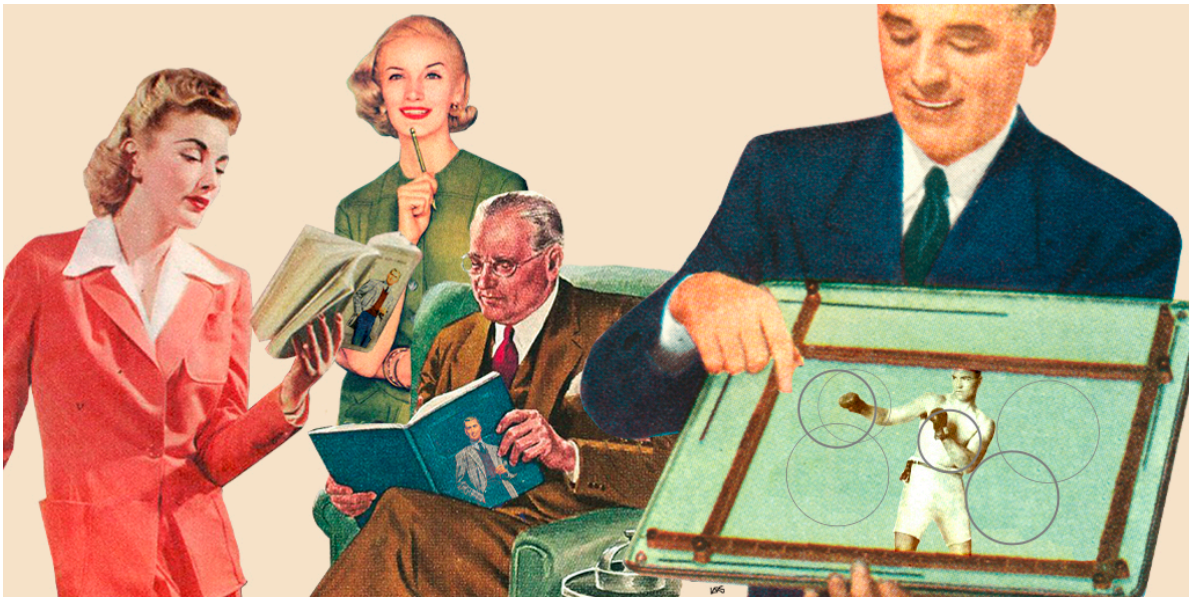
MASCULINITY AND LGTBI POLICIES

The Study of Men and Masculinities

Academy, Activism and Public Policy in Equality

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Illustrator: Lara Lars

In recent years we have become familiar with reading and hearing references to “new masculinities” or “egalitarian masculinities”, in a context when part of what is called the fourth wave of feminism has addressed men directly, while some men have openly joined the feminist struggle. Meanwhile, there is a modest yet growing interest in the masculine question, both in the academic and social realms, and this is reflected in the mass media and on social networks. This in turn leads us to ask questions such as: Why is this taking place? What is the state of studies and knowledge on masculinity? Where are they arising from? What contexts are they most established in? To what degree have they made inroads in academia and how far have they gone in permeating public policy? Is there a place for men in feminism? If there is, in turn, what might their agenda be?

Studies on Men

There is no question that we are witness in Spain to a growing demand for training and gender research publications focused on men and masculinities. Some authors, such as

Nelson Minello [1] state that this is thanks to Women's Studies from the 1970s and the epistemological and theoretical growth of second-wave feminism, with the consequent institutionalisation of gender studies in the university, with the analysis of male identity giving way to Men's Studies. In the Spanish context, it was in the 1980s when there appeared, for the first time, research projects and publications centred on men as a subject of study. Yet it would not be until the end of the 1990s when a certain interest would emerge, gradually and sporadically, which has since continued to grow until the present.

It can be confirmed that there is indeed a boom taking place, since this "fourth wave of feminism" began in 2017, as reflected in courses, workshops, books, news items and audiovisual productions (to which the COVID-19 pandemic has contributed with online formats); there is a tendency to focus on the analysis of men from a gender perspective, and upon occasion through an intersectional gaze. This interest of a social, media and political nature is reflected in the proliferation of publications on masculinity and gender equality and the manifest interest of publishing houses, such as Tirant lo Blanch, Dykinson, Bellaterra, Ariel, Planeta, Destino, Comares and others. These publications are requested, presented, purchased, read and debated; meanwhile, in our particular case, we have edited various publications recently, bringing together multidisciplinary and international points of view on a broad variety of subjects that centre on men from a gender perspective and feminist objectives [2].

The Academy

While it may be the case that we are beginning to see an interest in the question of masculinity in academic university education, there is still a lot to be done. For example, in 2006 various official Masters on Equality and Gender began to be offered in Spain, although today, some fifteen years later, there are very few courses on masculinities included in them [3]. A few years ago, our research group ECULGE at the UMH carried out a study whose results were published in a text entitled "Políticas de formación e investigación en género en la universidad Española. Estudios de las masculinidades" [4]. In this study of the 25 official Masters on Gender, in only two were there courses on masculinities [5]. In other words, of the 1710 ECTS credits in official masters on Gender Equality, only 0.4% of all classes were focused on the study of Men and Masculinities from a gender perspective. As for the 12 university-specific graduate diplomas related to Equality and Gender in 2019, in only two of them were there courses related to masculinity [6].

Fortunately, this situation is changing. In January 2021, the first edition of a programme at the UMH was begun, entitled Specialist University Degree in Masculinities, Gender and Equality. In its first year of operation, registration capacity was fully met and many individuals on the waiting list could not register, which demonstrated the existing demand for this line of education. In fact, in the following academic year, another specialist graduate degree was begun, entitled Gender, Masculinities and Social Action, organised by the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, the University of the Basque Country, the Fundación Cepaim and Promundo. Simultaneously, at the University of Castilla-La Mancha,

Professor José María Armengol is coordinating a new Masters programme on Studies of Masculinities, which will be offered online in Spanish and English with a global, interdisciplinary approach.

Further to this, we have seen a modest yet growing number of university extension or continuing studies courses in certain universities, such as winter courses, summer courses, MOOCs and so on. With regards to this, we consider it worthwhile to refer to the MOOC on Masculinity and Violence offered by the University of Granada in the autumn of 2020, under the direction of Miquel Lorente, with more than 5,800 people registered; a third edition is being prepared.

Nevertheless, and despite growing supply (and demand), there is still much to do when it comes to formal education and research in the academy: doctoral programs, official Masters degrees, research projects and funding for projects dealing with men from a gender perspective, and so on.

With regards to the events that are being organised on the question of masculinity and gender equality, it is important to differentiate between academic and non-academic content. In the university context, we might highlight the 1st International Conference on Masculinity and Equality: In Search of Good Practices in Egalitarian Masculinities in the University Context-CIMASCIGUAL [7] which was held in April 2019 in the city of Elche, organised by the ECULGE research group of the UMH. It arose in response to demand and the need to get a better idea of how the academy was addressing studies in masculinity. An aspect that rose to the fore was what little interest there was in Spanish universities to educate and research in the subject of Men and Gender Equality, in spite of numerous existing regulations (European, state, regional, university, and so on) that have recommended this subject area for many years. A question dealt with was that there is hardly any formal education on Masculinities and Gender Equality, and that the subject of masculinity is almost non-existent in the Equality Departments of Spanish Universities [8]. Over 470 individuals attended this congress, 40% of them men. Subjects addressed not only focused on masculine identities (construction, deconstruction, crisis) but also emphasised, from a feminist perspective, the structural position of men and women within patriarchal social organisation. Presentations thus featured research and lectures on work, care, sexuality, prostitution, sexual slavery, paternities, forms of violence, corporeality, masculinism, neo-machoism, emotions, co-education and so forth. [9]

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For its part, at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC), in late September 2021 Professor Begonya Enguix and her team organised the fifth edition of the Men in Movement

International Conference, in collaboration with the Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona (CCCB), which has been held since 2015. Another example of what we are referring to would be the organisation by the Masculinities Observatory of the UMH, together with Bakea Alonso of the Equality Department of the Fundación Cepaim, of an international seminar with MenEngage Europa. Held on 16 June 2021, it took the format of an online session with various experts, addressing the topic *La situación de la formación sobre masculinidades en el ámbito académico en España y en Europa* [*The Situation of Education in Masculinities in the Spanish and European Academic Sphere*]. The seminar was part of the activities that the MenEngage Global Alliance has carried out since late 2020, and in relation to its third congress, entitled UBUNBTU.

Masculinities Observatory

One of the commitments taken on when the CIMASCIGUAL congress ended in April 2019, was to continue to work in national and international networks with experts in Masculinities and Gender. For this reason, and under the initiative of a core action group at the Universidad Miguel Hernández of Elche, in January 2021 the Masculinities Observatory was created. It was conceived as a broad platform that would seek to address the masculine question on different levels, including scientific-academic, activist, professional, social, from a gender perspective and from a feminist approach. The project is based on the opening up of paths towards real equality, which unequivocally call for the active and reactive involvement of men to surpass an obsolete model of traditional patriarchal masculinity, in favour of a transition towards other possible and more egalitarian ways of being men.

The Observatory has research professors specialised in Masculinities, Gender Studies and Equality Policy. These researchers come from various scientific spheres and disciplines, besides the participation of certain organisations of the Men's Movement for Equality in Spain, and more than 100 expert collaborators in Gender Studies and Masculinities from a variety of countries, universities, activist spheres and disciplines.

Along with the academy, we should make note of the activism of pro-feminist and pro-egalitarian men that the Masculinities Observatory collaborates with. In this regard, it is well worth consulting the webpage of Joaquim Montaner, Cronología 3.0, which offers a timeline of the history of the Men's Movement for Equality in Spain, with events, important dates, resources and past and present projects of the Movement. For anyone seeking to deepen their knowledge on men's activism in gender equality and in support of feminist struggles, it is possible to consult the webpage section resources and map of associations and collectives, provided by the Masculinities Observatory, and the results of a recent published research project on activism in the Men's Movement [10].

Public Policy in Equality Directed Towards Men

For a certain time now, various international, national and regional organisms have called for the inclusion of men and masculinities in public policies in favour of gender equality,

although this has barely had an incidence on laws and concrete actions. This has led to a pending challenge that should not be avoided any further.

The European Union, in its Session no. 2767 of the Council, under the term “Men and Gender Equality”, already proposed this. Therefore, the very Istanbul Convention of 2011 itself, ratified by Spain in 2014, already expressed in its text the need for specific work on masculinities. In the current Convention, emphasis is put on the role of educational organisations in teaching equality as a means to favour the prevention of sexism, machoism and gender violence.

Further to this, as a reflection of the Spanish ratification in 2014 of the Istanbul Convention, in the Valencia Region, for example, we find Law 7/2012, from 23 November, which was focussed wholly on violence towards women. There was also Law 9/2019, from 23 December, of the Government of Valencia, on tax measures and those related to administrative and financial management and organisation of masculinities as measures to counter gender violence and inequalities, grounded in the construction and encouragement of new models of egalitarian masculinities. This new reality of focussing on masculinities is reflect in the Valencia Agreement Against Gender Violence, signed in 2017, which focuses on the importance of including men in working on “new masculinities” in the development of a freer society. Further to this, in the Valencia Region a public consultation is taking place before the drafting of a pre-project of the new Valencian Law for Equality, which amongst its 6 key points seeks to encourage “policies related to egalitarian masculinities.”

Along with what we have explained regarding the Valencia Region, we should also highlight progress on a legislative level in other regions in the subject, for example in the Basque Country and Andalusia. In effect, across Spain we might point to Article 3.1.c of Law 4/2005, from 18 February, for the Equality of Women and Men of the Basque Country, which conceives of specific actions meant for men; in Andalusia we find Article 10b of Law 7/2018, from 30 June, which modifies Law 13/2007, from 26 November, featuring measures for prevention and full protection against gender violence in Andalusia, regulating “programmes directed towards men for the eradication of gender violence.”

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It should not be ignored, furthermore, that various local and regional public administrations are gradually implementing measures in rather modest fashion (referring to the case of the Government of Catalonia) that consider initiating services “working with new masculinities” for aggressive individuals; there is also the possible creation of three centres to train adult and younger men who have taken up roles of toxic masculinity. As we see it, however, what is truly important is to approve laws favouring gender equality, which considers one of its

main inspirations, in general terms, to be that of working with men from a gender perspective in favour of effective equality. This would make it possible to ensure working with men was present across lines for any concrete intervention and measure (in areas of gender violence amongst couples, employment, conciliation and co-responsibility, paternity, care, time sharing, co-education, health, consumption of sex services through prostitution or sexual slavery, affective sexual education, diversity, and so on) from the perspective of gender and intersectionality, so as to advance true equality between women and men.

Currently, the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, approved in 2015 by the United Nations, states that "all forms of discrimination and violence towards women and girls will be eliminated, including through the participation of men and boys."

Feminist Agenda on Men and Masculinities

A new and highly interesting proposal is the project supported by the Fundación Iniciativa Social of the *Feminist Agenda on Men and Masculinities*. It was presented in 2021 for public consultation and participation from the recently created network MenEngage Iberia, member of the MenEngage Global Alliance and its regional network MenEngage Europa. The proposal does not merely appeal to men, however, but to all individuals (experts and activists) who share the feminist values of defending gender equality and aspire to the egalitarian transformation of men and masculinities. It is meant for individuals, activists in social movements, NGOs, those in the university context and public institutions, and it's available online. This process was culminated with the European Encounter for a Feminist Agenda on Men and Masculinities, with the participation of organisations from MenEngage Europa, as part of the #21oct21 Initiative of Men for Equality, held in Seville in October 2021.

Nevertheless, the various proposals, resolutions, strategies and recommendations of international organisms, on the need for working with boys and men from a gender equality perspective, have not been reflected in public policy, which is why it is the main goal of this project.

Reflections

Studies on masculinities have become an area of growing social interest. The Internet and fourth-wave feminism have contributed to raising interest for this area the media, amongst part of the general population, on social networks, in political parties (some more than others, and with different positions) and in the academy, as they begin to consider the role of men in the struggle for equality.

There is no question that nowadays feminisms call on men to join the struggle for real and effective gender equality, in opposition to patriarchy, while there does remain a debate on just how they might join and in what function. On the one hand, the position is held that men should be allies of feminism, understanding that women are its political subject. On the other hand, the proposal is directed towards men, as they themselves propose the

possibility of being feminist men, with their own agenda in working for equality. From the perspective of feminism, they are constantly being asked to not be satisfied with individual introspection or with the deconstruction of their traditional hegemonic masculinity, calling urgently to move forward actively, as militants. This would involve moving into the terrain of analysing men in hierarchical power relationships between women and men, in terms of domination-oppression, that patriarchy as a social structure and machismo as a cultural and ideological substrate has granted them.

It is an urgent priority for the university to analyse and reflect on the various studies and research projects carried out on men and masculinities, and on their relationships and involvement in achieving true, effective and real gender equality on a daily basis. The university should be actively engaged in spreading general knowledge emerging out of the academy, so that it does not solely remain in internal circuits, ensuring that it might be of benefit to society in general. We seek to educate and raise awareness amongst the masculine collective in society on gender equality, so that they might be aware of other ways of expressing their masculinity/masculinities, ways that are neither sexist, androcentric nor patriarchal, encouraging them to deconstruct themselves, to look at themselves in the mirror from a gender perspective (informed by relationships of unequal power between men and women). Furthermore, knowledge of the cultural construction of masculinity from a gender perspective and with an intersectional focus, might allow women to better understand the logics of patriarchy and masculine socialisation in a sexist society like our own. This would thus give them the tools required to disarticulate hegemonic ideological representations of gender, sexist behaviour and micro-sexisms that perpetuate inequality between women and men.

REFERENCES

1 — Minello, N. (2002) “Masculinidades: un concepto en construcción” *Nueva Antropología. Revista de Ciencias Sociales*, 61: 11-30.
2 — This is being directly confirmed, for example, with the organisation of a series of seminars in the format of conversations with authors of some twenty books on the subject, which is being presented (from January 2021 to May 2022) through webinars that are recorded and later uploaded to the Masculinities Observatory of the Universidad Miguel Hernández [Available online].
3 — We are speaking of courses which in their titles make it clear they are about men or masculinities, not others which might include some aspect of the subject in their course outlines.
4 — Quiles, M. (2019) “Políticas de formación e investigación en género en la universidad española: estudios de las masculinidades” en Téllez, A.; Martínez, J. E. y Sanfélix, J. (2019) (eds.) *Masculinidades igualitarias y alternativas. Procesos, avances y reacciones.* Madrid: Tirant Lo Blanch. Pps. 299-323
5 — In the interuniversity Masters Programme in Equality and Gender in the Public and Private Domain of the UJI-UMH, where from its beginnings in 2007 we have given a required course on masculinities with Professor Octavio Salazar. There is also a course in the University Master of the UNED in Gender Studies (elective).

6 — Quiles, op. cit., p.306.
7 — All of the conference proceedings were recorded and are available online. Many papers presented are available in Proceedings, published in open access online.
8 — Salazar-Agulló, M. y Martínez-Marco, E. A. (2019) “La masculinidad en los planes de igualdad de las universidades públicas españolas” en Téllez, A.; Martínez, J. E. y Sanfélix, J. (2019) (eds.) *Masculinidades igualitarias y alternativas. Procesos, avances y reacciones*. Madrid: Tirant Lo Blanch. Pps. 325-347.

At this time organisation is moving ahead on organising the next congress, with the title 2nd International Congress on Masculinities and Equality: Education for Equality and Co(education) (CIMASCIGUAL II), to be held in Elche from 20 to 22 October 2022.

Cascales, J. y Téllez, A. (2021) “Masculinidades y activismo en el movimiento de hombres: igualdad, mitopoética y neomachismo” en Téllez, A.; Martínez, J. E. y Sanfélix, J. (2021) (Ed.) *De la teoría a la acción: en busca de masculinidades igualitarias*. Madrid: Dykinson. Pps. 59-94.



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