

GENDER EQUALITY, LIMITS, AND PRESSING ISSUES IN THE FEMINIST DEBATE

“Gender equality is not only a fundamental right but one of the essential foundations for building a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable world.”

The proposal is intended for students in the 4th year of compulsory secondary education, baccalaureate secondary education, vocational education, and university studies.

Classroom work proposals

1. Introduction

On 15 November, within the framework of the 7th edition of Cosmògraf, the roundtable discussion entitled “Gender equality, limits, and pressing issues in the feminist debate” was held in Manresa. The event addressed current debates concerning feminism, the advances of feminism, government policies in relation to gender equality, and featured the discussion question: “What should feminism address in 2030?”. The roundtable was moderated by journalist and CRÍTIC editor Laia Soldevila and featured participation by Begonya Saez Tajafuerce and Miriam Solá García.

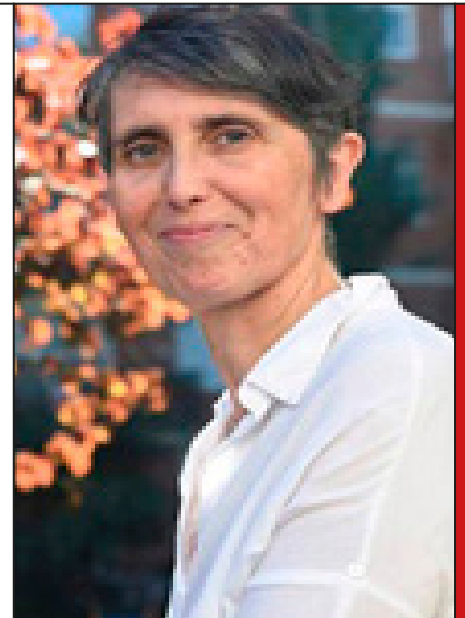
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Holding a PhD in Philosophy from the Autonomous University of Barcelona, Dr Saez is a professor and coordinator of master's and doctoral studies in the philosophy department at the UAB. Her research focuses on the definition and representation of identity. She forms part of the Body and Textuality research group.

MIRIAM SOLÁ GARCÍA

Miriam holds a Bachelor's Degree in Philosophy and a Master's Degree in Gender Studies. She is a political advisor and an expert on equality and diversity policies. She is also a feminist researcher and activist. For more than a decade, she has been researching the links between new feminist and queer discourses and practices and transfeminist social movements in the Spanish and Catalan context.

In recent years, feminism has taken on an undeniable central focus within the space of common and political debate. The massive demonstrations on International Women's Day, the incorporation of specifically feminist and LGTBIQ+ issues in political institutions through new councils and ministries, the passing of legislation concerning the freedom and rights of



Begonya Saez Tajafuerce



Miriam Solá García

women and trans groups, and much more are proof of this. However, the dynamics of polarization, cancel culture, and hatred on social media have come out in full force and have affected the space of feminist debates that now seem increasingly difficult and less open to nuances. This represented the starting point for the discussion between the philosopher Begonya Saez Tajafuerce and the philosopher and activist Miriam Solá.

Background

In 2000, the United Nations adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs represent eight milestones that all the countries collectively agreed to in order to promote greater equality in the world.

In 2015, the MDGs were replaced by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With a historic agreement by 193 countries, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015 as a global instrument of unprecedented scope and importance. The SDGs came into force on 1 January 2016.

The SDGs entail 17 environmental, social, and economic goals that guide the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. These 17 SDGs are linked to 169 goals or milestones that constitute a global roadmap.

All the objectives are closely related: to make progress on one, you must also do so on others. The goals are concise, easy to communicate, action-oriented, and applicable to all countries.

In addition to ending global poverty, the SDGs also include other goals such as eradicating hunger and achieving food security, ensuring healthy lives and quality education, achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls, ensuring access to water and energy, promoting sustainable economic growth, taking urgent action against climate change, and promoting peace and facilitating access to justice.

The SDGs have an impact on five critically important spheres of the 2030 Agenda, the so-called 5 Ps: people, peace, planet, prosperity, and partnerships.

We will focus on SDG 5, that is, on the Sustainable Development Goal called “Gender Equality” included within the sphere dedicated to people.

SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

This goal entails eradicating violence and discrimination against women as well as ensuring that they have the same opportunities as men in all areas of life. This means ending all forms of violence against women, including sexual exploitation.

This SDG also encourages us to work towards equality between women and men in the workplace, combat wage discrimination, and promote work-life balance.



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It is important to work towards recognition and a fair distribution of care and work within the family sphere. Finally, the full and effective participation of women and equal opportunities in public leadership must also be ensured.

2. Goals, objectives, and activities

Based on different reflections and ideas taken from the conversation between Begonya Saez, Miriam Solá, and Laia Soldevila during the roundtable discussion entitled [“Gender equality, limits, and pressing issues in the feminist debate”](#), the following activities were proposed to achieve these goals.

Goal 1.- Reflect on the notion of feminism. Am I a feminist or not? Come up with a proper definition of feminism.

Goal 2.- Visualize the types of gender violence to which women are exposed and focus on inequalities and violence that have long been normalized because if society as a whole becomes aware of them, it will be easier to eradicate them.

Goal 3.- Give young people solid sex education to ensure healthy and violence-free relationships.

Goal 4.- Raise awareness about the need to achieve gender equality in order to live in a fairer society for everyone and how the problem of male chauvinism is not a women’s problem, but a problem throughout society.

Goal 5.- Raise awareness about the limits and pressing issues in the feminist debate today and what the challenges and outlook for the future should be to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Objectius i activitats:

Activity 1.- “Are you a feminist?” test

Miriam Solá stated “feminism has led to some of the most important shifts in collective mentalities and paradigms in recent years.” Although it is true that there have been changes to collective mentalities, we will begin by reviewing individual mentalities in relation to the issue of feminism to become aware of our personal viewpoints.

The first activity entails taking the [“Are you a feminist?” test](#) that has been prepared by the LIKA association and includes an assessment of the result.



<http://www.associaciolika.org/>

After taking and self-correcting the test, participants must read the assessment of the result carefully in order to subsequently share aspects that have surprised them regarding their questions and answers in order to continue raising feminist awareness.

We will finish this activity by highlighting the definition of feminism, which is certainly not the opposite of male chauvinism. The article [“What is feminism? Definition and guide for beginners”](#) gives us tools to build a comprehensive definition with many nuances.

Activitat 2.- The sexist violence iceberg

“As a framework for analysis, feminism has brought to light a range of inequalities and violence that were quite typical and has made them unacceptable.” (Miriam Solá).

The #MeToo campaign that arose in 2018 produced a change in our understanding of sexist violence by focusing on sexual violence because it had scarcely been talked about at that point.

The activity consists of visualizing the different types of sexist violence using the metaphor of the [sexist violence iceberg](#) that classifies sexual violence into two large groups: visible violence and invisible violence.

This iceberg helps give visibility to many inequalities and violent situations that women have always suffered and which still persist today. In addition, many of these situations are widespread or even socially accepted.

A multitude of resources can be used to look at the different concepts included in the sexist violence iceberg, but since the list could be endless, we suggest starting by focusing on the lower tip of the iceberg, that is, on sexist microaggressions because they are the foundation of gender violence. In addition, sexist microaggressions entail socially normalized male chauvinism. We have selected these three videos on sexist microaggressions:

- 1.- [“Sexist microaggressions: they're there, although we don't always want to see them”](#) de eldiario.es.
- 2.- [“If you haven't seen it, look at it”](#) – 18 sexist microaggressions in three minutes from the Peace with Dignity Association.
- 3.- [“Have you ever dealt with...”](#) from the Andalusian Institute for Women.

VIOLÈNCIA MASCLISTA
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Activity 3.- Sex education workshop for young people

Begonya Saez says that “the issue with young people’s sexuality is not pornography, but a lack of sex education.”

In order to reduce issues with young people’s sexuality, it is best to offer quality sex education workshops with up-to-date content taught by accredited professionals as young people look to pornography for information in the absence of sex education.

At present, there are several entities that can offer these workshops in Catalonia, including Mandràgores, Sida Studi, Enruta’t, Centre Jove d’Atenció a les Sexualitats (CJAS), Candela, and more.

Activity 4.- Masculinity is in a state of crisis

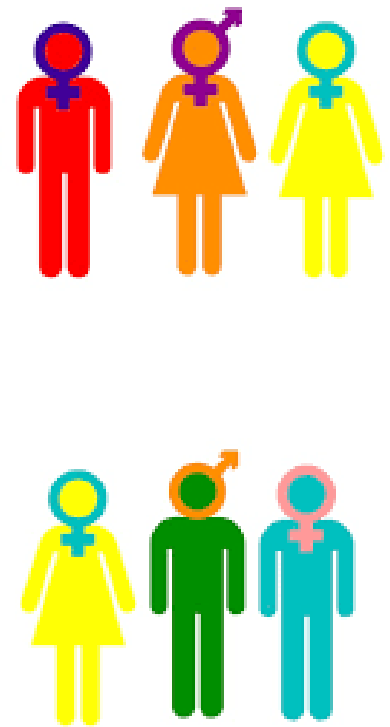
Traditional masculinity is in a state of crisis because it is less and less socially accepted.

The speakers agree that “feminism must also propose an emancipatory story to men because otherwise they will join the ranks of the far right, which is but just and strategic.” Furthermore, “there are many men who do not fit into the category of what feminism calls privileged men.” The speakers also stated that “as a social movement, feminism has been gaining ground in recent decades and this has a counterpart because when a movement becomes strong there is always a reaction. In this case, the reaction of the right and the far right has appeared worldwide and it is focused on restricting women’s rights, sexual and reproductive rights, LGTBIQ+ rights, and so on.” In conclusion, the far right is taking advantage of the crisis of masculinity to create an army of angry men and this goes against a just and egalitarian society.

Now there is a process of radical change in masculinity. Masculinity has nothing to do with hormones or anything biological, but with social rules that change over time.

As a tool for debate and reflection, we propose watching the documentary [“Where are the men?”](#) which shows that there are men who are starting to leave behind the idea of traditional masculinity and are becoming aware that masculinity and the patriarchy are not just a problem for women.

Miriam Solá said that “the key is to make society and men understand that the crisis of masculinity does not come from feminism or from migration and that LGBT people are not to blame for it, but rather it comes from capitalist dispossession processes and from a series of neoliberal impoverishment crises that are dispossessing men and



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culture? (Excerpt from a speech by Begonya Saez).
We can conclude this educational activity with the idea that it is necessary to promote a feminist culture that is not exclusive and that emphasizes networking.

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