

## Women Exist Beyond Strategic Voting: A Radical, Abolitionist, and Sex-Based Feminist Reflection.

In every election, women reappear as a statistic, a slogan, a campaign promise, and a moral reserve of legitimacy. We are called upon to vote, to be politically active, to defend democracy, to stop fascism, to prevent regression, to sustain hope. But when men come to power, even those who call themselves progressive, women are once again displaced from the political center. They speak in our name, they manage our suffering, they symbolize our cause, but they do not truly guarantee our lives, our safety, our health, our sexual freedom, or our material autonomy.

From a radical feminist perspective, the question is not simply which party “includes” women in its discourse, but which political project recognizes that women are a sexual class oppressed under patriarchy. Catharine MacKinnon argued that equality cannot be understood merely as formal treatment before the law, but rather as a power structure based on domination and subordination. Her theory shifts the debate from “equality of opportunity” to the material conditions that enable the sexual oppression of women. From this perspective, a government is not feminist simply because it uses the word “equality,” but because it confronts the institutions that sustain the sexual, reproductive, economic, political, and symbolic exploitation of women.

The left-wing government in Colombia promised transformation, but for many sex-based feminists, it ended up representing a particularly painful form of abandonment. Not because the right wing offered hope—it never has for women—but because the left presented itself as a historical ally of the oppressed and yet allowed women to be diluted within broader agendas where the political category of “woman” lost its clarity. The Ministry of Equality developed specific programs for the LGBTIQ+ population and celebrated CONPES 4147 of 2025 as an achievement, with its national public policy, budgetary support, National LGBTIQ+ System, and actions planned through 2035. The problem, from a radical feminist perspective, is not that civil guarantees exist for other vulnerable populations; the problem is that the institutional framework has been unable to sustain, with the same force, a material, specific, and urgent policy for women as a sexual group.

Women continue to face violence without sufficiently integrated, timely, and actionable records. The National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences warns that its figures correspond to cases assessed within the medico-legal system, but not all cases are reported or prosecuted. The Ombudsman's Office published a consolidated report for January-May 2025 on femicides, domestic violence, sexual offenses, human trafficking, and the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, confirming that the problem is neither marginal nor abstract: it is a sustained crisis of violence against women, girls, and adolescents. Having bulletins is not enough without robust prevention systems, active local observatories, allocated budgets, effective support pathways, protection, and accountability.

For decades, abolitionist feminism has warned that prostitution, pornography, trafficking, and reproductive exploitation are not “neutral markets,” but rather patriarchal forms of organizing male access to women’s bodies. Andrea Dworkin, in *Prostitution and Male Supremacy*, questioned how academia could discuss prostitution from the comfort of abstract debate, while women in prostitution live a reality marked by violence, need, and risk. Kathleen Barry documented the relationship between prostitution, international trafficking of women, and female sexual slavery, positioning sexual exploitation as a global structure of domination. Sheila Jeffreys, for her part, argued that distinguishing between “free” and “forced” prostitution often serves to legitimize sectors of the sex industry, when all of them depend on the historical subordination of women.

Therefore, from an abolitionist perspective, any policy that normalizes the purchase of sexual access to women, the exploitation of their bodies, or the conversion of their reproductive capacity into a service for third parties cannot be considered progress. In Colombia, surrogacy remains hampered by a legal vacuum that has led the Constitutional Court to urge Congress and the Government to comprehensively regulate assisted reproductive technologies. From a radical feminist perspective, this vacuum is not technical: it is political. Where the State fails to protect, the market intervenes; and when the market intervenes in women's bodies, autonomy becomes a fragile concept in the face of poverty, inequality, and the purchasing power of those who can buy.

Women should not be forced, election after election, to cast a strategic vote for men and parties that have already demonstrated their opposition to us. Women are asked to vote for "the lesser evil," but are almost never offered a political option truly committed to our material existence. If the far right wins, we know the risk: a rollback of hard-won rights, the return of women to the home, the exaltation of compulsory motherhood, control over sexuality, the defense of the patriarchal family, and the symbolic expulsion of women from positions of power. But if the left comes to power and erases the category of "woman," surrenders our institutions to agendas that don't address sex, and fails to confront sexual and reproductive exploitation head-on, then it abandons us as well.

The trap of strategic voting lies in demanding political obedience in the name of fear. They tell us: "Vote for this man so that other one doesn't win." They tell us: "Now is not the time to divide." They tell us: "First, let's defeat the right wing, and then we'll talk about women." But that "then" never comes. Women vote, sustain campaigns, put their bodies on the line, defend causes, march, care for others, organize, denounce injustice, and then they are relegated to the sidelines. Law 2453 of 2025 expressly recognizes violence against women in politics and seeks to prevent, address, and punish conduct that limits their public participation, including symbolic, digital, economic, physical, sexual, and psychological violence. This law confirms a fundamental truth: even in a democracy, women's political participation occurs under patriarchal threat.

In 2026, the feminist perspective cannot be negotiable. It is not enough to ask a candidate if they support "equality." We must ask them if they recognize women as a political category based on sex; if they defend spaces, data, policies, and budgets specifically for women and girls; if they oppose sexual exploitation; if they reject the commodification of reproduction; if they guarantee health, justice, and protection without erasing sex as a material variable; if they understand that women's rights are neither a subcategory of diversity nor an electoral bargaining chip.

From this perspective, no party fully represents women in Colombia in 2026. There are parties that may be more or less dangerous, more or less regressive, more or less useful in a given situation; but tactical utility is not political representation. Women are not obligated to surrender our vote, our voice, or our agenda to men who only acknowledge us when they need to win. Radical feminism reminds us that women's politics cannot depend on male benevolence, nor on the right wing that wants us subordinated, nor on the left wing that dilutes us when it comes to power.

Women do exist. We exist before the ballot, during the campaign, and after the presidential inauguration. We exist as exploited children, as impoverished mothers, as disappeared women, as victims of sexual violence, as persecuted human rights defenders, as precarious workers, as bodies turned into commodities, as citizens without our own party. And precisely because we exist, we must no longer accept that our survival is reduced to a calculation of the lesser evil. Feminist politics can no longer be a reaction to male power: it must be a break with it.

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