

## Editorial

### Feminisms, intersectional perspectives and social intervention

We live in convulsive, challenging times, of fundamental disputes regarding the horizons of meaning and the conditions to develop fully and with dignity. The Covid-19 pandemic has shown, once again, how inequalities and oppressions are crudely expressed, together with the accumulation and enrichment of a few social sectors.

With regard to the struggles for the recognition of differences and diversities in today's societies, we find a complex and contradictory panorama. On the one hand, it is possible to identify advances in public policies and legislation aimed at eliminating inequalities and promoting the human rights of traditionally marginalized social sectors. On the other hand, we simultaneously identify obstacles, stagnation, threats and setbacks in relation to historical demands of women, migratory rights and LGBTI+ rights, among others, in the context of a violent resurgence of conservative discourses and practices linked to a revitalization of the conservative right and certain religious groups.

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At the same time, we are witnessing new forms of organization, agency and resistance of various subalternized collectives. Particularly in Chile, and after the social revolt of October 2019, the plebiscite to decide the constitutional change, and the election of constituents and the formation of the Constitutional Convention itself, have been marked by a transversal demand to value differences, dismantle the mechanisms that generate inequalities, redistribute power and build forms of government that challenge traditional politics and its exclusive and exclusionary configuration: exclusive of the political-economic elite, and exclusive of traditionally marginalized sectors such as women, youth and children, older adults, sexual dissidents, people with disabilities and indigenous peoples. The configuration of the Constitutional Convention - the first gender-parity convention in the world, with seats reserved for representatives of native peoples, and finally, presided over by a Mapuche woman - suggests that something very profound is happening.

These transformations are not spontaneous, but the result of years of feminist, indigenist, anti-colonial, anti-racist, non-hetero(cis)normative struggles, among others, which



have been challenging and permeating discourses, practices and “common sense”. In May 2018, these struggles came to crystallize in a major historical milestone for the feminist and dissidence movement, enabling some visibility, recognition and questioning of the articulation of structural inequalities.

Precisely in the R&D Cluster “Diversity and Gender: Intersectional Feminist Approaches” of the University of Chile, we want to put into practice a critical view that invites us to be suspicious of the uses of certain concepts that have contributed to their depoliticization, putting them at the service of a liberal, hierarchical and meritocratic tolerance. That is why we always wonder what is being understood by notions such as “diversity”, “minorities”, “gender”, “equality” and “freedom” when they are invoked in specific contexts and situations for specific purposes. In turn, we want to contribute to the deconstruction of dichotomous, essentialist and homogenizing thinking in order to venture to participate in the construction of new forms of recognition/redistribution. Intersectional and feminist approaches propose other ways of considering the processes of subjectivation and construction of identities. In turn, they invite us to rethink social struggles, solidarities, alliances and political coalitions, in order to build social sciences committed to transformations and social justice.

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Intersectional feminist approaches allow us to visualize social inequalities and the articulation between devices and structures of oppression and power in their complexity, urging us to avoid reductionist and unidimensional views that focus solely on the effects of patriarchy, capitalism or colonialism as independent structures of domination, or that focus on a single axis of social differentiation such as gender, class, “race”, ethnicity, sexuality, functional diversity, nationality, religion, among others. A key challenge of intersectional perspectives “is to recognize the articulation of these power structures, avoiding treating them as ahistorical and pre-existing, with the aim of constantly updating the question about the modes and processes of their articulation, and the situated effects as social materialization of relations, subjectivities and experiences of privilege, domination, exclusion and inclusion” (Troncoso et al., 2019: 5).

Therefore, we have devoted this second issue of our journal to addressing discussions on feminisms and intersectional perspectives and their link with the processes of social intervention, with the purpose of translating feminist values into ways of thinking and orienting intervention and public policies, in addition to the ways of understanding and addressing intersectionally (not as the sum of aggregate attributes) the social phenomena that constitute the “object” of public intervention and professional action. In



this issue you will find analyses on the dynamics of power and relations of privilege/oppression, inclusion/exclusion, power/resistance in force and reified by systems of public intervention, reflections on collective actions, alliances and feminist social movements that day by day forge counter-hegemonic understandings in the face of sexism, heteronormativity, classism, adultcentrism, racism, among others, and their effects on the configuration of life in these times of transformation that we live in. These issues are central to debates in the social sciences today, and especially for Social Work, which, as indicated by its international definitions, is a profession and discipline based on a critical consciousness that is expressed in reflection on the structural sources of oppression and/or privilege - the fruit of race, class, language, religion, gender, disability, culture and sexual orientation - and in the development of emancipatory interventions for the liberation of people (FITS, 2014).

Following this critical impulse, we open the ARTICLES section with two papers that offer a conceptual mapping of feminist and intersectional perspectives. First, the article by **Javiera Cubillos and Carlo Zarallo**, entitled "*Feminist counterpoints in the ethical debate and its possibilities for Social Work*", begins by questioning the confinement of feminism - as a critical perspective - in the traditional intellectual developments of social work. From this premise, they review the proposals of feminist ethics, raise criticisms of deontological ethics, and propose, from there, a situated ethics that puts in tension the professional interventions of social workers and that questions the dichotomies inherited from modern/colonial thought -including the dichotomy "who intervenes"/"who is intervened". This is followed by the work of **Paulina de los Reyes**, who analyzes the operations of power in the context of the health crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. From an intersectional perspective, and making a genealogy of the notion of intersectionality, the author argues that these perspectives allow us not only to understand the impact of health policies on the structural inequalities that shape the social order, but also to identify the ways in which this order can be transgressed, contested and negotiated in the midst of the crisis. Her article provides us with important clues to understand and situate the intervention that thousands of professionals are carrying out in diverse political-institutional frameworks in times of pandemic, from feminist reflections that place the notion of intersectional resistances at the center.

Bringing into play these feminist contributions and recovering contributions from decolonial thought to analyze the disputes over the decriminalization of abortion in Argen-

tina, **María Eugenia Hermida** presents “*Pregnancy Interruption, Coloniality and Patriarchy*”. Here the author hypothesizes that the expropriation of the ability to decide on pregnancy is configured as one of the central devices for the establishment and reproduction of racially structured patriarchal capitalism. Based on these analyses, the text offers interesting contributions to social work debates and interventions. Also exploring from feminist perspectives, in this case, the notion of “maternity”, **Karina Guerra and Rocío Gallardo** in their article “*Transgressive maternities: political-affective resignifications of women activists in post-dictatorship Chile*”, propose a sharp analysis of memory practices from women’s activism that allows for complexifying the understanding of historically subalternized political agencies - the political agency constructed from an androcentric logic - and thus rethinking motherhood in complex and dynamic socio-political contexts, highlighting its possibilities of agency in a context of permanent vindication of essentialist readings.

Contributing to a critical understanding of the shaping of subjectivities in the context of the dynamics of integration/exclusion, and questioning the supposedly favorable character of the policies of social, educational and labor inclusion of young children of immigrants, **Josselyn Urdiales and Rosa Lázaro’s** article “*Labor and educational trajectories of racialized youth in Catalonia. Reflections from an intersectional perspective*” analyzes the restrictions that class, gender and origin have on the promotion of young professionals in an increasingly competitive and precarious labor market that punishes difference and reinforces oppression. Her work questions public policies aimed at youth in terms of labor inclusion and discusses their contributions in terms of intervention. In the same line of critical analysis of public intervention, in this case directed to LGTB+ people, the work of **Caterine Galaz and Lelya Troncoso** “*Possibilities and limits of public intervention aimed at LGTB+ people in Chile*”, shows their reactive character, where binary and hetero-cis-normative logics are still reproduced, which are manifested in the conceptions of “sexual diversity” present in the intervention with these groups. These conceptions, the authors warn, could conceal new inequalities and reify new positions of subordination of non-normative sexualities; a key issue to consider in the debates of social work committed to these struggles. Our articles section closes with the work of **Ana Marcela Bueno, Mari-bel Florián and Diana Chinchilla**, who in their paper “*Feminist reflections on social work intervention with women who experience violence in Bogotá*”, emphasize the analysis of the perspectives underlying public intervention in this area. They propose

an understanding of violence against women from a feminist perspective that highlights the effects of patriarchy on feminized bodies, allowing social workers to observe their own intervention and visualize challenges in this field of professional practice.

In our TRANSLATIONS section we present a classic text of post-structural feminist analysis of public policy. It is with great joy that we share in this issue **Carol Bacchi's** work, "*Introducing the 'What's the Problem Represented to be?'*" originally published in 2012 in the book "*Engaging with Carol Bacchi: Strategic Interventions and Exchanges*" edited by A. Bletsas and C. Beasley and published by University of Adelaide Press. This material will undoubtedly be a contribution for those who are dedicated to the analysis of the discourses that underlie - more or less explicitly - the design of public policies and social interventions, their definitions, methodologies and instruments, and that reinforce the oppressive nature of the sexist, cisheteronormative, patriarchal, empowering, ageist and racist social order, among others.

**Catalina Fernandez** contributes in this issue a comprehensive and thought-provoking review of the book "*Normal Life: Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics, and the Limits of Law*" by trans activist and lawyer Dean Spade. It could not be more pertinent to the discussions that underlie the work previously presented. It analyzes the trans movement and its political-legal struggles, putting key questions at the center of the discussion: what do we want to be part of, and assimilate into, the neoliberal model? The tensions and debates regarding the dynamics of inclusion/exclusion and power/resistance are strongly present in this work, which are extremely relevant considering the role that social movements play today in the construction of the social order that we long for and that is manifested in - although not only there - the constituent process that is taking place in Chile. This is precisely the call for attention that Spade makes: we cannot rest on legal change, we need to "articulate new tools to dream ways of life that allow us to coexist in freedom, especially for those who have been vulnerable, marginalized and criminalized by the exercise of power," as Catalina reflects.

Finally, in our INTERVIEW section, we share conversations with two great figures of feminist and intersectional struggles: Natalia Corrales Cordero, social worker, candidate to the constituent convention and Chilean feminist union leader; who shares her analysis of the current political situation in a story that generously articulates her private and public, personal and professional, academic and activist trajectory. In the same vein, and sharing her knowledge, experiences and insights on intersectional proposals in academia and social intervention, Marisela Montenegro challenges us to think

about how our own interventions can reproduce relations of oppression, highlighting the importance of maintaining critical attention in our own understandings and daily approaches.

We hope you enjoy this issue, and we are deeply grateful to those who collaborated with us and participated in its construction. As a whole, this issue speaks to us of the importance of generating alliances between the academy and different social collectives that are not neutral or innocent, but strategic and cooperative, and that seek social transformations that have a positive impact on collective life. As Butler points out, thinking of these alliances enables us to have a “plural and performative right to appearance, a right that affirms and installs the body in the middle of the political field, and that, sheltering in its expressive and signifying function, claim for the body economic, social and political conditions that make life more dignified, more livable, so that it is no longer affected by the imposed precarious forms” (Butler, 2017: 13).

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Editor-in-Chief

Propuestas Críticas en Trabajo Social

*Critical Proposals in Social Work*



**Caterine Galaz Valderrama**

**Lelya Troncoso Pérez**

Guest Editors

Diversity and Gender:

Intersectional feminist approaches

R&D Cluster



Núcleo  
Diversidad  
y Género:  
abordajes feministas  
interseccionales

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