

Valencia's 'Men for Equality' movement. An assessment of some of its protagonists

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ABSTRACT

The *Men for Equality* movement [*El movimiento de hombres por la igualdad* - HPLI], although a fairly recent phenomenon, already has a forty year track record in Valencia. The movement has had its high and low points. After the trail blazed by protagonists in Valencian society, a period of consolidation followed in which those who came after them kept the movement going. A qualitative study carried out by the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology records the impressions of those men who kept the movement alive between 1975 and 2018 despite the odds at the outset. These voices are analysed within frameworks for interpreting movements. As a social movement, *Men for Equality* developed new codes of behaviour and meaning. The results reveal the need – now greater than ever – of a paradigm shift in masculinity in Spain and Valencia.

Keywords: men, equality, Valencia, discourse analysis.

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INTRODUCTION

To begin with, one should say what a man is. There is no single definition of masculinity – rather, it is a many-faceted idea. Definitions of manliness are of a relational nature. At the very least, they are socially defined and, as Pierre Bourdieu (2000) notes, masculinity exists in opposition to femininity. Thus

Western Society treats men and women as bearers of differentiating elements. This approach re-elaborates the social construction of manliness through the emergence of a hegemonic masculinity that not only subjugates women but also those men who do not fit the accepted model (Connell, 1997; Kimmel, 1997; Kaufman, 1997).

It is generally accepted that the division of the sexes is a social construct. Thus Kimmel states that:

Virility is not static or timeless but rather is rooted in history. By the same token, it is not a manifestation of an inner essence but instead is socially constructed [...] within a cultural framework. That is why virility means different things in different ages and for different individuals, (Valdés and Olavarría, 1997: 23).

This model of a man imposes a definition that is not homogeneous and that can be made to fit any given cultural context. There is a broad range of opinions within the feminist movement. There are those who see masculinity as a gender construct that can be altered (Carabí and Armengol, 2008: 9). Yet there are also other approaches to the subject, such as the one taken by Judith Butler (2007), who argues the need to subvert the notion of genders. In any case, the term ‘masculinity’ is highly elusive. When one asks social agents, these are unable to flesh out the notion with specific content. The concept is rooted in the collective imaginary of a society furnishing a prototype of masculinity that conditions studies on men.

Masculinity thus becomes a kind of dominant patriarchal structure. The category is an unsettling one, and some feminists view it with suspicion. As Marta Segarra notes, masculinity is present in most social and intellectual discourses as transparent (Segarra and Carabí, 2000: 174), yet, as Marqués states, “Men are neither so alike among themselves nor so different from women [...] although the patriarchal system treats people as if they were identical to others of their sex and very different from those of the opposite sex” (Valdés and Olavarría, 1997: 18). Little by little, as occurred with women before them, men who are homosexuals and/or come from racial and ethnic minorities are defining themselves in new, alternative ways (Guasch, 2006: 103).

Despite efforts to permanently fix what constitutes ‘true masculinity’, such attempts reveal successive crises in male identity, marking cultural transforma-

tions questioning generally-accepted ideas on the male prototype (Montesinos, 2002).

One needs to clarify “What it is to be a man” given, as Marqués notes, that one runs the following risk:

We have spent so much time saying what a real man is [...]. These highly atypical men define themselves as normal or even as paradigmatic. Corporate masculine megalomania is such that any attempt to work on masculine identity runs the risk of falling into idolisation of one’s own sex (Valcuende and Blanco, 2003).

One should note that men tend to exalt masculinity when this trait is questioned — hence the need to anchor the analysis of ‘masculinities’ beyond point-scoring and of asserting one’s virility.

The masculine stereotype is the most common and hegemonic, offering an ideological alibi that is difficult to put into practice because, among other reasons, there are many kinds of masculinity (Connell, 1997) stemming from the various gender relations shown by men themselves.

When one speaks of masculinity or femininity, it concerns the emotional base upon which identities are forged. This scheme thus swiftly goes beyond the individual and takes us to culture and representations of what makes a man (Gilmore, 1994).

In analysing social change in The West and the tensions arising from the persistence, crisis, or overcoming of modernity, one can look at masculinity not just as a socio-cultural representation of the gender system but as a political category (Whitehead, 2002). This is why it is reflected in citizens’ social organisation and is translated into a set of privileges.

These privileges can be seen in the very notion of manhood, which implies power (Bourdieu, 2000). Yet this approach to sexual differentiation is both attributive and distributive given that each group has cultural attributes that both define it and determine its hierarchy. It is precisely this approach that is now in crisis.

This prevailing model of masculinity is showing cracks and new models are slowly emerging to tackle new circumstances. In a nutshell, understanding masculinity and gender relations is a complex affair. The notion of masculinity is still under construction (Guasch, 2006: 17) in what is a never-ending process.

We refer to those heterosexual men from fairly well-heeled classes (above all the Middle Classes). These, now exposed to the real foundations of Neo-Liberalism (whose values serve to legitimise such men) now find themselves de-legitimised. As a result, they feel all at sea and without bearings. These men see how old marks of legitimacy (family, State, country) have become multi-faceted, changing beyond recognition. One needs to approach these men from a gender perspective, following the advice tendered by contemporary feminist theories in order to map an undisputed position (or at least undisputed until recently) of the dichotomy of modern genders, and follow up on the efforts made in *Critical Studies on Men* to highlight the gender brand of these men. One can thus reveal gender to 'the genderless' — a gender that is invisible but transparent (García, 2009: 3-4).

One should recall that the model on which *Men's Studies* is based has lost its validity given that it no longer reflects the complexity of masculine identities. It also does very little to explain the power relations among men themselves. This is why the study of these identities needs to find new theoretical reference points (Menjívar, 2010: 64-65).

As Amoroso (2000) suggested, a woman lays claim to her occupation of the social space as a subject. The new masculinities call for a change in paradigm, demanding a more pro-active role for pro-feminist men, the removal of patriarchal hegemonies, and stressing the need for measures fostering true parity. It boils down to making place in society for a new subject. There is one observation that should be borne in mind amid all the theoretical vagaries in this field:

We are living through a period of cultural change [...] That means both men and women build

their identities from the same traits, which instead of giving certainty regarding one's membership of a gender, leads to confusion and even to unacknowledged fear. (Montesinos, 2004: 16)

Thus, the crisis of masculinity arises from the fading away of the traditional, hegemonic model of manliness and the difficulties in finding an alternative model of masculinity.

While new explanations of the concept of masculinity have sprung up, these are not isolated events but rather part of a continuum in a changing society that needs to consider whether there is uniformity among what that been termed 'the new masculinities'.

THE MEN FOR EQUALITY MOVEMENT IN VALENCIA (1985-2010)

The Men for Equality movements in Valencia (1985-2010) as social movements

One can say that the *Men for Equality* movement is a social one, following Raschke's classic definition, namely:

A collective actor that: often mobilises; is based on highly symbolic integration and scant specification of its role; pursues a consistent goal; avoids fundamental social changes and adopts variable measures and organisational forms in pursuing its ends (Raschke, 1994: 124)

There was a social and cultural movement in Valencia between the 1970s to the early 1990s. Although it was not a large movement, it was very active. In this context, we find two individuals who sparked a different kind debate on what would become known as "new masculinities".

In 1985 Joan Vílchez launched two men's groups from the Sexology Society in the Valencian Autonomous Community. His reason for doing so was that he felt there was a lack of communication with other men. Those taking part included J.L. García Ferrer, Rafael

Xambó, Juan Goberna, and José Manuel Jaén, among others. Josep Vicent Marqués' reflections were the inspiration for the initiative, which took up Fina Sanz's invitation to create men's groups similar to those set up by women to seek a more equal relationship between the sexes.

The psychotherapist Fina Sanz designed Meeting Therapy [*Terapia de Reencuentro*]. This model is based on the integration of psychology (especially clinical psychology), sexology, education, and a gender and community-based perspective. Its theoretical model also draws on conceptual contributions, methodologies and techniques from other disciplines and cultural traditions. In this case, a person is seen as an individual whose sex is defined by physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, behavioural, and social aspects.

Work has been done on intra-personal and inter-personal processes, linked with community relations, within a preventative approach (self-knowledge, human development, education for health) and therapy (understanding of symptoms and the use of therapeutic resources to change one's life). It also considers setting up groups of experts whose work has great social impact in spreading values fostering good manners and peaceful relationships. Those taking part included some men who used this methodology to set up a men's discussion group, which was later called *Espai d'Homes* [Men's Space], co-ordinated by the psychologist Jesús Gallent.

In addition, Josep Vicent Marqués' showed strong leadership and was someone with a major presence on both the Valencian and the Spanish scenes in the 1980s and 90s. Indeed, it was during those decades that he wrote on the role of men, beginning with his PhD thesis: *La construcción social del varón* [The Social Construction of Men] (1982), in which he covered the *macho* ['stud'] image of men in newspaper ads and among university students. Yet he stated: "Nothing has always been considered masculine — or feminine for that matter" (Marqués, 1991: 172). He also said the following:

A powerful set of deeds, omissions, slogans, orders, supporting or dissuasive measures — whether parents or the general public are aware of them or not — turn a child into a boy or a girl, who then grows into a man or woman. The aim is to create the kind of people accepted by society and who, though differing in their outlooks, are then given freedom and access to power. (Marqués, 1982: 55)

At the end of the 1990s, Marqués returned to Valencia where he was Full Professor of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Universitat de València (UV). He set up various groups to discuss many subjects, among them the role of men in modern society.

Despite these two poles of reflection, the men's social movement failed to take off. These fifteen years (1995-2010) fell in a period in which men played little more than a token role when it came to gender equality. Some forums were kept but their analyses underwent changes. There was a gradual turnover in members, reflecting generational succession. The membership, which at the outset was mainly drawn from academe, began to reflect a broader swathe of society. Accordingly, we can speak of true *Men for Equality* movements, as Michael Flood (1996) notes, albeit with some caveats.

This token role is no hurdle to the two components found in the classical distinction between an instrumental approach (aimed at 'the powers that be': the ecological movement) and the expressive approach (identity oriented: the feminist movement) defended by Rucht (1992) and further developed by Melucci (1998). In this period, rebuilding of the collective identity took place outside the institutional sphere, with meaning given to individual and collective action (the expressive component) and getting political and social resources to instrumentally further that identity. This link fostered self-assessment practices and direct measurement among the diverse agents in their daily lives.

"This construction of collective identity, the ability to recognise others and be recognised as part of the

system of social relations” (Melucci, 1987: 139), is based on affective solidarity and personal involvement that movement networks give rise to — camaraderie, collegiality, integration, social support, and so on. These are general requisites for participation in most groups and facilitate mobilisation. Nevertheless, the solidarity that keeps a movement together cannot be separated from political identity (Melucci, 1987; Diani, 1998; Tejerina, 1998). Here, following the line taken by Habermas (1999), and Cohen and Arato (2000), one must recall that the twin strategies of Civil Society (instrumental and expressive) are harnessed to foster freer, more democratic societies. That is why it is worthwhile hearing the voices of some of the men who have kept this movement alive.

Movements as 'labs' for creating and spreading meanings

To begin with, one needs to recall that constructivist approaches in social movements became important from the 1980s onward (Calle, 2003). A salient feature was the way the rational world was re-framed from various perspectives (Snow and Benford, 1992) in both cultural and identity terms (Melucci, 1987, 1998), as well as in a symbolic and epistemological fashion (Johnston, Laraña and Gusfield, 1994; Laraña, 1999). This helped foster mobilisation cultures (Tarrow, 1992, 1997) and macro-social orders (Inglehart, 1998). Melucci (1998) stresses that the most important contribution was terming problems differently, framing them in a language and a discourse that were at odds with those used by 'the powers that be' at the time.

Melucci's (1987, 1998) studies on the 'cognitive resources' used by networked movements to maintain unity and to challenge power structures can be taken as a starting point. Here, the "cognitive approach" taken by such movements as forms of activity gives rise to new kinds of social identities, and the "cognitive practices" noted by Eyerman and Jamison (1991). One can say that in the process of rebuilding a collective identity, a movement is not merely a response to changes (the 'negative' part of the protest, as it were) but rather constitutes a social 'lab' facilitating the emergence of new ideas,

codes of behaviour, and meaning. This gives rise to a mix of knowledge, experience, and affectivity that gives birth to new forms of inter-personal relations, sense-making structures, and alternative projects.

The sum of all these phenomena creates a 'social reality' which, according to Manuel Castillos (1998: 25), can be seen as the first step in processes of social change, and by extension, of the legitimacy of new knowledge, values and practices (Inglehart, 1998). Taking this perspective as their starting point, the discourses of *Men for Equality* were structured by the analysis of interpretive frameworks for studying movements.

METHODOLOGY: ANALYTICAL DIMENSIONS AND INDICATORS

A movement is a 'process'. It comprises a host of interactions generating mobilisation (Melucci, 1987; Tejerina, 1998; Laraña, 1999). Given the complexity of this analysis, the empirical approach taken to the work has basically been a qualitative one, given that only thus that one can access the dimensions that are the subject of the study.

The unstructured interview technique was employed whereby the ideas, discourses, and positions of members were openly explored using the language used by the subjects (Ortí, 1993; Taylor and Bogdan, 1994; Vallés, 1997; Calle, 2003). While this research technique does not incorporate either the measurement or reproducibility of quantitative methods, the value of symbolic resources such as discourses lies in the fact that the situations covered are dealt with in significant terms for participants and their goals (Ortí, 1993).

Although the techniques for gathering data are qualitative in nature, the universe of the study is clearly bounded, to wit: a social movement in a well-defined area and during a given period. The number of interviews is considered sufficient to achieve 'saturation' of the information needed in the form of "intentional

Table 1 The sociological profile of the men interviewed

Code	Association/ Body	Age	Education	Employment status	Type of Association
E.1	AHIGE	52	Secondary Education	Unemployed	Campaigning
E.2	Stop Machismo	54	Primary Education	Self-employed (bookshop)	Campaigning
E.3	CEGM - Centro de Estudios de Género y Masculinidades	42	Higher Education	Working (European projects)	Self-reflection and studies
E.4	ESPAI D'HOMES	58	Higher Education	Working (Psychology practice)	Self-reflection
E.5	Colectivo de Hombres	61	Primary Education	Retired	Self-reflection

Source: Authors

sampling” or “theoretical sampling” (Ruiz and Ispizua, 1989; Taylor and Bogdan, 1994; Vallés, 1997; Rivas, 1998). A sample was sought in which the information was obtained from a diverse set of interviewees drawn from various organisations comprising the movement, ranging from the most dissident ones to the most self-reflective ones. This quest was based on an approach linked to the analytical dimensions, allowing discovery of a range of perspectives within the movement to reach an “overall discourse” covering the symbolic space of the production of meanings from the standpoint of the social agents (thus reflecting the diversity of those agents).

To draw up the movement’s ‘overall discourse’ and the ‘basic framework’ within which *Men for Equality* operated, we applied interpretative approaches in analysing the in-depth interviews with various members of the movement. The interviewees are listed in Table 1 above.

To simplify the data so as to obtain a practical, systematic number of categories, we took the “ideal type framework” proposed by Rivas (1998, 1999). The content was modified to adapt it to the analysis of

the following dimensions and strategies in the “basic framework”¹ (Schemes 1 and 2):

- 1) *The Diagnosis/Framework of Injustice*. This defines a situation as unjust or illegitimate, includes its causes (whether these be processes or persons), and calls for a response. It is a cognitive or intellectual judgment on what is fair or equitable and is also emotionally cognitive.
- 2) *The Prognosis/Call for Action*. On the one hand, it includes various channels for changing the situation, and is a call for action. A solution is proposed for the diagnosed problem, specifying what should be done and who should do it. It includes the goals, strategies and tactics to be followed and is linked to shared programmes, ideas and beliefs. It also includes a framework

¹ Within a framework, one needs to differentiate between structure and strategies. According to Rivas, one needs to indicate that the “framework strategy” comprises the framework dimensions and the thematic areas they refer to (which we call ‘dimensions’ or ‘frameworks’) on the one hand, and on the other “framework strategies” (that is to say, techniques used by movements to interpret each thematic area).

for those protesting (who must not be those held responsible for the problem). In addition, the costs and benefits of the status quo are set forth, underlining the legitimacy of both the ends and means of the action taken.

- 3) *Motivating frameworks/agency dimension.* This develops the reasons justifying the action. It is the framework for the chances of success of the actions taken to achieve the stated goals. It includes moral re-evaluation by the group, which reflects on the mobilisation practices of its forerunners and on continuity between

past and present. There is a need to establish a vocabulary for the rationale justifying action to further the cause.

- 4) *Identity-based Communication Strategy.* This pursues the construction of a sense of belonging while blaming a given actor for the ills that the movement seeks to remedy. It is a definition of 'us' versus 'them', without which the goal of collective action would be merely an abstraction. One also finds the movement's utopian projects within this framework, and that form part of its identity.

Scheme 1: The ideal framework: framing dimensions

DIAGNOSIS/FRAMWORK OF INJUSTICE	
Definition and description of a situation considered unjust or illegitimate	
	<i>Indicates an issue in/for the public debate. Defines it as a problem and highlights the gap between how things are and how they should be.</i>
Causal attribution	<i>Definition of the cause. Definition of the agents.</i>
PROGNOSIS/CALL TO ACTION	
Channels for action to change the current state of affairs	
	<i>Proposal of a solution to the problem (what must be done and who should do it). Goals framework (strategies and tactics). Legitimacy of the goals (in relation to the identity-based framework).</i>
Framework for those targeted by the protest	
	<i>Framework for those targeted by the protest and the solutions expected of them.</i>
MOTIVATING FRAMEWORKS/AGENCY FRAMEWORK	
Effectiveness. Consideration that actions are not unchangeable	
	<i>Framework for the chances that the movement's efforts will succeed. The validity of the mobilisation (linked to the prognosis).</i>
IDENTITY	
Identity-based communication strategy	
	<i>Social movements' self-legitimation strategy. Rationales that justify action in favour of a cause. De-legitimisation of 'them', showing that 'they' are either unwilling or unable to solve the problem.</i>

Scheme 2: The ideal framework: framework dimensions and strategies

Framework dimensions (thematic areas)	Framework strategies (techniques for interpreting thematic areas)
1. The theme and interpretation of the problem	
1. Indicate a question for public debate	1. Give it a concept or slogan. 2. Make it empirically credible through a reference to the real world.
2. Define the issue as a problem, highlighting the gap between how things are how they should be	1. Specify the problem by referring to daily experience. 2. Put it in context or within a broader scheme (frameworks, schemes, scripts, etc.). 3. Dramatise: foresee future implications.
2. Causal attribution	
1. Definition of the cause	1. Assign a concept ('male chauvinism', Neo-Fascism, etc.). 2. Attribute it is external actors or groups: 'they' are responsible
2. Definition of agents	1. Personalise the actors responsible. 2. Attribute them with intentions. 3. Attribute them with vested interested that run counter to the common good. 4. Moralise: Consider them illegitimate agents in the movement's public communications.
3. Framework of the goals and the chances of success	
1. Framework of goals	1. Give them a concept or slogan. 2. Make them specific by spelling out the benefits for those affected by the social ill and set ways to achieve the goals. 3. Schematise: Link the goals to the highest values.
2. Framework of the chances of success	1. Make historical references to the success achieved by forerunners. 2. Estimate the number of potential participants: the more participants, the greater the chances of success. 3. The greater the echo in the media, the greater the chances of success.
4. Framework for those targeted by protests and those expecting solutions to be proposed. De-legitimise them	
	1. Personalise those targeted by protests. 2. Attribute them with vested interests. 3. Moralise: Consider them illegitimate agents in the movement's public communications. 4. Consider them as corrupt.
5. Social movements' self-legitimation	
	1. Show that the movement's members represent collective, universal interests. 2. Self-attribution with a key social value (for example, a 'Peace' movement). 3. Enlist trustworthy persons and institutions for the cause. 4. Seek credibility on the subjects covered. Place issues within a framework. Make accurate predictions.

Source: Rivas (1998, 1999)

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS: “WE WERE JUST A HANDFUL”

The dimensions of the discursive framework used by the Men for Equality movement

With regard to the analysis of the movement's meaning frameworks, the main findings are as follows:

The diagnosis of the situation and the problem are clearly delimited. Members of the movement show the injustice of gender inequality and the violence it spawns through statements that take the form of slogans such as:

In reality, it is a group of men fighting gender inequality. [E2]

Violence is a man's problem but women are the ones who suffer as a result. [E3]

The world would end without women. [E3]

Other parts of their discourse try to show the empirical validity of their proposals. These cover both the diagnosis and the framework covering the movement's chances of success — within the motivational frameworks — by stressing the credibility of the themes and issues dealt with.

The movement achieves said credibility by showing that its discourse is not an abstract one but that it bears on real issues:

We produced a manifesto opposing reform of Spain's Abortion Act and it was not only because of its provisions. It is odd that once again it is men who set the limits for women. Symbolically, it is pretty awful that a Minister can make the law for every woman in Spain, which is to say 51% of the country's population. [E3]

Taking this as a starting point, the social movement seeks congruence with the culture of the people it targets in order to define injustice as a problem, stressing the gap between how things are and how things should be, and to this end using specific daily experiences such as the following:

They [women] have had to think like men. We are partly responsible for the change in attitudes towards violence and in daily relations. We have often worked on issues such as sharing tasks, social life, and time together... [E3]

In the *Men for Equality* movement, the narrative is developed in a three-pronged fashion, covering: (1) changes in men's attitudes to 'male chauvinism'; (2) inequalities in couples' relationships; (3) personal life is a 'political' issue — a thread that ran through the discourse. In relation to the first point, we find the following statements:

It is impossible to eliminate male chauvinism from this society without changing men. [E2]

What we want is for groups of men to shape the social debate and society as a whole. [E5]

We listen to all kinds of men. It is a talking shop where men come licking their wounds, they complain that their wives are the worst of the worst, and so on. Little by little, the group starts looking at things differently — something that implies solidarity. That is why the group is an open one. [E4]

Inequality in a couple's relationship underlines both the sex and power differences, evidenced by the following statements:

They create a relationship in the couple based on power models, linked to models of male power. That is to say, the person holding power is the one representing all the traditional, patriarchal male values. It makes no odds whether the one 'wearing the trousers' is a man or a woman. The point is that it creates a state of violence in which one person is under the other's thumb. This spawns permanent conflict — something that is easy to detect and is very similar in many cases. [E3]

Someone has to run the household, look after the children, the sick and the needy. That is where we men fall short. [E5]

With regard to personal life being a ‘political’ issue, this refers to a scheme that goes beyond the individual and links us to the culture and representations of manhood:

This is a *sine qua non*; that is, any proposal on the subject has to be based on one’s own experience. I believe that is the right approach and it is the one that is currently powering this space. [E4]

For me as a man [...] I really believe in change and I strive to bring it about. I work on what I really enjoy, which is spurring change. [E5]

At the Trade Union level, at the socio-educational level [...] I seek ways to introduce such things [...] That is especially true for those who think that social change involves men. [E3]

In addition, the delimitation of injustice is put within the broad context of male hegemony — something that the movement stresses above all and that is evidenced by the following words:

What dominates the world is male chauvinism and violence, both of which are masculine values. [E2]

The problem does not lie in a specific dysfunction or a given model of society but rather with the person representing this sexuality, be it a man or a woman. [E1]

The literature of the English-speaking world in the 1940s, 50s, and 60s produced a given model of man, of which Humphrey Bogart is a prime example. It was a model in which ‘real men’ did not show emotions and it is one that has lasted until the present. It depicts a kind of ‘super-hero’ who can overcome anything, including his own emotions. [E3]

Likewise, the discursive framework for the issue dramatises this situation and augurs future consequences. This is revealed in statements such as:

The problem is the model set for young men. For example, the notion that “the more manly one is, the better one controls one’s emotions”. [E3]

What would happen if women downed tools and stopped taking care of children and so on? This is what comes out of these changes. For example, I say to my children: “Can you imagine what would happen if mothers went on strike”. It is a frightening idea, right? “I remember when my mother was not around and it was awful”. It is not only that normal life is suspended for a day; the whole daily routine goes to pot. “Daddy couldn’t find the *Nesquik* [a children’s drink], which was kept next to the biscuits. He dressed me with socks of different colours...” [E3]

Without women, the world would come to an end. [E3]

Within the causal attribution framework, defining the cause implies harsh criticism of masculine values (‘male chauvinism’) and male control and power. This criticism extends to the control/power exercised over other men, the male breadwinner (as opposed to the caring father), and the economic model and Capitalist system in general. The ideas are often tantamount to slogans, such as:

Male chauvinism dominates the world and constitutes violence. Both are masculine values. [E2]

Father’s Day in Spain (the 19th of March) — *The Day of The Egalitarian Father* for us [...] — is dedicated to the model of the male breadwinner. This model must be changed and put over as a model of the caring father. [E3]

For example, things are pretty clear when it comes to the economic model, which only works because there are women who keep it afloat. [E5]

The poor distribution of work in the world means that the Capitalist system only works thanks to the fact that women work a double or triple shift. [E3]

Having defined the cause, this is attributed to external agents, who are held responsible for the injustices. The ‘culprits’ are non-egalitarian, ‘male chauvinist’ men. In the case analysed, those seen as the cause of these ills are also the ones targeted by protest. It

is impossible to separate the two groups, which are clearly delimited in the corresponding discursive strategies and, as a result, are wholly de-legitimised. Specifically, the personalisation used to these ends can be seen in statements such as these:

Men are responsible for most of these problems. [E5]

Violence is a man's problem but women are the ones who suffer as a result. [E3]

The issue of equality cannot be tackled without dealing with men. [E3]

At the same time, these actors are not only seen as the cause of the problem but also to be fully aware of the fact:

True equality can be achieved only if men change their oppressive mind set. [E3]

Social change has everything to do with men. [E3]

Unlike elsewhere, the movement's discursive framework did not attribute vested interests to those opposing the common good during the period studied. Nevertheless, for the reasons discussed earlier, the targeted agents were considered as lacking legitimacy, as the following comments reveal:

In fact we suffer from non-physical aggression from traditional 'male chauvinism'. [E2]

We get called all kinds of names, they call us *femini-nazis*, of being women's lap dogs and goodness knows what else. [E2]

In relation to the agency framework and motivating discourses, the framing of goals and the chances of success, the aim is to build a new model of society and members see their priority as working towards equality. Thus the goals are framed as slogans or concepts such as:

Men against gender inequality. [E2]

It is impossible to eliminate male chauvinism from this society without changing men. [E2]

True equality can be achieved only if men change their oppressive mind set. [E3]

We need to work on men to achieve social change. [E3]

Members opine that achieving the proposed goal (a new, egalitarian society by changing men), would benefit society in various ways. The main benefit, they argue, would be the building of more equal relationships between the sexes. This, they posit, would then free society of the problems stemming from the traditional self-destructive patriarchal model:

Everyone wins by being brought up in a more egalitarian society. That is because there are no pressures and one does not have to prove one's worth to anyone. The self-destructive component is eliminated once the traditional patriarchal model has gone. The social benefit of a sea change in equality is clear. [E3]

Apart from the benefits, the movement's members also stress the legitimacy of these value-charged goals, linking them to overcoming the problem through the values characterising a more egalitarian society:

Men have to change their oppressive mind set and that is why it is so important to work with men, right? [E3]

It is impossible to eliminate male chauvinism from this society without changing men. [E2]

What we want is for groups of men to shape the social debate and society as a whole. [E5]

The issue of social change has to be approached by working with men. [E3]

This framing highlights two of the movement's strategies — one instrumental and the other expressive — which coalesce around the goal of creating freer, more democratic societies. In analytical terms, this forms part of proposed solutions to the problem — the movement's goals — within actions to overcome the present state of affairs.

The chances of success were also framed within the period studied, although it was not a recurring discourse. Here, we find statements such as:

Fortunately, this is changing and men are getting increasingly involved. [E3]

Yet nobody is under any illusion that it is going to be easy:

In general terms, my research at schools shows the scale of the problem. It is a serious issue that men still sit on their hands when it comes to household chores ... [E3]

Nothing is being done in Valencia. [E2]

No special references are made to the success enjoyed by their forerunners given that the movement is still an incipient one, save for occasional statements such as:

There is a group of men called *Espai d'Homes* [Men's Space] but it is very much a private affair. I think they will be at the demonstration on the 8th of March. [E2]

Indeed, from this discourse one gets the impression that a certain sector of the feminist movement both suspects and rejects the *Men for Equality* movement:

The feminists give us a hard time because there is little public money for equality policies. The feminists say: "Now that we have scraped together a bit of cash, come protest with us for whatever..." It's a problem. "We have spent goodness knows how long trying to put women on the map and now you are asking the same for men?" I understand how the women feel [...] Many men feel they are being turned into scapegoats. This explains why they think us coming along is the last straw. We have to tread carefully lest we offend them. [E1]

Although the movement is a highly expressive one, it does not overlook the instrumental side and the call for action:

The issue of equality cannot be tackled without dealing with men. [E3]

There are three strands in this framing: (1) how action is taken; (2) action targeting men; (3) action targeting society. In the first case, we find statements that refer to a change in education and the need for commitment:

First, we act in the education field because when it comes to therapy, repetition works. [E5]

A group of men is a [therapeutic] reflection group but there are also much more social aspects too because there is a need to commit oneself to social change sooner or later. [E3]

The following statements were made in the context of specific actions targeting men:

In the meetings, each member speaks about his experience, of a problem, of how to deal with things without resorting to violence but instead being receptive and open-minded when it comes to dealing with conflict.... This is another way of peacefully solving problems. [E2]

Men began to turn up for the group sessions in 2000. A typical comment was "Now what? I was married, I had a wife but I have no friends now. I am on my own". That was reason enough to say, "Look, we have a gathering on one Friday a month. If you feel like coming along..." [E4]

In the case of actions focusing on society, there were statements on the following lines:

We want the group to talk about things that concern us but we have also done some things outside our circle. [E2]

In *Foro d'Homes* [Men's Forum] [...], things are more public — our actions focus on the outside world. We always hold meetings but they end up with a public session. [E2]

I also spent a year working at Picassent prison on rehabilitating those convicted of domestic violence. I realised that some of them who had taken the programme could attend the group. [E4]

We actively work on the streets to cover the equality issue. [E5]

We undertake specific actions two or three times a year. This is especially true in October before all the activity in November to mark *The International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women*. We leave a little time before the 25th to stress male responsibility for such violence. There is also a lot of work around the 8th of March. The new date — the 19th of March — strikes me as a golden opportunity for fostering change. For us, it is *The Day of the Egalitarian Father* ['Father's Day' elsewhere]. [E3]

Potential membership of the movement is delimited by several aspects: the incorporation of individuals in the group; the expected identity-based motivation set out in the description of the movement; the birth of collectives from mixed groups; the number of participants; generational succession. Nevertheless, the analysed discourse makes no references to media dissemination of the movement's activities. The subject of an individual's incorporation in the movement crops up in statements such as:

I needed to share my feelings with more men. Where could I find these men? I began to meet men who were worried. [E2]

I joined but it was like a gathering and from then on I started attending once a month. [E2]

Men with partners were asked to review their behaviour and think about how things stood. From then on, they joined the group... because they were seeking support. [E5]

After a therapeutic initiative in which I took part as a user, I met other men and I began undergoing the process they had talked about. [E4]

With regard to motivation and incentives for solidarity, some the statements made include:

The special feature of *Espai d'Homes* [Men's Space] [...] is that it needs to be a closed one in order

to strengthen trust among its members and the relationship arising from it. [E4]

Here, one should note that the movement's groups sprang up in the mid-1990s:

Espai d'Homes [...] was founded in 2005 but back in 1994 and 95 we began creating small groups of men. [E4]

Nevertheless, they sprang from mixed groups of men and women:

It was suggested that women work on one part and men on another and that they then pooled ideas to reach consensus. When these training periods finished, these small groups of men emerged and continued from there. [E4]

Here in Valencia, a group run by Josefina Sanz adopted a perspective based on feminine and masculine psycho-eroticism that spoke of constructing sexuality between men and women. It involved the genders working separately but pooling their findings. The first men's groups emerged from that. [E3]

Furthermore, the participants were a mixed bag:

The forty-two members have a strong track record of social intervention in various spheres: trade unions, science, therapies, and so on [E3]

The network is very eclectic. There are all kinds of people, ranging from those working only on a given subject to [...] those doing jobs that have nothing to do with gender issues. [E3]

The sociological profile is very diverse, with an equally diverse educational profile. [E5]

The make-up of the groups changes over time because there is a natural turnover of members:

There are roughly ten of us in the group but there were a lot more in the past. [E2]

At one point there were twenty or twenty-two in the group of which seven of us were men [at the group's inception with Fina Sanz, who set up Espai d'Homes]. [E4]

Men join and leave all the time [In Espai d'Homes]. [E4]

This agency framework is also reflected in the movement's networks:

We call on the women to do things but they do not reciprocate. [E1]

I began in men's groups in Andalusia; the movements that sprang up were *AHIGE* (Men's Association for Gender Equality, and *Heterodoxia*... [E4]

Many of them were part of *AHIGE* men's circles. There was active involvement. [E3]

Generational renewal is also highlighted:

Now three or four younger men have joined. [E2]

Nevertheless, the interviewees also highlighted the movement's development, which has shifted from members with more academic backgrounds in the past to people drawn from a broader range of social sectors today:

The group changed after that [...] Now there are people who are not professionals but rather who are just ordinary folk. [E2]

Being in the university, there are groups that are more scholarly and are more strongly linked with reflections on research models of masculinity. [E3]

When it comes to framing those whom the protests target and from whom solutions are expected, we should stress that in the period studied, the discourse was not aimed at institutions but rather at the agents blamed for causing injustice.

The identity-based communication strategy (playing on self-legitimation of both members and the movement) was used to convey the idea that collective, universal interests were being represented that could only be met by driving change [E5],

making a big leap forward towards equality [E3] and rooting out male chauvinism [E2]. All this effort and commitment had several implications:

I often said to my pupils: "Working on this subject with you now means you will not come looking for answers in twenty five years' time. This work is bad for my wallet but good for your lives". [E3]

Even though this meant being misunderstood by society and other social movements:

What I found is that when I spoke to people, they said: "So, what's all this then?" They simply had no idea... [E2]

I understand why the feminists are wary. You always have to explain things. This is why they think us coming along is the last straw. We have to tread carefully lest we offend them. [E1]

They also attribute their movement with a core social value:

Men against gender inequality. [E2]

In addition, 'they' are the self-same men, both agents of the diagnosis, and targets of the protest. They de-legitimise themselves by showing that they are unwilling to solve the problem and to change their oppressive behaviour in which violence is used to settle conflicts.

Discursive innovations

Various studies have been carried out to determine changes in the contents of discourses and communication over time (Ruiz and Ispizua, 1989). In the case of movements, McAdam (1994: 59) states that working class identity — which at first glance seems to be objectively based — actually arose from the workers' movement. Likewise, Tarrow (1997: 192) shows that Mansbridge discovered some of the expressions date from the early periods of the women's movement (for example *machista* [male chauvinist]) had its origin in a word used by the poor to broadly cover actions that one's colleagues disapproved of. One can also read of new environmentalist perceptions of the world in Diani (1998: 255).

As with other movements, one can also find various discursive innovations. Thus we can find things that shape reflection on the traditional roles assigned to men:

A group of men is a [therapeutic] reflection group but it also has more social aspects. [E3]

It is impossible to eliminate male chauvinism from this society without changing men. [E2]

It also involves questioning these traditional roles:

It is a talking shop where men come licking their wounds, their wives and the worst of the worst, and so on. Little by little, the group starts looking at things differently — something that implies solidarity. [E4]

One should not forget the importance of forging more expressive relations and solidarity with other men, and be able to share one's feelings and concerns without feeling any less a man for it:

The problem is the model set for young men. For example, the notion that "the more manly one is, the better able one is to control one's emotions". [E3]

Being receptive and open-minded when it comes to dealing with conflict... This is another way of peacefully solving problems. [E2]

That is why they see this transition not as a loss but as a gain:

True equality can be achieved only if men change their oppressive mind set. [E3]

They reflect on masculinity, power, sexuality, fatherhood, violence, and sexual and sentimental relationships:

Men with partners were asked to review their behaviour and think about how things stood. From then on, they joined the group... because they were seeking support. [E5]

The problem does not lie in a specific dysfunction or a given model of society but rather with the

person representing this sexuality, be it a man or a woman. [E1]

There is also the transformation of *Father's Day* (19th of March) into *Day of The Egalitarian Father* instead of the 'breadwinning father':

For us, the Day of the Egalitarian Father sparks a curious debate that turns a Judeo-Christian celebration of the breadwinning father (or 'providing father') into a caring father. Here, we understand 'caring' in a holistic, emotional, and affective sense and thus our father is also an egalitarian one. [E3]

This reveals how the *Men for Equality* movement creates new codes of conduct, using a different language from that of 'the powers that be' to describe problems.

CONCLUSIONS

From the end of the 1970s to the beginning of the 1980s, certain groups became aware of the gender issue from a psychological standpoint. Later on, without ditching their theoretical-practical ideas, these movements began to make an impression on society and appear at various events, including the 8th of March demonstrations.

Josep Vicent Marqués played a key role in many initiatives, both individual and collective ones. Nevertheless, during the first decade of the 21st Century, the presence of these movements on the public stage was merely a token one (at least in Valencia).

This study gives voice to some of the men who kept the movement's flame burning. These voices are analysed within frameworks for interpreting social movements. Examination of the discursive dimensions and strategies revealed a 'basic framing' that was well drawn up, featuring all of the elements one might expect: diagnoses/framing of injustice; prognosis/call to action; framing of agency drivers/dimensions; identity-based strategy. Here, one should note that the agents (other men) causing the injustices are those targeted by the

protest. Neither group can be understood without the other. No special reference is made to the movement's forerunners given that it was of an incipient nature. Although these groups were highly expressive, they kept the instrumental side and the call for action in view, even though there were no references to this in the discourse.

One can also see how, as a social movement, it came up with new codes of conduct and meanings, using different language and discourses from those of 'the powers that be'.

Another point that can be highlighted from the analysis is the shift in the make-up of groups and the membership. Back in 2011, a university-inspired

group gradually began reflecting on the need for men to mirror changes in Spanish and Valencian society, especially in relation to feminism. This link can be seen for example in the framing of causal agents and the harsh criticism levelled at the economic model and the Capitalist system — something directly linked to the strikes held on the 8th of March.

The study's findings reveal the pressing need to change the concept of masculinity in Spanish and Valencian society today. That said, one should not forget that 'new masculinities' are still under construction. Such ideas are inseparable from demands for a paradigm shift in which men would take a more pro-active role in eliminating patriarchal hegemonic elements and in coming up with a new kind of man.

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