PAGE PROOF INSTRUCTIONS AND QUERIES

Journal title: Qualitative Inquiry
Article Number: 537206

Greetings, and thank you for publishing with SAGE Publications. We have prepared this page proof for your review.

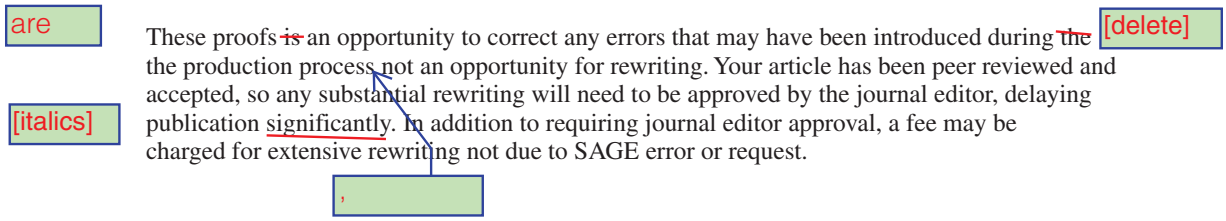
Please respond to each of the below queries by digitally marking this PDF and sending the marked PDF back.

Please use only the icons shown below for your mark-up, and do **not** use "sticky notes" or other "pop-up" comments.

Please use:  Please do NOT use: 

Help with Digital Mark-up

1. Do you have Adobe Reader? Quick, safe, free download is available at http://get.adobe.com/reader/
2. To access the recommended tools, please click "Comment" in upper right of Adobe Reader, then "Drawing Markups."
3. Using tools other than those recommended may cause data loss.
4. Some mark-up examples are shown below.



Please note that sending corrections in any form other than the marked-up PDF can significantly delay the processing of your corrections.

Please assist us by clarifying the following queries:

No	Query
1	Please review the entire document for typographical errors, mathematical errors, and any other necessary corrections; check headings, tables, and figures.
2	Please check that (a) all authors are listed in the proper order; (b) clarify which part of each author's name is his or her surname; (c) verify that all author names are correctly spelled/punctuated and are presented in a manner consistent with any prior publications; and (d) check that all author information, such as affiliations and contact information, appears accurately.
3	Please check whether the given corresponding author details are accurate.
4	Please confirm whether the given conflict of interest statement is accurate.
5	Please confirm whether the given funding statement is accurate.
6	Please confirm that you have sufficiently reviewed your proof and queries, and that you understand this is your FINAL opportunity to review your article before publication.

Qualitative Inquiry
1–6

DOI: 10.1177/1077800414537206
qix.sagepub.com
SAGE

Romantic Love and Gender Violence: Clarifying Misunderstandings Through Communicative Organization of the Research

Montserrat Yuste[1], M. Angeles Serrano[2], Sandra Girbés[2], and Maite Arandia[3] [AQ: 1] [AQ: 2]

Abstract

Some prevention programs start from the assumption that romantic love triggers gender violence. This assumption has no scientific basis; no links have been found in the literature between romantic love and gender violence. This study explains how the communicative organization of research allows us to challenge discourses that claim the existence of a link between gender violence and romantic love without any evidence. Among other elements, the communicative organization of research implies the existence of an advisory committee, composed, in this case, of adolescents. In this committee, voices heard during fieldwork are contrasted with the literature, including theories on romantic love from the Middle Ages or theories on platonic love, as well as current scientific research. By so doing, examples of romantic love that refute the links to gender violence have been identified.

Keywords

romantic love, gender violence, communicative methodology, adolescents

> When loving too much becomes a trap
>
> . . . These women feel an attraction to all those who need them and they think that their lives are based on dedication to the others . . . They transfer [these believes] to their relationships. The purpose, to overcome an ideal of romantic love teeming with erroneous believes.
>
> —Morales (2011)

This opinion article, questioning devoted romantic love, was published on November 25, 2011, on the International Day Against Gender Violence, in a broadly read Spanish newspaper. In this study, we will provide evidence that egalitarian communication between researchers and youth in different dialogue contexts, motivated by the communicative organization typical of the Communicative Methodology, calls into question the assumption that romantic love is the cause of violence against women. Some scholars have argued for such a link in association with the reproduction of gender roles (Bosch Fiol, 2004-2007; Holter, 2013). Our research on this topic includes an advisory committee of youth voices, which allows us to analyze traditional gender roles and their perpetuation and to explore the values of free choice and respect found at the foundations of romantic love. The communicative organization involved youth in a reflection process about the meaning of love, the love images they have internalized through socialization, and the construction of their affective-sexual relations (J. Gómez, 2004). The experiential data that they provided, along with the scientific data, have generated some clarifications regarding the negative consideration of romantic love in some literature on violence against women, thus opening opportunities to widen the scientific perspectives and to redesign intervention programs with teenagers.

In the article, we will first explore research on the purported link between the meaning of romantic love and gender violence. We will then focus on the role the advisory committee plays in understanding love relationships within a communicative organization structure that joins life-world and science. This organizational structure is a step forward in the democratization of research processes in which society and science must go hand in hand (A. Gómez & Díez-Palomar,

[1]Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain
[2]University of Barcelona, Spain
[3]University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU), Leioa, Spain

Corresponding Author:
M. Angeles Serrano, Department of Sociological Theory, Methodology of Social Sciences, and Legal Philosophy, University of Barcelona. Passeig de la Vall d'Hebron, 171, Edifici de Llevant, planta 0, Despatx 14, 08035 Barcelona, Spain.
Email: mangelesserrano@ub.edu [AQ: 3]

2009; A. Gómez, Siles, & Tejedor, 2012; Mazzei & Jackson, 2012; Puigvert, Christou, & Holford, 2012).

When considering the relationship between romantic love and gender-based violence, the young girls in our study did not perceive any violent attitudes in the loving interactions between characters in traditional fairy tales, although they expressed that there may be other models of intimate nonviolent relationship beyond this traditional model. To support these statements, we will use the qualitative data obtained from a research project on the preventive socialization processes of gender violence (Duque, 2010-2011). The methodological contribution of this study is to show how the communicative methodology and its communicative organization can generate opportunities for dialogue that detach romantic love from gender violence. In our study, youngsters questioned the connection between romantic love and gender violence and instead suggested a link to freedom of choice, respect, and equality. These findings may open the door to future preventive educational programs.

Romantic Love and Gender Violence: Overcoming Nonscientific Links

Concern over gender violence among young people is growing in the fields of research, politics, and education. The data are overwhelming. In 2007—just before the economic crisis—the Barometer of the Spanish Center for Sociological Research (CIS) highlighted violence against women among the most important problems in Spain. Quantitative studies carried out in other countries have expressed similar findings (Eisikovits, Winstok, & Fishman, 2004; Jaspard & équipe Enveff, 2003; Simister, 2013; Valls, Puigvert, & Duque, 2008). However, is it true that violence is triggered by romantic love? Several studies have argued that the construction of romantic love during adolescence is related to models of sexual attraction choice that people develop and thus influences the type of relationships that develop in adulthood (Bai, 2012; Chung, 2007; Duque, 2010-2011; J. Gómez, 2004; McCarthy & Casey, 2008; Simister, 2013). Despite the value of romantic experiences and relationships, some gendered analyses present romantic love as being harmful, a direct cause of the reproduction of sexist roles and a trigger for gender violence. They argue that romantic love and the myths associated with it are based on an unequal conception of the relationship, generating dependence and leading to violence (Ferrer & Bosch, 2013). This interpretation has been integrated into awareness campaigns for the prevention of violence against women. However, other scientific studies do not support a causal link (Giordano, Longmore, & Manning, 2006; McCarthy & Casey, 2008; Valls et al., 2008) but rather clarify aspects of the relationship between romantic love and violence. First, there is a difference between sexism—as the representation of clearly established roles for men and women in which the woman is attributed a passive and dependent role—and gender violence, which is related to a relationship of abuse. If we examine men and women from previous generations, a great many could be described as sexist based on their socialization into a patriarchal society in which gender roles were clearly differentiated: Men used to handle public issues, and women used to do household chores. However, this does not necessarily mean that men in such a society were perpetrators. In a sexist context, there have always been both men who abuse women and men who do not but still have differentiated and stereotyped roles. Therefore, sexism does not directly equate to sexual abuse (Duque, 2010-2011; García, Ruiz, Puigvert, & Rué, 2009). Second, relationships that are grounded in feelings give rise to romantic love, which may prevent youths from developing violent attitudes. Moreover, both boys and girls can be emotionally committed to these types of feelings. Donna Chung (2007) provided narrative examples of teenage experiences of mutual support, understanding, and life prospects in both partners in romantic relationships. She even pointed out the positive influence of these relationships on academic performance. However, she also argued that as soon as the interests of relationship parties no longer converge, power interactions may come to the fore and relationship asymmetry arises.

Romantic love has frequently been associated with an ideal relationship state, with little adjustment to reality. This imbalance with respect to the real world and, in many cases, the masking of the relationship through misleading romantic attitudes, such as letters or flowers used in strategic way, creates confusion and encourages young people to employ self-deception to attain the ideal (Dunn, 1999; Towns & Adams, 2000). This association has been, to a great extent, responsible for associating romantic love with the possibility of suffering gender violence. However, we have found no studies that provide direct evidence of this link. Some studies have focused on content analysis of traditional tales to examine romantic and ideal love from the perspective of the reproduction of stereotypes about what is to be a man and a woman (Gilbert, 2002; Sanchez & Kwang, 2007). These studies highlight how traditional tales only show the traditional model of heterosexual relationship in a patriarchal structure. However, it does not follow that this entails violence. The "classic" princesses in the tales play a traditional role; they clearly follow a female stereotype. Does that mean that we can find sexism in some tales? Probably. At the same time, however, these princesses never fall in love with a prince who abuses them but only with individuals who express respect and affection. According to Martin and Kazyak (2009), this is a transformative love that is far from the control of any political or social force. Indeed, this may not constitute the reference model of relationships for all the human beings, merely a traditional, nonviolent model

of relationships. The danger, as pointed out by the authors, is that adolescents may regard such a model as ideal and thus encourage the reproduction of sexism and stereotypes. Thus, the problem is not the relationship model that the tales describe but the way that they are collectively told, transmitted, shared, and interpreted; that is, their use in the educative processes.

Our research on a communicative orientation, including dialogue between teenagers and researchers throughout the research process, has captured adolescents' perceptions, reflections, and experiences of romantic love. These dialogues have critical in clarifying the difference between ideal love and gender violence. In the following section, we will see how the communicative organization allowed the young people to take part in all stages of the research, from the initial moment of setting the research questions to the interpretation of the results and their dissemination (A. Gómez & Díez-Palomar, 2009; Tejedor & Pulido, 2012). Involving concerned voices in the research processes is one of the latest considerations in qualitative studies.

Communicative Organization of Research: Dialogue as a Means of Transformation and Construction of Knowledge

The communicative methodology and its organization encourage a constant dialogue between the life experiences and social constructions of the teenagers and youngsters and the scientific contributions of the research teams. It derives its validity from the attempt to attain a permanent understanding between both worlds and, in this way, opens new paths to the interpretation of social-educative problems. By introducing the voices of the concerned collectives in all the stages of the research, communicative research has created an opportunity to overcome inequality in the participation of excluded or silenced populations in the collective construction of knowledge (A. Gómez & Díez-Palomar, 2009; A. Gómez et al., 2012; Puigvert et al., 2012). We have seen the fruits of this union in the dialogue between scientific and experiential knowledge that we carried out around romantic love and the "supposed" links to violence. The main purpose of our research is to contribute to the prevention of gender violence among the adolescent population. In particular, we have focused on the analysis of two elements that influence youth socialization processes into sexual-affective relationships: the mirage of upward mobility and the conception of ideal love/romantic love (Duque, 2010-2011). The research leading to the definition of these elements includes four communicative focus groups, eight communicative daily life stories, and document analysis. Through these techniques, we gathered views and reflections of youngsters surrounding the presence or absence of violence in their relationships. Finally, our research included an advisory committee composed of young people of different ages, cultural background, and sexual orientations. They provided their reflections on the outcomes of the research based on their thoughts and experiences, so that they could be compared and contrasted with the scientific data.

The advisory committee was instrumental in clarifying assumptions about the meaning of ideal love, romantic love, and the traditional roles that appear in children's tales in relation to gender violence. An important aspect of a communicative organization of the research is establishing co-responsibility throughout the research process. This co-responsibility was developed in the following steps:

1. The derivation of the questions the teenagers were asked using different qualitative techniques;
2. tailoring the language used when talking about love and sexual relationships so that it would be more familiar to teenagers;
3. the method of presenting the knowledge to be discussed so that it would create a propitious and engaging communicative context with the young participants of the research (for instance, the advisory committee suggested illustrating the research with real-world examples from their own experiences and life contexts and ensuring that the situations presented were realistic enough to generate a problem-solving dialogue with the teenagers); and
4. reflecting on and providing new insights into the researchers' analyses and results, thus contributing to the construction of knowledge about the way in which the assumed link between violence and romantic love is developed.

In approaching the young people's reading of ideal love in a dialogic way, we realized that they do not link ideal love to only one model of relationships, as the literature suggests, but rather to a wide range of possible relationships that, for instance, include both heterosexual and homosexual models. The following excerpt is a reflection of this communicative process that generates learning for both the researchers and young participants. In the conversation, Emilia, age 17, considers that ideal love is necessary to achieve positive relationships and widen her prospects:

> Do you think that dreaming of an ideal love helps? Is it positive? Yes, of course, because I also believe that if you want something, you may as well think about it, imagine it, because if you don't, you don't have a referent of what you want; I mean, I think about what I want and then I look for it. If I don't think about it, I can't look for it. And this is the same: if I don't dream of my ideal love, I will never find it. (Duque, 2010-2011, p. 18)

The selection of advisory committee members was a relevant methodological issue. The main duties of the advisory committee were not only to monitor the process and guarantee validation of results but also to orient the focus of the universal capacity for language and argumentation, regardless of generational difference or language code, toward doing research "with" rather than "about" (Sordé & Ojala, 2010). The advisory committee did not include any "experts" in the subject knowledge (such as psychologists or educators); instead, young people with different age profiles were selected. They comprised three girls and three boys from a secondary school, between 14 and 18 years of age, and two undergraduate young women, aged 20 and 25 years. The selection was designed to reduce biases against underrepresented social groups.

In the first meeting, the researchers explained to the advisory committee members the reason for and value of their participation. Here, a girl explains what it meant for her to participate in this research and how the possibility of contrasting actual data about the topic brought her to question the link between romantic love and gender violence:

> Umm, after listening to what you just have said that, after all the analyses performed, nothing has been found that links gender violence and ideal love . . . It's logic! Because romantic love has nothing to do with gender violence, . . . with somebody who abuses you . . . That doesn't make any sense. (M. Arandia, personal communication, June 27, 2013)

This first contact allowed participants to begin building a common language and to reach some consensus around the object of study. To allow the participants to understand the research objectives and realize the value of their personal experiences and contributions, the researchers introduced the theoretical debate in the existing scientific literature and its impact on the social construction of the image of love. Later, the researchers explained the project design and anticipated fieldwork, which was to be refined with their help. The purpose was not to transfer scientific knowledge or to have the participants listen to researcher statements but rather to open up an egalitarian dialogue according to the postulates of communicative methodology (A. Gómez et al., 2012). This allowed the young people to link scientific data to their everyday experiences and to compare and contrast them through reflective thinking.

In advisory committee meetings, accumulated knowledge on the topic (from previous studies) is discussed, along with new data emerging from researchers' analyses and interpretations in the current study. In our case, this was one of the most complex and challenging tasks in terms of overcoming methodological gaps. In the meetings, we shared information from the review of previous studies, as well as new data from the analysis of fieldwork in which we failed to find any link between ideal love and gender violence. After sharing this information, the members of the advisory committee shared their thoughts and mostly corroborated our data. One girl said, "I believe that looking for the ideal love doesn't make me more vulnerable to gender violence," and "ideal love doesn't mean following just one model of relationship like that in the fairy tales, but there are different models of relationship." Another girl then talked about ideal love in relation to what is commonly known as the "Prince Charming" model, associated with the idea of seeking a partner with whom to share a life plan. She expressed that there is not just one but many prototypes for "Prince Charming." The egalitarian dialogue between science and the life-world can help to clarify constructions created by academics without considering people's lives. This girl, aged 19, pointed out,

> I know that, for me, the "Prince Charming" is the ideal person, and it is a positive feeling, but for me he can be a different "Prince Charming" than that of, I don't know, that of a punk girl, who maybe has a different "Prince Charming" in mind; so I think that yes, it is positive. Is it mushy? Well, it isn't! Everybody would love to find the ideal person for them. (Duque, 2010-2011, p. 19)

In the case of the research presented here, it was important to discuss not only the contents of the research with the advisory body but also the context in which the meeting took place. It is important to create egalitarian contexts, that is, to create a relaxed atmosphere for the dialogue. The meeting is also an opportunity to break from stereotypes and images linked to the researcher power and to develop fruitful dialogues with carefully chosen meeting scenarios. Another key element was the attitude the researcher assumed in the dialogue. The scientific data were provided from a horizontal position, with an attitude of sharing and openness to listen. The moderation of the debate, encouraging dialogical interactions from experiences, thoughts, and comments, was important. It was particularly important to assure that all participants in the meeting had space to talk.

Working side-by-side, researchers and youngsters not only demonstrated the detachment between romantic love and gender violence but also generated a series of recommendations for broadening thinking on this matter in the field of education, both in schools and in other informal educational spaces, such as leisure clubs, where young people participate. To that end, we also had meetings with teachers and leisure monitors to critically consider the matter, providing the educational tasks that they develop and their contact with adolescents.

Finally, dissemination was also conceived of as new moments of intersubjective dialogue in which the different agents analyze and question the results of the research. Among other materials developed for dissemination purposes, we created a video with the most essential conclusions about the lack of a relation between ideal and romantic love and gender violence. The video, which

was requested by the participants and is accessible through social networks, has also become a reference material for tutorials and debates in high schools and adult learning centers. The reflection of a 25-year-old woman was very enlightening in this respect:

> I was less tolerant before, but now I pay more attention to what's going on. I watch TV . . . but I watch it with an active attitude . . . And I listen to the youth differently now . . . because we need more spaces to talk to peers, and compare, and build ourselves up. (M. Arandia, personal communication, June 27, 2013)

Final Considerations

Methodological reflections on this communicative research process led us to consider that when research creates opportunities for young individuals to talk to us about their experiences and constructions of ideal and romantic love, they can improve their understanding of what this love means for them and they can challenge stereotypes in the literature and collective imagination. These dialogues have helped to enrich the existing scientific knowledge on the topic by including contributions not only from our analyses as researchers but also from the lived experiences of the participants in the study. For the researchers, it has provided a context of epistemological openness and committed action toward overcoming misunderstandings about romantic love, and it has contributed new elements to the theoretical framework of preventive socialization against gender violence. For the young participants, it has helped them become aware of the socialization processes that ground many of their everyday relational behaviors. When this new knowledge comes together and is transmitted through new dialogues with friends in their specific realities, such as youth clubs and organizations, school contexts, and social media, the multiplier effect can be unpredictable. The communicative organization of the research, particularly advisory committees, thus presents opportunities for the transformation of understandings and meanings about young people's relationships.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.[AQ: 4]

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.[AQ: 5]

References

Bai, M. (2012). Love, sex, marriage: A family history on the women's side. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *18*, 475-481. doi:10.1177/1077800412442819

Bosch Fiol, E. (2004-2007). *Del mito del amor romántico a la violencia contra las mujeres en la pareja. Estudios e Investigaciones* [From romantic love myth to gender against women. Studies and Researches]. Madrid: Women's Institute, Spanish Ministry for Equality.

Chung, D. (2007). Making meaning of relationships: Young women's experiences and understanding of dating violence. *Violence Against Women*, *13*, 1274-1295. doi:10.1177/1077801207310433

Dunn, J. L. (1999). What love has to do with it: The cultural construction of emotion and sorority women's responses to forcible interaction. *Social Problems*, *46*, 440-459. doi:10.2307/3097109

Duque, E. (2010-2011). *Miratge de l'ascens i amor ideal. Noves propostes preventives de la violència masclista* [Climbing mirage and ideal love. New preventive proposals against gender-based violence]. Barcelona, Spain: Catalan Institute for Women, Catalan Government.

Eisikovits, Z., Winstok, Z., & Fishman, G. (2004). The first Israeli National Survey on domestic violence. *Violence Against Women*, *10*, 729-748. doi:10.1177/1077801204265549

Ferrer, V., & Bosch, E. (2013). Del amor romántico a la violencia de género. Para una coeducación emocional en la agenda educativa. *Profesorado. Revista de curriculum y formación del profesorado*, *17*(1), 105-122. Retrieved from http://www.ugr.es/~recfpro/rev171ART7.pdf

García, J., Ruiz, L., Puigvert, L., & Rué, J. (2009). *Hipatia de Alejandría* [Hypatia of Alexandria]. Barcelona, Spain: Hipatia Editorial.

Gilbert, P. R. (2002). Discourses of female violence and societal gender stereotypes. *Violence Against Women*, *8*, 1271-1300. doi:10.1177/107780102762478019

Giordano, P. C., Longmore, M. A., & Manning, W. D. (2006). Gender and the meanings of adolescent romantic relationships: A focus on boys. *American Sociological Review*, *71*, 260-287. doi:10.1177/000312240607100205

Gómez, A., & Díaz-Palomar, J. (2009). Metodología comunicativa crítica. Transformaciones y cambios en el siglo xxi [Critical communicative methodology. Transformations and changes in the twenty-first century]. *Teoría de la educación. Educación y cultura en la sociedad de la información*, *10*(3), 103-118. Retrieved from http://campus.usal.es/~teoriaeducacion/rev_numero_10_03/n10_03_gomez_diez.pdf

Gómez, A., Siles, G., & Tejedor, M. (2012). Contribuyendo a la transformación social a través de la metodología comunicativa de investigación [Contributing to social transformation through communicative research methodology]. *Qualitative Research in Education*, *1*, 36-57. doi:10.4471/qre.2012.02

Gómez, J. (2004). *El amor en la sociedad del Riesgo: Una tentativa educativa* [Love in the risk society: An educational approach]. Barcelona, Spain: El Roure.

Holter, Ø. G. (2013). Masculinities, gender equality and violence. *Masculinities and Social Change*, *2*, 51-81. doi:10.4471/MCS.2013.21

Jaspard, M., & équipe Enveff. (2003). *Les violences envers les femmes en France. Une enquête nationale* [Violence against women in France: A national survey]. Paris: La documentation Française.

Martin, K. A., & Kazyak, E. (2009). Hetero-romantic love and heterosexiness in children's g-rated films. *Gender & Society*, *23*, 315-336. doi:10.1177/0891243209335635

Mazzei, L., & Jackson, A. Y. (2012). Complicating voice in a refusal to "Let participants speak for themselves." *Qualitative Inquiry*, *18*, 745-751. doi:10.1177/1077800412453017

McCarthy, B., & Casey, T. (2008). Love, sex, and crime: Adolescent romantic relationships and offending. *American Sociological Review*, *73*, 944-969. doi:10.1177/000312240807300604

Morales, C. (2011, November 25). Cuando amar demasiado se convierte en trampa [When loving too much becomes a trap]. *El Mundo*. Available from http://www.elmundo.es

Puigvert, L., Christou, M., & Holford, J. (2012). Critical communicative methodology: Including vulnerable voices in research through dialogue. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, *42*, 513-526. doi:10.1080/0305764X.2012.733341

Sanchez, D. T., & Kwang, T. (2007). When the relationship becomes her: Revisiting women's body concerns from a relationship contingency perspective. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *31*, 401-414. doi:10.1111/j.1471-6402.2007.00389.x

Simister, J. (2013). Women's education reduces risk of gender-based violence: Evidence from 33 Countries. *Multidisciplinary Journal of Gender Studies*, *2*, 150-181. doi:10.4471/generos.2013.24

Sordé, T., & Ojala, M. (2010). Actos Comunicativos Dialógicos y Actos Comunicativos de Poder en la Investigación. *Revista Signos*, *43*, 377-391. doi:10.4067/S0718-09342010000400008

Tejedor, S., & Pulido, C. (2012). Challenges and risks of internet use by children. How to empower minors? *Comunicar*, *39*(20), 65-72. doi:10.3916/C39-2012-02-06

Towns, A., & Adams, P. (2000). If I really loved him enough, He would be okay. *Violence Against Women*, *6*, 558-585. doi:10.1177/10778010022182038

Valls, R., Puigvert, L., & Duque, E. (2008). Gender violence among teenagers. Socialization and prevention. *Violence Against Women*, *14*, 759-785. doi:10.1177/1077801208320365

[AQ: 6]

Author Biographies

Montserrat Yuste is a predoctoral fellowship researcher in the Department of Didactics of Social Science at the Autonomous University of Barcelona and member of CREA's (Centre of Research in Theories and Practices that Overcome Inequalities) Women Group SAPPHO at the University of Barcelona. Her areas of research include gender studies, especially adolescents and at-risk collectives.

M. Angeles Serrano is lecturer in the Department of Sociological Theory, Methodology of Social Sciences, and Legal Philosophy at the University of Barcelona. She has worked with non-academic women for more than 13 years. Her research and publications focus on social inclusion of at-risk collectives, gender and the social uses of information technologies and communication.

Sandra Girbés is a PhD candidate with a predoctoral fellowship in education at the University of Barcelona and a researcher at CREA. Her research focuses on the prevention of gender-based violence among youngsters and community involvement.

Maite Arandia holds a PhD in pedagogy and is full professor in the Department of Didactics and School Organization at the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU). She has extensive expertise teaching women teachers. Her areas of research and publication focus on gender, communicative methodology, and social inequalities.