The three people who promote this call for proposals have worked on gender from different angles. Lina Álvarez has studied decolonial thinking and feminisms of the Global South, aiming to find alternatives to State-centered politics and growth economics. She currently coordinates the gender committee of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the Universidad de Los Andes. Angelika Rettberg is an expert on issues of armed conflict and peacebuilding. As part of her work as co-director of the Gender, Justice, and Security Hub at the London School of Economics, she has increasingly adopted a gender perspective to understand the differential experiences of women in war and peacebuilding. José Fernando Serrano has researched LGBTQI+ social mobilizations, their role in peacebuilding, and the State's response to their demands through specific public policies. In this special issue, they joined forces to analyze the new stage of the relationship between gender and politics.

### **Theoretical framework:**

The growing and sustained work of feminisms has questioned and transformed the forms of politics. This is manifest, in part, in gaining spaces in the State and the participation of women in state structures and institutions. Similarly, in the emergence and growing visibility of movements that build alternative forms of politics in non-State scenarios, beyond and against the State, as shown by decolonial feminism (Segato, 2016; Lugones, 2016), community feminism (Gutiérrez-Aguilar, 2017; Paredes & Comunidad mujeres creando comunidad, 2014; Tzul, 2019), and ecofeminism (Shiva, 1988; Mies, 1998), and, in part, in the irruption in partisan politics of discourses coming from social movements that had historically focused on working at the territorial level with grassroots organizations. The subject is complex, and feminisms are always plural. In this way, topics that were formerly excluded from the political debate or had a peripheral place in it but have been part of the feminist agendas for many years (e.g., gender quotas, inequality in the remuneration of care work, or environmental issues), begin to gain strength in the public sphere. Whether out of conviction, persuasion, or convenience, political actors take gender variables into account and adapt to them like never before. Hence, it is possible to affirm that politics is no longer the same due to the effect of feminisms and the irruption of women in previously inaccessible spaces.

This transformation of politics has generated counter-reactions, strategies to prevent the progress or the implementation of their demands, and even new confrontations and violence (Bonet-Martí, 2021). The result is a scenario of disputes and tensions over the meanings of politics for the objectives of feminisms and mobilizations that question gender and sexuality orders. Thus, from some perspectives, the struggle for gender equality focuses on guaranteeing parity of participation in existing political institutions (Fraser, 2008), achieving equal wages, and reproductive rights. Nevertheless, there are other perspectives that—without ignoring these struggles—call into question the state structures of political participation and the economic system based on the growing accumulation of capital, as they see them as the cause of gender-based injustices (Federici, 2018; Young, 1997, Crenshaw, 2017). These feminisms denounce the structural relationship

between patriarchy, gender-based violence, and state institutions (Segato, 2016); similarly, based on perspectives critical of the systems of oppression based on gender hierarchies and sexuality, they question the heterosexism (Peterson, 1999) and cissexism of politics (Serano, 2016; Wayar, 2018). In addition, while some feminisms denounce the close relationship between class and gender (as happens in Marxist-inspired feminisms), other feminisms include the racial dimension and the destruction of nature as elements of feminist struggles (as happens in African, Afro-diasporic, and indigenous feminisms) (Davis, 2016; Lugones, 2007; Vandana & Maria, 2014).

Several of these perspectives affirm the importance of creating local and decentralized forms of political participation that guarantee the right of people to decide on issues that affect their bodies and territories. They also highlight the relevance of building a policy that focuses on regenerating the material and symbolic conditions of existence rather than focusing on development economies. Finally, some of these feminisms question the hegemonic notions of the masculine and open the space to think about the importance of integrating the questioning and transformation of masculinities as part of new political bets (Connell, 2015; Valdés & Olavarría, 1997; Viveros, 2007).

#### **Key themes/thematic strands:**

Following the stated objective, the special issue will invite contributions related to or exploring the following topics:

- 1) **Impacts of economic, political, and institutional transformations on gender relations and State(s):** What changes have the inclusion of the gender variable and various feminisms implied in the States, and how have they set them in motion? What have been their main achievements in the States and other national and international social institutions, and what has impeded their progress? At the international level, what has been the impact of UN international instruments, such as the Beijing Declaration, CEDAW, the Women, Peace, and Security Resolution on national realities and international relations, and what has been the role of international cooperation in promoting the gender agenda?
- 2) **Feminisms and new notions of politics:** How have feminist movements transformed the logic of politics? What have been the effects of strategies such as quota laws, access to representation spaces, or narrative inclusion? What are the similarities, differences, and conflicts between the various notions of politics proposed by feminisms? What new actors begin to be considered political actors by feminisms (we think, for example, of the conception of nature as a political actor according to eco-feminisms)?
- 3) **Gender, sexualities, and political transitions:** How are political transitions gendered and sexualized? How are feminist and sexual diversity or dissent movements challenging and interacting with these transitions?
- 4) **Authoritarianism, conservatism, and new gender and political agendas:** What have been the reactions against feminist-led transformations of politics? How are these trends of change and regression interacting in specific contexts? Who is leading them, and how are they acting?

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