The New Alternative Masculinities and the Overcoming of Gender Violence

Ramon Flecha[1], Lidia Puigvert[1] & Oriol Ríos[2]

1) Department of Sociological Theory, University of Barcelona, Spain

2) Department of Sociology and Organizational Analysis, University of Barcelona, Spain

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Ramon Flecha
University of Barcelona

Lidia Puigvert
University of Barcelona

Oriol Ríos
University of Barcelona

Abstract

Research about masculinities gathers different topics from diverse disciplinary perspectives. One of the topics has been the analysis of the effect of the perpetuation of the traditional heterosexual model of masculinity upon gender violence. Recent scientific evidence about the reproduction of this social problem has shown the existence of three different types of masculinities (in the sense of the weberian ideal types): Dominant Traditional Masculinities (DTM), Oppressed Traditional Masculinities (OTM), and New Alternative Masculinities (NAM). The first two types contribute to perpetuate violence against women, while the latter allows preventing it and, consequently, leads to its overcoming. This article approaches the existence of these three types of masculinities and analyses both their characteristics and the consequences they have for the prevention of violence against women. It presents evidence about the link between language of ethics and language of desire that is found in NAM and which is the key element that explains its preventive effect regarding violence against women.

Las Nuevas Masculinidades Alternativas y la Superación de la Violencia de Género

Ramon Flecha
University of Barcelona

Lidia Puigvert
University of Barcelona

Oriol Ríos
University of Barcelona

Resumen

La investigación sobre masculinidades reúne diferentes temas desde diversidad de disciplinas. Uno de los temas ha sido el análisis de la reproducción del modelo tradicional de masculinidad heterosexual y sus efectos en la violencia de género. Recientes evidencias científicas sobre la continuidad de este problema social han mostrado la existencia de tres tipos diferentes de masculinidades (en el sentido de los tipos ideales de Weber): las masculinidades tradicionales dominantes (DTM), las masculinidades tradicionales oprimidas (OTM), y las nuevas masculinidades alternativas (NAM). Los dos primeros tipos contribuyen a perpetuar la violencia contra las mujeres, mientras que el tercero permite prevenirla y, en consecuencia, conduce a su superación. Este artículo aborda la existencia de estos tres tipos de masculinidades y analiza tanto sus características como las consecuencias que tienen para la prevención de la violencia de género. En este sentido, se presentan en el artículo evidencias sobre la relación entre el lenguaje de la ética y el lenguaje del deseo que fundamentan las NAM y que es el elemento clave que explica su efecto preventivo en la violencia contra las mujeres.

Palabras clave: masculinidades tradicionales dominantes, masculinidades tradicionales oprimidas, nuevas masculinidades alternativas, violencia de género, lenguaje del deseo

The three authors of this article belong to different groups of the multiple options involved in an extended network of diverse people: feminist heterosexuality, masculine homosexuality and masculine heterosexuality. Even though our reflections cover part of a wide spectrum of multiple options, in this article we present a first analysis of the effects on violence against women of Dominant Traditional Masculinities (DTM), Oppressed Traditional Masculinities (OTM) and New Alternative Masculinities (NAM). The main conclusion of the article is that by analyzing reality with a focus on the *language of ethics* and the *language of desire* (Flecha, 2008; Flecha & Puigvert 2010) it is possible to reveal that what some investigations –restricted to the language of ethics– have presented as "new masculinities" are, indeed, OTM. Hence, OTM is complementary to DTM, as are two sides of the same coin. Contrarily, NAM makes a key contribution to the overcoming of violence against women. Research evidence also indicates that actions undertaken in programmes based on said findings are also contributing to overcome violence against women.

One of the three authors supported the first steps of gay movements in Spain since 1969 and he has participated in groups of dialogue about NAM since 1977. Many of the reflections included in the article would not have been possible without the contributions of many participants in those dialogues. Another of the authors of this article has co-authored a book with Judith Butler. In her feminist works, she has always taken both violence against women and the *language of desire* into account. Many feminists with whom she has collaborated have contributed with their dialogues to the content of the research results we are presenting here. The third author has worked since he was a teenager in the development of free homosexual identities in a homophobic society. Many homosexuals have contributed to the dialogues that lead to the meta-research we are communicating in this paper.

Nevertheless, one man and one specific group of men have played a main role in the content of this article. Jesús Gomez died in the context of a persecution due to his contribution for breaking the silence about gender violence in Spanish universities. He created the concepts of traditional and alternative masculinities and one of his books has already contributed to the overcoming of violence against women among many teenagers. "Homes en diàleg" (Men in Dialogue), a group

created to continue Jesús Gómez's work on alternative masculinities has conducted numerous internal and public debates about this issue. The two male co-authors of this article belong to such group.

We do not know any other study about masculinities of the same dimension and diversity of perspectives, besides the one we are presenting here. A study of this kind must necessarily include the key contributions made by the first authors that initiated the scientific literature on this issue such as Kessler et al. (1985), Kimmel (1996) and Kaufman (2007). Even though our conclusions are different to theirs (and even contrary in some points), their work has been inspiring for us. Future works in this field will probably refute partially or globally what we argue today, as we refute with this analysis some previous statements about this matter. We will be happy if that happens as that will mean that a new relevant step has been made aimed at making possible more egalitarian and free relationships. While this happens, we will continue working from this perspective, both theoretically and empirically for the overcoming of violence against women and the enhancement of NAM.

We would like to thank all those people who have brought about their contributions to these results about NAM, which are already guiding many people on their way out of violence against women. With the publication of those results we expect to promote the emergence of many other contributions to this debate.

Methodology

This article is a meta-research based on qualitative data that has been collected through eleven scientific research studies conducted from 2001 to the present[1]. These investigations have been developed using the Communicative Research Methodology (Gómez, Puigvert, & Flecha, 2011), and are focused on gender issues from different perspectives, including masculinities, violence against women, employment, education and language. Reflections are also based on other two researches belonging to the 5th and 6th EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation which had gender as one of their prominent analytical dimensions[2]. Additionally, three interviews were conducted, to add to the hundreds of interviews and discussion groups carried out in the aforementioned research studies.

Throughout the years, while these investigations have been carried out we have been analyzing the evidence provided by those research projects under the perspective of the new masculinities. The meta-research on which this article is drawn complies with all ethical issues required by the Data Protection Directive 95/46/EC of the European Commission.

Academic contributions on masculinities: Men's studies

Much has been written nowadays about the evolution and diversification of masculinities since the late century, the change in gender relations regarding housework or care, or the ever increasing questioning of the traditional masculinities. All these issues belong to what is currently known as men's studies, a scientific field which came up in the scientific literature in the eighties with the first analyses carried out by the Australian researcher Raewyn Connell (1985) about gender patterns in school.

Very influenced by Gramsci's analysis of hegemony and social class conflicts, Connell and her colleagues (1985) were the first ones to refer to the concept of *hegemonic masculinity*. Their research concluded that there is a naturalization of male and female gender identities that are defined as *hegemonic masculinity* and *emphasized femininity*. They stated that both gender models are the most accepted among adolescents and influential for them, and with regard to the hegemonic masculinity two main features are included: aggressiveness and domination. However, Connell also argued that this hegemonic model goes beyond aggressiveness and domination, as it also means a legitimization of masculine power through social organizations and culture. Throughout the development of her theoretical work, she has been deepening on her analysis of the masculinities, and has pointed out that the hegemonic model is not always linked to violence (Connell, 2012). Regarding this, she puts forward that there are different types of hegemonic models which are characterized by unequal gender practices, and that not all of them are connected to violence.

Besides Connell, other researchers have contributed to the analysis of the hegemonic masculinity. The work carried out by Kimmel (1996) about the American manhood was also very influential for later

investigations in the field of men's studies. Kimmel defines four elements that characterize the hegemonic masculinity model: a) men should not evidence any attitude linked to femininity because these are rejected by real men, b) men should have a higher status than women and they should have the power, c) men should be rude and never show their feelings, and d) risk and aggressiveness are commonly accepted as natural masculine attitudes.

In a similar vein, Giddens (1993) is very critical with this model of masculinity, to which he names the "traditional model of masculinity". In his analysis of people's intimacy he introduces some relevant aspects about the construction of traditional masculinities. In this regard, Giddens defines this type of men as *womanizer*, that is, men who despite can fall in love with women, are characterized by despising and abandoning them. Contrarily, Jesús Gómez (2004) refuted Giddens' positioning about the capacity of a *womanizer* of falling in love, and provided relevant empirical evidence that shows how these men do not fall in love with women. Gómez (2004) also proved that men belonging to the traditional model continue acting violently as a result of a socialization process in sexual-affective relationships based on the link between violence, attractiveness and desire.

Connell and other relevant scholars on men's studies have demonstrated the existence of multiple types of masculinities. These authors provide evidence about the existence of male identities around the world based on diverse cultural patterns (Higate, 2003; Valdés & Olvarría, 1998; Warren, 1997; Gómez, 2004). These models of masculinity are changing over time and acquiring different forms depending on their social context. Seidler (1994) insists on this aspect defending that masculine identity can be transformed, it is not unbreakable: "Masculinity was no longer expected to be one thing; it could be many things, for it could now allow for diversity" (Seidler, 1994, p.116). Masculinity has been also studied from the anthropological approach. From this perspective, David Gilmore (1990) describes how non-western cultures construct masculinity in a different way. For instance, he explained the existence of a successful Japanese hero on TV representing values of solidarity and kindness.

There is also a relevant body of literature which is mostly focused on describing the creation of men's groups which position themselves

against the traditional masculinity model or which try to recover the essence of the lost masculinity. Within these groups, we found three with great impact: profeminist, mythopoethics and egalitarian men. These movements are sometimes organized in networks and act as political lobbies (Flood, 2007).

As regards *pro-feminist* men's groups, they acquired great prominence at the beginning of the nineties through their support to feminist movements. On the other hand, *mythopoethics* is a group based on the idea of connecting masculinity with nature and thus recovering the "real man". Finally, analyzing pro-feminist men's groups, Kaufman (2007) has recently defined *egalitarian men* as those who are engaged in the fight to end with violence against women and work for gender equality. These men are the continuity of pro-feminist groups and their slogans insist on the necessity to include men as an active agent within the private sphere (Kaufman, 2007).

As it is shown here, masculinities have been analyzed from different approaches. Different authors have identified traits of those men belonging to the hegemonic or traditional model, or of pro-feminist men who have reacted against the former. All these studies promote an open debate on models of masculinity and its relation to violence.

Dominant Traditional Masculinities as cause for Violence against Women

Research about violence against women refutes many existing assumptions about gender violence and also the effectiveness of most of the actions that are aimed to reduce this problem. All our analyses reinforce two common findings of most of the literature in the field. Firstly, the only *direct culpability* of violence against women concerns to aggressors. All evidence that we found clearly refutes the sexist assumption about women's provoking the situation of violence against them or women's lack of courage to denounce. Our research also refutes the racist assumption about the proclivity of some cultures to generate this violence. Secondly, the *indirect culpability* of social and gender inequalities concerns to media messages, institutional sexism and other related aspects. Some literature in the field situates the causes of this

violence in the language of ethics (Jewkes, 2002; Crowell & Burgess, 1997), but the evidence from the eleven research studies we are presenting in this article situates the cause not only in the language of ethics but also in the language of desire.

The media and many other social institutions and social interactions are promoting a socialization process consisting on two opposed links: on the one hand, a link between violence and sexual excitation and, on the other hand, a link between equality and lack of sexual excitation. Besides the evidence that we present in this article, we only need to think about zapping on TV to realize that in most of the movies men "who drive girls crazy in bed" are not men who do house chores but those who kill others, starting with James Bond. The combination of the perpetuation of gender inequalities with those massive messages that we receive since we are born socializes in a dependency on violent aggressions in some boys and dependency on violent boys in some girls.

The creation of female fan clubs for a guy who kills a girl is increasingly frequent. The case of Marta, a 17 years old Spanish girl who was murdered in 2009 by his boyfriend, Miguel, is a very enlightening case in this regard. Since Miguel entered in jail he has received lots of letters from some girls who admire and support him, and –what is more astonishing- these admirers have created a fan club with the aim of supporting Miguel's innocence.

Miguel's cellmates are fed up of him boasting at all hours about the messages he gets from his fans: "You are very handsome and I'm in love with you", "I'd like to meet you." (Noticias Terra, 2009, para. 1). With these comments, these fans publicly express their desire for the murderer and denigrate the girl victim considering a petty fact for him to have killed her: "Really, I do not understand why people insult him if they do not know how he is, maybe he is a good guy, but sure, because he has killed Miss Marta... see…" (Merino López, 2009, para. 4).

Furthermore, other cases of violence against women show that the fact of being friends with or even being a direct family relative of a victim is no obstacle to feel and express desire for the aggressor. Johana died in July 2010 of two shots in the chest. Two men have been judged for the crime, one of them Victor. Edith (the victim's twin sister) was one of the testimonies called by the district attorney. She accused Victor of having sexually and psychologically abused her sister. After the trial

she married him. Her replies to the critiques against her were: "I don't marry the murderer of my sister, I marry the man I love; with him I will make a family and I will live the rest of my life" (Guajardo, 2012, para. 2).

Socialization on desire toward men who are aggressors and who explicitly show a defiant attitude comes up in all empirical research that we have conducted about attraction among adolescents (Gómez, 2004; Valls, 2004-2005; Padrós, 2007; Duque, 2006, 2010-2011; Oliver, 2010-2012; Soler, 2006-2008). Thus, among the common narratives that we found in the fieldwork conducted with teenagers are the following:

> Alba: I really like one! Actually, (…). He is not well built, but he is a real bastard and has the gift of the gab. I: So what do you like about this guy? A: Well, (…)? His personality…(Valls, 2004-2005)

> Sonia: But later I saw Fernando who was so hot and I went crazy. And it was not because he was tall, it was because of his cocky attitude I liked, he knew that he was "the king of party" (Duque, 2004, p. 293)

But even without evidence from research studies, these attitudes are easy to observe in daily life as well as in the media. Thus, in the most prominent youth magazine read by middle and high social classes in Spain, a 15-year-old girl made it very clear: "My parents tell me to marry a good boy, and I really listen to them. Until I have to get married, I'm having fun with bad boys" (Flecha & Puigvert, 2010, p. 170). Consequently, evidence resulting from all our meta-research on this issue shows that this link between desire and violence leads to gender violence to a great extent. The interviews provided evidence like Vicky's words, an upper-middle-class girl told us:

> When I was 15 years old, the first relationship I had he forced me. (…), I wanted to be liked by him. (…) I made it very easy for him. So he decided that he would do me on a beach, I remember that I had never done it and I was very nervous, it was really painful. After that I cried a lot because it was really painful… And I remember he never talked to me again (…) So yes, there was no sexual pleasure, it was a lot of pain... And after that I was so in love with this guy, but he didn't want to be with me never again.

Research, like the one conducted by the main author of NAM (Gómez, 2004) and the feminist who has studied youth relationships in most depth (Duque, 2006), highlights that socialization in violence occurs not only in many boys but also in many girls. Part of the problem is that they think that attraction to violence is something biological, that comes from their inside. However, such attraction is something that has actually been put inside them, it is social and, for this very reason, as Seidler (1994) argues, it can be transformed. The following narrative shows how many boys and girls think that love is "a chemical feeling" we experience, and therefore, nothing can be done to control it, as Paula said: "I think that when it's this sudden love at first sight....it's not love… (…), attraction, but that's it…Love is when it's something more continued…and you can't get it out of your mind and...well, it's something more... longer" (Valls, 2004-2005).

In all research that we conducted on the relationships established among very diverse adolescents, the empirical evidence proves the dominating effects of this socialization in violence (Valls, Puigvert & Duque, 2008), as the following quotation from an interview shows:

> I: And would it not be easier to go out with someone who is not like that?
> G3.1. Someone passive.
> G.3.3. You always like hard guys. The difficulty is what we like (…). The more difficult it is, the more we like them.
> G3.1. The less attention they pay to you, the more…
> G.3.3. The more of a bastard they are to us, the more we like them.
> G3.1. Later on, the nicest thing is when they pay attention to you...
> (Gómez, 2004, p. 121)

As Connell argues (2012), not all DTM men are violent, but all men that are violent against women are DTM men. However, regarding the issue dealt with in this paper, some women that suffer gender violence are among the ones that have sporadic or permanent relationships with DTM men. Women having relationships with OTM men or NAM men do not suffer violence. Transforming desire towards men considered DTM, a desire in which they have been socialized by mainstream society, is not only relevant to overcome other sorts of domination and inequalities but also to overcome violence itself.

For instance, many primary schools allow in their playgrounds or even in parties for children that they organize the reproduction of clearly sexist songs which do associate attraction to violence. The song *I'd Rather Be Dead Than Plain* sung by a 10 years-old girl, the winner of the Junior Eurovision Song contest in 2004, was a hit among different audiences including children. Some schools have included books like *The Perfume* as mandatory reading[3], when the main character of that book is a murderer of women. At the same time, these schools attack the literature on romantic love as causing violence against women without providing any empirical evidence that supports such argument. On the contrary, evidence shows that romantic love actually prevents violence against women, instead of provoking it (Duque, 2010-2011). In all, the lack of research about this socialization into attraction to violence and its violent effects stimulates the unconscious promotion of violence by socialization agents such as educators, therewith reinforcing trashy TV programs instead of counteracting them.

A series of mistakes are gathered to uphold the above-mentioned assumption about romantic love as the cause of violence against women. The first mistake is to think that violence against women is generated by the partner or ex-partner in permanent relationships (as article 1 of the Spanish Law on Gender Violence of 2004 wrongly states). However, many women have been aggressed or even killed by men with whom they had a sporadic relationship. Due to this error in he Law, those cases of women who have been murdered by men whom they have met sporadicaly are not judged as gender violence in Spain; but the mistake of the Law comes from the aforementioned assumptions in some of the Spanish literature about gender relations. Contrarily to those assumptions, empirical evidence demonstrates that most of the women who suffer gender violence have been socialized in the relations with DTM men in their sporadic relationships at very young ages (James et al., 2000). Sometimes, these women also suffer this violence in their permanent relationships.

In those assumptions, dates are perceived as relationships which are free in all senses, including free of violence. Thus, girls educated in programmes based in those assumptions perceive the danger to be in the fact of falling in love, therefore assuming that she will not be victim of gender violence if they only have sporadic relationships. For this reason,

the discourse is focused on preventing girls from falling in love in order to prevent the danger of violence against them. Because literature on romantic love socializes in falling in love, it needs to be destroyed (Esteban & Távora, 2008). This reasoning does not take into account that frequently in sporadic relationships girls do not know if the boys with whom they engage in a date are violent or not.

Nevertheless, scientific research about this proves it wrong: violence against women is not perpetrated by men with whom women have a permanent relationship. It is exerted by violent men, no matter if it is within a permanent or sporadic relationship. Hence, it does not depend on the length of the relationship but on the type of men with whom women choose to engage in any kind of relationship. Many violent relationships are permanent and many are sporadic, as well as many egalitarian relationships are permanent and many others are sporadic. It is not romantic love but violent men, as a group among the DTM, who are responsible for violence against women.

One of the most common arguments to attack the fairytales on romantic love is that they promote women's dependency and thus lead to violence against them. But while dependency in fairytales is highly criticized, it does not happen the same with, for example, the dependency in the recent best seller "50 Shades of Grey" that results in signing a contract of submission. On the other hand, the correlation of dependency and violence has not been confirmed by any empirical data, since there exist many relationships of dependency (and with an unequal distribution of house chores) in which no violence against women is perpetrated. In addition, there are "independent" women that are being killed in a date by the man who they have just met.

There is no other feature common to all men that provokes the death (or other aggressions) of women but the fact of being DTM men. Even though not all those men are necessarily violent; DTM is a necessary but insufficient condition for exerting violence. The overcoming of violence against women and other types of submission and inequalities requires the creation of social spaces and interactions that promote the development of NAM since men are little children.

The Oppressed Traditional Masculinities

Giddens (1993), currently one of the most relevant sociologists, asked himself the question "why can't a good man be sexy, why can't a sexy man be good?" (p.156) In asking such question he was identifying a serious problem, even though he did not know how to analyze its cause neither how to find a solution. Nevertheless, by identifying the problem he has reached further than what most of the literature in the social sciences has stated on this issue.

NAM implies a model of sexual-affective relationships that are at the same time attractive and free of violence. Sometimes those men that we consider the oppressed ones within the traditional masculinity have been identified as new masculinities. Starting from a perspective restricted to the language of ethics, the model of an egalitarian man has been linked to men that do house chores. However, the language of desire, the capacity to raise attraction and be desired, has not been transformed in that model. Therefore, such man does not prevent nor reduce violence against women. Indeed, instead of weakening the model of DTM, reinforces it.

Many times socialization agents (such as schools and families) using the language of ethics promote the "good boys", which currently stands for non-aggressive, non-sexist and who do house chores. Meanwhile, there are the "bad boys" who are aggressive and/or chauvinist. However, which of these boys, some girls like the one cited above from the youth magazine *Ragazza*, will choose to have fun with? This double standard was created by DTM men as part of their domination in our patriarchal societies and conceive women in an Aristotelian way. This double standard has been assimilated in their own terms by women regarded as "independent", as the next quotation shows: "When the mould is broken and the models are not there yet, everything previously forbidden, irrespective of its value, becomes object of demand" (Valcárcel, 2000, p. 138)[4].

Under these circumstances, the "bad" boys reinforce their condition of DTM. They are convinced that for what really matters –that is, they as providers of good sex– they are much more popular than "good" boys. When women cheat on their partners having a crazy night out with

some other guy, in most cases, this other guy falls into the DTM model but not her permanent partner. This was well evidenced in all the data we collected, among which are the reflections of a working-class girl who talked about a conversation with a friend of hers who told her: "the good guys are those who are satisfied with their girlfriends, the bad guys are those who satisfy their girlfriends".

In front of this, the "good" boys usually have two very different kind of reactions. One implies developing complex about their own sexual performance. They understand the lack of desire for them in their girlfriend or wife as a result of them not being good at bed. Another complex they develop is not being egalitarian enough. This all is manifested in the following quotation, where a "good" man blames himself in dialogue with one of his friends:

> Joan (OTM) to his partner: I understand that my contradictions for being a man affect you, and because of this sometimes you do not really want to stay with me.
> Joan (OTM) to his friend: She cheated on me with Jordi, but I am to blame because I have been not doing my housework lately and she is disappointed with me.
> The friend: But Jordi has never cooked even a plate of spaghetti and remember he forced that Portuguese girl in the car!
> Joan (OTM) to his friend: Well, yes, but that was just one night and Jordi is sexually more experienced than me.

Another possible reaction is to initiate the socialization for being successful with girls; and in many cases these boys not only become "bad" but the worst of all. This was shown in all the data that we gathered, as illustrated in the explanation given by a boy about what a friend told him "In the past I used to treat my girl as a queen, and as a queen she made me serve her; now I treat girls as bitches and as bitches they follow me". But not only may the "good" boys react this way -that is, becoming "bad boys"- but also those boys who are in an "intermediate position".

These "good" but subordinate boys not only are no alternative masculinity to the dominant model but they act as its complement. Hence, DTM men have never understood prostitution as an alternative

to marriage but as a complement. Similarly, they also consider "good" boys as their ideal complement and not as an alternative to them, the "bad boys". "Bad boys" do not regard "good boys" as an obstacle to getting in touch with any girl; they even think that they can get the "good" boys' girlfriends, since these men are good for marriage but not to have fun with. This repeatedly came up in the analysis of all the data collected.

It is these "good" boys the ones that we consider to be OTM. They cannot be blamed for violence against women (the only ones to blame for this are men who perpetrate violence) but still their behaviour does not contribute to overcome it. DTM men and OTM men are so "contrary" to each other that they constitute the two sides of the same coin in the sense that they are the two sides of the same system of domination of patriarchal men over women and also over "good" men. Indeed, oppressed masculinities are not new, they have always existed. We only have to refer to the extreme cases of this model, the traditional figure of the "cuckold". This type of man is regarded as weak and unable to satisfy his wife.

New Alternative Masculinities

Radically opposed to OTM and DTM are other type of masculinities that we call New Alternative Masculinities (NAM). These types of masculinities are represented by men who combine attraction and equality and generate sexual desire among women. The language of desire is used to refer to these men. Additionally, NAM men are the ones who are being more active working against gender violence together with women. They move away from people with non-egalitarian values or who are violent, and seek egalitarian relationships based on desire and love. Gomez's analysis in his book "Love in the Risk Society" (2004) and other research on this type of masculinities have allowed us to define the three main characteristics of men falling into this model, namely: self-confidence, strength and courage as strategies to confront negative attitudes from DTM, and explicit rejection of the double standard.

First, men and women involved in the studies analysed stress that self-confidence generates attractiveness in men, especially when it is

connected with egalitarian values. The next quote, which comes from a young man belonging to the NAM and involved in a men's association exemplifies this aspect:

> Yes, they are egalitarian, but they are also conscious of their worth. They gain a lot of respect, because they are very conscious that they have a lot of security. So, these people that transmit these things, after the comments that I listened, yes many women consider them attractive (Soler, 2010-2012).

When new alternative masculinities help and support each other, this dynamic also creates an environment based on the link between attractiveness and equality. Additionally, when men start to feel more self-confident, they perceive themselves more attractive, as this young man explained:

> (…) We have been empowered to be egalitarian and people have also spoken with desire for us (…) Because somehow it causes an effect on you and you feel much more attractive, but it can also be perceived, as you notice it, you feel more confident in front of the rest, both in front of girls as well as boys (…) (Soler, 2010-2012).

Second, NAM men use their strength and courage as a key strategy to combat and even ridicule the negative attitudes coming from DTM men, like sexism and racism. In fact, NAM men express publicly their rejection of these non-egalitarian practices. Moreover, the effects of combining this strength with self-confidence evidence that desire and attraction have emerged. NAM men are conscious of these:

> A: Well, that, the language used, the way ... the respect he has towards women. And to everything, right? This is a guy who is not racist.
> E: And his attitude? What is his attitude towards things? How does he face daily things? I do not know (...) I mean does he has a secure attitude.
> A: No, it's a very secure guy. Yes, he is a secure kid and looks strong.
> E: And do you think that the others like this attitude?

> A: Man, I think so. A person that looks secure, strong with his stuff, right? He may not be too indecisive and not always collapsed (Soler, 2010-2012).

Third, by rejecting the double standard NAM men go beyond the analysis of some egalitarian or pro-feminist groups that introduce only the ethical discourse on what a man should be: a "good" man forgetting desire and attractiveness. In order to overcome violence against women through NAM and to achieve real equality, the combination of the language of ethics and the language of desire is required, making those men who are "good" and "attractive" desirable and attractive. In the heterosexual relationships, they do not like and do not desire those girls who have relationships with DTM men (that even imply lying other girls); but NAM men desire and choose girls who intensively desire to have a relationship with men like them, as this woman described: "They make you feel that they want to stay with you, that they are with you because they want to, not because they are below you and because you are like doing a favour to them (...)".

By linking equality with attractiveness, NAM men become more desirable to start an affective and sexual relationship. In this regard, we have identified how the language of desire is commonly used to describe NAM in different daily-life moments and spaces.

> I think one way is to speak of desire as it really is. So, to talk about what moves the world is this, love, desire and talk about how good sex is with these guys that want you and not with the ones that ignore you. That the ones that make you freak out are these, not those who ignore you, right? (Soler, 2010-2012)

Evidence about the existence of the aforementioned three types of masculinities is being transferred to programmes and actions addressed to overcome DTM and to promote NAM. Girls expressed the reflections that they were able to develop thanks to entering dialogue about different types of masculinities: "(...) this desire comes up from the dialogue... (...) and there we kissed- (...) But you don't want to believe it, and there, the pleasure I felt was infinity, and from there it has even increased (...)".

Unfortunately, although it is plenty of evidences that confirm the position upheld by NAM men about the effectiveness of linking equality with attraction to construct egalitarian and passionate relationships among people and overcoming violence against women, NAM men have had –and still have– to confront some resistances. Firstly, the idea that what is really needed to liberate men from the pressure and hegemony of the traditional masculinity model is that men learn to express their feelings and to manage emotions, instead of being strong and secure. This perspective implies the misunderstanding that both things are incompatible (feelings and security). Secondly, another false assumption that we still hear in some public spaces and even in scientific events is that "any man who is involved in gender issues, and who defends gender equality, does it because of the influence of a feminist woman".

Scientific evidence and our own personal experience demonstrate that both afore-mentioned ideas are false. Regarding the first one, NAM men do not oppose the fact of expressing their sentiments and emotions to the fact of being strong, where strong is radically different to being "the toughest man". For NAM men, fighting to end with violence against women involves fighting against DTM and being strong in order to construct egalitarian relationships with egalitarian women. The conception of NAM of being strong is not associated with physical power, but with emotional resistance to all that revolves against dominant masculinities, and which actually hinders the overcoming of violence against women.

Concerning the second idea, feminist and new masculinities movements are friends and not mother and son. It is true that many men fighting for equality have joined new masculinities movements after their relations with feminism. But most initiators of new masculinities' movements with the perspective of NAM have the complementary experience: many women have joined feminism after relations with these men. But both have come after many struggles undertaken by many women and men. Movements for gender liberation and equality have never been all women against all men, but they have always been many women and some egalitarian men against the patriarchal society defended by some women and some men. There are many cases studied

by the social sciences and included also in the literary narratives like the following example: The theatre play *Fuenteovejuna*, by Lope de Vega (1618), is based on a historical fact that constitutes an excellent illustration of this process. In many places were rebellions against the "right of the lord"; for instance, this was mentioned as one of the offences in the rebellions of the Catalan remences more than five centuries ago.

Conclusions

Scientific literature on masculinities has explored in detail the reproduction of traditional dominant masculinity and its impact on gender inequality and violence against women. Scientific studies on traditional dominant masculinity have both denied biological determinism associated to that model and have shown the existence of diverse types of masculinities based on cultural explanations. Simultaneously, there is another line of research which has deepened into the transformations achieved by new masculinities movements, like pro-feminist and egalitarian men, in their fight against the aforementioned social problems. All these steps are central for a whole comprehension of the construction of masculinities as well as for their effects on both the perpetuation and the eradication of violence against women.

This article illustrates a gap in research in this field which is directly connected to the attraction for new masculinities. In this regard, we provide new knowledge on this line giving a definition of three different types of masculinity: traditional dominant masculinities (TDM), oppressed traditional masculinities (OTM) and new alternatives masculinities (NAM). We conclude that this last type is the most successful in the struggle to end violence against women because it combines desire, attractiveness and equality.

The analysis that we provide at the beginning of the article shows the persistence of linking the dominant traditional masculinities, which perpetrate violence against women, with attraction. Ultimately, we also corroborate the incapacity of the oppressed traditional masculinities to end with this dynamic because they contribute to reproduce the double

standard. Contrarily, we demonstrate that it is the new alternative masculinities that link attractiveness with equality the ones that are effectively breaking this double standard and contributing to prevent and eradicate violence against women. The language of desire is the element that explains this transformation process.

Notes

[1] *Espejismo del ascenso y socialización de la violencia de género.* [The mirage of upward mobility and socialisation of gender violence]. RTD Project. Science Department, Spanish Government. (2010-2012); *Miratge de l'Ascens Social i Amor ideal.* [Mirage of upward mobility and ideal love]. Study funded by the Catalan Institute of Women, Catalan Government. (2010-2011); *Impacto de los actos comunicativos y nuevas masculinidades.* [Impact of the communicative acts and the new masculinities] RTD Project. Science Department, Spanish Government. 2010-2012; *Incidencia de la Ley Integral contra la Violencia de Género en la formación inicial del profesorado.* [Impact of the Integrative Law Against Gender Violence in Teacher's initial training]. Study funded by the Spanish Institute of Women, Spanish Government. (2007-2010); *Youth4Youth: Empowering Young People in Preventing Gender-based Violence through Peer Education.* DAPHNE III" European Commission. (2011-2013); *La formació per a la prevenció de la violència de gènere a la formació inicial de les persones professionals de l'educació.*[Training for the prevention of gender violence in the initial training of education professionals] AGAUR, Agència de Gestió d'Ajuts Universitaris a la Recerca. (2008-2009); *ACT-COM. Actos comunicativos y superación de las desigualdades sociales en las relaciones de género.* [Communicative acts and overcoming social inequalities in gender relationships] RTD Project. Science Department, Spanish Government. (2006-2008); *Centres of Secondary Education and Values Education: proposals for the prevention of Gender violence.* DAPHNE Programme. European Commission. (2006-2008); *Violencia de género en las universidades españolas.*[Gender violence in Spanish universities] RTD Project. Science Department, Spanish Government. (2005-2008); *Models d'atracció dels i les adolescents. Contribucions des de la socialització preventiva de la violència de gènere.* [Attractiveness models of teenagers. Contributions from the preventive socialisation of gender violence]. Study funded by the Catalan Institute of Women, Catalan Government. (2007); *Educació en valors per la prevenció de la violència de gènere als Instituts d'Educació Secundària.*[Education in values for the prevention of gender violence in the Secondary Education] Ajuts a la Recerca. Agència de Gestió d'Ajuts Universitaris i de Recerca. Departament d'Universitats, Investigació i Societat de la Informació (AGAUR). (2004-2005).

[2] *INCLUD-ED. Strategies for inclusion and social cohesion from education in Europe.* INTEGRATED PROJECT. Sixth Framework Programme. (2006- 2011); *WORKALÓ. The creation of New occupational patterns for cultural minorities. The Gypsy case.* RTD. FP5. DG XII. Improving the Socio-economic Knowledge Base. (2001-2004).

[3] In some Spanish secondary schools "The Perfume" has been established as a compulsory reading among the students of 4th grade (16 and 17 years old). For more

information see:
http://edu.jccm.es/ies/alejovera/web%20lengua/lecturas%20obligatorias.htm;   Required
Summer reading: Albany Public schools. Perfume.   For more information see:
http://www.albanyschools.org/Academics/ELA/2008-
09/2009%20HS%20summer%20reading%205-09.pdf

[4] Own translation from Spanish: "Pues bien, el cambio de modelos consistió en
renunciar a parte de esos males, abrazar otros con alborozo y reclamar algunos de "los
males del amo".(...) Cuando la horma se rompe y los modelos todavía no están, todo lo
antes prohibido, con indiferencia de su valor, se convierte en objeto de demanda"
(Valcárcel 2000, p.138).

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Ramon Flecha is Professor in the Department of Sociological Theory at the University of Barcelona, Spain

Lidia Puigvert is Professor in the Department of Sociological Theory at the University of Barcelona, Spain

Oriol Ríos is Adjunct lecturer in the Department of Sociology and Organizational Analysis at the University of Barcelona, Spain

Contact address: University of Barcelona, Faculty of Economics and Business, Avda. Diagonal, 690, 08034, Barcelona, Spain. Email: ramon.flecha@ub.edu