



Gendered Design in STEAM Bulletin




ISSUE FOUR | July, 2021

"Thank you to everyone who helped in producing Issue Four of the GDS Bulletin. Special thanks to Angélica Bernal Olarte for her written piece for the main feature. To Timothy Barnard for the Spanish to English translation. Thanks to the research projects for their project updates and insights to their fieldwork - it's so exciting reading about and seeing photos of your research developments. Thanks to Chiara Del Gaudio and Raquel Noronha for their update on the discussion and activities from LabTwo | Session One. Thanks also to Maya Chopra for the design and sourcing content assist and Ona Bantjes-Rafols for translation checking and preparing information."

Kerry Grace, GDS Program Coordinator and Editor of the GDS Bulletin

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Upcoming events

- [Creating with Community: Films by Keith Whiteduck and James McDougall](#) | [August 11-September 9, 2021](#)

MAIN FEATURE

Critical outlooks from the perspective of Feminism

Our main feature is written by Angélica Bernal Olarte from project ID80 - Re-imagining urban territories for women's autonomy in Colombia. Angélica is a political scientist with a PhD in philosophy. She currently teaches political science at Universidad Jorge Tadeo Lozano. Her research is focused on gender equality, women's political participation and policies of gender equality. Her research aims to increase visibility of the contribution of women in the construction of the public sphere and democracy. In her recent work, she explores how women not only face oppression because of gender inequality, but also how racism and classism contribute to the injustice against them. Here, she writes about some of her work, experiences and discoveries through the GDS program

This essay was originally written in Spanish and has been translated into English (by Timothy Barnard). The original Spanish text is available on [page 21](#) of this Bulletin.

“ It is very important for me that I tell you about my experience participating in this project. I want to begin by telling you that I come from a background and tradition of social studies and gender studies; for that reason, it has been quite a challenge accepting the invitation to become part of a project which is located in the field of design. This challenge has enabled me to think about new questions. In the field of feminist studies I had not arrived at thinking about the relations of social groups with space, nor with territory. Neither had I thought about our relations with objects and the liberating possibilities of our connections with territory and spaces. My questions were always oriented more towards interpersonal relations, in which I have wanted to bring out how power is exercised and runs through the bodies of women, men and non-binary people. It has been a constant learning experience, therefore, to ask questions about the power relations in life experiences occurring in particular spaces and in relation with objects, practices and territorialized experiences. Perhaps for this reason, I venture here to stop a moment and share some of the reflections that arose from my journey I shared with my colleagues in the School of Design and those taking part in the project of constructing women's autonomy in the Belén district of Bogotá, Colombia.

I will begin with my own experience. I studied at a public university in Bogotá, the Universidad Nacional, and my professors, the first feminist professors, were involved in the feminist academic scene, meaning that I learned from liberal feminism which is highly influenced by Anglo-American and European feminism. In this feminism, the question of our specificity as Latin American women,



Angélica Bernal Olarte | Professor,
Universidad Jorge Tadeo Lozano

as women run through with other oppressions and inequalities, was not central. All my professors in feminism were mestiza, urban academics who did feminism from the perspective of gender studies, which had a great influence on me because I read mostly French, Spanish and Anglo-Saxon authors and was for a long time unaware that in Latin America there existed feminist political theory that was asking questions about the ways in which inequality runs through the lives of women in our contexts.

This awareness arrived rather late in my life. It came only in 2010, when I was able to attend a lecture in Bogotá by Angela Davis, the renowned anti-racist communist activist who has fought all her life against racism. Confronted with her words, many of my certainties were cast into doubt. And so there arrived rather late in my life the question of why in Latin America, although the central concept of gender oppression is operative there, it is impossible to conceive of it outside of the colonial context, the racism

and the ethnocentrism specific to liberal scholarly thought and feminist struggles. This, for me, was a discovery, because many presumptions in dominant European theory that we repeat in fact lead us to see reality and thus try to understand it by means of references foreign to the political, social, cultural and historical processes of Latin America in particular and of countries such as Colombia.

I must acknowledge, for example, that I did not listen sufficiently when a feminist of African descent would arrive in a space for women and feminists to articulate and denounce racism, and the importance of the struggle of Black women against racism, and calling it into question. I did not pay attention when they criticized how in this battle problems around gender, and not racist oppression, are given priority. I understood this only very late. Also, in listening to and becoming familiar with the work of Angela Davis, I drew closer to the question of the connection between feminism and Marxism, but also to the question of the compromised academic work produced in Latin America. An enormous door then opened for me onto the path of becoming aware of our Latin American struggle to take our own feminism into account.

I arrived late to realizing that in Latin America there had been a few extremely valuable spaces: the Encuentros Feministas Latinoamericanos y del Caribe. The first of these encounters was held in Bogotá in 1981 and for many years they were decisive for the ways in which feminism was expressed in the region. For example, it was at this event that it was suggested for the first time that the goal of eliminating violence against women be commemorated on November 25. It is sometimes thought that this proposal came out of the United Nations, but in fact it came out of Latin American feminism at the Bogotá gathering. There have been various regional meetings, but there have also been occasions when minds did not meet, because within these discussions there were a great many conflicts among the diverse feminist perspectives found in Latin America and the Caribbean.

"...feminists have often taken academic political experience and Anglo-American theoretical constructions as our sole references, forgetting that we had our own contexts and that there had been very valuable experiences showing us the way."

These numerous points of view have created enormous political tension, primarily because of what I mentioned at the outset - that feminists have often taken academic political experience and Anglo-American theoretical constructions as our sole references, forgetting that we had our own contexts and that there had been very valuable experiences showing us the way. For example, the Black women's movement, women of African descent throughout Latin America thinking about and denouncing the racism, which often characterized the hegemonic and more liberal feminism.

On the other side is the communitarian feminism, which has in addition told us that at times the feminist agenda is ignorant of the life experiences and histories, and enormous problems of inequality experienced by women such as peasants and those living in working class and poor urban areas, who confront challenges not only as women but also on the level of the family and community. There is for example a magnificent text by a Bolivian woman, Domitilia Barrios, entitled "Si me permiten hablar" ("If I May Speak"), which recounts her life as the wife of a miner, but also how she became a public figure, not because of her demands as a woman but because her husband (like most mine workers) became gravely ill and the mining company wanted to evict them from their home. As you are aware, mining companies create mini-cities for their workers, and the moment a worker loses his health and cannot continue working they are evicted without any other consideration. Domitilia's struggle was for a decent roof over their heads, for decent wages, for the health of her family. Thanks to her political voice and her struggle, Domitilia was invited to an international United Nations conference on women. When she arrived there she wanted to speak about her problems, she wanted to talk about mining and its effects on health, about hunger and the lack of decent conditions in her community. But at the women's meeting she was told no, there they were going to talk about women's rights, and if she wanted to demand these other things then she basically had to find somewhere else to do it.

The question Domitilia asked at the time, and which she asked of those who listened to her and later of those who read her book, is whether the demands she was making were truly so far from the feminist agenda. She asked whether the feminist agenda was going to turn its back on substantive political demands so essential to the lives of many women in Latin America. Domitilia tells us: "You

white urban upper-class women who spend as much in one hour at a hair salon what my husband can earn in six months of work, you think you can tell me what I should fight for?" Domitilia's story calls to mind another story which took place much earlier, in the United States, when Black women fighting for the civil rights of the Afro-American population asked feminists if the struggle against racism were not a part of the feminist struggle, if the problems brought to their lives as Black women by racism were something that mattered to feminism. With these examples I wish to show the paths that have led feminists to self-criticism, to becoming aware of these vital experiences of women marked by terrible inequalities brought about not only by our gender but also by other factors such as, for example, structural racism and the capitalism that condemns millions of people across our continent to indignity and poverty. This question undoubtedly needs to be taken into account in the feminist struggle.

With this wide-ranging series of thoughts, I arrive at design and how I questioned my own feminism based on my experience in the project. I will begin with a central question in feminist thought: the denunciation of the historical division between the public and the private, found to a large extent in Western political theory, which has been constructed around the idea that there exists a public sphere and a private sphere. In the public sphere is freedom, autonomy, equality, political power. This is the space of men. In the private sphere is domestic life, raising children. This is the realm of inequality; here no democracy is possible because it is a patriarchy, precisely. It is the realm of rule by the father. This sharp separation between these two spheres has been made by feminism, enabling us to account for our historical exclusion from positions of political decision-making.

In addition, however, it let us denigrate or undervalue domestic work by designating it as a burden that oppresses women and condemns them to irrelevance. Feminism uncritically reproduced this categorical division to demonstrate the injustice women have confronted historically, but Black and communitarian feminisms show us that this division was above all ideological, and that this dividing line between public and private has been very porous. For example, Black women, women of African descent, Indigenous women and peasant women, have not been able to remain in the private realm; for reasons of survival, they have had to go out and fight in public



Logo designed for project ID80 - celebrating the power in the feminine, and cooking as a space of power and resistance. Their "Filosofía delantal" series (Apron philosophy), is a celebration of home cooking knowledge and the power in it.

for their daily bread. In addition, this firmly-implanted idea that women were confined to the home corresponds in reality to a relatively specific experience, that of middle-class urban women. It does not describe the experience of women who confront oppression through racism and because of their class.

On the other hand, and in connection more concretely with the project, we have called into question the tendency of a certain kind of feminism to focus on domestic labour in domestic spaces such as the kitchen as activities that have lesser value or do not grant women power and autonomy. This position loses sight of the problem that these tasks are assigned almost exclusively to women and are not considered work and are not paid. The harm is not that women do this work, but that it is not recognized as such. It is not valued and receives no economic compensation. The political objective, therefore, is not for women to abandon domestic labour as part of their liberation. What Black and communitarian feminism tells us is that domestic duties are the basis by which human survival is possible and that this is work of incalculable value because it makes possible the reproduction of life and its care and protection. The problem is not that women are in charge of it, but rather that they are alone and overworked. In addition, what is not being called into question is that urban middle class

women reproduce a logic of oppression and exploitation when they solve their domestic labour problems by hiring the services of racialized women, peasant women, or poor women, etc.

This has been fully called into question by Black women, women of African descent, Indigenous women and peasant women, who have, moreover, found in domestic labour opportunities to generate empowerment processes. Black and Indigenous women have shown us that around the hearth power and autonomy are woven, and that around the hearth also consciousness has been spun. Indigenous women have told us that weaving is not simply a repetitive activity that foments the subordination of women; it is also a way of constructing knowledge and consciousness. Weaving has served women to create connections amongst themselves and to construct women's powers. This and many other everyday domestic activities were seen by hegemonic feminism as reproducing the subordination of women, when in fact they were enabling other women to construct power, solidarity and the capacity for transformation by means of knowing their own worth through the worth of what they produce and create.

In capitalist ideology, the kitchen established itself as a space of the nuclear family, where a "housewife" cooks food for her own family. But this is by no means most women's experience; in fact, the kitchen is a meeting place, a space that welcomes speech, in which there is creativity, in which the knowledge of women of different generations can be connected together and transmitted to each other. Recipes, for example, but not recipes alone; rather the knowledge and the memories around them, who grandmother was, who great-grandmother was, how they prepared a dish, and the ingredients they used and why.

This experience of designing a kitchen has made me think of the need for new narratives of the kitchen as a public space for recognizing women's knowledge, for constructing solidarity among women, but also for the transformation of women, their families and their communities. A revealing kitchen implies in and of itself a political agenda that touches people's real lives. To recognize the kitchen is to recognize care as a part of the human experience not limited to the domestic in a nuclear, heterosexual, middle-class white family. It sees the kitchen, rather, as a community space, an open space, for constructing knowledge and autonomy, for sharing women's knowledge, where women's power is

"...the kitchen...as a community space, an open space, for constructing knowledge and autonomy, for sharing women's knowledge, where women's power is constructed through creating dishes and cultivating the land, for example, and by re-establishing the connection between the kitchen and the land."

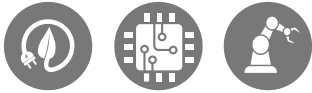
constructed through creating dishes and cultivating the land, for example, and by re-establishing the connection between the kitchen and the land. But it also recognizes the opportunity for the kitchen to be a community space in which is found not only women cooking but also knowledge favoured by women, and in which community care is constructed as well.

To see the kitchen not as something about and for women but rather as a stage upon which care takes form as a human value that can be practised by persons of every gender. I believe that the importance of this design experience is that we are going to demonstrate the extent to which a pioneering experience by a group of women in a working-class district can transform the kitchen into a project that makes it possible to gain not only personal power but, above all, collective power – to construct other ties based on solidarity and the protection of life. Of course this is a challenge, because women do not naturally have an essential view of these values. It is, rather, a political question, as it makes apparent the fact that championing and obtaining these values presents difficulties and obstacles, given that the protagonists are women from working-class districts living in difficult circumstances and with pressing economic needs. They must find a way to survive day to day – but here too lies the key to this experience, which does not seek the exit foreseen within capitalism but rather seeks escape routes to construct solidarity among women out of a project such as this one, based on popular forms of knowledge that make it possible for us to create a different kind of power, a different form of solidarity and other care experiences. ”

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

In this issue, Project Spotlight introduces the last five of the 20 awarded projects. [Find information on all the GDS projects here.](#)

Assessing the impact of solar panels to improve energy access for women in rural Ghana (ID40)



Stream 1 - Case study

The government of Ghana aims to provide energy access to communities with populations of 500 and above, but isolated communities (rural or island) have no access to electricity. In order to provide electricity access to these communities, many solar systems have been implemented. This case study will explore the factors enhancing women’s empowerment through energy access, investigate productive uses of energy in informal food preparation and processing sectors owned by women and vulnerable populations. It will assess the impact on energy access and gender and the political economy of the energy sector in these communities and enhance the role of the private sector in scaling up energy access for all.

The interdisciplinary research team consists of two project leaders who hold PhD and Masters degrees. Their expertise includes: Energy and Environmental Sustainability, Mechanical Engineering, Development Studies, Climate Change, and Gender and Community Development. In addition, there are two research assistants on the team, a PhD student and a Masters student both studying Sustainable Energy Management.

Primary investigator: Dr. Samuel Gyamfi

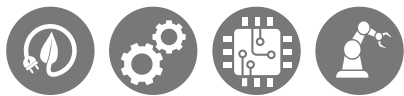
Co-Primary investigators: Dr. Danielle Sedegah and Dr. Eric Ofori Antwi

Institute: University of Energy and Natural Resources (UENR)



Solar panel installation on the roof of a home, Ghana.

Constructing an eco-friendly generator for low-income female artisans in Nigeria (ID65)



Stream 2 - Case study plus prototype

This research project aims to design and construct a fuel-less generator, capable of producing a sustainable, accessible and environmentally friendly electrical power machine to support female artisans operating in small and medium scale business ventures in Nigeria. The project aims to construct a generator that improves gender equality by developing cheap and robust methods that incorporate the cognitive, emotional and cultural needs of female artisans.

The team is comprised of six members who hold a PhD and/or Masters degree. The lead researcher for the project is Ese Esther Oriarewo who is also the Director of Centre for Gender Studies and Women Development;

Legal Officer and Principal Assistant Registrar, at Edo State Polytechnic, Nigeria. Mrs. Adesuwa Sarah Omege is the faculty representative to the Centre for Gender Studies at Edo State University. She is one of the Co-PIs on the project along with Dr. Obokhai Kess Asikhia, a chief lecturer at the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Edo State Polytechnic and the director of academic planning at the institute. The team is also comprised of three supporting researchers whose expertise includes: Socio-psychology, Civil Engineering, and Communications.

Primary investigator: Mrs. Ese Esther Oriarewo

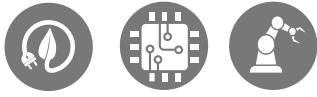
Co-Primary investigator: Dr. Obokhai Kess Asikhia

Institute: Edo State Polytechnic Usen



Left to right: Mrs. Loveth Obanor-Obaseki; Engr. Sylvester Omoruyi Barr; Mrs. Ese Esther Oriarewo (PI); Engr. David Idiata; Engr. Dr. Kess Obokhia Asikhia (Co-PI)

Developing small wind turbines with local women for domestic use in Mauritius (ID71)



Stream 2 - Case study plus prototype

This research project aims to design and develop a prototype model and a system for a small-scale vertical-axis wind turbine which can later be scaled-up for domestic use in Mauritius. The prototype model and system design will involve local resources as much as possible, engaging women in particular in the design process. The prototype will be simulated for different income-groups with different energy demand profiles in rural, urban and coastal areas.

The team consists of four PhD researchers and two other professional researchers. Their expertise includes: engineering design, energy efficiency and management

and renewable technologies, sustainable development, and social sciences. Dr. Mohammad Khalil Elahee, the project leader, holds a PhD in Energy Management and is an Associate Professor at the University of Mauritius along with Assoc Dr. Abdel Khoodaruth, who holds a PhD in Energy Engineering. Dr Riad Sultan specializes in Social Sciences, particularly Econometrics, and will cover the econometrics aspects of the project.

Primary investigator: Dr. Mohammad Khalil Elahee

Co-Primary investigator: Dr. Abdel Khoodaruth

Institute: University of Mauritius



Gender Equality and Diversity in Design Conference 2021

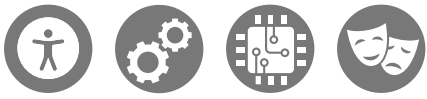
October 14 and 15, 2021

For the conference, the research cluster "Design & Gender" at the Institute for Design Research, Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences, wanted to specifically stimulate an interdisciplinary and cross-university discourse on the topic of "Design and Gender Equality" and thereby explicitly address "Design & Diversity" themes as well as "Inclusivity" as part of their engagement towards social sustainability. The following questions and issues are to be addressed:

How can gender equality and diversity be designed? | Where has gender diversity remained implicitly or explicitly under-thematized and under-represented to this day? | Who are pioneers in the integration of gender equality into design practice and how do/did they work? | What are adequate measures for the sustainable implementation of gender equity and diversity? | How and where can and should structures be changed or perpetuated to sustainably implement gender equality in and with design? | How does design relate to intersectionality today? | Do we perhaps even need some kind of ethical code in design for equality and inclusivity?

See the [GDD conference website](#) for more information.

A case study of ergonomic design considerations of low-income, menopausal women in Brazil (ID53)



Stream 1 - Case study

This case study aims to produce usability standards of clothing for low-income women going through the menopause in Brazil. The researchers will conduct interviews to better understand the bodily changes, behaviour, and emotions of menopausal women in order to develop clothing design guidelines that promote security and comfort.

The team is comprised of two PhD students and two professors from São Paulo State University, all four with expertise in ergonomics. Érica Neves, the PI, and Co-PI Leticia Marteli, both have expertise in fashion design

and design research. There are two other Co-PIs; PhD Luis Carlos Paschoarelli whose background includes product design with an emphasis in ergonomics and Dr. Fausto Orsi Medola who has expertise includes assistive technology and biomechanics.

Primary investigator: Érica Neves

Co-Primary investigators: Titular Professor Dr. Luis Carlos Paschoarelli, Dr. Fausto Medola and Ma. Leticia Marteli

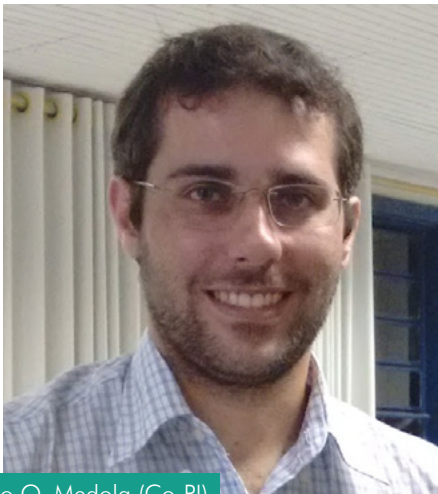
Institute: Universidade Estadual Paulista, (UNESP)



Dra. Érica das Neves (PI)



Dr. Luis Carlos Paschoarelli (Co-PI)



Dr. Fausto O. Medola (Co-PI)



Ma. Leticia Marteli (Co-PI)

Developing innovative urban design strategies to combat gender violence in Mexico (ID61)



Stream 2 - Case study plus prototype

This research project will study the impact of urban design on gendered violence by adopting innovative, interdisciplinary strategies in urban public spaces in Ciudad Juárez in Mexico. Communication and collaboration between academics, key stakeholders in civil society, educational institutions, and government will allow for a more thorough understanding of gender-based violence in urban public spaces from a local perspective. A seminar involving an interdisciplinary group of collaborators will serve to contextualize how urban design has negatively impacted women and children in Ciudad Juárez. A prototype designed to help prevent gender violence will be created.

The fifteen team members and nine consultants supporting the research study have expertise in architecture, urban design, communication, designing public policies, industrial design, graphic design, and psychology. Dr. Erika Rogel's research interests include social design, crime prevention, and design methodologies. Co-PI Dr. Leonardo Moreno's expertise includes interdisciplinary design approaches and Co-PI Dr. Lourdes Ampudia's includes economy and gender studies.

Primary investigator: Dr. Erika Anastacia Rogel Villalba
Co-Primary investigators: Dr. Leonardo Moreno and Dra. Lourdes Ampudia
Institute: Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez (UACJ)



Left to right, top: Dr. Erika Rogel Villalba (PI); Dr. Lourdes Ampudia (Co-PI); Dr. Salvador Valdovinos; Guadalupe Chihuahua; Ariel de la Torre
Left to right, middle row on right: Dr. German Aguilera Ampudia; Valeria Sánchez; Ariadna Moreno
Left to right, bottom: Dr. Leonardo Moreno (Co-PI); Zennia Ruiz; Raúl Sarandingua; Dr. Janneth Mendoza; León Felipe Irigoyen

OPEN LEARNING

Here is a selection of readings and resources that you may find informative and interesting. There are some other references mentioned throughout the Bulletin.

Decolonising Design - [Intersectional Perspectives on Design, Politics and Power](#) (2017). School of Arts and Communication, Malmö University:

- Design and Intersectionality: Material Production of Gender, Race, Class—and Beyond by Ece Canli and Luiza Prado de O. Martins.
- Feathers of Hope: A Design Justice Case Study by Una Lee.
- Why people do not rebel? Issues of self-marginalisation in design for mental health by Paola Pierri.
- Conflictual design artefacts reveal vertical power relationships by Max Mollon.
- Invited Talks by Pinar Kaygan (PI of GDS project ID17); Elizabeth (Dori) Tunstall; and Clive Dilnot.

- Sultana, S., Guimbretière, F., Sengers, P., & Dell, N. (2018). [Design Within a Patriarchal Society: Opportunities and Challenges in Designing for Rural Women in Bangladesh](#). Proceedings of the 2018 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems

This paper highlights how design can enable empowerment by working within the patriarchal systems. It specifically discusses Bangladesh as a case study, but may have implications for gendered design in the global south.

- Pecis, L. (2016). [Doing and Undoing Gender in Innovation: Femininities and Masculinities in Innovation Processes](#). Human Relations, 69 (11), 2117-2140

This article contributes towards developing a gendered understanding of innovation by introducing the term 'positions of displacement' to signal the fluidity and messiness of doings and undoings of femininities and masculinities through innovation practices.

- Series of live talks as a part of the [Virtual Design Festival's collaboration with What Design Can Do](#)

The Virtual Design Festival (2020) in collaboration with What Design Can Do hosted live talks on: Decolonising Design, Gender Equality, and Social Justice.

- Mazé, R. (2019). [Politics of Designing Visions of the Future](#). Journal of Futures Studies, 23(3): 23–28

This paper examines the relationship between the political aspects of design and design futures.

A roundtable event on July 22, 2021, organized by project ID80 from Colombia and ID41 from Argentina, discussing designing for anti-patriarchal praxis. You can watch the event on [YouTube](#). The roundtable is in Spanish, however, English subtitles can be turned on.

- Buchanan, R. (2001). [Design Research and the New Learning](#). Design Issues, 17(4):3-23

This article provides a brief overview of design, its origins, definitions, and highlights the overall value of design as a discipline and practice. The author aims to address the uncertainty about whether design knowledge merits serious attention and argues that there is a revolution happening in design thinking and the field of design.

If there is a particular journal, article, book or chapter that you are interested in, but you are unable to access this through your local library, please contact the [Program Coordinator](#).

If you would like to submit a suggested reading, event, discussion or video, please [complete this form](#).

A CLOSER LOOK

Our GDS Labs are opportunities to gather the GDS network for the collective exploration, knowledge building and advancement on Gendered Design (GD). Here, [Chiara Del Gaudio](#) and [Raquel Noronha](#) talk about their GDS LabTwo | Session One - [Exploring together: The role of power in GD](#).

Introduction

One goal of the GDS program is to support the emergence of a network of scholars engaged with exploring the field of Gendered Design (GD) and experimenting with more aware design practices. The GDS research teams are for sure members of this potential future and work-in-progress network, along with the GDS core team and experts (gender, regional, and sector). With this in mind, a new set of activities to support the development of this network was designed and took the shape of LabTwo.

LabTwo embraces topics of interest from the collective group of researchers and creates space for exchange, discussion, and knowledge production around them. [LabTwo | Session One](#), took place on June 25, 2021, on the first selected topic 'The role of power in GD'. The session was designed and facilitated by us, Chiara Del Gaudio and Raquel Noronha.

LabTwo | Session One: the making

The first session of LabTwo emerged from the awareness that the design process consists of, and is the result of, the interweaving and interaction of several voices and perspectives, which can be clearly known and expressed, but also subjacent and hidden. Cultural specificities contribute to informing these perspectives and voices. Therefore, they underlie design practices and play a role in the power dynamics that define the design process. This comprehension enables a better understanding of why gender issues and opportunities are embedded in the design process.

The session aimed to explore together the interconnection between power, design, and gender, drawing from post-modern and decolonial perspectives. Specifically, drawing from Michel Foucault's and Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui's work, we identified some key concepts to analyze and think about a design practice that embraces gender issues and opportunities. We identified four concepts and addressed two of them in Session One, leaving the others for future

activities. The four identified concepts, with the first two the focus of Session One, are:

- Discursive formations and dispersions
- Conditioned participation
- Time control
- Engagement in making

Based on the GDS goal described earlier, we decided that open and collaborative conversation based on research and design experiences, theoretical reflections, and speculations would be the basis of the session. Therefore, beforehand we shared the concepts' description and some questions. We asked the participants to read and reflect on the concepts we were proposing for this exploratory session. We invited them to think about situations from their GDS design project to exemplify the concepts. We asked them to bring two examples, one for each concept. If no example could be found from their GDS project, one could be taken from their professional history.

We asked participants to present these examples during the session as a catalyst for exchange, peer-support and contribution. We asked participants to present these examples during the session as a catalyst for exchange, peer-support and contribution. We also asked them to bring the theoretical references that they used to think about the suggested concepts. Aware of the richness and diversity of each ones' experience, and of knowledge itself, the concepts and our definitions were understood as means to start the conversation and exploration, not as an end point or to be repeated and replicated. The concepts

Chiara Del Gaudio | Assistant Professor, School of Industrial Design. Master Coordinator for Master of Design. GDS Program Investigator.

Raquel Noronha | Adjunct Professor and Director of Design and Technology. Head of Graduate Program in Design. GDS Regional Expert for Latin America.

we explored were discursive formations and dispersions and conditioned participation.

Concept one: Discursive formations and dispersions

Drawing on Foucault's work, discursive formations and dispersions refers to losing the sense of the origin of discourses. When a discourse and its practices are assumed as something given, the origin of the discourse gets lost. The naturalization and alienated reproduction of the practices that operationalize the discourses occur. Among these practices, we highlight the very act of designing and the understanding of gender issues. Within the scope of gendered design, the use of methods, techniques, and tools can be co-opted by discourses engendered in norms, values, and standards that, potentially, will then be understood as truth. We, as designers, are not always aware of all this.

According to Raffestin, power can be characterized in two ways: by its striking presence or by its invisibility. In the first way, characterized by the use of the capital letter, Power is present in the way the State manifests itself, through its institutions and its laws. Although authoritative and regulatory, it is something familiar because we are used to it. In the other case, power (with the lowercase letter) spreads everywhere. This does not mean that it is in everything, says Foucault. However, it emanates from everywhere. From this point of view, the author invites us to look at relationships. It is through the relationships that this power is exercised. For Foucault, resistance to the power's impositions does not exist outside the relationship. Power and resistance are intrinsic to each other.

In the context of material culture, forms of co-optation by dominant discourse are perceived as normal when

"According to Raffestin, power can be characterized in two ways: by its striking presence or by its invisibility."

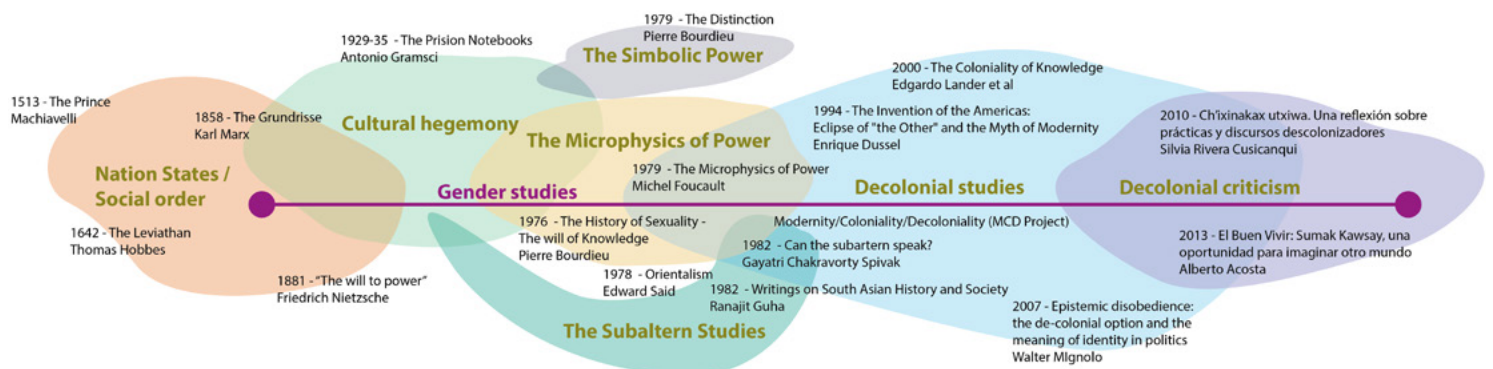
power relations are more active than those of resistance; and to the extent to which we do not notice them. For example, Rivera-Cusicanqui alerts us from the traps of the decolonial discourse that if on the one hand, reminds us of emancipatory discourses, on the other hand, reinforces the legitimacy of hegemonic powers since the discourse on autonomy overlaps its practices.

In this regard, we invited our colleagues to discuss the level of discursive co-optation that is intrinsic to our design practices, through the creativity tools we choose, how we organize the design flow, through to the software and applications selected: *What type of tool(s) do we choose? How do we choose them? Do they reveal a way of thinking and acting on gender issues? What are these? Are we aware of this? What is the relationship with gender issues and the relative established orders and power dynamics that the ones we have chosen bring with them?*

Considered as normal, the tool is necessary for the standardization process. The standardization process eliminates gender differences and (establishes) and reproduces a standard to be achieved.

Concept two: Conditioned participation

The concept of conditioned participation that we wanted to discuss emerged from our explorations of Foucault's studies on disciplinary dispositive. In Foucault, a dispositive is a network of relationships between heterogeneous elements (for example institutions, regulations, discourses, laws,



Power studies timeline (work in progress)

scientific statements, etc.) that is constituted according to a specific strategic purpose (in the case of disciplinary dispositive, this is the production of politically docile and economically profitable individuals).

Therefore, disciplinary devices are present and active in any sphere of human life and activity, and inform and discipline our participation in different societal spheres. Without us noticing it, they define what can be done, how it can be done, and allow it to happen. They define the society in that we live, the objects we produce, and that which constitutes it, as well as any processes of knowledge production. They influence us and who produces them, since we overlook their influence and accept the social and knowledge norms and the order they are established and promoted.

What does this have to do with design? And with a design practice that aims to have a more critical and inclusive stance about gender issues?

It shows us that when we think about design practice (and research in design) and even more about participatory design, we need to reflect on the conditions placed on the possibility of participating: *Who is allowed to participate? What role can someone play? What activities can be attributed to those who decide to join the process? What activities are only for the designers or for some specific actors? And why? At what stage of the process are people invited to participate? What are they allowed to say (according to the time they are allowed to participate, and how often they take part in the activity)?*

Or even: *How to open the process to different voices and embrace different standpoints in a design process that seeks to embrace differences? How is someone invited to join the process? What are the social dynamics and rituals that constitute the action and social interaction in the context? How do they influence and define someone's participation? How does our gendered design approach address participation? How do these questions apply to the practice of gendered design?*

"... disciplinary devices are present and active in any sphere of human life and activity, and inform and discipline our participation in different societal spheres. Without us noticing it, they define what can be done, how it can be done, and allow it to happen."

All of this has a strong influence on the possibilities of each person's contribution and how this will actually be considered and made tangible. This produces conditioned inclusions and conditioned participations. By sticking to what is proposed by social and disciplinary norms, conditioned inclusions are produced and exclusions of content and people from the production of knowledge, which in the design process takes the form of the (tangible and intangible) outcomes of the process.

If we do not reflect on this, the simple inclusion of minorities in the design process will not contribute to redefine the balance of power. It becomes essential to reflect on the conditions we establish for someone's participation.

LabTwo | Session One: the happening and next steps

At the beginning of the session, we provided an overview of the concepts we identified, and explained how we did that (see 'Power studies timeline'). We then had three groups of research project teams from Latin America and Africa presenting their reflections and examples on the proposed concepts. The small and intimate format facilitated communication and provided space for in-depth group discussion. Still, we would have liked and felt the need of more time, to go beyond what everybody knows on this into what we can discover together. However, we understand Session One as the first step of a more extended conversation and process of building together knowledge on this topic that might unfold in subsequent activities throughout the next months.

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INSIGHTS FROM THE FIELD

As we learned from our last issue, the research projects have faced, and continue to face, delays and challenges due to COVID-19. Despite this, they continue to adapt and progress as much as they can. We hear from five projects to learn more about what they have been doing in the field.

ID37

Exploring urban childcare infrastructures to support women's autonomy in Argentina | Centro de Intercambio y Servicios Para el Cono Sur Argentina (CISCSA) – Ciudad Feminista

The team of ID37 began with a literature review on key concepts of the project: We carried out a literature review on the concepts of women's right to the city, feminist cities, care and autonomy. Three members of the project started an intensive course on care and public policies, based on a gender perspective at the National University of Córdoba. Discussions on the concepts have come out of another project led by CISCSA, which organizes conceptual debates on care among different feminists, references in the Region, and members of our network, providing inspiration for the framework of this project.

They have also begun data-collection for the project: We have collected and systematized socio-demographic data and information on urban infrastructures of care in the City of Córdoba. Two sub-teams, each with their particular expertise, worked together to collect and systematize the data in order to convert it into GIS format. Members of the team collected data on facilities and (public, private and community) infrastructures of care in Córdoba through bibliographic research and the revision of municipal documents, as well as sources like Google Maps. Moreover, we have carried out several exploratory interviews with different municipal officials in areas related to the project's theme, which provided important information and also strengthened our relationship with the local government. On the basis of all the data collected, we have been able to define the intersectionalities and variables for this sociodemographic and territorial study.

The pandemic meant that the research team had to re-think and adapt some of their methods and bring-in additional expertise: Originally, we planned to carry out focus groups and in-depth interviews with women, but the pandemic made this a challenge. Together with an expert in participatory and qualitative methodology from the National University of Córdoba, we have developed

alternative tools to adapt our work and to design participatory activities with women.

In December 2020, we had our first experience with the Project SOMOS TERRITORIOS, led by CISCSA, which allowed us to work in a participatory way with women's organizations by using the MIRO Platform, mapping their perceptions of violence against women and girls in the city. Although this has allowed for exciting possibilities of participatory practice during COVID-19, not all women have the same access to Internet in order to participate in this project virtually. The conditions of some poor neighborhoods in which people live include precarious housing, food and hygiene conditions, and violence. It is for this reason that the involvement of women's organizations still remains a major challenge. The expert in participatory and qualitative methodologies has been hired by CISCSA in another project to provide recommendations and will be helpful to us in developing participatory research strategies in the current context.

We have also been sharing our work through online conferences. On June 18, 2021 Prof. Emeritus Ana Falú participated in UN Habitat: Foro COVID y Ciudades, and on June 21 she presented at Global Alliance for Care: Exploring and Sharing Commitments and Good Experiences which had the participation of stakeholders interested in engaging in this new Alliance for Care. On June 24, 2021 Dr. Falú was invited to the panel CUIDADOS en Ciudades Cuidadoras de Bogotá.

*Professor Emeritus Ana Falú (PI)
Mgt. Eva Lia Colombo (Co-PI)*



Project ID37: Prof. Emeritus Ana Falú (top row, second from the left) participating in UN Habitat: Foro COVID y Ciudades (June, 2021)

ID17 Improving the design of public transport based on women’s experiences in Turkey | Middle East Technical University

The team has been exploring how women's gendered experiences in public transport can be connected to the design of the vehicle interiors. We have conducted interviews with women users to explore their material interaction with the vehicle interior, and its relationship with their social interaction with other passengers and the driver. We observed that once the relevance of gender is asked directly, we received relatively short and shallow answers; but when the participants integrated their gendered experiences into their travel experiences, they provided more in-depth and richer accounts of the problems they have experienced and the strategies they developed.

We found that there is a strong relationship between women's material interaction with the vehicle interiors (in relation to creating personal space, managing the risk of sexual harassment, and how to avoid undesired gazes etc.), and their gendered experiences in public transport. We expect to address our findings and identify solutions to the design problems in our next steps as we move forward.

Despite the challenges of COVID-19, the team has been able to adapt their methods and progress with the research: Due to COVID-19 restrictions, there has been a sharp decrease in the use of public transport, on which our research is based. We solved this problem by conducting online interviews and by asking participants to refer to their pre-COVID experiences, and where relevant, to compare their pre- and post-COVID experiences in their interviews. Our initial plan, after conducting and analyzing our interviews, was to organize a physical workshop where we would bring together design students and stakeholders. However, this plan is no longer feasible. Our online teaching experiences have demonstrated that students’ full participation is limited by the online platform, therefore, we believe that the workshop is not transferrable to an online format. Instead, we decided to work with four experienced designers, by still including experts on women’s problems in the public domain, in a series of design intervention activities that will be carried out online.

Dr. Pinar Kaygan (PI)
Dr. Asuman Özgür Keysan (Co-PIs)



Modernizing the batik industry to improve income for women in Tanzania | University of Dar es Salaam

The team has been constructing new knowledge about Gendered Design: We needed to develop relevant methods and validate our comprehension. This stage calls for humility and thinking with others, from experts and leading authorities, as well as engaging grass-root level stakeholders. Although it is growing, Gendered Design is a fairly niche theoretical approach in the context of engineering fields. However, we have started to embark on interdisciplinary methods both in terms of the theory and in practice. A gendered lens will be applied in our methods and developed knowledge, both theoretical and practical. However, we have seen that a gendered lens is heavily contextual and will be adapted to appropriately meet the needs of the community and build upon local knowledge and context.

Covid-19 has not prevented the team from working since the country has not been kept in full lock-down. But it has somehow limited their field work: The team has been able to conduct some remote research while maintaining all precautions that have been set by the country and other health organizations. We have also been able to conduct our first stakeholder workshop. However, the interaction with the key stakeholders were not in-depth interactions and we have not been able to conduct field work as we had initially planned. Furthermore, there is a concern about the state of mind of team members when it comes to conducting more field surveys in the near future when faced with psychological pressure from increasing COVID-19 cases. In the meantime, office work has been feasible. We have been able to focus on our ongoing critical assessment of existing literature, analyzing the preliminary data from our field work, and asking fundamental questions about the meaning and impact of our current endeavor. We are also in the initial stage of redesigning our second workshop which is scheduled for the end of August this year. We are able to do so by reducing the number of participants since the possibility of conducting the workshop virtually is limited considering the technological limitations of our participants.

*Dr. Pendo Bigambo (PI)
Dr. Mbonea Mrango & Ms. Safina Kimbokota (Co-PIs)*



Mr. Merinyo Africasana facilitating day 1 of the workshop.



Mr. Merinyo Africasana and Ms. Pendo Haule presenting some of the developed batik motifs and pattern designs on day 2 of the workshop.



Participants from day 1 of the workshop with PI Dr. Pendo Bigambo (back row, far right) & research assistant Ms. Happiness Wella (front row, second from right).

ID80

Reimagining urban territories for women's autonomy in Colombia | Universidad de Bogotá Jorge Tadeo Lozano (UTADEO)

Team ID80 began by collectively developing a conceptual framework: In order to articulate theoretical knowledge with those emerging from the everyday experiences and practices of the project members, we developed a space of living concepts around the notions of femininity, territory, autonomy, love, ancestry and cooking. On equal terms the members of the academic team and the women of the Aisha Circle, contributed their own experience placed in dialogue with the perspectives of authors such as Maturana and Verden-Zöllner (2008), Escobar (2010) Mouffe (1993) Federici (2018) Rivera Cusicanqui (2018) and Maldonado (2020). The women of the Aisha collective have been instrumental in conceiving the kitchen space as a place of feminist resistance and understanding the feminine as a human dimension not exclusive to women. Going deeper into these concepts has allowed us to recognize the particularities and personal experiences that nurture each concept, and with this process we have been discovering and consolidating some aspects that characterize an anti-patriarchal design praxis.

The participation and collaboration of the community has been crucial in the development process: Although the use of Miro, WhatsApp, Google Meet and Google Drive have helped to keep the process and reflections alive, we have found that in-person interactions have been key to this participatory work. In this sense we undertook the creation of the audiovisual identity and social networks

of the project, to explore narratives and communicative scenarios for the social appropriation of the knowledge that is being built and motivate social dialogue in throne to the possibilities to de-design patriarchy.

They then began the process of co-creating a community kitchen: We decided to make a kitchen-workshop that would allow for cultural and educational activities in the Belén neighborhood. The team members and the women of the community created cooking videos, which opened a window to some of the secrets, practices and customs that develop around the kitchen as a scenario for the configuration of political subjectivities in the exercise of autonomy. These served as a basis for identifying some determinants for the design of the community kitchen. We also studied national regulations on kitchen design before creating a draft kitchen design based on our analyses. In order to strengthen existing community practices in the Belén neighborhood, architectural plans for a kitchen-workshop are being developed in conjunction with community members and the academic team.

We invite you to talk to us on our networks:
Facebook: reimaginarlofemenino
Instagram: @reimaginarlofemenino
Twitter: @Re_image

Associate Professor Adriana María Botero Vélez (PI)
Associate Professor Pablo Calderón Salazar (Co-PI)



Team ID80 and community members in the community kitchen they are constructing in the neighbourhood of Belén in Bogotá, Colombia.

ID57

Developing a hybrid fish dryer to improve processing for small-scale female processors in Nigeria | Lagos State University

The team designed a survey and established contacts with the fishing communities: Our team developed a survey instrument to collect data of predominantly female fish processors in selected local fishing communities. We were able to meet with the artisanal fishermen (inclusive of women fish processors) at the State level to inform and create awareness of the project objectives and build a relationship with the fishing communities. Additionally, an observational visit took place where our team conducted interviews with female fish processors at Ipakun community in Ijede, Ikorodu Division, Lagos.

The team was able to maintain a gendered focus in their design process by highlighting the peculiarities or specifics that emerge when applying a gendered lens to their research: We have continuously assessed the research objectives and goals of the project through a gendered lens and strengthened our understanding with theoretical thinking in the gender dimension but strongly aligned with our local contexts. Maintaining a gender focus in this stage of our design process has resonated around the gender dimensions of time, labour, income, and assets.

Through a literature review and the developed survey, we understand the gendered dimensions of technology adoption process among women fish processors and the gender dynamics in fishing households. We understand that lack of attention to the needs of different end-users lead to low levels of technology uptake. Similarly, we also understand that changes in gender dynamics as a result of the introduction of a new or upgraded technology can have negative or positive impacts. Thus, we have brought together elements of psychological, socio-economic and institutional factors, such as: gender, age, education, family size, fish processing experience, membership of cooperatives, marital status, household size, extension contact and income, influence adoption of technologies. Financial profitability and suitability to the needs and circumstances are also crucial to technology transfer.

The team have built an initial prototype design for the hybrid solar-biomass fish dryer: We continue to refine the design process and construction of the prototype for optimal results. Next steps include testing the prototype to produce safe dried fish. We will also be looking to offer training for smallholder processors to access improved markets as incentives to accept and adopt prototype design.



A half-drum smoking kiln built during the research design process.



External view of a fabricated charcoal-fired smoking kiln of 80 kg production capacity built during the research design process.

Brief description of the hybrid prototype

The present prototype hybrid solar-biomass fish dryer has three main components encased in a wooden frame: a drying chamber, a biomass stove-heat exchanger and a solar air vacuum flat plate collector. All three components are separate entities and assembled to work together as a unit.

The **drying chamber** is a constructed of wood equipped with three shelves. Each shelf contains a tray made of wire mesh to load the fish. The top of the dryer has three air outlets for smoke exhaust and a tempered glass cover for direct solar radiation.

The **biomass stove-heat exchanger** is encased in a wooden frame and surrounds galvanized sheet metal. Between the wooden encasement and the inner metallic frame is rock wool for thermal insulation. At the bottom of the frontal view is an opening originally designed and constructed for smoke-drying using fuelwood/firewood that would be placed on a mesh. Projecting from the inner walls into the heat exchanger are baffles in alternating series made of iron sheets projecting to prevent direct contact of flame with the fish being dried.

The **solar collector** is composed of an absorber made of black colored aluminum and clear glass on the top. The casing is also constructed of wood to prevent heat loss. Between the glass cover and the absorber is a gap that forms the air passage. There are two air vents generally referred to as inlet air vent and outlet air vent at opposite ends of the collector. With solar energy drying, ambient air enters through the inlet vent and is heated by the solar collector and is passed through the drying chamber. The outlet air vent is situated at the other end of the collector side and is the point of attachment to an opening at the side the drying chamber.



The prototype hybrid solar-biomass fish dryer (present design).

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Perspectiva críticas desde el feminismo

Angélica Bernal Olarte, Profesora titular Universidad Jorge Tadeo Lozano

The English translation is available on [page 1](#) of this Bulletin.

“ Para mí es muy importante contarles cómo ha sido la experiencia de participación en este proyecto. Quiero partir de contarles que provengo de una formación y una tradición de estudios sociales y sobre los asuntos de género por ello ha sido todo un reto aceptar la invitación a hacer parte de un proyecto que está ubicado en el área disciplinar del diseño. Un reto que me ha permitido plantearme nuevas preguntas. Desde los estudios feministas no había llegado a preguntarme por las relaciones de los grupos sociales con el espacio, con el territorio; tampoco me había cuestionado sobre la interrelación humana con los objetos y las posibilidades emancipatorias de nuestras conexiones con el territorio y en los espacios. Mis preguntas siempre estuvieron más orientadas hacia las relaciones entre las personas, en las que he querido evidenciar los ejercicios de poder y cómo éste atraviesa los cuerpos de mujeres, de hombres, de personas no generizadas; así que, preguntarme por las relaciones de poder entre experiencias vitales que ocurren en espacios concretos y en relación con objetos, prácticas y experiencias territorializadas ha sido un aprendizaje constante y tal vez por eso me atrevo un poco a pararme desde allí para compartirles las reflexiones que me ha suscitado compartir este camino con colegas de la Escuela de Diseño y las personas que participan en el proyecto de construcción de autonomías femeninas, en el barrio Belén, en Bogotá, Colombia.

Empiezo por mi propia experiencia personal porque yo vengo de una formación de universidad pública en Bogotá, en la Universidad Nacional y mis maestras, las primeras maestras feministas estaban en el escenario académico del feminismo, así que yo aprendí del feminismo liberal, muy influenciado por el feminismo anglosajón y europeo en donde la pregunta por nuestra especificidad como latinoamericanas, como mujeres atravesadas por otras opresiones y desigualdades no estaba en el centro. Todas mis maestras en el feminismo eran académicas mestizas, urbanas que hacían feminismo desde los estudios de género, desde luego esto me ha marcado de una manera

importante porque yo leía en particular francesas, españolas y anglosajonas, y desconocí durante mucho tiempo que en Latinoamérica se venía produciendo teoría política feminista, se venía preguntando por las maneras en que la desigualdad atraviesa las vidas de las mujeres en nuestros contextos.

Este conocimiento llegó bastante tarde a mi vida, sólo fue hasta el 2010 cuando pude participar en una conferencia de Angela Davis en Bogotá, esta destacada activista comunista antirracista, que ha peleado toda su vida contra el racismo me confrontó con sus palabras y puso en duda muchas de mis certezas. Así mismo llegó bastante tarde a mi vida la pregunta por la manera en que América Latina, aunque opera el eje de opresión de género, es imposible pensarla por fuera del contexto colonial, del racismo y del etnocentrismo propios del conocimiento científico y de las luchas feministas liberales. Para mí fue un descubrimiento porque muchas cosas que daba por sentadas, que repetimos desde la teoría europea dominante en realidad nos lleva a ver la realidad y por tanto tratar de conocerla con unos referentes ajenos a los procesos políticos, sociales, culturales, e históricos o América Latina en particular y de países como Colombia.

Debo reconocer por ejemplo que no escuchaba de manera adecuada cuando a los espacios de mujeres y feministas, llegaba alguna feminista afrodescendiente a enunciar y denunciar, por ejemplo, el racismo, y de la importancia que tiene la lucha de las mujeres negras contra el racismo y su cuestionamiento; no presté atención cuando criticaban cómo en esta lucha en la que estamos se priorizan los problemas vinculados al género y no la opresión del racismo, no lo entendí sino muy tarde. También el escuchar y conocer la obra de Angela Davis me acercó a la pregunta por la relación entre feminismo y marxismo, pero también la producción académica comprometida producida desde Latinoamérica. Se me abrió entonces una puerta enorme hacia el camino del conocimiento de la nuestra lucha latinoamericana por contar con feminismo nuestro.

Llegué tarde a conocer cómo en América Latina ha habido unos espacios valiosísimos que han sido los Encuentros Feministas Latinoamericanos y del Caribe. El primero de esos encuentros fue en Bogotá en 1981 y determinó durante mucho tiempo las expresiones del feminismo en la región ya que, por ejemplo, por primera vez, se propuso al mundo que el 25 de noviembre se conmemorara el día de la no violencia en contra de las mujeres. A veces se piensa que esa propuesta surgió desde las Naciones Unidas, pero en realidad surge en el seno del feminismo latinoamericano reunido en Bogotá. Han sido varios encuentros regionales, pero también han sido desencuentros porque en el seno de esas discusiones se han dado muchos conflictos grandísimos entre las diversas perspectivas feministas de América Latina y del Caribe.

Estos múltiples puntos de vista han creado tensiones políticas enormes principalmente por lo que se nombraba al principio y es que muchas veces las feministas habíamos tomado únicamente como referencia la experiencia política académica y las construcciones teóricas anglosajonas olvidando que teníamos unos contextos propios y que ha habido experiencias muy valiosas que nos estaban mostrando el camino: por ejemplo, el movimiento de las mujeres negras, afrodescendientes de toda América Latina pensando y denunciando el racismo que muchas veces caracterizó al feminismo hegemónico y más liberal.

De otro lado, el feminismo comunitario que además nos ha dicho que en ocasiones la agenda feminista desconoce las experiencias y las trayectorias de vida y los problemas de desigualdad enormes que viven las mujeres de sectores como las campesinas, las mujeres de los barrios populares, de los barrios pobres que enfrentan retos no únicamente en su ser mujer y sino con sus familias y sus comunidades. Tenemos por ejemplo un texto enorme una mujer boliviana, Domitila Barrios llamado "Si me permiten hablar" que narra su vida como esposa de un minero, pero también cómo llega a ser una figura pública no por su reivindicación como mujer sino por el tema de que su esposo (como la mayor parte de los trabajadores de las minas) enfermó gravemente y la empresa minera los quería expulsar de su casa. Como ustedes saben las empresas mineras crean miniciudades para sus trabajadores y en el momento en que el trabajador perdía la salud y no podía seguir trabajando eran expulsados sin importar nada más. La pelea de Domitila era por un techo digno, por salarios dignos, por la salud de su familia. Gracias a su voz

pública y a su lucha Domitila es invitada a un encuentro internacional de Naciones Unidas sobre la mujer y al llegar allí ella quiere hablar sobre sus problemas, quiere hablar sobre la minería y sus afectaciones a la salud, del hambre y la falta de condiciones dignas en su comunidad; sin embargo, en el encuentro de mujeres le dicen que no, que allá van a hablar es de mujeres y de los derechos y que si ella quería reivindicar esas otras cosas pues básicamente tenía que ir a otros escenarios.

La pregunta que se hace Domitila en su momento y que les hace a las personas que la escuchan y luego a las personas que leen su libro es si esas reivindicaciones que ella estaba teniendo eran tan ajenas de verdad a la agenda feminista y pregunta si la agenda feminista va a estar de espaldas a reivindicaciones políticas sustantivas y tan necesarias para la vida de muchas mujeres de América Latina. Domitila nos dice: "ustedes mujeres blancas urbanas de clase alta que se gastan en una peluquería en una hora lo que mi esposo se puede ganar en 6 meses de trabajo, creen que me pueden decir por qué tengo que pelear". Esta historia de Domitila nos recuerda otra que había pasado mucho antes en el contexto estadounidense cuando las mujeres negras en el marco de su lucha a favor de los derechos civiles de la población afroamericana les preguntaban a las feministas si lucha contra el racismo no era parte de la lucha feminista, si los problemas que traía el racismo a su vida como mujeres negras era algo que le importaba al feminismo¹. Con estos ejemplos quiero mostrar los caminos que nos han llevado a las feministas a la autocrítica, a darnos cuenta de aquellas experiencias vitales de mujeres que están marcadas por terribles desigualdades no provocadas únicamente por nuestra asignación genérica, sexo genérica sino también por otros temas como, por ejemplo, el racismo estructural, el capitalismo que condena a la indignidad y a la pobreza a millones de personas a lo largo de nuestro continente, cuestión que sin duda debe ser tomada en cuenta en la lucha feminista.

Con esta amplísima reflexión llego al punto sobre el diseño y de cómo he cuestionado mi propio feminismo a partir de la experiencia del proyecto. Parto de una cuestión central en el pensamiento feminista que ha sido la denuncia de esta división histórica entre lo público y lo privado reproducida por buena parte de la teoría política occidental y que ha estado estructurada alrededor de la idea de que hay un ámbito de lo público y un ámbito de lo privado. En el ámbito de lo público está la libertad, la

autonomía, la igualdad, el poder político, es el espacio de los hombres. En lo privado esta lo doméstico, la crianza eso, es el reino de la desigualdad y allí no hay democracia posible pues es el patriarcado en concreto, es el reino del gobierno de los padres. Esta separación tajante entre estos dos ámbitos se daba por sentado desde el feminismo ya que permitía explicar nuestra exclusión histórica de los cargos de decisión política, pero, además, nos permitió denostar o subvalorar el trabajo doméstico al señalarlo como una carga que oprimía a las mujeres y las condenaba a la irrelevancia. El feminismo reprodujo de manera acrítica esta división categorial para mostrar la injusticia que históricamente hemos enfrentado las mujeres pero, los feminismos negros y los feminismos comunitarios nos muestran que esa división ha sido sobre todo ideológica, y que esa línea fronteriza entre lo público y lo privado ha sido muy porosa porque por ejemplo, las mujeres negras, afrodescendientes, las indígenas, las campesinas no han podido quedarse en lo privado sino que por cuestiones de sobrevivencia han necesitado salir a luchar en lo público para buscar el pan de cada día así que esa idea sólida de que las mujeres estaban confinadas al hogar en realidad corresponde a una experiencia bastante particular de las mujeres urbanas clase media, pero no describe la de mujeres que enfrentan opresión por el racismo y por razones de clase.

De otro lado, y más concreto ligado al proyecto hemos cuestionado cierta tendencia feminista de señalar el trabajo doméstico y lo que en los espacios del hogar como la cocina, como actividades de menor valor o que no otorgan poder y autonomía a las mujeres. Esta posición pierde de vista que el problema de que estas tareas estén asignadas casi que exclusivamente a las mujeres es que no se consideran un trabajo y que no sean remuneradas. Lo malo no es que las mujeres realicen este trabajo si no que no se reconozca como tal, no se otorgue valor y no haya una retribución económica. El objetivo político entonces no es que las mujeres abandonen el trabajo doméstico como parte de su emancipación. Lo que nos dice el feminismo negro y el feminismo comunitario es que los oficios domésticos son la base que hace posible la sobrevivencia humana, es un trabajo de un valor incalculable porque permite la reproducción de la vida y su cuidado y protección. El problema no es que las mujeres estén a cargo, sino que estén solas y sobrecargadas, pero además que no sea cuestionado el hecho de que las mujeres de clase media urbanas han reproducido

lógicas de opresión y explotación cuando han resuelto sus problemas de trabajo doméstico contratando los servicios de las mujeres racializadas, campesinas, pobres, etc.,

Esto lo han cuestionado a fondo las mujeres negras, afrodescendientes, las mujeres indígenas y las campesinas que han encontrado además en el trabajo doméstico oportunidades para generar procesos de empoderamiento. Las mujeres negras y las indígenas nos han enseñado que alrededor del fogón se tejen poderes, se teje autonomía, alrededor del fogón se ha cocido también conocimiento. Las mujeres indígenas nos han dicho que el tejido no es simplemente una actividad repetitiva que fomenta la subordinación de las mujeres, sino que es una manera de construcción de saber, de conocimiento. El tejido ha servido a las mujeres para conectarse entre ellas y para construir poderes femeninos. Y así como estas muchas otras actividades propias de lo cotidiano y lo doméstico que el feminismo más hegemónico consideraba que reproducían la subordinación de las mujeres en realidad les han permitido a otras mujeres construir poder, construir solidaridad y capacidad de transformación, a partir de conocer su propio valor a través del valor que tiene lo que producen, lo que crean.

En la ideología capitalista la cocina se estableció como un espacio de la familiar nuclear, en donde una “ama de casa” cocina los alimentos para su propia familia. Pero esa no es ni mucho menos una experiencia mayoritaria para las mujeres, en realidad, la cocina es un lugar de encuentro, un espacio que acoge la palabra, en la que hay creatividad, en la que se pueden conectar los saberes de las mujeres de distintas generaciones que se transmiten unas a otras, por ejemplo, las recetas pero no solamente las recetas sino también los saberes que hay alrededor, los recuerdos, la historia familiar quién era la abuela, quién era la bisabuela, cómo hacían un alimento, qué ingredientes usaban, entre otras cosas.

Esta experiencia de diseñar una cocina me ha confrontado ya que me ha hecho pensar en la necesidad de nuevas narrativas de la cocina como un espacio público de reivindicación de los saberes femeninos, de construcción de solidaridad entre mujeres, pero también, de transformación de las mujeres, de sus familiares y sus comunidades. Una cocina revalorada implica en sí misma una agenda política que toca la vida concreta de las personas. Reivindicar la cocina reivindica el cuidado

como parte de la experiencia humana que no se cierra a lo doméstico, en una familia mononuclear, heterosexual, clase media, blanca, sino la cocina en como espacio comunitario, como un espacio abierto, de construcción de saber y autonomía y de compartir saberes femeninos, en donde se construye poder femenino a través de la creación de los alimentos, a través de por ejemplo cultivar la tierra y de reestablecer la conexión entre la cocina y la tierra, pero también como en la oportunidad de que la cocina sea un espacio comunitario en donde no cocinan solo las mujeres aunque hay un saber privilegiado por parte de las mujeres, sino donde se construye también cuidado comunitario.

La cocina no como algo sobre y para mujeres sino un escenario donde se concreta el cuidado como un valor humano que puede ser cultivado por las personas de todos los géneros. Considero que la importancia de esta experiencia de diseño es que nos va a mostrar en qué medida una experiencia pionera por parte de un grupo de mujeres de un sector popular puede transformar la cocina en un proyecto que permite ganar poder, no solo individual sino sobre todo poder colectivo para construir otros vínculos, basados en la solidaridad y la protección de la vida. Esto desde luego es un reto porque no es una visión esencial que las mujeres naturalmente tendemos hacia estos valores sino más bien, una cuestión política en tanto hace evidente que defender y procurar estos valores tiene dificultades y enfrenta obstáculos ya que sus protagonistas son mujeres de sectores populares con necesidades económicas apremiantes, en condiciones difíciles que deben buscar cómo sobrevivir el día a día pero allí está también la clave de esta experiencia que no busca la salida prevista desde el capitalismo sino que busca rutas de escape para construir solidaridad entre mujeres a partir de un proyecto como este y que sea a partir de los saberes populares que nos permiten crear otro poder, crear otra solidaridad y crear otras experiencias del cuidado. Gracias. ”

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