

EDITORIAL

Inclusion of the gender perspective in psychology: A bet against the reality of the armed conflict in Colombia



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Correspondence authors:
seleneao.psi@gmail.com

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Selene Margarita Ariza Ortiz 
Universidad Simón Bolívar, Colombia

In the essay *Gender: A Useful Category for Historical Analysis*, historian Joan Scott reflects on the uses of the concept of gender, questioning how historical analysis in its development lacks such a perspective. Scott defines gender as a primary form of significant power relations; distinguishing 4 elements that make it up: 1) Symbols and myths, 2) Normative concepts, 3) Social institutions and organizations of gender relations and 4) Identity. These elements are placed in the social context, hence representations around sexual difference such as femininity and masculinity nourish exchanges of meanings in the framework of social interactions, while normative institutions condition or reproduce certain symbols in relation to this difference.

In this sense, it has been a challenge to incorporate, since the emergence of gender studies at the end of the 1970s, the category of gender in human and social sciences research. In the case of psychology, although the initial reflections on the human psyche from psychoanalysis were based on sexual differentiation, it is relevant to note at present how this discipline relates to gender analysis and feminist bets. By the way, Reyes, Mayorga & De Araújo Menezes (2017) point out that this relationship implies questioning epistemologies and methodologies when dealing with certain emerging problems that are subject to social transformations, as well as contexts marked by inequality, violence and oppression. For example, it is possible to question the omission of demographic and socio-cultural variables that perpetuate discrimination and the processes of inequality, enabling their continuity in social imaginaries and in the scientific production of the discipline.

Thus, a critical and ethical bet for psychology is to value the contributions made from gender analysis, among which are: 1) Conducting research taking into account invisible or invisible experiences as problems. This implies questioning what knowledge is legitimated at the social level within the disci-

plines and from where the “social problems” that are sought to be investigated are named. 2) The coloniality of knowledge, recognizing the hierarchies of power and knowledge that feminist discourse has pointed out as part of social, political, economic and cultural interactions, where scientific production does not escape such configuration, favoring the establishment of a colonial logic, researcher/colonizer, which translates into questioning the position of knowledge/power with which others speak and certain voices are silenced. Finally 3) Intersectionality as a research tool that favors, on the one hand, the articulation of psychology and feminism, and on the other, to glimpse how social organization is a complex process that will not depend on a single aspect but on diverse social constructions on which the logics of inequality and discrimination, such as ethnicity and social class, are also based (Reyes, Mayorga & De Araújo Menezes, 2017).

Bearing in mind that the Colombian College of Psychology establishes at least 17 fields of analysis of the discipline in Colombia, we want to highlight how the inclusion of the gender perspective can contribute to research processes in relation to the armed conflict, recognizing, among other aspects, the place of women, the impacts and confrontations as a result of armed violence. For example, in the fields of clinical psychology, health psychology and social psychology, an analysis of the psychosocial impacts and the mental health of women from the occurrence of victimizing events in the framework of the armed conflict in Colombia, it is necessary a first recognition of how gender configured the roles and places played by men and women in the territories violated by the armed actors; how, from this differentiation, some effects are estimated that must be read from a differential perspective, which takes into account the disproportionality of these impacts, thus recognized by the Constitutional Court of Colombia in its jurisprudence.

However, gender also shapes the way in which men and women faced violence; it is no coincidence that women were the majority who moved with their sons and daughters and other relatives, without ruling out the possibility of other types of experiences. In effect, many of them played the role of caregivers in their homes and this implied safeguarding the safety of family members against armed violence, seeking their protection. Thus, a response that psychology might describe as an escape reaction or struggle against stress, must be understood taking into account the social constructions of gender that have historically placed women in the role of caregivers in our society.

Similarly, it should be noted that the representations of femininity and hegemonic masculinity were reinforced and reproduced by the armed actors as forms of victimization of the population, through processes of control over roles, social life, bodies and sexualities. Sexual violence, for example, was a form of victimization of the armed actors that affected mostly women, girls and lgbt people. This is key to developing processes of psychological support and accompaniment to people who have been victims of sexual violence in the context of the armed conflict, because it implies that the re-elaboration of the traumatic event starts from a reading of the context, of the meaning of the woman's body as a scene of dispute, of the transgressions of the heteronormative order and finally, to consider the particular intentionality of this type of violence on the part of the armed actors in the framework of the struggles for control of the territory.

To conclude, the inclusion of the gender perspective in the diverse fields of psychology is an essential bet in order to provide ethical and contextualized responses from disciplinary investigation and professional accompaniment to reparation processes for victims and peacebuilding processes in Colombia.

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