

New perspectives in feminist methodological research

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Over the past several decades, many pages and volumes have been written on the subject of feminist methods, including numerous issues of this journal that have been devoted to the topic. There are several important contributing factors to the ongoing focus on this diverse subject over such a broad span of time. First, feminist methods have been theorized and explored in virtually all research fields, including medicine, law, political science, history, sociology, linguistics, film and media studies and many, many others. Second, feminist approaches to research and knowledge have literally transformed these fields in broad-reaching and profound ways, shifting attention to previously undervalued or neglected topics, and shifting priorities and approaches to those previously studied. Feminist research has altered our understanding of our world, and has influenced the way that research is conducted, not only by feminist researchers, but by many researchers following the dictates of state-of-the-art in their fields. A third very significant reason for the sustained attention to feminist methods is that researchers who are dedicated to this type of work are engaged in a continual effort to extend the limits and definitions of their commitment to values such as egalitarianism, intersectionality, social change, and ethical challenges to the status quo, particularly as it relates to privilege and relations of power. Beginning with commitments to investigate the voices and experiences of women and to interrogate the gender binary, feminist methods have moved well beyond these initial foci to investigate the boundaries of meaning that these concepts and ideas suggest.

As feminist research has remained committed to these values, it is been open to continual challenge and revision, and has remained dynamic and relevant as a result of these efforts. While there has been general agreement that the central goals of feminist research should include a focus on women's experiences and voices, and that feminist methods should strive to break down relations of power within the research process, researchers and theorists have grappled with central questions about how to define key terms and how best to accomplish these fundamental goals. For instance, many have questioned the use of the term "woman" and challenged its accepted definition, asking whether and how it could be possible to imagine a unified experience among a group of people with such diverse identities and experiences of the world. Similarly, research that at first seemed to critique and interrogate existing relations of power was later understood as replacing one set of power imbalances with another, creating new problems while hoping to solve old ones. Dedication to feminist methods has required a commitment to continual critique, to redefinitions, and to remaining open to the need for ongoing revisions and amendments to the research process. These commitments have made feminist methodologies diverse, dynamic, and at times self-contradictory, as different values and commitments have at times come into conflict with one another. Through all of this, the process of striving to find new and better ways to transform knowledge, to understand our world from new perspectives, and to make the world a better and more just place has been the focus of feminist researchers across academic and professional fields. It is our goal in this special issue to continue this central imperative of feminist research methods, starting from established fields of knowledge and extending in innovative ways into new territory that expands our ability to understand the ways in which gender conditions our world and our understanding of it.

Feminist research methods have been employed for many decades, and has a rich and varied history due to the range of disciplines included within their scope. We wish to focus attention on more recent developments for this special issue. Among the publications after the year 2000 that deserve a mention in the field of feminist methodologies, only three representative works will be mentioned here to provide a limited overview of the main contributions. A review of three volumes on the topic that each gather together chapters on specific approaches to feminist methods will serve to ground the present collection of articles. In *Feminist methodology: Challenges and choices*, editors Caroline Ramazanoglu and Janet Holland (2002) detail the major concerns that any publication devoted to the study of feminist methodologies should take into account: how social reality can be understood, why conceptions of sexuality and gender have specific meanings, how people

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make sense of their experiences; and how power inhabits knowledge production (2002, 9). The book provides insightful reflections on the past, present and future of feminist methodologies and their developments; the editors are not afraid to admit and incorporate critical contradictions in feminist efforts to produce and justify authoritative knowledge of gendered social life (2002, 10). A second work, Joey Spragues's *Feminist Methodologies for Critical Researchers: Bridging Differences* (2005) is oriented to students of sociology and related disciplines. The author introduces quantitative and qualitative methodological options and explores the links between epistemology and methodology. Additionally, suggestions on how to overcome bias in standard methodologies and to develop critical thinking are provided. Finally, Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber's *Handbook of Feminist Research: Theory and Practice* includes familiar aspects and new challenges of feminist research including standpoint theory, use of authority in feminist work, and confluences between postmodernism, intersectionality, and queer identities in feminist research. The book addresses global and international contexts of research including chapters on global ethnography and globalizing feminist research.

A number of important volumes explore critiques of mainstream feminist methods or bring alternative perspectives to the fore. Among these, *Global Critical Race Feminism: An International Reader* (edited by Adrien Wing) is an important recent work that extends earlier critiques by authors including Patricia Hill Collins and Gloria Anzaldúa. Many other academic publications explore feminist methodologies in specific areas such as geography, social work, international relations, engineering, natural sciences, education, communication technologies, law, business, psychology, postcolonial studies, migration studies, theology, health, fashion and politics, among others. Feminist methodologies have also been developed according to different geographical and ethnographic areas covering the particularities of different socio cultural and political approaches in different continents. Of these, Nina Lykke's book titled *Feminist Studies: A Guide to Intersectional Theory, Methodology and Writing* focuses on current issues in feminist theory, epistemology and methodology. Lykke presents analytical approaches to gendered power conditions intersecting with other processes of social inclusion and exclusion based on race, class, and sexuality, along with theories of the performativity of gender and sex. Many other individual articles have offered new perspectives on the specific topic of feminist methodology investigation.

Challenges to feminist thought have always been present in societies, and resistances to the development of feminist methodologies are to be expected. In times in which social and political transformations are leading to a better understanding of social justice and a greater implication of wide sectors of the population with feminist demands, reactions in the form of backlash to preserve power and maintain certain aspects linked to patriarchy and hegemonic society surface. In the academic realm, efforts to continue the exploration of new ways of approaching the discussion on how to provide criteria for producing, justifying, and evaluating knowledge are needed. Feminist methodologies provide innovative and critically advanced means to uncover authoritarian appeals to maintain the status quo by appealing to traditional authority and denying accountability for the ethical and political implications of the production of knowledge. Challenges to feminist knowledge claims have come from dominant approaches to science, reason, progress and truth associated with a pretended and mandatory objectivity in all disciplines. The brief review of some of the outstanding academic developments in feminist methodologies, as well as the articles included in the present volume, are the proof that intellectual rigour, passion for advancing knowledge and openness to innovative ways of thinking provide significant advances and a convincing response to attempts to dismiss feminist proposals.

This special issue of *Investigaciones Feministas* is therefore not the first to examine feminist methods, and will certainly not be the last, as we do not purport to offer a final word on the subject. However, in this issue we offer a fresh combination of insights into relationships between feminist methods and other research commitments. In addition, this special issue offers not only examinations of feminist methods in a range of fields, but also unique applications and interpretations that serve to push the limits of the label feminist methods. This process of exploring and extending boundaries continues to be a central feature of feminist method. Throughout the essays in this volume, authors draw on feminist methodologies in order to transform our understanding of newly emerging fields and streams of scholarship. Each article includes an examination of existing literature within an established field of scholarship and continues with an original contribution to that field in the form of an independent research project, case study, or theoretical exploration extending that field of scholarship. By providing linkages with existing literature in traditional fields and categories of research in humanities, social sciences and technology/physical sciences, we point to the ways in which this innovative work continues to contribute to the original project of analysis, critique, and transformation of work across academe.

Along with more traditional review-style essays that examine ways in which feminist methods have been defined and applied, this issue offers several articles that bring a fresh perspective to this subject about which so much has been written. The essays in this volume are informed and inspired by feminist research, but each essay pushes into new territory, either through applying feminist methods to a specific case study, or by examining the implications of feminist methods to a newly emerging realm of theory or experience. An innovative aspect of this volume is that it combines articles that review methodologies that have been present in feminist studies for the past decades with others that focus on relatively new disciplines and areas of study, such as ageing studies, the affective turn, and graph theory. Yet, others offer a reformulation of methodological prac-

tices with illustration of recent applications, as is the case with the Standpoint Theory. An important distinctive feature of the monographic number is that it is not only interdisciplinary in the manner in which several disciplines, methods and concepts are included, but also in the way in which many of the articles approach their subject by combining knowledge in at least two different disciplines. The article written by Raquel Medina and Barbara Zecchi, titled “Technologies of Age: The Intersection of Feminist Film Theory and Aging Studies” intersects ageing studies with feminist film theory, which leads to a fundamental methodological and theoretical rethinking of the notion of cinema as a powerful technology of age. The article titled “Feminist historiography and science studies: New methodological frameworks” by Esther Rubio Herráez focuses on the intersection between feminist historiography and studies in the natural sciences to present a methodological approach that allows for the recovery of the achievements of women in the field and to explore the reasons for their absence or lack of recognition. The article “New approaches to the propagation of the antifeminist backlash on Twitter”, authored by Miren Gutiérrez María J. Pando-Canteli and María Luz Congosto, incorporate an eclectic and interdisciplinary approach that integrates graph theory and CDA (Critical Discourse Analysis), thus connecting social media formulations with offline discourses to examine the backlash to feminist advances in contemporary societies. The article “Navigating among women: Digital ethnography and its contributions to feminist research” combines an ethnographical approach with a design developed in a Facebook in southern Chile to explore several gender power relations in that community. “The Power of Necropolitics: Affect Theory and Violence in Perspective”, written by Annabel Martín and Cristina Ortiz-Ceberio, explain how the affective turn can be explored in relation with the study of violence and necropolitics to provide fruitful results. These are some of the examples of the effort that these complex articles have made to offer innovative and intellectually challenging approaches to the notion of feminist methodologies.

In the opening essay, Erol and Cuklanz provide an overview of two important streams of research in order to provide a delineation of the ways in which these two bodies of work share similar purposes and methods, as well as ways in which their goals diverge. In the first half of the essay, the authors summarize key concepts and methods in feminist research. In the second, they provide an overview of queer theory, discussing its central objectives and guiding principles. The authors note that the two streams of scholarship share some emphases, including raising critical consciousness, emphasizing human experience related to gender and diverse intersectionalities, encouraging social change, and questioning or even replacing accepted forms of knowledge production. Both approaches also seek to center marginal voices and experiences, and both propose research that challenges dominant assumptions and relations of power. The authors note that although queer theory developed from feminist origins and began as a branch of feminist scholarship sharing many of its critical tenets such as questioning relations of power and centering the marginal within research, at present much work in queer theory does not focus on gender and cannot be considered feminist. Rather, queer theory rejects a unified notion of the category of “woman” as well as a binary approach to gender, relying instead on the deconstruction of binaries wherever they serve to structure knowledge or support existing structures of power. While the core commitment of feminist methods has been to discover and focus academic attention on women’s experiences and voices, bringing their formerly absent perspective into view, the core commitment of queer theory has been to decenter and deconstruct binaries including, but not limited to, those of gender and sexuality. In addition to providing a comparative overview of these two streams of scholarship, the authors offer examples of each as well as a discussion of the key limitations and critiques of each. This review essay considers the historical growth and development of feminist methods, examines the complex relationship between feminist methods and queer theory, and provides a context for the further consideration of more recent innovations in feminist methods throughout the special issue.

The first two essays in the volume explore innovative methods to approach social media. The authors of “New approaches to the propagation of the antifeminist backlash on Twitter” employ Congosto’s (2018) typology for the study of Twitter profiles to examine the proliferation of reactions against the #Cuéntalo Twitter campaign, the equivalent of #MeToo within Spain. Using Twitter Representational State Transfer API, the authors accessed over 477,000 Twitter messages connected with this hashtag during three days in April 2018, with the goal of providing a deeper understanding of antifeminist backlash on that platform. Through examination of retweets, they created an index of the impact of individual Twitter accounts. In addition, their analysis draws on the integration of Critical Discourse Analysis and graph theory to coordinate their analysis of offline discourses with those found on Twitter. These combined approaches are offered as a new mixed quantitative and qualitative methods approach to social media analysis that bears particular relevance to social movement and backlash discourses. The authors approach #HimToo as a counter-corrective movement focused on resisting feminism and women’s rights gains. Contemporary rhetoric within this movement is notably less extremist and reactionary than earlier antifeminist backlash discourses. The essay explores not only dynamics and trends within the movement, but also identifies and analyzes themes within its discourses. The study found that this specific backlash community was a small one comprised of Spanish nationalists, neo-liberals, ultra-Catholics, and prison officers who were vociferous and well-focused, tweeting consistently. Backlash messages centered around a few repetitive ideological ideas including that of tyrannical feminism, the ideological bias of the left, abuse of men, and finally focus on specific court cases. Anti-feminism and right-wing politics were closely

aligned among this group and their tweets. Approximately 60% of the backlashers emerged as retweeters, while a much smaller group produced new material retweeted by others. While testimony and evidence were rare, commentary and retweeting were the more common forms of expression. These findings corroborate those of other studies of antifeminism, its rhetorical dimensions, and the ideological connections between antifeminism, racism, and neoliberalism.

While the first article examines anti-feminist rhetoric on Twitter, the second takes the study of a feminist movement through Facebook. The article “Navigating among women: Digital ethnography and its contributions to feminist research” offers methodological reflections that emerged within the interdisciplinary framework in a digital-ethnographic design developed in a Facebook group which brings together women from a town in southern Chile. The authors place their study in the context of the feminist movement that developed in Chile in May 2018, in which different educational establishments raised “*tomas feministas*” questioning the patriarchal ideological structure of Chilean society. Universities shut down their activities for two months and the demands impacted Chilean society, expressing themselves in massive protests and demonstrations in which offline spaces were intertwined with online spaces through, for example, adherence to international mass movements, such as #Niunamenos or #Metoo. The research objectives seek to understand the patriarchal power relations that are exercised in this space of interaction, the regulations on gender performances, and the meanings of community that their own participants assign to the space. The article situates its contribution in the core of feminist research, which is the commitment to social transformation and the struggle against hegemony which often is established as an effect of research itself. A feminist digital ethnography in a group of women allows both the authors and the readers to understand how patriarchal power relations can be subverted or confronted and to identify the strategies used. The authors contextualize the research, explaining how it results from the reflections of their own experiences as participants. The methodological proposal offers an original contribution through the adoption of a techno-feminist theoretical approach which focuses on the possibilities of mutual transformation between gender and technology. The originality of this article stems from the nature of the research itself, that is, the analysis of an online group from a feminist perspective, questioning the positions of power in the production of knowledge and glimpsing their contributions to social transformation and colonization of knowledge.

The third article in this special issue is situated within humanities, focusing on film studies from the perspective of aging studies. The authors of “Technologies of age: The Intersection of feminist film theory and aging studies” begin their analysis with an overview of what feminist analyses have shown about gender differences in aging in mainstream Western cinemas. While the preferential treatment of older male actors has been accompanied by a lack of roles for older women in cinema as well as portrayal of aging as decline, the essay provides a framework for possible changes in these troubling patterns of representation. Within aging studies, the concept of affirmative aging offers the possibility of moving beyond a binary understanding of youth versus old age, where aging is depicted mainly as decline while youth equates to vitality and success. This essay provides a thorough analysis of depictions of aging in mainstream Western cinema as well as an extensive list of films from the global South providing alternative depictions of women’s experiences of aging from a range of innovative points of view. Raquel Medina and Barbara Zecchi assess key areas of intersecting concern for feminist theory and aging studies including under-representation of older women in decision-making and in on-screen roles, stereotypical representation of older female characters, and limitations in depictions of older characters as compared to depictions in cinemas of the global South. After assessing industry output from several Western countries, the authors examine different representations from the directors in Mexico, Iran, India, Chile, Spain, and many other nations that have demonstrated the potential for more complex, nuanced, and positive representations of aging in cinema including treatments of historically significant issues such as representations of the aging body, sexuality among older characters, and positive views of human potential in advancing years. Similarly, the authors show how female and feminist filmmakers including Isabel Coixet, Alankrita Shivastava, Pilar Miro, Chinonye Chukwu, Claire Denis, Natalia Beristain, Francesca Archibugi, and Maria Novaro among others have advanced new representations of older women and have improved the visibility of aging women. The authors advocate for the possibility for mainstream Western productions to take on these more nuanced portrayals evidenced in the texts analyzed from the global South. The essay focuses on the potentials of new approaches to questioning the youthful hegemonic gaze and deconstructing technologies of age such as assumptions about embodied experience and hegemonic temporality, based on their re-examination of feminist film theory from the lens of aging studies. This essay shows how a set of contemporary films challenge technologies of age, effectively challenging ageism by reconceptualizing embodiment, modes of the cinematic gaze, sexuality, and the abject in ways that offer new points of view.

While the first three essays in this issue provide innovative feminist approaches to humanities subjects including social media and film, a number of essays in this volume work within the arena of social science. In “The Power of Necropolitics,” Annabel Martin and Cristina Ortiz Cebero explore the intricate relationships between affect theory and feminist thought as applied to the subject of necropolitics, which they operationalize as “the right to kill or destroy” political enemies. The essay focuses on political violence in the Basque example and explicates a style of negotiation in place of necropolitical destruction as it has played out in that

situation. Using Deleuze and Guattari's affective theory of bodies as assemblages of sensations and impressions, the authors remind us of the importance of moving beyond questions of subjectivity in order to center ethical considerations. The essay settles on the key question of the applicability of affect theory to provide transformative solutions to political problems, and thus to contribute meaningfully to social change projects such as those proposed by feminism. Significantly, Martin and Cebero situate a key contribution of affect theory to feminism in that it invites us to question our usual thought processes and categorizations in relation to gender, offering a way to underscore unexamined interdependencies and linkages. The authors seek to use these theoretical insights to provide a new sense of interconnection to rebuild where violence has shattered social connections and a sense of community. Analyzing restorative justice in the Basque Country, they show how affect theory effectively challenges necropolitical logics by centering the emotional power of connection rather than divisive and destructive self-other frameworks. This essay provides a synopsis of the Basque conflict that took place from 1959 to 2011, situating it in world historical context as well as within the more local context of Spanish political history. The case is particularly relevant for this study in that the Spanish state was in some ways complicit with the terrorist project of ETA, due to a number of contextual factors. The central role of a belief system centered on heroic masculinity means that a feminist take on gendered categories can be fruitfully combined with the analytical work proposed through affect theory in this case study. The authors identify in the Basque application of restorative justice a specific material process in which terrorists and their victims spoke face to face, merely in order to share their experience, outside of any self-interested motive in material gain or political benefit. The process requires the location of a shared humanity among the parties and takes this discovery as its central project.

The authors of "Inspira STEAM: breaking the confidence gap with female roles" conducted an ambitious independent research project designed to provide a context in which young girls, as well as boys, could develop confidence in STEAM subjects and careers by working with a mentor in a structured 6-week program. The authors position the design and goals of the program within an extensive published literature on gender gaps in STEAM fields. The project is a part of a larger ongoing series of similar programs and was conducted in the Basque region of Spain, with focus on the three largest cities in that region. One hundred fifty-nine women mentors and over 4,000 children (approximately half girls and half boys) in 80 schools participated. A group of 6th-grade volunteer subjects were assigned with mentors in small groups of under 15 for 6 one-hour sessions at their schools. The goal was to provide positive female role models for girls and boys in order to potentially build their confidence in pursuing a STEAM career, as well as to educate students on the lack of equality between the genders in STEAM fields and the need for more women in these fields. Mentors were provided with training, and a questionnaire was administered at the end of the 6-week program. Participants, both children and their mentors, reported positive evaluations of the experience. The authors note that there is also some work to be done in terms of further developing the program to address some of the shortfalls. For instance, girls admired their mentors and their achievements, but for the most part failed to turn this experience inward toward an increase in self-confidence for their own potential in a similar field. On the other hand, some additional positive benefits of the program emerged in the questionnaire data. The female mentors themselves derived important benefits from their participation including the development of greater self-confidence in their own role as mentors and teachers who could help children develop self-esteem and career goals. In addition, mentors developed a network of peers through the program that can be a source of support and solidarity for their own work in the future. Students and mentors rated the experience of participation very highly, finding the program a valuable one. This project began in academic year 2016-2017 and has been repeated in different locations in Spain and other countries and has found some success. The program has been expanded and has also been conducted in other areas of Spain including Madrid and Catalonia, and plans are underway for a similar program to be carried out in Chile. This innovative methodology actively works to transform the way that participants, both youth and their mentors, understand and experience their own relationship to STEAM fields and careers.

The article titled "Feminist Historiography and Science Studies: New methodological frameworks" by Esther Rubio Herráez exposes the slow process of incorporation of women and women's accomplishments to the academic field of the natural sciences due to the perception of the essential nature of science characterized by objectivity and neutrality as essential imperatives. The author focuses on the intersection between feminist historiography and studies in the natural sciences to present a methodological approach that allow both the recuperation of women's agency in cases in which their advances were buried or hidden previously and the investigation into the reasons for such historical confinement and the consequences for the production of knowledge and for the authoritative perspective resulting from the erasure of women's participation. The first step in this methodological approach was to research the biographies of women in history and to underscore some of the achievements that had not been revealed, while simultaneously exploring the causes underlying such concealment from the intellectual and academic fields. The article shows a significant transformation that takes place when gender as a category of analysis and interpretation is included in the intersection of historiography with the natural sciences: new resources are revealed, new methods of research are developed and, finally, new knowledge is generated. The author shows how biographical studies transcend individuality to become exemplary documents of the sociopolitical and intellectual context in which the lives of these women

were framed. In such manner, they provide relevant clues for the interpretation of androcentric bias and the consequences for the distortion of resulting scientific paradigms. The article explores the example of the life and work of North American scientist Barbara McClintock, who becomes a relevant illustration not only because of her achievements in the field of genetics, but also due to her personal philosophy of life and scientific generation of knowledge. She firmly believed in the combination of reason and emotion as fundamental tools for scientific discovery; her great intellectual capacity along with her relevant contributions to the sequencing of the genetic code and to the development of genetic transposition makes of McClintock a perfect example of the methodological proposal described in the article. McClintock was aware of the discrimination she experienced and demanded equal opportunity and recognition. This case study explores the context in terms of scientific, social and political discrimination and exposes the bias that even today is present in many situations to convey the need of these type of methodological interventions in the intersections of historiography with the natural sciences.

Lorena Pajares Sánchez in “A feminist basis for participatory research: Knowledge, gender and participation, or the necessary dialogue for transformation” focuses on the area of social research and explores how the underlying concepts of participatory research and popular education born in Latin America in the 70s relate theoretically and methodologically to those of feminist research and epistemology developed from the 80s to support action-oriented participatory research with a gender perspective. The article defends the notion of methodological miscegenation that may result in new scientific practices to develop both the discursive and transformative potential of social research in combination with feminist research. Through a methodology based on a critical review of the main theoretical postulates of both types of research, the author analyzes how participatory research and contemporary feminist research and epistemology share many perspectives: both are based on the rupture of the dichotomy between science and politics, propose the incorporation of new knowing subjects, defend a relational idea of knowledge and value the possibilities offered by the link as a central unit of analysis, among other aspects. Through this methodological approach and by contrasting such postulates and perspectives, the author argues that feminist research largely coincides with the foundations of participatory research. Moreover, in a dialogical and critical exercise, it strengthens and expands its epistemological principles through two main keys: the incorporation of women as epistemic and political subjects and the incorporation of a new interpretative framework of reality that allows us to create new knowledge. The article argues for the need to develop a feminist approach to participatory tools that privileges the study of the connections between subjects, identities and social, cultural and economic positions, historical contexts, experiences and narratives to make visible the intersection between gender, class, race, ethnicity or sexuality as central elements of the framework for the interpretation and transformation of our social and political places. The final section of the critical review carried out in this article defends that an inclusive dialogue between participatory and feminist contributions will greatly advance the explanatory and transformative potential of social research.

María Silvestre Cabrera, María López Belloso, and Raquel Royo Prieto examine ten recent feminist social science doctoral theses in order to examine the ways in which these examples of innovative feminist research studies are able to carry out the imperatives of Sandra Harding’s ideals of Feminist Standpoint Theory (FST). The authors developed a “Harding Test” that is here applied to this new research in order to assess several central aspects of it including its feminist commitments and empirical contributions. Through the close analysis of this specific set of doctoral dissertations, the authors show how recent feminist work has been able to incorporate marginalized voices into their production of situated knowledge. The essay provides an extensive literature review on intersectionality within the academic conversation on feminist standpoint theory, emphasizing the notion that the concept of intersectionality interrogates both the invisibility of marginalized voices as well as the specific privileging of androcentrism. Recent research using Feminist Standpoint Theory is endeavors to place researcher and subject on a similar footing without privileging one over the other. This challenging but centrally important research commitment forms the core focus of the essay: the authors seek to show how and to what extent the dissertations were able to articulate the voices of marginalized subjects. The essay finds that feminist standpoint theory was employed meaningfully and successfully in each case and shows the range and depth of research on this point. Subject matter included marginalized positions such as single mothers, Moroccan immigrant women, and victims of domestic violence and/or sexual violence. Experiences of “exclusion and risk” were also multiple, and included unemployment, pregnancy, and coping. The authors of the dissertations under evaluation here all cited personal motivations in their selection of research topic. Their personal connections to the study topic provided opportunities for informed and meaningful expression from the point of view of research participants. For example, authors working on the subject of immigration were themselves immigrants. Although only one thesis explicitly mentions FST, the use of qualitative methods toward objectives centering around understanding and comprehension of the subjects and their point of view was central to all. Their research conclusions focus carefully on these same objectives, with some forays into suggestions for improving the situation under analysis. The essay’s authors conclude that these dissertations are successful examples of FST research based on three main criteria. The dissertations use the experiences of women to provide new knowledge; they support women and center their experiences against androcentric privilege, and they place the researcher on the same level as the study’s object. These three objectives make up the

“Harding test” posited by the authors based on the work of Sandra Harding. This study thus brings Harding’s classic work on feminist methodology into the present day, showing how its central tenets have influenced and enriched contemporary research.

María Luisa Jiménez Rodrigo, in “Possibilities of documentary research for the intersectional analysis of equality policies” addresses the possibilities of documentary research for the intersectional analysis of gender equality policies. She offers an analysis of the strategic plans of equality, valid in 2019 (or most recent) developed in the Spanish context at State and autonomic level. The analysis of equality policies, through the examination of texts produced for their design, provides concrete data that can empirically enrich discussions around the advantages and limitations of different approaches to addressing inequalities. The two main research points focus on the recognition of intersectionality and multiple inequalities and on the attention to groups located in multiple positions of inequality. The conclusions of the detailed and comprehensive analysis carried out in this article provide some relevant conclusions. First, recognition of intersectionality as a guiding principle of equality policies is still scarce in plans developed at the regional and national levels. Second, although many of the plans included in the analysis state the importance of inequalities and multiple discriminations, their concretion in specific measures is partial and insufficient, with under-representation, or even exclusion, of numerous situations of discrimination and multiple inequality, which intersectional studies point to as fundamental. The analysis reveals an underrepresentation of interests and needs of racialized, migrant, and ethnic minority women in addition to an insensitivity regarding affective-sexual diversity. What this work attests to is that methodological analysis such as the one offered here become an effective manner of advancing towards social justice since the article makes evident that mainstreaming can help policies to be more effective and inclusive by bringing into focus groups that often remain invisible after homogeneous approaches. The intersectional policy proposal allows for different implementation strategies. The configuration of specific policies located at the intersections of social inequalities and focused on multi-marginalised groups and the cross-cutting incorporation of the intersectional perspective in unitary policies will make it possible to address sectors of the population that remain excluded or that lack visibility. This methodological proposal thus addresses spaces for intervention that often remain unattended in conventional research.

Finally, in the article titled “Facing heteropatriarchal epistemologies: theoretical-methodological elements for a Feminist analysis on violence against women” Tania Martínez Portugal carries out a critical analysis of the social imaginaries around violence against women through the study of its impact within activist communities of the Basque Country. This case study, which ranges from the formal spaces of meeting and work to informal spaces of socialization of the group or collective, offers the possibility of constructing an alternative narrative on the social context, the myths surrounding the victim and the abuser, as well as the expressions of violence themselves. When faced with the forms and processes through which heteropatriarchy creates knowledge and constructs discourses around violence against women, feminist resistance has worked tirelessly in the construction of new frameworks and interpretations. As a result of the theoretical review and epistemological reflection that emerges from a research of the phenomenon in the activist communities of the Basque Country, this methodological proposal is sustained on the analysis of ten narratives of women activists who have survived violence. Agency and the inclusion of the women’s voices are essential as the impulse generating the analysis, and a revision of the stereotypes associated with the abuser is provided. The article thus offers a methodological proposal that influences the systemic and structural character of violence against women, contributes to the production of knowledge related to the postulates of feminist epistemologies, and is respectful of the research community. The proposal captures many of the theoretical contributions that feminist authors inside and outside the academy have developed, and without which the present effort advances knowledge to a better understanding of the conditions and consequences of contexts in which violence against women takes place.

Together the contributions to this volume provide a wide range of innovative approaches to recognizable fields of academic inquiry, in many instances combining insights and methods from distinct fields to produce a new hybrid research design that sheds light on a contemporary subject or problem. The range of mergers between fields include taking a biographical historiographic approach to physical science, approaching social media with both quantitative and qualitative methods, restructuring the representation of aging in mainstream film through a mingling of feminist film theory and aging studies, and providing real-world mentoring experiences for youth and female mentors from STEAM fields. Each of these complex interventions serves to transform knowledge by focusing on some aspect of gender or of women’s experience, while the specific definitions of these key elements might be operationalized differently in each essay. Several explore styles of participatory research that elicit a commitment to the transformative power of the research process for participants, and endeavour not only to place the participant’s experience at the centre, but to level the relationship of power between researcher and study subject. These essays go beyond reviewing and explaining feminist research, but also demonstrate how feminist methods can be deployed to address contemporary situations and dynamics. These essays provide an international perspective on their subjects as well, with several essays focusing on historical events in Spain, while others examine such topics as films from the global South, feminist activism in Chile, or the experiences of immigrant women. What these articles have in common is, first, an effort to provide an intellectual challenge to create new knowledge either by reviewing previous theories and method-

ologies to add new contexts, perspectives and concepts or by generating new fields of study through interdisciplinary research. Second, they all share a profound political commitment to work towards gender equality and social justice. Finally, all articles convey the need to push the boundaries of research and to expand the limits of traditional academic writing in order to achieve new ways of investigating feminist methodologies. We sincerely hope that the readers share the passion that we, as editors, have experienced through the process of editing this monographic number. To finish we warmly thank María José Camacho and the editorial board at *Investigaciones feministas* for their invaluable help throughout this rewarding endeavour.

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