

## EDITORIAL

***A GLANCE OF CURRENT RESEARCH ON EQUITY AND GENDER STUDIES IN LATIN AMERICA***MARÍA DEL ROCÍO HERNÁNDEZ-POZO\*

The journal *Acta Colombiana de Psicología* has organized for this issue a special section aimed to promote Latin American research on gender equity from different perspectives and methodological approaches. This section has been arranged with the central purpose of disseminating multidisciplinary research on the topic of gender studies in an indexed journal such as this one which has international circulation and prestige. Whether these research topics are disseminated in a general journal of Psychology is a bet we made to get more exposure and reach a more diverse audience.

While there are specialized journals on gender studies and feminism, it was particularly attractive to accept the invitation from *Acta Colombiana de Psicología* for two reasons: First, because it is a general interest journal, and second, because of the bibliometric databases of international quality in which it is registered.

There are three sources that provide lists of journals exclusively dedicated to gender issues and feminism by regions. The Michigan State University via the Center for Gender in Global Context offers a list of 112 entries for American feminist journals (CGGC, 2013). The University Association for Women's Studies provides a non-exhaustive list of six Spanish scientific journals devoted to the subject (AUDEM, 2013), a number that has increased up to 10 titles, based on additional information. The third source is LATINDEX, which stands for the Regional Online Information System for Scientific Journals from Latin America, the Caribbean, Spain and Portugal, sponsored by the UNAM, which lists 34 Latin

American journals dealing with gender studies and eight additional titles that are no longer published, organized in different fields of knowledge (Latindex, 2013). The advantage of the latter source is that LATINDEX is employing strict quality criteria for inclusion of a title in its collection, unlike the other two sources.

As an example of the distribution of journals by subject areas, according to CGGC, the 112 U.S. journals, are

distributed in 21 branches: Business (2), Communication Studies (2), Criminal Justice (2), Developmental aspects (3), Economics (1) Education (3) Ethnic Issues (6), Homosexuality, Transgender and Queer studies (13), Geography (1), History (4), Interdiscipline (37), Media communication (2), Medical and health Issues (10), Music (1), Philosophy (1), Political Science (4), Psychology (11), Social Work (1), Religious Studies (5), Technology studies (1), Women and Literature (2). The number of journals under each subject is an indicator that reflects both the areas of greatest interest to the institutions that sponsor them, as well as the response of the audience they are targeting.

In order to compare the intellectual production in two bibliometric databases, SCOPUS and REDALYC, with worldly and regional scope respectively, the latter for Latin America, Spain and Portugal, a search was performed using words with a high-probability of occurrence in gender studies. The search was conducted with the terms "gender" and "feminism" in the title, abstract or keywords of published articles from the first record up to date, with a ratio of 1.92 in favor of the SCOPUS database, compared to REDALYC.

From that worldwide journal search in SCOPUS, 306844 articles published in 158 journals were found, of which only 13 were identified as journals exclusively dedicated to feminist issues and gender studies.

From the information contained in Table 1 it can be concluded that only 8.22 % of the journals publishing articles on those issues was devoted exclusively to the topic of gender studies and feminism. Additionally, not all the titles of these journals are listed in the CGGC website. Therefore, an updated thorough record of North American journals about feminism and gender studies that can be used as reference to the specialists apparently is not available at present.

A search with the same keywords in REDALYC, a regional bibliometric database, threw 159482 articles, but unfortunately the search engine of this database does not provide detailed and disaggregated information that

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enables sorting out documentary sources as efficiently as SCOPUS does.

**Table 1**

SCOPUS journals specialized on gender or feminism that published articles with those keywords in their title, abstract or keywords, organized according to their order of importance by the number of articles published on the subject and its inclusion in the CGGC list.

Place	Journal title	In base (CGGC)	Articles
1	Sex Roles	no	2345
6	Women Studies International Forum	no	918
10	Journal of Homosexuality	yes	707
32	Gender & Society	yes	454
35	Gender, Work and Organization	yes	435
37	Gender, Place & Culture	yes	433
46	Gender & Education	yes	409
49	Gender & Development	yes	405
90	Journal of Women's Health	yes	294
102	Journal of Interpersonal Violence	no	268
119	Women & Health	yes	222
125	Healthcare for Women International	yes	200
126	Feminist Media Studies	yes	199

Therefore, although there is a large intellectual production on gender studies and feminism in Latin America, regional databases are not as well equipped yet in terms of search engines that can organize in an agile and versatile way information about Latin American studies on gender or feminism. In spite of this fact, SCIELO-Mexico and REDALYC are developing protocols in this respect, but there is an urgent need for further support from national government agencies in this regard.

A preliminary comparative analysis leads to conclude, first, that most of the research on gender issues published in journals, at least from the international results via SCOPUS, appears on journals dealing with general subjects of different fields of knowledge and this trend is very robust. The second conclusion, perhaps a more painful one, is that many Latin American journals that are dedicated exclusively to gender issues do not meet the explicit requirements of international bibliometric databases, or of regional catalogs. To illustrate this last point, one just has to compare the 49 entries listed in the Directory of LATINDEX for journals that address the issue of gender studies, which includes all the titles that exist in the region, with a list of 15 entries of the same journals listed in the catalog, *id est*, journals that meet the minimum criteria from 33 quality requirements

for printed journals and 36 requirements for digital ones (Latindex, 2013).

In addition to this state of affairs, most of the research on gender studies is published via book chapters which have a very low circulation, or that are not available electronically. This makes it very difficult to have access to them and consult them, and in practical terms, they become invisible.

This project, sponsored by the journal *Acta Colombiana de Psicología* is intended to make a small contribution to reverse that trend, through the dissemination in English and Spanish, of research studies with a gender perspective carried out by Latin American authors and conducted in six countries: Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and Puerto Rico. The work presented in this special issue includes articles on the following subjects, namely: conceptual reflections on the theory of gender studies, epidemiological inequality associated with being female or male, psychological vulnerability of women who have been victims of violence, female labor vulnerability in four countries, factors that contribute to the marginalization of women's activity in the scientific establishment, and research trends with a feminist perspective in the world.

Ursula Oswald Spring, from Mexico, at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, by means of a mixed empirical study that uses qualitative and quantitative methods, analyzes the effect that both climate change and emigration to the U.S. of male heads of households from a rural town, have had on the lives of their partners. The study proposes a vulnerability index to measure the environmental and social ravages due to the combination of these factors.

Rocío Hernández-Pozo from Mexico and Lourdes Fernández-Rius from Cuba, from the National Autonomous University of Mexico and the University of Havana, respectively, provided a scientometric analysis of studies with feminist perspective published in the past 53 years in journals indexed in the SCOPUS database. They make a critical analysis of the production discussing the topics, their impact via the number of citations, the preponderance of certain countries in the production of knowledge from that orientation and a gender-based leadership within networks of authors generating these studies.

Colombian authors Tania Pérez-Bustos and Andrea García-Becerra, from the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, tackled, from a critical stance, the apparent homogeneity of women's scientific work in Latin America. From interviews conducted with women scientists from indigenous, black or lesbian backgrounds, the authors set out to identify the elements that, according to their report, the sponsoring agencies used to marginalize these women's contributions. The authors emphasize the adoption of an ethical and political practice that links teaching, research and service,

as well as a concern for the collective future as a common denominator of the work conducted by members of this marginalized scientific sector.

Mercedes Pedrero-Nieto, also from the National Autonomous University of Mexico, presents her conclusions based on an analysis of inequality in the use of time of paid and domestic time, by gender, marital status, kinship and age, based on data collected from recent surveys in Ecuador, Peru and Mexico. The author emphasizes that equity in the distribution of housework time is a requisite to reach equality in different areas of daily life and that this goal should be considered by policy makers in these countries as a first and necessary step to achieve that goal.

Furthermore, Eréndira Serrano-Oswald, of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, presents a conceptual exercise in which she links social representations theory and gender theory to account for how the social construction of sex differences affects power relations, life conditions, as well as individual's behavior and self-consciousness.

Elena Rodríguez-Blanco, from the Autonomous University of the State of Hidalgo in Mexico, offers a study of women victims of violence who became resilient as a result of their participation in the self-help groups called Co-dependents anonymous. The author, based on interviews conducted with women in that condition, stresses the link between alcohol addiction and domestic violence and proposes a preventive procedure to dismantle the causal chain.

Another study, conducted by Olivia Tena, from the National Autonomous University of Mexico, presents an empirical research based on the application of a mixed methodology, qualitative and quantitative, to analyze the strategies developed differentially by men and women who perform a typical male occupation, based on their hierarchical status, as to how they distribute their time devoted to paid work, to their home and to their couple relationships. The author discusses the advantages of using this methodology to deepen and understand the effect of these variables on the way the responsibilities in these areas are reconciled, and the negative consequences of the adoption of these strategies on the part of professionals from the police force.

Lucero Jiménez-Guzmán, also from the National Autonomous University of Mexico, offers a comparative analysis between Argentina and Mexico, focusing on the crisis of masculinity as a result of recent transformations suffered by employment in these countries. In her article the author discusses, from a multidisciplinary point of view and using a qualitative methodology, the individual, family and social effects that unemployment and job insecurity have on the lives of highly educated men from middle and upper classes in those countries.

Finally, Teresa Pedroso - Zulueta, a researcher from Puerto Rico at the University of East-Carolina, presents

an analysis of different indicators of mortality by sex in her country. She discusses, from a gender perspective, the social causes of male mortality, of diseases associated with behavioral variables, disability, injury and premature male death. She emphasizes the need for public policies that restores equity in the gender gap around life expectancy.

With this variety of theoretical and empirical research that present various methodological approaches, a brief overview of the academic concerns of gender studies in the fields of health, work, family relationships and scientific creation is shown.

Paraphrasing Francesca Gargallo (2007), it is necessary to identify and locate the contributions of Latin American gender studies in the world order and to detect collective motives for which people in this region have reinvented their images of being and of doing scientific research.

We conclude that a course of action to increase the visibility of gender studies in Latin America is to publish in indexed general journals of different specialties and areas of expertise, to strengthen journals devoted exclusively to gender studies so they could enter high quality international databases, and to make visible the production of specialized books on the subject.

This particular issue is an effort in that sense, as it responds to the urgency of spreading among colleagues and experts in the social sciences, concerns, issues and contributions of research on gender equity studies carried out in these latitudes, that allow to put into perspective the findings published by specialists from other regions. Only with a clear road map, one can advance in the creative journey of knowledge.

In addition to the nine articles in this special issue, the journal published three other independent articles, pertaining to the psychometric area, educational psychology and social psychology.

The Brazilian author Ana Paula Porto Noronha from the Pontifical Catholic University of Campinas presents a psychometric study on an instrument that measures visual-motor skills in relation to intellectual disability.

On the other hand, Colombian authors Paula Andrea Botero-Soto and Constanza Londoño-Perez, from Eccos Corporation and the Catholic University of Colombia, respectively, offer a structural equation model that predicts the quality of life in people in condition of physical disability, based on disease, mental health and other psychosocial variables measured through the administration of questionnaires.

Finally, Colombian investigators Edwin Luna, Christian Zambrano and Freddy Hidalgo, from the University of Nariño, present an experimental study on the effects of variations in the level of discrimination of authority, in

violation of explicit rules, based on a Behavior Analysis approach

We thank the General Editor of the journal for his kind invitation to organize this special issue, as well as the reviewers and editorial staff for their hard and careful work and their constructive criticism that provided additional viewpoints that improved the communication of original proposals both conceptual and methodological.

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