



## UPSTANDERS TO PREVENT GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE: THE ROLE OF MEN AND EDUCATORS

Guillermo Legorburo Torres

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# **Upstanders to prevent gender-based violence: The role of men and educators**

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Guillermo Legorburo Torres

DOCTORAL THESIS

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UNIVERSITAT ROVIRA I VIRGILI

UPSTANDERS TO PREVENT GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE: THE ROLE OF MEN AND EDUCATORS

Guillermo Legorburo Torres

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Upstanders to prevent gender-based violence:  
The role of men and educators

Doctoral Thesis

Supervised by Dr. Aitor Gómez González  
& Dr. Oriol Ríos González

Department of Pedagogy  
Consolidated Research Group on Social Impact and Education (IMSE)



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UPSTANDERS TO PREVENT GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE: THE ROLE OF MEN AND EDUCATORS

Guillermo Legorburo Torres



FAIG CONSTAR que aquest treball, titulat “Upstanders to prevent gender-based violence: the role of men and educators”, que presenta Guillermo Legorburo Torres per a l’obtenció del títol de Doctor, ha estat realitzat sota la meva direcció al Departament de Pedagogia d’aquesta universitat.

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HAGO CONSTAR que el presente trabajo, titulado “Upstanders to prevent gender-based violence: the role of men and educators”, que presenta Guillermo Legorburo Torres para la obtención del título de Doctor, ha sido realizado bajo mi dirección en el Departamento de Pedagogía de esta universidad.

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I STATE that the present study, entitled “Upstanders to prevent gender-based violence: the role of men and educators”, presented by Guillermo Legorburo Torres for the award of the degree of Doctor, has been carried out under my supervision at the Department of Pedagogy of this university.

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Tarragona, 19/03/2024

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UPSTANDERS TO PREVENT GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE: THE ROLE OF MEN AND EDUCATORS

Guillermo Legorburo Torres

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## Abstract

Gender-based violence (GBV) affects especially women and LGBTI+ people, in all social contexts. It is perpetrated by violent people, mostly men with a dominant traditional masculinity; men who don't adhere to the hegemonic type, and defenders of victims, are also reprimanded. The consequences of this violence and discrimination affect the health and life of the victims, the bystanders, and the whole community. *Bystander intervention* is the involvement of witnesses, who become *upstanders*, to stop or prevent any dominant or violent behavior. Involving everyone who has egalitarian values and wants to end violence has proven to be crucial. These upstanders include egalitarian men who show attitudes of New Alternative Masculinities (NAM), educators in formal and non-formal institutions and everyone in those communities. Giving social value to these men and people, and emptying of attractiveness the dominant types, is crucial to build preventive socialization processes. The primary purpose of this thesis is to offer scientific insights into stances opposing violent behaviors and their effectiveness in stopping and preventing GBV.

This thesis, presented as a compendium of papers, presents three researches published in top open-access scientific journals. Those articles, and the dissertation as a whole, follow a communicative methodological approach: it focuses on enhancing social impact through research, which benefits citizenship and societies within their universal key goals. Knowledge is co-created in an egalitarian dialogue between scientific knowledge, introduced by researchers, and knowledge of the lifeworld, provided by the participants. The data collection techniques employed were communicative daily life stories, semi-structured interviews, pre-post questionnaires and social media analysis. The data was analyzed in order to find barriers but mainly solutions and hopeful results to the objectives proposed: elements which are contributing to overcome GBV.

The main results are the following. First, both dominant men and women reprimand nice guys, but New Alternative Masculinities (NAM) neutralize them with communicative acts full of attractiveness, strength, and courage. Second, social media such as Reddit and Twitter are used by egalitarian men to support victims of GBV, specifically non-consensual relationships, and help create a culture of desire towards consensual relationships; moreover, men with NAM traits show they deeply reject engaging in non-consensual relationships and only show desire when all parties involved are fully involved. Third, educators express transformative impacts after a training to end violence against LGBTI+ youth, that make them upstanders and promote the bystander intervention approach in their educational contexts.

## Resumen

Las violencias de género (VdG) afectan especialmente a mujeres y personas LGBTI+. Es perpetrada por personas violentas, en su mayoría hombres de masculinidad tradicional dominante; los hombres que no se adhieren al tipo hegemónico, y los defensores de las víctimas, también son represaliados. Las consecuencias de esta violencia afectan a la salud y la vida de las víctimas, las personas espectadoras y la comunidad. *Bystander intervention* es la implicación de testigos, que se convierten en *upstanders* para detener o prevenir cualquier comportamiento dominante. Involucrar a todos los que tienen valores igualitarios y quieren acabar con la violencia ha demostrado ser crucial. Estos *upstanders* incluyen a los hombres igualitarios que muestran actitudes de Nuevas Masculinidades Alternativas (NAM), a educadores de instituciones formales y no formales y a todas las personas de esas comunidades. Dar valor social a estos hombres y personas, y vaciar de atractivo a los tipos dominantes, es crucial para construir procesos de socialización preventiva. El objetivo de esta tesis es ofrecer aportaciones científicas sobre los posicionamientos que se oponen a los comportamientos violentos, y su eficacia para detener y prevenir la VdG.

Esta tesis, presentada como un compendio de artículos, expone tres investigaciones publicadas en revistas científicas de acceso abierto de primer nivel. Dichos artículos siguen un enfoque metodológico comunicativo: se centra en potenciar el impacto social a través de la investigación, que beneficie a la ciudadanía y a las sociedades dentro de sus objetivos clave universales. El conocimiento se co-crea en un diálogo igualitario entre las personas investigadoras y las participantes. Las técnicas de recogida de datos empleadas fueron relatos comunicativos de la vida cotidiana, entrevistas semiestructuradas, cuestionarios pre-post y análisis de redes sociales. Los datos se analizaron con el fin de encontrar barreras, pero sobre todo soluciones y resultados esperanzadores para los objetivos propuestos: elementos que están contribuyendo a superar la VdG.

Estos son los principales resultados. Primero, tanto hombres dominantes como las mujeres que los imitan reprenden a los chicos buenos, pero las NAM los neutralizan con actos comunicativos con atractivo, fuerza y valentía. Segundo: las redes sociales como Reddit y Twitter son utilizadas por hombres igualitarios para apoyar a las víctimas de la VdG, y ayudan a crear una cultura del deseo hacia las relaciones consentidas; además, los hombres con rasgos NAM muestran que rechazan profundamente involucrarse en relaciones no consentidas y solo muestran deseo cuando todas las partes implicadas están plenamente implicadas. Tercero: los educadores expresan impactos transformadores después de una formación para poner fin a la violencia contra la juventud LGBTI+, que los convierten en *upstanders* y promueven este enfoque de intervención en sus contextos educativos.

## Resum

Les violències de gènere (VdG) afecten especialment les dones i a les persones LGBTI+. És perpetrada per persones violentes, en la seva majoria homes amb una masculinitat tradicional dominant; els homes que no s'adhereixen al tipus hegemònic, i els defensors de les víctimes, també són represaliats. Les conseqüències d'aquesta violència i discriminació afecten la salut i la vida de les víctimes, les persones espectadores i tota la comunitat. La *bystander intervention* és la implicació de testimonis, que es converteixen en *upstanders* per a detenir o prevenir qualsevol comportament dominant o violent. Involucrar a tots els que tenen valors igualitaris i volen acabar amb la violència ha demostrat ser crucial. Aquests *upstanders* inclouen als homes igualitaris que mostren actituds de Noves Masculinitats Alternatives (NAM), als educadors d'institucions formals i no formals i a totes les persones d'aquestes comunitats. Donar valor social a aquests homes i persones, i buidar d'atractiu als tipus dominants, és crucial per a construir processos de socialització preventiva. L'objectiu principal d'aquesta tesi és oferir aportacions científiques sobre els posicionaments que s'oposen als comportaments violents, i la seva eficàcia per a detenir i prevenir la VdG.

Aquesta tesi, presentada com un compendi d'articles, exposa tres recerques publicades en revistes científiques d'accés obert de primer nivell internacional. Aquests segueixen un enfocament metodològic comunicatiu: se centra en potenciar l'impacte social a través de la recerca, que beneficiï a la ciutadania i a les societats dins dels seus objectius clau universals. El coneixement es co-crea en un diàleg igualitari entre les persones investigadores i les participants. Les tècniques de recollida de dades emprades van ser relats comunicatius de la vida quotidiana, entrevistes semiestructurades, qüestionaris pre-post i anàlisi de xarxes socials. Les dades es van analitzar amb el focus de trobar elements que estan contribuint a superar la VdG.

Els principals resultats són els següents. Primer, tant els homes dominants com les dones que els imiten reprenen als nois bons, però les NAM els neutralitzen amb actes comunicatius plens d'atractiu, força i valentia. En segon lloc, les xarxes socials com Reddit i Twitter són utilitzades pels homes igualitaris per a fer costat a les víctimes de la violència de gènere, concretament en les relacions no consentides, i ajuden a crear una cultura del desig cap a les relacions consentides; a més, els homes amb trets NAM mostren que rebutgen profundament involucrar-se en relacions no consentides i només mostren desitjo quan totes les parts implicades estan plenament implicades. En tercer lloc, els educadors expressen impactes transformadors després d'una formació per a posar fi a la violència contra els joves LGBTI+, que els converteixen en *upstanders* i promouen aquest enfocament d'intervenció en els seus contextos educatius.

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## Presentation of the Doctoral Thesis

This doctoral thesis has been carried out within the framework of the PhD programme in Humanistic Studies at the Universitat Rovira i Virgili. The research carried out aims to provide scientific knowledge on how the positions against any violent attitude help to stop and prevent violence. Specifically, these positionings (bystander intervention) by egalitarian men and educators have been investigated, and the focus of violence is all gender-based violence, whether directed at women, LGBTI+<sup>1</sup> people or men.

The origin of this thesis goes back to the time when I was studying for a degree in Primary Education. As complementary training, I signed up for a continuing teacher training seminar on scientific evidence of social impact, the Valencian Seminar "On the Shoulders of Giants"<sup>2</sup> (Roca-Campos et al., 2021). As part of this seminar, there was a group of men in dialogue (Serradell, Santa Cruz & Mondéjar, 2014), Tagore<sup>3</sup>, also focused on this evidence applied to the role of masculinities in ending gender violence. In both spaces I was able to read and dialogue deeply and intensely about the problems that unfortunately drive these investigations, but above all I was able to learn about the successful actions that have been scientifically proven to be pioneers in contributing to overcoming all violence (Ugalde et al., 2022; Duque et al., 2021). I was also able to see how an important part of the information that citizens and educators know about education and gender is not based on evidence of social impact, and is often based on hoaxes<sup>4</sup> (Racionero-Plaza et al., 2023; Yuste et al., 2014; Rodríguez et al., 2020). Therefore, the personal and professional decisions they make can be counterproductive for themselves and for the people they impact.

As a feminist, teacher, heterosexual man with close relationships with diverse men, women and LGBTI+ people, I wanted to contribute from scientific research with social impact to co-create knowledge that helps to end gender-based violence, and all forms of violence; and for this, to promote both the evidence to stop existing violence and to promote those forms of relationships that are protective and preventive. Nonetheless, these are not only my

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<sup>1</sup> This dissertation uses the acronym LGBTI+ to refer inclusively to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex individuals as well as other identities such as Queer, Asexual and others. Various organizations employ different acronyms to refer to this community. For instance, the Human Rights Campaign utilizes LGBTQ+ (<https://www.hrc.org/resources/glossary-of-terms>), while ILGA Europe employs LGBTI (<https://www.ilga-europe.org/about-us/who-we-are/glossary/>). We incorporate the plus (+) sign to signify our inclusivity of other self-identifications not explicitly specified in the studies reviewed.

<sup>2</sup> Here is the education seminar website: <https://amusclesdegegantsv.wixsite.com/seminari-vc/>

<sup>3</sup> Here is the Tagore group of Men in Dialogue website: <https://gruptagore.wixsite.com/info?lang=en>

<sup>4</sup> Check two participatory open platforms on scientific evidence about education and gender, created on the framework of H2020 project Allinteract: <https://socialimpactscience.org/>



individual objectives: the aim of this research is to achieve societal goals defined not by researchers alone but by citizens; specifically, this thesis aims to contribute to mainly Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 5 and 4, which pertain to promoting gender equality and ensuring quality education, while others such as SDGs 3, 10, 11 and 16 are also addressed. At the midpoint of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, global progress towards gender equality remains inadequate (UN Women & UN DESA, 2023).

Gender-based violence is a dreadful reality, occurring in our societies in all contexts, in professional, educational, private, and social environments, in person and online. It is particularly suffered by women and LGBTI+ people. The intersection of several axes of social discrimination increases the likelihood of suffering this violence and compounds its negative consequences on the victims (Dunn, 2020). For instance, being LGBTI+, an immigrant, from a cultural minority, poor, or having a disability.

In the face of this violence, despite a general social growth in intolerance, a permissiveness and impunity permeate society: a majority of those who do not perpetrate violence do not, however, feel they have the knowledge, skills or position to be active defenders (Davidovic et al., 2023). Among the scientific explanations, we highlight three. First, we find that there is a dominant coercive discourse, reproduced by the mass media and also in interpersonal relationships, that generates a false sense of attractiveness and social value to dominant behaviors, particularly of certain men, and at the same time diminishes the attractiveness of egalitarian and solidarity behaviors (Duque et al., 2023; Ríos-González et al., 2018; Gómez, 2015). Secondly, Isolating Gender Violence -the attacks suffered by those who do take a stand- discourages these defenders and others from taking a stand in the future (Melgar et al., 2021). Thirdly, and as we said initially, many educational programs and social approaches to masculinities and prevention of gender-based violence and violence against LGBTI+ people are not evidence-based (Flecha, Puigvert & Racionero-Plaza, 2023). Both in training for students and teachers, as well as in governmental or social campaigns, also disseminated on social networks.

Theoretical and scientific interest in the prevention of gender-based violence and masculinities has more than fifty years of approaches, research, and advances. Specifically, Men's Studies have grown thanks to important contributions such as Raewyn Connell's conceptualization of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 2006, 2012). Two decades ago, the pioneer work of Jesús Gómez (Gómez, 2004, 2015) within CREA research center proposed an alternative socialization that rejects traditional relationships and values people and, specifically, kind boys, especially the brave ones who take a stand against any dominant interaction and who, from their self-confidence, only desire egalitarian relationships. This is

because science has shown that bystander intervention is key to ending all violence. For this, we need to apply solutions based on scientific evidence of social impact in educational contexts, at work and in our daily lives.

## Presentation of papers

Three scientific articles are the core of this dissertation. Below I show the most relevant information of the three. In the following section I will justify their thematic connection.

**Table 1**

*Summary of articles of the doctoral thesis*

<b>Title</b>	<b>Authors</b>	<b>Journal</b>	<b>Indexing</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Impact</b>
«Come on! He Has Never Cooked in His Life!» New Alternative Masculinities Putting Everything in Its Place. Frontiers in psychology	Coauthor with: Rosa Valls-Carol, Antonio Madrid-Pérez, and Barbara Merrill	Frontiers in Psychology	JCR-Q1 SJR-Q2	Published in open access in 2021	(March 2024) +2000 views 557 Downloads 5 Citations
Not All Men: The Debates in Social Networks on Masculinities and Consent	Coauthor with: Oriol Rios, Analia Torres, Emilia Aiello, Bernardo Coelho, and Ariadna Munté	Humanities & Social Sciences Communications	JCR-Q1 SJR-Q2	Published in open access in 2024	(March 2024) +1100 accesses 15 Altmetric
Impact of an evidence-based training for educators on bystander intervention for the prevention of violence against LGBTI+ youth	Coauthor with: Oriol Rios, Juan Carlos Peña, Andreas Avgousti, and Laura Natividad.	Humanities & Social Sciences Communications	JCR-Q1 SJR-Q2	Published in open access in 2023	(March 2024) +1300 accesses 4 Citations 21 Altmetric

The research and results included in these three articles has been presented in six different papers at international scientific conferences on gender, feminism, masculinities, and education (see Annex 7 for the specific contributions).

## Justification of their thematic unity

I will now introduce, in a concise way, the relationship between the three papers presented. This unity can be directly verified by reading the papers.

As will be explained in the following section on the overall context of the thesis, the line of preventive socialization of gender-based violence (Puigvert, 2014; Puigvert-Mallart et al., 2022; Racionero-Plaza et al., 2021) is the theoretical and scientific basis of the whole research. Masculinities, specifically the focus on New Alternative Masculinities, is present in all three articles: centrally in the first two articles, and as part of the training of which impact is collected in article three.

The *bystander intervention* approach (Coker et al., 2015; Banyard, 2011; Coker et al., 2020) is part of all three articles. The transformative reactions of men analyzed in the first article, the positioning in social networks in the second article, and the focus on training and the impacts studied in the third article stand out. These, as will be discussed in more detail in the theoretical and scientific framework, are all examples of bystander intervention, positions with the aim of stopping and preventing violence. Specifically, positioning in social networks and digital contexts is studied in articles 2 and 3. In addition, support, and solidarity networks, whether in social networks, among men or among educators, are common to all three studies.

The *communicative methodological approach* (Gómez, Puigvert & Flecha, 2011; Gómez, 2019) is shared by all three investigations from design, implementation, analysis, and transfer. This approach, as will be explained in detail in the Methodology section, establishes an egalitarian dialogue between researchers and research participants, especially in the qualitative part which is the major part of these investigations. Finally, and especially important, the three articles share, in relation to the communicative methodology, an orientation towards social impact during all phases, particularly with the chosen theoretical and scientific basis and the analysis that seeks transformative elements.

## Global context where research has been carried out: participant researchers, research group, research project.

This thesis is possible thanks to many people, as already introduced in the Acknowledgements. However, in this section I want to explicitly reflect the professional context in which this research has taken place. I will explain it from the most global and core to the most concrete and complementary context.

This thesis has been carried out within the framework of the PhD programme in Humanistic Studies at the Universitat Rovira i Virgili. I have benefited from a grant as a project research assistant, a Martí i Franqués pre-doctoral contract and a FI pre-doctoral contract from AGAUR.

Firstly, the three research projects presented in the articles arise from several theoretical and research lines initiated decades ago by the CREA network of researchers, the Community of Research on Excellence for All<sup>5</sup>. Their work has been reflected, among others, in their having been awarded as coordinators of six projects of the European Commission's research framework programme, on topics such as academic success and inclusion, the Roma population, citizen solidarity, or citizen participation in science on education and gender.

In a special way, the line of preventive socialization of gender violence, developed in CREA, stands out for having also given rise to the conceptualization of masculinities, which is one of the pillars of the thesis. In addition, I have enjoyed frequent and intense spaces for dialogue based on scientific evidence on masculinities and violence prevention since years before the start of the PhD. In particular, the Tagore group of Men in Dialogue and the network of New Alternative Masculinities have been for me an unthinkable context thanks to which I have been able to situate myself as a researcher and as a man with a view to the completion of this thesis.

More locally, the consolidated research group MEDIS (Educational Research Methodology with Social Impact), now called IMSE (Social Impact and Education)<sup>6</sup>, welcomed me from the beginning of the thesis as a predoctoral member. My two thesis supervisors, doctors Aitor Gómez and Oriol Rios, are respectively the principal investigators of MEDIS

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<sup>5</sup> Here is CREA research network website: <https://crea.ub.edu/>

<sup>6</sup> Here is the IMSE research group website: <https://imse.urv.cat/>

before and IMSE now. With them I have shared university teaching in subjects closely related to the thesis, but also projects and research.

More specifically, with Professor Oriol Rios I worked for more than two years on the European project, funded by the REC programme, entitled "Up4Diversity: Empowering young people and youth workers to become active upstanders in the prevention of violence towards LGBTIQ+ people in the digital era"<sup>7</sup>. I worked on all coordination, management, and research tasks in constant communication with Rios, principal investigator of a consortium of European partners. This project was in itself the beginning of my doctoral stage, thanks to which I was able to learn and put into practice many skills that have been crucial for the research included in my thesis. Up4Diversity sought to train educators to have the skills and knowledge to promote bystander intervention in their formal and non-formal educational contexts, and thus curb and prevent violence against LGBTI+ youth.

Other projects in which I have also collaborated include the H2020 project "ALLINTERACT: Widening and diversifying citizen engagement in science", led by Professor Emeritus Ramón Flecha. Thanks to the work of ALLINTERACT we were able to carry out the research on social networks on masculinities and consent, which is the second article in the thesis. I have also collaborated in the R&D (I+D) project "SAFE: Impact of Bystander intervention for a school culture that overcomes gender violence": the project, led by Dr. Carme Garcia Yeste, from the IMSE research group, shows a high connection with my research.<sup>8</sup>

I have already mentioned CREA as a network of researchers. Thanks to this network I have also been able to collaborate with other people who have become co-authors of the articles included in the thesis. Specifically, Rosa Valls, Antonio Madrid, Emilia Aiello, Ariadna Munté and Juan Carlos Peña-Axt. In addition, I have also been able to co-author with other international researchers such as Barbara Merrill, Analia María Torres, Bernardo Coelho, and Andreas Avgousti.

Conferences have also been an important context for my thesis. I have had the opportunity to present papers almost annually on the thesis research and projects I was collaborating on. These have been great opportunities to receive feedback and to deepen through the questions and issues improving the thesis itself; in addition, the congresses have served me to learn first-hand from the research of very diverse colleagues. I would like to highlight the following international conferences: CICFEM, The International Congress on

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<sup>7</sup> Here is the Up4Diversity project website: <https://imse.urv.cat/up4diversity/>

<sup>8</sup> Here is the SAFE project website: <https://imse.urv.cat/safe/>

Science, Feminism and Masculinities, where I have presented papers, been a reviewer and have worked actively in its organization since 2019; CIMIE, the International Multidisciplinary Congress on Educational Research, where I have presented papers, reviewed abstracts and coordinated the Didactics and Educational Organization area; ECER, the European Conference on Educational Research, where I have presented papers and reviewed proposals; and Annual Meeting of AERA, the American Educational Research Association, where I have co-authored papers and reviewed abstracts. In addition, since the beginning of 2021 I have been secretary/co-editor of the scientific journal *Masculinities and Social Change*, published by Hipatia Press, indexed in SJR-Q3<sup>9</sup>. Being in contact with many different publication proposals in relation to masculinities has provided me with useful reflections and learning for my thesis.

In the last phase of the stay, I had the opportunity to experience an international stay at the GODESS Institute at the Hanken School of Economics in Helsinki, Finland, together with Professor Emeritus Jeff Hearn, in the top 25 of most cited researchers on gender and top 12 in violence, both in Google Scholar; and Professor Charlotta Niemistö, Director of GODESS.

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<sup>9</sup> Here is the website of the scientific journal *Masculinities & Social Change*:  
<https://hipatiapress.com/hpjournals/index.php/mcs/about/editorialTeam>

# Chapter 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Global summary of research objectives

As discussed above, the research objectives of this thesis are concretizations for the achievement of global goals, in this case the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that share the greatest consensus among a diversity of citizens and societies to be met by 2030 (United Nations, 2015). Here are the main SDGs and their targets which are addressed with this thesis:

SDG 5: Gender equality: “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”.

- Target 5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.
- 5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres (...).

SDG 4: Quality education: “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”.

- 4.1 Ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.
- 4.5 Eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable.
- 4.7 Ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for (...) human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity (...).
- 4.a Build and upgrade education facilities that are (...) gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all (...).
- 4.c Substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers (...).

SDG 3: Good health and wellbeing: “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”.

SDG 10: Reduced inequalities: “Reduce inequality within and among countries”.

- 10.2 Empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, (...) or economic or other status.



SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities: “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”.

- 11.7 Provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.

SDG 16: Peace, justice and solid institutions: “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies (...), provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”.

- 16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere.

## Thesis objectives

Being that said, **the overarching purpose of this thesis is to provide scientific knowledge on positions against any violent attitude and their impact in stopping and preventing gender-based violence.** This main goal is specified in each investigation:

**Specific Objective 1.** To analyze communicative acts that reprimand non-violent men, undertaken by some women or dominant men, and communicative acts performed by New Alternative Masculinities that counteract such reprimands.

**Specific Objective 2.** To collect stories of upstander masculinities in both digital and offline contexts who combat gender-based violences, specifically related to sexual consent.

**Specific Objective 3.** To provide evidence on the professional impact of evidence-based training on bystander intervention to prevent violence against LGBTI+ youth in formal and non-formal educational institutions.

The following table details the specific objectives and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that are addressed in each of the articles.

**Table 2**

*List of articles with thesis specific objectives and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*

<b>Article title</b>	<b>Specific Objectives</b>	<b>SDGs</b>
«Come on! He Has Never Cooked in His Life!» New Alternative Masculinities Putting Everything in Its Place. <i>Frontiers in psychology</i>	1	5, 3, 16, 10
Not All Men: The Debates in Social Networks on Masculinities and Consent	2	5, 3, 11, 16
Impact of an evidence-based training for educators on bystander intervention for the prevention of violence against LGBTI+ youth	3	4, 5, 3, 11, 10, 16

Next, we briefly explain how each of the thesis objectives are linked with each SDG:

1. Objective and Article 1 address SDG5 by promoting egalitarian masculinities who don't perpetrate violence or discrimination against women and girls; SDG 16 by promoting upstander behaviors which reduce violence; SDG10 by reducing inequalities faced by egalitarian men; SDG3 by the health and well-being positive consequences of the latter.
2. Objective and Article 2 address SDG5 by contributing to the creation of a culture of consent where there is no tolerance for non-consensual relationships as a persistent form of VAWG; SDG11 by contributing to more inclusive online communities; SDG16 by fostering the reduction of sexual violence; SDG3 by the health and well-being positive consequences of the latter and by promoting consensual and enthusiastic interactions.
3. Objective and Article 3 address SDG4 by ensuring inclusive educational contexts where all LGBTI+ youth can fulfill their studying dreams; by promoting that all learners acquire upstander behaviors for peace and non-violence; and by increasing the qualified teachers in coexistence and violence prevention. They address SDG5 by helping end violence and discrimination against LGBTI+ youth; SDG10 by reducing such inequalities; SDG11 by making educational communities safer, more inclusive and resilient; SDG16 by creating more peaceful, just and solid educational institutions; SDG3 by the health and well-being positive consequences of the latter.

## 1.2. Structure of the dissertation

This thesis is organized as follows. Previously, the scientific articles that make up the thesis have been presented, justifying their thematic unity, and explaining the context in which the research was carried out. In addition, the main objectives of the dissertation have been presented. After these sections, this dissertation is structured according to a scientific publication: theoretical and scientific framework, methodology, results, discussion, conclusions, references, and annexes. In these, we have chosen to highlight the aspects common to the three research studies and articles, thus creating an original and unpublished organization. The corresponding chapters are now introduced in more detail.

Chapter 1 introduces the theoretical and scientific framework. The main and most relevant contributions that support this research and this thesis are summarized. Specifically, it will delve into gender-based violence, specifying it in different vulnerable groups; the masculinities approach chosen after a previous overview will be presented and argued; and finally, the successful actions that the scientific literature has shown to contribute to the end and prevention of gender-based violence will be introduced.

Chapter 2 presents the methodological aspects. The general communicative research approach is presented; the objectives are recalled and related to the data collection instruments; the research participants are presented; the phases of the thesis are outlined; finally, the process of analysis of the data collected is introduced, and the ethical aspects are discussed.

Chapters 3 to 5 consist of the three published articles of the thesis: each is initially introduced in relation to the overall context of the thesis, and then the article is presented in the editorial format for publication in the corresponding journal, according to the regulations of the doctoral program. Each of them has the sections corresponding to a scientific publication.

Specifically, Chapter 3 (article 1) exposes communicative acts of power carried out against egalitarian or oppressed men by dominant men and some women who imitate this dominant model; it also analyzes dialogic communicative acts of New Alternative Masculinities that neutralize these attacks through the language of desire.

Chapter 4 (article 2) presents social media interactions of NAM men and also women around masculinity and consent, through the analysis of the hashtags #NotAllMen and #Consent. It also presents positionings of NAM men that evidence their deep rejection of non-consensual relationships and their desire only for consent-filled relationships.

Chapter 5 (article 3) presents the last of the investigations, contextualized in the European project Up4Diversity. It presents the personal and professional impacts reported by educators participating in a training on bystander intervention to prevent violence against LGBTI+ youth.

After the articles are presented, Chapter 6 is the last one of this thesis. It presents the main common results of the thesis in relation to the objectives. It also presents the discussion of these results and of the thesis in general, contrasting them with recently published research in the field and the research objectives. Final conclusions include some identified limitations and lines of future research.

### 1.3. Theoretical framework

This section is the starting point of the thesis. In it, the theoretical and scientific foundations that inspire and support the three investigations are presented. The main social theories, together with the most relevant scientific evidence of gender-based violence, masculinities, and successful actions to overcome gender-based violence will be introduced. The theories and evidence included have been chosen for their high scientific and social impact: they propose knowledge that helps to overcome violence, which has been validated in multiple international research projects and papers published in indexed journals.

The ultimate purpose of this thesis is to contribute to the end of all violence: that is why focus is set on approaches whose purpose is achieving zero violence. It is from the depths of the iceberg of violence that remain initially unseen (Puigvert-Mallart et al., 2022; Puigvert, 2014; Diez-Palomar et al., 2014), which consists of the socialization processes, where the most visible behaviors are either reproduced or transformed. There are only two ways of relating and interacting as humans, as Flecha states in *The Dialogic Society* (2022): through dialogue or through violence. This thesis is a contribution to how dialogic learning and dialogic communicative acts contribute to a safer and more free society.

#### 1.3.1. Gender-based violence

The definition of gender-based violence (GBV) encompasses a spectrum of violence, violations, and both behaviors and attitudes on the basis of sex and gender. The concept consistently intersects with other dimensions of inequalities, including but not limited to age, ethnicity, disability, and sexuality. UN Women defines it as “violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering, against someone based on gender discrimination, gender role expectations and/or gender stereotypes, or based on the differential power status linked to gender” (2016, p. 10). For the European Commission, “violence that affects persons of a particular gender disproportionately” is also another way of acknowledging GBV.<sup>10</sup>

Based on this definition of gender-based violence, we will discuss in this section the two groups defined by sex and gender that suffer the most violence: women and LGBTI+ people (EU-LGBTI, 2020). In addition, we will include a less prevalent but sociologically relevant gender-based violence experienced by men who do not follow a dominant masculinity

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<sup>10</sup> [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-based-violence/what-gender-based-violence\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-based-violence/what-gender-based-violence_en)

profile (Council of Europe, 2019, EIGE, n.d.; Valls-Carol et al., 2021). Finally, we will introduce a type of gender-based violence recently conceptualized scientifically and with legislative support, called isolating gender violence: violence against people who defend victims of GBV (Flecha et al., 2024).

Within gender-based violence, different types of violence have been typified at the international level, different ways of expressing the same way of behaving and relating: from domination, power, contempt. These include, but are not limited to, physical, verbal, sexual, psychological, and socio-economic violence (UN General Assembly, 1993). At the end of this conceptual framework, we will indicate another type of GBV recently typified in some parliaments with unanimity, the isolating gender violence. This violence can be exercised by a stable partner, by a sporadic affective-sexual relationship, by someone known or unknown.

Among the most severe forms of GBV, sexual assault refers to any sexual behavior that takes place without the consent of the victim, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. This includes, but is not limited to, rape (Duque et al., 2023). It mostly affects women and children, but also adult men to a lesser but still large extent (Smith et al., 2018). Other LGBTI+ people also suffer from it (Tilley et al., 2020). The latest evidence on consent for any sexual relationship enables defining that “it should be affirmative, agreed, free, informed, without coercion, based on the lack of interactive power and institutional power, extended from the beginning until the end of each sexual engagement, based on the non-verbal communicative acts” (Flecha, Tomás & Vidu, 2020, p. 7). Any sexual act where this has not been met can be considered non-consensual, abuse or assault.

GBV occurs in all types of contexts and interactions. Regarding violence in affective-sexual relationships, not only is it not limited to intimate partner relationships, but research is showing how it occurs with great prevalence in sporadic relationships (Flecha et al., 2024; Puigvert et al., 2019). Besides, it can happen in any space, from a company to an association or non-profit organization, and from the earliest ages: it happens in educational centers and non-formal education movements (Mackinem & Laufersweiler-Dwyer, 2024) from primary education through university (UNESCO & UN Women, 2016; Dueñas et al., 2021; Valls et al., 2016).

Nevertheless, research on school violence and bullying does not usually consider a gender dimension. This mistake ignores the fact that, on many occasions, the people who engage in bullying and gender-based violence are the same ones (Espelage et al., 2022; Espelage, Basile & Hamburger, 2012; Basile et al., 2009; Duque & Teixido, 2016). School-

related gender-based violence (SRGBV) is defined as “acts or threats of sexual, physical or psychological violence occurring in and around schools, perpetrated as a result of gender norms and stereotypes, and enforced by unequal power dynamics” (UNESCO & UN Women, 2016, p. 20). It happens in all countries and across cultural and economic differences within societies. It affects children and youth, but also families and communities. This concept is quite recent, a fact that is explained by a social misunderstanding that gender-based violence happens from the age of adolescence onwards. Nonetheless, having suffered violence during primary or secondary education increases the risk of physical or sexual abuse in girls (Exner-Cortens, Eckenrode & Rothman, 2013).

The latter is one of the worst outcomes within revictimization. However, there are others that are very prevalent: one of the most serious is to suffer isolation or further attacks after daring to report, formally or informally, the violence suffered (Puigvert, Soler-Gallart & Vidu, 2022; Pulido et al., 2021). Trivialization and lack of empathy also generate harm that can additionally remain invisible. For instance, in online contexts, when a woman shares an experience of sexual harassment and some men jump in saying that “not all men”, this silences and discredits the victim (Spewak, 2023).

Indeed, new digital contexts have generated new channels, formats, and expressions of violence. The main characteristic of technology-facilitated violence<sup>11</sup> (Mitchell et al., 2022) is that it is usually facilitated by the anonymity of the sender, the physical and emotional distance from the receiver and the sense of impunity (European Commission, 2024). Online violence can translate to offline harassment. Some of these forms of digital violence are nonconsensual sharing photos or information from others (Henry, Flynn & Powell, 2020; Chen, Cheung & Chan, 2019), impersonating, or cyberstalking (March et al., 2022), among others. Memes are also frequently used as violence (Dracket et al., 2018). Moreover, hate speech is easier than ever to disseminate through social media (Chan, 2023). Cyberbullying and various forms of digital violence are more widespread than at any previous time (Abreu & Kenny, 2017). Women are more likely to experience online sexual harassment than men (European Commission, 2024); regarding hate speech, women are the main target of online hate speech, receiving more violent posts, with explicit and dehumanizing language (FRA, 2023).

Given the importance of language and, more broadly, communicative acts (Rios-González et al., 2018; Flecha & Soler, 2010) in the three investigations of the thesis, we

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<sup>11</sup> UN Women: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2023/04/technology-facilitated-violence-against-women-taking-stock-of-evidence-and-data-collection>

specifically address this aspect in relation to violence. Communicative acts involve examining both verbal and non-verbal language, understanding the impact of the social context in which interactions take place, and considering the intentions and accountability for the outcomes of the entire communicative act (Rodríguez-Navarro et al., 2014). In other words, it is essential to take into account the context of the interaction, and it does not matter the initial intention of the sender, but the consequences that his communicative act generates in the receiving party. It is clear that not only the explicit use of words can give rise to violence, because communicative acts of power can be expressed through a simple gaze, or even through suddenly ignoring a person with whom someone has a relationship -ghosting (Powell et al., 2021).

It must be said that certain traditional, somewhat sexist attitudes, are not violence. Nonetheless, the term "micromachismos" (sexist microaggressions, or soft violence) is promoted in Spanish contexts without international scientific backing -it has not been published in journals in JCR- (López de Aguilera et al., 2021). The lack of empirical basis prevents the testing of their hypotheses and theoretical conceptualizations. No robust data are presented to ratify the typologies of machismo but neither are the beneficial effects of such differentiation. The few articles that are found only weakly recognize the influence of invisible violence in couple relationships in their results. Moreover, it does not allow a robust explanation of the causes of gender violence. Furthermore, this term was inspired by Foucault (Bonino, 2008), who was an advocate of the depenalization of pederasty (Valls et al., 2022). Some examples used in an attempt to justify this term are a waiter giving the beer to the man and the soft drink to the woman, a man always opening the door for a woman, or a man holding something heavy for her. They argue that these expressions are invisibilized and thus become the most harmful forms of perpetuating male domination. Nevertheless, in the scientific international community this concept does not exist, and there is no agreement on which behaviors constitute micromachismos. Consequently, some acts of violence against women may be dismissed as microaggressions, diminishing their gravity and significance, such as asking a woman on a job interview if she wants to become a mom, or telling a boy that he "runs like a girl". Not cooking cannot be compared to looking down on a woman. International scientific literature speaks of communicative acts of power and violence (Flecha, 2022; Portell & Pulido, 2012).

Coming back to communicative acts, humor is a use of language, not only spoken, which can often be used to ridicule, as well as to perpetuate power relations (Greenwood & Gautam, 2020; Rees & Monrouxe, 2010; Abedinifard, 2016). Humor can be used as a dialogic communicative act (Hay, 2000), but here we refer to when its use -such as reprimands, jokes,



teasing, or others- are intended or generate a harmful effect. An example are those acts that border on homophobia (McCann et al., 2010), and that among other consequences, as we will see in the next section, reinforce a single permissible model of what it means to be a man.

Allowing and perpetuating milder forms of violence generates a context that facilitates the worst expressions of violence (Rios-González et al., 2019); nevertheless, it is the latter that are most visible, for example in the Spanish news about femicides and vicarious violence. Some data and specific characteristics of violence against women, LGBTI+ people and non-dominant men will now be presented.

### **1.3.1.1. Violence against women**

Violence against women affects all women and girls (European Commission, 2024). We will highlight some data based on research and surveys by international organizations.

Violence is clearly explainable on the basis of gender. While it is undeniable that the majority of homicides in the world are committed against men and boys (80% in 2022), when we focus on close and not eminently warlike or belligerent contexts, such as the home, women and girls are disproportionately affected by homicidal violence: 53% of all vital home victims are women; moreover, 66% of intimate partner killings target female victims, contrasting with only 12% involving male victims (UNDOC & UN Women, 2023).

The majority of homicides against women and girls are driven by gender-based motives. In 2022, approximately 48,800 women and girls worldwide lost their lives at the hands of their intimate partners or other family members (UNDOC & UN Women, 2023). Most importantly, as explained by UN Women: “The gender-related killings of women and girls represent the lethal end point of a continuum of gender-based violence, and they usually follow prior experiences of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse”. This information guides us towards prevention and effective action against less definitive forms of gender-based violence as the basis for action.

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights produces European reports based on large-scale surveys. Data from their latest report (FRA, 2014) on interviews to 42.000 women of all EU countries show several representative results at both European and national level: 1 in 3 women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence since the age

of 15; the same proportion, 33% of women and girls, have childhood experiences of physical or sexual violence by an adult. Since the age of 15, 18% of women have encountered stalking. 55% of women have experienced some form of sexual harassment. Regarding sexual-affective relationships, 22% experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a partner, and 43% suffered some type of psychological violence from either a current or former partner. In Spain, in 2023, 56 women were killed by their partners or ex-partners; this number is larger than that of 2022. However, there were also 9 "non-intimate" femicides, referring to sporadic or non-stable relationships. Children are also deadly victims of violence against their mothers or become orphans afterwards.

Returning to sexual violence, non-consensual comments, or interactions in public or private contexts, both in person and in online environments, show that for a certain group of men, which we will define later as traditional dominant masculinity, women are objects of domination (Flecha et al., 2024). In that sense, gang rapes are increasing in Spain (Flecha, Tomás & Vidu, 2020). In a study on teenagers (Katz et al., 2019), 22% of women and 8% of men indicated that they had encountered sexual coercion at least once in their lifetime. Social debates and, unfortunately, laws, continue to be based on obsolete notions of sexual consent, stuck in the "yes means yes" or "only yes means yes": these approaches only focus on verbal acts and puts the responsibility on a person's "yes" when it may have been given out of fear of physical, institutional, or interactive power (Pulido et al, 2024). Therefore, the responsibility of consent is solely on the person in a position of power. As Flecha, Tomás & Vidu explain, "the lack of consent constitutes a crime, and it is therefore aggression" (p. 5). While this becomes clearer, a coercive dominant discourse still plays out with strong social influence, which pressures people to engage in unwanted relationships without critical thought or criteria, and where "disposable", ugly encounters and disdainful hookups are most common (Torrás-Gómez et al., 2024; López de Aguilera Jaussi et al., 2022).

Groups of female friends or acquaintances can be a prevention or risk factor for gender-based violence. For example, the recent study by Hoxmeier, O'Connor & McMahon (2023), analyzed how female participants in college sororities were more likely than women who do not belong to such affiliations "to report experiencing some types of sexual violence, consuming alcohol prior to victimization, and to identify their perpetrator as a hookup/casual partner". The social pressure to engage in as many sexual encounters as possible, irrespective of the characteristics of the other partners, is strengthened among peer groups (Flecha et al, 2024; Racionero-Plaza et al., 2021). Considering that in sporadic relationships potentially violent men are chosen over egalitarian men (Puigvert et al., 2019), this may

explain the rates of gender violence in hookups. More on this analysis will be provided within the description of the models of masculinity.

### 1.3.1.2. Violence against LGBTI+

Violence on the ground of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression is an important part of gender-based violence. The second of the Yogyakarta Principles on the application of international Human Rights Law in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity (n.d.) state that:

“Discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity includes any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on sexual orientation or gender identity that has as its object or as a result the annulment or impairment of equality before the law or equal protection under the law, or the recognition or enjoyment, on equal terms, of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity may be aggravated by discrimination based on other causes, including gender, race, age, religion, disability, health status, and economic status.”

Among lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex (LGBTI) and other Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities (SOGI), the violence suffered has certain nuances. In many countries, certain SOGI are illegal and prosecuted (EU-LGBTI, 2020), and they lack basic human rights. In general terms, data is the same or worse for intersex and trans people (EU-LGBTI, 2020; Taylor et al., 2020). As for violence against women and girls, the Fundamental Rights Agency carried out the largest survey about violence against LGBTI+ in 2020. With over 140.000 thousand LGBTI participants, it included youth from the age of 15 (FRA, 2020).

LGBTI people aged 15 to 17 experience more harassment than their older peers. However, almost half of them (48%) say someone supported, defended, or protected them and their rights as LGBTI people at school. This support drops to 33% for people aged 18 to 24 and to 7% for those 40 and over. This violence towards LGBTI+ youth occurs within educational settings, spanning from formal institutions such as high schools and universities (Coulter & Rankin, 2020), to nonformal environments like leisure activities, sports clubs, and youth associations. All forms of violence previously described for gender-based violence or violence against women also take place against LGBTI+ people, whether physical, sexual,

psychological, and verbal violence (Dueñas et al. 2021). These phenomena are widespread across all educational environments and are seldom formally brought to light through reporting (Gallardo-Nieto et al. 2021).

While some data show improvements from the 2012 LGBT Survey, others are worse (FRA, 2020). First, this European data shows that an increasing number of individuals are frequently or consistently open about being LGBT—52% as opposed to 36% in 2012. Among young people aged 18-24, fewer conceal their LGBT identity in school—41% in 2019 compared to 47% in 2012. Nonetheless, 61% of LGBT individuals still frequently or consistently refrain from holding hands with their same-sex partner in public. Moreover, the level of discrimination in their daily lives has worsened since 2012, particularly affecting trans individuals, with 60% reporting feelings of discrimination in 2019, compared to 43% in 2012. This explains a more active hate and rejection against LGBTI+ than before. In 2019, 58% of LGBT respondents reported experiencing harassment within the five years preceding the survey, compared to 45% in 2012. Reporting rates continue to be low, with only 17% of individuals reporting their experiences of discrimination to an equality body or any other organization, showing a slight increase from 13% in 2012.

In reference to some differences within the LGBTI community, nearly half of bisexual women report being harassed not only because of their sexual orientation but also because of their gender. This proportion is significantly higher than that of any other demographic group. Furthermore, hate crimes targeting bisexual women are the most prone to culminate in instances of sexual violence. Regarding bisexual men, they are the least inclined to openly identify as LGBTI.

Lesbian and gay sexual orientations have been increasingly accepted within our societies. However, bisexuality remains less understood. Moreover, as introduced before, intersex and trans suffer the most discrimination, violence, and social rejection: trans teenagers experience significantly higher levels of discrimination compared to their lesbian, gay, or bisexual peers (Gallardo et al., 2021). Additionally, intersex individuals encounter more discrimination than any other LGBTI group, with one in three citing bullying and violence as the primary challenges faced by intersex people.

Universities are not free of violence against LGBTIQ+ people (Ríos et al., 2022). Moreover, incidents of this nature are seldom reported, particularly if they don't involve physical violence (Dueñas et al., 2021). University staff demonstrate unfamiliarity with the

measures and policies aimed at preventing and intervening in such situations (Gallardo et al., 2021).

### **1.3.1.3. Violence against boys and men who don't follow a Dominant Masculinity**

This section is included within gender-based violence because there is a ubiquitous discrimination and violence towards boys and men who do not adhere to the masculine hegemonic gender identity and expression (Jenkins and Aube, 2002; Pinilla et al., 2014). The European Institute for Gender Equality states that "both women and men experience gender-based violence but the majority of victims are women and girls." (EIGE, n.d.) This violence is mostly but not exclusively perpetrated by dominant men. We will argue why it is crucial to include an analysis of this violence if we seek to end gender-based violence. This form of violence, with the purpose of imposing a single valid form of "successful" masculinity, includes cis heterosexual men as well as gay, bisexual, and trans men. We highlight the first group in this section, as it has not been previously discussed.

Such violence is usually misogynistic and LGBTIphobic, because it usually mentions characteristics of women and LGBTI people as an insult: it is common to hear "like a girl", "don't be a fag", "that is so gay", or "sissies", among many others. In both stances, it is based on gender. However, sometimes the attacks are not so explicit, but they are made from the language of desire (Melgar-Alcantud et al., 2021), emptying these non-dominant guys of any possible attractiveness: thus, we can identify comments such as "that guy is too nice", "what a bore, poor guy", or "that guy would be the ideal husband or father, but he's not sexy" (Gómez, 2015).

The aim is on the one hand to marginalize the one being attacked, "and at the same time elevating themselves and endorsing the misogynistic and homophobic elements of the school's gender regime" (Hamlall and Morrell, 2012, p. 492). Of particular importance is the second objective: these men seek to increase their attractiveness while destroying the attractiveness of others. Thus, they contribute to perpetuating the double standard.

For the most part, it is men that we will define as "traditional dominant masculinity" who exercise this violence (Flecha, Puigvert & Ríos, 2013; Gómez, 2004). However, some women who imitate the male dominant model (Gómez, 2015) also exercise or promote these attacks. This pioneering research of Jesús Gómez, whose publication is now 20 years old, remains absolutely timely. López de Aguilera et al. (2021) found how women who were in relationships

with non-dominant men but recalled with desire past toxic relationships with dominant men dominated those men, ridiculing or talking down on them. bell hooks argued in her book "Feminism is for everybody" (2000) that women are not exempt from sexism and socialization in the patriarchy, and a woman cannot be considered a feminist *per se*. A feminist is someone who is against all violence and who breaks the silence about it in a courageous way. Without denying history and intersectionality, it is important to make it clear that being part of a vulnerable group does not make it impossible to have a dominant or violent profile. This thesis is based on the absolute rejection of violence, whoever it comes from.

#### 1.3.1.4. Isolating Gender Violence

It is considered very relevant to dedicate a section of this thesis to Isolating Gender Violence (IGV), since the dissertation seeks to generate upstanders, active advocates. Initially referred to as second-order sexual harassment or SOSH (Vidu et al., 2021; Madrid et al., 2020; Flecha, 2021; Puigvert et al., 2021), IGV is violence towards these people who position themselves, by the fact of doing so, with the intention of discouraging them from doing so, and with the purpose of being able to continue the harassment or violence (Nazareno et al., 2022; Vidu et al., 2021; Cooper & Blumenfeld, 2012). This form of violence is common and complementary to all other forms of gender-based violence: it does not address the personal characteristics of the subject but their behavior, which is to defend the victims.

The concrete forms that this violence takes are totally varied: from direct attacks that may include death threats, to slander intended to undermine the credibility of these defenders (Vidu et al., 2021; Vidu et al., 2017). The first studies on the health consequences of IGV have been published (Aubert & Flecha, 2021; Flecha et al. 2024), where fear, anxiety and other physical and mental health impacts are perceived by IGV victims.

The IGV has been legally and unanimously recognized as a form of gender violence by the Catalan and Basque parliaments (Vidu, Tomás & Flecha, 2021), and it is included in protocols against violence from scientific organizations.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Check for instance the zero-violence statement from the University Association on Science, Feminism and Masculinities: <https://www.cicfem.com/violencia-0?lang=en>

### 1.3.2. Consequences of gender-based violence

Fatal consequences of gender-based violence have already been introduced. The victims are the first to be affected, but the negative consequences go far beyond that and extend to the rest of the people in that context; ultimately, as we will argue, they affect society as a whole.

First of all, victims of gender-based violence may suffer a wide range of health and daily life problems. The health implications encompass diminished self-esteem, an increased likelihood of various psychological and physical illnesses, and even suicidal ideation (Poštuvan et al., 2019), among other effects (Almeida et al., 2009; Ellsberg et al., 2008; Devries et al., 2011; Gallardo-Nieto et al., 2021). In their daily lives, the ability to continue living their lives is clearly impaired. In the case of students, victimization is observed to correlate with diminished academic achievements, increased absenteeism, and a greater inclination to consider dropping out of high school or discontinuing further education (Aragon et al., 2014; Joanpere & Morlà, 2019). In relation to work, victims may also decrease their productivity or need to take medical leave (Leander et al., 2012). Outside the context of education or work, violence and discrimination lead to behavioral adjustments that limit the freedom of victims, who may make efforts to hide their sexual orientation, be in a dysfunctional state of hypervigilance, discard dreams of the future and truncate their life trajectory (Joanpere & Morlà, 2019).

Victims report negative consequences not only of episodes or situations of violence when perpetrated by aggressors: they also highlight the inadequate or harmful response by the people in their environment who may either remain impassive, look the other way, trivialize the situation, and not believe them, or justify the perpetrators (Potter, Fountain & Stapleton, 2012; Poštuvan et al., 2019). All these reactions result in the feeling of loneliness of the victims, who are at that moment revictimized. The absence of support exacerbates the described negative consequences for victims, impeding their journey towards becoming survivors and overcoming the adverse effects they have endured.

In addition, the inaction of people who are aware of the violence a victim suffers influences the real sense of impunity of harassers, who feel free to continue harassing; thus, more violence will lead to more negative consequences for the victims. The consequences of isolating gender violence also reach first-order victims: seeing their defenders suffer violence takes a toll on them (Flecha et al., 2024; Aubert & Flecha, 2021).

On a second level, gender-based violence has consequences in the direct environment: it becomes hostile and unsafe (Joanpere & Morlà, 2019). The rest of the people,

who have not been directly attacked, increase their feelings of anxiety and nervousness because, in such a context, they can become victims at any moment. In the absence of effective actions, violence does not create rebellion but fear; it fosters bystanders instead of upstanders (Flecha, 2021).

Third, society as a whole is affected by gender-based violence. Each act of violence, without a corresponding effective reaction, perpetuates negative traditional socialization and contributes to the normalization and internalization of violence (Poštuvan et al., 2019). Moreover, the costs of gender-based violence, including in economic terms, are studied by countries and by the European Union (EIGE, 2021).

### 1.3.3. Masculinities and GBV

One of the thematic focuses of this thesis is masculinities in relation to gender-based violence, whether they are those who exert violence, those who are attacked, or those who actively and successfully take a stand. Men make up almost half of the world's population. To end gender-based violence and gender inequalities, it is essential to conduct scientific and transformative analyses that provide evidence-based solutions regarding masculinities.

Theory and research on masculinities have been developed for more than fifty years (Kessler et al., 1985; Giddens, 1995; Connell, 1987; Kimmel, Hearn & Connell, 2004; Hearn et al., 2012). The origins of men's studies contributed, through Raewyn Connell, the concept of "hegemonic masculinities" (1987, 2005), stating that they display aggressiveness and domination. Kimmel also develops the characteristics of this masculinity from its analysis of American manhood (1996): distance from femininity, higher status than women, rudeness and avoid showing feelings, and risk and aggressiveness may be presented as natural male traits. Authors such as Gilmore (1990), through anthropological research, make an important contribution when they analyze that in non-western cultures there are male leader models which are far from the latter descriptions and can be peaceful (Ríos, 2015). Indeed, Seidler (1994) proves that masculinity can be transformed and accepts increasing diversity.

Men's studies have also identified groups of men who reject traditional or hegemonic masculinities as well as gender-based violence. *Pro-feminist men* stood in support of feminist movements from the nineties, and lately Kaufman (2001) described as *egalitarian men* those actively involved in the fight to eradicate violence against women and advocate for gender equality. From those initial theoretical and experimental research advances on the men's studies, the last years have seen an ever-increasing proliferation of scholarship around



masculinities from a diversity of fields (Rios-González & Peña-Axt, 2022). Analyses on hegemonic masculinities continue to be developed, but other productions are increasingly focusing on new masculinities or alternative masculinities (Morris & Ratajczak, 2019). Some initiatives involving men who may portray masculinities that help overcome gender-based violence are the White Ribbon Campaign (Kaufman, 2001), #HeForShe (UN Women, 2018) or Men in Dialogue (Serradell, Santa Cruz & Mondéjar, 2014).

In recent years, research has collected the social progress made towards accepting a greater diversity of forms of expression of masculinity (Rios, 2015): that includes behaviors previously considered feminine and non-masculine (mainly heterosexual), such as vulnerability, expressing emotions or feelings, clothing or physical style, or physical contact between men. However, what remains greatly influential is the coercive discourse that makes dominant behaviors look attractive (Flecha et al., 2024); moreover, those superficial changes have also not been coupled with increasing boys' and men's active positioning against violence and in favor of egalitarian relationships. These conceptualizations of masculinities that have been created, therefore, have the gap of not connecting to the fulfillment of SDGs such as gender equality, since they raise mostly intrapersonal reflections of each man's individual behavior. Moreover, it ends up reaching, with a blaming discourse, mostly to non-violent men, even if they have some small sexist attitudes.

Fortunately, there exists within the preventive socialization of gender-based violence a conceptualization of masculinities (Flecha, Puigvert & Rios, 2013) that does contribute to the global goals. There is extensive and ever-increasing scientific literature around three models of masculinity within that conceptualization (Padròs et al., 2021). Two of these models follow patriarchal patterns that perpetuate gender-based violence; the third, New Alternative Masculinities, is the real alternative that encompasses all boys and men desired by people who want an end to violence and who seek ideal relationships. It should be noted that this categorization is based on "ideal types": boys and men, although not necessarily representing 100% of the attributes of a model, relate to one of them.

Before deepening on those masculinity models, a note should be made. Despite the exponential growth of research on masculinities, this field has not been free of harmful hoaxes, that is, false claims not based on evidence. Here are some of the most damaging ones<sup>13</sup> and their consequences. The statement "all men are the same" equates rapists with those who are only attracted to and choose relationships with consent. The phrase "boys will be boys" posits the immutability of these supposed characteristics common to boys and men. The hoax "all

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<sup>13</sup> The Sappho platform includes statements made by citizens, classified as scientific evidence or hoax depending on the evidence provided: [socialimpactscience.org/gender/themes/masculinities/](https://socialimpactscience.org/gender/themes/masculinities/)

men are potential aggressors" raises a farcical relativism that is impossible to disprove. The idea that "when a guy gets aroused, he becomes irrational" asserts that men don't care about the other person's consent (Conlin & Heesacker, 2018; Towns & Terry, 2014).

Indeed, not all men reproduce sexism and violence (Joanpere & Morlà, 2019). These statements may be raised from those who have only experienced or know of disdainful and violent relationships (Flecha et al., 2024). They are raised from a reactionary postmodernism that states that, as sexual-affective relationships will always result in a negative experience, "at least have someone who excites you", which predominantly equates to choosing a dominant person who leads to negative consequences (Puigvert et al., 2019). These unscientific approaches are very harmful because they prevent alliances with and trust in egalitarian men, who are viewed with suspicion, because "they are part of the enemy". This is just as prejudice-based and reactionary a position as saying that all women are manipulative.

#### **1.3.3.1. Dominant Traditional Masculinities**

The first category includes men with a dominant attitude. Not all Dominant Traditional Masculinities (DTM) men are violent, but all violent men are within the DTM type (McCarry, 2010; Hamlall & Morrell, 2012; UN Women, 2020). The common traits are summarized in the well-known "bad boy" attitude: cocky, egocentric, narcissistic, unsupportive, self-serving. The same behaviors are seen in men who portray such a model, independent of age: they are equally aimed at oppressing and having power over others; so be it against women, LGBTI+ people, non-dominant men, ethnic or cultural minorities, people with physical or other differences.

There are two new features of our societies and interactions that increase the diversity of DTM profiles. First, new forms of violence in digital contexts make it easier to overcome the stereotype of the high school sports bully: now, boys and men with self-concept issues also perpetrate all kinds of harassment through the convenience of their electronic device (Mitchell et al., 2022; Ging, 2017). Secondly, in recent years, the previously existing process of redefining traditional masculinity has accelerated: cultural changes have modified what is normal in the expression of traditional masculinity. We are referring to superficial traits, in many cases physical, such as depilating or dressing in ways that were previously considered feminine or homosexual. However, this broadening of certain forms of expression continues to be validated by men who maintain the foundational characteristics of hegemonic or traditional dominant masculinity. Therefore, the key is not whether a boy or man looks tough, whether he expresses his feelings or not, what physical appearance he has, or whether he

plays more or less video games; the question is whether he does in fact exercise violence and power relations (Myrntinen, 2018; Jeleniewski Seidler, 2007; Eisen & Yamashita, 2019). In this sense, adherence to traditional masculinity has been studied to decrease bystander intervention (Leone & Parrott, 2019; Leone et al., 2016).

Dominant traditional men promote a way of expressing masculinity, usually in a heterosexual way. This explains some of the data in the European LGBTI report: gay men, along with bisexual men, exhibit the highest tendency to refrain from holding hands with their partners in public. Moreover, they are more inclined to avoid specific locations out of fear of facing attacks compared to lesbian or bisexual women (FRA, 2020).

As stated earlier, "hegemonic masculinity not only exerts control over women but also creates hierarchies among men, frequently sidelining those who do not conform to the prevailing model of masculinity" (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). Some of these dominant men reject what they consider feminine and unmanly at any given moment. However, and overcoming the thesis of Judith Butler's (1990) heteronormative matrix, we can also find non-heterosexual men who interact with other people and in their relationships from the perspective of domination and power. Indeed, rejection to dominant behaviors is necessary, whomever they come from. In fact, in 2004, Jesús Gómez already pointed out how there are women who imitate the dominant model and reproduce it in their way of relating to others (Gómez, 2004, 2015).

If we focus on affective-sexual relationships and consent, we find within the profile of dominant traditional men those who are not concerned about what the people with whom they have relationships want and desire (Duque et al., 2023). With this analysis, therefore, we also help to locate the problem of consent in this group of men, and we do not generalize it to all. As we said before, it is within this dominant profile that we find those who are violent against women or other people (McCarry, 2010; Duque et al., 2020).

And not only are they the ones who are violent, but they are also the ones who put up all kinds of obstacles to prevent discussions that help overcome this way of relating to each other. For example, they are the ones who say "NotAllMen" in a negative way. One research study delved into the social effects of this use of language (Spewak, 2023, p. 11-12):

Like '#AllLivesMatter', speakers introduced '#NotAllMen' as a derailment tactic except against women highlighting pervasive abuse. When women highlight violence by men, they foreground needed change, a perlocutionary goal. Some men respond by drawing attention away from that conversation toward their own fears regarding false accusations. These speakers respond using '#NotAllMen' because not all men

abuse women. Thus, '#NotAllMen' works as a defense tactic. Men who never abused women act defensively instead of compassionately”.

It is worth mentioning that some dictates of that traditional masculinity lead them to have negative consequences in their life and health, mainly due to risky behaviors such as worse eating, alcohol, and other drug abuse (WHO, 2018), reckless driving or lack of quality and deep interactions of help and support (Addis & Mahalik, 2003).

Last, “men’s rights” movements have lately garnered increasing popularity facilitated by the Internet. All these movements together make up what has been called the Manosphere (Ging, 2017; Marwick & Caplan, 2018; García-Mingo & Fernández, 2023). Although they have diverse beliefs, some common elements are anti-feminism, misogynistic and anti-scientific discourses. Some of them are involuntary celibates (incels), masculinist groups, men's rights activists, pick-up artists, or men going their own way. They use sites such as YouTube or Reddit to reinforce their ideas, which foster hate speech and online harassment, but can also translate to offline violence. As a matter of fact, they have been studied as a form of extremism. That connects with the need to link gender-based violence within the conceptual and theoretical framework of terrorism and hate speech (Chan, 2023).

#### **1.3.3.2. Oppressed Traditional Masculinities**

This second model of masculinity is also traditional, but oppressed (Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2021; Duque et al., 2021; Flecha, Puigvert & Ríos, 2013). It is traditional because they continue to understand relationships from the perspective of power, in which a person is either above or below. They are oppressed because, from that prism, they are unsuccessful, and they accept their position by submitting to other people due to a lack of self-confidence and attractiveness. These boys and men do not have a dominant or violent attitude, but they are no alternative to the dominant ones, since they lack the courage and strength to stand up to them and be a model of social success to displace the dominant ones. Not seeing the possibility of egalitarian relationships triumphing in the world, the danger is that these boys and men may wish to be like the dominant ones as the only way to stop being oppressed (Flecha, Puigvert & Rios, 2013, p. 101). Some of their behaviors also worsen their health, such as lack of security or low self-esteem (Flecha, Puigvert & Rios, 2013, p. 101). It is important to stress that these boys are not to blame for being boxed into this oppressed profile, although, as we will see, they do have agency to break out of that profile (Gómez, 2004).

In the following section we will connect both traditional models of masculinity with the concept of "dominant coercive discourse", which is key to understanding the social success of dominant masculinities and the failure of oppressed masculinities.

### **1.3.3.3. Coercive dominant discourse**

This concept is a social creation (Aiello & Joanpere, 2014) that explains a social process that permeates our societies in a multitude of spheres and levels of socialization, and which is at the basis of gender-based violence. The dominant coercive discourse (Puigvert and Flecha, 2018; Puigvert et al., 2019) is a way of understanding people and relationships that breaks with the classic union between goodness, truth and beauty: it has managed to take away the attractiveness of egalitarian and supportive behaviors, while giving attractiveness to dominant, even violent, behaviors and people (Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2020; Racionero-Plaza et al., 2021).

There are different channels through which this discourse is reproduced and perpetuated. Some audiovisual products -movies, series, video clips, commercials, songs, content on social networks-, but also written ones such as novels or magazines, have managed to be very successful while presenting real or fictitious people who are conflictive or violent as attractive (Villarejo-Carballido et al., 2022). But it is not only these products: in a key way, the day-to-day social interactions, especially of those people who generate more influence on each person, are determinant, and many times they promote this coercive discourse. Thus, although in childhood it may be the adult reference figures, from adolescence onwards it is the ideas and opinions of peers that most influence personal tastes and decisions in this regard.

The main consequence of the coercive discourse, in relation to masculinities, is that the profile of the dominant boy or man is seen as attractive, exciting, fun, cunning (Rodríguez-Mello et al., 2021): this is how it is felt by people, dominant or oppressed, who live according to a traditional model of relationships. Other people who only desire egalitarian relationships and people do not find their desire enslaved to these behaviors and people, but they are equally aware that this discourse exerts social pressure (Torras-Gómez et al., 2020).

Understanding this social discourse helps to explain why people, especially boys, misbehave with others: acting this way brings them benefits in different terms. Dominant men, and women who imitate this model, value them in different ways: explicitly, they laugh at their behaviors and choose them more as friends, flirts, or partners; internally, they see them as

more attractive, more leaders or stronger, and they transmit this with their verbal and non-verbal communicative acts. Also oppressed boys, and girls who do not feel attractive (Torras-Gómez et al., 2019), put these boys and men on a pedestal. Thus, they allow them to behave in ways that they would not allow in egalitarian children. bell hooks said it in "All about love":

“One of the longest romantic relationships of my life was one in which I behaved in the more traditional manner of placing it above all other interactions. When it became destructive, I found it difficult to leave. I found myself accepting behavior (verbal and physical abuse) that I would not have tolerated in a friendship.” (bell hooks, 2000, p. 136)

This coercive discourse, and inaction in the face of it, makes traditional dominant masculinities attractive not despite their behavior, but precisely because of their morally undesirable but socially learned irresistible behavior. Gómez (2015) argues how love is social: it is not biological, chemical, irrational, or inexplicable. Attraction and choice have an enormous social influence. Thus, it is not that guys and people attract more if they are more stereotypically handsome and attractive; moreover, what is considered attractive in each time and culture varies enormously. The key is in the attitude and the way of relating to others. From a traditional socialization -which does not influence everyone equally (Torras-Gómez, 2020; Gómez, 2015; Duque et al., 2023)- who attracts is the one who behaves with a dominant attitude.

That is why, in the convenient absence of truly alternative models, traditional oppressed masculinities are the perfect complement for the dominant, because the former occupy the places that the dominant do not want to take -being the friend who listens to you, typical of the "friendzone" (Flecha, 2022, p. 139), or the boyfriend who gives you stability- (Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2021), and allow the dominant to continue occupying those they do want to occupy, such as the lover or womanizer (Gómez, 2015).

The dominant coercive discourse and double standards negatively influence initiatives with supposedly positive and noble aims. Thus, some approaches to masculinities that are present in society can produce the effect of generating more oppressed masculinities, perpetuating, and further increasing the attractiveness of dominant traditional masculinities (DTM), and ultimately fostering more DTM and more violence. This happens whenever the masculinities approach does not unite two languages that the coercive discourse separated: the language of desire and the language of ethics (Melgar-Alcantud et al., 2021).

The *language of desire* is any communicative act whose effect is to give or take away attractiveness. In its affirmative use -giving attractiveness- you can say "that guy is a hotshot",

"I want to be like you", "you are the one I feel best with", or you can share a look of pure desire, among other examples. In its negative use -taking away attractiveness- examples of language of desire are: a look of disgust or absolute indifference, "I wouldn't touch him with a stick", "what an ignorant", or "what a loser". On the other hand, the *language of ethics* is more widely used: it indicates what is morally right and wrong, what people should or should not do. That said, if we only use the language of ethics in approaches to masculinities, we find the following: messages about what "men" are doing wrong, or campaigns that make egalitarian men look childish.

The danger is that there are men with a traditional oppressed profile who, aware of the coercive discourse, know that if they start behaving in a dominant way they will be better seen, they will flirt more, they will make more "friends". There is research that already shows evidence of these "transformations" (Flecha, Puigvert & Rios, 2013). This is the social pressure that, since the beginning of men's studies, authors such as Connell raise, for boys to follow a dominant model. Thus, approaches based only on the language of ethics are counterproductive and produce more gender-based violence and worse relationships.

If we have our sights set on social transformation and the end of gender-based violence, the scientific evidence of social impact offers us the New Alternative Masculinities (NAM).

#### **1.3.3.4. New Alternative Masculinities**

As we have just stated, the New Alternative Masculinities approach has the greatest potential social impact, since it incorporates the various scientific evidence introduced above for overcoming violent relationships. Faced with traditional models of masculinity, society needs a truly alternative model, an ideal model to which egalitarian and non-violent boys and men would like to aspire. In 2013, and after years of in-depth work, a conceptualization of this alternative was presented under the name of New Alternative Masculinities (NAM).

This conceptualization, the NAM, has been studied in an interdisciplinary manner and with different perspectives, uninterruptedly over the last ten years. Thus, there are studies from education (Gómez, 2015), sociology (Rodríguez-Mello et al., 2021), psychology and health (Rios-González et al., 2021), or communication (Villarejo-Carballido et al., 2022).

The New Alternative Masculinities unite the language of ethics with the language of desire: we find in the same person the values, feelings and egalitarian, kind, supportive and fair behaviors, along with fun, freedom, courageous and safe positioning. They are good and

at the same time attractive boys and men, solving Giddens' dilemma (1995), when he said "why can't a good man be sexy?". Three main characteristics define them: self-confidence and security; the courage to take a stand against dominant attitudes; and the clear rejection of double standards (Flecha, Puigvert & Ríos, 2013).

Based on the above, NAMs are totally diverse (Flecha et al., 2013). Diverse in identity and sexual orientation; diverse in their gender expression: with clothes, style, and way of being in the world considered more or less masculine in the current era. Diverse in the style of intimate relationships they choose: with one person or several, in a stable or sporadic relationship, married or not, with or without children, etc. They are diverse in age: there are children, adolescents, young people, adults, and elderly NAM. They are culturally diverse: of any belief, country, or ethnicity (Macías-Aranda & Rios-González, 2021). They are socioeconomically diverse: in the lower and upper classes, with doctorate degrees or illiterate. They are also functionally diverse.

We make the diversity of NAMs so explicit - and surely, we are leaving out sources of diversity - to stop associating alternative masculinities with an educated, white, middle-aged adult male type who wants to stop being macho. That's not what NAMs are. What determines whether a person can identify more or less with the NAM ideal are his attitudes. We will now introduce some specific NAM behaviors that we will see reflected in the fieldwork of this thesis.

NAMs wish and act towards the freedom of everyone to be, express their identities and live their lives however they choose to. Firstly, because as we have said there are gay, bisexual and trans NAMs. Even so, for now most men identify as heterosexual: straight NAMs are allies to LGBTI+ but to anyone really who wants to live egalitarian relationships and may be targeted for different reasons such as sex, gender expression, sexual orientation, culture, religion, language, age, etc. In this exercise of guaranteeing freedom and safe spaces, NAMs are the ones who take a firm and clear stand against any form of gender-based violence. They are the truly feminist men who have always existed (hooks, 2000). They always take the side of the victims and never justify violent acts for any reason. As they are the ones who take a stand against domination and violence, they may suffer isolating gender violence (Nazareno et al., 2022). Fortunately, the relationships they weave, whether friendships, partnerships, or family relationships, are quality relationships: this allows them to count on support and solidarity networks.

Men embracing New Alternative Masculinities seek relationships characterized by an inseparable blend of freedom, equality, and passion, thus emphasizing the importance of obtaining desired consent from all parties involved. NAM helps break double standards in



society, because they unite in the same person good values and passion (Gómez, 2015). They contribute to unite in men romanticism, ideal love, ideal relationships with maximum feelings, commitment, of course in a reciprocal way, neither above nor below (Joanpere et al., 2021).

NAM boys and men are part of dialogic feminism (Pulido et al., 2021; Flecha & Puigvert, 2010). This feminism recognizes that there are always men and women, and others, supporting aggressors; and men, women and others supporting the victims. It is a scientific feminism, which seeks consensus, and is not based on a particular ideology but is diverse. It is a scientific feminism that overcomes hoaxes, and does not put all men "in the same bag". NAM men, therefore, do say "not all men", but from this approach: however, they of course criticize the negative use of #NotAllMen when used as an argument employed to divert focus from men in conversations regarding sexual assault, sexism, and other feminist concerns; in fact, they criticize Men's Rights Activists groups that are DTM profile and give this use to the concept of "not all men" in their misogynist online discourses. NAMs are brave to publicly take a stand against such discourses, and make a scientific and transformative use of NotAllMen. From dialogic feminism, many women are also clear about this. Of course, NAM do not have this idea as a slogan, but, if anything, something along the lines of #YesAllWomen (Morikawa, 2019) or #YesAllLGBTI+, in reference to the sexism and violence that all women and LGBTI+ do suffer in one way or another. It is this reality, with crushing and harsh data, that motivates the *raison d'être* of NAMs. It is not mansplaining when a man talks about gender issues, it is allowing egalitarian dialogue that includes egalitarian men.

Pinilla et al. (2014) studied men engaging in 'Egalitarian Men Groups' in Spain, exploring their interactions with feminists to assess their contributions to combating gender-based violence and promoting gender equality. The study revealed that certain feminists in positions of authority established hierarchical relationships with these men who had egalitarian values, leading some male colleagues to adopt a submissive stance. NAM men reject this type of relationship: they are not afraid to take a stand in front of communicative acts which are apparently performed from some feminist standpoints, but which in reality are against these ideals and even perpetuate gender violence. For their part, they seek and establish egalitarian relationships with feminist women based on the premise exemplified by Nobel Prize-winning neuroscientist Rita Levi Montalcini in relation to her fellow researcher Stanley Cohen: "you and I are good, but together we are wonderful" (Levi-Montalcini, 1988, in Oliver et al., 2023).

Primer & Moss-Racusin (2009) suggested the importance of implementing changes in discourse surrounding men to foster gender equality. They proposed that recognizing men who actively support women's endeavors for equality as strong individuals would fundamentally shift the dialogue, highlighting that such actions require considerable strength

as a man. In this regard, the New Alternative Masculinities (NAM) movement has successfully embraced a perspective that merges the language of desire with ethical considerations in their daily communicative acts. By doing so, they have garnered the attention of young men to their cause, demonstrating the possibility of being staunchly opposed to gender violence (Joanpere and Morlà, 2019) while simultaneously refusing to accept being marginalized or devalued (Serradell et al., 2014).

We return to the dominant coercive discourse in our societies to comment that this has effects on some people's perception of NAMs. For those whose desire is enslaved in disdainful relationships (Racionero et al., 2021), NAM behaviors and men are not equally attractive and desirable, because although these boys and men have a lot of security and strength, egalitarian and ethical values and attitudes are a demotivating element for those people (López de Aguilera et al., 2021; Torras-Gómez et al., 2022). NAMs are aware of this: from the outset, they do not seek to please or be liked by everyone; but they are clear that they do not want to surround themselves with those who desire dominant people, and so it is easy for them to discard people with enslaved desire to focus their attention and motivation on those who are egalitarian and truly free.

There are NAM celebrities, as far as we are concerned, but above all there are anonymous NAMs, all around us, every day. What happens is that the coercive discourse has made them invisible, and even people who do not submit to the coercive discourse sometimes do not end up publicly valuing these behaviors, filling them with all the attractiveness and desire that will contribute in a key way in a preventive socialization of gender-based violence.

### 1.3.4. Successful actions against gender-based violence

Gender-based violence, in all its manifestations, has been a global health problem for decades: currently, the fifth Sustainable Development Goal is about Gender Equality (UNESCO, 2017). It is on national and international agendas in most countries of the world (European Commission, 2024; European Commission, 2015; Rivers and Swank, 2017). There are widely read scientific journals, such as *Violence Against Women*, which publish diverse research on a weekly basis, some of which are cited in this dissertation. A multitude of projects of varying magnitude are funded that seek to contribute scientific knowledge and products to overcoming violence. However, the data presented above show that we are still far from eradicating violence.

The first situation to denounce is that social initiatives and educational programs are being implemented that are not based on scientific evidence in gender and/or education, and, moreover, that some are even based on hoaxes, such as those already presented on masculinities, or others, such as that romantic love should be avoided (Yuste et al., 2014) or that the focus should be placed on aggressors. The Fundamental Rights Agency calls for evidence-based policies (FRA, p. 10) and, with regards to advancing equality for LGBTI people, they suggest nothing resembling those hoaxes, but rather to focus on building “a culture of zero tolerance towards violence and harassment”, and creating “a safe and supportive environment at school”. Their approach is nonetheless mainly focused on institutional and top-down measures, such as working with teachers and school administrators, formal reporting, and action from the police (EU-LGBTI, n.d.).

Secondly, many projects and programs focus on scientific evidence without social impact. Some focus on generating diagnoses of the problem, from very different and precise angles. On the other hand, many approaches do not focus on prevention either, but rather on the resolution of the problem. In both cases, unfortunately, we know that “the best diagnosis is the autopsy, but it comes too late” (Valls et al., 2020). Most actions do not go to the root of the problem, which as we have previously argued is social relations.

Almost half of the world's population is male. The evidence is clear, as in this recent meta-analysis (Alsina et al., 2024), that interventions that also include men are more effective in preventing intimate partner violence. Orchowsky et al. (2020) found that preventive programs against sexual assault should encompass training for both women, men, and all potential bystanders. On the other hand, we have both boys and girls in educational centers and non-formal organizations, and we cannot exclude some of them from the educational

actions we implement. This does not mean, as we shall see, that all actions must be carried out in gender-mixed contexts.

Patriarchy has imposed a law of silence which isolates victims. Breaking this law of silence was achieved globally, thanks to social networks, through #MeToo movement (Clark-Parsons, 2021), or in the Spanish context with the #Cuéntalo movement with the case of “La Manada” (Larrondo et al., 2019). Many women and some other people were given the spotlight to speak out and share their stories. When victims and witnesses are encouraged to report, reality is no longer hidden but faced.

In that sense, the creation of spaces for dialogue on coexistence and violence with a transformative and preventive perspective help not only share stories of violence and discrimination, but to create the conditions for the creation of solidarity networks, where victims and defenders are believed and supported (Roca-Campos et al., 2021). The normalization of many forms of violence has caused the harmful consequence of trivializing when a victim asks for help (Oliver, 2014). Many victims express how what came once they decided to report was far worse than the incident alone (Aubert & Flecha, 2021). Victims feel judged, responsibility is put on them for the violence experienced. Critical training and reflection on all forms of violence, and on the fact that it is always the aggressors’ fault, is key in this sense. Linked to the latter, learning about consent based on communicative acts has been recently studied for its transformative potential (Duque et al., 2023).

To educate and socialize in the feeling of friendship and love that excludes all violence has been studied as fundamental (Gómez et al., 2022; Racionero et al., 2020). Very much connected is the importance to educate and socialize in the capacity of attraction and choice based on scientific evidence about the relationships that prevent or put someone at risk of violence (Gómez, 2015). Agreeing on guidelines to stop aggressors has been proven useful within institutions and for society in informal contexts. In any case, the common element is to agree with the whole community that the context should be a safe space and create an environment that does not tolerate violence. As we will later develop, all those approaches and actions ought to move from the language of ethics to the language of desire: to make the non-violent attractive while making the violent unattractive.

These pieces of evidence can be put into practice at the individual, collective and institutional levels. At the individual level, bystander intervention emerges: as soon as someone is aware of something, they are already a bystander, and there are only two positions: to be part of the problem, if they do nothing in favor of the victims, or to be part of

the solution, if they intervene in some way. At a group level, fostering dialogic environments and solidarity networks is the practice with most evidence (Valls et al., 2016). An example of this, in relation to overcoming violence against LGBTI+, are Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs), affiliated groups of LGBTI+ and non-LGBTI+ people. Studies of participants involved in GSAs have shown academic improvement and fear-based absenteeism decrease (Seelman et al., 2012). This can be done online, networking voices against violence (Banerjee & Kankaria, 2022). At an institutional level, protocols, and standards for action against violence that encourage bystander intervention can be developed, and efforts to ensure compliance of protocols ought to be taken. Training to workers can also become part of the institutional line of prevention: for instance, in educational centers, teachers serve as influential figures and wield significant influence in either perpetuating or reshaping environments that can be hostile for LGBTI+ youth.

The successful action approach, stemming from European research, offers a framework for defining successful educational practices that enhance both social cohesion and academic outcomes in schools across various regions of the globe (Flecha, 2014; Flecha & Soler 2014). These successful actions are transferable to other contexts, such as working environments or public spaces. Nonetheless, from the preventive approach, schools emerge as a crucial context and a great opportunity for intervention (Rios-González et al., 2019). One of the pieces of scientific evidence with the greatest social impact internationally, and which includes several of these keys, is the *bystander intervention*.

#### 1.3.4.1. Bystander intervention

The bystander intervention approach has been widely studied for its social impacts (Moschella & Banyard, 2020; Coker et al., 2020; Ma & Chen, 2019). The premise is simple: the focus of the intervention is on bystanders, who become upstanders when they stand up to violence and discrimination. In this thesis we use a different term when bystanders are active against violence: they become *upstanders*, because they don't "stand by". This approach stressed the need to address the majority of people who are not aggressors or reinforcers of aggressors, so that they protect victims, stand up against harassers and promote positive interactions. There is a growing body of literature suggesting that empowering young individuals to become allies of the LGBT+ community and to intervene in instances of harassment and violence can be an effective strategy (Villarejo-Carballido et al., 2019).

The *Green Dot Bystander Intervention programme* (Coker et al., 2015, Coker et al., 2022) explains violent acts as red dots. If we imagine a physical context where an episode of

violence occurs, that constitutes a red dot. The goal is to neutralize each red dot with a green dot, which would be an upstander positioning. Moreover, green dots can be preventive behaviors, those that transform the context towards zero tolerance of violence: thanks to these second interventions, future red dots are prevented because the environment allows less and less such behavior to go unpunished, and violence is therefore discouraged.

Nonetheless, in situations of interpersonal violence, the current social dynamics make it easier for a majority of people to be inactive bystanders, looking the other way. In the case of a health emergency of a person, known or unknown, people usually come to their aid, because usually there will be no negative consequences after their positioning. However, retaliation -isolating gender violence- encourages many people not to be an upstander (Melgar et al., 2021).

In violence prevention, the approach that focuses on aggressors is obsolete, and the focus shifts to the unpositioned majority. The approach, applied to masculinities and gender, consists of not focusing on the offenders, but on the majority who do not actually perpetrate gender-based violence. We are looking for what in Spanish-speaking contexts is known as "Fuenteovejuna, todos a una" (Fuenteovejuna, all together): the involvement of all agents in the community. In educational contexts, this means intervention by educators and other adults but mainly intervention by the majority of agents, that is, peer children and youth.

Different programs based on bystander intervention, such as Green Dot or "Right to Be" training (2024), establish a didactic tool to understand pragmatically different types of upstander actions, always mindful that whatever action is carried out should help protect the victims (Ford et al., 2024) and hopefully be safe for upstanders also (Moschella & Banyard, 2020). The following possible bystander interventions are described in the literature (Berkowitz, 2002):

1. Distract: to create a diversion that interrupts the hostile or potential incident, without explicitly calling out the problem. A bystander can tell the victim or aggressor that someone needs them; they can also change the topic of conversation.
2. Delay: to care for the victims after the incident, whether because no other intervention was possible, whether to strengthen the support already given, or because sometimes a person is not a direct witness but is made aware afterwards. Finding resources for the victim is another form of delay.
3. Delegate: when a situation is overwhelming for a bystander, they can look for other people's help. These can be other peers or authority figures in each context (older

- youth, adults, educators, staff, the police, etc.). This allows each of them to intervene in different and complementary ways (Coker et al., 2015).
4. Direct: this is the explicit action to stop the situation, call out the negative behavior and defend victims. The rejection towards the incident is short and final, without any intention to engage in a potentially scalable conversation which can never become a dialogue if the other person is using power communicative acts. The evidence on preventive socialization of gender-based violence suggests that direct positioning should always consider the language of desire to empty of attractiveness violence and to give it to kindness and solidarity. Direct action may be more prevalent when bystanders are male or when they know the victims or perpetrators (Palmer, Nicksa & McMahon, 2018).
  5. Diffuse: actions aimed at pacifying the parties involved (Moschella et al., 2018).
  6. Distance: physically separating the individuals by some means (Moschella et al., 2018)
  7. Document: especially useful for social media, documenting can mean taking screenshots of the aggressive comments as evidence. Whatever evidence is documented, also in person, must be given to the victim so that they are in control and can decide what to do with it.

Employing several actions, in contrast to just one, is found to correlate with eliciting more positive feelings and responses from others -victims, perpetrators and other bystanders- (Moschella & Banyard, 2020). Besides, all these types of interventions can be carried out in person or in digital contexts (Kleinsasser et al., 2015). For instance, social media can foster the visibility that upstander comments have, if those posts are more shared and commented. Social movements such as the #HeForShe campaign, which involves men in gender equality and violence prevention, benefited from social media (UN Women, 2018). Against the “manosphere”, online movements of misogynistic men, collective bystander intervention in digital spaces that counteracts the violence is necessary (Spewak, 2023).

#### **1.3.4.1. Preventive socialization of gender-based violence**

Bystander approaches have been studied for their potential to: (a) decrease acceptance of violence; (b) enhance bystander readiness, effectiveness, intentions, and actions; and (c) lower instances of violent victimization and perpetration (Coker et al., 2015). However, research has also described its pitfalls and limitations (Ford et al., 2024). To

strengthen, expand and deepen its impact, evidence has suggested considering and incorporating the evidence on social processes (Flecha, 2022), the traditional attraction models (Diez-Palomar, Capllonch & Aiello, 2014) and the theory of preventive socialization (Valls, Puigvert & Duque, 2008) that sets the alternative to successful and sought behaviors.

To do this, we now revisit the existence of the dominant coercive discourse that encourages many people to have an enslaved desire for dominant people. Socially, we have the challenge of internalizing that people who act in any dominant way are neither fun nor desirable, they do not deserve any kind of attention -apart from shortly calling out their negative actions- or esteem. At the same time, it is essential to create alternative discourses that make egalitarian people -and especially active upstanders- the best friends, peers, and intimate partners. This can be crucial in improving the quality of the relationships, so that they have a total lack of violence or power and a full and pure joy and excitement.

From the position of the person who acts as an upstander, it is essential that this positioning be linked to the language of desire. In this sense, Hay (2000) identified three roles of humor: bolstering solidarity, upholding power dynamics, and addressing psychological needs such as defense mechanisms and coping strategies. When the function of humor is to defend oneself or others, that becomes a strong upstander action far from violence.

With this as a basis, we can identify in the scientific literature successful actions that combine the language of ethics and the language of desire. With regards to masculinities, the three types of masculinity previously identified are of great use to us. In this sense, it is key to take the spotlight away from dominant men and give it to NAM and egalitarian boys. The former, fortunately, has been increasingly done in recent years, with critiques such as the #DontBeThatGuy campaign<sup>14</sup>. In parallel, other initiatives such as Gillette's "The Best A Men Can Get" commercial<sup>15</sup> are promoting NAM without being aware of the theory behind its successful positioning.

Men have historically been involved in movements to end gender-based violence. The first pro-feminist movements have evolved to groups of men to end violence against women, present in the White Ribbon Campaign (Kaufman, 2001; White Ribbon UK, n.d.) or HeForShe (UN Women, 2018). However, among the diverse social movements of men, some of them are not linked to social transformation but rather on intrapersonal reflection. In this dissertation

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<sup>14</sup> <https://that-guy.co.uk/>

<sup>15</sup> Check Gillette's commercial: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UYaY2Kb\\_PKI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UYaY2Kb_PKI)



we highlight those whose purpose is to foster actions that help eradicate gender-based violence, and specifically those who promote New Alternative Masculinities.

In this sense, the Men in Dialogue group started two decades ago (Serradell, Santa Cruz & Mondéjar, 2014) and gathered a group of diverse men to debate around the scientific evidence on masculinities and gender violence prevention. The Tagore Group of Men in Dialogue was founded ten years ago inspired by the first group, and this group initially was formed by educators who met monthly to do dialogic gatherings where they discussed previously read texts. Both groups joined together in the current Network of New Alternative Masculinities. These groups are linked to women from dialogic feminism, such as CREA Safo or Scheherazade. The dialogic society theorized and studied in a leading way by Ramón Flecha (2022) shows how these movements and people confront non-egalitarian relations while building alternatives in their daily lives.

#### 1.3.4.1. Successful Educational Actions

We need educational actions that promote New Alternative Masculinities in educational centers. Preventive socialization of gender-based violence permeates all Successful Educational Actions (SEAs), as they are based on the seven principles of dialogic learning, among which we highlight *egalitarian dialogue*, *solidarity*, *transformation*, and the *creation of meaning* (Racionero & Padrós, 2010). These SEAs are transferable to any educational context. The SEAs currently identified are: dialogic gatherings, dialogic model of conflict prevention and resolution, dialogic teacher training, educational participation of the community, family training, and interactive groups (Flecha, 2015).

The *dialogic gatherings* (Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2023) stand out for generating a space for egalitarian dialogue among participants based on valid arguments. Dialogic literary gatherings have been studied for their effect in the emergence of language of desire towards non-violent relationships (López de Aguilera et al., 2020). Specifically, in feminist dialogic gatherings, texts are discussed that explain the scientific evidence previously introduced and others in relation to violence prevention (Puigvert, 2016). The positive effects of these gatherings have been studied in groups of girls (Salceda et al., 2020; Puigvert et al., 2016; Rodrigues de Mello et al., 2021).

The *dialogic model of conflict prevention and resolution* is the most explicit SEA to tackle coexistence issues (Duque et al., 2021): beyond individual and reactive actions, this model of coexistence permeates every space and interaction between the members of the community, inside and outside the physical space (Villarejo-Carballido et al., 2019). It is a community model that involves everyone, including the whole student body, from the upstander approach, because it is only from the action of everyone that we can transform a socialization towards violence and conflicts that we have internalized and that comes out of us unconsciously. The dream, further than zero tolerance to violence, is achieving zero violence.

Among the two actions in which the dialogic model takes shape, we highlight two. Firstly, the creation of a community norm of coexistence is central. Involving all members of the community, students, families and other agents, there are several opportunities to raise, reflect and dialogue around what will be agreed upon as the rule that will have the greatest impact on this school, because it is an important problem but possible to transform, and that generates consensus among the different members. Secondly, the zero-violence brave club (Roca-Campos et al., 2021) is a group-classroom dynamic that incorporates all the scientific keys mentioned above. It consists of initially agreeing on which attitudes are brave and which are cowardly in terms of interpersonal relationships (from the language of desire). Thus, spaces are encouraged to denounce cowardly attitudes and praise the brave ones, and only those who the group decides that they behave in a brave way are part of the brave club.

Thirdly, *dialogic teacher training*. In order to be able to implement the above keys in any educational or other institution, it is essential to implement evidence-based training on these keys towards educators and leaders. A study conducted by Ioverno et al. demonstrated how students who witness teachers intervening during incidents of homophobic name-calling and perceive positive representation of LGBT issues in the classroom are more inclined to intervene against such behavior (2022).

Together, *family training* (Gómez-González, Tierno-García & Girbés-Peco, 2024) and *educational participation of the community* (Rodríguez-Oramas et al., 2022) greatly increase the impact and sustainability of the new alternative socialization that is being generated with the application of the other SEAs, given that families and other community agents are involved. They do not participate passively in meetings, but rather they can learn, perhaps also in dialogic gatherings, about the same issues of violence prevention; in addition, they enter the center on a daily basis and during school hours, as volunteers in classes doing *interactive groups* (Santiago-Garabieta et al., 2023; Valls & Kyriakides, 2013) and other spaces, soaking

in the dialogic environment that socially values kind people and does not pay attention to those who generate problems or put themselves above others.

Becoming a Learning Community helps to be able to implement all these keys. Educational institutions that decide to organize themselves as Learning Communities are committed to applying all the successful educational actions identified by scientific research. They are, therefore, the ones that achieve the greatest educational and social impact (Flecha, 2014). Any educational organization can apply successful educational actions, whether it is a school for adults, whose greatest exponent is La Verneda (Gómez Cuevas & Valls, 2022), or a leisure and free time, music or sports organization or group.

## 1.4. Methodology

### 1.4.1. Communicative methodology

The communicative methodological approach was chosen for the dissertation as a whole and for each of the three investigations. The objective of the communicative methodology is twofold: to scrutinize social realities and to seek remedies that address injustices and inequalities, ultimately contributing to social transformation via informed research. This research methodology is focused on social impact: research serves as a potent instrument for catalyzing substantial societal changes by shedding light on realities that foster a more equitable world (Soler & Gómez, 2020; Gómez et al., 2006).

Furthermore, before going into more detail, this methodology has been used because it is especially recommended by the European Commission for the social sciences, and because it has in fact been chosen for many other important projects, as well as for research along the lines of the thesis (Gómez et al., 2019).

Engaging citizens in different research processes is a Key Impact Pathway considered to increase the societal impact of such research, as proposed by the expert report from the European Commission which set the guidelines for co-creation and social impact in the Horizon Europe Program (2018). This methodology proposes an egalitarian dialogue between researchers and participants (Gómez, 2021; Flecha, 2014) in all phases of research: while the former contribute their accumulated scientific knowledge on the topics, the latter contribute their cultural intelligence, their stories and life experience on a day-to-day basis (Flecha & Soler, 2014; Gómez, 2021). All this facilitates enhancing research practices to attain greater scientific, political, and social impact (Reale et al., 2017).

As described in the presentation of this dissertation, the overarching purpose of this thesis is to provide scientific knowledge on positions against any violent attitude and their impact in stopping and preventing gender-based violence. This main goal is specified in each investigation:

**Specific Objective 1.** To analyze communicative acts that reprimand non-violent men, undertaken by some women or dominant men, and communicative acts performed by New Alternative Masculinities that counteract such reprimands.

**Specific Objective 2.** To collect stories of upstander masculinities in both digital and offline contexts who combat gender-based violences, specifically related to sexual consent.

**Specific Objective 3.** To provide evidence on the professional impact of evidence-based training on bystander intervention to prevent violence against LGBTI+ youth in formal and non-formal educational institutions.

These objectives guide the methodological decisions taken and implemented.

#### 1.4.2. Participants

The participants of this dissertation are very diverse, considering the three independent researches. Intentional samples in all investigations include individuals capable and willing to contribute meaningful insights on the studied topic. For some research objectives we needed men involved in the men's movement of New Alternative Masculinities (NAM).

Investigation 1 deals with communicative acts that attack non-violent men, and NAM reactions that successfully respond to those reprimands. In the communicative daily life stories, 3 men and 5 women, aged 35 to 65, with professional profiles ranging from educational advisors, university professors, a secondary school teacher and a factory worker. They were part of a purposive sample of individuals who could contribute meaningful communicative acts on the studied topic. The selection criteria aimed for diversity across various factors, including socioeconomic status (SES), age, gender, and family status. Another criterion, identified in the literature, was to interview individuals with varying degrees of involvement in women's and men's movements.

Investigation 2 analyzes men's attitudes towards violent relationships without sexual consent, and men's attitudes in favor of relationships with consent. To this end, two sources of participants were sought:

- First, an unintentional sample of users in social networks. The focus of this analysis was not to collect personal data about users, but only their comments, and that is why we do not have a number of specific people from the Reddit and Twitter analysis: it was not an analysis with participants but an analysis of tweets and Reddit posts, that was the way to count.
- Second, it was complemented, to achieve the research objectives, with a purposive sample of participants in groups of men who discuss scientific evidence on

relationships that combine egalitarian values with desire and passion. The three men are heterosexual and between 35 and 45 years old.

For the last investigation, article 3, the sampling method is intentional: all participants were attendees to the project training events aiming to combat violence against LGBTI+ youth by teaching educational actions based on the bystander intervention approach. Two techniques involved two samples of participants:

- For questionnaire participants, out of more than 150 trainees, 118 completed the voluntary pre-training test, and among them, 90 responded to the post-training questionnaire. These trainees hailed from over 10 countries, mostly from Spain or Cyprus. The respondent demographic comprised 80% women, 15% men, 2.5% non-binary individuals, 1.25% gender-fluid participants, and 1.25% who preferred not to disclose their gender. Ages ranged from 18 to 66 years old. Participants represented various formal and non-formal educational institutions, including high schools, universities, NGOs, LGBTI+ organizations, and educational associations.
- Interview participants: out of the questionnaire respondents, 12 key informants who actively participated in the majority of the training sessions, offering a range of profiles and perspectives, including LGBTI+ and non-LGBTI+ participants; professionally, profiles encompassed educators, activists, and university lecturers and researchers.

Apart from these people, many others are active participants in the research: my fellow co-authors have made it possible, with their experience and expertise, for each research to be of higher quality. In addition, many other people have implicitly participated in the research, since the many dialogues with them have improved, without being aware of it, all the research stages. Likewise, all the research in the line of preventive socialization of gender-based violence, as well as the line of successful educational actions, are the basis for this thesis. Without all that previous work of decades, and without all the voices of numerous investigation participants, this thesis would not have taken place.

### **1.4.3. Research instruments**

Now we will introduce the data collection techniques and instruments, which have been informed by the research objectives. It must be made clear that the aim was not to employ techniques or obtain results that allowed generalization of data to the population as a whole, but rather to delve deeper into the reality of study. Even the questionnaires to be presented were designed not to adhere strictly to a quantitative methodology focused on obtaining representative results, but rather to facilitate a descriptive exploration of impact.

Specific and detailed information on each technique and instrument can be found in chapters 2 to 4. Moreover, annexes at the end of this dissertation include the template of questions and items of those instruments. In this section we will introduce each technique at a theoretical level, justifying their choice and briefly specifying them for each investigation. The following have been used: communicative daily life stories; social media analysis; pre-post questionnaires; and semi-structured interviews.

#### 1.4.2.1. Communicative daily life stories

This technique enables a more thorough examination of participants' past and present experiences, fostering discussions on the analysis and interpretation of these events. The discussion centers around a particular topic, drawing upon lived experiences for reflection, juxtaposed with the scientific evidence presented by the researcher. The communicative daily life stories have been studied for their potential to foster awareness on issues about violence and desire (Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2020).

In research 1, the starting point was to share with the participants the theory of communicative acts and the three ideal models of masculinity, as specified in the research objectives. During this brief conceptual introduction, explained with an example, participants could review their memory of experiences or stories shared by other people. In research 2, it was used to learn about their personal experiences and their more personal standpoint regarding consensual and non-consensual sexual relations.

#### 1.4.2.1. Social Media Analytics (SMA)

We include this innovative technique because of the linkage of research 2 with the project "All-Interact: Widening and diversifying citizen engagement in science" from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program (ALL-INTERACT, 2020–2023). Social Media Analytics (SMA, hereinafter) was born in this project as a way to achieve a social analysis of the problem of sexual consent, sexual violence, and the role of men; the novelty of this technique is to approach what, in an organic way, is being expressed by citizens in social networks on the topic of study. Specifically, Reddit and Twitter were selected as the social media platforms for analyzing posts, comments, and debates due to their public and open nature, allowing any user to engage in discussions, read, and participate in ongoing conversations.

In particular, we utilized the search terms "NotAllMen" and "Consent", individually as well as in combination. The aim was to explore discussions surrounding consent and men, encompassing perspectives from various individuals, not limited to men alone. This methodology allowed us to reach a much larger volume of data than if we had conducted *ad-hoc* fieldwork: we analyzed over two thousand Twitter messages, encompassing initial tweets, responses, and retweeted messages. For Reddit, the search focused on specific subreddits relevant to the research objectives, identified through the ALL-INTERACT project. Excel files containing messages from these subreddits amounted to a total of 58,114 posts and comments. These were then filtered to analyze those containing the targeted terms "NotAllMen" and "Consent."

#### 1.4.2.1. Pre-post Questionnaires

The third data collection technique used was questionnaires, in research 3, with participants in the Up4Diversity project training. The research adhered to a pre-experimental pretest-posttest design involving a single group of participants, as outlined by Campbell and Stanley (2011).

The questionnaires contained quantitative and qualitative short-answer questions, with the main purpose of comparing previous and gained knowledge, and its application, before and after the training. They were collated by the Up4Diversity project advisory committee and consortium which facilitated their distribution and implementation in the context of the training courses held in the partner countries (Belgium, Cyprus, and Denmark). Both questionnaires were short and could be completed in 5 to 10 minutes. In addition, they were distributed online through Google Forms, and during the training itself -which was also online-, to facilitate their completion and achieve a high response rate.

#### 1.4.2.1. Communicative Semi-structured Interviews

As a complement to these questionnaires, after the training and the completion of the second post-test questionnaire, we sought to deepen and complement the evidence of impacts through semi-structured interviews. Therefore, only volunteers among those who completed both questionnaires and who had participated in all or most of the training sessions participated in them, on an intentional basis.



These interviews had an initial set of topics of conversation in the form of questions, but were designed so that interviewers could follow up on participants' insight and develop in further details the most relevant information shared. Participants were asked to discuss their perceived personal impacts regarding upstander empowerment following the training. Additionally, they were encouraged to explore the past, present, and future impacts of the training on upstander behavior within their youth groups, among colleagues, or within their educational institutions. As for the communicative daily life stories, in these interviews, the interviewer, given his scientific knowledge of the subject, could introduce some evidence that could be contrasted with the personal experience of each educator interviewed (Ramis-Salas, 2020; Padrós et al., 2011). These interviews were carried out online and lasted from twenty minutes to an hour.

The following table shows the relationship between the participants and each technique implemented.

**Table 3**

*Relation of participants and techniques of data collection employed.*

<b>Participants</b>				
<b>Article</b>	<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Age/ Country</b>	<b>Profile</b>	<b>Technique</b>
<b>Article 1</b>	Ana	50–55	Educational advisor	Communicative daily life stories
	Alejandra	60–65	Educational advisor	
	Begoña	50–55	Teacher of secondary school	
	Lucía	40–45	University professor	
	Laia	35–40	University professor	
	Marc	35–40	University professor	
	Luis	45–50	Factory worker	
<b>Article 2</b>	Javier	35-45	Heterosexual Spanish men between with a long trajectory on the movement and with significant knowledge of the research topics of age linked to a network of men who debate New Alternative Masculinities and the overcoming of gender-based violence	Communicative daily life stories
	Lolo	35-45		
	Manuel	35-45		

	Unknown	Unknown	Users from Twitter and Reddit engaging in #NotAllMen and #Consent interactions	Social media analysis
<b>Article 3</b>	Unknown	Unknown	Educator training participants (N=118 pre-training test, out of which N=90 to the post- training test)	Pre-post questionnaires
	Litsa	Cyprus	Female kindergarten teacher and MA student at UCY. Activist at an NGO for people with special capabilities. Involved in a feminist movement	Communicative Semi-structured interviews
	Stela	Cyprus	Female English teacher	
	Sandra	Spain	Female primary school teachers belonging to the collective implementing the dialogic model of conflict prevention	
	Leo	Spain	Male schoolteacher and headmaster from a rural school implementing preventive upstander actions	
	Ester	Spain	Policewoman linked to education working in an association for the visibility of LGBTI and human rights	
	Teresa	Spain	Female teacher who was learning for the first time about upstanders	
	Hugo	Spain	University professor and researcher	
	Eveleen	Ireland	Female lecturer from an Irish University	
	Mike	Ireland	Male PhD student and lecturer at university, with professional experience with young students	
	Jakob	Belgium	Teacher trainee	
	Aya	Belgium	Teacher trainee	
	Anndrea	Denmark	IT-consultant, an active member of Danish NGO working for diversity, equality, and women's rights	

#### 1.4.4. Data analysis

Data from the daily life stories and interviews were transcribed with Outlook Word transcription and with careful manual revision. Data from SMA was collected in two ways: Reddit posts and comments had been collected in the ALLINTERACT fieldwork in an Excel. Tweets that met the criteria were collected into a word document. Last, the pre-post questionnaires were collected at an Excel sheet.

Out of all research instruments, only some questions in the pre-post questionnaire were analyzed following quantitative logic. The analysis of all data was done manually, without any specific software of analysis other than Excel. Thematic analysis was carried out. This

method is used to identify, analyze, and present recurring patterns or themes within datasets (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and across research participants (Riessman, 2008).

Data was analyzed following the communicative orientation. Categories were created, combining prior knowledge from the literature, and informed by the data collected. Subsequently, a distinction was made between the transformative and exclusionary dimension of results (Pulido et al., 2014; Gómez et al., 2006). The exclusionary dimension includes those results that show barriers to the problem under study; the transformative dimension presents solutions to these barriers and positive results that help to overcome the problem under study (Aubert et al., 2019). Below I present together the categories differentiated in both dimensions of the three studies.

Investigation 1: the one category of results created was “communicative acts as violent attacks or as neutralizing reactions to those attacks”, within which:

- Exclusionary dimension: communicative acts as reprimands to non-violent men. That is, reprimands and teasing linked to violence, and silence/non-reaction from the men targeted in front of these situations.
- Transformative dimension: men’s communicative acts that counteract such reprimands (counteracting reprimands/ethic and desire linked to non-violence).

Investigation 2: within the category of results “Effects of interactions and personal positioning on non-consensual or consensual relationships”, these are the two dimensions:

- Exclusionary dimension: debates and comments that perpetuate non-consent relationships.
- Transformative dimension: debates and comments that help overcome non-consensual relationships.

Investigation 3: five categories of analysis were created inductively from the collected data and are connected to the three objectives of the specific study: assessing the training, its learning impacts, and its professional impacts. In this article, only the transformative dimension of each category is included, since the aim of the study and manuscript is to show positive impacts of the training:

1. Training assessment
2. Awareness of violence against LGBTI+ youth
3. Awareness of evidence-based successful strategies
4. Professional empowerment
5. Impact on the workplace

#### 1.4.5. Ethical considerations

The last section of the Methodology involves all ethical considerations. Informed consent was achieved by all participants intentionally involved in the interviews, daily life stories and questionnaires. The consent protocols adhere to the international standards set forth by the European Framework Programme (European Commission, 2019); in the case of the first and third article consent was orally given in the recorded interview. In all cases, the consent was given after research objectives were explained and opportunity was provided to solve any doubts before providing consent and afterwards. They were informed of all anonymity and confidentiality precautions, as well as the voluntary nature of participation and the possibility of revoking participation without needing to give explanations. The results were presented using pseudonyms, which allow personalization of the information shared while ensuring anonymity. Participants were informed that excerpts from the provided data might be utilized solely for research purposes. After the initial transcription of data, member checking was carried out (Creswell & Miller, 2010): interviews were sent to each participant for validation or modifications needed, to ensure that they identified with what they were sharing with us. Once each article was published, it was sent to them asking for voluntary personal feedback.

Authors of tweets and Reddit posts were not addressed since the collection and analysis did not focus on the participant profiles but only on the content shared online. Moreover, no explicit posts were shared in the publication, but rather descriptions and paraphrases.

The communicative methodology itself presents elements that contribute ethical validity to the thesis. For example, the search for the transforming dimension of the results from the design of the research benefits citizenship. For its part, the dialogue in which the researcher includes scientific evidence on the subject contributes to democratizing the scientific evidence, reaching the researched people; we do not extract information for the individual benefit of the research, but there are many ways of returning the knowledge collected.

Special care was taken with the participants to ensure comfort and confidentiality, given the personal and harsh nature of some topics, such as attacks received or experienced, relationships without sexual consent or violence against minors and LGBTI+ youth. Likewise, it was taken into account to prevent isolating gender violence against those who reported, as upstanders, their personal positions in the face of violent situations.

CREA's ethics committee validated the first investigation (reference number 20210105), through the Protocol for the ethical evaluation of research. The other two

investigations were validated by the European Commission in the context of the funded projects. Moreover, the initial ethical documentation was sent to the ethics committee of the university, who finally rejected the follow-up due to backlog.

One last element that provides ethical and scientific strength is the advisory committee that contributed to the third research. In line with the proposal by Gómez et al. (2006) and demonstrated successes by Yuste et al. (2014) and Tellado et al. (2014), an advisory committee was established at the project's outset. This committee comprised individuals not directly involved in research but representing communities benefiting from the project outcomes and training (Munté et al., 2011), in addition to scientists from the project consortium. Nine participants, including a teacher, a professor, a policy advisor, an education officer, a researcher, and two activists and volunteers from LGBTI+ and youth organizations, engaged in online meetings alongside the project coordinators.

The advisory group played a crucial role in validating the training content, organization, and data collection instruments through dialogic design. They convened in three online meetings where project members and researchers introduced processes and proposals, which were discussed and validated (Solar & Ojala, 2010). Due to their input during both meetings and email correspondence, the training program was enriched with tailored instances of digital advocacy and a comprehensive overview of LGBTI+ concerns at the national level. Additionally, they recommended integrating questionnaires directly into the workshop sessions and stressed the importance of translating them, even in regions with high English proficiency like the Nordic countries, to ensure inclusivity for all prospective participants.

## Chapter 2. Communicative acts that perpetrate, perpetuate and overcome violence against non-violent men

This chapter includes the first of three articles that publish the results of the first investigation. The article is entitled “«Come on! He Has Never Cooked in His Life!» New Alternative Masculinities Putting Everything in Its Place”<sup>16</sup>. It was published in May 2021 in the open-access journal *Frontiers in Psychology*, indexed in quartile 1 of Journal Citation Reports, in the context of the Special Issue “Interactions Promoting Diverse Models of Masculinity And Men’s Attractiveness”. It is coauthored with Rosa Valls-Carol, Antonio Madrid-Pérez, and Barbara Merrill. By March 2024, at the time of the delivery of the thesis, the article has 2,000 views, 555 downloads, 5 citations, and an Altmetric of 4.

The article covers objective 1 of the thesis: “To analyze communicative acts that reprimand non-violent men, undertaken by some women or dominant men, and communicative acts performed by New Alternative Masculinities that counteract such reprimands.”

This article’s results provide scientific knowledge on positions from men with confident and brave attitudes against violent attitudes (attacks and mocking) from both men and women, and the positive impact that those NAM reactions can have in stopping and preventing gender-based violence: when the language of desire is employed in a transformative way, dominant men are seen as less attractive, and egalitarian men are seen as more desirable. A clear statement is made: any upstander behavior done with self-confidence, courage, and deep-down rejection of double standards, ends up having this language of desire. The article pragmatically exemplifies the three models of masculinity described in the theoretical framework. The last strong statement of the publication is that there are always men and women with victims of gender-based violence, and men and women against them (Pulido et al., 2021).

Turning upside down the hegemonic attraction models in daily situations like the ones explored are key in discouraging dominant behaviors which end up in the worst forms of violence.

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<sup>16</sup> Valls-Carol, R., Madrid-Pérez, A., Merrill, B., & Legorburo-Torres, G. (2021). «Come on! He Has Never Cooked in His Life!» New Alternative Masculinities Putting Everything in Its Place. *Frontiers in psychology*, 12, 674675. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.674675>



# “Come on! He Has Never Cooked in His Life!” New Alternative Masculinities Putting Everything in Its Place

Rosa Valls-Carol<sup>1\*</sup>, Antonio Madrid-Pérez<sup>2</sup>, Barbara Merrill<sup>3</sup> and Guillermo Legorburu-Torres<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Theory and History of Education, University of Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain, <sup>2</sup> Department of Political Science, Constitutional Law, and Philosophy of Law, University of Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain, <sup>3</sup> Centre for Lifelong Learning, University of Warwick, Coventry, United Kingdom, <sup>4</sup> Department of Pedagogy, University of Rovira i Virgili, Tarragona, Spain

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### \*Correspondence:

Rosa Valls-Carol  
rosavalls@ub.edu

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Communicative acts of some women are perpetuating the dominance that DTM (Dominant Traditional Masculinities) have over both women and OTM (Oppressed Traditional Masculinities). Some women use language in a disdainful manner to reprimand oppressed men’s behavior in daily life situations, the same behavior that such women would not reproach to DTM. But NAM (New Alternative Masculinities) are reacting to this. This article analyzes the communicative acts employed in all these situations, both those produced by women and DTM, as well as NAM’s communicative acts in response to those offenses. Data was collected using communicative daily life stories of give women and three men with diverse profiles and different levels of participation in women’s and men’s movements. Findings highlight, from the transformative dimension of the communicative methodology, that the use of language of desire in NAM’s reactions is effective not only to make justice with men who have never executed violence on women, but also to undermine the attractiveness of both DTM’s behavior and the comments of some women on such behavior. These findings complement previous research on preventive socialization of gender violence by broadening scientific knowledge on NAM’s communicative acts that prevent and eradicate gender-based violence. Further research ought to broaden the evidence of how some women who defend feminist values sometimes do not support and even tease or reprimand men who practice these values; moreover, an important line could analyze the way people talk about men with NAM attitudes to hold back reprimands in comparison to how people talk about men who follow a DTM model.

**Keywords:** communicative acts, masculinities, discourses, domestic work, reprimands, gender

## INTRODUCTION

Xavi: I remembered an example of a communicative act shared in a meeting where we were talking about trends in New Alternative Masculinities (NAM). One researcher explained the situation of a woman who always was reprimanding her boyfriend (Abel) for not doing some domestic work. This boy had egalitarian values and was worried by that, thinking that he was worse than her ex-boyfriend (Mauro). Then, this researcher, who knew that her ex-boyfriend (who follows a DTM model) never did domestic work and had sexist attitudes toward her, said to this friend (Abel): “Come on! He has never cooked in his life!”

Xavi's example is based on a communicative act performed by a researcher to his friend (Abel). His friend was worried about his girlfriend because she reprimanded him about domestic work. But the researcher knew that his girlfriend never reprimanded her ex-boyfriend (Mauro), who never did any domestic work and held attitudes belonging to the DTM model (Flecha et al., 2013), according to Xavi's words. DTM stands for hegemonic men with non-egalitarian attitudes, the main perpetrators of gender-based violence. For this reason, the researcher stopped the effect of this reprimand to his friend (a man who never perpetrated gender violence) of seeing himself as worse than the DTM ex-boyfriend. This reprimand was stopped through the communicative act performed by the researcher who has a NAM attitude: “Come on, he has never cooked in his life!”, according to Xavi's words. NAM are egalitarian men who portray strong, confident, and coherent attitudes in their relationships and are therefore a successful and attractive alternative against traditional models.

There are multiple studies related to the language used to talk about women that enable us to identify social inequalities and violence in gender relationships (Kollock et al., 1985; Jenkins and Aube, 2002; Holmes, 2006; Talbot, 2006; Boonzaier, 2008; Newman et al., 2008; Greenwood and Gautam, 2020). Language is a central tool in human life according to words Parodi's (2009), and for this reason research on language and gender is studied by scholars from diverse disciplines, according to Talbot (2006). Academics from this research field have explored the use of language in diverse fields, for instance in representation in media, broadcasting, and other institutions including the family. However, literature related to the language used by women toward men who never perpetrated violence is scarce. Therefore, the analysis of women's uses of language toward non-violent men in daily situations (such as Xavi's example provided above) and the language used toward violent men have been detected as a research gap that needs to be filled. The present research is an exploration of this language used by some women toward the Oppressed Traditional Masculinities (OTM, hereinafter) model (Flecha et al., 2013). OTM include men who do not practice violence but who don't awaken attraction, since they lack confidence. Particularly, we analyze which type of communicative acts (Santa Cruz and Redondo, 2010) are used to reprimand OTM or men who have never exercised gender violence in different daily situations: for instance,

when they are not doing some domestic work, in daily work situations, or in leisure situations with friends; and which type of communicative acts are used by these same women addressed to Dominant Traditional Masculinities (DTM, hereinafter) in similar situations. Further, our research does not only focus on these language uses, but it also sheds light on the different types of responses provided by men. Particularly, we have identified which type of communicative acts performed by NAM (hereinafter) (Flecha et al., 2013) tend to eradicate any reprimand or joke about men who have never perpetrated violence.

In doing so, the structure of this article is composed of four sections. The first section presents a review of the main contributions from the specialized literature related to how reprimands, jokes and teasing are used by women and men in order to ridicule someone, for instance in what situations they are used, and which collective suffers this type of language use most. Second, the methodology used in this study, involving data collection, and analysis, is presented. Third, we introduce the main findings which have been classified in two main categories: exclusionary communicative acts that reprimand and ridicule OTM expressed by some women and DTM; and transformative communicative acts performed by NAM that react upon these reprimands. Finally, the main conclusions of the study are provided.

## Research on the Use of Reprimands and Teasing in Gender Relationships

Previous to this study, a literature review was conducted focused on identifying the use of reprimands and teasing used by women and men in daily situations. The evidence found has been grouped into two main bodies of literature. The first section introduces the analysis of reprimands, jokes and teasing used in daily situations. In the second one, those evidence that confirm how dominant men are who reprimand and tease men who are not violent and a trend of some women who are reprimanding and teasing men who are not violent are introduced. At the end of the review, we present the current challenge faced by research, that is, the need to explore how to overcome these types of reprimands through the positioning of NAM's movement that counteracts these interactions, and how the present article is meant to represent a step forward toward this direction.

The first body of reviewed literature is focused on what we know about how sometimes reprimands, jokes, and teasing are used for ridiculing someone. In order to investigate more profoundly how they are used by people, some guiding questions have been defined to explore literature on heterosexual relationships. For instance, how are reprimands, teasing and jokes used for ridiculing? Who is using them? Addressed to whom? What are the consequences of that? Research in this field has already highlighted some meaningful information worth remarking upon here.

In the case of humor and jokes, milestone works have already pointed out how jokes exercise a double function: they are used to maintain healthy relationships and friendship, and to perpetuate power relationships (Hay, 2000; Holmes, 2006; McCann et al., 2010; Rees and Monrouxe, 2010;



Abedinifard, 2016; Greenwood and Gautam, 2020). Our work is focused on the latter function. Evidence is provided by McCann et al. (2010) about how humor could be used to ridicule persons, such as jokes that are close to homophobia. They investigated about how these jokes could constrain the attitudes and behaviors of all men, how they are used for preserving what is considered to be a real heterosexual masculinity and what is not, McCann et al. (2010). This contribution is related to reflections of Jewkes and Morrell (2010); they point out that hegemonic masculinity not only maintains power over women, but also produces hierarchies among men, often marginalizing those that do not adhere to the dominant model.

Other scholars such as Holmes (2006) found that gender stereotypes are the focus of workplace humor. Holmes (2006) pointed out that sometimes men and women reinforce negative stereotypes in their informal conversations: for instance, men are treated as communicatively incompetent and women as sexual objects. In the same line, Rees and Monrouxe (2010) analyzed how laughter is a mechanism for constructing gender identities. Sometimes, this mechanism could damage people who are the object of it. In the authors' words: "how laughter can make people feel bad (e.g., the butt of the tease)" (Rees and Monrouxe, 2010, 335).

Therefore, jokes, laughter, and humor could be used for hurting, and result in teasing mechanisms. In fact, Hay (2000) found that teasing was one of the languages used to maintain power over particular human groups. Specifically, Hay (2000) identified three functions played by humor in these settings: reinforcing solidarity, maintaining power-based relationships and psychological needs (to defend and to cope). Regarding the function of maintaining power-based relationships, Hay (2000) highlighted the aim of the teasing mechanism: "teases serve primarily to maintain the power of the teaser (Hay, 2000, 720)". One of the questions emerged is "who is the teaser then?" And "who is the target of the teaser?" It is clear how humor plays a role in perpetuating power relations in a wide range of situations; however, to what extent is this also used to maintain power relations within gender relationships? While some research has highlighted the use of humor in reinforcing gender stereotypes, mainly targeting women, scarce efforts have been dedicated to analyzing in which ways some women (Gómez, 2015) are also using jokes and humor in order to discredit and exercise power over particular men. This leads us to the second body of literature.

Evidence found confirms how boys and men who follow the dominant men model are those who exercise this oppression (McCarry, 2010; Hamlall and Morrell, 2012). On the contrary, men who are far away from this dominant model are those who mainly suffer reprimands and teasing from some women and dominant men (Jenkins and Aube, 2002; Bergmann et al., 2014; Pinilla et al., 2014). Examples of these reprimands and teasing have been found in different daily situations in diverse spaces: school, social movements, and in sexual affective relationships.

In this sense, Hamlall and Morrell (2012) conducted a research with secondary students and identified how the dominant masculinity model influenced students' interactions. Among other contributions, researchers highlighted that those boys who

follow the dominant masculinity model were teasing other boys and the terms that are used:

Dominant boys at the school called certain boys "gays" and "sissies" as a way of marginalizing them, and at the same time elevating themselves and endorsing the misogynistic and homophobic elements of the school's gender regime (Hamlall and Morrell, 2012, 492).

Due to this affirmation, dominant boys are learning to use teases for ridiculing others and maintaining their social status. The coercive dominant discourse (Puigvert and Flecha, 2018; Puigvert et al., 2019) influences these phenomena, emptying the attractiveness of the OTM men with such comments while reinforcing the link existing between dominant men and desire (Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2020a; Racionero-Plaza et al., 2021). In other research, dominant young men are identified with those that are more prone to perpetrate violence against girls (McCarry, 2010). She found that young males with a violent attitude against others coincide with those young men who are ascribed to the dominant model and this was a significant factor of the perpetration of male abuse and violence against girls involved with them.

The following step was to explore what has been studied about how reprimands have been used by women and which type of masculine model was their target. Literature in this specific field is scarce and not many answers are found to this question in the literature reviewed. Nevertheless, some evidence has been collected that approaches the issue. Pinilla et al. (2014) conducted a qualitative research on men involved in the "Egalitarian Men Groups" in Spain and their relationship with feminists in order to analyze their role in the fight against gender-based violence and gender equality. Researchers found that some feminists who were in power positions established vertical relationships with these men with egalitarian values. Particularly, they showed how these men felt that they often had to give explanations to some feminists who represent the institutional movement and how some male colleagues assumed this submissive position (Pinilla et al., 2014), although they shared the same goals of gender equality and fight against gender violence. For this reason, some men interviewed did not understand why they were treated in this way. Our research will shed light on this phenomenon and how communicative acts which are apparently performed by some feminist standpoints can do otherwise and go against these ideals and even perpetuate gender violence.

Situations identified in research indicate how the use of reprimands and teasing are mainly addressed to those men who have not perpetrated gender violence. Evidence shows a trend of some women using reprimands and teasing against those men who are in favor of gender equality or are fighting against gender violence. However, there is no evidence in the literature whether the same women are using these reprimands toward those men who belong to the DTM. Thus, one of the challenges of this study is to deepen in the analysis of reprimands and teasing used by some women addressed to men who do not perpetrate gender violence, and to see if there is any evidence that the same women are also reprimanding and teasing those men that have perpetrated gender violence.

Concluding, situations as the ones described above indicate that some men are stigmatized for not following the DTM model although they are supporting women’s rights and gender equality, consistent with research results of Rudman et al. (2012). In this sense, Primer and Moss-Racusin (2009) said that it would be necessary to introduce changes in ways of talking about men that support gender equality: “If it was understood that men who are supportive of women’s efforts for equality are strong men—by definition [that] it actually takes more strength as a man—that changes the conversation” (Primer and Moss-Racusin, 2009, 15). This idea helps to search which type of leadership could contribute to transform practices (Santamaría and Jean-Marie, 2014). In this sense, NAM’s movement has achieved this perspective, by combining language of desire and of ethics in their communication. In doing so, they are attracting young men to their movement because they show that it is possible to be committed against gender violence (Joanpere and Morlà, 2019) while not allowing for being undervalued (Serradell et al., 2014). Following the research by Puigvert et al. (2019), NAM are not submissive to that coercive dominant discourse that separates goodness from success and attraction (Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2020b). Due to the positioning of the NAM’s movement, it has been considered suitable to collect examples of reactions of NAM to counteract reprimands and teasing addressed to men who do not perpetrate gender violence. The last aim is to analyze what types of communicative acts are used to counteract reprimands and overcome inequality in order to cover an aspect that is not present in the literature, departing from the previous theoretical contributions.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study has been carried out using the communicative methodology (Flecha and Soler, 2014; Gómez, 2019). One of the main characteristics of this methodology is the creation of dialogic knowledge. This is possible because researchers and participants establish an egalitarian dialog where the former bring into the conversation the accumulated scientific knowledge in order to contrast it with the latter’s lifeworld (Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2020a). Besides, the present study has also been framed under the communicative acts theory (Santa Cruz and Redondo, 2010) focusing on the conflictive interactions developed in everyday life situations dealing with domestic chores, daily work situations, and leisure situations with friends and in partnership. Communicative acts include the analysis of verbal and non-verbal language, the influence of the social context where interactions occur, and the intentions and responsibility of the consequences of the whole communicative act that is performed (Rodríguez-Navarro et al., 2014). As Itakura (2014) concluded, it is necessary to include non-verbal elements and context for analyzing conversations in depth.

### Data Collection

This study focused on communicative acts that reprimand OTM undertaken by some women or DTM, and communicative acts performed by NAM that counteract reprimands. To

**TABLE 1** | Participants’ profile.

N	Pseudonym	Age	Profile
1	Ana	50–55 years old	Educational advisor
2	Alejandra	60–65 years old	Educational advisor
3	Begoña	50–55 years old	Teacher of secondary school
4	Lucía	40–45 years old	University professor
5	Laia	35–40 years old	University professor
6	Marc	35–40 years old	University professor
7	Luis	45–50 years old	Factory worker

start the interview, researchers explained both frameworks, communicative acts (Santa Cruz and Redondo, 2010) and the different types of masculinity OTM, DTM, and NAM (Serradell et al., 2014), in plain language to the participants. This presentation was the starting point of a shared reflection in which participants were asked if they knew any situations like the ones described in the results’ section and whether they could provide personal examples or cases of their friends or colleagues. On the one hand, they were asked to explain communicative acts of women or DTM men, specific things they did or said toward a man that corresponds to the OTM as a reprimand, with bad manners, mocking, comments with second intentions that show complaint or disdain, in reply to some daily life attitudes of that man, such as at work, with friends, or at home. On the other hand, they were asked to explain communicative acts from NAM that respond to the former, where a language of desire is present, in the search of justice toward such non-violent men who are targets of the reprimands, and also to empty of attractiveness such comments. The data presented in this paper was collected from five communicative daily life stories with women, and three communicative daily life stories with men. This technique allows to go deeper into the participants’ past and present events and to discuss the analysis of the interpretation of these events. Each daily life story lasted around 45 min. All participants were informed about the aim of the research before signing the informed consent. Pseudonyms (see **Table 1**) are used in order to preserve their anonymity and privacy. The consent forms comply with the international standards established by the European Framework Programme (European Commission, 2019).

### Criteria and Selection of Participants

We have selected 8 participants (5 women’s and 3 men’s), people who would be able and willing to share meaningful communicative acts on the topic studied. The basic criteria for the selection were aimed at achieving a certain level of diversity, as shown in different Socioeconomic status (SES) levels, age, gender, and family status (single, married, with a partner, etc.). A second basic criterion that came up in the literature was to interview people with different levels of involvement in women’s and men’s movement. According to evidence analyzed, examples of reprimands and teasing are mostly known by people involved in feminist movements or men groups (Bergmann et al., 2014; Pinilla et al., 2014). The participant’s profile is the following:

Ana, Alejandra, and Begoña have a historical perspective of the changes that have occurred in gender relationships since the end

of the seventies. Ana is more involved in educational practices that are working to overcome gender violence. Alejandra and Begoña share the common situation of having women friends involved in feminist movements but they are not directly involved. Lucia and Laia are both university professors and they have participated in different social movements; specifically, they have been activists in diverse feminist movements. Marc and Xavi are university professors, and they are directly involved in NAM's movement. Last but not least, Luis is working in a factory and is not involved in any movement.

## Data Analysis

First, concrete communicative acts that best represent the daily life stories were selected, in order to analyze communicative acts performed by women and men toward OTM that exemplified reprimands and teasing of how they do something (at home, work, etc.). Second, communicative acts expressed by NAM that counteract teasing and reprimand were analyzed. Thus, two main dimensions were defined: exclusionary communicative acts that reprimand, and transformative communicative acts that counteract reprimands. In order to analyze these examples, the conversations were analyzed according to the communicative acts' theory (Santa Cruz and Redondo, 2010). For this purpose, the focus of the analysis followed two dimensions of verbal and non-verbal language; one, that exemplifies the exclusionary dimension (reprimands and teasing linked to violence, and silence/non-reaction in front of these situations) and, two, the transformative dimension (counteracting reprimands and teasing/ethic and desire linked to non-violence) (Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2020a).

## RESULTS

Based on the communicative data analysis, findings are grouped in two main sections. In the first one, those communicative acts that have been categorized as exclusionary as examples of reprimands and teasing addressed to men who never perpetrated gender violence; in the second, communicative acts performed by men who counteract reprimands addressed to men who have not perpetrated gender violence. The latter are considered to be transformative communicative acts.

### Exclusionary Communicative Acts: Reprimands and Teasing Addressed to Men Who Never Perpetrated Gender Violence

Six communicative acts have been selected from the fieldwork: among them, four communicative acts are examples of reprimands and teasing toward non-violent men performed by women, and two communicative acts performed by men that follow DTM model who are teasing other men who do domestic work and who do not perpetrate gender violence.

The data collected through the communicative daily life stories provide evidence about how some women usually reprimand OTM or men who never have exercised gender

violence for issues related to domestic work. For instance, when talking about these issues, Lucia began to remember examples of her daily life that illustrate these situations. Specifically, Lucia provided examples of reprimands performed by women addressed to their partners (and these men were not violent) regarding domestic work issues. From these examples, we have selected two concrete communicative acts. Lucia for instance explained a reprimand of one friend to her partner because he was not folding the clothes in the way she wants it, reacting to this with a scream:

You are putting the thicker clothes inside the drier and then they are drying slowly, look at this! Or when he is cooking she said; You leave the kitchen a mess when you cook!

As Lucia remembered this example, she added that this same friend did not make any reprimands to her ex-boyfriend who never did any domestic work and who had a sexist attitude with her. This comment of Lucia indicates a first discovery that was not found in the literature: the same woman, who reprimands her partner for doing domestic work in his style, did not reprimand her ex-boyfriend that did not do any domestic work and treated her with a sexist attitude.

During the conversation with Lucia, she explained that these daily situations are common with all domestic tasks and also with childcare in some circles of friends. An example of this is that of a friend of hers who considers that her partner does not know how to properly dress their children:

I do not understand how you do not differentiate the right and wrong sides of the dress! How can you put it inside out?

In this sense, these types of interactions help to reflect about what type of language hinders the advance of egalitarian relationships between men and women. Hearn (2006) highlights the importance for men to be more active in domestic work and childcare for achieving more equal societies in Europe. But if some women reprimand their partners for their domestic work, it is not possible to advance in this direction, as they are emptying their relationship of attractiveness and breaking the sense of it.

The next two communicative acts selected are examples of reprimands made by women from different spaces. The first one is an example of how a girl reprimands her boyfriend in front of her group of friends, ridiculing him publicly. The second example shows how reprimands can occur in daily work situations.

Laia, a woman of 38 years, when asked if she knew examples of communicative acts of reprimands performed by women addressed to their (non-violent) partners, immediately recalled a situation of a couple (Noelia and Juan) who went to the beach at night with a group of friends, and how she always used to reprimand him even in front of their friends:

Laia: I remember a couple where Noelia treated her boyfriend Juan badly. He was very nice with her. One day a group of friends went to the beach at night (...) and she said that she was cold, then her partner (Juan) without saying anything went to the car (it was very far from us) to find a jacket for her. When Juan came back, he put the

jacket on her by surprise and Noelia said; “Fuck! Why are you giving me this jacket? I don’t like it, why do you go to get this jacket, I didn’t tell you to do it! You are an idiot!” – I was impacted, and Noelia said many times; “We make love only for his birthday and at the end of the year, and not more” – I remember that I talked to Juan and I told him that it would be better for him not to continue with Noelia, and he told me “It is ok for me, I have no personality”... Time passed and Noelia left him for a DTM boy, and she never treated this new boy in the same way that she did with Juan.

This communicative act proves that Noelia does not reprimand all men, but only a particular type: the ones who she feels are inferior to her. According to Laia’s words, Juan represents the OTM model, and Noelia often reprimands him. However, Laia identified that Noelia’s current boyfriend belonged to the DTM model, and Noelia never reprimands him as she did with Juan. In this example of communicative acts, the language and the tone used by Noelia are exclusionary because she uses an abrupt language (“Fuck, why are you giving me this jacket?”), using insults (“you’re an idiot”), and emptying his social image from any sexual attraction in front all of the rest of people who were living this situation (“We make love only for his birthday...”). This kind of interaction is evidence of how this girl has assumed a DTM model and she reproduces it with Juan. This evidence is linked with the result of Jenkins and Aube (2002) and Gómez (2015), who show how some women were reproducing attitudes and habits of the dominant masculinity model. The communicative act of Juan is exclusionary because he is not reacting in front of his girlfriend’s reprimands, he stays silent, and when Laia asked him why he is still with Noelia, who is not treating him well, his answer is to assume his submissive role with an insecure tone (“It is ok for me, I have no personality.”). This man’s reaction is consistent with the research conducted on how some men perpetuated the unfair and violent treatment because they are tolerating it (Talbot and Quayle, 2010; Messerschmidt, 2012; Flecha et al., 2013).

The fourth act of communication selected exemplifies an interaction which occurred in the workplace. Begoña, a 55-year-old woman, remembered during her life story various situations within teams of teachers in schools. Begoña is an educational advisor, and therefore knows firsthand the interactions that take place in teachers’ meetings. Begoña told us how some female colleagues of a secondary school changed their behavior toward a new coming physical education teacher (Mario). In the words of Begoña, these women initially thought he was the typical cocky guy, and considered him very attractive, but Begoña explains that as Mario is showing his sensitivity and romanticism toward his current partner (Maria), the same colleague who had considered him attractive, began to tease him.

Begoña: I’m thinking of a secondary teacher (Mario)... He had a strong body... and all the school teachers where I’m the advisor considered him physically attractive during the first days, they said “He is hot! mmm”... But when Mario

shared that he was in love with his partner (Maria) and he proposed marriage to his girlfriend giving her a nice ring belonging to his family, interactions of these women teachers began to change. Mario usually explained how he cares for his partner and his friends, sharing the attention he has for them and also gifts that he received from his partner and friends. Then, his female colleagues began to criticize him by saying “Look at him! He is like a woman,” and “he is a child and not a man, too soft, too healthy” (because he eats apples instead of drinking wine, etc.)... I think that these women envied him. Yes, this is an example of how this boy was considered attractive and how these women emptied his attractiveness doing reprimands and ridiculing him because he shared beautiful feelings and was an egalitarian man.

This communicative act is an example of how some women use a type of language of desire (“He is hot! Mm”) in relation to a man that is physically attractive to them but whose communicative acts change when these women perceive that he is nice (Puigvert et al., 2019) and passionate with his wife and friends. When this occurs, these women begin to use communicative acts with no desire regarding that man and make jokes, trying to ridicule him (“Look at him! He is like a woman,” “he is a child and not a man, too soft, too healthy”). Begoña explained that this man was not worried about these comments; he continued with his healthy life and with his passionate relationship.

To conclude this section, we have selected two communicative acts performed by men who follow a DTM model addressed to men with egalitarian values and who have not perpetrated violence according to the participants interviewed. The first is provided by Alejandra, a 61-year-old woman, who told us she had identified such interactions especially in circles of friends. Specifically, she remembered a couple where Blanca and Antonio shared housework, but that shared responsibility was not well regarded by some friends of the couple and told us a situation where Antonio was teased by their friends for it.

Alejandra: They shared domestic work (Blanca and Antonio). I have a friendship with this couple, and I remember they have the agreement to share equally these tasks. Then I remember that he ironed the clothes... and he is a handsome man, and other men of the friends’ group, I think that they were DTM, were making fun of Antonio, for instance when they were drinking together, they said: “Where is Antonio? He’s probably ironing (hu, hu, hu)” and they all laughed at him.

Researcher: and the women. What did they say?

Alejandra: the women did not say anything when they were with these men in the group to defend this man, although they liked his attitude.

This communicative act illustrates how men tease Antonio because he was sharing domestic work with his wife. The exclusionary dimension of teasing is exemplified when they laugh about him (“Where is Antonio? He’s probably ironing

(hu, hu, hu)"). This communicative act is an example of how laughter can be used as a tease, a mechanism that can hurt people who are the object of laughter, as Rees and Monrouxe already pointed out (2010). Additionally, the passive attitude of women in this situation, of not saying anything when the DTM men laughed and ridiculed the man who irons, even though they apparently liked the attitude of Antonio, is identified as an exclusionary dimension of this communicative act. Silence is also a mechanism of consenting to teasing and violence. Therefore, in this communicative act we can see how the silence of these women made them accomplices of the men who ridiculed Antonio, without reacting to this situation and allowing it to continue happening.

The last selected communicative act is provided by Laia again. When asked whether she knew any examples of communicative acts by some men who corresponded to the DTM model toward a man who was not, Laia confirmed and focused on describing the reaction of a boy who, according to her, corresponds to DTM (Julio) in front of a man (Manu) with egalitarian values toward women. In particular, Laia pays more attention to Manu than to Julio:

Laia: When I was younger, I usually went with a group of friends to the beach. One of my friends (Manu) was very nice and I liked to talk to him because I enjoyed it very much. One day my group went to the beach and I was talking with Manu and not with the DTM boy of our group (Julio) because I found him boring. Then, we were sitting at the beach and when some of us got up from the sand he [Julio] said "Look! I have left a hole in the sand with my ass" . . . Then all of us began to get up and see the holes that we had left. . . but my friend [Manu] would not do it . . . Then Julio said "Look! This idiot doesn't get up because he is fat. . . hu, hu, hu. . . and his ass. . . sure he left a big hole. . . hu, hu, hu". He was teasing him so much. And nobody was saying anything to him. . . finally some people told him to leave him alone. . . And that it'd be better to get back to our motorbikes. Manu did not get up, he was alone there, because all of us went back and nobody stayed with him, we left him alone. . . Now that I remember this, I think that it was a tough situation for him, and we should have been with him and respond to Julio more clearly.

This communicative act is a clear example of how DTM men need to ridicule men who do not represent hegemonic masculinity in order to maintain their power status inside the group, as Hay (2000) mentioned in her research. In fact, Julio (DTM) felt jealous, according to Laia's words, because girls were not paying attention to him, and she preferred to talk with Manu. Julio needed to attack Manu with personal details (in this case physical traits) to reinforce his social status ("Look! This idiot would not get up because he is fat. . . hu, hu, hu. . . and his ass. . . Sure he left a big hole. . . hu, hu, hu"). Dominant boys who are teasers usually use language to humiliate (Hamlall and Morrell, 2012) and this is an example of that.

## Transformative Communicative Acts: Courage and Attractiveness in NAM's Reaction

This section exemplifies three communicative acts performed by men who follow NAM behavior, which undermines the attractiveness of DTM and women who try to ridicule OTM or men who never perpetrated gender violence. As we will show in our data, these communicative acts bring in a transformative dimension because they use a language of desire to counteract reprimands and teasing. We have selected communicative acts that occurred in different social contexts, evidencing that these interactions are present in diverse spaces. These three communicative acts (one personal and two from other two colleagues) are provided by Marc, an active member of the NAM movement.

The first communicative act selected occurred during a conference organized by the "Men in Dialogue" association in Barcelona in 2013. After finishing the conference an activist (Jose) who explained successful strategies to prevent gender violence, a woman from the public addressed Jose to tell him how men's movements have to organize their fight. Marc vividly revealed this situation during his communicative daily life story:

Marc: In the Q&A, a woman from the floor started to tell us in a very authoritarian tone "Men have to do this and that." Jose replied: "Men will decide what we should do." He said it with self-confidence, and he emptied the attractiveness of the woman. We responded instead of shutting up.

The literature review evidenced how some men are afraid to answer this type of reactions, especially if they come from well-established feminist women (Pinilla et al., 2014). Our analysis shows how NAM are not afraid to be assertive and respond to the communicative acts that try to dominate them (Serradell et al., 2014). They work together with feminists who treat them in an egalitarian way, not from a power-based position. In the same way that feminist movements considered as an imposition that men would decide about aspects concerned to women's life, these men also refuse any type of imposition that some women might want to impose on men's issues. From our data, it can be inferred that an effective way to respond to the communicative acts that try to dominate men is by having a secure attitude as Jose said: ("Men will decide what we should do").

The second communicative act selected is a personal situation experienced first-hand by Marc. When Marc worked at a technology company, he remembered one colleague, in particular, representing the DTM model (Roberto). According to Marc, Roberto used to ridicule those men who did not follow his model (Racionero-Plaza et al., 2021) as well as making very derogatory comments toward women. As the company had partners in different European countries, the example provided by Marc refers to a night out of the team after a meeting in Belgium. Roberto tried to persuade all the team to enter a brothel appealing to their masculinity, according to Marc, pressing and teasing who would not want to go there.

Marc: I lived this situation when I was with my colleagues and some clients on a men's night out. Roberto (DTM) wanted to joke and said we had to go to this brothel, pretending to be funny and boasting of his masculinity.

Researcher: Really?

Marc: Yes. I said that I didn't want to go inside, because I don't like it and also because of my ethical principles. There, Roberto tried to tease me, but he didn't achieve to make me feel bad and he didn't change my decision. Instead, the boss (Albert) of our team supported my decision and said that he would do the same. Albert was a leader, apart from being the boss, and he decided to stop the social pressure imposed by Roberto and he didn't go inside the brothel.

Researcher: But he did this because you were the most courageous, maybe he thought "hopefully someone says not to go inside..."

Marc: Yes, that's it. Roberto was mocking, and the boss and I felt fine with our positioning. We felt complicity and others left the brothel quickly; Roberto remained in ridicule.

According to Marc's narrative, Roberto tried to impose on the group to go to a brothel, deciding that it is the nature of heterosexual masculinity, using humor and jokes to convince them. This interaction is an example of how dominant men decide what a "real man" is (McCann et al., 2010). However, Marc decided to say "No" to going to this brothel because he did not like it and for his ethical principles. This is an example of a communicative act that includes desire and the language of ethics. He transmitted self-confidence and the boss reacted and supported his decision. This is evidence of the link between NAM and leadership toward social change already stated by Redondo (2016). Marc said that the boss and he had a good night talking in another bar and developed a good mutual understanding; from this moment their friendship grew. This evidences how male friendships who share a clear statement against gender violence (in this case a clear position for not wanting to go to a brothel) generated a better and passionate friendship (Gomez, 2014). The courageous attitude of Marc was crucial for not being an accomplice and to help his boss to be courageous too. This situation put DTM in ridicule, emptying his attractiveness. Robert lost the power in this situation in front of the group, and the possibility to decide what a "real man" is. In fact, we have real heroes in diverse social contexts, the only thing that we should do is to explain more often this type of communicative acts and counteract the dominant discourse, as Primer and Moss-Racusin (2009).

The last communicative act selected refers to Lucas, Marc's friend, who works as a teacher in a high school. Marc told us about how a colleague of Lucas tried to ridicule him when he saw that Lucas was receiving romantic messages from his wife. This situation occurred in the teacher's room of a secondary school:

Marc: One male teacher saw chat messages of Lucas' wife "How are you, my love?" This teacher tried to ridicule Lucas and said: "You are a soft man, do you allow that your

wife tells you this "how are you, my love?" Then Lucas told him "Hey man! Don't blame me if your wife doesn't tell you these things but tells you to go to the couch!"

This last example evidences how Marc was sharing the importance of Lucas using the language of desire and not consenting to be ridiculed. The interaction of the colleague tried to ridicule Lucas. But Lucas, instead of shutting up, responded to this situation with the language of desire ("Hey man! Don't blame me if your wife doesn't tell you these things but tells you to go to the couch!"). In this way, Lucas achieved to empty the attractiveness of that man who is teasing him.

## DISCUSSION

Our research has shed light on how DTM and some women reprimand or ridicule OTM or men who never have perpetrated gender violence. We have also shown how OTM oftentimes do not effectively respond to these exclusionary communicative acts. Instead, some OTM tolerate it, thus perpetuating unequal relationships. Our data also indicates how some women are accomplices of this type of communicative acts. Evidence shows that they only reprimand OTM but not DTM, thus strengthening the coercive dominant discourse that moves away attraction from kindness (Puigvert et al., 2019). The communicative acts analyzed here illustrate that men who follow a NAM model counteract these communicative acts and overcome them (Rodríguez-Navarro et al., 2014). They use a language of desire for undermining the attractiveness of DTM and women who reproduce that behavior; in fact, they are achieving and changing the dominant discourse, releasing their circles from the coercion by practicing communicative acts that promote a freer socialization based on egalitarian values combined with a language of desire. This language used represents a real alternative to combat gender-based violence and to achieve better relationships where nobody is being subordinated to anyone, and where more possibilities to achieve satisfactory relationships are given; where communicative acts are free of unjust reprimands.

Our findings lead to the identification of several implications for further research. First, the need to go deeper into the evidence of how some women who defend feminist values, in some cases do not support men who practice these values, in some cases they are even reprimanding or teasing them in public. However, in the cases analyzed this same behavior is not reproduced in interaction with those men who represent the dominant DTM model. This fact evidences incongruences between discourse and practice of these women. Hence, this result could be included in feminist debates that could help to advance in the aim of constructing egalitarian relationships between women and men and to review the coherence between discourse and practice in gender relationships.

Second, this article has been a first step to reveal how communicative acts performed by NAM counteract reprimands done by some women and men who follow the DTM model. They turn the situation around, and these women and men are dismantled. Another crucial factor obtained is the reaction

of those people who experience these communicative acts of teasing. In this sense, future research could analyze how people talk about men with a NAM attitude counteracting reprimands and how people talk about men who follow the DTM model. Thus, the analysis of the impact of NAM's communicative acts in the perception of those people who are present during the reaction of NAMs could be collected to evidence who is more valued and who is ridiculed. According to our initial data, DTM are considered ridiculous after communicative acts performed by NAM (Rodríguez-Navarro et al., 2014); thus, violent attitudes are undermined. Therefore, further research is needed in this area because this result is crucial for preventing gender-violence relationships.

Limitations of this study mainly refer to the fact that communicative acts are basically examples of past events, and some of them from third persons. This implied a certain level of difficulty because the research participants had to remember concrete situations and some specific details might not be exact. To reduce this limitation the researchers consistently posed follow-up questions that helped the participant to remember relevant details related to verbal, non-verbal and interactions from those persons who participated in the communicative act.

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## DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

## ETHICS STATEMENT

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by CREA, Community of Research on Excellence for All. University of Barcelona. The patients/participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

RV-C approached the article's conceptualization. AM-P contributed to some insights on the literature review. RV-C and GL-T prepared and revised the final version of the manuscript. BM reviewed the last version of the manuscript. All authors contributed to the article and approved the submitted version.

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**Conflict of Interest:** The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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## Chapter 3. Not all men support and desire relationships without consent

This chapter includes the second of three articles, describing the results of the second research. The article is entitled "Not All Men: The Debates in Social Networks on Masculinities and Consent"<sup>17</sup>. It was published in January 2024 in the journal *Humanities & Social Sciences Communications*, indexed in quartile 1 of Journal Citation Reports. It is coauthored with Oriol Rios, Analia Torres, Emilia Aiello, Bernardo Coelho, and Ariadna Munté.

In March 2024, at the time of the delivery of the thesis and only two months after its publication, the article has 1108 views and an Altmetric of 15. This article is in the 87th percentile (ranked 32,407th) of the 255,098 tracked articles of a similar age in all journals and the 92nd percentile (ranked 13th) of the 155 tracked articles of a similar age in *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*.

This article addresses the second specific objective of the dissertation: "To collect stories of upstander masculinities in both digital and offline contexts who combat gender-based violences, specifically related to sexual consent". The research question asks: "Do men take a stand in favor of consent, in their personal sexual relationships and in interaction with others' behaviors? Do men desire con- sensual relationships and reject non-consensual interactions?"

Many brave and transformative positionings are described due to the thousands of messages analyzed in the Social Media Analysis. The link between New Alternative Masculinities is firstly explored: NAM men show a deep rejection of relationships where the other person(s) involved do not show clear and enthusiastic consent.

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<sup>17</sup> Rios-Gonzalez, O., Torres, A., Aiello, E., Coelho, B., Legorburo-Torres, G., & Munte-Pascual, A. (2024). Not all men: the debates in social networks on masculinities and consent. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 11, 67. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-02569-y>



## ARTICLE

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OPEN

# Not all men: the debates in social networks on masculinities and consent

Oriol Rios-Gonzalez <sup>1</sup>✉, Analia Torres<sup>2</sup>, Emilia Aiello <sup>3</sup>, Bernardo Coelho<sup>2</sup>, Guillermo Legorburo-Torres <sup>1</sup> & Ariadna Munte-Pascual<sup>4</sup>

Evidence shows the role men can have to contribute to the prevention of non-consensual relationships and gender violence, mainly fostering educational and social strategies which strengthen egalitarian male models that take consent as a key aspect in their sexual and affective relationships. In this regard, social networks show the existence of discourses that reinforce these male models. However, there is a gap in the analysis of how the previously mentioned discourses on consent are linked to men's sexual satisfaction. The present study deepened into this reality by analysing messages on Reddit and Twitter. Drawing on the Social Media Analytics (SMA) technique, conducted in the framework of the European large-scale project ALL-INTERACT from the H2020 program, the hashtags *notallmen* and *consent* were explored aimed at identifying the connections between masculinities and consent. Furthermore, three daily life stories were performed with heterosexual men. Findings shed light on the relevant positioning of men about consent as a key message to eradicate gender-based violence; in parallel, they reveal the existence of New Alternative Masculinities that have never had any relationship without consent: they only get excited by free, mutual and committed consent, while repulsing unconsented or one-sided relationships.

<sup>1</sup> Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Tarragona, Spain. <sup>2</sup> Universidade de Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal. <sup>3</sup> Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Madrid, Spain. <sup>4</sup> Universitat de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain. ✉email: [joseoriol.rios@urv.cat](mailto:joseoriol.rios@urv.cat)

## Introduction

There are several myths about heterosexual men's sexual interests and desires, which are based on hoaxes and not scientific evidence. One salient example of them refers to the idea that all heterosexual men always have sexual desire for women, regardless of their lack of consent. However, research has evidenced that this statement is not real and there are men's groups and men who are positioned against relationships without consent (Kaufman 2001). Concerning the approach to gender issues, social media is given a relevant role in their visibility. In fact, studies on the impact of social media have illustrated the effects on the reality that messages posted on virtual networks can have (Fu and Chau 2014; Zheng and Yu 2016). For instance, the gendered trolling of women was analysed by Pillai and Ghosh (2022) for its consequences on women.

The research questions that drive this study are: Do men take a stand in favour of consent, in their personal sexual relationships and in interaction with others' behaviours? Do men desire consensual relationships and reject non-consensual interactions? In the present article, we pay attention to this issue by analysing discourses and messages which have emerged on two social networks: Twitter and Reddit. Thus, we have mainly focused on the discussions around the hashtags #NotAllMen and #Consent, which show the positioning of men and women against gender-based violence and its connection with consent. Furthermore, three life stories of men were conducted aimed at deepening this issue: this fieldwork illustrates different dimensions concerning interviewed men's desire for consenting relationships that have not been identified in the analysis of social media.

This article is divided into four different sections. Firstly, the theoretical framework of the study will be introduced; secondly, a literature review will highlight some of the latest research relevant to our study, regarding scientific literature on masculinities, consent in affective relationships, and the relevance of social networks for strengthening the transformation processes. Thirdly, mixed methods employed in the article are described, as well as how the data analysis has been carried out. Fourthly, findings obtained through social media analytics and life stories are summarised. Lastly, a brief discussion of the results is elaborated.

**Theoretical framework.** This study is primarily situated within the theoretical framework and research line of preventive socialisation of gender-based violence, intersectionality and social impact research. The former examines how interactions with media and other people can help overcome violence (Gomez 2015; Puigvert 2014; Salceda et al. 2020). The central thesis revolves around the cultivation of an alternative socialisation that directs our focus, attraction, and decision-making toward egalitarian and dialogic relationships. Within this framework, the analysis of New Alternative Masculinities (NAM) is found and conceptualised: these NAM behaviours, characterised by a fusion of egalitarian values and attractiveness in the same boys and men, are to be promoted and endorsed within society. Shifting attention to such alternative attitudes could prove pivotal in reshaping preferences towards men who are not violent or dominant across various relationship dynamics.

Second, intersectionality is another theoretical approach that has been widely employed to comprehend gender inequalities directly or indirectly connected with masculinities (Crenshaw 1989). Following Crenshaw's works (2013), intersectionality pays attention to how hierarchical power relations contribute to maintaining discriminatory practices which are linked to structural variables such as race, social class and gender. This is particularly relevant to deepening the situation of social exclusion or discrimination lived by certain vulnerable groups. In this vein,

categories of class, race and sexuality can also reinforce patriarchy and men's privilege, strengthening the legitimacy of dominant models of masculinity that uphold positions of power (Christensen and Jensen 2014). Conversely, the theory of the Dialogic Society demonstrates that these kinds of unequal power alignments are being contested by social movements and individuals who claim and build more egalitarian relations (Flecha 2022).

Last, social transformation processes are often elucidated by social impact-focused theories, illustrating how research can serve as a valuable tool for bringing about significant societal changes by highlighting realities that contribute to a better world. These realities, like the ones explained in this paper, become social creations thanks to co-creation processes engaging citizens and promoting an egalitarian dialogue with researchers (Flecha 2022; Aiello and Joanpere 2014). In this regard, there are several analyses that show the role of social science research in generating experiences that reduce or eradicate inequalities. For example, the successful action approach, which arises from European research, provides the definition of successful educational actions that are improving coexistence and academic results in schools of different parts of the world (Flecha 2014; Flecha and Soler 2014). In relation to gender, Judith Butler (2003) clearly states that feminism can lead to social transformations of gender relations. Feminism, egalitarian men's groups and other identity movements are contributing to create new social relations shaping an alternative socialisation which strongly rejects non-consensual relationships (Soler-Gallart and Flecha 2022).

**Literature review.** The review of scientific literature is divided into two sections. Firstly, a review of contributions from men's studies concerning consent is carried out. Secondly, the role of social media for social transformation is analysed, paying particular attention to those campaigns which emerge in the context of men's engagement in initiatives that promote consent and gender equality.

*Men and consent.* About the contributions in the field of men's studies, impactful and a significant amount of literature pays attention to the relevance of implementing interventions addressed to men and boys to sensitise them on the importance of consent in intimate relationships. For instance, investigations which examine the impact of these interventions stress the relevance to articulate "positive masculinities" which are centred on the performance of healthy behaviours directly linked to male gender identity (Carline et al. 2018; Orenstein 2021). However, other contributions call into question the capacity of these actions to transform hegemonic masculinities (Jewkes et al. 2015), a typology of masculinities which still has an important influence in men's behaviours (Connell 2012; Flecha et al. 2013; Guarinos and Martín 2021; Padros-Cuxart et al. 2021).

There is another body of literature which examines the characteristics of some strategies addressed to men aimed at raising awareness about consent in sexual and affective relationships. One example of these strategies is those which are launched at university campuses where campaign posters are placed in strategic spaces, such as toilets, student unions, and pubs. These campaign posters include key messages related to consent, such as 'Can't answer? Can't consent – sex without consent is rape' (Carline et al. 2018). However, there is a significant academic debate about the impact of these informative strategies on men, particularly because several limitations are identified linked to how tailored these strategies are to local and regional realities where they are implemented (Casey and Lindhorst 2009).

From another perspective, there are analyses of consent linked with the construction of masculine models. For instance, Beres (2010) stipulates young men hold ideas about consent as a tacit understanding; therefore, they used to employ statements such as 'you get a vibe' and 'just feel it in the air'. On the other hand, other conceptualisations relativise sexual abuses using sentences such as 'sort of just happens', thus diminishing the importance of consent in intimate relationships. In fact, studies on socialisation related to this type of relationship show how this is strongly influencing social imaginaries about women, who are sometimes perceived as sexual gatekeepers.

Recent developments in men's studies have introduced alternative conceptualisations, different from the above-mentioned, which provide new insights on the positioning of men concerning consent. Thus, the New Alternative Masculinities' approach (NAM) (Ríos-González et al. 2021) pays attention to the active positioning against gender-based violence and abusive relationships. However, one of the distinctive elements of this approach concerns how New Alternative Masculinities men look for relationships that combine freedom, equality, and passion, so desired consent from all parts is necessary. The last findings in this field illustrate a distinction between traditional and alternative models of masculinities. In the first case, there are the Dominant and the Oppressed models. The Dominant Traditional Masculinities refer to the typology of masculinity, which exercises violence and domination. The Oppressed Traditional Masculinities are not aggressive but become passive in front of discrimination and inequalities (Ríos-González et al. 2021). In addition, the former is socially perceived as attractive, and the latter as unattractive (Puigvert et al. 2019).

Since the beginning of the study of men and masculinities, outstanding scholars like Connell have identified the pressure that men experience to follow a Dominant model, which is reinforced by a social coercive discourse that breaks the relationship between beauty, goodness and truth and gives social value to men who not only do not improve relationships but actually make them worse with their disdain and power (Puigvert et al. 2019). Nonetheless, research suggests that New Alternative Masculinities become an alternative to this double standard generated by traditional models because they combine a clear positioning in front of gender-based violence and awaken desire with their actions (Flecha et al. 2013).

In Butler's terms (1990), gender exists because it is socially performed, which means that the construction of gender patterns has a relevant role in shaping people's identities. She stated heteronormative matrix is also conditioning men's socialisation, pushing them to reject feminine behaviours and reproducing hegemonic values. Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier, the New Alternative Masculinities' approach confirms the existence of an alternative socialisation which confronts this normativity promoting more diverse masculinity models away from the dominant ones.

*Social media and transformation.* The second facet that this literature review explores is the role of social media in current societies. In this respect, social media can be employed as an instrument that, on one hand, fosters Islamophobia, chauvinism, and homophobia (Awan 2016; Leppanen et al. 2016); or, conversely, could become a tool to engage citizenship in transformative actions with a significant social impact (Roth-Cohen 2022; Soler-Gallart and Flecha 2022; Pulido et al. 2018; Redondo-Sama et al. 2021). However, the existence of a coercive dominant discourse, as previously explained, present in society and expressed as well in social networks such as Instagram or Twitter, is linking attractiveness with violent and risky behaviours (Villarejo et al. 2020). This discourse is influencing young people's socialisation,

making them more vulnerable to affective and sexual relationships where this connection emerges. More attention will be paid to all these aspects, which are under the purpose of the research we have conducted.

More linked with the research we have performed here, there are analyses about social media and social transformation, which have evidenced that virtual networks are accelerating activism communication and are making the work of social movements more visible (Poell 2014; Maaranen and Tienari 2020). This is evident in the experiences on social media driven by specific campaigns and hashtags. For instance, Zheng (2020) analyses #NotAllMen as a hashtag that has reached a wide audience, although she insists on the fact that several feminist voices have been very critical of it. They argue that it is only restricted to harassers, rapists, batterers, and perpetrators of sexism, concluding that more distinction is needed to properly understand the role of men in the prevention of gender-based violence.

There is another campaign and hashtag strongly linked to the involvement of men in gender equality and violence prevention, #HeForShe, which has been promoted by the actress Emma Watson since her discourse at the United Nations Headquarters in 2014. As it was demonstrated in Samarjeet's (2017) analysis, this hashtag encouraged many male celebrities to express their solidarity with women and contributed to creating global rhetoric on the relevance of involving men in gender equality. After this impact, the United Nations created a global social movement that is enabling the implementation of a set of actions addressed to question gender inequalities and stereotypes from a male standpoint.

While covering these issues, there is a scientific gap on the rejection of non-consent and, complementarily, desire towards consent. Moreover, no studies have analysed alternative interactions from men regarding consent. This manuscript endeavours to address the existing void by analysing online dialogues and engaging with a sample of heterosexual men who are actively participating in an egalitarian men's movement. The evidence found in this study, and presented in this paper, seeks to make a meaningful contribution to the transformation of gender roles and the engagement of egalitarian men in consensual relationships. This transformation is facilitated through the promotion of New Alternative Masculinities, fostering change in both online and face-to-face interactions.

## Materials and methods

This research started with the concern of what would the debates on social media be regarding men and consent. More specifically, there was an initial hypothesis that there is growing criticism of non-consent and towards men who perpetrate or reinforce it, while, and most importantly, there is a growing active involvement of men in opposing gender-based violence and only seeking relationships based on consent.

This study is framed within the ALL-INTERACT project from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program (ALL-INTERACT, 2020–2023). This project aims at Widening and diversifying citizen engagement in science, grounded on the perspective of the social impact of research.

Our study follows a Communicative orientation (Redondo-Sama et al. 2020). This Communicative Methodology aims not only to analyse social realities but also to find solutions that can help overcome injustices and inequalities, with the aim of informing social transformation through research. This methodological approach focuses above all on breaking the hierarchy between researcher and researched, breaking with the idea of interpretative unevenness. Analyses conducted under this methodology are based on the creation of scientific knowledge through

egalitarian dialogue, with the primary goal of reducing social inequalities. Next, the data-collection techniques are summarised, that is, the Social Media Analytics and the communicative daily life stories. Their design, implementation and analysis follow a communicative orientation.

First, the Social Media Analytics (SMA, hereinafter) carried out is explained. Reddit and Twitter were the social media platforms chosen for the analysis of posts, comments, and debates given their public dialogue nature, where any user can join an open conversation, read and participate. Precisely, the search unit we employed was *NotAllMen* and *Consent*, in the form of hashtags and keywords; these words were searched separately and combined. The objective was to see what people, not only men, talk about regarding consent and men. We initially analysed all messages that contained those words and additionally explored the threads where such messages were inserted to include reactions and responses.

Twitter was openly explored: according to the criteria described above, over two thousand Twitter messages -including the initial tweet, answers and retweeted messages- were read and analysed. On Reddit the search was centred on the following subreddits with a connection to the research purpose and which were obtained from the work of ALL-INTERACT. This European project funded this study and had two focus fields: the subreddits *Feminism*, *Feminisms*, *Bisexual*, *FeMRADebates* and *Purple-PillDebate* related to gender issues; the subreddits *ApplyingTo-College*, *Education*, *Science*, *Teachers* and *Teaching* were focused on education. We were able to utilise this data extraction and analyse its content in search for findings that met our research goals in two fields of great importance for the issue of consent: gender and education forums with great participation. Excel files containing messages from those subreddits added up to a total of 58,114 posts and comments, which were filtered to analyse those that included the target words and hashtags *NotAllMen* and *Consent*. The messages finally included in the results section were selected because they answered the purpose of the research. For data protection purposes, no literal excerpts will be presented, but rather descriptions and paraphrases of such comments.

To introduce the communicative daily life stories, it is important to note that our goal was not to provide a comprehensive and representative analysis of men's perspectives about consent, but rather to complement the SMA to fill the gap that social platforms did not incorporate in filling with statements from egalitarian men who may reject relationships not based on mutual consent and who would be most excited by enthusiastic consent. To achieve that, the inclusion criteria were men from an intentional sample who had participated in groups of men who discuss relationships that combine egalitarian values with desire and passion. Thus, the research team contacted a Spanish men's movement familiarised with scientific articles on consent and new alternative masculinities that they regularly debate. After being contacted, three heterosexual Spanish men between 35 and 45 years with a long trajectory on the movement and with significant knowledge of the aforementioned topics of age linked to a network of men who debate New Alternative Masculinities and the overcoming of gender-based violence were selected and then interviewed.

The technique chosen was the communicative daily life stories, where a specific topic is discussed based on the life experiences lived, which are put to reflection with the scientific evidence on men and consent that the researcher shares. During the conversation, the participants were asked to share insight about excitement and consent: they talked about their level of satisfaction towards consensual encounters and the way they felt about relationships where consent or reciprocity cannot be ensured. After analysing the interviews, the most repeated results were categorised considering the above-mentioned hypothesis.

The results were analysed following the communicative orientation. An initial general category, "Effects on consensual relationships", was drawn from the literature reviewed and the research objective. Then, the transformative and exclusionary dimensions were differentiated: the exclusionary dimension includes the debates and comments that perpetuate non-consent relationships; the transformative dimension includes "Debates and comments that help overcome non-consensual relationships" (see Table 1). Posts, comments and quotes that included the keywords, or referred to them, were analysed following the main category drawn from the literature and the emergent subcategories.

## Results

The results are presented in different categories following the ones established in the above-described data analysis procedure. Therefore, subsections 'Exclusionary dimension: debates and comments that perpetuate non-consent relationships' and 'Transformative dimension: debates and comments that help overcome nonconsent relationships' refer to the exclusionary and transformative dimensions of the main category, respectively.

In this section, we would like to underline that we draw on the conceptualisation of validity claims performed by Habermas (1984) and updated by Soler and Flecha (2010), which focuses on the arguments based on sincerity, truth and normative rightness. Thus, validity claims are contrary to power claims, which are framed on hierarchies and power positions.

**Exclusionary dimension: debates and comments that perpetuate non-consent relationships.** This section analyses the exclusionary dimension of the results: issues that arise from the comments and debates on Reddit and Twitter related to the chosen hashtags that make it difficult to overcome violence against women and gender violence. Data has shown the presence of debates and comments that pose barriers to overcoming relationships without consent.

The instrumental use of #NotAllMen acts as an excuse for some men to perpetrate and get away with unconsented actions. For instance, a tweet reports gay men touching women without their consent but justifying that they are not sexually attracted to them. Much more extended are conversations where the rape culture is strengthened. Some male posts include the views that a woman's "no" actually means "yes", or that they just need to be "warmed up". An open discussion on Twitter expressed the ideas of a man who argued that men have to insist because girls have learned to say "no" initially out of fear of looking easy, and that if men simply complied none would ever get laid. He shared a story where he respected the "no" of a girl who he later found out had ridiculed him with her friends with an insult regarding his sexual abilities, and that the following day she had called her vile ex to have sex because the first guy had left her sexually frustrated. What is more, the girl's friends offered him a solution that is not focused on consent and communication, but rather on techniques to have sex from an instrumentalised and senseless point of view.

Related to the previous interaction, we highlight a man's reflection of how women, he argues, engage in more or less consensual sex depending on whether men are more of a dominant or a nice-guy type. The comment shows that, with dominant men, women would consent to certain sexual practices he considers degrading, but which they would not have consented to with a non-dominant man. This statement can be aligned with previous research where it is noted that the existence of a dominant coercive discourse, linking attractiveness to bad boys and emptying nice guys of desire, is influencing socialisation

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processes with regard to affective-sexual relationships (Puigvert et al. 2019).

Both women and men express how some men behave differently whether in the presence of women or when they are among other men: those men act decently when addressed individually or among women, but openly exhibit misogynistic and anti-feminist comments and ideas when only men are present. Linked to that, some anti-violence men express on Twitter a popular and extended sense of silent and permissive brotherhood from some dominant men with any men, with whom they feel safe to say comments that perpetuate the rape culture. Critical debates about such situations are found in Twitter, and they include criticism of a larger group of less dominant but unconfident men who are nonetheless dragged along, wanting to fit in, and either stay silent or even encourage or reinforce the initial comments or behaviours.

Some female Reddit users express resistance to understanding the lack of consent from some men in different situations. For instance, a doctor stole a woman's number from personal data to ask her on a date, to which she felt stalked; her male friends excused this behaviour as understandable, as "he was taking his chance". Another issue that different users point out is the difficulty to identify men who do not care about consent when deciding whether to have a relationship with one.

Some difficulties, concerns, and doubts are shared on how to induce change in such dominant men. Contrary opinions are shared on the role that male friends can have in stopping comments. On the one hand, the problem of being a minority that stands up against them is thought to result in no positive impact. This lack of impact in individual actions can go from not taking the comment seriously to receiving attacks, which discourages them from future standing up because they feel it is not worth it. Men identify how not having a strong network is turning into a barrier for them.

Debates showed different elements as to why non-violent men do not feel empowered or ready to stand up to violence against women. An issue that discourages some non-violent men's involvement is "being put in the same boat" as the offenders, which frequently happens: they may be labelled as contributors or the problem, and attacked online for it. Further, at times when these men call out all forms of violence, including those perpetrated by women, they are attacked as misogynistic. Some spaces with a supposedly feminist standpoint seem to fuel this notion and its consequences, sharing repeated messages that "all men are evil". Likewise, some comments state that men who have healthy relationships should not be valued because that is what should be normal; some men themselves, when they support victims or the fight against gender violence, respond defensively because they should not be promoted for doing "the bare minimum".

Some men show in different online debates struggles in knowing how to flirt, while they seem to try to learn not by engaging in meaningful conversations but by reading self-help guides. They do not believe there are successful alternatives to the dominant model of insisting on women. That leads these men to hide their sexuality to ensure women are not bothered by them, but such an attitude results in women never taking them out of the friend zone. Consequently, to the internalisation of the idea that "successful masculinity is only found within traditional approaches", these "nice guys" express their need to adopt dominant behaviours due to their initial lack of success and the actual success they achieve when they behave badly. Linked to this, a woman on Reddit expresses her view that most men are very romantic and loving towards women; to this comment, a man's answer expresses that many men are initially like that, but after some bad experiences, they are taught by women that those attitudes will not bring them any success. Therefore, to appear

attractive to women, those initially egalitarian men feel like they have to train themselves not to be kind, even if most of them resist that mindset and keep on longing for mutually loving relations.

*Non-scientific debates on men and consent.* Next, we explore comments and debates that are not supported by scientific evidence. These conversations, which may be rooted in hoaxes related to gender issues, are not focused on discussing solutions or transformative proposals for the prevention of gender violence, specifically around consent.

The hashtag #NotAllMen is widely seen and explored. This hashtag is mostly used by men who claim never to have committed sexual assault or violence against women and state that they are not like that, even though they have not been personally accused. They act defensively, interfering in debates where women, and sometimes men, have conversations about experiences of non-consent or gender violence. It is then when these men alter the course of the discussion and, not caring for the victim's feelings or offering any form of ally-wise support, interrupt the debate to let everyone know they would not do the aggression being reported and criticised. As a consequence, victims and people who support them feel their concerns undermined.

Some men use hoaxes that deny the gendered base of violence, alluding to false reports from women being assaulted or to statistics being wrong. Certain profiles manipulate cases and statistics of male sexual abuse to strengthen misogynistic beliefs; or use men's suicide stats to bring up men's issues as a tool to switch the approach of the subject, silencing victims' voices.

Last, some debates introduce incorrect biological assumptions about innate sex drive differences between men and women, which are used with ulterior motives to justify some men's behaviours. Likewise, non-scientific conclusions that account for more self-control in women than in men are explained and used to justify some men paying for sex, even if they criticise such behaviour.

**Transformative dimension: debates and comments that help overcome non-consent relationships.** This section summarises the transformative dimension of this study: well-reasoned and impactful critiques against comments that perpetuate the non-consent culture, and against male inactive bystanders. Firstly, the #NotAllMen hashtag is strongly criticised; it is argued that nobody created an initial #AllMen hashtag (referring to all men being aggressors) to which the #NotAllMen hashtag had to be counter-used to make justice.

As another validity claim against #NotAllMen comments, very diverse comments and posts state the widely-held view that the men who harm women are a minority, but declare that this is not the point of the conversation. Some comments use #SomeMen to refer to perpetrators of the worst gender violence, such as rape or murder, to move the attention towards less grave but still worrisome situations that many women suffer, which all portray cases of harassment and violence that create the base of a pyramid of violence: that includes actions boys and men perpetrate, from looking under a girl's skirt to "slut shaming". These comments express a wide range of situations of violence against women concerning consent.

In a complementary way, there is a public accusation of men who are accomplices and who therefore support rape culture: some of the behaviours they criticise include men letting rape jokes slide, looking the other way because "it's none of their business", or not seeing the problem of using the "boys will be boys" statement.

We found repeated criticism towards people, mainly men, who act defensively but may be incoherent and stand by in face of

non-consent situations. That critique is frequently supported by the notion of not being part of the solution: many female users ask if all men do what they can to ensure that other men do not harm women, by stopping bad behaviours or engaging in conversations about women's safety and consent with their sons. They encourage those men that, before writing #notallmen, they share all their actions in defence of consent and women, such as campaigns, talks in schools, or gatherings to discuss male violence. Otherwise, they argue, it appears as if they seek recognition for not engaging in sexual assault. Some hashtags that reinforce this bystander critique include #TooManyMenNotSpeakingUp and #TooManyMenProtectingHorribleMen. Other users explain that bystanders are evil as well as the aggressors, for seeing hostile situations and doing nothing, since by looking the other way they are endorsing dominant men to escalate to worse behaviours. In this sense, the New Alternative Masculinities approach has demonstrated that alternative men's positioning and rejection is a transformative response to these men or men's groups complicit in the perpetuation of non-consensual relationships (Nazareno et al. 2022).

*Transformative debates on consent and men: men who stand up against gender violence reject non-consent in their relationships.* Next, transformative conversations regarding consent and men are presented. These debates offer alternatives, advice based on enthusiastic consent, or help men stand up to violence against women.

Educating about consent is a shared concern and a successful preventive strategy for many people, both in educational institutions and within families. Sex education in high schools seems too late for many, as they argue it should start in preschool years with non-sexual situations, with notions such as consent for physical touching. Regarding teaching consent in sexual-affective relationships, some comments include critically addressing from the "no means no" to a "yes means yes" that takes into account non-verbal communication. Further in that sense, some debates on Twitter express that the ultimate goal to be pursued when discussing consent with youth should be mutual enjoyment and good sex. Educators and parents showing themselves as available for open and continuous dialogues with youth are important for these social media users; from their perspective, adults should frequently engage in critical dialogue about situations they watch together in movies so that they distinguish whether there was or not consent. Another man shows his determination that we should teach our young men about what it is to be a man in sex, "which always starts with consent". The tea metaphor for learning consent video is shared as a useful resource, with over 20 million views on YouTube. Mention is made towards preventive, governmental and systemic approaches that include the educational system and all social spheres, such as the police and workplaces.

Training men to become confident and successful upstanders is also discussed. Many public campaigns, such as #AllMen by Women's Aid Organisation, have this approach. For instance, men who lead the men's engagement campaign "Don't be that guy" express that men do step up and want to engage in dialogue and action about these issues: one of them explains that since the beginning of one of the campaigns he had been receiving positive daily messages from men, as well as support from women. Some of the famous men portrayed in the campaigns further develop the campaign in their media profiles, having conversations with experts who discuss scientific evidence of the impact of male sexual entitlement on violence against women.

Following that course of action, it is clearly expressed the need for men to have an active role in stopping violence by changing the atmosphere, rather than just an intrapersonal approach to changing their own actions. That involves, they say, retaking social spaces where sexist men think that their misogyny is accepted until they

have no spaces where they feel their behaviours are normal. Some comments acknowledge that "leaders set the tone", but criticise looking up because that encourages the bystander effect -people waiting for others to intervene. In this sense, the bottom-up community approach is reinforced, stressing the need for everyone to be an upstander.

Many discussions on social media, involving both men and women, focus on criticising and condemning non-consent relationships and situations mostly shared by women while expressing support to the victims. When women break the silence online and speak up about a situation they suffered, many men show messages of empathy, support, and rejection of the offenders and their behaviours.

Some debates in social media show that many people choose not to engage in a conversation with other people who are not interested in having an egalitarian dialogue focused on collective solutions; these persons move away from such encounters and focus their energies on those who are willing to engage in respectful and constructive dialogue. Users choose to mute Twitter threads when "gender-critic trolls" invade it with ill-intentioned comments; others choose to stop interactions and relationships with the most dominant men in their environments because it is counterproductive to intervene as an isolated action.

Struggles from unconfident men who care about consent are mostly met with support and advice from other men. That advice includes being assertive and confident about one's desires, while maintaining an open mind to what the other person may want and being willing to stop. These conversations offer advice about building up a relationship so "it's pretty clear" that the other person feels comfortable with them before asking for a date or a kiss. Being thoughtful and considerate towards the other person is also appreciated among some men's debates and seen as a virtue, even if that means some women will lose motivation because they are not used to such kindness. According to the comments analysed, this is not seen as the man's problem but as the woman's loss.

There is a repeated understanding of the essential role of men in overcoming gender violence. Conversations about men standing up to violence against women support the idea that there are allies in men who portray an alternative masculinity model; female users value how "they raise the bar about what it means to be a good man". Women in these debates emphatically talk about the fact that male allies exist. These comments are socially valued in terms of the relative number of likes they receive compared to the rest.

Men openly express their collective need to stand up against male offenders. They do it by writing blog articles that they publish on social media or which are disseminated by others; they stand up by posting videos where their public positioning against violence is explained, while encouraging other men to share their upstander statements to the world, claiming their bottom-up transformative potential. Some of these male allies have thousands of followers, but there are many more men who are not public figures and who make comments and show their egalitarian attitude. Some brave statements from men in #NotAllMen debates describe their commitment to be exempt from double standards against gender violence: they argue they do not feel offended by the public debate because they know they would stop any form of violence even if that meant standing up to a friend. Concrete examples of possible reactions and answers against dominant behaviours are discussed and offered in the debates. Real stories of men taking a stance against violence are shared, which manifest as verbal or non-verbal communicative acts, such as a disapproving and strong gaze to keep other men in check. Users identify these behaviours in their male friends and relatives.

The hashtags analysed also included profiles of men's groups that promote boys' and men's engagement to end gender

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violence. “What Can I Do?”, “Beyond Equality” and “White Ribbon” are more repeatedly found in users’ debates. An attached article about Beyond Equality describes how the project experienced a significant increase in men registering for their training following the femicide of two women from their country.

Men who reject violence also use these social media debates to ask what they can do to be more active allies. This allows for encouraging and resourceful advice from both women and men. Suggestions include sharing studies about gender violence on social media, amplifying women’s voices, or even being willing to let go of friends because of how they treat women. These suggestions include reasons for having other men in check, such as the need to call out any small attitude to prevent it from building up to assault, because dominant men cannot interpret, they will be tolerated for anything they may do. Some answers insist that ignoring and letting it happen makes you part of the problem, and that collective actions are needed and have the most impact because all men doing something would result in an avalanche of actions.

Having conversations, not with dominant men but rather between egalitarian men, is a strategy with the preventive potential to also change the culture: people comment suggestions such as male spaces about sharing what each of them is doing, to realise they have the same objective and to inspire others to action. Specifically, including boys in the conversation is an option men suggest to break the “boys will be boys” mentality, better equipping them with the right skills.

Men of all ages, countries and cultures show these critical attitudes that transform bystander inaction into allyship attitudes. Some may recognise their past bystander conduct, but strongly state that they are no longer part of the problem because they are active allies who act with solidarity no matter the personal consequences.

*Male aversion to relationships without mutual and enthusiastic consent.* This section and the next one are made from the comments of the three men interviewed. These are heterosexual men who participate in groups of men who dialogue around scientific evidence on preventive socialisation of gender-based violence (Gomez 2015). The participants express that not only do they reject non-consent relationships because it may be morally wrong, but because they do not enjoy them: “I have never had a need to look for relationships without consent, it is the opposite to arousal, it doesn’t turn me on”. These men do not seek the other person’s consent to appear as nice guys but because it’s the only way they can truly enjoy their relationships:

I did not guide my actions so that the other person would consent, I did it for myself because... no, no, I couldn’t get my head around it [that the other person would not be enthusiastically into it], I didn’t like it, I got the creeps. Even on a sexual level, an emotional level, feeling that the person who was with you was not all over you, hmm... I didn’t like it, I felt like something was off.

Rejection is expressed not only in unconsented relationships, but in instrumental or unilateral situations: “If the other person is not there 100%, I do not want it either, but not just because I say “no, this isn’t right”, but because I no longer want it, I’m not turned on anymore.” Another participant expresses it like this: “From what people say, it’s like turning sex into some kind of routine, a task on a checklist, and you can tell me what is the point...”. This fragment and the following clearly express these men’s views on relationships with and without desired consent:

Of course, that [an unenthusiastic encounter] is a drag, you have already taken away not only magic, but that point of intensity; it’s like anything, you can do it 100% with maximum commitment and thus it is fun, pleasant,

unrepeatable but you want to repeat it because you had such a great time; or it can be as if you were checking that task off your checklist; and of course turning sex into that, you tell me about it... and of course, that needs consent, obviously, otherwise, you tell me about it...

*Men who only enjoy consensual and committed relationships.* Ideals of sexual-affective relationships that combine enthusiastic and mutual consent are shared by men on social networks. Some speak about never having had sex without enthusiastic consent, since that is a basic sign of dignifying and respecting women. Others project their dreams of a relationship onto the future, speaking with desire about intimate and loving situations such as cuddling or holding hands, or about sex, stating that the greatest thing is making her feel good as well. Men in these conversations share a wide range of sexual encounters, which nonetheless include communication and consent as essential, regardless of the stage of the relationship.

All participants in the communicative daily life stories show that the only way for them to allow and enjoy any sexual-affective relationship is not only by mutual consent but by mutual commitment: “What I like is seeing that the other person is with you, that she is well, and that you are with her, that you are comfortable, and to me that makes me lower the nervousness pulse and turn up the excitement pulse.”

In the following quote, It becomes evident how a participant in our qualitative study connects consent and desire; for him, it is not possible to separate both things because desire appears when consent is clearly observable:

What I find most exciting is giving yourself. The way it feels like fireworks is when there is this full commitment, and these moments where you kind of lose the sense of time (...); but of course, that only happens, the way I see it, when there is that possibility to commit fully; therefore, since it is a form of interaction like any other, then of course, if the other person doesn’t consent, they can’t be like that [committed], and if they can’t be like that...

Last, an interviewee points out that dreams linked to an ideal relationship have been crucial in his life. Therefore, in that case, this element serves as a preventive factor that explains better choices that connected consent and enjoyment:

In some way, I thought (...) I wanted sexual-affective relationships to be something else; something was there within me that drove me to look for beauty and kindness in relationships, and I believe that has been a lifejacket (..), not only to be okay, but to have a good time as well, because we have seen what the alternative is...

## Discussion

This manuscript supposes an advance in research regarding social media and consent, due to its communicative and mixed methodological approach and its focus on men. Thus, it is giving voice to these models of brave masculinity which are connected with good values, and the research is committed to looking for such standpoints that generate unprecedented knowledge which can contribute to improving sexual and affective relationships. Findings show that public debates on Twitter and Reddit have both an exclusionary and a transformative dimension. Among the negative interactions that perpetuate gender-based violence, we found how the #NotAllMen is used to excuse men and switch the centre of attention, making victims lose credibility. Additionally, some women ridicule men who stop at the first sign of non-consent. Both things would be strengthening non-egalitarian relationships with dominant men (Valls-Carol et al. 2021).



Misogynistic men seem to feel comfortable when they are surrounded by only men because those usually do not challenge them. A difficulty to identify predatory men before engaging in a relationship is shared. Literature supports this idea, especially in sporadic relationships (Torrás-Gómez et al. 2020), where there is little chance to get to know the other person. When deciding to stand up to dominant men, there is a risk of suffering reprimands -which the literature refers to as Isolating Gender Violence (Aubert and Flecha 2021), especially if there is no collective positioning, and this fact discourages some men's upstander behaviours. In this sense, there are analyses that emphasise the importance of addressing these typologies of violence from an intersectional perspective, calling for the creation of an Intersectional Gender-Based Violence Movement. This would make it possible to study and address the problem by considering the creation of networks of survivors who are contributing to overcoming violence and who present very diverse typologies of discrimination, including gender identity, sexual orientation or cultural and ethnic origin (Gill 2018).

Comments that put egalitarian men and offenders on the same boat, stating that all men are potential offenders, provoke similar effects. Scientific conceptualisations on masculinities with a transformative dimension (Flecha et al. 2013) clearly express that only some men with a Dominant Traditional Masculinity exercise violence, while many others who remain inactive and accipit to it have an Oppressed Traditional Masculinity; but there exist New Alternative Masculinities (NAM) who do not tolerate any violence and act upon it to protect the victims with confidence and strength.

In this regard, these men should not receive praise for merely meeting the minimum expectations. Contrarily, evidence shows the need to include the language of desire towards these New Alternative Masculinities aimed at inducing social change (Melgar-Alcantud et al. 2021; Puigvert et al. 2019). In fact, not offering this alternative as a successful and desirable one risks that "nice guys" who do not have success with women may become dominant because they see that as their only "successful" option (Puigvert et al. 2019). In this way, New Alternative Masculinities radically position themselves and seek sexual relations where there is consent because this is what excites them sexually. When there is no consent, there is a lack of motivation. Thus, in their sexual relations, New Alternative Masculinities look for people who treat them as equals, as this generates greater sexual pleasure for them (Joanpere et al. 2021).

Many transformative debates are analysed in this study. They focus on educating about consent at all ages and the power of having continuous and critical dialogues with children, with special mention to addressing boys and men; it is key to have those dialogues based on scientific evidence (Villarejo-Carballido et al. 2022). In that line, different campaigns, especially on Twitter, debated that breaking the silence fosters men's engagement, and many comments acknowledge that many men are already committed. Indeed, the #MeToo movement has already shown the potential of online solidarity networks, which can take place among men as well, and help overcome the potential reprisal for stepping up, what is known as Isolating Gender Violence (Nazareno et al. 2022). It is these kinds of movements that Butler (2022) argues are working from a position of nonviolence for social transformation. Their ethical stance is one of the bases of their struggle for equality and peace.

This reality contrasts with another one also analysed by studies such as Trott's (2022) in which the use of YouTube comments in a campaign promoting alternative masculinities can be a niche for derisive comments typical of Traditional Dominant Masculinities (Flecha et al. 2013; Al-Rawi et al. 2022). Works such as Díaz-

Fernández and García-Mingo's (2022) express how online platforms such as *Forocoches* validate digital (hegemonic) masculinities; while we argue that online means merely facilitate the emergence of those already internalised dominant attitudes, indeed exacerbated by a culture of tolerance and a law of silence, which indeed needs to be broken.

We found in the interviewed men that they strongly reject relationships without consent, using a language of desire because they do not get aroused if women are not into it as well. In this regard, these men show in different ways their desire for relations with mutual and enthusiastic consent (Joanpere et al. 2021). The advice between men in that regard is seen as well in social media, showing a re-enchantment in dialogue (Gomez 2015) and a focus on communicative acts (Rios-Gonzalez et al. 2018); they also share brave examples of male positioning against potential harassment and provide reasons why all should engage to leave offenders alone.

Similarly, the three interviewed men affirm they are only turned on by relationships where all parts are committed, independently of the type of relationship. In a broader sense, this study highlights the need for research on successful and egalitarian types of men, such as New Alternative Masculinities, and their role in fostering passionate and egalitarian relationships across various contexts, including mass media. The paper contributes to universal goals, such as SDG5, providing evidence that, shared with citizens, can foster more transformative actions and help overcome non-consent relationships.

## Conclusion

Following our research questions and with the data analysed, men with traits of New Alternative Masculinities (NAM) show attitudes that play a critical role in eliminating non-consensual relationships. These men are making visible their rejection of non-consensual relationships, as well as explicitly stating that they enjoy their affective-sexual relationships much more when there is consent on both sides. This last aspect has not been found in any of the debates that have been evaluated in the social networks analysed, so the qualitative fieldwork has provided relevant and complementary knowledge to the research. In fact, this complementarity is visible in many of the posts where many men, through the hashtag #notallmen, express a position in favour of relationships with consent and a rejection of gender-based violence or harassment.

Lastly, we would like to highlight that the present study has some limitations: the sample size of men interviewed is relatively small and belongs to an intentional group. Future research could analyse dialogues between different groups of egalitarian men, which can positively influence peer learning about consent and effective responses to violence. Moreover, in future research, it would be relevant to conduct a quantitative analysis of social media discussions to determine the percentage of men exhibiting NAM characteristics, because this is a step pending in the analysis undertaken in the present study.

## Data availability

The data that were used for this study are not available for the general public, since they contain personal information on sensitive topics about gender-based violence. However, it can be made available upon reasonable request by email to the corresponding author.

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**Appendix**

Table 1

**Table 1 Categories of results divided by their exclusionary and transformative dimension.**

Categories/subcategories	Exclusionary dimension	Transformative dimension
Category: effect on non-consent relationships	Debates and comments that perpetuate non-consent relationships	Debates and comments that help overcome non-consent relationships
Subtopics in which categories are presented in the results section	Non-scientific debates on men and consent	Transformative debates on consent and men: Men who stand up against gender violence reject non-consent in their relationships. Male aversion to relationships without mutual and enthusiastic consent Men who only enjoy consented and committed relationships

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## Author contributions

OR-G, EA, EO, AM-P and GL-T contributed to the study conception and design. Data collection was performed by OR-G and GL-T. Analysis was performed by GL-T and OR-G. The first draft of the manuscript was written by GL-T and OR-G. AT and BC made the last revisions. All authors commented on previous versions of the manuscript and read and approved the final manuscript.

## Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

## Ethical approval

The article has been approved by the CREA ethics committee of the University of Barcelona, which certifies that the study was performed in accordance with the ethical standards as laid down in the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards. No data from Twitter or Reddit are literally included in the manuscript.

## Informed consent

Participants in the interviews were explained the goal of the study and consented to their participation.

## Additional information

**Correspondence** and requests for materials should be addressed to Oriol Rios-Gonzalez.

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## Chapter 4. Impacts of bystander intervention training to prevent violence against LGBTI+ youth

This chapter includes the third of the articles, which publishes the results of the latest research. The article is entitled "Impact of an evidence-based training for educators on bystander intervention for the prevention of violence against LGBTI+ youth"<sup>18</sup>. It was published in September 2023 in the open-access journal *Humanities & Social Sciences Communications*, indexed in quartile 1 of Journal Citation Reports. It is coauthored with Oriol Rios, Juan Carlos Peña, Andreas Avgousti, and Laura Natividad. This paper is possible thanks to the research and dissemination work of the European project Up4Diversity.

In March 2024, at the time of the delivery of the thesis, the article has 1355 views, 4 citations, and an Altmetric of 21. This article is in the 92nd percentile (ranked 15,406th) of the 206,906 tracked articles of a similar age in all journals and the 99th percentile (ranked 2nd) of the 123 tracked articles of a similar age in *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*.

This study draws from the following research question: Does this evidence-based training on upstander approach impact the participants, so that they are more confident, empowered and therefore more likely to transfer the knowledge and skills to their professional contexts? The specific goals of the article include assessing the training impact in the attendees in terms of improvement in awareness about bullying against LGBTI+ youth and effective strategies to overcome it, as well as in empowerment and intention to implement upstander interventions in their organizations and contexts.

The results contribute to filling the research gap of lack of evidence on the impact of the combination of co-created and evidence-based training based on bystander intervention for the whole community to prevent violence against LGBTI+ youth in formal and non-formal educational institutions. In doing so, it addresses thesis goal number 3. New Alternative Masculinities are also addressed in both the ten-hour training delivered and the results as voiced by the participants.

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<sup>18</sup> Rios-Gonzalez, O., Peña-Axt, J. C., Legorburo-Torres, G., Avgousti, A., & Sancho, L. N. (2023). Impact of an evidence-based training for educators on bystander intervention for the prevention of violence against LGBTI+ youth. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 10(1), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-02117-8>






## ARTICLE

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OPEN

# Impact of an evidence-based training for educators on bystander intervention for the prevention of violence against LGBTI+ youth

Oriol Rios-Gonzalez <sup>1✉</sup>, Juan Carlos Peña-Axt<sup>2</sup>, Guillermo Legorburu-Torres <sup>1</sup>, Andreas Avgousti<sup>3</sup> & Laura Natividad Sancho <sup>1</sup>

Research shows that teachers and educators receive scarce scientific evidence-based training and tools to implement effective strategies to stop and prevent violence against LGBTI+ youth in educational institutions. Nonetheless, no data examines pedagogical contents and training initiatives that are providing these professionals with effective strategies and skills. This paper will cover this gap by gathering data on the impact of training workshops that were carried out in five European countries as part of a REC programme project. These workshops were designed to train educators in formal and non-formal contexts about scientific evidence-based content aimed at reaching social impact, such as *bystander intervention* and *the dialogic model of violence prevention*. As part of the training, they participated in the debate of a scientific article first hand, thus engaging with direct research. The content, organisation and instruments for data collection were co-created with relevant end-users and researchers who engaged at different meetings in an Advisory Committee. Aimed at collecting the impact of this training, 208 online pre- and post-questionnaires, and 12 semi-structured interviews were analysed. Results show that participants gain knowledge and confidence empowering themselves as active agents in the problem. Thanks to this co-creative and community science approach, participants affirmed they are thinking of applying upstander actions in their working contexts. The trust in the rigour of the content and the interest sparked towards science are also expressed.

<sup>1</sup> Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Tarragona, Spain. <sup>2</sup> Universidad Autónoma de Chile, Providencia, Chile. <sup>3</sup> University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus.  
✉email: [joseoriol.rios@urv.cat](mailto:joseoriol.rios@urv.cat)

## Introduction

Formal and non-formal educational institutions are hostile environments for many LGBTI+ youth who suffer violence (Fundamental Rights Agency, 2020). The lack of evidence-informed professional training for educators perpetuates this situation (Oliver, 2014; Yuste et al., 2014). However, there exist science-based educational actions that help face and prevent violence. This study is possible thanks to decades of competitive research projects and publications on gender-based violence and its prevention (Flecha et al., 2013), LGBTI+ (Rios et al., 2022), the bystander intervention approach (Duque et al., 2021a; Villarejo-Carballido et al., 2019), (cyber) bullying prevention programs (Olweus and Limber, 2010; Williford et al., 2013); scientific teacher training (Roca Campos et al., 2021), and communicative methodology (Gómez et al., 2006; Gómez et al., 2019).

This study assessed bystander intervention training to educators to stop violence against LGBTI+ youth, which started with the research question: Does this evidence-based training on upstander approach impact the participants, so that they are more confident, empowered and therefore more likely to transfer the knowledge and skills to their professional contexts? Results help answer this question, showing quantitative and qualitative data from Spain, Cyprus, Ireland, Denmark, and Belgium.

The author's positionality goes in line with the communicative methodology of research used (Gómez et al., 2019): to contribute with scientific evidence to social impact, in this case in terms of better lives for LGBTI+ and all youth. This approach has been used in EC Framework Program projects such as ALLINTERACT, REFUGE-ED or SOLIDUS (European Commission - H2020, 2020-2023; 2021-2024; 2015-2018). The research team is made up of a diverse group where there are some teachers, professors, LGBTI+ youth and adults. From an egalitarian dialogue based on validity claims (Habermas, 1987) with participants, the Advisory Committee and this diverse team, hope to best interpret reality in order to foster social transformation. This study aims to realise goals established by society and not by researchers, such as Sustainable Development Goals 4 and 5 about quality education and gender equality. This idea of social impact was widely developed by Flecha (2022) and Flecha et al. (2022) in the framework of the theoretical conceptualization of a dialogic society.

On the other hand, our positionality in regard to gender takes into consideration the analysis of social construction and socialisation in the shaping of identities. Accordingly, Morgenroth and Ryan (2021) affirmed that gender identity is understood as a social process of self-categorization where non-binary people demonstrate that there are individuals who do not identify themselves as either exclusively male or exclusively female. This conception includes, although is not reduced to, the recognition of persons who are considered gender-fluid, multigender and agender. Butler (2002) detailed the relevance that performativity has in this social construction of gender. She underlined how non-heteronormative identities, such as drag queens, questioned the binary differentiation between male and female. In that vein, she insisted on the oppression that heterocentrism causes in those sexual and gender minorities. Referring to socialisation, Millett (2016) argued that this is a process affected by power relationships and patriarchal policies which give a higher status to male identities. This situation causes the stereotyping of sex categories based on the needs and values of a masculine dominant group. In this line, there is recent research on men's studies which showed the existence of alternative models of masculinities that are not reproducing this scheme (Flecha et al. 2013). Such research evidences that new alternative masculinities are diverse but at the same time have common elements connected with the struggle against gender discrimination and gender-based violence.

This manuscript is divided into the following sections: a literature review contains relevant scientific knowledge for the present study; the methods section explains in detail the training and the research processes, including the co-creation approach; the transformative results from the questionnaires and interviews are then presented in the different categories; last, a discussion and conclusion connect our data with other up-to-date evidence and establish future research lines.

## State of the art

The following theoretical introduction is a state of the art on the main topics of this study: violence against LGBTI+ youth and consequences, and evidence-based measures to tackle and prevent such violence will be explored; then, training for teachers and educators on both former issues will be presented; more specifically educational actions and training which include a "bystander intervention" approach are described. Last, the advances and importance of community science are explained. Specific research gaps are described in the different sections.

**Violence against LGBTI+ youth and consequences.** Due to oppressive and discriminatory practices, LGBTI+ youth is a group that uses to suffer violence and bullying, especially intersex and trans people (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2020; Copp and Koehler, 2017; Taylor et al., 2020). This violence takes place in educational institutions, whether formal -high schools, universities (Coulter and Rankin, 2017)- or non-formal -leisure, sports clubs, youth associations, etc. This harassment takes different forms: from physical or sexual violence to psychological and verbal violence (Dueñas et al. 2021), and other more subtle but harmful forms (Nadal et al., 2011). These are ubiquitous in all educational contexts, they are rarely reported (Gallardo-Nieto et al. 2021), contribute to the normalisation and interiorisation of LGBTI+phobia and perpetuate non-inclusive environments. Moreover, cyberbullying and other types of digital violence is more prevalent than ever (Abreu and Kenny, 2017). Perpetrators are diverse but have in common a dominant profile and a sense of immunity (Rodrigues-Mello et al., 2021; Jackson and Sundaram, 2019).

These violent and discriminatory behaviours towards LGBTI+ people are an issue that has been also institutionalized by politics and governments. According to data on the analysis of the SOGI (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identities) policies, mostly implemented in Western societies, they are obtaining positive results to protect LGBTI+ rights (Rahman, 2020). However, there are several European countries, such as Hungary and Poland, which are facing challenging situations in this field. For instance, in Poland, numerous municipalities and districts have created the namely zones free from LGBTI+ ideologies and people. They are described as municipalities and regions that have defined themselves as unwelcoming about LGBTI+ issues and claims. Similarly, in Hungary, a law was approved in 2021 where paedophilia was directly linked to homosexuality and gender change (Monaco and Corbisiero, 2022).

This whole issue is having significant health and educational consequences that have been long studied. First, health effects include lower self-esteem, a higher probability of experiencing different diseases, suicidal thoughts among others (Tucker et al., 2016; Almeida et al., 2009). Second, victimisation is found to contribute to lower academic outcomes, higher truancy, and expectations to abandon high school or not to continue studying (Aragon et al., 2014; Kosciw et al., 2012). Lack of support has the worst consequences for victims and makes it harder for them to become survivors and overcome the harmful effects experienced.

Nonetheless, consequences of violence are not only suffered by first-order victims. Allied youth can and do suffer from Isolating Gender Violence (IGV), which consists of attacks of different forms to discourage bystander intervention (Nazareno et al., 2022; Vidu et al., 2021; Cooper and Blumenfeld, 2012).

**Evidence-based measures.** Ending violence and discrimination against LGBTI+ youth is an international priority, included in the fifth Sustainable Development Goal on Gender Equality (UNESCO, 2017). Regarding measures to overcome violence, while historically attention was paid to the aggressor, such approaches have long been overcome by much research that put the focus on the victims and on bystanders. Among the recommendations drawn from research for decades, Grossman et al. (2009) suggest clear policies and rules, peer education, or planning educational actions and training for school personnel to create inclusive communities. The mandatory applicability of anti-discrimination protocols shows improvements (Gallardo-Nieto et al. 2021). Protective factors have been studied in more detail. For instance, a literature review by Espelage et al. (2019) showed how youth who suffer homophobic bullying but have support from family and friends do not have such negative consequences. Furthermore, strong and positive school climates both deter violence. Other protective factors analysed in a study by Valido et al. (2021) include friendships with trusted adults; participating in healthy activities; helping others; spirituality; access to counselling; and access to medical services. Successful strategies can be found in different educational contexts, overcoming prejudices towards, for instance, religiously affiliated education institutions, where Gay-Straight Alliances have been fostered and positively assessed (Killelea McEntarfer, 2011).

**Training for teachers and educators.** More recent research stresses the importance of training educators (Ioverno et al., 2021), especially in the most successful evidence-based educational actions (Flecha et al., 2023). The last decade, in most countries, has seen the rise of many training initiatives organised by LGBTI+ entities who have increasing visibility and social validation (DG JUST, 2023; IGLYO, 2023). Universities and high schools are also promoting such training among different educational agents (Rivers and Swank, 2017). Nevertheless, its impact on the creation of safer spaces has not been very studied (Flecha et al., 2023, p. 30). Specifically, there is no in-depth analysis of the effects on the LGBTI+ collective providing impact evidence. This study fills this gap.

Evidence shows how educators are role models and play a key role in perpetuating or transforming hostile environments for LGBTI+ youth (Molina et al., 2021). A study by Ioverno et al. showed how “students who observe teachers intervening during episodes of homophobic name-calling, and who perceive the representation of LGBT issues in class as positive, were more likely to intervene against homophobic name-calling” (2022, p. NP19564).

As it was abovementioned, there is a lack of evidence-based teacher training on violence prevention based on sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI). Consequences of insufficient training include educators’ and educational centres’ improvisation, unfamiliarity with protocols, incoherence, lack of impact or even counterproductive effects (Gallardo-Nieto et al. 2021). Indeed, many educational measures are implemented once situations of bullying become apparent, but no prevention is done (Senden and Galand, 2019).

Research has been increasingly including non-scientific people in different phases and processes, due to ethical and scientific concerns: science is more accurate and relevant to end users and

the beneficiaries when they are involved, especially in Social Sciences, this has also been studied (Gómez et al., 2019). When youth and LGBTI+ people are not considered when implementing an anti-bullying measure, it may not be tackling the most relevant and urgent issues they face. For instance, studies show how intersex and transgender youth benefit less from inclusive policies and practices, whose needs must be met by addressing them directly (Day et al., 2019). Complementarily, Greytak et al. (2013) evaluated the effects of four resources: Gay-Straight alliances (GSAs), and comprehensive anti-bullying/anti-harassment policies which include specific protections for LGBTI+ students had the strongest effects on trans youth. GSAs are a form of students’ school involvement which has shown academic improvement and fear-based absenteeism decrease (Seelman et al., 2012). Co-creation processes with beneficiaries include all steps, such as the development of an evidence-based risk assessment survey tool which, thanks to this community science approach, included Isolating Gender Violence as a variable in the survey (Gómez et al., 2022).

**Bystander intervention in educational actions and teacher training.** Despite the importance of educators becoming examples of bystander intervention, evidence clearly states that it is the intervention among peers and the whole community which has the most impact. For example, Ioverno et al. (2021) concluded that students who saw other peers intervene were more likely to do so themselves. Training towards educators should therefore focus on engaging everyone as upstanders. The scientific evaluation of bystander intervention training implemented for employees of a large healthcare organisation showed positive results in bystander beliefs and attitudes (Kuntz and Searle, 2022). In this regard, the role of the facilitator and spaces to practise bystander intervention strategies is crucial although effects declined as time passed.

Among the educational actions that have been scientifically assessed with positive results in violence prevention, with a bystander intervention approach and which includes scientific evidence, the “Dialogic model of violence prevention and resolution” stands out (Duque et al., 2021a; Villarejo-Carballido et al., 2019). This model holds the whole community accountable for violence prevention, has its main focus on prevention and on changing the norms of the group, and so that bystander intervention is promoted by being socially valued among peers. This model fosters positive relationships and bystander intervention by transforming the models of attraction towards egalitarian people (López de Aguilera et al. 2020), acting as a strong prevention for any type of violence (Elboj-Saso et al., 2020). Relevant evidence-based keys for success are included in this model (Flecha et al., 2023): fostering friendship (Iñiguez-Berrozpe et al., 2021; León-Jimenez et al., 2020), protecting upstanders to avoid Isolating Gender Violence (Melgar et al., 2021b), language of desire (Melgar et al., 2021a), the importance of ideal love (Torrás-Gómez et al., 2020); not trivialising or letting pass any form of violence (Valls et al., 2016); promoting New Alternative Masculinities (Rodríguez-Navarro et al., 2014), and educating on consent (Flecha et al., 2020).

**Community science and social sciences.** A community science approach has been included in an ever-increasing number of research projects (Bonney et al., 2014), with the aim of improving research and achieving higher scientific, political, and social impact (Reale et al., 2017). Most of them engage citizens in being direct agents in different processes of research beyond mere data collection (Phillipps et al., 2019), such as in the design of the research objectives, the elaboration of the data collection

techniques, the analysis of the data or the dissemination of the results. Further, citizen engagement can include individuals or community-based organisations in individual or collective actions (The ICBO and Allies Workgroup, 2022); an example of the latter is the Advisory Committees created by non-scientific end-users (Gómez, 2019). Research regarding environmental and health issues has acquired this approach (King et al., 2019), and so is social sciences in the last decade.

For instance, the communicative research approach used in social sciences and endorsed by the European Commission follows the same standpoint and aims: co-creation with all citizens, especially those directly benefited from the research and usually silenced, to increase the quality and ethics of science and to transform world challenges, while also achieving a distributed awareness and ownership of the importance of science to change the world. For example, Carrillo et al., (2019) present the impact of involving Moroccan immigrants in a collective “Dream process” for community development, engaging through communicative methodology researchers and citizens in an egalitarian dialogue that empowers the families and improves the neighbourhood. Natural leaders from the Moroccan community assisted the meetings, whose initial feelings of distrust dissipated as they realised their ideas were being considered. Furthermore, in light of the community demands, researchers trained neighbours on successful cooperative initiatives and gave them agency through scientific advice to start a cooperative.

In another study, Flecha (2014) evidences how through this co-creative approach silenced and marginalised communities such as Roma do engage in science and improve their situations. In that case, A Roma’s mother, a member of the Advisory Council, was key to ensuring that the research findings were oriented towards solutions and not only problems: her contribution led to a focus on family education, which resulted in many empirical contributions (p. 251).

**Research gap and objectives.** Taking into consideration the analysis carried out of the literature on violence against LGBTI+ youth, general evidence-based strategies, the bystander intervention approach and training for educators with social impact, the specific research gap that this study aimed to cover is to provide evidence on the impact of the combination of co-created and evidence-based training based on bystander intervention for the whole community to prevent violence against LGBTI+ youth in formal and non-formal educational institutions.

In coherence, the objectives of the study are the following:

1. To assess the trainees’ perception of the quality, applicability and transference of the training, analysing the elements that fostered or hindered such effects.
2. To assess the impact of the training attendees in terms of improvement in awareness about bullying against LGBTI+ youth and effective strategies to overcome it.
3. To assess the impact of the training in terms of empowerment and intention of education professionals to implement upstander interventions in their organisations and contexts.

## Methods

The Communicative Methodology (Gómez et al., 2019) was followed throughout the whole study and the project lifespan. This community science approach to research focuses on co-creation of knowledge by having an egalitarian dialogue between participants and researchers (Flecha, 2014). Engaging citizens in different research processes is a Key Impact Pathway considered to increase the societal impact of such research, as proposed by the

expert report from the European Commission which set the guidelines for co-creation and social impact in the Horizon Europe Program (2018). As proposed by Gómez et al., (2006) and proven successful (Yuste et al., 2014; Tellado et al., 2014), an Advisory Committee (AC) was created at the beginning of the project, formed by non-researchers belonging to the collectives that benefit from the project outcomes and training (Munté et al., 2011), as well as scientists from the project consortium. Along with the project coordinators, 9 people participated in the online meetings, among which there was a teacher, a professor, a policy advisor, an education officer and administrator, a researcher, and two activists and volunteers from LGBTI+ and youth entities.

This advisory group validated the training content, organisation, and instruments for data collection by engaging in their dialogic design (Tellado et al., 2014). They met at three online gatherings where processes and proposals were introduced by the project members and researchers and then put into dialogue. They were also informed during the two years of the milestones achieved and received documents to contribute to their creation. Some of them attended and spoke at a panel in the project’s Final Conference. Specific details on the AC contributions will be in the next sections, we now cite a female teacher member of the AC who expresses the impact of her participation: “As the three meetings and everything went by, it was like I began to appreciate the importance of this network, this connection between different countries, this rigorousness in what is being done, so, in a way, I got a bit hooked on it.”

**Methodological design and intervention.** The research followed a pre-experimental pretest-posttest design with a single group of participants (Campbell and Stanley, 2011). This group is the one that received the training intervention. This intervention consisted of a ten-hour training divided into two or three sessions of 2.5 to 4 h and some individual tasks. The content of the training was essentially drawn from the pedagogical modules created by the project’s consortium. The main contents of the training, divided into five modules, were:

- 1) LGBTI+ concepts, the reality of LGBTI+ youth, the violence they suffer and its consequences; and the European legislation and strategic actions.
- 2) A more in-depth explanation of violence in the digital era
- 3) The bystander intervention approach, its benefits, impediments, and how to foster it in educational institutions
- 4) What is behind violence: an understanding of its persistence and how to overcome it from the roots with preventive socialisation of gender-based violence, including the keys of friendship, addressing isolating violence, masculinities, and consent, among others.
- 5) Community involvement in violence prevention, deepening into the Dialogic Model of Violence prevention and resolution, and strategies to engage families and other agents.

The sessions consisted of a part of teaching the main contents and ideas, with the support of official power points based on the published modules, with a dialogical approach that encouraged questions and experiences being shared. Moreover, some practical and dialogue-based activities were proposed in each session: pertinent to this study, there was a dialogical brainstorming to find out ways to protect upstanders and prevent isolating violence. Apart from that, some individual tasks consisted of the preparation of a brief final document with upstander actions they could implement as an individual, in their youth group or in their institution. Trainers had previously participated in a “Train the trainers” event, where each project member taught their area



of expertise. Four of the eight training events also included the individual reading of a scientific article on some key contents (Racionero et al., 2021a, b), which was then debated in the last session in the format of a pedagogical dialogic gathering (Roca-Campos et al., 2021; Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2021). The content and pedagogy reflect some Successful Teaching Actions (Flecha García et al., 2014). As previously explained, both the contents and the methodology were discussed with and validated by the Advisory Committee. Thanks to their feedback, the training included specific examples of standing up in digital contexts and a country-level introduction to LGBTI+ issues.

**Instruments.** Mixed methods were employed, both quantitative and qualitative. A Google Forms questionnaire was designed as a pre-test, which participants completed within the first session of the training, after a brief introduction of the project, to facilitate attendants to fill it out and solve any doubts regarding the questions. The same questionnaire was replicated for the post-test, which included questions regarding the evaluation and impact of the training. Attendants were also given time at the end of the last session to complete this second questionnaire. Both questionnaires were translated from English to national languages: Danish, Greek, Dutch, Spanish and English.

Questionnaires were designed to be brief and focus on key and general issues regarding the training. They do not respond to a quantitative logic of achieving representative results but to a descriptive exploration of the impact on the participant's professions which was one of the main purposes of UP4Diversity project. Then these results were complemented by the qualitative data. Both questionnaires shared 16 initial questions, and 11 more were included in the post-test. They asked for basic demographic information about age, country, gender identity, educational institution, and role in it. Then, they contained mostly quantitative questions: combining the pre- and post-test, ten questions with a Likert scale 1–6 with a narrow dispersion and no middle values; three multiple choice questions with Yes/No/I don't know options ("What is being an upstander?") or different text options ("What is the role that professionals can have to prevent or deal with violence against LGBTI+ youth?). Four short open-answer questions were also included: they asked for a definition of being an upstander, educational practices that are based on scientific evidence to prevent violence, and whether they were already implementing any upstander actions in their institution and which was the impact achieved; the post-test included "Name three things you learnt in the training, or would like to highlight, regarding educational practice". The survey template with answer options can be found in Annex 1.

On the other hand, interviews with a communicative approach were semi-structured and carried out by each project partner in the local language, to facilitate natural communication by participants. The main topics of dialogue were their perceived personal impacts in terms of upstander empowerment after the training; and upstander past, present and future impacts of the training with their groups of youth, with their colleagues or within their educational institutions. Thus, the interviews focused on helping respond to research objectives 2 and 3. Questions and items can be found in Annex 1.

**Participants.** The sampling method for this study is intentional: all participants were attendees to the project training events.

*Questionnaire participants.* The sample is a group of participants in the training who decided to voluntarily respond to the pre and post questionnaires. Around 150 participants attended one of the 8 national training events -both Spain and Ireland training was

carried out in two different events each-, of which 118 responded to the voluntary pre-training test and 90 responded to the post-training questionnaire. All respondents to the post-training questionnaire answered the pre-training survey.

82.2% of the respondents in both the pre and post-test were from the trainings in Spain and Cyprus, and the remaining of the respondents were from Ireland, Belgium, and Denmark. Some participants were from other countries, such as Greece, China, Mexico, UK, and the USA. This participation difference responds in a proportionate manner to the number of trainees by country in the workshops. National training was the responsibility of each consortium partner: some of them found difficulties with the educators' conciliation of professional training outside of working hours and personal lives in their contexts. Two of the partners were a youth and a LGBTI+ entity, and not research teams. Moreover, trainers from Cyprus University engaged their teaching education students. Last, the Spanish project members were the project coordinators and leaders of dissemination efforts, and therefore their allocated working hours for those purposes were longer. Nonetheless, the aim of the project and the study was not to achieve representativity of the European countries involved, but rather to reach as many educators as possible over 100 attendees, and see the impact on them, a goal achieved. This was the agreement that the consortium reached with the EC.

An 80% of respondents were women, 15% men, 2.5% non-binary, 1.25% gender-fluid, and 1.25% preferred not to respond. Ages went from 18 to 66. Participants belonged to different formal and non-formal educational institutions, such as high schools, universities, NGOs, LGBTI+ entities and educational associations.

*Interview participants.* The post-training questionnaire included a last question regarding respondents' interest in participating in an interview. Among those who responded positively, trainers suggested two of them by country who had, as key informants, attended the majority of the training and they would provide diverse profiles and insights. In the end, 12 education professionals of different contexts and profiles (LGBTI+ and not, educators, activists, etc.) and all consortium countries, as explained in Table 1, participated in the interviews. Their insight helped deepen the answers provided in the questionnaires. Interviewers were members of the project consortium of each country, involved in the training workshops carried out.

**Procedure.** Participants in the training were introduced to the questionnaires and given time to fill them out within the sessions, which took around five to ten minutes. After the end of the training, among those trainees who had provided their email for a possible interview, the ones selected by the Consortium for the reasons previously described were reached and asked if they confirmed their willingness to participate in an interview after being informed of its objectives and provided with the informed consent. Those who confirmed their participation were asked to send back the consent signed. The interviews were carried out through videoconference and had a duration from twenty minutes to one hour. They took place the following weeks up to three months after the last training session, from March to June 2022. The interviewer, following the communicative and community science approach (Ramis-Salas, 2020), included some key scientific evidence of the issues at hand, so that the participants could compare them with their personal experience and provide their knowledge of the lifeworld (Padros et al., 2011). The knowledge was co-created in an egalitarian dialogue between both the interviewee and the researcher. For instance, an interviewee talking about the training's impact on her was doubting whether it would be better not to stand up so much directly to an

**Table 1 Interviewees' profiles.**

Litsa	Cyprus	Female kindergarten teacher and MA student at UCY. Activist at an NGO that works with people with special capabilities. Involved in a feminist movement as an active member
Stela	Cyprus	Female English teacher. Original interview about the whole project and network, but with valuable information regarding the project's network.
Sandra	Spain	Female primary school teachers belonging to the collective implementing the dialogic model of conflict prevention
Leo	Spain	Male school teacher and headmaster from a rural school implementing preventive upstander actions
Ester	Spain	Policewoman linked to education working in an association for the visibility of LGBTI and committed to human right
Teresa	Spain	Female teacher who was learning for the first time about upstanders
Hugo	Spain	University professor and researcher. Original interview about the whole project and network.
Eveleen	Ireland	Female lecturer from an Irish University. She attended all sessions, and in her final task included a proposal for institutional upstander intervention in her faculty
Mike	Ireland	Male PhD student and lecturer at university, with professional experience with young students
Jakob	Belgium	Teacher trainee
Aya	Belgium	Teacher trainee
Anndrea	Denmark	IT-consultant, an active member of Danish NGO working for diversity, equality, and women's rights

aggressor; the researcher provided the evidence that direct positioning, if non-violent, may sometimes be necessary, even though there are indeed other ways to be an upstander such as to delegate or distract.

**Ethical aspects.** Regarding the instrument design, the end-user citizens from the Advisory Committee (AC) were an active part. They were emailed a draft to which they sent suggestions, which were deeply discussed in a specific meeting. They proposed questions and language changes so that the instruments were easier to understand and more relevant. For instance, members of the AC suggested we did the questionnaires within the workshop, and they expressed that it was important to translate them, even in Nordic countries with good English levels, to ensure the inclusiveness of all potential participants.

Ethical procedures were agreed among the Consortium and approved by the European Commission before the implementation of the data collection instruments. The confidentiality of the data provided was ensured, and responses were anonymised using pseudonyms for the interviews. Participants voluntarily decided whether to complete the questionnaires or not, as well as to participate in the interviews. The informed consent at the beginning of the questionnaires and before the interviews included information on the project objectives and the procedures of the questionnaire or interview, and they were informed that quotes from the data provided might be included only for research purposes. Once the official paper draft was elaborated it was sent to them so that they could validate the results and conclusions.

**Analysis.** Data from the different questionnaires was combined into one Excel with two tabs for pre and post results. Transcriptions of the interviews were carried out, and the analysis was done manually. The categories of analysis have been created inductively, as they have emerged from the data collected, while connecting to the three objectives of the study, which refer to the assessment of the training, its learning impacts and its professional impacts. The connection between objectives and categories can be found in Table 2.

Individual changes in respondents are not analysed, since questionnaires were anonymous and researchers could not identify the questionnaires to match same-person pre- and post-answers; instead, a whole-group comparison was carried out.

**Results**

Results are presented in four sections which correspond to the categories and to the research objectives. Generally, quantitative

data is initially introduced in each section; the qualitative part of the pre-post questionnaires, and mainly the semi-structured interviews, allowed the emergence of deeper results that relate to and expand the quantitative data.

**Training assessment.** In this first section, the data presented answers to objective 1. The overall assessment of the training in the questionnaires was a 9.1 on a scale 0–10. Respondents averaged 5.45 on a scale 1–6 in assessing that the training was useful because they had developed upstander strategies to implement.

On top of that, attendees describe having been provided with useful scientific knowledge on these issues as a key to foster their professional confidence: Leo says that “having access to evidence-based training, well, that’s not always the case and so it is very much appreciated to always have that source, and that rigorous source”. Another one expresses the potential of being taught “what the research has said so far that works in programs that work against violence”.

The scientific pedagogical gathering that took place in some training events was assessed as very effective, practical, cohesive and coherent, and as a first-hand experience of their transformative potential in training that can be easily transferred to the participants’ contexts.

The training had diverse professional profiles, but participants explained that it was the methodology of promoting a dialogic and interactive environment which made it possible to benefit from such heterogeneity. For instance, Aya describes how having teachers explain the theory being implemented in their classrooms was very helpful to visualise it. Eveleen expresses the benefits of other profiles:

“It was great to have so many different partners involved because I learned from the different experiences. I had no idea some of them existed, and now I know where to go if I ever need them. (...) And I actually found it very helpful to actually look at all of the places where this kind of intervention can be made. So, for example, (...) it was really interesting to hear the perspectives of people who work in voluntary services, you know, in youth services (...). And actually, useful in terms of clarifying my own perspective on things, because sometimes when you just work with people who work in the same area as you do, you have a very kind of narrow focus.”

**Awareness of violence against LGBTI+ youth and evidence-based successful strategies.** This section provides data to answer objective 2. Among the questions included in both the pre and post-test, respondents show an average increase from 4.51 to 5.12

**Table 2 Categories of results in relation to the research objectives.**

Objectives	Categories
SO1: To assess the trainees' perception of the quality, applicability and transference of the training, analysing the elements that fostered or hindered such effects	1. Training assessment
SO2: To assess the impact of the training on attendees in terms of improvement in awareness about bullying against LGBTI+ youth and effective strategies to overcome it.	2. Awareness of violence against LGBTI+ youth 3. Awareness of evidence-based successful strategies
SO3: To assess the impact of the training in terms of empowerment and intention of education professionals to implement upstander interventions in their organisations and contexts	4. Professional empowerment 5. Impact on the workplace

on a scale of 1–6 in awareness of violence suffered by LGBTI+ youth; they also have a mean increase from 3.61 to 4.81 on a scale of 1–6 in feelings of preparedness to intervene when aware of cases of such violence. Moreover, they averaged 5.35 on a scale of 1–6 on feeling that participation in the training had improved their awareness of the effective practices that can help overcome violence against LGBTI+ youth.

The percentage of respondents who know any evidence-based educational practices to prevent violence goes from 30.7% ( $n = 118$ ) to 67.8% ( $n = 90$ ). Regarding the bystander intervention approach specifically, participants were asked if they knew what “bystander intervention” or “being an upstander” meant: from the pre-test respondents ( $n = 118$ ), 40% answered “no”, 31.3% answered “I’m not sure” and only 28.8% answered “yes”; however, post-test results show a 95.6% of respondents answered “yes” and only a 4.4% answered “no” or “I’m not sure”.

One question in the questionnaires asked about the role that professionals can have in preventing or dealing with violence against LGBTI+ youth. From the analysis of the respondents of the Spanish events, a substantial difference is seen in checking the hoax-statement option of ‘focusing on the aggressors’: 49.15% marked it in the pre-test while 21.05% marked it in the post-test.

The training confirmed some past and present educational actions that were in fact based on the evidence, while also clearly acknowledging what was wrong in their professional practice and how to improve it. It is made evident that people who joined the training were already sensitised to these issues. As a matter of fact, various participants expressed “I have been an upstander all my life”; thus, what the training has done for them, so they say, is to provide them with more impactful approaches and actions. A quote by Eveleen serves as an example:

“I was already motivated to try and do something to change it. (...) So, I came to the training (...) with the desire to make things better. So, I couldn’t say that the training actually changed that. But the training certainly changed what I thought was the appropriate thing to do.”

Deeper on that idea, Aya, a Belgian pre-service teacher, expresses that, despite previously stepping up against violence, the training has given her keys and tools to be a good upstander and carry out correct actions:

“I would not be shy to speak up, I never have been. But I never really knew what to say, or how to do it in a way that makes things better, not worse. I think this workshop really helped me with that. It’s not going to be easy, and it will take practice, but I now know that I don’t need to be too rushed, I can delay, I can distract, I can ask questions, and then I can think about what I can do on a more structural level afterwards.” (Aya)

Opening spaces for dialogue about acting upon violence against LGBTI+ people, among youth or other agents of the community, is another widespread action as expressed by several participants. Nevertheless, Hugo mentions that even though the training has provided him with the motivation to do so, he is also more aware

of the need of those spaces to be safe: “the issue must be put on the table, but with great care to ensure that no danger is created for anyone.”

An Irish university professor expresses her change in her professional approach within her daily teaching dynamic: “Before I undertook the program (...) I would have been more focused on the perpetrators than the bystanders (...); after doing the program, I suppose I’d be more focused on empowering bystanders to take action.” (Eveleen). She and another colleague participating in the training did together the final task where they committed to reaching all students and staff from a teacher postgraduate module on sexual health promotion.

In that same line, another attendee draws on Isolating Violence -attacks suffered by defenders- and reflects on teaching for successful intervention: “give it a couple of twists and turns to provide in which situations and how not to, mostly to avoid [bad] experiences which make people close themselves off and not want to be an upstander anymore” (Ester). Very much connected, other participants realise that backlash for defending is likely to happen, and therefore it is necessary that everyone is aware and prepared for those attacks: first, so that it does not come as a shock after doing something good if they understand they are not the only ones experiencing reprisal and if they become aware of the impunity control underneath those attacks; and second, so that they have the tools to overcome those situations, namely creating solidarity networks and building supportive friendships. Ester expresses it in these terms: “If the majority of people start to be upstanders, to have the “enough is enough” attitude, then those people [who have been harassed] are not left alone, right?”

An important professional impact stated by participants is the increase in critical thinking on training that is not focused on scientific evidence and achieving social impact: this was especially reflected by professionals already trained on such evidence, who gained concern with possible training opportunities for the educational centre that, by not being scientific and rigorous, might turn out to be contradictory, confusing and counter-productive, because some of their colleagues show resistances to implementing evidence-based actions.

Different participants, especially those participating in other continuous teacher training based on successful educational actions, emphasise that constant dialogue around this preventive evidence is key to overcoming obsolete approaches:

“That work of prevention. Very constantly, because we have it very deep inside us, and so we not only have to be aware that it exists, but we have to work on it with great persistence; because we are so socialised in this [wrong assumptions] that turning it around requires a lot of dialogue.” (Hugo)

The necessity of learning together, and the willingness to continue the project’s network and learning for real impact, is also mentioned:

“If spaces for dialogue about the research that is being carried out with respect to the bystander intervention with the LGTBI+

collective were organised, then it would really be a continuity of teacher training, because otherwise, how can teachers continue to be trained? (...) Because there are a hundred thousand [training] materials. So, what is going to ensure quality teacher training? Research and educational actions with a transformative impact, which is what really makes it effective. Well, yes, if we want to do it in the long term, we must generate these spaces (...)" (Sandra)

Last, the need to establish a dialogic learning environment among educators within each education institution is reflected as key, because they can have more frequent and closer meetings, through pedagogical dialogic gatherings, to fully understand the profound educational actions and therefore be able to correctly apply them:

"Everything we have talked about in the training is like clues to continue working with the teaching staff on the basis of the dialogue that we all need to have, right? In the end, what generates concreteness is talking about what you are doing [specific daily educational actions with youth], and I think this is what happens in the [pedagogical dialogic] gatherings, right? We are talking about a subject or giving opinions, we are growing in the argument, in the depth of what we are doing. And to generate the pretext, all the resources you have given us to generate these debates are great. It seems to me that it is going to be very transformative in the staff meetings. In fact, I think that teachers who have never worked in this way of training, when they come to the centres and there is this climate of dialogue between teachers to improve practice based on evidence, I think they always, always, always appreciate it a lot. So, I think it is very important to have concrete strategies, but when you do the [zero-violence] brave club, to give an example, it seems that if you don't talk about it if you don't go into it in depth, it is difficult, it is very difficult to do it correctly." (Leo)

**Professional empowerment.** This section and the last one provide evidence to respond to objective 3. 97.6% of questionnaire respondents answered that after the training they felt more confident to implement upstander actions in their organisation or class. From the qualitative data, participants mention feeling more comfortable once they start teaching the next year, with more confidence due to the many tools and advice received. Sandra, a Spanish teacher who belongs to the LGBTI+ collective, said: "It has really helped me to empower myself." As a school headmaster, Leo expressed this as feeling "very relieved", and explained it with the fact that the written modules are open access and available "to everyone, but especially to families who need to see it, read it and comment on it.". That self-confidence is also translated into overcoming tabus by breaking the silence and talking explicitly about LGBTI+ or personal upstander behaviours so that students have real and close testimonies that inspire them.

The atmosphere of the training and its empowering effects are highlighted by Jakob, a Belgian pre-service teacher: "I appreciate being told that this is hard. And if I can't fix all of it straight away, that's okay. I will try, and I will learn, and hopefully I can help more and more each year". Specifically, having the research and global and local data on violence gives professionals the strength to stand up in conversations with sceptics:

"Having the black-on-white findings from the research was so useful. I have created a folder on my desktop with all the materials, so that if I need them when I start teaching, or if someone asks me 'Hey, this is not important, why do you care', I can point them to these things. It's much more persuasive that way, and I will use it for sure." (Jakob)

Connected to this, Hugo, a Spanish male university professor expresses how the training clearly stated that everyone has an

important role as upstanders for LGBTI+, also heterosexual men. This was especially empowering, given some exclusive discourses that people in his university or in other contexts have, which conclude that people who do not belong to the collective have nothing to say or do in these regards. Further, his increased motivation draws on the reflection that his teaching around the upstander approach could be easily included in many university subjects in a transversal way, impacting hundreds of pre-service teachers. He expressed that in the following terms: "So it is about talking to people and, well, this is something that is not going to stop, I mean, it is only going to get bigger and bigger."

An appropriate summary of this empowerment is an idea from this teacher: "It's like I already had the "glasses" on, and what the course has also done is to reinforce them on me." (Sandra). Furthermore, that empowerment is turned to actions beyond the professional field: participants described having had conversations about being a bystander or either an upstander with young family members or friends or identified stronger and non-violent upstander responses to inappropriate behaviours by peers or acquaintances:

"This training workshop gave me the understanding that we need to stand up in every situation, even if we do not believe that something will change. (...) I realised that my silence sometimes has been taken as agreement with conservative opinions. Right after the workshop, I found myself in situations where I consciously thought: "You have to speak and support the people that are being verbally bullied, right now". And so, I did." (Litsa)

**Impact on the workplace.** An average 5.51 on a scale of 1–6 was obtained when asked in the questionnaires if they would be implementing some upstander actions in their professional activity to help end, among other forms of violence, LGBTI+ phobic violence. Among the upstander actions that respondents planned to implement in their institutions, the following three options received more than 80% of the responses: being an upstander themselves (94.7% of Spanish respondents); opening dialogue spaces with their colleague professionals about upstander actions (78.9% of Spanish respondents); and opening dialogue spaces with youth about being upstanders (84.2% of Spanish respondents). Reading and discussing with their colleague professionals the project's training materials for educators was also highly selected (60.5% of Spanish respondents).

The conversations raise many diverse comments that refer to educational changes introduced in their everyday dynamic with youth, or as institutional changes, thanks to the training. These changes have the potential to impact not only students: many participants analyse that the main barriers in promoting upstander approaches for LGBTI+ are found in families and staff, even in the institution boards; therefore, families and professionals become a key target of training. Focus on prevention and involving the whole community are emphasised when aiming for zero violence and safe spaces:

"Training helps, and being preventive is really important. It can't just be up to one or two teachers; you have to create a whole environment so that things don't get out of hand. I'm still a bit nervous about seeing a really bad situation and maybe not knowing exactly what to do. But I do know what I can do in my classroom, and what is possible to prevent these things" (Jakob).

Indeed, many participants express their plans to include the contents, doing "something similar to this training" (Aya), with students and teachers. Concerned by the level of normalised homophobic hostility in their educational centres, and inspired by the training, teachers like Sandra or Leo see the need and possibility to do awareness training for the whole educational community, also thanks to the teaching resources provided.

Among the contents, the challenge but importance of teaching skills to stand up in digital contexts is highlighted: “It is important, when talking about courage and being able to break the silence, that upstanders can also do it in the digital space” (Sandra).

Ester, a Physical Education teacher, expresses how the dynamics in this specific subject allow her to differentiate those who impose themselves as “leaders” from actual leaders: people involved with other vulnerable people or who enjoy solidarity. The training helped her identify the transformative potential of giving value to those students: “(...) detecting those potential leaders (...), also involving them in these things, would help a lot, since the rest will already start to see things as they are, right?”. Then she connects contents taught in module 4 of the training with these ideas around solidarity leadership for group change: “And also to encourage another type of masculinity”.

Teresa, a high school teacher, expresses her special interest in involving families and creating mixed commissions where they are relevant. For that, she aims at discussing the idea in faculty meetings and working with other colleagues to make it a reality:

“That is why I also centred my final task so that this sector [families] would also have more visibility and could also show itself or be an example. And also, to show their disagreement with what is happening, right? (...) because together they make more of an impact, and many ideas can also arise.”

The training was focused on benefiting LGTBI+ youth, but several participants expressed the interdisciplinarity nature and usefulness of bystander intervention for anyone, which increases the chances of its transferability to multiple contexts and for many minorities such as refugees or intellectual diversity:

“The subject -diversity- is really important to me because I come from a ‘diverse’ background myself. I don’t think it really matters if you are of a different ethnicity, or you look different to others, or you are LGBT; learning how you can become an upstander and using those techniques is important for all of those. I’m definitely going to use what I learned when I start teaching.” (Aya)

Teachers who work on or join educational centres which are already implementing the bystander intervention approach in different measures and actions, such as the Dialogic Model of Violence Prevention and Resolution, state that the training has nonetheless motivated the inclusion of the LGTBI+ dimension in the school. The training sparked dreams that combine professional and personal dimensions:

“With a work that is already being done there [at the school], drawing on bystander intervention, you can see it, (...), [this helps] establish a starting point of how the LGTBIphobias issue has been specifically worked and if it has been worked, and if not, then give them this approach. I mean, that is one of my dreams.” (Sandra)

Participants such as Teresa express how they are already implementing successful educational actions mentioned in the training such as dialogic gatherings. In this sense, she sees it as an opportunity to incorporate what was learnt in the training within those dialogues. The previous general knowledge on bystander intervention and preventive socialisation of gender-based violence has been concretised in this specific vulnerable collective: a headmaster mentions it has helped pay more attention to LGTBI+ students and the relationships around them.

The motivation gained is translated into faculty decisions to continue learning, and to train new teachers and families. The content of the project reinforces the work they are already doing:

“At the faculty level, it seemed pertinent to us how to do this in the first weeks of class, training the new faculty and the new families, because it is true that we are implementing the dialogic model of prevention and conflict resolution, so somehow, we

have it more or less incorporated, but the training is with this LGTBI+ approach, it gives us an extra importance to what we are doing.” (Leo)

This school headmaster expresses how the modules and presentations offered by the project would enable them to facilitate a more comprehensive and structured training which would be approved in a staff meeting to be included in the Annual general plan of the centre so that it is carried out yearly as part of the training dynamic.

Given the diversity of roles and professional profiles of attendees to the training, transference to training reaches further than teachers’ actions: for instance, Ester, a LGTBI+ police woman expressed how she will incorporate all that evidence in the training she carries out with students, teachers and families, with the aim of involving more and more those passive, sceptic and conservative people and non-LGTBI+ people: “I see this as gold, applying this, teaching these tools”. She expressed taking advantage of the confidence that her police status provides to some more conservative people, to incorporate the same content:

“(...) at a talk on hate crimes, there was a heterosexual mother of children from the group (...) And, well, it occurred to me, because, of course, if these mothers are there at that talk, they are potential upstanders, right? If they are there, learning everything they can to help.... So, they are the ideal people, within the families”.

Universities may also benefit from training initiatives derived from the project’s training. Hugo foresees the organisation of a conference at his Spanish campus for its potential impact on the whole university and the regional media. A different context that benefited from this training programme is a Belgian university:

“Moving forward, the KU Leuven’s diversity department will consider how it can offer a shorter programme next year, to staff and students, based on this programme. As such, we are confident that the current program is there to stay in the future!”

Teresa, a secondary education teacher, expresses her willingness to be more coordinated with entities she knows that support adolescents’ struggles. Another lesbian teacher expresses a dream that grew in her from the training, which consists of making the knowledge and strategies gained regarding bystander intervention reach a LGTBI+ collective where she is a member so that the extensive training this organisation carries out in educational centres includes all this evidence. In a similar vein, contents developed in the training are already being shared with other networks of educators, for instance, the final individual task where participants were asked to plan strategies they would implement in the future in their contexts:

“The work I have done to send it to you, I have shared it in safety groups, for example, in the “Women’s group Sherezade Dialoguing Feminism”, in case it would be useful for them to work on it in their centres because I know they already have this [theoretical and scientific] base.” (Sandra)

## Discussion

This study provides both quantitative and qualitative evidence of the quality and impact of training for educators to gain scientific knowledge and implement science-based educational actions with an upstander approach to help end violence against LGTBI+ youth. With the evidence provided, we consider that the training and research goals are met, and the research question is positively addressed. Respondents show they are more empowered, skilful, and likely to transfer the skills and strategies learnt in their professional contexts. Regarding the learning acquired, quantitative data demonstrates that participants show a substantial decrease in marking the statement ‘focusing on the aggressor’ when offered different options to address violence. Drawing on

previous research, these focusing actions on aggressors are not effective, and therefore this result is explained as an increase in scientific competence to differentiate appropriate from counter-productive solutions to violence (Dekker et al., 2012).

Regarding the goals that refer to empowerment and transference, participants express that the confidence gained is partially explained by knowing that some of the best available science on the issue is provided to them. Very much linked, different trainees expressed that the training had already motivated upstanders to guide their actions in order to increase their impact through evidence-based actions that effectively tackle school violence (Castellví et al., 2022). In a complementary manner, some trainees expressed having a mindset towards caring especially for more vulnerable groups but lacking some basic training on LGBTI+ issues: the training has, in this sense, provided them with this lens on gender and sexuality minorities to be included in all the successful educational actions, such as the dialogic model or dialogic gatherings, which they already carry out. Connected to the research by Tuyakova et al., (2022) on emotional intelligence, participants show signs of increased self-motivation, empathy, and managing one's and other people's emotions.

As expressed by men, but also different women, the training helped internalise the importance of empowering everyone to stand up to violence, including heterosexual men (Rostovsky et al., 2015), for which research shows it has been a bigger challenge to become allies for LGBTI+, for fear that their attractiveness and male identity will be called into question (Goldstein, 2017; Dessel et al., 2017). The New Alternative Masculinities' approach explained in the training course helps in this regard, showing that men who stand up are not only more egalitarian and fairer but more confident and attractive at different levels (Duque et al., 2021b; Zubiri-Esnaola et al., 2021). This focus on "leader traits", such as confidence, strength, and attractiveness, as it has been affirmed by some participants, helps engage popular opinion leaders both within the staff bodies and teachers or within youth groups.

Another repeated result found, consistent with European and international approaches to science communication (European Commission, 2018), is the need to share scientific results open-access for everyone to benefit from them, such as the modules and other results that were shared with participants, which can be found on the project's website (Up4Diversity Consortium, 2022) and which will continue to be disseminated through social media and in other events with citizenship. Teachers who received the training can then recreate it in their communities thanks to the freely available resources, as expressed by different participants like Sandra or Leo.

A pedagogical dialogic gathering was carried out at half of the training events with great evaluation by participants. This training action allows the direct access of citizens to science, as it follows a community science approach where co-creation takes place to create knowledge together in egalitarian dialogue (Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2021); moreover, it is easily replicable in all contexts (Roca-Campos et al., 2021). Indeed, the headmaster of a school explained that this is the best way they have found to fully understand the educational and personal changes needed, and also the most effective action to help new teachers and professionals in the successful educational actions they carry out as a school project (García-Carrión et al., 2020).

Involving the whole community for violence prevention can be done by organising open dialogic gatherings or other training, or by starting a mixed committee with families, volunteers, staff, and youth (Rodríguez-Oramas et al., 2021; Flecha, 2015; Flecha and Soler, 2013). A Gay-Straight Alliance can also be launched in any context, with great results in involving straight allies and creating safe spaces for conversation and learning (McCormick et al.,

2015; Killelea McEntarfer, 2011). As has been evidenced by the diversity of participants and by research, acting to end harassment towards LGBTI+ youth is a common fight of everyone who is against violence, women, men, and other LGBTI+ people. Creating solidarity networks to fight isolating violence was highlighted by trainees and by research (Melgar et al., 2021b).

The research gap that this study contributes to cover, as identified in the literature review, is the existence of training materials that combine an evidence-based approach of bystander intervention, from a preventive and resolution perspective, with a specific focus on violence against LGBTI+ youth, which involves all educational agents; designed in co-creation and taught in a dialogic learning context. Beyond the initial research goals, it is worth mentioning that the project network of educators has continued meeting for dialogic training sessions every 3 months a year after the end of the project lifespan: this has been a great contribution from this research, a group of people learning from scientific evidence in Europe which did not previously exist. Both the network and the positive impact of the training can contribute to an increase in training initiatives and research in diverse contexts which can provide a multiplying impact in the lives of LGBTI+ youth.

## Conclusions

Diverse literature has shown that educators lack scientific training that connects LGBTI+ issues and bystander intervention to create safer spaces (McShane and Farren, 2023). The current study has shown similar results to other research on bystander intervention training (Kuntz and Searle, 2022). Evidence-based training towards educators can contribute to overcoming prejudices and hoaxes which, in the end, foster the implementation of evidence-informed approaches. Learning about Successful Educational Actions with a bystander intervention approach has a strong potential impact on the reduction and prevention of violence towards LGBTI+ youth, as many educational centres are already evidencing (Flecha et al., 2023; Flecha, 2015).

With the evidence available, some policies are proposed. Formal and non-formal educational institutions can benefit from implementing training based on bystander intervention, dialogic gatherings with books and articles about LGBTI+ realities and successful actions; as well as implementing the zero-violence brave club and gay-straight alliances. These measures should involve primarily students and educators, but all agents of the community. These dialogic spaces will help give visibility to realities that LGBTI+ students face, while also reinforcing upstander attitudes. All actions carried out ought to have the final aim of creating safe and free spaces for everyone, where violence is not tolerated and solidarity is fostered and reinforced.

The research process and results have strengthened the important role of the Advisory Committee in designing the modules, the training and the instruments for data collection. Moreover, the communicative methodology that guides the interviews explicitly allows participants to benefit from the evidence available regarding the topic: the researcher would include in the dialogue such evidence. All these actions are part of a community science approach which is key to improving training processes and results.

Lastly, some limitations can be drawn from this study. First, regarding the intervention, the content was too condensed given the 10-h time frame agreed, where more time could have allowed for a deeper explanation and, most of all, longer dialogues around the contents of the training. Second, with regards to the instruments, the questionnaire could have included more hoaxes and evidenced statements to have more proof of the overcoming of non-scientific approaches by trainees. Questionnaires could have

included individual identification to allow same-person comparison between pre- and post-questionnaires' answers. Furthermore, long-term assessment of the impacts would help check if there is actual transference to educational actions. Future studies can combine both elements to provide evidence of sustainable transference and, ultimately, impact on upstander behaviour increase and violence reduction.

### Data availability

The data supporting the results and analyses presented in the current study are not publicly available due to the fact that they contain personal information. However, they will be made available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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## Author contributions

OR-G has contributed to the conception and design of the work, he has rewritten the discussion and the state-of-the-art after the peer review, and he has established the final approval of the version to be published. JCP-A and LNS have been involved in the final revision of the manuscript. GLT has written the state-of-the-art, methods and results. He has also conducted the fieldwork in Spain. AA has collected the data in Cyprus and has contributed to its analysis.

## Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

## Ethical approval

The study was performed in accordance with the ethical standards as laid down in the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

## Informed consent

Freely given, informed consent to participate in the study was obtained from all participants. Participants in the questionnaire responded affirmatively to providing consent in order to continue with the survey; participants in the interviews signed a specific informed consent.

## Additional information

**Supplementary information** The online version contains supplementary material available at <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-02117-8>.

**Correspondence** and requests for materials should be addressed to Oriol Rios-Gonzalez.

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## Chapter 5. Results, discussion, and conclusions

### 5.1. Main results

This section gathers the main results of the thesis. As already introduced, each research objective was more specifically addressed through a specific investigation and article (Valls-Carol et al., 2021; Rios-González et al., 2023; Rios-González et al., 2024). For the dissertation, results are presented in an organization so as to combine the common elements found of the three studies, and presented through the transformative and exclusionary dimensions characteristic of the communicative orientation (Pulido et al., 2014). Some excerpts from the participants will exemplify the results, except from the social media analysis since, as we explained, for ethical reasons they were paraphrased.

#### 5.1.1. Dominant behaviors from men

Research 1 and 2 provide us with innovative results in the already deeply studied field regarding the behaviors of dominant and violent masculinities: these are exclusionary results from research objective 1. We continue to find examples of dominant men in article 1 (Valls-Carol et al., 2021, p. 6) who ridicule those who do not follow the hegemonic model: “*Where is Antonio? He’s probably ironing (hu, hu, hu)*”. More novel, however, is the digital use of #NotAllMen (Rios-González et al., 2024, p. 4) as a disproportionate self-defense for not accepting the social reality of gender-based violence, not getting involved in the fight to end it, and in fact invalidating stories shared by women on networks. These same men, a minority, are the ones who promote a coercive and misogynistic camaraderie when there are no women in front of them. Lastly, we highlight as alarming the cases of men in social networks who adopt certain dominant attitudes (such as not being loving and kind, being hard on women) to, according to their way of seeing it, succeed in affective-sexual relationships (p. 5).

#### 5.1.2. Oppressed masculinities: the consequences of the traditional model

These findings fall under the exclusionary dimension, as these also contribute to the perpetuation of patriarchal relationships, and are therefore connected with research objective 2. The first article explores accounts of men who allow themselves to be beaten by their

partners or others even in public, and who neither react to this violence nor leave the relationship due to lack of self-confidence: *"It is ok for me, I have no personality..."* (p. 6). We also find oppressed men on social networks who express that they feel equal to the dominant ones, whether on issues such as sharing chores or securing relationships with consent. Specifically on Reddit (Rios-González et al., 2024, p. 5), we found some accounts of men who believe that there is no success in relationships outside of following a dominant model of pressuring women: they feel that if they try to flirt, they may annoy or bother girls, and to prevent this they hide that facet and never try.

### 5.1.3. Women's positioning and impact

We also collect women's voices and behaviors in the three articles. As we know historically, some perpetrate, some perpetuate and some overcome gender-based violence.

First, we will present results within the exclusionary dimension, responding to research objective 1. There is a minority of women who imitate the dominant male model: from an unconsciously internalized socialization to the attraction to violence, these women understand relationships only from the logic of power, where only positions of domination or submission exist. This leads them, when they can put themselves above, to act in a dominant and contemptuous way towards other people. In article 1 we have focused on their reactions to non-dominant men (Valls-Carol et al., 2021). Thus, reports in the life-stories present women's public criticism and ridicule of their oppressed or non-violent male partners for house chores or otherwise that are not really problematic: *"I do not understand how you do not differentiate the right and wrong sides of the dress! How can you put it inside out?"* (p. 5). Some of those reprimands are directly attacks for nice details that these guys have had in mind for their partners, such as disdain for beauty: *"Fuck! Why are you giving me this jacket? I don't like it, why do you go to get this jacket, I didn't tell you to do it! You are an idiot!"* (p. 6)

Article 2 reveals complementary results from Twitter and Reddit: men appear who are doing what the dominant ones are not doing and yet they are being belittled or even ridiculed and attacked (Rios-González et al., 2024, pp. 4-5). Examples are those who publicly take a stand against non-consensual relationships and are told that "it's the least they can do, don't expect recognition"; another case is the story of the guy who respected a girl's "no" in a sexual relationship and then she ridiculed him with her friends and slept with her dominant ex. The worst consequences experienced by women in heterosexual relationships from this socialization is that they "consent" to sexual relationships that with a non-dominant profile they would not consent to, because it is not what they want; that is, they submit to dominant men.

We also collect female voices in networks that manifest difficulty in identifying dominant men in flings; we will discuss this result from the concept of enslaved desire towards attraction to violence. A story from article 1 reveals more details about how attractiveness is not in the physique, but in the attitude, and that can add or subtract depending on the socialization of the beholder: so is seen with a physically attractive teacher who when he shows himself romantic, healthy, and caring, is ridiculed: "*his female colleagues began to criticize him by saying "Look at him! He is like a woman," and "he is a child and not a man, too soft, too healthy"*" (Valls-Carol et al., 2021, p. 6).

In short, these exclusionary cases are women who only understand relationships from the perspective of violence and power, and therefore treat in this way those they consider inferior, their male partners who lack self-confidence, but not their dominant partners or flirts. It does not matter how these comments or dominant attitudes towards non-violent men (which are with a tone of disdain and totally unattractive), but the results indicate how towards dominant men they do not behave this way and allow them everything.

Now, we will introduce results within the transformative dimension, which necessarily complement the findings related to objective 2 (analyzing upstander behaviors from men). Most women's comments in the Twitter and Reddit posts analyzed acknowledge and value the essential role of men in overcoming gender violence: "*They raise the bar about what it means to be a good man*" (Rios-González et al., 2024, p. 6-7). Women in these debates emphatically talk about the fact that male allies exist. This is also the position of the educators participating in the bystander intervention training of article 3; in fact, most participants in the training to prevent violence against LGBTI+ youth (80%) are heterosexual women (Rios-González et al., 2023). Further, the female participants in the first article are acting as upstanders when they denounce female- and male-dominant situations and value the confident reactions of NAM men; they are also most participants in those communicative daily life stories.

#### 5.1.4. Making New Alternative Masculinities visible

This research has made visible many NAM communicative acts full of courage and attractiveness. All these findings are found in the transformative dimension and help respond to research objectives 2 and 3. The transformative stories in the first article are very inspiring, and one of them gives the title to the scientific publication: "*Come on! He has never cooked in his life!*", in response to a girl who unfairly criticized her current non-violent partner while another dominant boyfriend was allowed to ignore his involvement in household chores (Valls-

Carol et al., 2021, p. 2). Another example, in this case towards a dominant man trying to ridicule him for receiving a nice message from his wife, is when Lucas replied *"Hey man! Don't blame me if your wife doesn't tell you these things but tells you to go to the couch!"* (p. 8). We see how the language of desire is present in all of them.

Secondly, we have seen how in social networks (Rios-González et al., 2024, pp. 5-7) there are many supportive interactions from men to women who tell their stories of gender-based violence. We also observed many interactions of support and advice from egalitarian men to others who are insecure in relationships, offering a simple approach to securing consent without losing naturalness. They show no fear and, actually, confidence, in not being chosen by a woman while behaving thoughtfully and considerately, because some women do not feel desire by such egalitarian behaviors. Men clearly share their collective imperative to confront male perpetrators. Real narratives of men actively opposing violence are exchanged and disseminated. The examined hashtags also encompassed profiles of male-focused organizations advocating for the involvement of boys and men in combating gender-based violence. Men who reject violence leverage social media discussions to inquire about actionable steps to become more effective allies. Some responses emphasize that passive indifference perpetuates the issue, advocating instead for collective action, as the combined efforts of all men taking a stand could spark a cascade of impactful actions. Individuals offer suggestions, such as creating male spaces for sharing personal initiatives, with the aim of fostering a sense of common purpose and inspiring others to take action.

In relation to the latter, men sharing openly and confidently, with a language of desire, their positioning against violence, creates bonds between those men who reject violence. Two examples are the story of the man who refuses to enter a brothel in Brussels and is joined by more co-workers: *"Roberto was mocking, and the boss and I felt fine with our positioning. We felt complicity and others left the brothel quickly; Roberto remained in ridicule"* (Valls-Carol et al., 2021, p. 8); or participants in the Up4Diversity training who expressed that they could count on each other: *"It was great to have so many different partners involved because I learned from the different experiences. I had no idea some of them existed, and now I know where to go if I ever need them"* (Rios-González et al., 2023, p. 6).

For their part, the three stories of men participating in the New Alternative Masculinities movement bring us two essential parallel results: men who refuse non-consensual relationships because they are not turned on by them, and only seek out and are turned on by those with consent: *"If the other person is not there 100%, I do not want it either, but not just because I say "no, this isn't right", but because I no longer want it, I'm not turned on anymore"*

(Rios-González et al., 2024, p. 7) This is strengthened in social media, where men share ideals of sexual-affective relationships characterized by enthusiastic and mutual consent.

#### 5.1.5. Interactions based on hoaxes about masculinities and gender-based violence

The second investigation delves into debates and interactions based on hoaxes about men and consent (Rios-González et al., 2024). These fall in the exclusionary dimension of research objective 1. Such interactions are promoted by dominant men and by women who imitate this dominant model. In turn, we find some men who say that a woman's "no" actually means "yes", or that they just need to be "*warmed up*" (p. 4); others spread hoaxes that deny the gendered base of violence, alluding to false reports (p. 5).

Nevertheless, we also find women who reproduce discourses that place all men "in the same boat" as the cause of the problem, or who do not value those who take a stand or are egalitarian (p. 5). They even say that "all men are evil", or call misogynist egalitarian men who call out violence perpetrated by women. We also find stories stating that "men who have healthy relationships should not be valued because that is what should be normal". Finally, we found erroneous biological assumptions regarding inherent disparities in sex drive or self-restraint between genders, which are exploited to rationalize certain men's behaviors for ulterior violent motives.

#### 5.1.6. Standing by or standing up

This thesis makes visible many unpleasant daily situations that can be acted upon. However, addressing the exclusionary dimension of research objective 1, we note how the lack of self-confidence, courage and strength are key factors in whether or not to take a stand. Thus, the insecure men in the first article who receive attacks do not know how to react; nor do the women who hear taunts with which they clearly disagree (Valls-Carol et al., 2021, p. 6):

*Alejandra: (...) "Where is Antonio? He's probably ironing (hu, hu, hu)" and they all laughed at him.*

*Researcher: and the women. What did they say?*

*Alejandra: the women did not say anything when they were with these men in the group to defend this man, although they liked his attitude."*

In a similar vein, social media voices (Rios-González et al., 2024, p. 6) claim that non-violent guys in men's groups who look the other way in the face of macho comments are endorsing dominant men to escalate to worse behavior. As a last noteworthy result, we find how in networks they see individual upstanders and lack of strong network as a limitation.

Despite the previous findings, we also found others within a transformative dimension and therefore can help achieve research objective 2: we have many revealing results that reinforce the upstander approach. Thus, along the lines of the above but with a transformative perspective, on Twitter and Reddit we find a critique of non-dominant men who act as accomplices and perpetuate rape culture. But, above all, we find powerful advocacy for men to act safely and be active advocates in the face of any violence. Online campaigns are shared in which these egalitarian men are attractively involved, and anonymous and famous men who take a stand in networks are made visible (p. 6).

As a preventive upstander action, in social networks the role of Education is valued, the importance of educating about consent from the earliest ages and with an approach that does not include only verbal language (p. 6). All of article three, with the voices of so many diverse educators involved in ending violence, reflects the importance given to training to be able to act as upstanders. In fact, a quantitative data from the pre/post questionnaire of the bystander intervention training brings hope about the easy and quick impact it has: participants attending the training were asked regarding their familiarity with the concepts of 'bystander intervention' or 'being an upstander.' In the pre-test, only 28.8% responded affirmatively, whereas in the post-test, 95.6% confirmed their awareness, with only 4.4% responding negatively or expressing uncertainty (Rios-González et al., 2023, p.7).

#### 5.1.7. Impact of bystander intervention training for educators

This last group of results relates to objective 3: "To provide evidence on the professional impact of evidence-based training on bystander intervention to prevent violence against LGBTI+ youth in formal and non-formal educational institutions". All results refer to the third of the scientific publications (Rios-González et al., 2023).

In summary, attendees conveyed, through both the pre-post questionnaires and interviews, a heightened sense of empowerment, proficiency, and inclination to apply the acquired skills and strategies within their professional settings. As a first step, the awareness of violence experienced by LGBTI + youth is generally increased (pp. 6-7). However, participants were already sensitized to the issues addressed, and found the training enhanced

their effectiveness in addressing violence. Despite their prior engagement, they credit the training for providing them with essential tools and strategies to become more impactful upstanders:

*“I was already motivated to try and do something to change it. (...). So, I came to the training (...) with the desire to make things better. So, I couldn't say that the training actually changed that. But the training certainly changed what I thought was the appropriate thing to do.”* (p. 7).

Evidence to strengthen our argument is that the mean increase in feelings of preparedness to intervene, measured on a scale of 1 to 6, rose from 3.61 to 4.81. An average rating of 5.51 on a scale of 1 to 6 was obtained when participants were asked in the questionnaires whether they would implement upstander actions in their professional activities to combat various forms of violence, including LGBTI+phobic violence. This empowerment extends beyond the professional realm, as participants described engaging in conversations about bystander and upstander roles with young family members or friends (p. 6)

Engaging in the training enhanced participants' awareness of effective practices for addressing violence against LGBTI+ youth. Attendees describe receiving valuable scientific knowledge on these matters as pivotal in bolstering their professional confidence. An example of the gained scientific competence is the following: there is a significant discrepancy observed in the selection of the hoax-statement option "focusing on the aggressors": 49.15% indicated it in the pre-test, whereas only 21.05% selected it in the post-test. They now acknowledge more clearly that they should focus on the majority of bystanders to turn them into upstanders, involving the whole community, including families, staff and other agents: *“after doing the program, I suppose I'd be more focused on empowering bystanders to take action”*. Another example is the rise expressed in critical thinking regarding training on LGBTI+ that lacks a focus on scientific evidence and achieving social impact. Another is when they express that possessing research and access to both global and local data on violence empowers them to confidently engage in conversations with skeptics. A last one is that the training explicitly emphasized that everyone, including heterosexual men, plays a significant role as upstanders for LGBTI+ individuals. This message was particularly empowering, countering exclusive and anti-scientific discourses prevalent in university or other contexts that suggest that individuals outside the collective have no relevance in such matters (pp. 7-8).

In order to promote bystander intervention and reduce violence, they express an increased awareness regarding the necessity for those spaces to prioritize safety: *“the issue must be put on the table, but with great care to ensure that no danger is created for anyone”*.



Indeed, they already offer guidance on when and how to intervene, particularly to prevent negative experiences that may cause individuals to withdraw from being upstanders: they are aware of isolating gender violence against defenders, and state that it is essential for everyone to be aware of and ready to respond to those attacks. The training assisted some attendees in recognizing the transformative potential of acknowledging the value of students who already are upstanders: “(...) *detecting those potential leaders (...), also involving them in these things, would help a lot, since the rest will already start to see things as they are, right?*”. Connections with new alternative masculinities are made in this stance: “*And also to encourage another type of masculinity*” (p. 9).

Educators show a new need for frequent dialogue concerning this preventative evidence is crucial for surpassing outdated approaches. The collaboration among educators within each educational institution is recognized as pivotal, as they can engage in more frequent and close-knit pedagogical dialogues to gain a comprehensive understanding of profound educational strategies and effectively implement them. While the training had a primary focus on supporting LGBTI+ youth, numerous participants highlighted its interdisciplinary nature and the broad applicability of bystander intervention techniques. This versatility enhances its potential for transferability across various contexts and for diverse groups, including refugees and those with intellectual diversity (p. 9):

*I don 't think it really matters if you are of a different ethnicity, or you look different to others, or you are LGBT; learning how you can become an upstander and using those techniques is important for all of those. I'm definitely going to use what I learned when I start teaching.” (Aya)*

## 5.2. Discussion of results

The evidence provided in the last section shows that all three research goals of the dissertation have been met:

1. To analyze communicative acts that reprimand non-violent men, undertaken by some women or dominant men, and communicative acts performed by New Alternative Masculinities that counteract such reprimands.
2. To collect stories of upstander masculinities in both digital and offline contexts who combat gender-based violences, specifically related to sexual consent.
3. To provide evidence on the professional impact of evidence-based training on bystander intervention to prevent violence against LGBTI+ youth in formal and non-formal educational institutions.

Now, we will discuss the findings with the scientific literature available.

### 5.2.1. The importance of upstanders

To act in any way against any dominant or violent behavior, attitude or gesture is to be an upstander. There is a lot of scientific literature that has delved into how to involve more bystanders in an effective way. Research and practice propose different ways of intervening depending on the situation and the person who stands up (McMahon et al., 2013). This thesis suggests several ways, such as direct response as a counterattack; victim support, also in social networks; as an authority figure such as an educator; or promoting more upstanders.

“There is strength in numbers”: When more bystanders are involved, the sense of impunity and support for perpetrators is drastically reduced, and thus the potential for them to act abusively again. However, this should not discourage people from acting individually or as a minority, and indeed society should especially appreciate the courage and strength it requires to act in the face of a situation such as this. We only ought to be aware that it is possible to suffer isolating gender violence, for which upstanders must be prepared and protect themselves with their own solidarity networks, together with first-order victims (Flecha, 2021). The New Alternative Masculinities combine this strength, courage, and confidence to inspire more people to action, as well as the desire to generate quality relationships that protect and neutralize the violence suffered. They change the dominant discourse, present a

successful alternative by acting as dialogic leaders (Redondo-Sama, 2016); they offer a way of socializing based on egalitarian values combined with desire, fun, freedom, intensity (Joanpere et al., 2021).

How someone remembers a situation in which they have taken a stand influences subsequent decisions. Whoever has been attacked after taking a stand will suffer the consequences of the isolating violence received (Flecha et al., 2024), and is also less likely to take a stand in the future. If they have had support, despite having been attacked by bullies, the feeling and memory can be of success (Nazareno et al., 2022). That way, they will continue being the informal support that has been found crucial for recovery (Melgar et al., 2021).

In this sense, the language of desire is a key element to introduce in the positioning: if our words, tone, look, gestures, and attitude are full of the conviction that those who act violently are cowardly, we can generate a greater impact with our communicative acts (Rodríguez-Navarro et al., 2014). We have seen in the first research examples of communicative acts of NAM men full of desire language, which do not justify themselves or make themselves small, but do not consent to the attack in a firm, blunt and confident manner. They are not positions that seek to generate a dialogue with the violent person, because violence denies the possibility of egalitarian dialogue. Dialogue is key, but in preventive and community contexts. As can be exemplified in the narratives shared, those positions that make the person who has exercised domination less attractive are never violent or dominant positions, but rather courageous and assertive. Based on our preliminary data, dominant men are considered ridiculous following communicative actions carried out by NAM (Rodríguez-Navarro et al., 2014), consequently weakening violent profiles. Moreover, they promote not only the freedom of the person attacked at the moment, but also collective freedom by making violent people less attractive, who will dare less to act in that way. These findings hold significant importance in the prevention of gender-violence relationships. We need these positions, in this way, to put an end to gender violence, because on the one hand they stop violence and on the other hand they offer the option of better, more satisfying relationships.

### 5.2.2. Support and solidarity networks

To put an end to violence, it is necessary to promote bystander intervention by the entire community. To do so, it is crucial to generate support and solidarity networks (Freire, 1971; Valls et al., 2016). Research highlights how such human connections help fight isolating gender violence (Melgar et al., 2021). It is not necessary to be close friends to support each other and show solidarity: though bystander intervention should be done with anyone, studies

have shown how friendship with the victim encourages action (Davidovic et al., 2023), and most importantly, having some relationship with the perpetrator shows mixed outcomes (Bennet & Barnyard, 2016). To this end, it is very useful to reclaim the deep meaning of the concept of *friendship* (Gairal-Casadó et al., 2022; Giner i Gota, 2018), as a relationship that can be very diverse but that ensures support and freedom, and of course excludes any form of domination and submission. Not only that, but exposure to peers who sexually objectify, and disrespect women has been studied to reduce the likelihood of engaging in supportive bystander intervention (Leone & Parrott, 2019). Therefore, the promotion of true friends, and the decision on who to spend time with, might be key to being an upstander or not.

From a positive perspective, this solidarity can be fostered in individual relationships or in the form of a network with more people. They can occur in interactions between men: quality relationships between men allow them to express deep feelings, give each other honest advice and help each other to increase self-confidence (Rios-González et al., 2021).

We have also proven that social networks can be dialogic and transformative spaces, in interactions with strangers (Redondo-Sama et al., 2021). The #MeToo movement transformed feminism and society by giving voice and strength to millions of women and people who had suffered abuse; millions more stood in solidarity with them. Social media does bring up talk about sexual consent, sometimes from facetious approaches, but often also from rigorous, inclusive, and hopeful approaches (Pulido et al., 2024; Rios et al., 2023). Other studies have deepened on dominant masculinities from the manosphere spreading misogynistic discourses on Twitter (Hopton & Langer, 2022). Nonetheless, Jones et al (2022) also analyzed #NotAllMen and found many messages of positioning and resistance to the misogynistic use of the hashtag. Moreover, there are online communities of fathers who are adopting and fostering caring and pro-feminist masculinities (Scheibling, 2020); and pro-feminist podcasts are being studied for their potential to broaden the involvement of men in outreach efforts to broader demographics (McInerney & Burrell, 2023).

Educational contexts may be even easier to generate these solidarity networks, given the intensity and frequency of interactions in a more controllable environment. The dialogic model of conflict prevention and resolution stands out for its ability to reach consensus on rules of coexistence and facilitate safe spaces for dialogue where cowardly attitudes can be denounced and courageous upstander attitudes can be valued. Outside a specific educational community, we observe successful cases of teachers who voluntarily and permanently network and learn about these scientific evidence (Roca-Campos et al., 2021; Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2021). The third research presented shows the creation of a transnational network of diverse educators (Rios-González et al, 2023; De Witte et al., 2024). Results similar to those

found on bystander intervention training have been reported (Kuntz and Searle, 2022). The best way to train educators is through pedagogical dialogic gatherings, reading and discussing first-hand the scientific evidence. This may result in an increase in scientific competence to differentiate appropriate from counterproductive solutions to violence (Dekker et al., 2012). The emphasis on "leader traits," including confidence, strength, and attractiveness, assists in mobilizing popular opinion leaders both among staff and teachers, as well as within youth groups. Engaging the entire community in violence prevention efforts can be achieved through organizing open dialogic gatherings, conducting training sessions, or establishing mixed committees involving families, volunteers, staff, and youth (Rodríguez-Oramas et al., 2022; Flecha, 2015; Flecha & Soler, 2013). Moreover, actions that have proven success serve for any collective: they curb and prevent violence against women, LGBTI+ people, men, people with disabilities, cultural and ethnic minorities, etc.

Those who want to overcome all violence, regardless of their identity, are against discrimination and violence suffered by any person and collective. It is key to involve and make egalitarian men, also heterosexual (Rostosky et al., 2015), feel equally valuable, for which research shows it has been a bigger challenge to become allies for LGBTI+, for fear that their attractiveness and male identity will be called into question (Goldstein, 2017; Dessel et al., 2017); this makes evident that isolating gender violence focuses on damaging the image, the attractiveness, of the upstander.

### 5.2.3. Failure to take a position has negative consequences

A victim can never be blamed for not taking a stand. In this sense, non-dominant men who are attacked, according to the analysis of the first research, are not to blame for the attacks they receive. We can only analyze that there are insecure men who do not want to leave these abusive relationships because they think they do not deserve better. In social contexts, it is the lack of positioning of bystanders that needs to be urgently addressed. We have analyzed women and men who act in complicity with men and women who attack; they perpetuate unequal relationships if they do not position themselves on the side of the victim and against the abusers. It is essential to support these victimized men, women and other LGBTI+ people to overcome this situation and gain the confidence and attractiveness to not tolerate such interactions and to seek out those that are egalitarian and unite values and desire.

As educators, not promoting actions in the line of bystander intervention means perpetuating gender-based violence and all other forms of violence: not being part of the

solution means being part of the problem. Educators have a responsibility in ensuring safe and free spaces for everyone. Not implementing educational actions that have proven to reduce violence, and implementing other practices with no scientific evidence of social impact is harmful for children and youth, and for society overall.

#### 5.2.4. The importance of giving visibility to NAM

This dissertation contributes to giving voice and value to upstanders, with a specific focus on educators and men, like another research has also done (Casey & Ohler, 2012). Granting voice to these models of courageous masculinity, which are aligned with the best values, is crucial. Through research, we have the opportunity to generate groundbreaking knowledge that can enhance sexual-affective relationships, and all others. The third research shows that a minority of heterosexual men attended the bystander intervention training for LGBTI+ violence, a fact consistent with the research on the subject (Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2023). Social and educational initiatives that are grounded on scientific evidence of social impact will welcome and value the participation of more egalitarian straight men, and more will increasingly get publicly involved. With this research we contribute to making visible attitudes and behaviors of men, especially heterosexual men, that are key and that break stereotypes: they do not get aroused without consent, and they protect any person.

### 5.3. Final conclusions

The results and discussion presented above provide evidence to believe the overarching purpose of this dissertation has been achieved: we have provided scientific knowledge on bystander and upstander positions against a wide range of violent attitudes and their negative and positive impact in stopping and preventing gender-based violence. In doing so, we have contributed to Sustainable Development Goals 5, 3, 4, 10, 11, and 16, as justified initially in section 1.1.

Indeed, this thesis provides evidence of the importance and impact of relying on scientific evidence of social impact in social analysis and educational actions, as well as some consequences of not doing so. Further arguments and evidence are provided to continue to make clear the consequences of putting or not putting all boys and men in the same bag. Specifically, we must express openly that dominant and violent attitudes are exercised only by a group of men with a certain profile; but that there is a majority of non-violent and non-dominant men. Among them, we have been able to identify new alternative masculinities that position themselves with attractiveness, security, strength, and courage in the face of dominant interactions; they are boys and men who seek ideal relationships in which they only contemplate consent and freedom as a basis; and who are trained to prevent any violence. Also, within the non-violent men, there are those with a traditional oppressed profile, lacking self-confidence, self-esteem, conviction, and hook; society has placed them in that position, but if we offer them an alternative in the NAMs, it will improve their lives and those of the people around them or with whom they interact.

To achieve this, it is key that these oppressed but non-violent and non-dominant masculinities are made clear that no one sees them as anything like the dominant ones, and that we help them to gain security. It is also important to react sharply against dominant attitudes, whoever they come from (López de Aguilera et al., 2021), with a lot of confidence and with the language of desire in our communicative acts, to remove the attractiveness of those who make the world worse with their interactions, and who do not really enjoy quality relationships. All this, while focusing our efforts on making visible the real alternative already present in our societies. At the public level, NAM positions contribute to a more just society, whether by defending egalitarian men or by positioning themselves in social networks: making them visible with a lot of attraction is to encourage them to continue acting in this way, and that others also want to get closer to them and their way of acting. On a private level, in

affective-sexual relationships, friendships and any other type of relationship, NAM coherence generates very deep impacts.

It is key to open dialogues based on evidence of social impact in any space in this regard. To this end, the proposal of dialogic feminism is relevant. This is an inclusive feminism, which includes all people against violence, including men, and which is brave against those who are not really feminist, even if they are women. This will be a feminism with common goals from the equality of differences, which seeks to end all forms of violence, whether against women, men or other LGBTI+ people. We will thus contribute to the freedom of all people to express themselves as they wish from their gender and sexual orientation, both cis-heterosexual men and women as well as LGBTIA+ people.

At the educational and social level, rigorous training is a crucial tool. Thus, dialogic teacher training (Roca Campos et al., 2021) or dialogic gatherings are educational actions that can be transferred to any context. Training educators based on evidence can help overcome prejudices and hoaxes, ultimately promoting the adoption of evidence-informed approaches which do have social impact. Likewise, there are media such as *El Diario Feminista* and *Periódico Educación* that disseminate news and scientific publications that are available to all citizens in the thematic lines of this dissertation, which can provide much knowledge to anyone. In order to allow citizens to participate in science, learn about it and benefit from its advances, it is necessary to prioritize methodologies that involve them in equal dialogue. In addition, it is important to share scientific results open access for everyone.

Dialogic spaces will serve to raise awareness of the violence, discrimination, and prejudice experienced by women, LGBTI+ individuals, and men, while also strengthening upstander attitudes. All endeavors should ultimately aim to establish safe and inclusive environments where violence is not tolerated, and solidarity is nurtured and reinforced; contexts where the dreamt relationships can be a reality for everyone.

We have the privilege of being able to dream of improving the world, of zero violence: there is scientific evidence that, spread throughout humanity, can eradicate violent relationships.

### 5.3.1. Further research

This dissertation, and especially dialogue around it, has truly inspired many research questions that spark further research proposals which contribute to those dreams of zero violence (Gómez, 2014). As a matter of fact, the first research is already being concluded with



a group of high school boys who carry out dialogical gatherings on NAM. Two scientific articles on their results and impacts will be published in the coming months in JCR journals.

We will continue to study to make upstander people visible, and specifically New Alternative Masculinities, in order to give security to egalitarian boys and to make the utopia of an alternative in masculinities more and more real (Olin Wright, 2020). This will contribute to increasingly dialogic societies (Flecha, 2022).

Some of the topics that could be derived from this thesis are:

- Examine how people talk about men exhibiting a NAM attitude in their response to reprimands and attacks, and how they talk of men adhering to the DTM model, to evidence who is more valued and who is ridiculed or undermined.
- Deepen the evidence about women who advocate feminist values but then fail to support or even undervalue men who practice those values.
- Examine conversations among diverse groups of egalitarian men, aiming to foster peer education on consent and constructive approaches to addressing violence.
- Perform a quantitative analysis of social media discussions to ascertain the proportion of men displaying NAM traits.
- Analyze the impact of the group of New Alternative Masculinities who have been meeting for over 10 years.

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## Annexes

### **Annex 1. Guidelines of the communicative daily life stories from Article 1 (Valls-Carol et al., 2021)**

- To start the interview, explain the frameworks of communicative acts (Santa Cruz and Redondo, 2010) and the different types of masculinity OTM, DTM, and NAM (Serradell et al., 2014), in plain language.
- Ask whether they recall scenarios similar to those outlined in the results section, and if they can share personal anecdotes or instances involving their acquaintances or colleagues.
- Explain communicative acts of women or DTM men, specific things they did or said toward a man that corresponds to the OTM as a reprimand, with bad manners, mocking, comments with second intentions that show complaint or disdain, in reply to some daily life attitudes of that man, such as at work, with friends, or at home.
- Explain communicative acts from NAM that respond to the former, where a language of desire is present, in the search of justice toward such non-violent men who are targets of the reprimands, and also to empty of attractiveness such comments.

### **Annex 2. Guidelines of the communicative daily life stories from Article 2 (Rios-González et al., 2024)**

- Whenever necessary: share any relevant scientific evidence. Specifically, share the hoax that all men, especially heterosexual men, are turned on regardless of the other person's consent.
- Do you think that consensual relationships give you pleasure?
- Do you think there is more excitement when there is consent? Why? How do you perceive and experience it, from your own experience?
- Do non-consensual relationships turn you on or have they ever turned you on? Have you ever sought them out? Why?

### **Annex 3. Questionnaire Article 3 (Rios-González et al., 2023)**

We provide the English version of the pre-test and post-test questionnaires.

#### Common part for the pre and post-test questionnaires:

##### Introduction

- Objectives of the questionnaire, explanation of its content; ethical considerations of anonymity, voluntariness, contact information, gratitude for participation.
- Email
- Consent: “By filling out this questionnaire you are giving consent to the use of your data in the terms previously explained.” (compulsory question)
  - “Yes, I give consent”.

##### Demographic details

1. Age (blank space)
2. Country of origin
  - a. Spain, Denmark, Belgium, Cyprus, Ireland, and “Other” (blank space)
3. Gender Identity
  - a. Woman, man, trans\*, non binary, gender fluid, prefer not to say, “Blank space”
4. In which type of educational institution do you collaborate or work?
  - a. NGO, Youth entity/association, LGBTI or feminist association, high school, university, leisure organisation
5. What is your role as a youth professional? (short answer text)

##### Awareness

6. How would you assess your level of awareness of violence and bullying suffered by LGBTIQ+ youth?
  - a. 1-6 from Totally unaware to Totally aware
7. Have you learnt about LGBT+ violence and bullying from any of the following strategies? (click as many as needed):
  - a. Teacher training, support to youth groups, social media, other projects, blank space
8. Are you familiar with any educational practices that are based on scientific evidence to prevent violence?
  - a. Yes/No
9. If you know any, tell us here and, if possible, describe briefly their impact (Short answer text)
10. What is the level of awareness and tools you think professionals who work with youth have?
  - a. 1-6 from Very low to very high
11. Do you know what "bystander intervention" or "being an upstander" means?
  - a. Yes/No/I'm not sure
12. Tell us what you know in one sentence (Short answer text)
13. How prepared do you feel to intervene, in any way, when you are aware of situations of LGBTIQ+phobic violence with youth you work with?
  - a. 1-6 from “Not prepared at all” to “Very well prepared”



14. What is the role that professionals can have to prevent or deal with violence against LGBT youth? Mark as many as you think should be done, and add more if you have
  - a. Nothing/Support the victim/Talk mainly to aggressors/Engage the youth group to intervene/Report to the organisation/Other (blank space)
15. Are you linked to any of the Up4Diversity consortium universities or entities? In which way? What is your role there? (Short answer text)
16. Tell us here if you are implementing any upstander actions in your institution already and which is the impact achieved (Short answer text)

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The post-test questionnaire, apart from the first 16 questions, had the following 10:

#### Overall satisfaction

17. My overall assessment of the training is
  - a. 1-10, from "Poor" to "Excellent"

#### Quality

18. Name three things your learnt in the training, or would to highlight, regarding educational practice (Short answer text)
19. All doubts were resolved satisfactorily during the training sessions
  - a. 1-6 from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree"

#### Utility

20. The training has taught me about realities that I did not know previously
  - a. 1-6 from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree"
21. The content of the training has changed my mind regarding LGTBI violence in educational institutions
  - a. 1-6 from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree"
22. The Training has been useful because I have developed upstander strategies to implement in my institution or youth I work with
  - a. 1-6 from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree"
23. Do you feel more confident now to implement upstander actions in your organisation or class?
  - a. Yes/No

#### Applicability

24. Do you feel that your participation in the Up4Diversity Conference has improved your awareness on the effective practices that can help overcome violence against LGBTI youth?
  - a. 1-6 from "Not at all" to "Very much"
25. I will be implementing some upstander actions in my professional activity to help end, among other forms of violence, LGBTIphobic violence
  - a. 1-6 from "Not at all" to "Yes, as many as I can"
26. What upstander actions do you plan to implement in your institution? Choose as many as you would like to do.

- a. Be an upstander myself whenever I am aware of some violent behaviours
- b. Open dialogue spaces with my colleague professionals about upstander actions
- c. Open dialogue spaces with youth about being upstanders
- d. Reading and discussing with my colleague professionals the Up4Diversity Training Materials for professionals
- e. Start the process of agreeing a common norm that puts the focus on being upstanders to end violence and improve the environment
- f. Attend future training events from Up4Diversity, such as the National Training Workshops
- g. Ask for specific upstander intervention training in my institution
- h. Other (blank space)

#### Voluntary interview

27. Write here your email and telephone number if you are willing to be contacted in a few weeks to deepen on the impact of the training (Short answer text)

### **Annex 4. Guidelines of the communicative semi-structured interviews**

#### Training assessment

1. What were some of the strongest points about the training?
2. What did you learn?
3. What could be improved?

#### Personal upstander impacts

4. Do you feel more prepared to intervene in violent situations, as an upstander in your position as a (role)? How, and what has made this difference?
5. What personal upstander behaviors have you started to do after your participation in the project, if you can think of any?
6. Have you had any dialogues with other professionals or youth about upstander actions against LGBTIphobic violence?
7. Have you noticed upstander actions due to these dialogues? It could be preventive actions or standing up to violence.

#### Upstander impacts in the organization

8. Have you shared any of the knowledge learnt in project's with colleagues or students?
9. What upstander actions, if any, have you implemented at your organization? If not, which are the main barriers? How can you overcome them?
10. What changes do you plan to make for the next school year(s)?
11. How do you feel you can impact your institution more in terms of it implementing upstander actions? Which ones do you think you could implement, or help be implemented?

## Annex 5. Written consent for the questionnaires

### Up4Diversity Pre-Training Questionnaire

Before you participate in an Up4Diversity National Training Workshop in 2022, we would like you to complete this very short questionnaire (less than 5 minutes) that will help us assess the impact of the training in terms of

- a. Improvement in awareness about bullying against LGBTIQ+ youth and effective strategies to overcome it.
- b. Empowerment of education professionals to implement upstander interventions in their organizations


For that purpose, a similar questionnaire will be sent to you at the end of the last training session.

The majority of the questions offer different options to select or choose from. Only in 2 questions will you be asked to write one sentence. You can answer that in any language you desire.

Your participation in this questionnaire will be completely anonymous and the data will only be used for scientific purposes of the project in accordance with the Regulation of the European Parliament (EU) and of the Council of 27 April 2016, on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation).

This questionnaire is voluntary and you can withdraw or modify your data by contacting us at [up4diversity@gmail.com](mailto:up4diversity@gmail.com) at any time. You can also contact us if you have any doubts or comments.

We would like to thank you for your participation and contribution to improve formal and non formal educational environments so that they are safe and inclusive for LGBTIQ+ youth and people.

[up4diversity@gmail.com](mailto:up4diversity@gmail.com) [Cambiar de cuenta](#) 

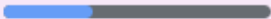
\* Indica que la pregunta es obligatoria

Correo \*

Tu dirección de correo electrónico \_\_\_\_\_

By filling out this questionnaire you are giving consent to the use of your data in the terms previously explained. \*

Yes, I give consent.

[Siguiente](#)  Página 1 de 3 [Borrar formulario](#)

## Up4Diversity Post-Training Questionnaire

After participating in this training, we would like you to complete this very short questionnaire (5-10 minutes) that will help us assess the impact of the conference in terms of

- a. Improvement in awareness about bullying against LGBTIQ+ youth and effective strategies to overcome it.
- b. Empowerment of education professionals to implement upstander interventions in their organizations

The majority of the questions offer different options to select or choose from. Only in a couple of them will you be asked to write one sentence. You can answer that in any language you desire.

Your participation in this questionnaire will be completely anonymous and the data will only be used for scientific purposes of the project in accordance with the Regulation of the European Parliament (EU) and of the Council of 27 April 2016, on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation).

This questionnaire is voluntary and you can withdraw or modify your data by contacting us at [up4diversity@gmail.com](mailto:up4diversity@gmail.com) at any time. You can also contact us if you have any doubts or comments.

We would like to thank you for your participation and contribution to improve formal and non formal educational environments so that they are safe and inclusive for LGBTIQ+ youth and people.

[up4diversity@gmail.com](mailto:up4diversity@gmail.com) [Cambiar de cuenta](#)



\* Indica que la pregunta es obligatoria

Correo \*

Tu dirección de correo electrónico

By filling out this questionnaire you are giving consent to the use of your data in the terms previously explained. \*

Yes, I give consent

[Siguiente](#)

Página 1 de 7

[Borrar formulario](#)

## Annex 6. Consent form for the communicative semi-structured interviews or Article 3 (Rios-González, 2023).



### INFORMED CONSENT - UP4DIVERSITY INTERVIEWS

After participating in an Up4Diversity National Training Workshop, we would like to carry out an individual interview with you that will help us more deeply assess the impact of the training in terms of

- a. Sustained empowerment of youth professionals to implement upstander interventions in their organizations
- b. Implementation of initiatives based on upstander intervention and social media in youth organizations
- c. Impact of the implementation of initiatives with upstander intervention approach and a social media orientation

Your participation will be completely anonymous, and the data will only be used for scientific purposes of the project in accordance with the Regulation of the European Parliament (EU) and of the Council of 27 April 2016, on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation).

This interview is voluntary, and you can withdraw or modify your data by contacting us at [up4diversity@gmail.com](mailto:up4diversity@gmail.com) at any time. You can also contact us if you have any doubts or comments.

Participation will not involve any financial expense to you, and you will not receive financial compensation of any kind. However, participation in the research may provide benefits to you or your organization in terms of the objectives previously stated; moreover, the project will be benefited from your insights and experiences.

Non-personal data from the interviews may be used for scientific publications and communications in research conferences. The interview will be recorded and kept private, only for the purposes mentioned.

We would like to thank you for your participation and contribution to improve formal and non-formal educational environments so that they are safe and inclusive for LGBTIQ+ youth and people.

I ..... with ID .....

Have read all the information above, understand it and agree to continue with my participation in this interview.

Signature (digital certificate or image of the signature is enough):

## **Annex 7 – Dissertation results presented in congresses and conferences.**

Rios González, Oriol; Gallardo Nieto, Elena María & **Legorburo Torres, Guillermo**. International Multidisciplinary Conference on Educational Research (CIMIE 2021). Online. Violencia contra el colectivo LGBTQI+: Estrategias Formativas Basadas en Evidencias

Rios González, Oriol; Gallardo Nieto, Elena María & **Legorburo Torres, Guillermo**. International Conference on Science, Feminism and Masculinities (CICFEM 2021). Online. HEI4Diversity y UP4Diversity: Estrategias de éxito para prevenir la violencia hacia el colectivo LGBTIQ+

Rios-Gonzalez, Oriol; Garcia-Yeste, Carme; **Legorburo Torres, Guillermo**. European Conference of Educational Research (ECER 2022). Online. Up4Diversity: Training Education Professionals Across Europe to Implement Bystander Intervention to Stop Violence Against LGBTIQ Youth.

**Legorburo-Torres, Guillermo**; Rios-González, Oriol; Vidu, Ana. American Educational Research Association (AERA) Annual Meeting 2023. Chicago. Impact of the Upstander Intervention Training Toward Educators to Overcome Violence Against LGBTI+ Youth.

Rios-Gonzalez, Oriol; **Legorburo-Torres, Guillermo**; Gallardo-Nieto, Elena. European Conference of Educational Research (ECER 2023). Glasgow. A European Network of Educators that Learns Together Evidence-based Bystander Intervention Actions to Stop Violence Against LGBTI+ Youth.

**Legorburo Torres, Guillermo**; Natividad Sancho, Laura. International Multidisciplinary Conference on Educational Research (CIMIE24). Granada. Not all men: Masculinities and consent in social media and in their sexual-affective relationships.

## **Annex 8 – Papers’ Co-author statements**

The following pages include the signed declarations of the co-authors of the scientific articles included in this PhD thesis, stating that I am the main contributor of those publications.



UNIVERSITAT ROVIRA I VIRGILI  
DEPARTAMENT DE PEDAGOGIA

## Co-author declaration for thesis scientific articles

I, Rosa Valls Carol, as co-author of the scientific article entitled “*Come on! He Has Never Cooked in His Life!*» *New Alternative Masculinities Putting Everything in Its Place*”, presented by Guillermo Legorburo Torres within his PhD dissertation, STATE that the main part of the work included in it has been carried out by the author of the thesis.

Barcelona, 3 abril 2024

VALLS CAROL  
MARIA ROSA  
Signature 37673153G

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por VALLS CAROL  
MARIA ROSA -  
37673153G  
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UNIVERSITAT ROVIRA I VIRGILI  
DEPARTAMENT DE PEDAGOGIA

## Co-author declaration for thesis scientific articles

I, Antonio Madrid Pérez , as co-author of the scientific article entitled “*«Come on! He Has Never Cooked in His Life!» New Alternative Masculinities Putting Everything in Its Place*”, presented by Guillermo Legorburo Torres within his PhD dissertation, STATE that the main part of the work included in it has been carried out by the author of the thesis.

Date and place:

Signature

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PEREZ  
ANTOIO -  
35118954R

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UNIVERSITAT ROVIRA I VIRGILI  
DEPARTAMENT DE PEDAGOGIA

## Co-author declaration for thesis scientific articles

I, Dr Barbara Merrill, as co-author of the scientific article entitled “*«Come on! He Has Never Cooked in His Life!» New Alternative Masculinities Putting Everything in Its Place*”, presented by Guillermo Legorburo Torres within his PhD dissertation, STATE that the main part of the work included in it has been carried out by the author of the thesis.

Date and place: 11/09/23 UK

Signature *Barbara Merrill*



UNIVERSITAT ROVIRA I VIRGILI  
DEPARTAMENT DE PEDAGOGIA

## Co-author declaration for thesis scientific articles

I, Oriol Rios González, DNI 40.994.687-Q, as co-author of the scientific article entitled *“Impact of an evidence-based training for educators on bystander intervention for the prevention of violence against LGBTI+ youth”*, presented by Guillermo Legorburo Torres within his PhD dissertation, STATE that the main part of the work included in it has been carried out by the author of the thesis.

Date and place: 30/01/2024, Tarragona

Signature

RIOS  
GONZALEZ  
JOSE ORIOL -  
40994687Q

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por RIOS GONZALEZ  
JOSE ORIOL -  
40994687Q  
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09:55:12 +01'00'



UNIVERSITAT ROVIRA I VIRGILI  
DEPARTAMENT DE PEDAGOGIA

## Co-author declaration for thesis scientific articles

I, Analia Maria Cardoso Torres, as co-author of the scientific article entitled *“Not all men: the debates in social networks on masculinities and consent”*, presented by Guillermo Legorburo Torres within his PhD dissertation, STATE that the main part of the work included in it has been carried out by the author of the thesis.

Date and place: Lisboa, 30 January 2024

Signature

A handwritten signature in purple ink, consisting of stylized, cursive letters that appear to be 'A.M.C.T.' followed by a long horizontal flourish.



UNIVERSITAT ROVIRA I VIRGILI  
DEPARTAMENT DE PEDAGOGIA

## Co-author declaration for thesis scientific articles

I, Emilia Aiello, as co-author of the scientific article entitled "*Not all men: the debates in social networks on masculinities and consent*", presented by Guillermo Legorburo Torres within his PhD dissertation, STATE that the main part of the work included in it has been carried out by the author of the thesis.

Date and place: Madrid, 29h January 2024

Signature **MARIA  
EMILIA  
AIELLO -  
DNI  
X7263009T** Firmado  
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13:08:44 +01'00'



UNIVERSITAT ROVIRA I VIRGILI  
DEPARTAMENT DE PEDAGOGIA

## Co-author declaration for thesis scientific articles

I, Bernardo Coelho, as co-author of the scientific article entitled "*Not all men: the debates in social networks on masculinities and consent*", presented by Guillermo Legorburo Torres within his PhD dissertation, STATE that the main part of the work included in it has been carried out by the author of the thesis.

Date and place:

Lisbon, 14/02/2024

Signature

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bernardo Coelho". The signature is written in a cursive style.



UNIVERSITAT ROVIRA I VIRGILI  
DEPARTAMENT DE PEDAGOGIA

## Co-author declaration for thesis scientific articles

I, ...Ariadna Munté Pascual.... , as co-author of the scientific article entitled *“Not all men: the debates in social networks on masculinities and consent”*, presented by Guillermo Legorburo Torres within his PhD dissertation, STATE that the main part of the work included in it has been carried out by the author of the thesis.

Date and place:

Barcelona, January 30, 2024

Signature



UNIVERSITAT ROVIRA I VIRGILI  
DEPARTAMENT DE PEDAGOGIA

## Co-author declaration for thesis scientific articles

I, Oriol Rios González, DNI 40.994.687-Q, as co-author of the scientific article entitled *“Not all men: the debates in social networks on masculinities and consent”*, presented by Guillermo Legorburo Torres within his PhD dissertation, STATE that the main part of the work included in it has been carried out by the author of the thesis.

Date and place: 30/01/2024, Tarragona

Signature

RIOS  
GONZALEZ  
JOSE ORIOL  
- 40994687Q

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por RIOS GONZALEZ  
JOSE ORIOL -  
40994687Q  
Fecha: 2024.02.05  
09:54:42 +01'00'





UNIVERSITAT ROVIRA I VIRGILI  
DEPARTAMENT DE PEDAGOGIA

## Co-author declaration for thesis scientific articles

I, Juan Carlos Peña Axt, as co-author of the scientific article entitled “*Impact of an evidence-based training for educators on bystander intervention for the prevention of violence against LGBTI+ youth*”, presented by Guillermo Legorburo Torres within his PhD dissertation, STATE that the main part of the work included in it has been carried out by the author of the thesis.

Date and place: 13-09-2023

Universidad Autónoma de Chile. Temuco, Chile

Signature

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Juan Carlos Peña Axt', written over a light blue horizontal line.



UNIVERSITAT ROVIRA I VIRGILI  
DEPARTAMENT DE PEDAGOGIA

## Co-author declaration for thesis scientific articles

I, Andreas Avgousti, as co-author of the scientific article entitled *“Impact of an evidence-based training for educators on bystander intervention for the prevention of violence against LGBTI+ youth”*, presented by Guillermo Legorburo Torres within his PhD dissertation, STATE that the main part of the work included in it has been carried out by the author of the thesis.

Date and place: Nicosia, 12/09/2023

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andreas Avgousti', written over a horizontal line.

Signature



UNIVERSITAT ROVIRA I VIRGILI  
DEPARTAMENT DE PEDAGOGIA

## Co-author declaration for thesis scientific articles

I, LAURA NATIVIDAD SANCHO, as co-author of the scientific article entitled *“Impact of an evidence-based training for educators on bystander intervention for the prevention of violence against LGBTI+ youth”*, presented by Guillermo Legorburo Torres within his PhD dissertation, STATE that the main part of the work included in it has been carried out by the author of the thesis.

Date and place:

Tarragona, 13 de septiembre de 2023

Signature

LAURA  
NATIVIDAD  
SANCHO -  
DNI  
33461623G

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LAURA NATIVIDAD  
SANCHO - DNI  
33461623G  
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