

The thoughts' evolution on woman in Spain since the late Nineteenth Century to the Twenty-First Century: Romanticism, labour market, violence and equality*

Evolución del pensamiento sobre la mujer en España desde finales del siglo XIX al siglo XXI: Romanticismo, mercado de trabajo, violencia e igualdad

Evolução do pensamento sobre a mulher na Espanha desde o final do século XIX ao século XXI: Romanticismo, mercado de trabalho, violência e igualdade

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DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21803/2Fpenamer.9.16.342>

Abstract

This paper focuses on a critical analysis of the role of women over the course of Spanish history. The importance of women's work in Spanish context is unquestionable; it is one of the pillars which form the basis to build historical processes aimed at achieving gender equity. Throughout its history, Spanish's concept of women has evolved, because of its social and cultural changes. A core aspect to promote gender equality was female participation into the labour market. However, an authentic reflection on the fact of "being a woman", as well as the ensuing debate, was greatly retarded by Spanish people due to their sociopolitical crisis that was out of the ordinary in an internationally comparable context. In fact, the demands of Spanish feminism were postponed until the end of the twentieth century, when they finally achieved the recognition of gender equality. Only in this way women can make gender violence visible to the whole society.

Key words: Feminism, Syndicalism, Scientific Labour Organization, Gender Violence, Equality, History of Spain.

Resumen

La importancia del trabajo femenino en el contexto español es de todo punto incuestionable al ser, como poco, uno de los puntales sobre los que se ha construido el edificio histórico de la igualdad de la mujer. En este contexto, y desde sus mismos comienzos, la mujer ha gozado de diferentes enfoques conceptuales y tratamientos que estarían, en relación directa, por un lado, con la evolución social y cultural de España a lo largo del último siglo y, por otro, con las condiciones de incorporación al mercado laboral de que el sector femenino pudo gozar en cada momento. Sin embargo, la reflexión sobre el hecho de "ser mujer" y el consiguiente debate de género se vio muy retardado por la peculiaridad sociopolítica española en el contexto internacional. De hecho, las demandas del feminismo español, que culminaron con el reconocimiento político y jurídico de la igualdad de la mujer en España, se pospuso hasta finales del siglo XX y, más allá de la realidad laboral de la mujer, se construyó desde la visibilización del fenómeno de la violencia de género y su extracción del ámbito privado. En este trabajo se realiza un recorrido histórico y crítico que trata de analizar y comprender este proceso.

Palabras clave: Feminismo, Sindicalismo, Organización Científica del Trabajo, Violencia de Género, Igualdad, Historia de España.

Resumo

A importância do trabalho feminino no contexto espanhol é t inquestionável, ao ser um dos pilares sobre os quais se construiu a fundação histórica da igualdade das mulheres neste ponto. Neste contexto, e desde o início, a mulher tem desfrutado de diferentes abordagens conceituais e tratamentos que estariam em relação direta, por um lado, com a evolução social e cultural da Espanha durante o século passado e, por outro, as condições de entrada no mercado de trabalho que o setor feminino pode desfrutar em cada momento. No entanto, a reflexão sobre o fato de "ser mulher" e, portanto, o debate de gênero foi grandemente retardado pela peculiaridade sociopolítica espanhola no contexto internacional. Na verdade, as demandas do feminismo Espanhol, culminando com o reconhecimento político e legal da igualdade das mulheres em Espanha, foram adiadas até o final do século XX e para além da situação laboral das mulheres, foram construídas a partir da visibilidade do fenômeno da violência de gênero e sua remoção do setor privado. Este artigo apresenta um percurso histórico e crítico que procura analisar e compreender esse processo.

Palavras-chave: Feminismo, Sindicalismo, Organização Científica do Trabalho, Violência de Género, Igualdade, História da Espanha.

How to cite this article: Pérez, F. (2016). Evolución del pensamiento sobre la mujer en España desde finales del siglo XIX al siglo XXI: Romanticismo, mercado de trabajo, violencia e igualdad. *Pensamiento Americano*, 9(16), 121-142. <http://dx.doi.org/10.21803/2Fpenamer.9.16.342>



Received: July 22 de 2015 • Accepted: September 15 de 2015

* Este artículo se vincula al proyecto titulado: Variables psicosociales, psicológicas, pedagógicas y antropológicas para la comprensión de la conducta criminal, la prevención, la rehabilitación y la intervención en los ámbitos forense y penitenciario (PSICRI II). Financiado por la Universidad Camilo José Cela.

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Introduction: Romanticism vs. Syndicalism

Whenever the dark times of the persecution of women—the witch, the unredeemed sinner, the incarnation of evil¹ were overcome, the nineteenth-century image that Spanish culture instituted for her was, as it could not be otherwise, constructed by men as well as by a society and a culture of men who seemed to want to compensate, by means of overprotection and paternalism, the negative symbology that, in matters of gender, had prevailed in times past. This resulted in a very fantastic vision of the woman, very little in accordance with the historical and social reality of the time.

It is thought that until the middle of the century the intelligentsia was in the hands of the Romanticism of Larra, Espronceda or Rivas and that, beyond 1850, Postromanticism of characters such as Campoamor or Selgas came to take over the first ones who, suddenly, were considered too rhetorical². However, when the generational change was achieved, the image that the Romantics devised for women, largely

imported from abroad, had already been established indelibly in the heart of Spanish society. This allowed that, after 1845, an author like Becquer could perpetuate in his *Rhymes* that melancholic idea of the feminine outlined in the past by people like Enrique Gil or Pastor Diaz (Diez Taboada, 1965).

Thus, a theory of women was instituted among the educated classes as being fragile, ethereal, an object of unattainable desire and innocent and childish temper. A being that lived to be loved, contemplated and protected, from which could not be expected anything beyond whim, emotional volubility, love or indifference. This type of idealization also did not establish clear or definitive differences between the rural woman and the city woman. Both had, in the eyes of men, the identical end regardless of context or rusticity of their manners. The career of this artificial female concluded in being a loving wife, object of maternity, protector of the family unit, center of care, object of adoration and epicenter of the home. An ideal of woman that the Spanish romanticism - short - instituted in a short time, but that was very influenced by other European artistic, intellectual and literary currents, especially the German and the French, from which it was imported, and that put in all the areas of knowledge (Alborg, 1980). We cannot be surprised, therefore, to the extent that generated in an intellectual magma that was the usual currency of change, that the painful image that

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- 1 It must be noted that in Spain, behind the criminalization of witches, sorcerers, healers or midwives, and along with religious and political reasons, a strong folkloric and misogynist component was beating. It is not only that the woman was considered weak and tending to sin because she was Eve's skin, nor that she was considered prone to insanity, but also there was an active interest on the part of the ecclesiastical institution to take away women of any practice that had scientific visions. In fact, only this way can be understood the different gender treatment received by men and women accused (or persecuted) of similar crimes before the courts of the Holy Office (Marsá González, 2009).
- 2 Precisely for this reason authors such as Diaz Plaja (1948) consider this stage rather an "anti-romanticism" that will end up leading to realism.

someone as influential as Sigmund Freud had of the woman - whom he considered morally and intellectually incapacitated, even for reading *Quixote* (López-Muñoz, Pérez-Fernández and Álamo, 2014), coexisted with the pathetic and misogynistic consideration of his criminal capacity offered by authors like Cesare Lombroso and that, in one way or another, was incorporated into a good part of European legal orders³ (Pérez-Fernández, 2005).

But it is notorious that this definition of the feminine found no correspondence with the social reality of Spanish women in particular and European in general, dealing with an ideal built from the dominant classes rather than a genuine sociocultural description: “while [Zancarini - Fournel (1999) explains referring to the French case at the turn of the century] that discourses of all kinds on the social function of motherhood and the illegitimacy of the work of married women outside the home are numerous [...] the number of working women, even considering that it is underestimated, is one of the highest in Europe.” And the fact is that the birth rate throughout the continent tended to slow down during the two decades

prior to World War I despite the fact that demography became an obsession for economists, businessmen and statesmen during those days, when they lived a consolidation of the liberal policies of economic and industrial growth. A progressive slowdown that was correlated with the increasing instruction of women and their incorporation into the labor market (Esping-Andersen, 2013).

Specifically, 1873 will be a very relevant year in the Spanish panorama by marking a clear turning point, not only because it proclaims the progressive regime of the First Republic, but also because Spain passes from lacking legislation in the labor field to have a First law on the regulation of women and children (Salas Antón, 1923). It is true that the advent of the Canovist Restoration, which was a singular retrotraction of the nation to the ideological patterns of the Old Regime, minimized the possible beneficial effects of this law under a renewed pressure from the bosses and caciquiers, slowing down this path of progress. However, it will be symptomatic that something is changing in the mentality of intellectuals and

Spanish leaders who only three years after this progressive law appeared in the Hispanic panorama, and under the impetus of Giner de los Rios, the Free Institution of Education appeared, an element of capital importance as a binding factor of a new intellectual elite that promoted the need for a social and po-

3 A question that reached in one way or another all the orders of justice. For example, known were the reservations experienced by many executioners - or “executors of sentences” - at the time of having to apply the death penalty to a woman. These situations were not only strange in Spain, because such a sentence was rarely pronounced against women, but also gave rise to all sorts of stories, legends and comments when they occurred. Known in this area for being the subject of extensive discussion in the newspapers, the case was played by executioner Pascual Ten Molina and Josefa Gómez Pardo in 1896 (Pérez-Fernández, 2013).

litical regeneration (Carpintero, 1994). In this context, the role played by the new Spanish trade unionists - less romantic and more active than in previous decades, as well as having a predominantly libertarian ideological bias), as the engine of the changes that were beginning to take place. In fact, the drive of social pressure, consolidated in the incipient labor movement that emerged under the umbrella of industrialization, led to restorationism to take new measures, such as the law on *hazardous work of children* of 1877 and finally, in 1833, to the consolidation of an old Pascual Madoz project when the Social Reform Commission⁴ was created (Sánchez Agesta, 1981). However, these movements did nothing to improve the wrong image of women, who, despite their indisputable incorporation into the world of work, found strong resistance regarding their acceptance as an active agent of the workers' struggle. The world of salaried jobs was without question the territory of the male and the trade union struggle, therefore, wanted to understand and assume the role of women as something as peripheral as testimonial. In Spain this type of considerations crystallized in a very significant way: "Since its founding the PSOE⁵ had followed a program focused on labor issues in which little attention had been paid to gender issues. Until 1910, the party was

essentially masculine. So the women members of the Socialist Group of Madrid, one of the most important in the country, represented only 1.2% of the total membership "(Nash, 1999).

The "gender issue" and the value of work

It was when the feminist movement made it visible from the eighteenth century on that the question of gender began to exist and to arouse sociopolitical interest. The early demands of this incipient feminism centered on the demand for citizen rights for women, such as access to education, voting, paid work and so on. Demands that could only be sustained by showing that their lack came from an essential inequality - metaphysical if you will - unsustainable from the intellectual plane, but rooted with great firmness in the ultimate substratum of culture and social praxis. We cannot forget, for example, that the French Revolution, in proclaiming the *Declaration of the Rights of Man* in 1789, literally took only men into account. It is paradoxical, because it is public and notorious that women fought for the achievement of these rights as well as the men themselves, and once these rights were obtained excluded women from them and relegated to a second sociocultural background⁶ (Medel

4 Created by Royal Decree of December 5th, 1883, in order to study "all questions that directly affect the improvement or well-being of the working class and the issues affecting the relations of capital and labor."

5 Spanish Socialist Worker's Party. Founded in May, 1879.

6 Olympia de Gouges - the pseudonym of Marie Gouze - was one of the first to rise against it by publishing in 1791 its Declaration of the Rights of Women and the Citizen, the reason by she was guillotined. At that time, in 1792, also the British Mary W. Shelley, author of the famous Frankenstein, would publish in London its Claim of the Rights of the Woman.

Toro, 2009). After this first wave, the struggle went to a second phase, already during the nineteenth century, which “reduced” the initial ambitions of the movement to concentrate on the achievement of the right to vote. The famous *suffragette movement*, which strongly took root in the United States from 1848 onwards, would be born. We should not be fooled by this apparent reduction of women’s demands because, theoretically, it was understood that the right to vote and the subsequent decision on political representation would, in the medium term, be the best tool to fight inequality. The intellectual calculation of the suffragettes was obvious: if women ended up becoming a stable stock of votes, politicians would necessarily also take into account their problems and demands (Trimiño Velásquez, 2010). In fact, the achievement of the vote for women in various parts of the world provoked the inevitable domino effect in the West, which nevertheless took a long time to begin to offer the desired effects, since the attainment of female suffrage was rarely accompanied by the possibility that women had effective access to the political sphere.⁷ In Spain, the interna-

tional impetus for suffrage was very short in scope, since the debate had to go through the paths of institutionalized political corruption, the education of the popular classes, and the modernization of the economic base - of regenerationism in sum -, issues directly related to the socio-cultural problems of women for which the country was simply not mature yet. So much so that it was with the appearance of the Krausist currents and the birth of the Free Institution of Education that the gender debate focused, above all, on its psychoeducational aspects. The battle, before being fought in the field of rights of genders, was elucidated in the scope of their intellectual capacities (Franco Rubio, 2004).⁸

Whatever the case, and despite its evident delay with the rest of the countries around it, Spain got on the chariot of the Scientific Management practically since it consolidated with Hugo Münsterberg pioneering research (1994, 1996). The need for a reconversion of the country’s economic fabric, which had practically not exceeded the productive limits imposed by

7 New Jersey was the first State of the Union to approve the feminine vote, which accidentally happened in 1776, using the word “people” instead of “men” in the electoral law, by which it was again abolished in 1807. The first country in the world to approve the unconstrained female vote, thanks to the movement led by activist Kate Sheppard, was New Zealand in 1893. It is noteworthy that in many places where the woman vote was accepted, this victory was achieved even before that of universal suffrage. The first place in Europe in which the female vote was admitted was Finland in 1907, followed later by Norway and Sweden. In Spain women were able to vote for the first time from the promulgation of the Constitution of 1931, and until 1939, the year in which the fundamental norm was suspended for well-known reasons.

8 “The situation of economic underdevelopment and political and social decomposition of Spain in the first third of the twentieth century easily explains the difficulties of society at that time to assume a movement that advocated the political participation of women. Even so, a feminist and, to a lesser extent, suffragist movement could crystallize, which was strongly conditioned by the dynamics and evolution of other social movements of the time, such as syndicalism, nationalism or social Catholicism. This weakness did not allow to impose these conditions, which is reason why the results obtained were rather mediocre and in accordance with the patriarchal ideology; but it was that atmosphere that surrounds the timid concession of Primo de Rivera, and which clears the way to the recognition of female suffrage in the Second Republic” (Franco Rubio, 2004, p.482).

manual labor and obsolete agricultural holdings, became a political necessity which, in the end, was also closely related to the reshaping of educational patterns. The change from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, therefore, brought with it the presentation of the first great Spanish labor legislation embodied in the two broad laws, labor accidents and child labor, which led the Cabinet of Azcarraga. From this moment on, and in the scarce space of two decades, Spain made all the political effort that had remained pending throughout the nineteenth century. In fact, the break that meant World War I for Europe (1914-1919) allowed Spanish legislation on labor matters to practically be the spearhead of the international concert. Another very different thing is the limited way in which these measures would come to take shape in practice (Salas Antón, 1923). Nevertheless, and by a clear effect of communicating vessels, this will end up germinating in the consolidation of an intellectual current that, in the long run, would end up having an important repercussion in the feminine subject, which in Spain was always closely linked to the work subject.

When the Social Reform Commission was converted into the Institute of Social Reforms, which happened in 1903 on the initiative of Maura, the entire state machinery in terms of foresight, mutuality and labor inspection will be put in place. During the biennium 1912-1914, under the sign imposed by the Institute

of Social Reforms and the *Mancomunitat de Catalunya*, the Labor Exchange and the *Secretariat d'Aprenentatge* (Kirchner, 1979) opened in Barcelona. Madrid saw in 1915 the establishment of the National Patronage of Abnormal that will lead first Achúcarro and soon Rodríguez-Lafora. It was understood as the official beginning of Spanish occupational psychology, which emerged in two more milestones: the creation in 1918 of the *Institut d'Orientació Professional* in Catalonia, and in 1922 the Institute for Rehabilitation of Invalids of Labor in Madrid. Similarly, in 1920, Pedro Gual Villalbí devoted a series of articles to these issues that came to light in the magazine *Éxito* (Carpintero, García y Pérez, 1998). Spanish intellectuals were also keys in organizing and disseminating the International Congresses of Scientific Management in Brussels (1925) and Rome (1927). Along the same lines José Mallart (Pérez, 1999, 2000) or Francisco del Olmo also placed themselves, to the point where, very soon, the number of authors and publications interested in the subject from within our borders began to be broad indeed.

Despite all this, and at first, the labor specificity of women occupied a secondary, rather underground, place within this clear national concern. Suffice it to say that the first comprehensive monograph dedicated to the subject (Gual, 1929) does not even mention the case of female labor and its implications, and even an expert like Mercedes Rodrigo dedicated, spe-

cifically to women's labor problems, only three small articles during her professional career (Rodrigo, 1926, 1927; Rodrigo & García Abad, 1944). She did show an anecdotal interest, however, in the incorporation of women into the psychological profession, a work environment that practically was considered, as well as others such as nursing, (Sellán Soto, 2010) especially fit for women:

Mercedes Rodrigo also makes a brief quantitative study of the Archives of Psychology in Geneva between 1901 and 1936, and of the *Mental Hygiene* magazine of New York during 1945, in order to verify the increase of female participation in psychology [...]. It is somewhat surprising, considering that she is the first Spanish psychologist, as well as an absolute pioneer of Colombian psychology (Herrero, 2000, p.317).

This gender gap does not, of course, respond only to a Spanish singularity. When international trade unionism, through William Green, made public in 1929 its acceptance of the Scientific Management of Labor as necessary and beneficial to the worker, it was not considered that women, whose union presence was still minimal, had something to say about this particular matter or come to deserve a specific mention. Otherwise: paid female labour, in spite of being elevated and, especially in rural areas, to live up to the one

done by men, continued steeped in the invisibility. This happened at least until 1930.

In that year, the Journal of Scientific Organization timidly opened its doors to the problematic of the feminine world with the publication of the summary of a conference that the lawyer Matilde Huici offered at the Institute of Professional Reeducation. A truly claiming text in which assertions are inserted like this: "All the ladies want to be producers of work. But in this the woman goes far behind the man and shows a gregarious spirit" (Huici de San Martín, 1931, p.280. Or: "The day that all women, in professional groups are associated and stop being each other's enemy by offering to work for a real less than her companion, will the woman reach the relative tranquility that the man has reached" (Huici de San Martín, 1931, p.281), it is also worth noting that the appeal would simply be in mere testimonial act and, of course, the publication itself would not give too much space to this type of writings in the future (Pérez-Fernández, 2001).

Rather, and in front of the egalitarian discourse on matter, the old image of the mother, owner of the home and pillar of the family woman who was readapted to the new times from the Spanish Association for the Dissemination of the Home Sciences.⁹ Just have a look

⁹ An entity that began its activity in June of 1928 in the Superior School of Education of Madrid, and whose object was the readjustment of the social function of the family and

at one of the reviews that, under the heading of “women professional education” are spread throughout the various issues of the *Journal of Scientific Organization*. For example, the summary of one of these courses, offered in the summer of 1931 in Talavera de la Reina (Toledo) by the Pedagogical Missions, explains that such a female formation dealt with

home teaching and practical classes of embossing, applied modeling to the school and pleasant talks by Dr. Sainz de Tejada, of Childhood and Dietetics [...]. The teachers spent six days indoors in an adequate building, engaged in domestic tasks themselves in turn and practically lived the life of home (Anonymous, 1935, p.524).

And this was not a typically Spanish peculiarity either (Pérez-Fernández, 2001). Mallart (1946) sets the example of the *Ecole Professionnelle de Jeunes Filles* de Lausanne, a place of long teaching tradition whose system of education was reorganized in 1938 and in which the Swiss ladies received classes of cut and tailoring, as well as adequate training for performance at home. In other words, the intellectual maladjustment between what women were supposed to be and do and what they were actually doing both in the cities and in the countryside was obvious.

the woman to the new times. Presided over by the Liberal-Democrat politician Jose Sánchez Anido, it was attended by professors from Spanish normal schools, who wanted the spiritual, moral, hygiene, economic or domestic tasks teaching to be used to instruct rural women.

This constant effort of the social agents to deny the evidence to support the traditional position of women defended by a culture that was clearly surmounted, during the 1930s and 1940s, led to a series of gendered labor responses that in no way helped the female sector to detach itself from the home in either sense. This is explained by María Fernanda Mancebo (1993):

Many (working) women who are not registered could be grouped under the heading ‘housewife’, while 18 per cent belong to the garment industry. For married women, the family home was their place of work, both for non-paid and paid domestic work. They sewed up at home, had guest houses or did housework in exchange for accommodation. Single women worked mainly in shops, offices or publishing houses until they were married (Mancebo, 1993, p.16).

From career guidance to violence against women

The European experience of the two world wars, and particularly in the The Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), highlighted the potential of women - whether married or not - as a first-class labor group. For example, in England and during the First World War the female labor census reached 7,300,000 female wage earners. In Germany, from 1942 to 1945, the number of women over fourteen years of age in the industry grew by one million. After the war,

the German government made female work mandatory for obvious reasons. On the other hand, it had been shown that in times of crisis, women were employed more easily than men, although this was due to the obvious wage inequality between both groups, so that the greater ease with which women found work wasn't in no way favorable to gender (Decouvelaere, 1935). At the same time, middle and higher education institutions had considerably increased the demand for women's jobs, which had finally opened women's doors to academic qualifications, until then a mainly men preferred field.

In the Spanish case, the hard role played by women during and after the Civil War, who not only filled most of the labor activities, but also, in many cases, fought in the fronts of the struggle, first Spanish and then European, with considerable value despite the fact that the contribution of the female sector to the course of the war was forgotten by historians until recent times.

In many cases, such as the 400 Spanish exiled women in France, we have even lost the memory of many of their names (Mancebo, 1993); in others, such as the visibility of women who had been victims of reprisals and imprisoned by the Franco regime, given their more or less direct links with the cause of the losers, historical injustice has only recently begun to be alleviated (Vinyes, 2010).

By now many women were dissatisfied with the meager progress made, but it was around a book published in 1949, *The Second Sex*, that this widespread malaise catalyzed in the form of a well-constructed intellectual and material movement. Its author, Simone de Beauvoir, theorized for the first time about the meaning of what it implies "to be a woman" and with that it fed the general awareness about the relations of inequality existing between genders, showing to what point they were entrenched in the history of culture and how they were evolving and adapting over time. In fact, it was Beauvoir (2009) who began to see, among others, the problem of the naturalization of violence against women, opening a consolidated line of work later, in 1963, when the American psychologist Betty Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique*. A text focusing, for the first time, on gender violence as such, as well as on the psychosocial processes that facilitate, justify and conceal it by detaining it in the private sphere (Friedan, 2009).

Thanks to the contribution of the duo Beauvoir-Friedan, and the well-celebrated texts of the American anthropologists Margaret Mead (1990) and Gayle Rubin (1986, 1989), the international feminist movement could at last have elements that it had not previously had: a consistent theory to submit to the socio-political debate, and organizational capacity from which they could present concrete, uniform and coherent demands. The main issue arose precise-

ly around the problem of *gender violence* as a natural, fatal and invisible event that affected women in all manifestations of their existence. Precisely in this - beyond the torturous ideologizations of the fundamental problems - lies the historical and central merit of feminism: it showed that this “natural” destiny of the woman - to be violated, to be unequal, to be submitted - was not only based on anthropological fallacies, and hidden history, but it was also an unjust and terrible destiny that a society, to be simply human, had to fight and eradicate.

However, at least in the Spanish case, things had to be very different from the rest of Europe since the implantation of the traditionalist and national-catholic regime of General Franco had established a very specific model of woman, not too far from the nineteenth-century canon of the mother and wife, the pillar of the family. So, by completely removing the issue of gender-based violence from the socio-political debate, in Spain the questions and answers simply slipped from the subject of domestic work to those relating to the occupational field to which women should have access. For example, José Mallart, unable to postpone the question, devotes the last five pages of his 1946 book to the specific training and guidance of women, to conclude that while it is interesting for women to marry to ensure her life and avoid the efforts of physical occupations to which she is subjected, it would be

interesting to develop *real feminine* labor fields in which single women could be employed.

Now, one always has to ask to which feminine labor areas we refer. The response remained unchanged until well into the 1970s, despite the various legislative provisions that, starting in 1944, gave way to the equalization of rights between workers regardless of their gender (Espuny, 2008). But if the image politicians had of women had not been able to escape the unquestionable fact of their massive incorporation into the labor market, such legislative advances found little impact on a feminine thought that remained entrenched in the old paradigms and topics of Spanish vocational guidance. In fact, Madrid was in 1968 the scene of the *First Ibero-American Seminar on School And Professional Orientation*, and within it only a paper was presented, elaborated by personnel of the Female Section of the political party Falange Española¹⁰ - or “of the Movement”, that would confront the specific situation of the woman (Valcarce, et al. 1968) and which means an evident corroboration of this fact, so it will be worthwhile to pause in it briefly.

¹⁰ Popularly known as the “Feminine Section”, it emerged in 1934 as a branch for the woman of the political party Falange Española that, during the Franco dictatorship, would be renamed as the Falange Española Tradicionalista and the Trade Union National Offensive Boards - or FET de las JONS -. The Feminine Section was dissolved in 1977, being directed throughout its existence by Pilar Primo de Rivera and Sáenz de Heredia, sister of the founder of the main party, Jose Antonio Primo de Rivera.

The work in question responded to a sample elaborated through a questionnaire that was passed to 600 girls from Madrid, Valencia and Barcelona, aged between the ages of twelve and fourteen years. We already see a first bias in the taking of referents because the rural scope is completely excluded from the study. This seems even more reprehensible given the fact that at that time, and despite the industrial progress achieved through the Stabilization Plan, Spain was a country where the primary sector was clearly predominant over the rest of the activities.

The majority of surveyed girls wanted to harmonize domestic work with their occupation in the future, although they valued housework more. On the other hand, the professions these girls knew were evaluated as childish chimeras. Later on, asked about what profession they were really planning to choose once they leave the school, the interviewees seemed to opt for the following: typist, clerk, hairdresser, dressmaker, nurse and teacher. A first surprising data because in a first answer many girls recognized other professional tastes as doctor, journalist, pharmacist, writer, lawyer, translator, architect or chemist. From an objective analysis, it is difficult to understand how a young woman who wants to be a doctor can be content to be a hairdresser or, worse, content to study typing while her male brothers are sent to the Law School. However, the authors of the paper maintained their results on mere

practical criteria such as the need to introduce financial assistance in their homes.

In any case, the authors of the paper supported a curious thesis that, apparently, closed the plot arc of their paper: if Spanish girls did not choose professions that included mechanization, high intellectual effort or industrialization, and favored by women of a more “feminine” nature, this could be due to a peculiar psychology of Spanish women. The national reality at the end of the decade, however, was obstinate in demonstrating precisely the opposite.

The analysis of “gender” from violence

It is interesting, from a psychosocial point of view, to realize how little understood - or how much misinterpreted - the concept of *gender* was. There are those who believe that it is an elaborate *ad-hoc* category and within a feminist-style political program. Some people think it is a simple semantic invention lacking any scientific support. Some even maintain that it is a pretext designed by supposed “anti-system” to interfere or subvert the good socio-cultural order. However, none of these three points of view is correct.

What is certain is that the concept of gender appeared in psychological research, and the first authors who used it, by the way, were not women but men. Although coined in John Money (1955), it would be Robert Stoller (1968), in the

course of his studies on children suffering from different androgenic syndromes and subjected to hormonal therapies, who would establish the conceptual difference between sex and gender as we understand it today. From his works Stoller concluded that gender identity and behavior were not determined by biological sex, but rather by the lived experiences, rites and customs attributed to the biological sexes from the socio-cultural labeling.¹¹

Thus, the history of concepts such as “gender violence” is, because it’s recent and subjected to all kinds of socio-cultural resistance, controversial and tortuous. In fact, the first conceptualizations on the subject, developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s, failed to account for all the possible manifestations of the problem, nor did they take care of it in all its magnitude. The uses of researchers in a very new field were subtle and “politically correct” in tackling the problem, and they continued for many years (Lizana Zamudio, 2012).

From the conceptualizations of violence against women in terms of sexual aggression or violation in the beginnings, generated in the field of sociology, criminology, psychology and

psychiatry, passed, in the late 1970s, to the diffuse terminology of “domestic violence” (Walker, 1979), which opened new dimensions of the problem to the public debate. Several reasons explain this change and not all of them have to do with sociocultural demand, the genesis of new currents of thought, and the protest of the old values of patriarchy. Science, as a reflection of that movement, was also being transformed: first, the question of child abuse had gained force in the investigation, a fact that had broken with the monolithic image of the family as a place for happiness and raised the problem of the privacy of certain domestic behaviors. Secondly, victimology had emerged, a discipline that helped greatly, especially from the momentum it received in the British context, to raise the question of violence against women at home. It would be in the United Kingdom, in fact, that this debate clearly fruited in generating a new direction in public policies: the first network of shelters for battered women appeared in England in 1971. Also there the first survey about domestic violence was carried in 1975 (Soria, 2006).

The problem, however, was that the concept of domestic violence did not explicitly refer to gender inequality as a phenomenon anchored in socio-cultural reproduction, nor did it go too deeply into the dynamics of such violence. In the end, rather than a clear directionality of aggression - whatever its form - from man to woman, it seemed to establish a two-way ap-

¹¹ It is important to mention that it was from this line of work that homosexuality began to be considered as having no biological basis and that, therefore, it was not scientifically wise to consider it a pathology. In doing so, it would soon be excluded from the most common classifications of mental disorders. The American Psychiatric Association (APA) excluded her from her diagnostic guide, the famous DSM, in 1973.

proach to violence and, consequently, maintained the issue in the area of neutrality (Lizana Zamudio, 2012).

From this moment the nomenclatures are qualified. Thus, “domestic violence” (Echeburúa & Corral, 1998), still used in Central and South America, “conjugal violence” or “marital violence” (Straus, 1992) appear. It deals with the latter to swing the problem about the intimate and emotional relationship between two adults, but political asepsis is maintained to the extent that the differential of social and cultural power of the sexes was obviated. On the other hand, they are soon shown as dysfunctional nomenclatures to the extent that unmarried women seem to be excluded from domestic violence. For this reason, authors such as Cardarelli (1997) proposed the term “violence in the couple”.

The international feminist movement was key in showing the true root of the problem and to properly reflect it when recovering the denomination of Money and Stoller to call it “gender violence,” a worldwide denomination since the UN adopted it as its own in the 1990s to insert it in a unique way in its documents and resolutions. It is a generally adequate name because it clearly shows the twofold aspect of the problem: it is exercised by men over women and it is a structural violence institutionalized transversally in all spheres of society and culture from the consideration that there

would be a fundamental inequality between the sexes. But this theoretical adjustment did not eliminate controversies either. It is a way of calling the things that generated displeasure in many environments to the extent that, due to its non-academic origin, it was considered by many social actors an ideological concept and an institutional surrender to an extremist and minority discourse - the feminist - replete with connotations that some groups were not willing to assume as their own (Lizana Zamudio, 2012).

Rooted in sociopolitical traditionalism, the Spanish Penal Code and its different revisions, as well as other legal implementations adopted over time, treated violence against women as any other, assuming, at most and when there was, the aggravating of “kinship”, or punishing their actors in the framework of so-called “domestic violence.” It was a “passionate” form of violence, emotional, and therefore excusable in certain contexts. Consequently, there was no differentiated treatment for violence that, based on men, rests on women beyond the non-specificity of domestic violence. Only after 1997, after the media and social upheaval generated by the murder of Ana Orantes¹², the

12 The media played a key role in understanding its decisive value in relation to the visibility of the problem. The fact is that Ana Orantes was brutally murdered by her ex-husband a few days after she had denounced in a very followed television program the harassment and the systematic violence that he exerted on her, as well as the helplessness that it experienced from the authorities. Her death, therefore, was a knockout in the ethical-moral conscience of the Spaniards, who until then had tended to regard this class of matters as private.

terrible legal helplessness faced by women subjected to the violence of their partners raised, which encouraged the implementation of immediate legal reforms aimed at the direct protection of victims. This not only transformed the historical consideration of this issue in the Spanish legal and political framework but also the State, pushed by an understandable wave of social outrage, was also forced by the exigency of what happened to meet the different international obligations that it had previously signed, culminating in the promulgation of the controversial Organic Law 1/2004 (Fernández Rodríguez & Pérez Ruiz, 2010).

“Gender” policies

Taking the difference from the gender, which in Spain penetrates, as indicated, from the problematic of violence, it makes perfect sense to speak of “equality” between men and women. In fact, we are referring to a legal principle that is reflected in profusion of universal declarations, laws, constitutions and similar texts promulgated at the international level, and it is one of the issues in which political, propagandistic and material efforts have been invested over the last fifty years. However, and paradoxically, it remains a pending issue in most of the world insofar as it is possible to legislate on material issues, but not on the attitudes of people, and these are the cornerstones on which any sociocultural transformation is based. Any change in values, from those prefigured in surviving materialism to those

proposed in postmaterialism that arises when living conditions improve and stabilize, is not of immediate adjustment. As Inglehart (1991) has proposed, there is a more or less long temporal mismatch between the material circumstances and the values of the subjects because, although the former change with relative ease, individuals are not usually so flexible or commonly motivated to change regarding to the perception of those issues they consider central in their lives and that form the core of their identity.

As it has been shown, gender equality is very recent in Spain for its own historical idiosyncrasy. In fact, it was around the International Year of Women decreed by the United Nations -1975- that there was a slow awakening of the problem, because the event brought a global dimension to the concerns that a minority group of Spanish young people had felt that, after having been able to join university studies as well as men, had decided to convoke to fight against the structural gender inequality that prevailed in our country and that, for the rest, the pro-Franco regime had not only consolidated but also assumed as an intrinsic part of its political, social, cultural, moral, and educational ideals.

It cannot be said in the strict sense that Francoism would have done more harm to women than any other of the previous gender approaches - whether in Spain or in Europe -

as all of them coincided in the fact of domesticity, submission, motherhood and femininity as the basic matter of their existence, but it did radically slow the emancipation process in our country by stopping the historical clock in a retrograded and simplified image of women. In fact, the cultural identity of gender, which is not alien to the mechanisms that make up any other sort of cosmivision, pivots and diffuses over the symbolic image of the sexual role projected in culture, so it serves the informal social control by pushing and channeling women and men towards historically constructed, deforming, gender relations that manifest themselves in existing and “permissible” attitudes and behaviors. That is to say, to be a woman or to be a man - in the same way as to feel as belonging to a social class or another - would consist in being attached to a certain closed image that is necessarily simplifying and even caricatured, but whose ideological and identity power is unavoidable (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).

Thus, for Spanish women, the decomposition of the national-Catholic state model, and the progressive dissolution of its gender symbolism, represented a turning point in the struggle to break with a historical invisibility, which would hatch in The First National Days for the Liberation of Women, held in Madrid at the end of 1975, a few days after the death of Francisco Franco but approved by the government agencies before. The truth is that these first days, generating the necessary controver-

sy, had a broad echo and not only among feminist groups. The star theme of this event - in fact the historic battlehorse of Spanish feminism - was the translation of gender equality into political organizations in order to at least ensure that the most progressive political parties were interested in issues pertaining to the daily life of women and the reproductive field (Ortiz Heras, 2006).

In May 1976 the second meeting of Spanish women took place. Under the protection of the strong activist impulse that women had developed in Catalonia, it was decided that these days should take place in the Auditorium of the University of Barcelona, under the auspices of the Association of Friends of the United Nations and with the coordination of the Secretariat of Non-governmental organizations. They gathered around four thousand women from all over the country and established a Unitarian Platform for mobilization. There, central themes such as the analysis of patriarchy and male domination in the family were discussed, among other things; the role of unpaid domestic work and the traditional division of domestic tasks; the analysis of the family as an institution that originated the exploitation of women; maternity as an imposition or as a free and voluntary option; the separation of sexuality and reproduction (Nuño Gómez, 1999).

The advances followed quickly: In 1976, the

first center of reproduction and sexual planning was created in Madrid. In 1978, a female feminist adviser of the Andalusian Preautonomic Board was appointed, which contributed to the opening of Women's Centers in that region.

Demonstrations of protest against perpetual macho aggressions, which became a commonplace of the Spanish feminist movement, were aimed at sensitizing public opinion on the vulnerability of women in a male-dominated society, with the need to arbitrate protocols of prevention and intervention in this matter. In the same way, another area in which great efforts were concentrated was the educational one, posing a special battle in relation to the sexist contents of the school textbooks. Women had to be made visible and it was clear that one of the keys to understanding the secondary role of women in society had been educational seclusion in stereotypes of sex and at home. For this reason women's access to the labor market, to paid work in short, was presented as a powerful mechanism for social change and emancipation (Ortiz Heras, 2006).

Thus the first democratic elections of June 1977 came. For the first time in history the programs of the political parties of the progressive arch spoke of women and their problems. It is true that always as a subject of second order, but this did not prevent women from entering the electoral lists, with twenty-five of them

elected as deputies. The next step, then, and once active political participation was reached, it was logical: within the Ministry of Culture, the General Subdirectorate of the Female Condition was created. Subsequently, with the establishment of the first democratic municipalities, the already standardized Women's Councils were created.

In 1983, the aforementioned Subdirectorate of the Women's Condition was transformed into a Women's Institute and a high budgetary allocation was granted to this organization. From this point on, the presence of feminist demands on the political agenda intensified, but only in an institutional way, as it became increasingly evident that all these developments were slowly closing in society. In fact, the Spanish feminist movement had seemed to reach its top in the third and last great state days held in Granada in 1979. Not surprisingly, the creation of institutional spaces from which to develop policies against gender discrimination had absorbed a good part (Nuño Gómez, 1999).

Although the Spanish Constitution of 1978 enshrined the right of legal equality, it was not until the laws promulgated in 1981 that a new family order was established with the repeal of the marital authority and all its derivations. Thus, the family management was assigned to both spouses and articulated the relationship between husband and wife from the equality

and reciprocity of rights and duties¹³. An idea subsequently consolidated by Law 15/2005, July 8th, which amended article 68 of the Civil Code with an addendum in which spouses are required to share domestic tasks as well as caring for family members and other dependent persons.

Despite this legal recognition, however, and among other things, government statistics show that women spend more than three times as much on household tasks as men, or that maternity leave requested by men reaches percentages very low. It is a silent discrimination, maintained within the home, which limits the democratization of families and directly violates the principle of equality enshrined in the law. Moreover, this unequal distribution of domestic tasks has a direct impact on both the personal freedom of women and their incorporation into the labor market. But not only this: this unequal treatment of women is extended to the labor market through wage discrimination and, in addition, enormous obstacles - often hidden or avoided - for promotions in promotions ladder (López de la Cruz, 2008).

It is in this context that LO 3/2007 (or LOI) appears. The object of it is obviously not the theoretical or elemental equality within the framework of the legal system that is recognized by principle for both sexes. In fact, it

might seem extravagant that a state such as Spain, in which equality before the law is recognized as a fundamental right of citizenship, promulgates such a law. However, in the case of LO 3/2007 the relevant word of the title is not “equality” but “effective”, that is to say: the material achievement of such equality that the Spanish Constitution of 1978 enshrines and that for different sociocultural reasons that aforementioned, we are yet to accomplish (Peñafiel Sanz, 2010).

It would therefore be a mistake to understand this legislation as a *law for women* or *made by women*. On the contrary, all the principles which the law deals with are defined equally for both sexes with the sole exception of those positive provisions which are envisaged in favor of women and which, as it is well stated in Article 11: “(they) shall apply as long as such [inequality] situations persist.” It is also established, in the same article, that such positive actions “must be reasonable and proportionate in relation to the objective pursued in each case.”

Final thought

Thinking about women, as it has evolved in the Spanish context, does not admit a critical treatment that establishes distances with the historical moment. This implies that in Spain there never was an autochthonous theory about women from which to draw up plans of social, cultural or political action and intervention,

13 See Articles 66 et seq. Of the Spanish Civil Code.

and such approaches, usually imported from abroad, have only begun to fall in Spain since the 1980s. Lack of culture, superstition, the maintenance of dubious traditions, economic inefficiency, job insecurity and illiteracy were endemic to Spanish society -especially in rural areas- and these problems affected to a greater extent, the female population which, in all areas subject to the narrow control of the male, reduced to the most basic education and led by traditionalism and superstition, often did not even know the most adequate way to perform basic domestic tasks as child care and hygiene or the rational management of the home. That is to say, ironically, it was topical that women were not well qualified for the efficient performance of those tasks to which society and the culture sought to reduce to them. Moreover, it is also directly related to the social image of women in the historical section that competes here and which has been strengthened from the political and legal institutions in a transversal way.

The incorporation of women into the labor market, which was never progressive or gradual but avoided by specialists and public policies for decades, far from being something that society had to oppose, became as years passed, however, in a process of incontestable evidence that had to be studied, monitored and understood in a very specific way by trainers and counselors and, undoubtedly, also by the State. In fact, it has been the channel through

which the theme of gender equality and thinking about the feminine entered in Spain. It was never argued, in fact, that women could not or should not work, but in any case lived for almost a century in the unmasked belief that the female sector should not be employed in any work activity that, *because of its own idiosyncrasy*, put them away from motherhood, home care and family management, tasks of the highest order for Spain before and after the Civil War for reasons that were rather practical than economic.

Despite everything, although women were not impelled or educated for work outside the house, their participation in extradomestic tasks was not prevented in any way from the official instances. Moreover, legislative efforts were even made to put the means, even timidly, so that the development of such activity was appropriate. Thus, after seventy years, in the period comprised between 1900 and 1970, the female collective doubled its active presence in the world of work.

In purity, the only thing that can be reproached to the Spanish society is the enormous amount of time that took to understand that working women cannot and should not have less labor rights than men on the basis of gender. This implies that it was not so much the subject of work that preoccupied the dominant patriarchal culture as the ethical-moral question of the management of power. In fact, and

as we have tried to show, the subject of gender did not awake in the Spanish culture from the work side or from merely ideological action- with very little relevance until recently-, but rather because of the massive and stark visibilization of a violence that a democratic and advanced society could not tolerate in its core.

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