



Editorial

Editorial Introduction to New Directions in Gender Research—2nd Edition

Maria Helena Santos ^{1,*}  and Carla Cerqueira ^{2,*}

¹ Center for Research and Social Intervention, Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (ISCTE-IUL), 1649-026 Lisbon, Portugal

² The Center for Research in Applied Communication, Culture, and New Technologies (CICANT), Lusófona University, 4000-098 Porto, Portugal

* Correspondence: helena.santos@iscte-iul.pt (M.H.S.); carla.cerqueira@ulusofona.pt (C.C.)

The second edition of the Special Issue “New Directions in Gender Research” includes 13 articles from diverse disciplinary fields, applying multiple methodologies. This issue reflects the vitality of the disciplinary field of gender studies that crosses theoretical and epistemological approaches. It should also be emphasized that the diversity of empirical studies presented in this issue shows that gender studies cover a multitude of topics. These often reveal a social relevance in addition to their scientific pertinence.

It is worth noting that several articles focus on the Portuguese context and provide a better understanding of gender studies in that country, as well as the reality of certain spheres of society.

The article by Caynnã Santos, Rosa Monteiro, Mónica Lopes, Monise Martinez, and Virgínia Ferreira titled “From Late Bloomer to Booming: A Bibliometric Analysis of Women’s, Gender, and Feminist Studies in Portugal” contributes to understanding how the area of research has evolved over the years, providing valuable insights and opening important avenues for future research worldwide. We can even consider it an article that acts as a hat-tip to other investigations that are present in this Special Issue in the Portuguese context.

Issues relating to the health and self-care of various women appear in articles such as “Trans Women’s Body Self-Image and Health: Meanings and Impacts of Sex Work” by Joana Topa, Eduarda Moreira, Sofia Neves, and Estefânia Silva, who present a qualitative study carried out in the city of Porto, Portugal, aiming to understand the self-determination process and the meanings and impacts of sex work on trans women’s body self-image and health. The findings suggest that the participants were subjected to several experiences of discrimination and violence since childhood, negatively impacting their health and social integration. Furthermore, the results point to the importance of comprehending trans women sex workers’ needs and reanalyzing how their health conditions might be improved.

Focusing on the private sphere, the article by Estefânia Silva, Cláudia Casimiro, Cristina Pereira Vieira, Paulo Manuel Costa, Joana Topa, Sofia Neves, Janete Borges, and Mafalda Sousa titled “We Are Tired”—The Sharing of Unpaid Work between Immigrant Women and Men in Portugal” intended to understand and discuss how immigrant men and women living in Portugal perceive their contributions to the performance of unpaid work and the ways in which they try to deal with the situation of the greater burden on women. The findings of the qualitative and exploratory study showed that the division of unpaid work between immigrant women and men is not equal, with women continuing to bear a greater responsibility and burden.

A similar focus on the dynamics of the labor market but centered on issues related to various forms of symbolic violence is depicted in the article of José Baptista, Dália Costa, and Sónia P. Gonçalves. The authors present an empirical study on the “Social Representations



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of Trans People in the Workplace” and conclude that the social representations most associated with trans people in a professional context are discrimination, normality, equality, difficulties, and prejudice. However, they also conclude that “it is worth underlining the appearance of positive (and neutral) terms, which may, according to Intergroup Contact Theory, be justified by contact since the majority of the sample (57.6%, $n = 125$) have had contact with trans people”.

Continuing in the Portuguese context and the analysis of gender and labor relations, Mónica Lopes, Virgínia Ferreira, and Caynã Santos contribute an article titled “Gendered Micropolitics in Academic Work Environments: Uncovering Microaggressions during the COVID-19 Pandemic”. The authors analyze how the pandemic has impacted the dynamics of academic work, specifically focusing on the often-overlooked aspect of everyday interactions in the work environment. The study reveals that women, especially those who are younger, single, have specific caregiving responsibilities, and are in the early stages of their careers, were more vulnerable to experiencing “everyday” microaggressions compared to men during the pandemic.

In the article “Forced to Work from Home: Division of Unpaid Work between Parents and the Relation to Job Satisfaction”, Maria Helena Santos, Miriam Rosa, Rita B. Correia, Jéssica Ramos, and Ana Catarina Carvalho outline a quantitative study carried out in Portugal during pandemic lockdowns, “show[ing] that unpaid work is still mostly performed by women, with important consequences for the paid work sphere”, another study revealing gender asymmetries, especially in the times of a crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

The article by Madelyn Clark, Shashika Bandara, Stella Bialous, Kathleen Rice, and Raphael Lencucha on “Gendering the Political Economy of Smallholder Agriculture: A Scoping Review” is a review that seeks to chart and analyze how gender is used in the existing literature in relation to the political economy of smallholder agriculture. This provides a nuanced understanding of how gendered identities produce and are produced by political economy, and how political economy shapes and is shaped by gender and household dynamics. This is another perspective from the labor market and a specific area, which also demonstrates the importance of situated knowledge for gender studies.

The relationship between women and politics is also discussed in this Special Issue. This is another facet of research that links women and professions. The article “Gender and Politics: A Descriptive and Comparative Analysis of the Statutes of Brazilian and Portuguese Political Parties” includes a study by Maria Cecilia Eduardo, Maria Helena Santos, and Ana Lúcia Teixeira, aiming to evaluate if and in what way women are included in the statutory guidelines. The authors showed that, in the two countries considered, “leftist parties remain the main encouragers of women’s political participation, at least in their statutory rules”.

Studies on various expressions of gender-based violence are also featured in this issue.

Iris Almeida, Ana Ramalho, Rafaela Morgado, and Ricardo Ventura Baúto present an article on “Gendered Perspectives on Intimate Partner Violence: A Comparative Study of General Population, Students and Professionals’ Beliefs”, highlighting a study carried out from a quantitative perspective. The authors show that “we need to work hard with the social evolution in men’s and women’s beliefs on IPV, reinforcing the importance of targeting IPV prevention by gender and age in the general population but also in students and professionals”.

Continuing the theme of domestic violence, Elayne Nogueira, Elsa Simões, and Ana Isabel Sani deliver a small, qualitative, exploratory study with the general aim of investigating, from the perspective of victims of domestic violence, the contribution of advertising campaigns to the combat this phenomenon. The results, published in the article titled “Victimization Experience and Perceived Benefits of Institutional and Commercial Advertising Campaigns in the Fight against Domestic Violence”, suggest that “advertising is a useful tool for social transformation, which has contributed to the social awareness of the problem of domestic violence”.

The article by Iris Almeida, Carolina Nobre, Joana Marques, and Patrícia Oliveira on “Violence against Women: Attachment, Psychopathology, and Beliefs in Intimate Partner Violence” encompasses a study carried out from a quantitative perspective that analyzed the relationship between adult attachment, psychopathology, and beliefs in intimate partner violence (IPV) in Portugal. The results showed that, globally, attachment is related to psychopathology and IPV beliefs. IPV requires urgent attention since it is the greatest threat to the health and safety of women around the world.

The analysis by Júlia Garraio’s focuses on understanding the case linked to Kathlyn Mayorga’s rape allegation against the Portuguese football star in an article titled “Our Hero and That Kind of Woman: Imaginaries of Sexuality, Masculinity and Femininity in the Discussion of the Rape Allegation against Cristiano Ronaldo in Portugal”, which was mostly met in his home country with disbelief, prompting a strong wave of support for the national icon.

Finally, Camila Lamartine and Carla Cerqueira present an article about “Communicating through Cyberfeminism: Communication Strategies for the Construction of the International Feminist Strike in Portugal”. This study highlights the importance of communication for feminist activists in the public sphere. The “findings indicate a significant rise in Instagram’s platform utilization and exploration, concomitant with the establishment of WhatsApp as a central tool for both organizational and internal communication”.

The research presented in this Special Issue shows that there are new themes and questions in the field of gender studies. However, these studies reveal that certain issues remain central. Analyses that focus on labor dynamics and the domestic sphere continue to reveal gender asymmetries. At the same time, forms of symbolic and gender-based violence are still very present in multiple spheres, affecting women in different ways.

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