
Introduction to the dossier “Gender and Equality”

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I am pleased to introduce the dossier “Gender and Equality”, where prestigious professionals from both inside and outside academia have their say.¹ From their respective fields of knowledge – social anthropology, sociology, social work, economics and communication – they all research the broad, hotly debated field of gender from a feminist perspective.

Here one finds a powerful set of articles that critically inquire into current, topical issues related to gender and equality. The scene that each author sketches is often somewhat bittersweet: although there are many, varied theoretical initiatives and feminist political actions to understand and promote equality, they repeatedly come upon unbudging and/or reactionary responses by a multifaceted patriarchy that fluctuates between benevolence, concealed inaction and toxicity. This is precisely the subject of three of the articles in the dossier. The one by Begonya Enguix explores the current status of studies on contemporary masculinities through concepts

1. They are Mercè Barceló Serramalera (professor at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and member of the Council for Statutory Guarantees of Catalonia), Maria Corominas Piulats (professor at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and vice-president of the IEC), Begonya Enguix Grau (professor at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya and coordinator of the MEDUSA research group), Monica Gil Junquero (professor at the Universitat de València), Yolanda Jubeto (professor at the Universidad del País Vasco/Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea), Gabriela Moriana Mateo (professor at the Universitat de València and director of the Interuniversity Women's Studies Institute at the same university) and Mercè Oliva Rota (Serra Hünter professor at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra and coordinator of the UNICA research unit).

like *hegemonic masculinity*, *hybrid masculinities* and *toxic masculinity*, and later compares them to the realities shown by surveys. Mercè Oliva's analysis of media representations of certain images of women – the “super-rich” woman in particular – reveals that this popular reality-TV figure personifies numerous tensions and ambiguities related to inequality and the survival of gender stereotypes and oppressions. Finally, the study by Monica Gil, Yolanda Jubeto and Gabriela Moriana rigorously reveals what underlies public policies related to gender violence on an autonomous-region scale (Valencian Community), which contradicts the dynamics provided for in the State Pact against Gender-Based Violence.

By contrast, the article that opens this dossier, by Maria Corominas and Mercè Barceló, is an exception with respect to the research approach followed by the preceding studies. To be precise, it takes a close look at the contents of a specific corpus of institutional rules conceived to favour gender equality. As members of the Equality Committee of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans (IEC) and referees of the IEC's first Equality Plan (2024-2027), they present this plan in a reasoned and enlightening way, discussing in detail its main lines and its objectives, based on the regulatory framework and a prior diagnosis.