

Grey zones of gender-based violence and gender roles in young people in Spain



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POSITIVMASC - ENGAGING YOUTH IN PROMOTING POSITIVE MASCULINITIES TO ERADICATE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Introduction

Aim

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Conclusion

“I reject it, but that’s what normally happens”: Grey zones of gender-based violence and gender roles in young people

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Gender-based violence (GBV) →

Global public health problem:
damaging effects on women's human rights and well-being



High prevalence
Increase among young people



- Mechanisms at play in the perpetuation of GBV
- GBV related to social constructions around gender



Grey zones (Levi, 1988): contradictory situations or discourses around GBV where the notions of who is victim and who is the perpetrator become ambiguous and unclear.

→ Where GBV is systematically reproduced.

Aim

To explore the grey zones of GBV, and how they relate to gender roles, in the discourses of young people in Spain.



Qualitative study



20 SEMI-STRUCTURED
INTERVIEWS



4 FOCUS
GROUPS



- October 2019 – February 2020.
- Alicante and Madrid.
- Final sample: 49 young men and women, aged between 18-24, involved and not involved in feminist activism.

• Guide of two parts:

Part 1 with explicit questions about what they understand by GBV.

Part 2 with 9 VIGNETTES that implicitly presented common situations of GBV:

- Digital violence
- Psychological and emotional violence
- Physical violence
- Sexual violence inside and outside a couple relationship

**Sociological
analysis of the
discourse system**

(Conde, 2009)

- **When participants were asked explicitly about GBV:**

Emphasis on rejecting and condemning it.

- **When they were commenting on some vignettes of concrete situations of violence, without explicitly saying that they were cases of violence:**



GREY ZONES

GREY ZONE

Subtle forms of psychological violence

Consenting insults, blackmail, control... justified by myths of romantic love and gender roles (e.g. jealousy as a positive demonstration of love)

"Girls waiting to be conquered and girlfriends who want to be protected by their boyfriends. Everything we receive from our childhood goes in the direction of this romantic love and justifies, to a greater or lesser extent, these attitudes and, in the end, makes you swallow all these micromachismos (...). With my ex-partners I also understood jealousy as something good". (Activist woman).

GREY ZONE

Sexual violence outside of a couple's relationship

Vignette of a girl wearing a dress being sexually harassed at a party:

Free to dress as
she wants



Should be aware of the
negative consequences


Victim-blaming

"Everyone is free to dress how they please, but it is true that you have to be aware. In today's day and age, things are how they are. I'm not saying it's justifiable, but come on, if you dress like that, with the way things are, it's true that it's more likely that something bad might happen to you".
(Non-activist man).

GREY ZONE

Sexual violence inside a couple's relationship

Vignette of a boyfriend who wanted to have sex and the girlfriend did not:

Condemned this  Justified it through gender and biological assumptions (e.g. "men are naturally more sexual", "testosterone makes men unable to manage or control this need").

"Yes, it has happened to me (...). If you don't do it there will be a fight, with consequences and reprisals. It's something we must do, because they have testosterone that they can't manage, and you have to do it, because of course, you've got him horny somehow."
(Non-activist woman).

GREY ZONE

Digital violence

Revenge porn and sextortion vignettes. Practices influenced by gender:

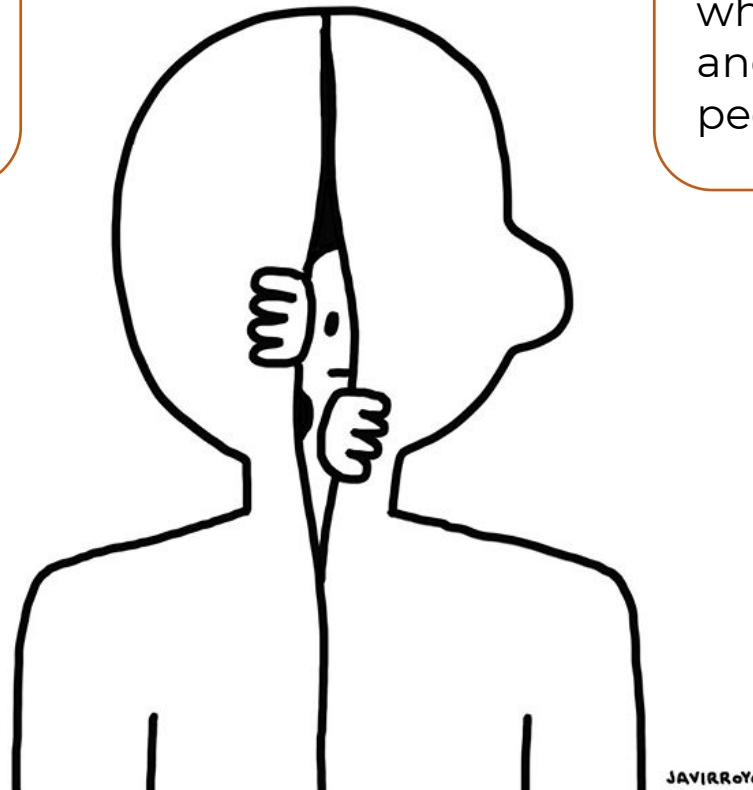
Women: hide their sexuality and intimacy. Severe social criticism and punishment



Men: demonstration of male hypersexuality

“If they [men] send pictures of their genitals, they’re almost always going to be seen as alfa-males, ‘fuck, how great to send a picture’. There wouldn’t be such a problem, nor such a revolution. It is not the same when a girl and her body are shown in a photo. Because she lives in a hypersexualized reality. This makes the situation much worse, a situation of shame for her and a situation of abuse” (Activist woman).

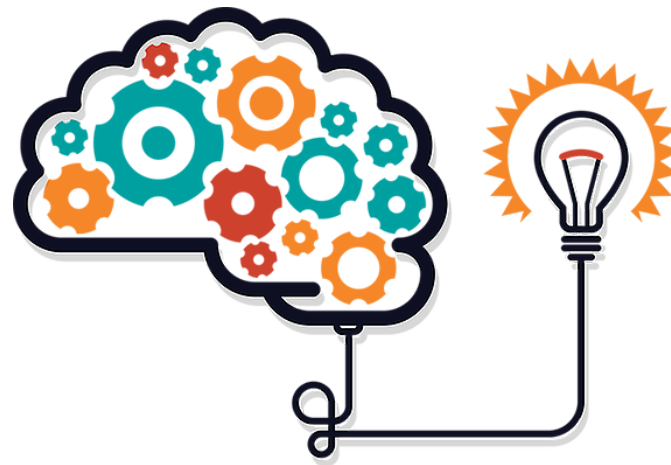
- **Social constructions** around gender intervene in the ways of understanding and coping with GBV in young people.



- The **grey zones** identified represent contexts of oppression where gender roles, violence, power and the reduced agency of young people are mutually articulated.

Illustrate how GBV is systematically reproduced and the ways in which young people can be involved in perpetuating those power and health inequalities

- Design of contemporary GBV intervention and prevention actions that incorporate the focus on gender configurations:
 - Deconstruction of the **myths of romantic** love that sustain subtle forms of violence.
 - Beliefs surrounding the **victims of sexual violence** which contribute to blaming them.
 - Transversal promotion of **egalitarian and healthy masculinities and femininities**.



Thank you so much



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