

**“Gender, Sexual and Racial Dynamics in the Americas”, Institute of the Americas Conference,
North-East Group, Gustave Eiffel University, Paris, November 12, 13 14, 2020**

Gender, sexuality and race have become crucial social, cultural and political markers to decode our contemporary world and reevaluate past events. This seems a paradoxical situation to the extent that it positions on the front line minoritized groups who are themselves building their agency, their collective voices and their epistemological regime breaking away from dominant knowledge systems.

On August 16 2019, the United States Department of Justice filed briefs to the US Supreme Court arguing that “sex discrimination” does not legally protect LGBTQI+ employees. For three years now, the Trump administration has been attacking LGBTQI+ rights, especially excluding trans* from the military, education, health care and sports.¹ Attacks on women’s rights have recently been intensifying in the Americas as well as in Europe. By 2019, 9 States had passed bills to limit abortion rights, including Missouri, Kentucky, Alabama and Louisiana.² The Guttmacher Institute estimates that “more than 97% of women of reproductive age in Latin America and the Caribbean live in countries with restrictive abortion laws.”³ In the United States and Brazil, among other nations, the demand for a return to a white, heterosexual, patriarchal order and the praise of nationalism, capitalism and colonialism are often inseparable from gender and sexual dynamics that are brought to the fore in contemporary politics. This will lead us to question how gender, race and sexuality explain and frame political issues within the purview of politics itself, and how they define specific categories and languages, but also from the real and symbolic violence resulting from ideological decisions.

Gender, race, and sexual dynamics are thus central to political, economic, cultural and social issues in the Americas despite clearly diverse and multiple situations.⁴ Some social movements advocate the implementation of normalizing processes of gender, sexual, and racial diversity, while others seek to deconstruct normative categories or struggle for their emancipation. Since August 2019, Mexicans have been fighting against gender violence.⁵ In the United States, the Trump Administration promotes discriminatory policies based on gender, sexuality or race.

The manifold intersections between gender, race and sexuality clearly call for a multifactorial analytical frame. More specifically, representational and social creativity of plural identifications suggests a performative dynamic of gender, race and sexuality that can offer modes of resistance through politics and imagination. Between social and cultural determinism and absolute individual freedom, there is potential space for collective resistance. The thriving terrain of Drag Balls exemplifies how queer Black and Latinx groups managed to intervene against their own literal and symbolic erasure thanks to social (“Houses” taking in homeless gays and trans*) and artistic (voguing etc.) creativity. These performances, by operating in the cracks of normativity, have proliferated in

¹ Sam Levin, “A critical point in history’: how Trump’s attack on LGBT rights is escalating,” *The Guardian*, September 3, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/sep/03/trump-attack-lgbt-rights-supreme-court>. See for further analysis: Marche and Serval, <https://journals.openedition.org/ideas/4363>.

² “Abortion Bans: 9 States Have Passed Bills to Limit the Procedure This Year,” K.K. Rebecca Lai, *New York Times*, May 29, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/us/abortion-laws-states.html>

³ <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/abortion-latin-america-and-caribbean>.

⁴ Omar G. Encarnación, *Out in the Periphery: Latin America’s Gay Rights Revolution*, Oxford University Press, 2016.

⁵ “AP Explains: Why Mexican Women March Against Gender Violence,” *The Washington Post*, September 8, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/the_americas/ap-explains-why-mexican-women-march-against-gender-violence/2019/09/08/ebaa1270-d1ed-11e9-a620-0a91656d7db6_story.html.

many countries (Brazil, France etc.) through many representational vectors (documentaries, scholarship, TS series), illustrating how hybrid and multivalent approaches create meaning through the minority practices.⁶ Such fluid, complex and intersectional perspectives offer productive venues to explore the dynamics of sexuality, gender and race.

Undoubtedly, such creative powers were born from conflicting forces, resulting from an opposition between minority and majority positions that highlights movements and interactions producing new perspectives. Many questions remain to be addressed: Do gender, racial and sexual dynamics go beyond the limitations of static approaches? Can they help rethink political interventions, social dissidence and imaginary practices in order to create new modalities and reshape our world? Are they providing tools for a queer, feminist and decolonized utopian futurity (Muñoz 2009)? Do they invent an open practical and imaginary epistemology? These questions might offer some ideas to deploy the critical potential of the notion of gender, racial, sexual dynamics clearly articulated to circulation and representation. The deep and complex connections between San Juan and New York City as illustrated on stage by musicals, spanning from *West Side Story* to *Hamilton*, suggest how political, social, cultural and artistic perspectives must be articulated to address the meaning of the circulations between the Caribbean, South and North America. Decolonial, feminist and queer perspectives provide a critical momentum to denaturalize, deconstruct and resist binary alienations.

The 2020 IDA Conference will interrogate the gender, sexual, and racializing dynamics in the Americas within the framework of both contemporary and historical approaches. Transdisciplinary or pluridisciplinary perspectives articulating gender, sexual and racial issues are warmly encouraged, including (but not limited to) trans*, queer, feminist, postcolonial, decolonial, intersectional lenses.

The following topics are particularly of interest, though the list is not meant to be exhaustive:

- Political, social and cultural representations (infrapolitics, social movements, mediatization, etc.)
- Performing gender, sexual, and racial dynamics on page, stage, screen, in the street and beyond (circulations, hybridity, non-binary, fluidity)
- Reproductions, appropriations, failures (pink washing, homonationalism, backlash)
- Activist, historiographical, and epistemological resistance (intersectionality, disidentification, networks, etc.)

Proposals in English, French, or Spanish (title, Name, institution, 500 word abstract plus corpus/bibliographic sources, theoretical frame), 5 key words, and short biographic (150 words) note to be sent to IDAEST2020@gmail.com up to **15 April 2020**, answer by the end of May 2020.

We welcome abstracts and proposals in a range of formats, including individual papers; complete three-paper sessions; roundtables; and workshops.

Please save as **IDA2020 + Last Name**.

⁶ A diverse array of works come to mind: Jennie Livingston's famous documentary *Paris Is Burning*; Marlon M. Bailey's thorough study *Butch Queen Up in Pumps* and the recent Netflix TV series *Pose*.