

# **Economy, Gender and Academy**

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# **Economy, Gender and Academy: A Pending Conversation**

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

*This book is dedicated to all women who play different roles, from academia, research, science, housewives, professionals, entrepreneurs and in the workplace, who every day seek for their work to be visible and recognized, in order to achieve better opportunities, greater equity and general well-being. We hope this is a call to all stakeholders to continue promoting the development of policies and guidelines that can make it possible to achieve these initiatives to achieve more just and egalitarian societies.*

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# List of Abbreviations

## Chapter 1

INEGI	National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Informatics (Mexico)
SEP	Ministry of Public Education (Mexico)

## Chapter 2

ECLAC	The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
OAS	Organization of American States
UN	United Nations
UNODC	The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

## Chapter 3

ACEGI	Inclusive Management Educational Civil Association of Argentina
ACNUR	United Nations Refugee Agency
BM	World Bank
ENPOVE	Survey of the Venezuelan population
EPA	Self-Managed Public Schools
ESIAL	Higher Education and Indigenous and Afro-descendant Peoples of Latin America
GRANMAV	Great Woman love and value yourself
GrET	Work Studies Group
IFAD	Distance Learning Institute
INEI	National Institute of Statistics and Informatics
NNA	Children, Girls, and Adolescents
ODS	Sustainable Development Goals
OIT	International Labor Organization
ONG	Non-Governmental Organization
UNESCO	United Nations Organization for Education, Science, and Culture
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

## **Chapter 4**

SIES	Servicio de Información de Educación Superior
CONFECH	Confederación de Estudiantes de Chile

## **Chapter 5**

CAN	Andean Community of Nations
SAI	Andean Integration System
WHO	World Health Organization
CONPES	National Economic and Social Policy Council
INEC	Ecuadorian Institute of Statistics and Census
SNIG	National System of Gender Indicators
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
ILO	International Labor Organization

## **Chapter 6**

IDH	Human Development Index
ONU	United Nations Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
PIB	Producto Interno Bruto
BM	World Bank

## **Chapter 7**

CDMX	Ciudad de México
IMCO	Instituto Mexicano para la Competitividad
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
COVID-19	Coronavirus-19
D.W.	Deutsche Welle
IMCO	Mexican Institute for Competitiveness
MYT	Museum Memory and Tolerance

## **Chapter 8**

UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
ITC	Information Technology and Communications
IES	Higher Education Institutions
WEF	World Economic Forum
SITEAL	Latin American Education Trends Informations System
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

ODS	Sustainable Development Objectives
UNAD	Universidad Nacional Abierta y a Distancia
EAFIT	Escuela de Administración y Finanzas e Instituto Tecnológico
UNAB	Universidad Autónoma de Bucaramanga
ONU	United Nations Organization
OXFAM	Oxford Committee of Aid Against Hunger (Oxford Committee for Famine Relief)
EAN	Universidad EAN – Escuela de Administración de Negocios
IPG	Gender Empowerment Index
CIDESCO	Corporación para la Integración y Desarrollo de La Educación Superior en el Suroccidente Colombiano
IESALC	UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America

## **Chapter 9**

SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
DANE	Departamento Nacional de Estadística
IMF	International Monetary Fund
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
GEIH	Gran Encuesta Integrada de Hogares
ILO	International Labor Organization
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
IBD	Inter-American Development Bank
PET	Población en Edad de Trabajar
UDCW	Unpaid Domestic and Care Work
ONU	Organización de Naciones Unidas
TDCNR	Trabajo Doméstico y de Cuidados No Remunerado
TDCNR	Unpaid Domestic and Care Work
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
NTUS	National Survey of Time Use
SCN	Sistema de Cuentas Nacionales
PNUD	Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo
IMF	International Monetary Fund

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# Foreword

## Presentation

### Our organizations, reproducers of a normalized inequity

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Money, its a crime. share it fairly but dont take,  
a slice of my pie. Money, so they say,  
is the root of all evil today.  
but if you ask for a raise its no surprise  
that they are giving none away”  
*Money*, Roger Waters

Understanding the behavior of modern organizations from the perspective of gender and economics acquires different nuances depending on their geospatial location. This is due to the importance of the place where its members travel. Traditional definitions of the concept of organization conceive it as a collectivity with relatively identifiable boundaries (Hall, 1996). Contemporary meanings emphasize that this collectivity does not exist as an abstraction; the collective action manifested within it is oriented by its gender composition, that is, modern organizations are composed of men and women, bearers of customs, learned interactions reproducing ways of seeing the world (Montaño, 2020).

In the 1960s, organizations in industrialized countries were reluctant to recognize the contribution of women. Discussions focused on the predominance of men in the development of strategic tasks. This implied that the management of organizations implicitly carries a patriarchal vision. Burin (2009) indicates that the gender mandate that points to the male as the possessor of economic rationality is perpetuated, attributing to him an untouchable strategic capacity. Women, on the other hand, are associated with remaining isolated in decisions involving public space. This mandate promotes a society based on levers that inhibit the possibilities of building equitable and inclusive organizations. In terms of the contributions of men and women, there is a latent questioning of universalist and naturalistic biases that point to the white, heterosexual male with an aggressive attitude as the profile best suited to hold power (Acker, 1998). On this basis, a web

of meanings and conditioning practices is woven to develop an economic activity anchored in business organizations.

Therefore, the transformation of women's economic role is associated with the functioning of the capitalist economic system, which places them in the background. At the world level, the Great Depression of 1929 exposed the male predominance in decision-making in large corporations. The strategic leadership was occupied by men. Decades later, there were other challenging moments that challenged the functioning of financial systems in different latitudes. Capital, as its engine, does not contemplate women in this game. Various restrictions have been eased as a result of different social movements. The struggles of the first feminists who demanded, through collective resistance, legislative reforms to recognize women as an important part of the economic engine of Western society.

It is enough to go back to the nineteenth century, with the hard work of women and girls at the height of industrialization. The Scientific Labor Administration laid the ideological foundations, based on the predominance of men, to weave nodes that operate and reproduce labor practices, under the pretext of the efficiency of time and movements dictated by the machine (Billing, 2011). In the development of operational activities, historically there has been an absence of regulations to improve their precarious conditions. Undoubtedly, the perception of the contribution that exists between men and women in an organization crosses the patriarchal paradigmatic model. The organization affects the appropriation of masculinized conventions and routines, developed from susceptible practices where violence against women is made invisible and normalized (Alvesson & Due, 2009).

In modern organizations, those who are not within the masculinized control of rational economic logic are considered vulnerable groups. In other words, women, Indigenous women, and members of LGBTQ groups are excluded (Alvesson & Due, 2009; Billing, 2011). As an example, an Indigenous lesbian woman, originally from a rural community, with barriers to accessing middle and higher levels of education will have more difficulties in achieving social mobility. In countries such as Mexico and Colombia, with great economic instability, insecurity, and vulnerability to guarantee the recognition of labor and human rights, the basis for strengthening structural violence that does not contribute to equity in every sense is laid.

By combining gendered economic perspectives, they contribute to the dimension of labor precariousness. Yancey (2003) and Acker (2004, 2006) point out that women's participation in the workplace presents different disadvantages. The first is the possibility of accessing, developing, and ascending to higher hierarchical levels. If other variables, such as ethnicity, are crossed, more inequalities appear that are linked to their access to health services, education, housing, and decent food. The notion of economic independence, to generate autonomy in the maintenance of women, is crossed by different conditioning factors. In the words of Acker (2012), each one is a product of the combination of representations associated with the region where the organization is located. This directly generates a gender structure designed to establish both explicit and implicit rules for behavior at work.

In Latin American countries, the arrival of industrialization was late, due to the colonization processes. Processes of resistance to Eurocentric capitalist visions were favored, patriarchal domination has a face of individualism, maximization of resources tinged by machismo (Acker, 2004). The distribution of tasks within our organizations also reproduces internal household dynamics. Women's work outside formalized spaces is often devalued. Unpaid activities, including health care for members, are part of the increased domestic burden that goes unrecognized.

Women's work in organizations tends to omit its importance, which Alveson and Due (2009) agree in calling gender blindness. In other words, it would seem that organizations are places free of any inequity generated by the gender dimension. This bias has an affective and symbolic charge, which gives it a series of experiences and aspirations that exclude and inhibit feminization to exalt its opposite. This blindness leaves its blindfold when crises make visible the hidden inequalities between men and women. For example, this book in front of you develops an interesting reflection on the economic crisis derived from COVID-19 confinement. How a health crisis placed marginalized women who did not have sufficient economic resources to cope with it in greater vulnerability. In this regard, the female presence in Hispanic American organizations, as already mentioned, is associated with a pattern oriented by a labor market that punishes them for their age, roles of care in the home, and the imposition of beauty stereotypes. A pattern that fades when the concept of professional success exalts the male more than the female. Female achievement is a line of analysis addressed in this book under the pretext of opening up possibilities to explain the gender gap. Consequently, economic growth is not only found in statistical coldness and indicators.

There are different cultural and institutional barriers that conceal a parallel structure that limits employment opportunities. From this perspective, patriarchy imposes different devices that differentiate who has access to better-paying jobs (Goldin & Sokoloff, 1982). According to Yancey (2003), women are historically exposed to greater economic vulnerability reflected in salary differences. In business organizations in our region, there are wage gaps in economic activities associated with the tertiary sector and senior management.

In this regard, academic research (Acker, 1998; Billing, 2011) attributes the lack of representation of women at higher hierarchical levels to the persistence of stereotypes based on the legitimacy of a violent social order, where the white heterosexual male stands out in a logic of "rational" knowledge production. This is due to the persistence of stereotypes based on the legitimacy of a violent social order, where the white heterosexual male stands out in a logic of "rational" knowledge production. In this regard, Burin (2009) recalls the existence of a glass ceiling, to refer to the invisible and discriminatory barriers to climbing to certain positions that raise gender-based stereotypes.

With the above, the authors of this book *Economics, Gender, and Academia: A Pending Conversation*, combine a collective effort for you, the reader, to broaden your view of our region around economics and gender. The critical and updated perspective, based on academic rigor, characterizes each of the chapters that comprise it. This text is led by the Politécnico Grancolombiano and the Universidad

EAFIT and is the result of two international symposiums related to gender equity during the years 2021 and 2022. The topics discussed here are part of a polyphonic conversation that emphasizes inequality between men and women. The gathering of these conversations seeks to ally on the front of the denunciation against violence by giving the floor to those who have not taken it. The university imprint sets the tone for influencing the closing of gender gaps.

Each page of this book challenges the status quo, anchored in an interest in probing beyond the concept of equity. When theory is not removed from day-to-day action, context is relevant. It is possible that there will be those who only see a book integrated with thematic chapters. Just as there will surely be those who discover, in rigorous research and the written word, that no resistance is exhausted, which opens the infinite possibility of imagining a world built on respect for difference. Let us begin the conversation.

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# Preface

Research on equity and the gender gap has led each of the authors to find different perspectives that are relevant when it comes to identifying the advances that have been made in this matter, and invites reflection from areas such as the economy, the education, culture, organizations, academia, in order to validate and recognize the achievements and existing gaps in terms of gender equality. In this tour it is possible to collect the vision of different Latin American researchers, who present relevant positions and arguments while inviting them to continue reflecting on the importance of continuing the discussion and promotion of gender issues.

With this book, we want to contribute once again that reading on issues of gender equity continues to generate awareness of the importance of strengthening the results achieved for both women and men, recognizing the role played by the people and their willingness to advance in policies that become a mandate. The value of education when training in different knowledge and how from there it must also be promoted for this equality, in addition to exercising a facilitating role, so that it is there where it can advance in policies aimed at reducing gender gaps, including organizations and society in general.

There is a conversation and pending actions, although progress is recognized, the challenges must become a real commitment on the part of society, the gender problem crosses borders and takes on a global character, in this way, it is invited to recognize those elements that have been advancing in the region and continue with their reflection and actions that in compliance with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can increase the opportunities for equity, freedom, and dignity, for men and women on equal terms.

This tour begins with an analysis that is presented from Mexico in relation to the contents of gender equity in texts and official educational documents in Mexico, with the idea of being able to identify if they are promoting equity, or maintaining stereotypes, superiority, and authority.

It is evident the inequality of rights, wage gaps, and gender stereotypes, it is the context in which women live in Latin America, which aggravates their situation of poverty. Under this scenario, a reflection is presented in relation to how drug trafficking is presented as a legitimate job offer and a response to the economic needs of women.

The analysis continues, in the post-pandemic context in the education sector, referring to Cuba, Peru, and Argentina, particularly in education, which is conceived as a platform for social integration in the workplace, the authors then

raise from their experience and the vision of sources, the proposal of political theoretical criteria that facilitate inclusive public policies in the field of education and the productive sector that lead to overcoming gender and racial gaps in the post-pandemic context.

In this context, an analysis is presented between academia, organization, and gender in Chile, the authors make an analysis based on gender and organizational studies, which leads them to find that the practice of management in institutions acquires a central and hegemonic status.

The study of the gender perspective must be done from the pillars of human rights, which when considered universal do not suggest political ideologies, cultural differences, and economic systems, in this context the authors present a reflection on gender policies in Latin America for the case of the Andean Community of Nations CAN (Colombia, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador).

From the practice in organizations, an analysis is presented regarding the alternatives of change that they must have in the light of a gender perspective, the author presents macroeconomic indicators of development and gender gap, where she shows their relationship and multiple variables, which lead to propose and recognize conditions around what should be the intervention within organizations.

Finally, it considers what are the difficulties and challenges that a woman in Mexico must face to generate a company in the education sector, and what COVID-19 meant, exploring the different strategies that guaranteed her to maintain the organization, which can be an example of all those women in Latin America who wish to undertake.

The importance of progressing in the dialogues between academia and economics on gender gaps in organizations is reviewed, identifying the advances that have been made in this area in Latin America, with emphasis on the Colombian case, evidencing the challenges that persist in accordance with the provisions of the Sustainable Development Agenda and the role played in this scenario by the Institutions of Higher Education the progress achieved and the challenges that are proposed.

There is a lack of conversation about economics and gender because the analysis is from a macroeconomic perspective by writing that, regardless of who does the care work or domestic work, one can also question the assumptions of economic science that, by convention, in national accounts ignores the value of domestic work and almost deals with scarcity, selfishness and competition and rarely abundance, altruism, and cooperation.

The text presented is a compendium of experiences and a tour of Latin America, so that it interpers, motivates, and invites to continue working to achieve true inclusion and gender equity, its reading will lead to enrich the discussion and to continue developing spaces, which allow advancing and answer the following questions:

What are the challenges and opportunities in gender equity presented by economic analyses in Colombia in a Latin American context?

Why, despite the fact that most large companies and organizations have protocols and complaint management instances to address gender-based violence, in many cases asymmetrical relationships persist and structural changes are not observed in most of them?

Can environmental culture determine resistance to change within organizations, or are new processes part of an isomorphic organizational response to environmental pressures?

To answer these questions, it is shown that there is still a pending conversation between academia, organizations, and actors that make change possible, the distinctive features of the book are themes that encompass critical pedagogy, gender equality and equity, gender stereotypes, equality in education, capital, public policies, racism, organization, management, masculinity, hegemony, human rights, social relations, invisible costs, Latin American women leaders, anti-semitism and female performance, Holocaust education, economics, higher education institutions, and leadership, among others, so this conversation has to keep moving forward.

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# Acknowledgments

Research opens doors and motivates us to continue advancing, for which we are grateful for the support of Grancolombiano Polytechnic and Eafit University and each of the authors who participated in the construction of the book with their contributions, based on their realities and experiences that they gather from their countries of origin. More than thanking, we want to leave open the dialogues and the interest to add new knowledge that is reflected in a more prosperous and equitable society in Latin America and the Caribbean.

With appreciation,  
Mario, Laura, Marisol y Gloria Nancy

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Part I

**Gender Equity, The Impact of Gender  
Equality on the Development of Latin  
American Territories**

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## Chapter 1

# Educational Materials in Elementary Education in Mexico: A Missed Opportunity to Promote Gender Equity

*José Baltazar García Horta and María Teresa Guerra Ramos*

### Abstract

This chapter presents an analysis of gender equity messages in textbooks and official educational documents in Mexico. For that purpose, critical pedagogy, understood as a framework to dissect power dynamics and gender relations in educational settings, is employed. From the point of view of critical pedagogy, stereotypes and imbalances of power are learned through everyday discourses and narratives and have been shaped by a long history of dominance and suppression; they are part of a system erected precisely to exercise control and limit possibilities particularly of those groups in the margins of society: poor, women, addicts, indigenous peoples, etc. Schools are regarded as spaces where inclusiveness is encouraged but also places where the reproduction of the status quo also occurs; in that sense, schools reflect whatever occurs in society at large, not only the positive cases but the bleak instances as well. Our main intention was to identify and examine books and documents on educational policy, guidelines, contents, or learning outcomes, which have been expressed to promote gender equity and respect for diversity. The idea is to identify whether the content that promotes equity is being communicated or if, on the contrary, gender stereotypes continue to be reinforced, the theme is avoided, or it is not considered relevant. We identified texts (activities and instructions) and images embodying messages connected to gender equity, or inequities, and even discourses that, proactively or by omission, perpetuate the transmission of gender stereotypes. The textbooks of *Civic and Ethical Education* of the final three grades of primary education are analyzed. A perusal of legal documents and official textbooks suggests that mixed messages that include both explicit statements

of equity between binary gender options and implicit messages of superiority and authority attributed to men are somehow transmitted. In particular, the iconography let through implicit messages, probably unintentional but nonetheless powerful, in conveying stereotypes and imbalances of power.

*Keywords:* Critical pedagogy; gender equity; gender equality; gender stereotypes; textbooks; equality in education

## **Introduction**

This section examines a topic that has the potential to exercise a meaningful and unpostponable social change that, however, has consistently been postponed either explicitly or unconsciously: gender equity. This idea is quite often referred to from a variety of perspectives and is frequently attached to an extensive set of practices and policies as well. However, despite its undeniable importance, it seems clear that not enough has really changed other than some instances of political discourse, with certainly good meanings, but not much more.

In our view, one major concern is that gender inequalities are not perceived as a structural or systemic issue but are regularly regarded as a private matter, or maybe something that is wrongfully happening at the workplace or in a particular family. Considering gender inequalities as a problem that imperfect individuals have is a poor diagnostic but, more importantly, misses the opportunity to set real social change in motion (Arnot, 2013). Gender inequalities need to be addressed as a systemic issue that involves power dynamics, subjugation, and awareness, or else whatever is proposed will be hopeless.

Gender education is difficult to define, and it is hard to identify a set of unified practices other than an undisputed foundation of unequal gender relations; “gender continues to be an important organizing and disempowering principle in the school system” (Klein et al., 2007, p. 1). Generally, it has been identified that male domination is at the core of an uneven distribution of power; however, without denying this blunt truth, it has also been suggested that gender education capable of generating social transformation and autonomy must transcend this notion.

Despite its importance, gender education has proven to be an extremely difficult and challenging subject to deal with teachers’ education programs and in classrooms with students, and it is regularly lost among the countless concepts and notions that public education seeks to communicate.

## **Gender Equity and the Critical Perspective**

Schools are places where day-to-day practices and discourses are guided by particular ideologies. The notion of schools as places of unbiased views and neutral activities is, to say the least, mistaken: “proponents of critical pedagogy understand that every dimension of schooling and every form of educational practice

are politically contested spaces” (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 2). Rather, it has been recognized that quite often violence and gender inequities are part of school practices that normalize male domination patterns and gender stereotypes, as well as other forms of discrimination and marginalization (Kanpol, 1999).

We use the term equity instead of equality since the latter is appropriate when discussing about rights, opportunities, or payment for performing the same activities in equal circumstances. However, equity is considered

to be more comprehensive and flexible than equality because it implies the concept of fairness or some differences in education processes rather than the concept of sameness when dealing with a diverse student population. (Klein et al., 2007, p. 3)

Disparities in gender relations in education have a long history; therefore, any effort to disrupt this system that has given primacy to a white-middle-class-male view must be under a critical perspective: critical educational policies, critical textbooks, and critical syllabuses (Arnot, 2013). If we summarize these tasks under a single question that would probably be: Are we preserving the status quo? In other words: Are we still giving primacy to a male-driven view of the world?

Critical pedagogy addresses these issues, questioning those structures of power and oppression, inviting students to become active participants in this process, and caring particularly for those that are segregated. “Critical pedagogy is interested in the margins of society, the experiences and needs of individual faced with oppression and marginalization” (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 23).

Critical pedagogy, Kincheloe (2008) says, “explores the cosmos of power and its efforts to regulate human beings” (p. 97); he also puts forward essential questions for the work that is described in this document: “What is the relation between [the sociocultural role of schooling] and dominant power blocs? How does this relationship affect the construction of the curriculum?” (Kincheloe, 2008).

Gender education must be directed, among other things, to the identification of day-to-day instances where power relations are exercised and acknowledge that those instances are part of a structure where individuals must conform to a rigid system of socially constructed hierarchies. Stereotypes and imbalances of power are learned through everyday discourses and narratives and have been shaped by a long history of dominance and suppression; they are by no means accidents, or minor misfortunes that we can disregard, they are fundamental blocks of a system built precisely to exercise control and limit possibilities of certain groups: poor, women, black and indigenous peoples to name some.

## **Gender Equity: Schools, Teachers, and Teaching in Mexico**

It is fair to say that in Mexican public schools, discussions about gender and gender inequities are rare. One possible reason for this is a misguided conception of schools as neutral spaces free from undesirable interests, and teachers as unbiased individuals that can put their own preconceptions aside. This idealistic way of seeing schools may be a deterrent to dissect gender issues regularly; perhaps, it

would be a more productive path to consider schools as places that reflect whatever occurs in society at large, not only the luminous side of the real world but the gray areas as well.

[...]sexism in schools is not only related to sexual harassment and/or sexual abuse but becomes a national pastime, amplified in many areas of curriculum, teacher–student relationships, and home relationships with mothers, fathers, grandparents, and brothers and sisters. I would go as far as to argue that sexism varies for different cultures, depending on the culture-minority or not! (Kanpol, 1999, p. 20)

In this sense, it is possible to say that schools are spaces where inclusiveness is encouraged but also places where the reproduction of the status quo also occurs. It may be worth keeping in mind that “gender is a major organizing principle, applied to uniforms, curricular subjects, administrative practices, classroom activities and even the use of space within and around the school” (Acker, 1994, p. 93).

It may also be that the way the teaching profession is characterized may influence on the perception of teachers’ abilities to deal with gender inequity issues. We have mentioned that one feature is to do with the notion of teachers as unbiased and objective individuals, but there is also the belief that teachers are mainly committed to the academic side of teaching; other areas such as appreciation of arts, equity, and equality, and social justice may be perceived as outside their area of expertise. Regarding teaching as a political activity, among many other things, it may be considered by many as going against what “respectable” teaching should be about.

Recent history of teachers participating in several social movements and protests has unjustly pictured teachers as social misfits as opposed to professionals that conform to the norm: it is fine to have different views, so long as they are “the correct views.” In this context, teaching about social injustices, discrimination, poverty, respect for sexual orientations and gender identity may be seen, by some layers of society, as a transgression and a threat. It might be acceptable to talk in schools about the more palpable instances of discrimination and inequities, which are quite often discussed in a rather superficial way while leaving ingrained power dynamics intact.

The essence of critical pedagogy is to build awareness of the uneven society in which we live and teach students about the economic and political truths, with a view on collective efforts and socially responsible initiatives, with respect for the environment. This is opposed to individualistic notions that are the norm in liberal societies, where individual achievements are celebrated and considered to be a triumph of a self-made person.

The way individualism and individuality appear in schools is quite often simple. Conceptually, individualism is intrinsically related to a modernistic view of Western civilization. Values such

as hard labor, self-discipline, and self-motivation carry overtones of a general quest for human individual supremacy, critical-mindedness, and self-achievement. These values are reinforced by self-gratification, instant gratification, and narcissism within the culture-striving for one's own in the guise of community welfare. (Kanpol, 1999, p. 43)

The idea of an autonomous individual is appealing, since self-determination is one of the foundations of capitalism and, to tell the truth, we all like to think we are in control of our own life and choices.

One of the downfalls of this mode of thinking is that disadvantages and inequities are seen as a product of individuals that have taken bad decisions or, at the very least, as a misfortune. On the other hand, success is seen as gifted individuals making the right choices. Under such model, male supremacy is justified, and inequities are attributed to individuals' poor choices, overlooking the systemic nature of male-dominant discourse, that has given shape to identities and disparities.

The danger of not transmitting to students a critical view about gender issues is that they may develop the notion that whatever happens in terms of disparities among individuals, discrimination, and oppression may appear as disassociated from their lives, creating the impression that those inadequacies occur to someone else, and that they have nothing to do with them. However, a word of caution is necessary, we are not saying that this is going to be easy; adopting a critical stance in gender education means contradicting assumptions about the man–woman relationships that have been learned from the cradle and that questioning them is likely to get messy and will require patience and persistence.

## **Gender in Article 3 of the Mexican Constitution**

The Mexican Constitution, officially the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States, in its current form, is the legacy of the Mexican Revolution of 1910, written shortly after the major armed conflicts had settled down; although some of its aspirations can be traced down to the Constitution of 1857 (Barba, 2019). It is said to be one of the first constitutional documents to have included social rights, followed by the Soviet Constitution of 1918.

Article 3 is the one that deals with education and has traditionally included the high aspirations assigned to the educational task; among the customary topics included, we can mention the idea that the education provided by the State is to be free, will be secular, and available for all (Barba, 2019). Like many other segments of the Constitution, Article 3 has had some reforms with different intentions (Cámara de Diputados, 2000); interestingly, the word *gender* has appeared only recently in the Constitutional text of Article 3; however, its meaning is unclear and is mentioned only, in general, an imprecise way.

The current text of Article 3 includes the expression of gender in three different paragraphs; in one of these, the word gender is used to establish that the

Technical Council of Education will be conformed considering gender equality. The other two instances are included here:

Plans and programs of study will have a *gender* perspective and will have a comprehensive orientation therefore knowledge of science and humanities will be included .... (Secretaría de Gobernación, 2020, p. 2)

[the criteria that will lead the educational task will...] (e) Be equitable, the State shall implement measures that will favor the full exercise of the right to education of individuals and will fight socioeconomic, regional, and *gender* inequalities in access, transit, and permanence in educational services. (Secretaría de Gobernación, 2020, p. 3)

Although it is to be recognized that the inclusion of the term is an important step, its meaning is general and vague, with a certain shallowness; only in the second paragraph, it may seem that the idea of fighting against inequalities is a move in the right direction, but its connotation is somehow restricted to access to the educational services.

It is also fair to say that a Constitutional text is general in nature and that there are other instruments and regulations of the State where many initiatives and aspirations take a real shape and are operationalized. However, it is not a minor aspect that it is only until recently that the term has been included in the Constitutional Article devoted to education, and even then, it is only treated in a rather superficial way.

## **Educational Context**

In México, compulsory government-funded schools provide elementary education to 90% of children and young people. Over past decades, state schooling has faced the challenges of meeting the needs of a large population with high growth rates, linguistic and ethnic diversity, difficult geographical accessibility, and a limited budget. Nowadays, official data show that the education service involves 13.67 million primary school students and employs 568,857 teachers in 95,699 schools (INEGI, 2022). Besides progress in education provision, several efforts have been made to reinforce the development of the national educational system and to improve the quality of elementary education. A strand of such efforts has been curriculum development. The last reform in 2017 introduced the current curriculum for primary education, for children aged six to 12 years. The Ministry of Education was responsible for defining the new plan of studies and the curriculum for primary education, which has a national character and must be followed by all schools, both state and public.

Generally, the approach, principles and stated aims of the curricular document could be regarded as forward-looking and well-intentioned. However, it makes use of a pedagogical official rhetoric that describes an idealized view of schools as