UNIVERSITAT DE BARCELONA

Our Right to the Pleasure of Falling in Love. Contributions from the Preventive Socialization of Gender-Based Violence

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PhD Thesis

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Abstract

Research has shown the existence in our societies of a Coercive Dominant Discourse (CDD), which, through the socialization process, enforces a link between attraction and violence. Conveyed through TV shows, songs, social media or peer interactions, among others, this discourse socializes many youths in developing feelings of attraction and desirability towards partners with violent attitudes and behaviors. However, even if pleasure is identified as one of the main motivations when engaging in sexual relationships, research has not yet explored the link that exists between the CDD and pleasure.

Drawing on this evidence, the main goal of the thesis here presented is to contribute new knowledge to the study of pleasure in sexual-affective relationships from a sociological perspective. Indeed, it intends to provide youth with further scientific evidence that allows them to unmask the myths of coerced relationships, so they can freely choose the relationships they want to have, in line with the preventive socialization of gender violence. To this end, six different research have been conducted. Two of these include literature reviews, while the other four are based on empirical research. Among the latter, one of them presents a methodological contribution. The results obtained provide new insights regarding the impact of the CDD and the preventive socialization of gender-based violence. The characteristics of the sexual relationships that girls and young women have are presented, as well as the experience of pleasure associated to each of them. Finally, transformative actions that allow the overcoming and rejection of the CDD in relation to pleasure are also outlined. All these findings provide new evidence towards making relationships based on freedom a possibility for all.

Resumen

Numerosas investigaciones han demostrado la existencia en nuestras sociedades de un Discurso Coercitivo Dominante (DCD) que, a través del proceso de socialización, refuerza el vínculo entre atracción y violencia. Impuesto a través de programas de televisión, canciones, medios de comunicación social o interacciones entre iguales, entre otros, este discurso socializa a muchos y muchas jóvenes en el desarrollo de sentimientos de atracción y deseo hacia personas con actitudes y comportamientos violentos. Sin embargo, aunque el placer se identifique como una de las principales motivaciones a la hora de establecer relaciones sexuales, la investigación aún no ha explorado el vínculo que existe entre el DCD y el placer.

A partir de estas evidencias, el objetivo principal de la tesis que aquí se presenta es aportar nuevos conocimientos al estudio del placer en las relaciones afectivo-sexuales desde una perspectiva sociológica. Pretende proporcionar a los y las jóvenes más evidencias científicas que les permitan desenmascarar los mitos de las relaciones coercitivas, para que puedan elegir libremente las relaciones que quieren tener, en línea con la socialización preventiva de la violencia de género. Para ello, se han realizado seis investigaciones diferentes. Dos de ellas incluyen revisiones bibliográficas, mientras que las otras cuatro se basan en investigaciones empíricas. Entre estas últimas, una de ellas presenta una aportación metodológica. Los resultados obtenidos aportan nuevos conocimientos sobre el impacto del DCD y la socialización preventiva de la violencia de género. Se presentan las características de las relaciones sexuales que mantienen las chicas y mujeres jóvenes, así como la vivencia del placer asociada a cada una de ellas. Finalmente, también se exponen las acciones transformadoras que permiten la superación y el rechazo del DCD en relación con el placer. Todos estos resultados aportan nuevas evidencias para que las relaciones basadas en la libertad sean una posibilidad para todos y todas.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Presentation

The current thesis dissertation was developed during the development of the MEMO4LOVE R+D project. This Project relies on the line of research on preventive socialization of gender-based violence developed by the research center CREA. The underlying idea of this line of research is the existence of a Coercive Dominant Discourse (CDD) that socializes young women in the attraction to violent models of masculinity (Puigvert et al., 2019).

In an initial stage, the contribution of this thesis dissertation was to develop a project aimed at children from 2 to 18 years old, for the implementation in schools of an educational action, the Dialogic Literary Gatherings. The development of such project envisioned fostering social improvement, based on the educational achievement that this educational action has shown to promote, as well as on its great potential on the prevention and transformation of personal relationships. In this sense, the project intended to encourage, from an early age, the construction of relationships that reject both, violence and arguments based on power claims, replacing them with validity claims (Habermas, 1984). Nevertheless, the research under the MEMO4LOVE project has contributed findings which have allowed the identification of new avenues for research. One of these contributions is the identification that memories of violent sexual-affective relationships can carry associated feelings of attraction and desire as a consequence of the influence of the CDD. Given the prospective functions of memories, this fact can put young women at risk of suffering gender-based violence (Racionero-Plaza et al., 2018). Drawing on these, one of the aspects that requires further study is the reasons that influence young women's choice for one or another intimate partner and relationship.

Considering these findings, it is our goal to redirect this PhD thesis towards the sociological study of pleasure in sexual-affective relationships, in order to provide new evidence to the preventive socialization of gender violence that allows young people to unmask the myths of coerced relationships and choose relationships based on freedom. To address this goal, four specific objectives have been established. These are aimed at (1) the understanding of the coercive dominant discourse in the current context; (2) the identification of the characteristics of the different relationships that girls and young women have, as well as (3) the influence of these relationships in the understanding and capacity to feel sexual pleasure that girls and young women have, and finally, (4) the identification of transformative actions that challenge the coercive dominant discourse in relation to pleasure. To address these goals, the current thesis includes six research, each of them presented as a chapter of this work.

The first of the objectives is addressed as part of the literature review conducted for each publication. However, chapter two, which presents the article *Sociological Theory from Dialogic Democracy* (Torras-Gómez et al., 2019), contributes to frame the current issue. Indeed, we find ourselves at a time in which the functioning of our social and personal lives is increasingly based on dialogue, and this first article offers an overview of the contributions of sociological theory to the understanding of current societies. Particularly, the article delves in the dialogic turn of societies and how research and sociological theory can contribute the theoretical foundations to understand and address current social challenges. Furthermore, it gathers evidence on the need to consider such dialogic orientation not only in reference to the issues to be explored, but also in the design of the research that seeks to bring new contributions to the topics of social concern. In this vein, the article presents evidence on the contributions of the Communicative Methodology in the production of research with social impact.

Chapters three and four present research that contributes to the second and third specific objectives. More precisely, the article presented in chapter three, *Our Right to the Pleasure of Falling in Love* (Torras-Gómez et al., 2020), provides new evidence on how the type of relationships of choice influences the pleasure the participants associate to their intimate relationships, and the consequences of their past choices in current relationships. Through the powerful narratives of the participants of the research, this contribution points out at the fact that pleasure is socially constructed, the effects of the kind of relationships and partners in the construction of pleasure, and the possibilities of transformation towards free relationships in which pleasure is regained. Alongside, chapter four, in which the article *Changes in Tongue Kissing in Hook-Ups after COVID-19* (Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2020) is presented, shows how the current pandemic context offers individuals an opportunity for reflection that includes as well sexual-affective relationships. In this vein, the mentioned article presents evidence on how participants changed their current perception of past relationships under the context of COVID-19, as well as their own perception of the likelihood that they engage in these same practices in the future, becoming more selective according to their own desires and, thus, increasing their capacity to freely choose the relationships they want to have.

The last of the specific objectives is introduced with chapter four, and developed in chapters five to seven. With a focus on the transformative actions that contribute to preventing and overcoming the CDD, chapter four already points out at the potential of reflection towards challenging relationships influenced by the CDD. In chapter five, the article entitled *The emergence of the language of desire toward nonviolent relationships during the dialogic literary gatherings* (López de Aguileta et al., 2020), presents an educational action, the Dialogic Literary Gatherings (DLG). More precisely, it provides evidence of a new impact of DLG, which refers to the emergence of language expressing desire and attraction towards nonviolent partners and relationships in the context of such educational action. Along this line, chapter six, reviews DLG in light of the Bourdieusian theories of distinction and reproduction. The article presented in this chapter, *Challenging Bourdieu's Theory: Dialogic Interaction as a Means to Provide Access to Highbrow Culture for All* (Torras-Gómez et al., 2021), challenges these theories by providing evidence of how DLG, based on democratic and egalitarian values, allow all citizens to benefit from the best cultural creations of humanity. Therefore, this article contributes evidence that supports how not only those with higher social, cultural and economic capital can benefit from the impact identified on chapter five, but any individual regardless of their socio-economic background. Finally, chapter seven, through the article entitled *Dialogic Reconstruction of Memory: a methodological contribution aimed at social impact on youth's sexual-affective relationships* (López de Aguileta et al., in press) introduces a new methodological contribution within the Communicative Methodology (CM), the Dialogic Reconstruction of Memory (DRM). More precisely, it presents how DRM emerges from research on the preventive socialization of gender-based violence, while it outlines the modifications to communicative interviews that allow for it, as well as the possibilities for personal transformation that the DRM opens.

The final sections of this thesis will gather a presentation of the results and their subsequent discussion, as well as the overall conclusion of the current thesis. Such chapters are not a mere summary of the articles presented. On the contrary, they offer a discussion of the results obtained in relation to the research objectives established in this thesis. Furthermore, the annex section contains formal documents that attest the scientific validity and excellence of the scientific contributions included in this work.

1.2. Justification

We find ourselves at a time in which society is demanding solutions to problems of utmost human concern, as gender-based violence and the overcoming of power relationships. This has been clearly defined in the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and, more precisely in SDG 5, which focuses on Gender Equality. Thus, in order to meet the demands of citizens regarding the achievement of gender equality, researchers must provide scientific evidence on the underlying elements that facilitate the reproduction of the aforementioned gender imbalance. Furthermore, research also needs to go one step beyond and provide the keys to prevent and overcome the exiting inequalities, so any women and men who so desire can build the best relationships, based on freedom and equality.

Research has shown that the power imbalance that leads to gender inequalities finds its origin not in our biological nature, but in a social construction. Berger & Luckmann in *The social construction of reality* (1966) already pointed out how through the process of socialization individuals acquire the needed understandings to become members of society. In this process, they internalize the set of roles and behaviors that are present in their context and that sustain it. More recent studies have found that one of the domains in which individuals are socialized is that of intimate relationships (Gómez, 2015). This approach has contributed to overcoming myths in sexual-affective relationships, such as the fact that these are not a product of biology, neither do they respond to a "mystical" nature of attraction and falling in love. On the contrary, following the socialization process, the feelings of attraction and desire (or lack thereof) that underlie sexual-affective relationships are socialized. Indeed, it is in the interactions with significant others that the individual internalizes the social reality, and this process remains active throughout the individual's lifespan.

Recent studies on sexual-affective relationships have unveiled the existence of a Coercive Dominant Discourse (CDD) that affects the socialization process of many youth regarding their intimate relationships (Gómez, 2015). The CDD links attraction to violence, while it associates egalitarian values to a convenience that is ultimately stripped from any hint of desire (Gómez, 2015; Puigvert et al., 2019). The process of socialization starts in childhood, with the family as the main socializing agent. Thus, from an early age, this discourse is transmitted through the many interactions individuals have in their everyday lives, including those with significant others and through the media (e.g. songs, movies, shows, social media…), progressively shaping preference and taste in relationships.

Beyond what they are taught within their families, teenagers keep learning about intimate relationships in a social context in which the CDD prevails (Gómez, 2015). Indeed, during adolescence, the interactions teenagers have with peers on sexual-affective relationships, the topics of choice and how these are discussed, are key in the development of their understanding of sexual-affective relationships (Giordano, 2003). For girls, these interactions can entail peer pressure that leads in many cases to the initiations of relationships under such pressure (Collins et al., 2009). This is especially relevant when taking into account that girls' development of attraction towards aggressive boys (Puigvert et al., 2019) can make them vulnerable to experiencing negative initial intimate relationships, which is associated to later problems, including being in abusive sexual-affective relationships (Bukowski et al., 2000). Such evidence are also supported from the field of socioneuroscience (Puigvert Mallart et al., 2019). Studies from this line of research show that the internalization that an individual undergoes shapes its neural networks, with its subsequent consequences regarding its own thoughts, feelings and behaviors. This means that an individual who, through the CDD, is socialized in an attraction to violence, internalizes violent characteristics and attitudes in a partner or relationship as exciting. When a certain level of internalization has been reached, such individual will feel aroused by partners portraying such characteristics in an almost unconscious manner, while the repetition of such

experiences will contribute to strengthening the neural connections that supported them in the first place (Puigvert Mallart et al., 2019). Thus, from a very young age, the CDD shapes and defines what is attractive and exiting and what is convenient but dull for many children, adolescents and adults, affecting their capacity of volition.

However, as aforementioned, socialization is a lifelong process, and what has been socialized at a certain age can be re-socialized later on in life. As seen before, in this process language and interactions play a key role. These elements become of increased relevance at a time in which society is becoming more and more dialogical (Padrós & Flecha, 2014). Indeed, more than ever, individuals make dialogue a part of their lives. Through and with it, they reflect with others about the options they have and the life they want to build. Taking this dialogic turn to the field of intimate relationships (Puigvert, 2012) shows the potential for individuals to reflect on, transform and create relationships that reflect the dialogic values, unveiling power relationships and coercive discourses and overcoming them through dialogue. Indeed, such principle is at the very core of the Preventive Socialization of Gender-Based Violence. This line of research sets its focus on the coercive interactions that link attraction to violence, with the aim to unveil them. Furthermore, the research under this line also seeks to provide new knowledge on the interactions that socialize as attractive both the rejection of violent models and the defense of equality. This approach provides not only understandings regarding the choice of relationships, but also on the needed elements to promote interactions that socialize in the association of attraction to violence rejection and equality.

In light of this evidence, the current thesis aims to continue advancing new knowledge within the line of research of the preventive socialization of gender-based violence. Particularly, it focuses on the interactions and relationships of adolescents and young adults around the construction of the ideas of pleasure and attraction. This approach contributes to unveiling the fact that the CDD shapes narratives around these elements. Alongside it shows that since pleasure and attraction are socially constructed, they can also be socially rebuilt through interactions in the direction that each individual wants, so that each person can freely choose the relationships they want to have.

1.3. Objectives

The current PhD thesis is aimed at studying pleasure in sexual-affective relationships from a sociological perspective. The goal is to provide new scientific evidence that allow young people unmask the myths of coerced relationships and have the ability to choose relationships based on freedom, in line with the preventive socialization of gender violence. The achievement of this goal is broken down into the following four specific objectives:

SO1. To delve in the foundations of the coercive dominant discourse and the preventive socialization of gender violence.

SO2. To analyze the characteristics of the sexual-affective relationships that girls and young women have.

SO3. To analyze the consequences of the sexual-affective relationships that girls and young women have in their experience of sexual pleasure.

SO4. To identify transformative actions that allow rejecting and / or overcoming coercive discourse in relation to pleasure.

Table 1 summarizes which of the articles that integrate this thesis respond to each of the established objectives:

Table 1. Relationship between published articles and specific objectives of research

Title of the article	Objective(s) it contributes to
Sociological Theory from Dialogic Democracy (Chapter 2)	SO1
Our Right to the Pleasure of Falling in Love (Chapter 3)	SO1, SO2, SO3
Changes in Tongue Kissing in Hook-Ups after COVID-19 (Chapter 4)	SO1, SO2, SO3, SO4
The emergence of the language of desire toward nonviolent relationships during the dialogic literary gatherings (Chapter 5)	SO4
Challenging Bourdieu's Theory: Dialogic Interaction as a Means to Provide Access to Highbrow Culture for All (Chapter 6)	SO4
Dialogic Reconstruction of Memory: a methodological contribution aimed at social impact on youth's sexual-affective relationships (Chapter 7)	SO1, SO4

In order to address SO1 *To delve in the foundations of the coercive dominant discourse and the preventive socialization of gender violence,* a literature review was conducted in the main scientific databases, more specifically in JCR and SCOPUS. This literature review is part of the state of the art of the articles presented in chapters three, four, five and seven. Each of these present the coercive dominant discourse and the main findings up to that moment in reference to the particular topic that each paper explores. First, the sate of the art in the article *Our Right to the Pleasure of Falling in Love* presents the state of the art regarding pleasure in hookups and stable relationships. Particularly, it pointa at the shortcomings of current theories to understand pleasure in sexual-affective relationships, as well as the need to explore pleasure under the lens of the CDD for a more comprehensive understanding that allows the prevention and transformation of coerced relationships. Second, the literature review article *Changes in Tongue Kissing in Hook-Ups after COVID-19* presents, on the one hand, the scarce literature that exists regarding intimate relationships in the context of pandemics and, on the other hand, need to explore these under the lens of the CDD. Third, the literature review in the article *Dialogic Reconstruction of Memory: a methodological contribution aimed at social impact on youth's sexual-*

affective relationships focuses on the creative role of dialogue when qualitative methodologies of research are oriented to social impact, such as the case of the Communicative Methodology, in connection with the malleable nature of autobiographical memory and the prospective influence on behavior of narrative. More precisely, the review explores these two elements in research that focuses on the preventive socialization of gender-based violence, as well as on how available knowledge on the CDD contributes to the achievement of social impact in its field of focus. Therefore, the four perspectives presented in the four mentioned articles contribute to delving in the understanding of the CDD, as well as to the identification of the gaps that research still needs to cover.

Nevertheless, the article *Sociological Theory from Dialogic Democracy*, presented in chapter one, specifically contributes to the understanding and definition of SO1, by framing the contribution of the current thesis within the dialogic turn of societies and the contributions that sociological theory can make. These include not only the understanding of such dialogic turn, but also the capitalization of the democratic principles on which such turn stands. Indeed, this article presents how citizens increasingly demand more freedom to decide about their lives, and how dialogue takes a central part in such decisions. Moreover, the article contributes evidence of how the Communicative Methodology, aimed at the achievement of social impact, is succeeding at providing evidence that directly responds to citizens' needs, by integrating them in every stage of research, from the establishment of the research priorities to the validation of the results obtained. Such approach is directly in line with the principle of co-creation of knowledge between science and society, and feeds into the democratic broadening of social spaces, by providing citizens with the necessary knowledge to freely decide about the issues that affect their life, including their personal relationships.

SO2 *To analyze the characteristics of the sexual-affective relationships that girls and young women have* and SO3 *To analyze the consequences of the sexual-affective relationships that girls and young women have in their experience of sexual pleasure* have been addressed through two different research. The first research is presented in the article *Our Right to the Pleasure of Falling in Love,* which explores the sexual pleasure of participant young women aged 20-29 regarding the type of relationship they had in their teen years and the type of relationship they currently have, as well as their feelings about the two. Pleasure is often presented as something inherent to sexual-affective relationships; nevertheless, research has already shown the social nature of attraction and desire. The current research contributes to SO2 and SO3 by drawing on this approach to explore how sexual pleasure is related to the partner and relationship of choice, which in turn is influenced by the CDD. Indeed, such approach contributes to unveiling the lack of sexual pleasure in coerced relationships and allows to vindicate our right as women to the pleasure of falling in love, challenging the narratives based on double standards that separate what is convenient from what is desirable.

The second research that responds to SO2 and SO3 was published in the article entitled *Changes in Tongue Kissing in Hook-Ups after COVID-19*. This article explores perceptions of past tongue-kissing experiences in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. More precisely, it captures how, at the time of the study, participants review their perceptions of tongue-kissing in past hookups, regarding how they rated them, the feelings they associate to them and the memories they have about them. Such approach allows the provision of new evidence regarding how the current context opens new possibilities for reflection on past relationships, which in turn provides new opportunities to question and overcome the impositions of the CDD.

Finally, SO4 *To identify transformative actions that allow rejecting and / or overcoming coercive discourse in relation to pleasure* was addressed through four research. Firstly, the last-mentioned article, *Changes in Tongue Kissing in Hook-Ups after COVID-19,* contributes a first transformative

element from the perspective of reflection. Along this line, it explores the impact that introducing the variable of the pandemic has on how participants see their past relationships and how they feel about their future ones, provided that COVID-19 can be transmitted through kissing.

Secondly, the article on *The emergence of the language of desire toward nonviolent relationships during the dialogic literary gatherings* contributes to the achievement of SO4 by exploring how reading and establishing a dialogue around the best literary contributions of humanity within the context of DLG allows the emergence of the language of desire towards nonviolent partners and relationships. Such contribution unveils the existence of a new impact of DLG that overcomes the separation of the language of ethics from the language of desire, uniting in turn what is attractive with what its convenient; what is desirable with what is good. In light of the power of narratives and interactions in the construction of pleasure, the identification of such impact directly feeds to SO4.

Along this line, the article entitled *Challenging Bourdieu's Theory: Dialogic Interaction as a Means to Provide Access to Highbrow Culture for All*, contributes to SO4 through the consolidation of the impact fostered by the former article on DLG. More precisely, it provides evidence of how highbrow culture is accessible and beneficial to all, challenging the Bourdieusian theories of *Distinction* and *Reproduction*, according to which only those from a higher class can truly access and benefit from highbrow culture. Thus, the current article contributes to SO4 by delving on the impacts of DLG in light of the seven principles of dialogic learning. To that end, it analyzes publications of successful cases in which participants from all socio-economic backgrounds improved different dimensions of their lives through their participation in the DLG.

Last, the research published under the article *Dialogic Reconstruction of Memory: a methodological contribution aimed at social impact on youth's sexual-affective relationships* contributes to SO4 from a methodological perspective. More precisely it identifies how orienting towards social impact research on the preventive socialization of gender-based violence leads participants in such research to a Dialogic Reconstruction of Memory. Furthermore, it explains how DRM is possible thanks to a series of methodological adjustments introduced in interviews designed under the Communicative Methodology, which in turn lead participants to a series of transformative reflections. These not only allow them to reconstruct their memories of past relationships, but also put them in a path for personal transformation based on breaking with the pressures of the CDD and on opening the possibility to freely choose the relationships they want to have, which in turn affect their construction of pleasure.

1.4. Methodology

The current PhD thesis is framed under the Communicative Methodology (CM) (Gómez et al., 2019). This methodology of research does not only yield scientific impact, producing robust scientific contributions, but also social impact, by yielding results that contribute to the transformation of social realities. CM is based on dialogue as the tool through which researchers and participants build new intersubjective understandings of the reality under exploration. In this vein, and egalitarian dialogue is established, in which researchers contribute scientific evidence to the topic being discussed, while participants contribute their everyday knowledge and cultural intelligence. Such participation is not limited to data gathering, since participants intervene in all stages of research. Such approach was first introduced with the FP5 project WORKALÓ (2001-2004), setting the foundations for the co-creation of scientific knowledges between researchers and citizens.

As outlined in the presentation, the current work comprises six scientific articles. *Table 2* provides an overview of each of these articles

Table 2. Summary of the Thesis articles

Title of the article	Year	Authorship (*corresponding author)	Journal	Database	Publication status
Sociological Theory from Dialogic Democracy	2019	Torras-Gómez, E*., Guo, M., & Ramis, M.	RIMCIS	SCOPUS (Q2, 2020)	Published
Our Right to the Pleasure of Falling in Love	2020	Torras-Gómez, E., Puigvert, L.*, Aiello, E., & Khalfaoui, A	Frontiers in Psychology	JCR (Q2, 2019) SCOPUS (Q2, 2020)	Published
Changes in Tongue Kissing in Hook-Ups after COVID-19	2020	Ruiz-Eugenio, L.*, Torras-Gómez, E., López de Aguileta-Jaussi, G., & Gutiérrez-Fernández, N.	Sustainability	SCOPUS (Q1, 2020) JCR (Q2, 2019)	Published
The emergence of the language of desire toward nonviolent relationships during the dialogic literary gatherings	2020	López de Aguileta, G., Torras-Gómez, E., García-Carrión, R.*, & Flecha, R	Language & Education	JCR (Q1, 2019) SCOPUS (Q1, 2020)	Published
Challenging Bourdieu's Theory: Dialogic Interaction as a Means to Provide Access to Highbrow Culture for All	2021	Torras-Gómez, E., Ruiz-Eugenio, L., Sordé-Martí, T., & Duque, E	SAGE Open	SCOPUS (Q2, 2020) JCR (Q4, 2019)	Published
Dialogic Reconstruction of Memory: a methodological contribution aimed at social impact on youth's sexual-affective relationships	2021	López de Aguileta, G., Torras-Gómez, E.*, Padrós, M., & Oliver, E	IJQM	JCR (Q1, 2019) SCOPUS (Q1, 2020	Accepted

The first of the articles, *Sociological Theory from Dialogic Democracy*, presented in chapter 2, and the fifth, *Challenging Bourdieu's Theory: Dialogic Interaction as a Means to Provide Access to Highbrow Culture for All*, presented in chapter 6, are based on a literature review. To develop both, a keyword search of articles in the scientific databases of SCOPUS and JCR was conducted, in order to ensure the quality of the referenced studies. In addition, the literature reviews were complemented with the inclusion of scientific books.

The rest of the articles that integrate the current thesis are based on empirical research. For the article *Our Right to the Pleasure of Falling in Love*, presented in chapter 3, thirteen communicative interviews were conducted with young women aged 20-29 years of age. All interviews were audio-recorded and the researchers also took notes of the development of the interviews.

The research presented in chapter 4, *Changes in Tongue Kissing in Hook-Ups after COVID-19*, was conducted in three steps. First participants completed a series of questions through questionnaire. Then, they watched a short video that portrayed how fast COVID-19 could be spread at a social gathering. Finally, participants filled in the same questionnaire, so we could compare how they answers had changed after watching the video. In this case the final group of participants was integrated by 20 young women aged 18 – 30 years old.

The article presented in chapter 5 was based on the case studies of two different schools implementing DLG. A total of 113 students aged 11-13 years old from both schools participated in the study, divided into five groups. A single researchers conducted a total of 28 participatory observations of the DLG sessions with all the different groups. A teacher was also present in all the sessions, and conducted the role of moderator. All sessions were audio recorded and notes were taken about the development of the sessions.

Finally, the paper presented in chapter 7 was based on six communicative interviews, divided into two groups. The first group was integrated by three scientists, two men and one women, who lead studies on youth's sexual-affective relationships in the Spanish and European context. The second group was composed by three women who had already participated in scientific studies on youth's sexual-affective relationships. In this case as well, all sessions were audio recorded, and notes were taken on the interviews by the researchers conducting the study.

For all the empirical research described in chapters 3, 4 and 7, informed consent forms were distributed to participants. These informed consent forms had information on the aim of the study, what participation entitled and the tasks to be conducted. Participants were given time to read all the provided information and were offered support from the researchers in case they had any questions. The consent forms clearly established that participation was voluntary and that they could quit the study at any time. In the case of the research described in chapter 5, consent from the families of the children participating in the study was obtained through the respective schools. In both cases, a researcher was in close contact with the principal and teachers, in case any questions or issues could arise. No sessions were conducted with individual students, and at all times two adults, the teacher and the researcher, were present in the classroom at all times. All observations and the focus group were conducted at the students' schools.

2. Sociological Theory from Dialogic Democracy

2.1. Presentation

Development consists of the removal of various types of unfreedoms that leave people with little choice and little opportunity of exercising their reasoned agency. The removal of substantial unfreedoms, it is argued here, is constitutive of development.

Amartya Sen - Development as Freedom

The development of social sciences as disciplines cannot be detached from the emergence of democracies. As a natural consequence of their newly conquered freedom, citizens demanded scientific knowledge that allowed them to effectively develop their acquired rights. Indeed, exerting these rights required understanding the consequences behind each option before being able to choose the best one for them.

Indeed, since their creation, society has demanded sociological theories to bear this direct connection with democracy. Moreover, in recent years it has been observed how the evolution of democracies has taken a dialogic turn (Giddens et al., 1994; Habermas, 1984, 1987). Citizens increasingly demand to be able to actively participate in the different social spheres on a democratic basis. In this vein, they do not only want their voices to be heard, but to actively participate in the definition and overcoming of the issues that affect their lives. Furthermore, the evolution of democratic societies towards the strengthening of democracy, as would be the case of the dialogic turn, brings along the demand for science to be increasingly more democratic, allowing participants to engage in research in equal terms and in all its phases. As well, citizens increasingly demand research to provide successful solutions for the issues that affect their lives; in other words, the orientation of research towards the achievement of social impact. Such demands can be seen in the definition of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Thus, democracies demand a sociological theory that is able to provide the theoretical foundations for those actions that are succeeding at transforming social realities. Alongside, at a methodological level, it demands that such contributions are based on the principle of co-creation in research. Under such principle, citizens, and not only researchers, are encouraged to participate in the construction of knowledge, in a collaborative and intersubjective way, overcoming the qualitatively relevant gap between the researcher and the research subject (Habermas, 1984, 1987).

Along these lines, the article included in this chapter contributes to the first specific objective of the current thesis, *To delve in the foundations of the coercive dominant discourse and the preventive socialization of gender violence*. Particularly, it frames the need of the research here provided as a response to the societal demand of gender equality (SDG 5). Moreover, it contributes to justify the methodological design of the current thesis within the Communicative Methodology, by presenting evidence on how this methodology effectively overcomes the aforementioned qualitatively relevant gap between researchers and participants (Habermas, 1984, 1987) and actually yields results that have a positive impact on citizens' lives.

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2.2. Manuscript

Sociological Theory from Dialogic Democracy

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Sociological Theory from Dialogical Democracy

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Abstract

Despite the long dialogical tradition both in Eastern and Western societies, in recent years the social dialogical turn is more and more evident in many domains of life. Citizens increasingly demand to have a saying in the seeking of solutions for their problematics, and advocate for a more democratic approach to science that fosters the inclusion of all voices and enhances the agency of citizens in social transformation. Therefore, global scientific research is progressively more oriented towards co-creation as a means to ensure social impact. In this context, social theory can provide the theoretical foundations to better address the societal challenges of concern, as well as the mechanisms to properly design research oriented to produce social impact, such as communicative methodology, and to monitor and evaluate such impact. Social theory would then serve its ultimate goal: to contribute to the improvement of societies. Sociology was born as part of the democracies to provide citizens with elements of analysis that would make it possible for them to make their decisions with the prior evidence of the consequences of each option. After a process of democratization, we return to the original sense, but now in a more democratic situation.

Keywords: dialogic democracy, communicative methodology, social impact, co-creation, citizenship

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Teoría Sociológica desde la Democracia Dialógica

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Resumen

A pesar de la larga tradición dialógica tanto en las sociedades orientales como occidentales, en los últimos años el giro social dialógico es cada vez más evidente en más y más ámbitos de la vida. Los ciudadanos demandan que su voz sea tenida en cuenta en la búsqueda de soluciones para sus problemáticas, y abogan por un enfoque más democrático de la ciencia que fomente la inclusión de todas las voces y mejore la agencia de los ciudadanos en la transformación social. Por lo tanto, la investigación científica global está progresivamente más orientada hacia la co-creación como un medio para garantizar el impacto social. En este contexto, la teoría sociológica puede proporcionar los fundamentos teóricos para abordar mejor los desafíos sociales de interés, así como los mecanismos para diseñar adecuadamente la investigación orientada a producir impacto social, como la metodología comunicativa, y para monitorear y evaluar dicho impacto. Desde este enfoque, la teoría sociológica servirá entonces a su objetivo final: contribuir a la mejora de las sociedades. La sociología nació como parte de las democracias para proporcionar a los ciudadanos elementos de análisis que les permitieran tomar sus decisiones con la evidencia previa de las consecuencias de cada opción. Después de un proceso de democratización, volvemos al sentido original, pero ahora en un contexto más democrático.

Palabras clave: democracia dialógica, metodología comunicativa, impacto social, co-creación, ciudadanía

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Whan Michael Burawoy visited the community of researchers *CREA* he said, '*I speak of public sociology, but you do not only describe it, you also do public sociology*'. The communicative methodology developed by this research community contributes to a dialogic construction of knowledge that not only eliminates the relevant methodological gap between the researcher and the researched subject, as Habermas had proposed, but also achieves the political and social impact that citizenship in democratic societies demand today. The European Commission, in its new research framework program *Horizon Europe*, has already defined the indicators that will assess the political and *societal* impact. Moving away from the often wield criticism that such evaluation only favors applied research - anchored in dichotomies already overcome - today, the framework of dialogic democracies demands a sociological theory that is able to support the social creations that make these impacts possible and, in short, that contributes to the improvement of society.

It has almost been forty years since Habermas (1987) raised the issue of the disappearance of the qualitatively relevant gap between the researcher and the person under research. Hence, the hierarchical relationship that placed social theorists as the ones who could see beyond the common sense of researched people disappeared. The social movements of recent years have challenged these hierarchical relationships with slogans such as '*they do not represent us*' or "not in my name". Earlier, as well, in the big demonstrations, the representatives of big organizations, who were also speaking at the final conferences, were in the front row. That is also changing. There are cultural groups, such as the Roma people, who are pronouncing themselves in an increasingly majority way against investigations that are not carried out with communicative methodology; they do not accept others to talk about them without their voices being equally considered. All these changes are part of the progress of dialogic democracy in more and more countries and areas, thus recovering the original sense of democracies as Elster rigorously analyzed. And it is, in fact, in democratic societies and in the demands towards more dialogic democracies, that science becomes in turn more democratic and dialogic following those same movements and processes.

A part of sociological theories is oriented more or less intensely to direct collaboration in this dialogic democracy. The goal of those who are dedicated to it is not to make many conferences, publish many books, some of which, as Giddens said in his last years, were to be sold in airport bookstores. On the contrary, the objective is to make theoretical contributions together which citizenry in order to foster democratic transformations. That objective is what Burawoy (2014) described as organic public sociology, referring to the Gramscian concept of organic intellectuals who make contributions, in this case from sociological theory and research, to foster social transformation. In this line, we define with the concept of social creations (Aiello & Joanpere, 2014; Soler-Gallart, 2017) all those contributions from the social sciences that manage to transform realities, such as creating jobs where there is unemployment, as improving educational results where there is failure, or as generating social cohesion where there was violence. Just as in the medical sciences, where a discovery that enables a new vaccine or a new treatment is made, and thus, creates something new that improves people's lives; in the social sciences there are sociologists who contribute social creations that also contribute to the improvement of the life of all citizens.

Indeed, the emergence of social sciences is linked to that of democracies. Citizens demanded evidence with which they could effectively exert their newly gained freedom. This required science-based knowledge that allowed to understand the consequences of each possible option prior to making a choice. Thus, this dialogic turn reconnects sociological theories with their original aim, by providing new solutions that now incorporate a type of knowledge - the experience of lay people - that has often been disregarded and disdained from science.

However, the dialogic approach does not only exist in Western countries, but also in Eastern countries, even with roots in their ancient cultures, as is the case of the Indian tradition, The Nobel Economy Prize laureate Amartya Sen, in his book *The argumentative Indian* (Sen, 2005), explains that already in the ancient epics of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, the two major epic poems of the Indian culture full of arguments and counter-arguments supporting the continuous debates, contrary antagonistic moral positions and viewpoints were often confronted through dialogue. An example of this are

the doubts and arguments of Arjuna and Krishna, two characters in the Mahabharata. Their discussions are still very relevant in the contemporary world: *one must commit to his/her personal duty; but must he/she do so at any cost?* This idea can be linked to Weber's contribution moving from ethics of intention to ethics of responsibility where, beyond our intentions, the consequences of our acts need to be taken into consideration as well. In the same nature, and delving into the study of dialogue and argumentation, Arjuna and Krishna's debates -and the ways these dialogues led to- can also be linked to Habermas' elaboration of the above-mentioned Webberian concept, making the original contribution more dialogic.

At a political level, the plurality of options and the respect towards all of them also follows a long tradition in the Indian society. This can be seen in the early Indian Buddhists, who highly vindicated dialogue as a means for social progress, as well as on the ruler Ashoka, who in the third century BC formulated one of the earliest rules for public discussion. In a similar vein, Emperor Akbar strongly supported open dialogue based on reasoning as the tool to address disagreements between those with different faiths. Thus, the preservation of democracy or the defense of secularism in India find its roots in the heterodoxy of thoughts and beliefs and the public debate around them that has traditionally been guaranteed (Sen, 2005). In this vein, the dialogic approach and the argumentative nature of the Indian tradition are key elements that allow to explain the seeking of social justice and the overcoming of social inequalities. Indeed, far from being something exclusive of the elites, language and dialogue offer all individuals, even the most excluded ones, the opportunity to have a saying in any matter of concern. In this line, dialogue, when set on an egalitarian basis, puts all participants, no matter their origin, status or studies, at the same level, since the strength of claims is based on the validity of the arguments that support them rather than on rethorics or power relations.

Moreover, dialogism has also roots in the Chinese tradition. The Analects, one of Confucius (2019) classic works, gathers that one should never *'feel embarrassed to ask and learn from lesser people* (5.15)*'* (in Chinese: *Bu Chi Xia Wen*) or, in a similar vein, that *'When three people walk together, there must be one person who is a teacher* (7.22)*'* (in Chinese: *San Ren Xing, Bi You Wo Shi Yan*). These ancient teachings highlight how all

individuals are capable of making sense about the world around them and transmit that knowledge to others. Because of life experiences, each individual's ways and methods of learning and understanding are different. This implies that taking as many different perspectives into account as possible contributes to unveiling new insights of the issue under study. Similarly, the "Book of Documents" (Chinese: *Shu Jing/ Shang Shu*) (Anonymous, 2009), which is the earliest compilation of historical documents in China (Shen & Qian, 2019), highlights that '*someone who likes to ask, will have ample knowledge, but if someone only relies on himself instead of communicating with others, his knowledge will be shallow*' (Chinese: *Hao Wen Ze Yu, Zi Yong Ze Xiao*). Thus, the idea of the intersubjective construction of knowledge was already present in ancient China, were intellectuals following the Confucian teachings understood how a deeper understanding of the world can only be reached in interaction with others.

In line with the dialogic turn of societies (Giddens, Beck & Lash, 1994; Habermas, 1987), this tradition shifts the focus from positions of power - those from lesser positions ought to learn from those in higher stands- to the acknowledgement that everyone has something to contribute and everyone can become a teacher as every person has cultural intelligence (Flecha, 2000). In this context, dialogue becomes the tool to build collective meanings that go beyond the addition of individual understandings. Indeed, communicative interactions allow for intersubjective constructions of knowledge in which the contributions of the participants are collectively shared, contrasted and reformulated into new knowledge that could not have been reached outside of the debate (Flecha, 2000). Han Yu, an important Confucian intellectual who influenced later generations of Confucian thinkers and Confucian philosophy (Shen & Shun, 2008), listed the positive and negative examples in his argumentative writing "Shi shuo". He emphasized that having a dialogue with the teacher was necessary to achieve the purpose of learning and he highlighted that regardless of the status, the age or the location the truth exists where teaching exists, thus acknowledging the potential of any individual to be both teacher and student in communicative interactions.

In the history of China, one of the most flourishing period of schools and thoughts was during the Spring and Autumn period (770 BC - 476 BC) and the Warring States period (475 BC - 221 BC) of ancient China (Tan, 2012). This time is known as the period of "Hundred Schools of Thought". In its context, the place that promoted the prosperity of different ideas and provided an equal and free dialogue environment was the Academy of the Gate of Chi (Chinese: *Jixia Xue Gong*) which almost simultaneously emerged with the Plato Academy in Greece (Needham & Ling, 1956). The Academy of the Gate of Chi gathered several philosophical schools such as Confucianism, Taoism, Mohist, Legalist, Logicians, all of which have been active in promoting the principles of free debate, mutual absorption, integration and development (Zhang, 2009; Zhao & Chen, 2019). In short, the dialogic approach present in ancient Chinese culture and school reached its peak in that period and it still has a wide impact in China today.

Communicative Methodology and Dialogic Construction of Knowledge

Now, recent changes in all sciences create possibilities for contributing from research to the development of more dialogic societies. Among these, one can find the communicative methodology, its relationship with the concept of co-creation - or dialogic creation of knowledge - and how that process contributes to the advancement of dialogic democracies. As well, the orientation towards social impact and its evaluation in scientific research programs are also discussed as a step forward in this democratic advance of society.

Communicative methodology of research involves in every step of research the people or the communities which are the focus of the study. Following this approach, both researchers and research subjects are invited to participate in an egalitarian dialogue; the former provide the expert knowledge and science-based evidence, will the latter provide their experience and their understanding of the context under study. Thus, communicative methodology seeks and promotes an active participation of citizens in science, including that of those vulnerable groups and minorities which are often excluded from scientific research. This approach has a twofold benefit: on the one hand, it provides tailored evidence-based

solutions that scientists on their own would not have been able to find. On the other hand, it actively engages citizens in the improvement and transformation of their social realities (Gómez, Padrós, Ríos, Mara & Pukepuke, 2019).

Almost two decades after it was first applied, Communicative Methodology has allowed to unveil evidence of transformative and exclusionary practices and elements for the contexts under research, allowing to foster the former and to overcome the latter; informing, in turn, citizens, scientists and policies that then incorporate the generated knowledge to improve people's lives (Valls & Padrós, 2011).

Indeed the fundamental postulates of Communicative Methodology include: language and action as inherent and universal attributes of all human beings; all individuals' capacity of agency and social transformation; the use of language based on communicative rationality to reach understanding, the consideration of lay people's common sense as valid knowledge, the abolition of the interpretative hierarchy based on power relations in favor of egalitarian interpretations, the creation of spaces that guarantee the equal epistemological level of all participants and the understanding of the dialogic nature of knowledge, as a result of intersubjective interactions.

Thus, unlike in ethnographies, participant research or action research (to name a few), the main objective of communicative methodology of research is the dialogue set between the accumulated knowledge in the scientific community and the experience lived from everyday life. Therefore, communicative methodology does not intend to collect the voices of the people being researched, but to dialogue with them in an egalitarian basis. Following this idea, the researcher does not participate in the researched context as if he were an equal, but, being aware of his position of power, he or she establishes the basis for an egalitarian dialogue (in the sense of Habermas, 1987).

The analysis of the communicative acts in the research process shows us how there are power interactions, from the fieldwork to the creation of advisory bodies with representatives of the citizens that are the target of that investigation. Only through the acknowledgement of their existence, these power relationships can be overcome, while, at the same time, the dialogic

communicative acts between researchers and researched subjects can be achieved (Sordé & Ojala, 2010).

Co-creation, Impact and Dialogic Democracy

Encouraging people to engage and participate in science is a practice that falls far in time. Before the emergence in the 19th century of science as a discipline there are some accounts of amateur scientists engaging non-experts in the collection of data around natural history observations (Miller-Rushing, Primack & Bonney, 2012). This type of participation allowed for the building of key collections of animals, plants and minerals, among others, and highly contributed to the advancement of the scientific fields that promoted these practices (Miller-Rushing et al., 2012). In fact, this kind of contributions not only continued with the professionalization of science but also got progressively perfected, providing researchers with extensive amounts of datasets that would otherwise have been impossible to gather through with only the involvement of scientists. Moreover, technological advancements and the development of the Internet and connected devices deeply boosted this collaboration, both in terms of citizens involved and data collected (Bonney, Phillips, Ballard & Enck, 2016). For instance, in medicine (Chrisinger & King, 2018), citizens can now participate in science through monitoring their well-being through the use of modern apps or through the promotion of healthier habits (Chrisinger et al., 2018). However, these kinds of collaborations follow the same style as in the 1900s, where citizens carried out fieldwork, merely observing, taking pictures and counting.

Thus, citizen participation in science needed to be reviewed in order to ensure that the voices of research subjects were included and taken into account in every step of research. This meant actively engaging citizens in finding solutions to their own problems and ensuring to a larger extent the social impact of the outcomes of scientific research. In this context, the concept of co-creation re-emerged with the aim to give citizens the spot they deserve in scientific research, not as passive providers of data, but as active agents in the creation of scientific knowledge.

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However, and once again, this idea is not exclusively a Western development. In ancient China, the participation of different schools of thought in the period of "Hundred Schools of Thought" had and effect not only at the time where the knowledge developments were taking place, but also in contemporary China. The impact is not only at an intellectual level, but also at a social one. Gu Yanwu (2017), who follows the ideology of Confucianism emphasizes the responsibility of all citizens to construct a better society. The author states the difference between "Desperate country" (Wang Guo) and "Desperate society" (Wang Tian Xia) and he also emphasizes the consistency of the individual and society, understanding society as the enlargement of the family. In *Ri Zhi Lu*, he suggests the idea that the 'rise and fall of a society rests with every one of its citizens' (Chinese: *Tian Xia Xing Wang, Pi Fu You Ze*). Therefore, any citizen has the inherent capacity to contribute to the improvement of the society in which he or she lives. These ideas are linked to the concept of co-creation.

Co-creation refers to the participation of citizens in the creation of scientific knowledge together with those who work professionally in this task. The first example of scientific research with social impact based on co-creation principles within the European Framework of research is that of WORKALÓ (WORKALO Consortium, 2001-2004) . WORKALO was an FP5 research project, coordinated by CREA, which incorporated in all phases of research the participation of subjects traditionally excluded from the scientific community and debates, as the Roma community. In one of the training seminars organized within its framework, Professor Michele Wieviorka was presenting his concept of mixed identities. He explained how people whose families shared different origins experienced different identity fractions. According to the professor, someone who had different or shared different origins from the country in which he or she lived could feel, for instance 50% Algerian and 50% French. In that same seminar, attended by citizens of different cultural groups, a young Roma woman raise her hand to intervene in a forum with scholars and other stakeholders and told him 'I do not agree with your statement because I am Roma and French and I do not feel 50% Roma and 50% French, but 100% Roma and also 100% French'. To this intervention, the sociologist replied, 'I will have to check my concept'. When research and the subsequent process of knowledge

production follow these dialogic processes, sociological theory contributes to social improvements that impact citizens and the societies involved. Thanks to this process, non-academic Roma people made key contributions to the WORKALO research project, the results of which were approved by the European Parliament in 2005 and by other parliaments of member states that have made possible concrete policies and programs that have led to direct improvements in the life of Roma people.

Co-creation became already a keyword in *Horizon 2020* and it is now at the very core of the Horizon Europe framework programme, informed on social theory. Indeed, in *Horizon Europe*, one further step is taken, since citizen participation is considered an essential part of social impact. Hence, this participation becomes evaluable and decisive for the approval of projects *ex-ante*, as well as *in-itinere* and *ex-post*. In fact, placing social impact at the core of research puts us on the path to a transformative relationship between science and society based on the improvement of society through the results and findings of research projects. This brings up a new scenario in which sociology and especially social theory, become particularly relevant and necessary. However, there is a part of sociological theory that does not agree with that process and will continue to make contributions to the social sciences and society from other perspectives. But there is also another part of sociological theories that not only addresses that challenge but is already co-directing the current transformations of all sciences and their consequences for the transformations of society.

The European Commission has decided to guide its new research framework program, Horizon Europe, following the document "Monitoring the impact of EU Framework Programs" (van den Besselaar, Flecha, & Radauer, 2018) in which the foundations on how to collect scientific, economic, political and societal impacts in science are laid. The pathway impact indicators highlight the path to the UN sustainable development goals - global goals for all citizens - and the path for citizens to be able to benefit from the knowledge created and research results. This social impact is achieved in the short, medium and long term. The short-term refers to the process of co-creation of knowledge with citizens; the medium-term to the use that citizens make of that knowledge beyond the research project, and the long-term, to the appropriation of knowledge and social improvements

experienced by the citizens themselves. The sociological theory that is linked to this dialogic co-production of knowledge based on a communicative approach is already in line with what is now a priority in Europe, as well as in advanced sciences in general.

The orientation of research towards social impact is part of the transformation of science within the framework of societies that want to be increasingly more democratic. Indeed, a new wave is now democratizing the scientific system with the concepts of "open access" and "open science" - including FAIR principles (findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable) that alludes with a pun to what is 'just' for science and humanity. There are top-level scientific journals such as PLoS that in two weeks can make a scientific discovery available not only to colleagues in their discipline, but to all citizens. Movements such as scientific literacy (which are not new, but now recovered) or the "march for science", are realities that indicate that citizens want to know and want to participate when they see that science improves their lives.

However, these advancements rely in many cases on ancient practices and classic social theory contributions. For instance, Sen (2005) explains that in the introduction of the first ever printed book with a date, an 868 Chinese translation of a Sanskrit text (Dimond Sutra, 402 CE), it could already be read that the book could be freely distributed. Also, as mentioned above, one of the essences of the Confucian learning methods is communicative interaction. In this vein, learning and the development of knowledge and though highly depend on dialogue with intellectuals as well as with lay people.

More recently, in the nineteenth century Weber stated that social theory is necessary to orient social research. Weber's (2004) *Ethics of Responsibility* is a highly relevant concept when considering social impact. This concept gives us a key to orient our work since it reminds us that is not the means we use in our research what matters most but is the results it produces. As well, the science system that Merton (1968) studied, with its functions and dysfunctions, has undoubtedly been an advance at the service of humanity, surpassing what was once sacred, opaque or incomprehensible to the majority and in the service of a few. Moreover, Merton's (1968) *Ethos of science* is behind current scientific advancements such as the open access

movement or the emergence of repositories such as the Social Impact Open Repository - SIOR, the first scientific repository in which research projects with social impact are indexed. Merton's contributions also remind us that even if technocrats want to narrow the approach to social impact to rankings and indicators, what it is truly necessary is to return to theoretical contributions and build from those, on the shoulders of giants.

Nevertheless, the contributions of social research to social impact have not only been top-down, from theory to practice, but also bottom-up. An example of this is that of *Real Utopias*, conceptualized by Erik Olin Wright (2011). Following this idea, social theory can provide the keys to understand the conditions under which these realities emerge, so they can be replicated and transferred to other contexts. An example of how this emancipatory social sciences approach can be applied to research is that of the research project SOLIDUS (Solidus Consortium, 2015-2018). In this case, theory and a rigorous methodological design allowed for the identification of the indicators of transformative solidarity actions through the case study of solidarity actions in Europe.

Another case of bottom-up contribution to social impact from social theory is Burawoy's public sociology, aforementioned. This sociological approach, directed at providing answers for social needs, has succeeded at making sociologist aware of the need to consider societal concerns and provide an explanation from research. This contributes to the creation of new knowledge around SSH that emerges directly from societal problematics as an answer to those problematics. An example of these are all the research within the field of sociology that are being produced in order to give an explanation to the social determinants around cases of gender based violence, for instance, or the focus on the UN's SDG.

Collective Contributions to Theory and Democracy

Today the creation of knowledge, in all disciplines, is not understood without collaborative teamwork, without collaboration with the other colleagues who are on those same issues around the world based on open knowledge. But moreover, nowadays the demand is focused on the collaborative work of social theorists and scientists in dialogue with citizens,

establishing co-creation processes that have the potential to transform social realities or which are already doing it.

Creating knowledge nowadays in any scientific discipline is more than ever the result of interaction, of different scientists from also different disciplines, providing their knowledge, but also creating new one, through their cooperation. Knowledge has become more open and free and anyone can add onto others' developments through different means for the sake of scientific progress. There are many initiatives based on an open dialogue meant to improve science and also our lives such as the Wikipedia dynamic process of knowledge creation and improvement, or the European Union's public consultations on a wide array of topics. All these initiatives aim at responding to citizen's expressed needs (Consultations, 2019).

Interaction and cooperation have always improved knowledge, although the current moment is the best one in history in terms of increased contexts of interaction that facilitate this progress. What is now facilitated through online open dialogue and collective creation of knowledge, was once extraordinary. In a seminar with Ulrich Beck, a bachelor student alerted him that he was saying just the opposite of what his own book said. When he replied inquiring about the reasons why she said that, she indicated the specific page where he had written it. Instead of getting angry, he exclaimed: '*Where is the miracle?*'. The student had read all of his books and was also part of a Seminar With the Book in Hand where researchers from different disciplines, academic categories and professions, read the main works of social sciences and other sciences (eg Weber's *Economy and Society*, Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, Sen's *Idea of Justice*, Kandel's *Principles of Neuroscience*, Einstein's *Evolution of Physics*, etc.) debating from specific paragraphs.

Habermas has made great contributions to sociological theory that have been key pieces and especially in the face of the postmodern and neoliberal offensive of the eighties of the twentieth century, have been key pieces. But working individually has increasing limits in current societies. In this seminar, reading and debating the Theory of Communicative Action and the Speech Acts of Searle, we discovered that Habermas had not understood the Searle's contributions to the theory of speech acts and only partially understood the contributions of the creation of this theory, Austin. Later, we

had the opportunity to have long and profound talks with Searle. He criticized Habermas for writing a lot about his theory and the theory of his professor and friend Austin without understanding both and making simple mistakes. The same happens, among others, with the theory of Parsons. One member of CREA had the opportunity to talk with Merton about the mistaken analysis. Habermas knows very well several books of Parsons but not at all the last ones, the ones in with develop his idea of societal community. This lack made Habermas to get angry with Parsons theory, abandon his contribution of societal community and replace it by one of the worst concepts elaborated by Habermas: the patriotism of constitution.

If even the best present sociological theorist has this kind of errors, which ones could make the others if we insist on working individually? The future of sociological theory and its contribution to society is promising because an increasing number of young theorists are already working collectively. We are aware that one of us cannot read seriously and profoundly all the books and papers that need to be taken into account in order to elaborate a real social theory. Besides, we are working closer to researchers from other sciences where is very common the collective work; papers from some sciences are signed by many authors, while in social sciences still most of them are signed individually.

The Seminar *With the Book in Hand* has been one of the main sources of theoretical and social creation of the research community mentioned in this paper. It involves both professors and undergraduate students as well as people outside the university. The only requirement is that to speak you have to reference the page which your idea comes from. This principle of equality, which is in the line of open science and the democratization of science, has made the contributions to the debate much richer. As mentioned before, great intellectuals, like Habermas, however much he has read, cannot cover everything. However, a working team, with people from very different disciplines, occupations, experiences, cultural backgrounds, religions, political options, sexualities, interests, working in a dialogical way can create much more.

Conclusions

In this paper we have argued that the dialogic approach has long been present in both Eastern and Western societies. Intellectuals from both traditions have widely pointed at the capacity of humans to learn from one another, beyond status, educational level or age, and to collectively build their understanding of the world. More recently, modern societies have started to experience a dialogic turn that incorporates these traditional ideas in an attempt to further improve democratic societies. In this context, more and more citizens, including those belonging to vulnerable groups, are demanding the inclusion of their voices in different fields, so their experience and viewpoints are also taken into account in the seeking of solutions to overcome the social challenges of our era. This turn is visible in scientific research, where scientists are more and more demanded to plan for the social impact of their research and to gather evidence of the extent to which that impact was achieved. In this scenario, methodologies such as the communicative methodology of research, become increasingly relevant, since they promote the inclusion of all voices and the co-creation of scientific knowledge which citizens as a means to improve both science and society. Drawing on this methodological approach, citizens not only contribute their knowledge at every step of the research but become agents of social transformation. Social sciences were born with democracies, so that citizens would have the necessary knowledge to rule over themselves. Through the principle of co-creation and with scientific impact at the very core of its design, scientific research is serving citizens more than ever, with social sciences leading the shift.

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3. Our Right to the Pleasure of Falling in Love

3.1. Presentation

Life is the flower for which love is the honey

Victor Hugo

Love is a conquest of humanity. In medieval ages, individuals were not free to choose their partners; unions were based on interest, and practices such as the *Prima Nocta*, in which virgin brides had to lay with feudal lords, were common practices. Indeed, as (Giddens, 2013) points out, romantic love is one of the contributions of the romanticism movements in the 18th Century, together with the defense of feelings and human rights.

In recent years a discourse against love has emerged. Such discourse associates love to gender violence and submission, while there is no scientific evidence to support such statements. This discourse often dwells on double-standards; it tells girls and you women that society wants them "pure", and incites them to reveal against such impositions, claiming this to be the path to sexual freedom. This Coercive Dominant Discourse is conveyed through the many daily interactions individuals have with significant other and with media (Puigvert et al., 2019). One only needs to take a look at magazines for teenagers, songs or TV shows, to see the infinite messages linking attraction to violence and deprecating love and beauty, so pressure is to have intimate relationships with men with violent attitudes, and not no stay pure. Indeed, through such interactions many girls and women are socialized in associating attraction to such violent attitudes and behaviors, affecting their volition (Puigvert Mallart et al., 2019). In such context, we talk about coerced relationships, since the girls and women engaging in them do not do so out of free will, but because of the impositions of the Coercive Dominant Discourse.

Along these lines, are we, as women, being ripped from our right to the pleasure of falling in love? Since pleasure is often presented as the main motivation for sexual encounters (Barnett & Melugin, 2016; Meston & Buss, 2007), the current article, entitled *Our right to the pleasure of falling in love*, explores the construction pleasure in relation to the relationships girls and young women have had and currently have. More precisely, it focuses on how pleasure is constructed when relationships are influenced by the CDD and when they are not, the effects of such construction in future relationships and the possibilities for transformation. In so doing, the current article addresses SO2 *To analyze the characteristics of the sexual-affective relationships that girls and young women have* and SO3 *To analyze the consequences of the sexual-affective relationships that girls and young women have in their experience of sexual pleasure*. It also contributes to SO1, *To delve in the foundations of the coercive dominant discourse and the preventive socialization of gender violence*, by exploring the pleasure and the relationship of choice under the lens of the CDD

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3.2. Manuscript

Check for updates

Our Right to the Pleasure of Falling in Love

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The social impact of psychology on the field of human sexuality is extensively wide. From Freud to Masters and Johnson, many are the research which have broken barriers and provided citizens with new knowledge to improve their lives. One of the lines of research which are now contributing to this social impact from psychology is that of the dominant coercive discourse (Gómez, 2015), which portrays power relationships as exciting and egalitarian relationships as convenient. Drawing from this theory, the aim of this research is to shed light on the influence of the coercive discourse on women's pleasure in their intimate relationships. In an exploratory study, women between 20 and 29 years old were interviewed under the communicative methodology. Results show three main findings. First, participants who reject the coercive discourse find pleasure in egalitarian relationships. On the contrary, participants who had coerced relationships acknowledge a lack of excitement in egalitarian relationships, while associating pleasure to the power nature of the former. Finally, some participants who initially had coerced sexual–affective relationships were able to disassociate pleasure from coerced relationships and break with them. Moreover, these women claim to feel more pleasure in their new egalitarian relationships. These findings open a new path of research that unveils the lack of pleasure in coerced relationships and vindicates our right to the pleasure of falling in love.

Keywords: coercive dominant discourse, attraction to violence, hooking up, romantic relationships, social impact

INTRODUCTION

Psychology has had a wide social impact on the fields of human sexual behavior and sexual desire. Advances in the field of psychology have demonstrated that, besides biological or even sociological factors, sexual desire depends as well on psychological ones.

One of the first authors to explore the topic was the psychoanalyst Freud. Freud (2016) focused on sex as the main element in human development, since he described libido as the force driving human behavior. Through his psychosexual development theory, he described five stages which humans follow in their lifespan: the oral stage, the anal stage, the phallic stage, the latent stage, and the genital stage. According to him, these were determinant to human development: failing to successfully pass them could lead to psychological problems and mental disorders. Even if psychoanalysis is now being questioned because of the difficulties to evaluate this theory following a scientific methodology (Kandel, 2018), its contributions to the exploration of human sexuality and human behavior regarding sex cannot be denied.

In the late 1940s, Kinsey (Kinsey, 1998; Kinsey et al., 1998) started conducting large-scale surveys of the American population's sexual activities published. For the first time, his reports provided evidence of sexual behavior of humans, including frequency, practices, and lifestyle, among others. However, the information gathered in these reports about sexual behaviors remained statistical.

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Indeed, it was not until the research of Masters and Johnson that the first evidence of how humans experience sexual arousal and sexual activity arrived. Even if now ethically controversial, the research conducted by Masters and Johnson regarding human sexual response (Masters and Johnson, 1966) and human sexual inadequacy (Masters and Masters, 1980) are considered among the 40 studies that changed psychology (Hock, 2001). These researchers explored the physiological responses in human sexuality, which they saw as fundamental for a satisfying sex life. Masters and Johnson complemented these works with a series of books in which they explored the psychological aspects of sexuality. Their work continues to influence scientific research on human sexuality in several fields, including psychology.

More recent research keeps challenging the reproduction theories by bringing forward evidence of pleasure being one of the main variables that explain sexual motivation (Meston and Buss, 2007; Barnett and Melugin, 2016). Indeed, hooking-up has been associated with physical pleasures (Farvid, 2014), such as stress and tension relief or fun, as well as with psychological and affective pleasures, including ego boosting and thrills linked to mischieving, transgression, and novelty (Farvid and Braun, 2017). Often these casual sex experiences involve alcohol intake (Claxton et al., 2015), which Pedersen et al. (2017) link to pleasure derived from control loss, time-out from normative life and recounting it to friends as "a crazy and wild experience."

However, research also shows that women associate hooking up with high regret (Campbell, 2008) and disgust (Al-Shawaf et al., 2018; Kennair et al., 2018) after engaging in casual sex, while those in a relationship report higher levels of pleasure than those who engage in casual sex and highlight the importance of care and love for "good sex" (Paik, 2010; Carlson and Soller, 2019). According to different papers, the negative feelings could be due to multiple and inconsistent reasons such as impelling sexual motivation (Campbell, 2008) or sexual double standards (Armstrong et al., 2010; Snapp et al., 2015; Rodrigue and Fernet, 2016; Farvid and Braun, 2017; Uecker and Martinez, 2017), and some point out to the negative outcomes of long-term relationships, such as controlling and violent partners (Armstrong et al., 2010). Nevertheless, scientific research has already provided evidence which shows that positive or negative outcome in a relationship do not depend on its length, but on the partner of choice (Puigvert et al., 2019).

In this vein, another theory which has contributed to the social impact of psychology is that of the coercive dominant discourse (hereinafter, CDD). Gómez (2015) argued that the traditional model of partner election which links sexual attraction to domination, imposition, and contempt is one of the socializing elements that influence the association of passion with suffering, while more egalitarian values are seen as convenient but lay far from desire. This traditional model is conveyed through the CDD in numerous daily interactions with peers, TV shows, popular songs, and social media, among others.

This continuous presentation of men with violent attitudes and behaviors as attractive progressively socializes some women from a young age into attraction toward violent attitudes and behaviors. Indeed, novel research on socioneuroscience has pointed out that the frequent association of violence to attractiveness is internalized by some women, leading them to feel aroused before men that present violent characteristics (Puigvert Mallart et al., 2019). As the authors explain, this emotional reactions are not in fact their own, but the consequence of the socialization in the pressures of the CDD that emerges from the power imbalance within relationships fostered by our patriarchal society. In line with these findings, many studies report girls to prefer partners with aggressive features for hooking up (Valls et al., 2008; Puigvert et al., 2019). These girls say to prefer "good guys" for when they get established in relationships, while they rather choose the bad ones, the fun ones, for short stands (Gómez, 2015). Nevertheless, preferring this type of guys puts them at a greater risk to suffer intimate partner violence.

Alongside, as part of this discourse, girls and women are told to break with alleged "pressures" which force them to save their virginity. However, the peer pressure conveyed through the CDD is also related to what has been defined by existing literature on gender violence prevention as the "upward mobility mirage" (Oliver, 2010–2012). When girls and women fall victims of this process of upward mobility mirage, they think that having intimate relationships with boys and men with violent attitudes and behaviors, they will move up in the social chain. However, what actually happens is the opposite: girls who hook up with many "bad boys" are less socially valued by their male and female peers. Therefore, gratification and pleasure in these cases seems to be related to the perceived social status. In addition, several studies show that students who felt pressured by their peers to engage in casual relationships seemed more susceptible to adverse outcomes related to hooking up, as well as were those hooking up with multiple partners (Montes et al., 2016, 2017).

The notion of romantic love has traditionally included inequality between men and women but at the same time love and respect and not violence at all. Currently there is a feminist transformation of this concept which maintains the non-violence but overcoming its inequalities. However, at the same time, there are other transformations of the concept which maintain inequalities and include violence in romantic love (Lelaurain et al., 2018). The feminist transformation of the concept allows girls and women to choose if they want to look for romantic love free of violence with other girls or boys. The other transformation of the concept prevents women to have that kind of love while it pushes them to sporadic relationships which often include more violence than stable ones. Indeed, there is no evidence of romantic relationships under these terms leading to gender-based violence (Yuste et al., 2014).

Drawing from the idea that pleasure is one of the main reasons to engage in sexual relationships, in the present study we explore the effects of the CDD on the pleasure of young women. The aim is to provide evidence on how CDD influences the partners they choose, the type of relationship they have, the sexual pleasure they associate to them and, on the long-term, what they expect from a relationship and partners (sporadic or stable). On the other hand, we also want to explore if these preferences are different in young women who have not been victims of these pressures. We hypothesize that pleasure in relationships is not related to the duration of those (long or short-term, sporadic, and stable) or to sex, but to dominant and coercive social preferences

regarding the type of partner and relationship (coercive vs. egalitarian) which have been internalized through socialization. Conversely, we expect love to be a protective factor against the CDD. With our results we expect to extend the social impact of psychology by providing some answers that allow to move forward toward violence-free and consented sexual–affective relationships (Vidu Afloarei and Tomás Martínez, 2019).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Design

The study follows the communicative methodology of research (CMR). This approach pursues the transformation of social realities through the egalitarian dialog and the inclusion of all voices (Gomez et al., 2019). In the CMR, researchers share their scientific knowledge with the researched subjects, who in turn contribute with their own knowledge and experiences of the social reality which is being explored. This is possible thanks to the establishment of an egalitarian dialog that allows to overcome the relevant gap between scientists and researched subjects (Habermas, 1987) and to provide new solutions to the problematics being discussed. The implementation of CMR has contributed to the social impact of psychology regarding violence prevention (Oliver, 2014).

Participants

Thirteen young women (P1–P13) from different socioeconomic backgrounds and geographical regions within the Spanish context were recruited for the study, using purposive and snowball sampling. No gatekeepers were used. All of them were between 20 and 29 years old and all of them reported having had heterosexual relationships. Twelve of them had completed a bachelor's degree and one of them was in the process of doing so. Eight of them had also completed a master's degree and two of them were currently in the process of finishing it. No participants withdrew from the research after signing the consent form.

Materials and Procedure

The current research was fully approved by Community of Researchers on Excellence for All's (CREA) Ethics Committee. It complies with the European Commission's Ethics Review Procedure (2013), the Data Protection Directive 95/46/EC, and EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights (2000/C 364/01). Before being involved in the research, participants were contacted individually by the researchers, who fully informed them about the study. They were given a written "informed consent" in which the specifications of the study were detailed: scientific background of the proposal, aim, methods, and procedure. Participants were given time to read it and were told that they could ask any questions at all times. The researchers gave clarifications when necessary. Participants were also informed about their possibility to withdraw at any time from the study. Taking the intimate content of their testimonies, they were granted full anonymity and their identities were concealed from the beginning of the research. Due to the nature of

their responses, they could decide if they wanted to be audio-recorded or if they preferred the researcher to take notes on their statements. Once the results of the study were ready, they were sent to the participants in order to ensure their conformity with publication.

A semi-structured interview was conducted with each participant individually. The questions for the interview were designed by consensus between all researchers. Knowledge from previous studies regarding the CDD and its influences on relationships and partners was considered when creating the interview. Questions were arranged temporally, from childhood to present. Finally, the script was composed by 33 open-ended questions and subquestions about their sexual–affective relationships, their own feelings, and behavior about them, as well as that of their peers. Interviews lasted from 50′ to 1h15′. Each testimony was either audio recorded or gathered through the researcher's notes, according to the participant's will.

Data Analysis

The current study follows the saturation criteria of Guest et al. (2006), according to which these 13 interviews allow for reaching theoretical saturation since participants were purposively selected; besides location and SES, the group was relatively homogeneous and the domain of inquiry has been delimited. The participants' narratives were analyzed as communicative acts (Searle and Soler, 2004). This approach considers the role of both verbal and non-verbal communication, it separates the intentions behind the acts from their consequences, and accounts for existing power relations in the social context of the speakers. The approach has already proven successful at better identifying situations of coercion, while providing elements of analysis for overcoming difficulties and transforming realities (Rios and Christou, 2010). Under this approach, the gathered testimonies were analyzed following a line-by-line technique. For the early coding, the content of their testimonies was classified into three temporal categories: childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood. Within each category, testimonies were scrutinized for evidence regarding the type of relationship and partner preferred, their own behaviors, feelings, and attitudes toward, as well as that of their peers. Discrepancies between the researchers concerning the data coding were sorted out by consensus. For these cases, researchers discussed the interpretation of each fragment and collectively decided its categorization.

On a second review of the categorization, the following elements of the CDD were identified (**Table 1**).

The analysis of the participants showed certain patterns in the appearance of the aforementioned elements, which had an impact on the way participants understood and perceived pleasure. The three models and their characteristics and differences will be presented in the following section.

RESULTS

As a result of the analysis, a series of elements were identified in the speech of participants. The way in which these elements appeared and converged allowed the identification of three

TABLE 1 | Elements of the CDD.

Elements	Description
e1. Peer pressure	How have the ideas and preferences in their context influenced them?
e2. Partner and relationship choice	How and why did they choose their partners and relationships?
e3. Coerced relationships and partners	How are coerced relationships and partners described and remembered?
e4. Fake narratives	Have they justified bad experiences or share them as exciting to meet social expectations?
e5. Transformation	Is there a change of view regarding intimate relationships preferences and the feeling of pleasure over time and experiences?
e6. Egalitarian relationships and partners	How are they described and remembered?
e7. Right to pleasure	What do they find exciting and/or remember as exciting?

different models, regarding how participants have chosen and choose their partners and relationships, as well as the impact this has on the way they understand and experience pleasure. These elements result from the CDD conveyed through multiple interactions in the context of a patriarchal society. They reflect the effects of such discourse on young women's partners of choice and relationships and the pleasure they associated to these. **Table 2** presents the distribution of the participants in each model.

Model 1 – Not Giving Up the Right to the Pleasure of Falling in Love

When participants were first asked about their childhood, they were suggested to describe their ideal partner and their ideal relationship; to share what these would entitle. Participants classified into Model 1 (M1) described positive and egalitarian relationships as it can be seen below:

"Very romantic, like in Disney movies. a person who is always, always there, someone emotional, romantic . . . . someone who fits in my family, funny, loving, who takes care of me. Someone with whom I have a good time, outgoing." (P1)

In this extract we can see that M1 participants think that an egalitarian relationship can have both love and passion. They also describe their partners through the language of desire, that is the type of language to express admiration, attraction, and desire (Rios-González et al., 2018), with words such as "loving" and "romantic."

However, participants in M1 explain that during adolescence the view of relationships which was socially shared among their peers had nothing to do with their own ideal. In fact, they acknowledge having experienced *peer pressure* (e1) to engage in other type of relationships and partners. However, they also state that even if what their friends did was important to them and that they felt curious about it, they did reject these pressures. An example of this can be read below:

"I didn't experience direct pressure, but indirect yes. Since others were doing it you, you felt the desire to do it as well . . . They used to tell me 'but don't you get bored? You're very young, you have to try more . . .' And if I don't want to, what? It has been very clear to me from the beginning." (P2)

In this extract P2 describes how those in her group of friends kept questioning her choices and pushing her to try something different. However, her ideal of a relationship and partner was

so clear to her that she did not want to give it up and remained strong before these pressures. Accordingly, regarding *partner and relationship choice* (e2), participants in M1 describe to have chosen and still choose their partners and relationships based on their own convictions. In their testimonies, there is a clear rejection to being with someone for any other reason than love and attraction. As P2 explains:

"Sporadic relationships have never attracted me, going to a house to have [sexual] relations with a stranger, with a stranger? That has never excited me. I do not get excited with a stranger. I have to like previous things." (P2)

In the same vein, when talking about *coerced relationships* (e3), M1 participants share strong negative feelings about them. They explain how some of their friends ended up with boys without liking them or with boys who did not treat them well, just because they were socially valued. However, even if they understand the reasons behind their friends' actions, they recognize a lack of pleasure in such practices and express it this way. As P1 explains:

"There were people around me who did things because they felt they had to, especially in sex. Maybe at that time they didn't give the same value to what they did and what they felt. To me, both have always been equally important . . . I shared what I felt and what happened to me. With some friends I have doubted that they were telling the truth. for whatever reason, to please more, because of what others may think." (P1)

In addition, as it can be seen in the extract, M1 participants acknowledge to be aware of the fact that some of the things their friends were sharing regarding these relationships were not true; they were telling them in order to meet social expectations. Moreover, they also recognize that sharing these *fake narratives* (e4), in which they did not feel the need to engage, has led their friends to end up liking such coerced relationships and partners who mistreated them. This is the situation described by P2:

"In this girl's case [a friend], *she gave in to the pressure and it was not a good experience for her. She wanted to like the boy, even if she was disgusted by him, and then she ended up liking him."* (P2)

Therefore, taking into account both their ideal of a relationship as children and this same ideal now, no *coercive transformation* (e5) is perceived in M1 participants, rather a continuous preference toward egalitarian relationships and partners. As seen in this subsection, M1 participants have preferred this latter type of relationship throughout their life,

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TABLE 2 | Distribution of participants in each model.

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13
Model 1	X	X											
Model 2			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
Model 3											X	X	

even when other type of relationships was socially valued by their peers. In addition, they explain to have chosen egalitarian relationships over coerced ones, because they understand that pleasure is a core component of the former, while the latter completely lack it. In this vein, M1 participants share that they choose *egalitarian relationships and partners* (e6) because according to them they unite both, ethics and desire. As P1 shares:

"*In my case, as I have been with my partner for so many years, I can say it's the best memory I have, both emotionally and sexually ... My relationship is passionate because of what it makes me feel. It makes me feel great in all physical and emotional aspects. it moves me. To me that is passionate.*" (P1)

Through this example we see how M1 participants have not given up their *right to pleasure* (e7). In fact, they believe pleasure is linked to falling in love and freedom. They feel they have passionate relationships in which they share tenderness and excitement and that these are feelings they have built their relationship upon, making it ideal to them.

Model 2 – When the Coercive Dominant Discourse Steals the Right to the Pleasure of Falling in Love

When asked about their ideal partner and their ideal relationship, participants classified into Model 2 (M2) also described egalitarian relationships with handsome and brave partners:

"*I imagined it as what it is seen on TV, in movies, that everything is ideal, everything is going great, boy and girl in love, all beautiful, they have no problems, and then you see that it's a lie, obviously.*" (P8)

As seen in this example, participants in M2 mainly dreamt too with idyllic relationships in which there is love and everything works out. However, a feeling of deceit can be perceived in the words of some of the participants in M2 regarding this ideal of relationship they had as children. In this vein, one can see how P8 points out that her former ideals were naive and unrealistic. She feels everything is "a lie"; these ideals are something unachievable to her.

When looking at what happened during adolescence, most M2 participants describe strong *peer pressure* (e1) in their context, even if they are not directly aware of it:

"*There was a time in which if you didn't have a boyfriend or weren't hooking up with someone, you were considered a loser. I started late ... The one who was with the most handsome guy, with the hottest, was the most socially valued ... At that time, I don't believe that having a stable relationship was more valued ... the one hooking up with more guys was more socially valued.*" (P3)

In this extract P3 recognizes that not falling into the pressures of the CDD had negative social consequences, which is the reason young women in M2 fall into them, as we will see in this section. Along the same line, most young women in M2, like P3, mentioned that they believed that the more you hooked up with the cool guys, the more your social status increased. This fact has highly affected M2 participants' partner and relationship choices (e2). In their narratives, these young women share that they have primarily chosen those partners and relationships which were valued in their social groups, sometimes even when they knew it was not something they wanted:

"[The guys with whom to hook up were] *the indifferent, the bad boys. They had to be handsome in the eye of others, yes ...* [about hooking up with them] *Everyone was doing it, otherwise I wouldn't have done it. It was what had to be done and almost everyone in my group did it. It was important to do it, not what you felt, because if you were going out and didn't do it on the next day you were devastated.*" (P6)

In this extract P6 clearly acknowledges that the partners they chose had to be accepted by their social group. This is a common characteristic for young women in M2, who fell into peer pressure in order to fit in and keep a status within their group, as commented above. Another fact that can be observed in this extract is related to the type of relationships they engage in. In this case, we see how P6 recognizes that what was important was doing what was expected from you, beyond your liking or your feelings. Indeed, she acknowledges she would not have done it if everyone else was not doing the same and, at the same time, she shares that not engaging in such practices had negative social consequences. In the same way, this evidence shows how M2 participants, because of the CDD, end up in *coerced relationships* (e4). Regarding these, another common characteristic of M2 participants is that they share ambivalent feelings related to the coerced relationships in which they engaged and the coercive partners they choose:

"*I told it as if it had been very cool, but in reality, I had experienced anxiety in a boy's house, but then I came back. why did I repeat* [with him] *if I felt anxious, why did I go back to his house? With my friends it was more like 'wow, I've done this, I've done a bad thing' It was about doing something malicious, a mischief.*" (P10)

The ambivalence is clearly present in P10's testimony. She acknowledges having a bad time, feeling anxiety, but repeating this behavior she considered "bad" because she then felt excited about telling her friends, even though she knew it was not true: "*the next day you were devastated*". In fact, fake narratives are another common element to most young women in M2. In their testimonies, these young women often acknowledge a lack of pleasure in the coerced relationship in which they engage, but end

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up justifying their actions or sharing them as exciting, in order to meet social expectations:

"*I was doing it wherever and before doing it I wanted to, but later I regretted it because I thought 'what a drag!'. Doing it like that, one night. I did not enjoy it. To me, doing it like that was not like 'wow, how cool'; rather, it was like eating an expired yogurt. People sell it like it's amazing, but they do not feel it that way. I think it's a lie, it's to fit in. It's like when you go on a trip and you say it's been amazing, but it's really been a fucking shit.*" (P6)

Both the lack of pleasure and the fake narratives are mentioned in P6 testimony. She acknowledges that she was not forced to do anything she was not choosing, but she did not feel like doing it either. In fact, she describes those relationships as "being a drag" and compares the encounter with "eating an expired yogurt," which is something clearly unpleasant. In addition, she acknowledges to lie about it in order to fit in and she believes everyone around her participated in the elaboration of these lies.

Therefore, considering their childhood ideal of a relationship, together with their life experiences and how they share them, a *coercive transformation* (e5) is identified in participants in M2. Looking at the evidence presented this far, a negative shift is perceived: they have given up their ideal of a relationship and fallen into coerced relationships and partners. In addition, when looking at how they talk about their current relationships, M2 participants fall into double standards. In the same spirit, *egalitarian relationships and partners* (e6) are described through the language of ethics in their testimonies:

[talking about the best and the most exciting] "*they are completely opposite.* [The best one, the current one, is] *healthy, public, close, routine, status, couple, economy between two people, fixed, comfortable. The other one* [the most exciting] *is natural, uncontrollable emotions, was not forbidden but out of context, having a partner, was a teacher, we did not fit. there was the tension factor, tension to think that we had such a strong connection, ignorance, lack of control, disinformation, desire, sexual tension when it is not easy. They break what you've learned, surprises come, taking off, more instinct.*" (P7)

In this extract we see how even if saying that the best relationship is the current one, her description lacks excitement, as she continuously describes it in terms of "convenience": status, economy, comfortable. This characteristic is common between participants in M2, who consciously or unconsciously end up choosing nice partners who treat them well. However, as seen before, there is a lack of transformation because they still identify those relationships in which they recognized coercion and a lack of pleasure as even more exciting than their best relationship. This leads to the last identified element shared by young women in M2. Regarding pleasure, this element is not a key component of the egalitarian relationships they now say to prefer. Similarly, some participants, like P7, pretend to fill this void by cheating on their partners, while others, like P6, consciously or unconsciously keep separating ethics and desire:

[talking about their most exciting relationship] "*just before being with him* [current boyfriend], *I had a boyfriend. He was older. I met him on twitter. It was very cool on twitter; typical platonic love. I could not imagine getting to be with him, but then it was a fucking*

shit. At first it was exciting, then it was shit. At first, I did not know him very well. At the beginning, with the other I had to fight for him. I wondered about things, but with [my current boyfriend] it was more tender. He wanted to get to know me, he was very good, and he wanted to protect me. If I had to choose, I would choose this as the other was a fantasy." (P6)

P6 was the girl who described coerced relationship as "eating an expired yogurt" and she now acknowledges she now has a good boyfriend by her side. However, when asked to talk about her most exciting relationship, she decides to share one that was very tempestuous and, even if in the end she says that she prefers her current one, she finishes by saying that the former one was a "fantasy." This shows that pleasure is still subject to the coercive discourse to her, since a single partner cannot unite both love and passion. Thus, the evidence presented this far shows that young women in M2 may have given up their right to the pleasure of falling in love.

Model 3 – Taking Back the Right to the Pleasure of Falling in Love

When asked about their childhood ideal of a partner and relationship, participants classified into Model 3 (M3) also mentioned egalitarian relationships and partners, which they describe through the language of desire:

"*A prince who treats you well, helps you when you're in trouble, based on love. The brave boy, attractive, nice, who doesn't speak badly or treat you badly.*" (P11)

As this extract shows, young women in M3 also preferred egalitarian relationships when they were younger. The partners that they dreamt of united ethics and desire, as it can be seen through words such as "nice" or "treats you well" for the former and "attractive" and "brave" for the latter. Moreover, in this case, unlike M2, no deceit is shown toward these ideas. In fact, this contrasts with the peer pressure (e1) young women in M3 describe:

"*Yes, social pressure in general. When someone started dating guys, you felt pressured not to be the last one. There might have been things that you did not like at all but you did not think about them because what most people thought of that person was more important.*" (P12)

All young women in M3 recognize to have felt social pressure and to have fallen into it. As shared by P12, they acknowledge that they felt pressured to start hooking up with boys, even when they did not really like what was going on, because they were more concerned about fitting in. In addition, through this extract we can recognize another common characteristic of young women in M3, regarding their partner and relationship choices (e2). Likewise, P12 acknowledges to have chosen the partners and relationships which were valued in her social groups and looked right to her friends. In a similar sense P11 explains:

"*You were pressured to hook up with one of those [a popular guy], but really with anyone. It had to be a jerk. He didn't have to be the coolest. Hooking up with someone of that style was enough. [My friends] They never pressured me to hook up with a nice guy.*" (P11)

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In this extract P11 explains how you had to choose a partner that was socially valued in order to be socially valued too, and how her friends were the ones pushing her to do it. However, from her words one can see that she resents this behavior, because she states that it never targeted the nice boy. Rather, she says she was pushed to engage in coerced relationships (e3). In Fact, when talking about those, the young women in M3 display negative feelings toward coercive partners and/or coerced relationships. As P11 shares:

> "I did not like the boy, or what was happening, I just hooked up with him to take away that pressure, but I didn't like it. Those are guys who take advantage of these pressures. They do not care about you. I did not have a good time. I did what I did not because I wanted to, but because I felt I had to. At some point I came to want to do it, but I wanted more to stop being the one that did not hook up, than hooking up itself [.] I would say that I did not feel pleasure. Once I hooked up with a guy and, on the next day, I felt so disgusting. And at that moment I was disgusted, that's why it was the last time. I thought that it changed the way they saw me, I wanted to think that they saw me as being at their level." (P11)

As seen in this extract, young women in M3 are very critical about their past coerced relationships and the partners they used to choose. They acknowledge feeling disgust, doing it without really feeling to and giving greater consideration to social status. However, the rejection present in their statements and their critical thinking allows them to recognize that they engaged in fake narratives. Nevertheless, they also explain that they do not do so anymore, because they have broken with the social pressures that pushed them to such behavior. As P12 explains:

> "When I hooked up with a guy I did not like, I told them [my friends] it had been cool, and it really hadn't. Not anymore. I am very honest with myself, if I do not like someone, I am not with him. I do not have to lie; I don't make things complicated." (P12)

In this vein, regarding the presence of fake narratives, young women in M3 do not try to justify themselves or share coerced relationships and partners as exciting anymore, in order to meet social expectations. On the contrary, breaking with the social pressure and acknowledging the lack of pleasure in the relationships they had allows them to understand that these are not what they really want and to stop the circle of lies. P12 admits not feeling the need to lie anymore because she just does not engage with partners she does not like. P11 recognizes not feeling pleasure, rather disgust. This critical reflection allowed her to unmask the truth behind coerced relationships and free herself from the peer pressure that had led her to choose those relationships and partners. Partners who she acknowledges did not care about her but took advantage of the situation.

Taking all the above into account, one clearly sees a common characteristic of M3 young women: liberating transformation (e5). Participants in M3 have come to reject past relationships based on pressures and now look for relationships and partners in which there is love, freedom, and attraction. For this reason, participants in M3 state to now prefer egalitarian relationships and partners (e6) that unite ethics and desire:

> "My current relationship [is the best]. This relationship brings me positive things in all aspects. It adds. it is a different relationship from the rest, it is something I had not felt before by anyone else, it is special. it's healthy, I have full confidence in my partner, like he has in me. it's not routineer, but it's very stable; I laugh a lot, even on bad days. it's a super nice, stable and real relationship. My most exciting relationship is also this one, there is always novelty, plans for the future, fun, sexual passion. I think they coincide [the best and the most exciting] because there is a balance between physical and spiritual attraction. Everything is connected and compensated." (p12)

As P12 explains, she now has a relationship that pleases her in every way. It is both her best experience and her most exciting one, because as she explains there is both the physical attraction and the spiritual connection. In a similar way, P11 explains:

> "[my best relationship] is the last one, because it was not with any pressure, because it was what I wanted. It was not with one of those guys who takes advantage of that [coercion, social pressure]. You have freed yourself from that [coercion, social pressure] and you are well, and you can enjoy. You enjoy really choosing. The most exciting [relationship] is that one too. I was excited because I liked him, and I felt he liked me." (p11)

These two last testimonies reflect the transformation that M3 young women have experienced regarding sexual affective relationships, partners, and pleasure. Even if they once fell for them, they now clearly reject past relationships based on pressures and choose egalitarian relationships and partners because they unite ethics and desire. Therefore, even though they initially subjected pleasure to coercion and power, they have seen that this is greater when it is associated with falling in love and freedom. They have taken back their right to pleasure of falling in love (e7).

DISCUSSION

The aim of this research is to shed new light on the influence of the CDD on the pleasure that young women feel or felt in their intimate relationships. The results found in this paper have led to three different models of women (in the sense of the Weberian ideal types) regarding the effects of the CDD on their partner and relationship choice and its relation to the pleasure they feel.

M1, as teenagers, rejected the pressure to engage in casual sex with those portrayed by the CDD as the "cool boys" and sought for egalitarian relationships and partners in which they united both ethics and desire. Some studies point out that frequent communication with parents regarding sexual issues significantly reduces falling into peer pressure (van de Bongardt et al., 2014). As well social interactions have proven to be a key element in rejecting the pressures of the CDD (Puigvert Mallart et al., 2019). However, further research is needed in order to provide more knowledge about the factors that allow girls and women to reject the CDD and freely choose egalitarian relationships.

Currently, M1 participants still link pleasure to their romantic relationships. They describe their partners as being supportive and good, but also attractive and passionate.

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They feel that their relationships are what they have always wanted, with sexual desire being an important part of them. Therefore, pleasure relies in the relationships they have built and the connection they feel. These results are consistent with other studies reporting greater sexual satisfaction in romantic relationships (Armstrong et al., 2012; Barnett and Melugin, 2016).

Moreover, the narratives of participants in M1 challenge the idea of the downside of long-term relationships having worse outcomes for women than hooking up (Armstrong et al., 2010), as all participants in romantic relationships (love-based) reported high satisfaction with their relationships. Indeed, these findings support the idea that the positive or negative outcomes of a relationship are not in its duration, but in the partner of choice. These findings are more aligned with those of Carlson and Soller (2019), which found sexual empowerment and sexual well-being in egalitarian relationships, led by increased communication within the couple. The narratives of participants in M1 also contribute to the empowerment of all those girls and women who freely decide to never engage with men portrayed as more attractive through the CDD because of being violent. In line with previous research by Puigvert Mallart et al. (2019), the self-interrogation that this girls undergo about who they want to be and with whom they choose to have sexual relationships allows them to break the association between violence and attraction, and to associate this later feeling to partners that respect them and feel too passionate about them. Furthermore, they prove that one does not need to suffer the negative consequences of coerced relationships to reject them.

Conversely to participants in M1, M2 participants link pleasure to elements of the CDD. In their narratives, directly or indirectly, they describe peer pressure to hook up with the bad boys. M2 participants' attitudes toward casual relationships are consistent with Suleiman and Deardorff (2015), which found that the majority of participants in their study mentioned their choice of relationship being influenced by their peers. In addition, young women in M2 indicate having engaged in such relationships for status matters. They felt that conveying which was expected from them would make them more socially valued by their peers. This behavior can be explained when girls and/or young women fall victims of the "upward mobility mirage" (Oliver, 2010–2012), which results from the CDD present in interactions with peers. It is also consistent with other studies (Pedersen et al., 2017), in which participants, through their narratives, share that having wild experiences to recount to friends is important to them. In addition, the fact that all young women in M2 recall engaging in sexual–affective relationships that they did not enjoy or choosing partners who they did not like is also in accordance with studies (Montes et al., 2016, 2017) showing that students experiencing peer pressure to engage in casual relationships seem more susceptible to adverse outcomes related to hooking up.

Nevertheless, young women in M2 also had good memories about these relationships, even if vaguer. These results would be consistent with studies reporting that pleasure in casual relationships often lies beyond the sexual encounter itself

(Farvid and Braun, 2017; Pedersen et al., 2017). Rather, these studies show that pleasure in these encounters relies on elements as the "hunt," status, or sharing the story with friends; all these elements being consistent with the CDD. For instance, participants in Pedersen et al. (2017) recounted their "wild experiences" as being fun, but provided ambivalent reports of these encounters. Thus, by including in the analysis the existence of the CDD, the present study provides new insights on the fact that girls and women under the pressures of the CDD engage in relationships that are not pleasurable per se. This is in line with studies from the field of socioneuroscience which explain how the CDD can shape the neural networks of some women and lead them to feel attraction toward these men and relationships, even though they can be aware at the same time that they do not feel pleasure in them. These finding can also contribute to explain why some women feel regret (Campbell, 2008) or disgust (Al-Shawaf et al., 2018; Kennair et al., 2018) after hooking up, by evidencing the contradictions between what they think of these relationships because of the CDD and what they actually experience in them. Moreover, the current study challenges those studies that explain these feelings of regret as a consequence of social double-standards that punish women, and not men, for being in casual relationships (Armstrong et al., 2010; Snapp et al., 2015; Rodrigue and Fernet, 2016; Farvid and Braun, 2017; Uecker and Martinez, 2017). In this vein, it provides evidence on how their choices are a consequence of the CDD, which in turn drives them to have behaviors that they do not fully consciously decide and thus, they later regret.

Furthermore, evidence in the current study supports that hook-ups do not inherently lead to negative outcomes. Rather it points out that they have negative effects on women when they are the consequence of the CDD, which is consistent with previous investigations (Valls et al., 2008; Puigvert et al., 2019).

In addition, the present study also provides evidence about how engaging in coerced relationships can have long-term effects in later relationships and partner choice. Participants in this study classified as M2 currently report to prefer egalitarian relationships, while they still think that hook-ups were more exciting. This drives them to a double standards cul-de-sac: while egalitarian relationships are now seen as more convenient, hook-ups with the "bad boys" still are more exciting (Gómez, 2015). This apparent contradiction could be explained at the light of results found by Racionero-Plaza et al. (2018), which show that violent sexual–affective relationships could include feelings of attraction and desire. According to the authors, this behavior would be influenced and triggered by the consequence of storing in their memory coerced situations as desirable, because of the CDD, and would, in turn, set a frame of reference infused of coercive elements for future relationships (Racionero-Plaza et al., 2018). Findings from the field of socioneuroscience also support this idea and provide an explanation of why it happens: in the same schemata and as a consequence of the CDD, there are stored memories of aggression in an intimate relationship (what happened) and attraction toward the aggressor.

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Therefore, the current study points out how the CDD might be responsible for leading adolescents to engage in pleasureless and coerced relationships, where pleasure lays outside the relationship itself. Moreover, the results presented in this paper also challenge the idea that bad hook-ups do not have negative long-term effects on women's relationships (Armstrong et al., 2010; Farvid and Braun, 2017). As well, it offers an explanation to the mixed-results found in the association between well-being and hooking-up (Vrangalova, 2015).

Finally, M3 participants explain how they fell into the pressures of the CDD and engaged in relationships with the bad boys for external reasons to the relationships, just as M2 participants (Oliver, 2010–2012; Gómez, 2015). However, conversely to those in M2, M3 participants fully acknowledge the lack of pleasure in those relationships, as well as the fact that they used to share them as exciting to meet social expectations. The capacity of these young women to break with the pressures of the CDD and transform their relationships is consistent with the analysis of Puigvert Mallart et al. (2019), who explain that critical awareness about the influence of CDD is key to dissociate attraction from violent partners and relationships. Indeed, all young women in M3 who undergo the process of rejecting the CDD regain control of their choices and preferences and transform the type of relationships they prefer.

In addition, these findings also contribute to explain the fact that women in egalitarian relationships report pleasure to be greater in such relationships, just as participants in M1. However, participants in M3 also contribute to challenge the pressures that women in M1 suffer when they are told that they prefer their egalitarian relationships because they do not know other relationships than those. Indeed, women in M3 provide first-hand narratives that unveil the lack of pleasure in coerced relationships and recognize how sexual pleasure can only be found with an egalitarian partner that does not treat you with contempt. Indeed, their narratives shed new light on aspects such as why the pleasure relies in external factors of the relationship [i.e., the hunt, status, feeling wild, etc. (Farvid and Braun, 2017; Pedersen et al., 2017)] and provide an explanation to why adolescents and young adults allege to engage in such relationships for the sex, while they also report the sex to be less physically pleasurable (Farvid and Braun, 2017). They also provide an alternative answer to why women can easily share the details about the lack of pleasure in coerced relationships but not the positive ones: challenging Farvid (2014) hypothesis, this would not be because they lack to resources to narrate such pleasures, but simply because these experiences were never truly pleasurable.

In addition, M3 participants support that egalitarian romantic relationships can be sexually empowering and satisfactory (Carlson and Soller, 2019). According to these participants, their egalitarian relationships are of higher quality (Paik, 2010) and more pleasurable, not only regarding orgasm (Armstrong et al., 2012), but because they unite in the same person passion and love (Gómez, 2015). These findings bring forward the idea that pleasure is closely associated with falling in love and challenge once again the idea of love being a damaging force (Lelaurain et al., 2018).

Limitations

The current research aimed at exploring pleasure taking into account the presence of the CDD. Our findings show how this new approach provides new answers for questions and behaviors that remained unexplained. However, because of its exploratory nature, the current study does not provide an in-depth explanation of the elements underlying the association between pleasure and the CDD, for which further research is needed.

Another limitation of the study is that participants shared their own narratives. Therefore, it must be taken into account that some questions were partially answered or that some tried to respond in line with what they consider to be more socially valued. This limitation was addressed by asking the same questions from different angles, which allowed us to detect inconsistencies and ask for clarifications. Nevertheless, the possibility of answers not being fully representative of their experiences cannot be rejected.

Further Research

The present study has unveiled new elements that should be considered in future researches. One of these elements of study refers to peer pressure under the CDD, in order to gain new insights on which factors put girls and women at risk of falling into its pressures and which factors can be considered protective. In this line, young women in M1 can provide new valuable knowledge.

Another element worth considering is the role of fake narratives in associating pleasure to coerced relationships. Providing new evidence of why girls and women engage in these practices, as well as to contrast what they experience with what they share would allow to provide further evidence supporting the lack of pleasure in coerced relationships. Young women in M2 and M3 could provide first-hand knowledge of this process. Moreover, the participation of young women in M2 in such a study under the frame of communicative methodology would provide them with scientific knowledge that could allow them to challenge their perceptions and engagement in coercive relationships.

Finally, further focus on egalitarian relationships will provide new evidence of which elements make these relationships pleasurable, contributing to a body of knowledge in which romantic relationships challenge the dichotomy between exciting relationships and convenient ones by uniting in the same person passion and love.

CONCLUSION

The current research is one of the many studies now contributing to further increase the social impact of psychology by providing new evidence regarding pleasure in sexual–affective relationships. Accounting for the presence of a CDD, this research has shown how peer pressure can lead to coerced relationships which completely lack pleasure but are perceived as pleasurable because of elements that lie outside of them and that are socially

constructed. Unveiling this fact has allowed us to see how those young women who reject the pressures of the CDD (M1) choose egalitarian relationships in which there is love and excitement. Pleasure is an important part of the relationship they have built; they have not given up the pleasure of falling in love.

On the contrary, those young women who fall into the pressures of the coercive discourse (M2) report ambivalent feelings about the relationships in which they used to engage: they signal that they started because they felt they had to and they describe experiencing negative situations; however, they still describe them as exciting because pleasure is subject to the elements of the CDD. Far from being isolated experiences with no further effects, this study shows how such behavior steals from women their right to the pleasure of falling in love, as it leads them to assume that egalitarian relationships even if convenient are boring, and that excitement lies elsewhere.

Nevertheless, our findings also suggest that the negative effect of falling into the pressures of the CDD can be overcome. This transformation lies in the rejection of coerced relationships by recognizing the lack of pleasure in them, the lack of truth in what was shared by friends (fake narratives) and the lack of freedom in those choices. In this vein, young women in M3 show how the right to the pleasure of falling in love can be taken back, since this transformation not only allows to unveil the negative truth behind coerced relationships, but also reveals how romantic relationships (long or short) are intrinsically free and satisfactory. As a M3, P11, stated:

> "Those who still look for hook-ups, want the next one to be even worse; it's always like this.
> Those who want to settle in, look for nice guys who they think will accept them.
> Those who transform themselves, look for the prince."

As women, we thus vindicate our right to the pleasure of falling in love.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The datasets generated for this study are available on request to the corresponding author.

ETHICS STATEMENT

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by the Ethics Board of the Community of Researchers on Excellence for All (CREA). The patients/participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study. Written informed consent was obtained from the individual(s) for the publication of any potentially identifiable images or data included in this article.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

LP was the IP of the research line from which this article derives. ET-G was responsible for the article's design and writing. AK and ET-G participated in some of the fieldwork. EA collaborated in the current line of research with LP and in the design of the article with ET-G. LP and ET-G participated in the analysis. AK and ET-G co-authored a communication on this topic at an international feminist conference.

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4. Changes in Tongue Kissing in Hook-Ups after COVID-19

4.1. Presentation

Lesbos, where the kisses are like cascades
That throw themselves boldly into bottomless chasms
And flow, sobbing and gurgling intermittently,
Stormy and secret, teeming and profound;
Lesbos, where the kisses are like cascades!

Charles Baudelaire - Flowers of Evil

From lockdowns to social distancing and the mandatory wearing of masks, the current pandemic context has brought many changes into our lives. In this new context, the *new normal*, some state how people, especially youth, will completely let go after the confinement and will seek and have more intimate relationships than before, in an alleged quest to recover the time lost during the pandemic (Benítez, 2021).

However, there is little research available about how the pandemic context affects sporadic relationships. Among the research available, most of it focuses on stable relationships (Yuksel & Ozgor, 2020), as well as on risk perception and behavioral changes (Cori et al., 2020). However, there is a lack of research in what concerns casual relationships as well as the role of emotions in decision-making in the context of the pandemic.

Elster's contributions show the increasing important role of emotions when making choices, beyond rational decisions and social norms (Elster, 1999). Even if Elster identified sexual desire within the basic emotions, later research has provided evidence of its complex and social nature (Gómez, 2015). Moreover, it is relevant to explore the influence of the CDD in the current context of pandemic, in order to unveil any transformative opportunities derived from it. The current context also offers opportunities for reflection on which are the things we value, including relationships.
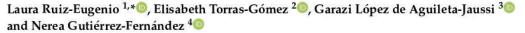
Along these lines, the paper presented in this chapter *Changes in Tongue Kissing in Hook-Ups after COVID-19,* explores young women's memories of past tongue-kissing hook-ups, what in Spanish is called *morreos*. The word *morreo* comes from *morro* (snout) and defines a tongue-kissing experience that is at opposite ends with what one imagines as a *Rome and Juliette* kiss. Particularly, the study explores if re-evaluating past tongue-kissing hookups in light of potential transmission of COVID-19 reflects any changes in their intentions and perceptions towards future experiences. In this vein, the current article also contributes to the achievement of SO2 *To analyze the characteristics of the sexual-affective relationships that girls and young women have* and SO3 *To analyze the consequences of the sexual-affective relationships that girls and young women have in their experience of sexual pleasure*, by unveiling how the memories of such relationships change when awareness is risen regarding the risks for transmission depending on the partner of choice. Moreover, the current article also contributes to SO1, *To delve in the foundations of the coercive dominant discourse and the preventive socialization of gender violence*, by how young women define these past hookup experiences and the re-evaluation of these in a context of pandemic. Finally, the paper included in this chapter contributes to sO4 *To identify transformative actions that allow rejecting and / or overcoming coercive discourse in relation to pleasure*, as participants predict a change in their future behaviors, based on the reflection made.

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4.2. Manuscript

sustainability

MDPI

Article

Changes in Tongue Kissing in Hook-Ups after COVID-19

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Abstract: A growing body of social and behavioral sciences studies are providing evidence on how COVID-19 is influencing changes in society and among individuals. A few of those studies focus on how it is affecting behavioral and habit changes in stable couples. Yet its influence on changes in hook-ups remains understudied. To contribute to filling this gap, this exploratory study analyzes changes related to tongue kissing in hook-ups promoted by increased awareness of tongue kissing certain people as a potential source of transmission. Through pre- and post-test questionnaires given to 20 girls (18–30 years old), potential changes in the memories of past tongue-kissing hook-ups and in intentions and perceptions towards future ones can be observed among 12 participants. The implications of these findings suggest not only how the new normal might affect tongue kissing in hook-ups among these girls but also how these girls might freely decide with whom to engage in sexual-affective relationships in the future.

Keywords: COVID-19; tongue kissing; hook-ups; new normal; prevention

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic is a global health crisis that requires large-scale organizational and personal changes to limit the transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in the post-pandemic period, already known as the new normal [1]. While scientists around the world are making great efforts to find a COVID-19 vaccine, social and behavioral sciences studies are being published on the existing evidence of psychological, biological, social, and environmental factors that influence behavior to limit the transmission of the virus [2,3]. However, the implications for behavioral changes in sexual-affective relationships have hardly been published yet. The few that have been written make some reference to changes in the habits of stable couples [2,4]. Therefore, there is a gap in how the pandemic has influenced changes in habits and behavior towards hooking up, dating, or casual sexual relationships, when these may be one of the main sources of infection among youth. This article addresses the gap by providing evidence that suggests how the new normal might change memories, perceptions, and intentions of participating young women towards tongue-kissing hook-ups. The terms tongue-kissing and hook-up have been chosen as the closest translations of the terms used in Spanish when conducting the study. The study used the Spanish word *morreo*, a specific form of kiss, which has hook-up connotations attached to it. If one thinks of Romeo and Juliet's kiss, *morreo* is completely at odds with their kiss. Hence, the most similar translation we have found is tongue-kissing, although we acknowledge it

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does not exactly convey the meaning of *morreo*. In addition, in this study hook-up is understood as a one-night stand, which might or might not involve sex.

1.1. Risk Perception, Behavioral Changes, and Choices in the New Normal

In recent weeks, research on risk and threat perception of the pandemic has been published, as it has become increasingly relevant for understanding and managing it. It is known that beliefs, knowledge, values, and attitudes influence not only individuals' decision making but also their behavior and exposure to infection risk [5]. Despite the fact that young people are not a COVID-19 risk group, one of the factors being studied as influencing their behavior most is the change in perception about the real risk to their lives and the lives of older people around them [6].

There is an urgent need for effective interventions to increase adherence to behaviors people can adopt to protect themselves and others [7,8] as well as a paucity of evidence on interventions that achieve these behavioral changes. The most consistent psychological predictors of concern about COVID-19 and adoption of healthy behaviors, as found in a US nationally representative sample, were increased sensitivity to pathogen disgust, germ aversion, and perception of infectivity [9]. Van Bavel and colleagues [2] have recently published a review of factors influencing decision making and behavior in the face of a pandemic, which is one of the few published studies that refers to factors that can influence changes in habits within intimate relationships in the new normal. Nevertheless, it only refers to long-term relationships, not to casual ones. They point out that a success factor in avoiding the stress of the infection threat is that couples calibrate their expectations to the circumstances and keep them high whenever the relationship can deliver in these conditions. Communication between partners about the consensus of what those conditions are can balance underestimating the probability of getting the disease with the anxiety and fear of contracting it [2].

Decades before the pandemic, the role of communication in decision making among people involved in a sexual-affective relationship had been widely studied [10]. Ulrich Beck had already referred to contract-style marriages in 1986 as a growing measure in which agreements could even be made to reveal to each other the form of their previous sexual experiences. Taking back Beck's analysis of what he called the risk society [11] could provide some clues about how the threat of contagion could be minimized in intimate relationships. For example, this may include a dialogue based on validity claims, honesty, and consensus without coercion [12] between the parties involved about the type of relationships they have had in previous weeks. Control and protection institutions will not be able to control the intimate relationships of people in order to limit the contagion. Therefore, the decisions and choices of individuals take on more significance than ever, in a society in which people act more on the basis of negotiations, dialogue, and the daily conquest of equality and freedom [13].

1.2. The Influence of Emotions on Choice

The review by Van Bavel and colleagues [2] has also reported how sound health decisions can be affected by emotions more than by factual information, and that prosocial behavior norms are more effective when they are accompanied by group social approval and when they are promoted through group members who have a central role. What others are doing or what they think others approve or disapprove of can have great influence on their own decisions. This is what Jon Elster [14] states as a choice guided by social norms. These are not guided by the best means but by the propensity to comply with the norms of the social group. Research also shows that the spread of fake information on social networks is influenced by emotion. However, when investigating the behavior of people on social networks, such as Twitter during the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been identified that fake information is tweeted more but is less retweeted than science-based information or fact-checking tweets, while science-based information and fact-checking tweets capture more engagement than simple facts [15,16].

The influence of emotions on decision-making processes and on choice was widely analyzed by Jon Elster. His analysis continues to be very useful for understanding decision-making processes and

choices of people in a pandemic and post-pandemic situation. Elster [17] already highlighted how emotions are playing an increasingly important role in decision-making, as opposed to rational choice and social norms. He considers that emotions, such as love or friendship, hate, or fear, are both a motivating and a distorting force that can affect cognitive rationality and may not find reasons to act and choose rationally. Elster considered sexual desire a basic emotion similar to hunger. According to the author, this can be explained by evolutionary theories, but they cannot explain complex emotions, such as self-deception or the tendency to think the worst as Othello did with Desdemona. For Elster, the benefits of emotions, such as jealousy, are not clear, even more so when they lead not only to kill the rival but also the loved one, as in the previous example. Later research has considered sexual desire not as a basic emotion but rather as a social question specific to human beings; a complex emotion that is shaped in a process of socialization [18].

1.3. The Transformation of Memories and of the Language of Desire

Socio-neuroscience analyzes the processes of conscious versus unconscious volition and social control [19]. In recent years, studies from this approach have highlighted the social dimension of attraction and desire through interventions that promote dialogue on the coercive dominant discourse (hereinafter, CDD) [19,20]. The CDD imposes the link between people with violent attitudes and behaviors and attraction and excitement [21]. In contrast, people and relationships with nonviolent behaviors are presented as less exciting [18]. This discourse is transmitted in numerous daily interactions with peers, television programs, songs, social networks, etc. [22]. The CDD refers to men who are considered nonviolent from the language of ethics ("how good he is"), but the language of desire ("how attractive he is") is missing [23,24]. On the contrary, when reference is made to men who exercise domination and disdain over women, the language of desire is present, associating them with appeal and excitement [23].

A study using a questionnaire with 100 female adolescents (aged 13–16) in different European secondary schools [21] identified that although nonviolent boys are highly preferred to those with a violent profile, the latter are mostly preferred for hook-ups, and the former are mostly preferred for stable relationships [21]. The CDD influences the socialization of many girls and women in linking desire and attraction to hooking up with boys and men with violent attitudes, developing a process of socialization in the desire identified as a risk factor for gender violence victimization [25].

Another study revealed that the intention to hook up with a boy who has a profile of traditional masculinity related to dominance and disregard decreased significantly after some female university students participated in a dialogic feminist gathering on the "mirage of upward mobility". This social phenomenon, previously studied as a result of the CDD, is the erroneous perception of some girls that hooking up with a boy who responds to the hegemonic masculinity that has violent and disdainful attitudes towards women increases their status and attractiveness, when in fact what happens is that the status and attractiveness of these girls decreases [26].

It should be noted that some research has shown that women associate hooking up with high regret [27] and disgust [28,29], while those who place importance on caring and love have better sex [30,31]. Research on preventive socialization of gender violence has shown that the positive or negative impact of a relationship does not depend on its duration, on whether it is stable or causal, but on the partner choice [25], as well as on the extent to which dialogue between partners is part of the daily quest for more freedom and equality [18], and how egalitarian dialogue focused on rejecting violence can promote critical thinking that unveils the link between attraction and violence [32].

Following such evidence, this study sheds light on whether participating girls' memories of past tongue-kissing hook-ups and their intentions and perceptions towards future ones might change due to an increased awareness of tongue kissing certain boys with whom there is no guarantee of a dialogue with validity claims about the type of relationships they have had in recent weeks as a potential source of transmission of COVID-19. In so doing, the present study addresses the gap in changes that the new normal after COVID-19 might promote for hook-ups. This study contributes

to advancing sustainability, particularly that of social development. Its findings point at a potential for participants to make choices based on evidence that can have a positive impact on their health, especially paramount during the pandemic and the new normal. Conclusions also suggest that there is a potential for the new normal to affect participants' intentions regarding future tongue kissing and provide them with more opportunities to freely decide on their relationships.

2. Materials and Methods

In order to get an insight on potential changes in girls' tongue-kissing hook-ups in the new normal, an experimental exploratory study based on pretest and post-test questionnaires has been conducted. This study has been carried out following a qualitative method with communicative approach [33,34], which is oriented towards the analysis of reality as a means to transform it. Through this methodology both researchers and participants share an egalitarian dialogue in order to cocreate scientific knowledge on the object of research and make it more democratic [35]. Following the communicative approach, which includes participants' voices throughout the whole research process [33,34], once the study results were written, they were sent to each participant whose response has been included in the study, so that they could give their consent and agreement to publish such results.

This study has been conducted in Spain. Hence, the words *tongue kissing* and *hook-up* have been chosen as translations from the Spanish terms *morreo* and *ligues esporádicos de marcha nocturna*, respectively. The word *morreo* was chosen due to its hook-up connotation, as it is a type of kiss which would generally not be associated with Romeo and Juliet's kiss. In other words, a *morreo* is linked with coercive environments and, therefore, it is at odds with an ideal and free love as that of Romeo and Juliet. After asking English-speaking girls which word would best convey its meaning, the term *tongue kissing* was chosen. On the other hand, our study specified that it addressed *morreos* in *ligues esporádicos de marcha nocturna*, which can be translated as *one-night stands* or *night party hook-ups*. After asking English-speaking girls what the best translation would be, the term *hook-ups* was established.

2.1. Participants

This study's participants are heterosexual females between the ages of 18 and 30. A few participants were purposely contacted initially, and the rest were then included through a snowballing process. Initially, 56 girls filled in the informed written consent, which was a requirement for participating in the study. Among them, 34 filled in the pretest questionnaire and, among these, 26 completed the post-test. From these 26 girls, two were dismissed because they did not give consent to publish their answers. Among the 24 remaining, three were dismissed, because they had not reported any tongue-kissing experience. Another one was discarded because she did not fit in the profile aimed for the study (she was above 30 years old). Hence, 20 participants were included in the analysis. Participants were between 23 and 29 years old. They were all Spanish and lived in different cities at the time of the study: Barcelona, Bilbao, Madrid, Reus, and Valencia. Numbers have been used in this article to refer to the participants.

2.2. Instrument

Two questionnaires were created using the Google Forms tool, one for the pretest and another one for the post-test. The first questionnaire was divided into six main blocks. The first block pertained to demographic information (age, gender, city of residence, and nationality). The second block asked how many tongue-kissing hook-ups they had had (0, 1–5, 5–15, or more than 15). The third one was an open question that asked participants to think about the three most exciting tongue-kissing experiences they had had and to put a reference for them to remember who they were talking about, as the rest of the questions would refer to those three. The fourth asked them to grade each of the chosen experiences from 0 to 10 (being 0 the lowest and 10 the highest). The fifth asked them whether they would repeat each of those experiences, *for sure*, *maybe*, and *no* being the options to respond. The last block concerned how they felt when remembering such experiences. In this block, participants had

two questions. The first one provided them with ten adjectives, five related to rejection feelings (*disgust, shame, humiliation, regret,* and *sadness*), and the other five related to attraction feelings (*desire, excitement, fun, pleasure,* and *joy*). They could choose as many adjectives as they wanted for each tongue-kissing experience. The second question was open-ended and asked the girls to add anything else they felt when remembering those experiences.

The post-test questionnaire was very similar but had slight modifications with five blocks in total. In the first block, the girls encountered a 43-word text explaining that COVID-19 is transmitted mainly through saliva, and that tongue kissing unknown people is a source of transmission. This short text served as an introduction to a 35-second video about an experiment in which a group of ten people in Japan gathered to have a meal together. One of them applied invisible ink in his hands. After 30 min, black lighting was used, evidencing that the ink was everywhere and on each person who was there. After reading the text and watching the video, the girls were asked how they remembered what they considered as the three most exciting tongue-kissing experiences they referred to in the pretest. After this question, the last three blocks from the pretest questionnaire were included.

Both the pretest and the post-test were filled in between 15 May and 4 June 2020. The minimum time interval between submitting the pretest and the post-test was 5 min, and the maximum time interval was six days, 23 h and 57 s.

2.3. Data Collection

Due to the confinement situation, data were collected virtually. To do so, the researchers first sent the informed written consent forms with the study's information, their rights as participants, and questions regarding consent in Google Forms format to several girls through WhatsApp. Some of these girls also sent the informed written consent to some of their contacts. Once they filled in the informed written consent, in which they wrote down their email address, researchers emailed them with the pretest questionnaire. Right after they completed the pretest questionnaire, researchers sent another email with the post-test questionnaire. Participants were encouraged to ask questions to the researchers throughout the whole study through WhatsApp or email.

2.4. Data Analysis

Data from both the informed written consent and the two questionnaires were automatically transferred into three separate Excel sheets. After reviewing all three, the researchers organized the information of those participants who had filled in both questionnaires and who had given permission to publish their results in another Excel sheet. The Excel sheet contained line-by-line answers from each participant. Their responses to each question in the pretest and the post-test were paired together in order to better identify whether and how many participants changed them. Changes were analyzed numerically (how many girls changed in each category, how many adjectives were changed, etc.), as well as qualitatively by looking at their comments. The current study is not and does not pretend to be statistically representative. Thus, its significance cannot be generalized to changes in patterns in society.

2.5. Ethics Statement

The study was fully approved by the Ethics Board of the Community of Researchers on Excellence for All (CREA). The participants provided their informed written consent to participate in this study. The information provided in the consent form explained the goal of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, the possibility to withdraw from it at any time, the procedure to collect the data, the materials and measures to be used, the permission to publish the data obtained, and the anonymity and privacy statement. Research participants had time to read the consent form and, due to the current situation, to ask questions to the researchers by email or WhatsApp.

3. Results

Among the 20 participants who completed both questionnaires and gave their consent for their results to be published, 12 have shown at least one change regarding increased rejection in the memory of past tongue-kissing (*morreo*) hook-ups and/or in the intention and/or perception towards future tongue kissing. The remaining eight participants have not shown any increased rejection change. Hence, in this article, only the results pertaining to the 12 participants' changes will be reported, as those are the changes that are of most interest for this particular study. Nonetheless, these 12 participants have also shown some changes related to increased attraction, which are also included in the results presented here, although not centrally discussed. The in-depth analysis of increased attraction changes could be the object of further research and another article. We consider increased rejection changes to be those regarding lower grades to tongue-kissing experiences, less willingness to repeat the experiences, more feelings of rejection associated with them, or less feelings of attraction associated with them. In turn, we consider increased attraction changes as those where girls reported higher grades regarding the experiences, more willingness to repeat them, less feelings of rejection associated with them, or more feelings of attraction associated with them. We have divided this section into four main categories regarding the observed changes: change in the attractiveness towards the tongue-kissing hook-ups, change in whether they would repeat them or not, change in what they feel when remembering them, and further reflections from participants.

3.1. Changes in Attractiveness Towards Tongue-Kissing Hook-Ups

Participants were asked to choose and grade from 0 to 10 what they considered as the three most exciting tongue-kissing hook-ups (which would be referred to as A, B, and C). A hyphen was inserted when no scores were given. Participants' responses to this question can be seen in Table 1. This category was the one in which the least changes have been observed. Out of the 12 participants presented in this article, two (P9 and P12) increased one of their grades, while three (P1, P2 and P11) gave lower grades in the post-test than in the pretest to at least one of their tongue-kissing experiences. Among them, P9 and P12 showed a one-point increase regarding one of her experiences, whereas P1 showed a one-point decrease regarding one of her experiences. Yet the change between the pretest and the post-test was bigger for the remaining two: P11 went from 8, 9, and 8.5 to 5, 6, and 5, respectively; P2 went from 7 and 8 (she only referred to two experiences) to 0 in both of them. Because of these changes, the average of all grades among the 12 girls went from 7.43 in the pretest to 5.9 in the post-test.

Table 1. Attractiveness of tongue-kissing experiences.

Participants	PRETEST			POST-TEST		
	A	B	C	A	B	C
P1	6	9	8	5	9	8
P2	7	8	-	0	0	-
P3	8	7	5	8	7	5
P4	0	-	-	0	-	-
P5	8	-	-	8	-	-
P6	7	8	6	7	8	6
P7	-	-	-	0	0	0
P8	-	8	8	-	8	8
P9	6	9	6	7	9	6
P10	7	9	8	7	9	8
P11	8	9	8.5	5	6	5
P12	10	8	9	10	9	9
	Average pretest		7.43	Average pretest		5.90

3.2. Changes in Whether They Would Do It Again or Not

Participants had three choices to express whether they would repeat the same tongue-kissing hook-ups now: *for sure (FS)*, *maybe (M)*, and *no (N)*. Answers within this category can be observed in Table 2. Among these 12 girls, all changes referred to increased rejection, that is, none changed from *no or maybe* in the pretest to *maybe* or *for sure* in the post-test. Few girls showed a change in this category, as most of them (P1, P2, P3, P4, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, and P11) said *no* in the pretest regarding at least one of the tongue-kissing experiences and maintained the *no* in the post-test.

On the other hand, five girls (P3, P5, P9, P10 and P12) did show a change from the pretest to the post-test in at least one tongue-kissing experience. Of these, all the ones who said *maybe* in the pretest shifted to *no* in the post-test. Regarding those who answered *for sure* in the pretest, four changed to *maybe* in the post-test. As for the fifth one (P12), whereas she said *for sure* regarding the three experiences in the pretest, in the post-test she changed one to *maybe* and maintained two of them as *for sure*.

Overall, the number of *for sure* and *maybe* answers decreased from 20% to 10%, and from 20% to 13%, respectively. Conversely, the number of *no* answers increased in the post-test from 60% to 77%).

Table 2. Whether or not participants would repeat the tongue-kissing hook-ups.

Participants	PRETEST			POST-TEST		
	A	B	C	A	B	C
P1	N	FS	M	N	FS	M
P2	N	N	-	N	N	-
P3	M	M	N	N	N	N
P4	N	-	-	N	-	-
P5	M	-	-	N	-	-
P6	N	N	N	N	N	N
P7	N	N	N	N	N	N
P8	-	N	N	-	N	N
P9	FS	M	N	M	N	N
P10	N	M	FS	N	N	M
P11	N	N	N	N	N	N
P12	FS	FS	FS	FS	M	FS
	N = 18 (60%)	M = 6 (20%)	FS = 6 (20%)	N = 23 (77%)	M = 4 (13%)	FS = 3 (10%)

3.3. Change in Feelings Associated with Memories of Tongue-Kissing Hook-Ups

In order to ask the girls what they felt when remembering the three most exciting tongue-kissing hook-ups, we first presented them ten adjectives among which they could choose as many as they wanted. Five of those adjectives expressed feelings of rejection: *disgust (Di)*, *shame (Sh)*, *humiliation (Hu)*, *regret (R)*, and *sadness (Sa)*; and the other five expressed feelings of attraction: *desire (De)*, *excitement (E)*, *fun (F)*, *pleasure (P)*, and *joy (J)*. The answers to this question can be seen in Table 3.

Among the 12 girls, eight (67%) showed an increased rejection change in at least one adjective. From these, two (P3 and P11) replaced attraction adjectives with rejection ones in the post-test, for instance replacing *fun* and *excitement* with *disgust*, *regret*, *shame*, and *sadness*. On the other hand, three (P5, P7, and P8) included at least one rejection adjective in the post-test, such as *disgust*, *sadness*, or *regret*. The other three (P1, P9, and P12) removed at least one attraction adjective from the pretest, such as *joy* or *excitement*. Moreover, from those who had initially selected at least one attraction adjective, two (P3, P11) ended up with no attraction adjectives in the post-test. P3, for instance, changed from *fun*, *excitement*, and *shame* for each tongue-kissing experience in the pretest to *shame*, *shame*, and *disgust* respectively in the post-test. Nevertheless, two participants (P1 and P6) showed an increased attraction change, as they remembered their tongue-kissing experiences with more rejection

in the pretest than in the post-test. In this vein, in the post-test, both participants removed a rejection feeling, such as *regret* or *sadness*, and replaced it with an attraction one, such as *joy* or *fun*.

Overall, among the 12 participants, the use of attraction adjectives decreased from 58% to 43% in the post-test, whereas the use of rejection adjectives increased from 42% to 57% in the post-test. Therefore, whereas in the pretest attraction adjectives were used more than rejection ones, we observed a reversing trend in the post-test. Moreover, while the most used adjective in the pretest was *excitement* (18%), the ones most used in the post-test were *shame* (17%) and *regret* (17%), also evincing the reversing trend in the post-test.

Table 3. Adjectives associated with tongue-kissing hook-ups' memories.

	PRETEST			POST-TEST		
	A	**B**	**C**	**A**	**B**	**C**
P1	Sh/E	De/E/P/J	De/F/R	Sh/P	De/E/P	E/F/J
P2	Sh/R	Sh/R	-	Sh/R	Sh/R	-
P3	F	E	Sh	Sh	Sh	Di
P4	Di/Sh/R	-	-	Di/Sh/R	-	-
P5	De/F	-	-	Di/De/F	-	-
P6	De	-	Sa	De	-	F
P7	Di/Sh/Hu/R	Di/Sh/Hu/R	Di/Sh/Hu/R	Di/Sh/Hu/R/Sa	Di/Sh/Hu/R/Sa	Di/Sh/Hu/R/Sa
P8	-	F	F	-	F/R	F/R
P9	E/P/J	E	F	P	P	F
P10	E/R	De/E	E/J	E/R	De/E	E/J
P11	Sh/F	Sh/Sa	E/R	Sh/R/Sa	Sh/R/Sa	Sh/R/Sa
P12	De/E/F/J	De/E/F/J	De/E/F/J	De/F/J	De/F/J	De/F/J
ATTID	De = 8 (12%); E = 12 (18%); F = 10 (15%); P = 2 (3%); J = 6 (9%) TOTAL = 38 (58%)			De = 7 (10%); E = 5 (7%); F = 9 (13%); P = 4 (6%); J = 5 (7%) TOTAL = 30 (43%)		
REJIR	Di = 4 (6%); Sh = 10 (15%); Hu = 3 (5%); R = 9 (14%); Sa = 2 (3%) TOTAL = 28 (42%)			Di = 6 (9%); Sh = 12 (17%); Hu = 3 (4%); R = 12 (17%); Sa = 6 (9%) TOTAL = 39 (57%)		

Attraction (ATT) = Desire (De); Excitement (E); Fun (F); Pleasure (P); Joy (J); Rejection (REJ) = Disgust (Di); Shame (Sh); Humiliation (Hu); Regret (R); Sadness (Sa).

3.4. Further Reflections from Participants

Girls had two occasions in which they could add any comments or reflections they wanted to: in the first question they had three blank spaces (one for each experience) in which they could write anything they wanted about the tongue-kissing experiences; in the last question, after choosing the feelings associated with such experiences, they were asked to add, if they wanted to, any other comment about what they felt when remembering them. Seven girls showed a change in at least one of the comments from the pretest to the post-test. On the one hand, some girls explained that their memory of at least one of the tongue-kissing experiences changed. On the other hand, some expressed that, while none of their past memories had changed, their intentions and perceptions towards future tongue kissing did change.

3.4.1. Changing the Memory of Past Tongue-Kissing Hook-Ups

Four (P1, P7, P8, and P10) of the 12 girls presented here expressed some kind of change when referring to the memories of the past tongue-kissing experiences in the first and/or last question. Overall, feelings of rejection, such as "disgust", increased in the post-test as compared to the pretest. P7, for instance, included some adjectives in the post-test that showed rejection towards the three previous tongue-kissing experiences. In answer to the first question in the pretest, she wrote down the place where they occurred, while in the post-test she wrote down they were "disgusting" (P7, post-test). As for the last question, whereas in the pretest she had written she felt "shame" (P7, pretest) regarding only the first experience, in the post-test she wrote she felt "disgust" (P7, post-test) regarding all three experiences. Even though she already showed some rejection feelings towards some tongue-kissing experiences in the pretest, those seemed to intensify and generalize to the three experiences, highlighting the feeling of disgust she now felt.

On the other hand, some girls changed not only in terms of increasing rejection in the post-test but also in terms of decreasing or, at least, focusing less on attraction-related feelings. Such is the case of P10, who showed changes in the last question when referring to the first and second tongue-kissing

experiences. Regarding the first one, in the pretest she expressed that, even though she regretted it, it was a very exciting experience:

> "At that moment it was something which excited me a lot, hence, I still remember it that way. But then that person turned out to be cheating on someone, and that's why I regret it. Although I still have that memory of excitement"
>
> (P10, pretest).

In the pretest, she stated that although she regretted tongue kissing him because he was with someone else, she still remembered it as a very exciting experience, as she remarked. Yet in the post-test, the remorse feeling seemed to intensify, whereas there was no mention whatsoever to the excitement in the memory:

> "if I already thought it was not worth it, now in a situation in which this person could pass me on the virus and hence my family would be in danger, I would never do it again"
>
> (P10, post-test).

Compared to the pretest, two main changes can be observed in P10's comment in the post-test. On the one hand, although in the pretest she did say she regretted the tongue-kissing hook-up, she did not say it was not worth it. Nonetheless, in the post-test she did. On the other hand, in the pretest she had mentioned how exciting it was twice, while in the post-test she did not show any feeling of excitement, passion, or similar.

3.4.2. Projecting Changes for the Future

Three girls (P4, P5, and P6) showed no changes towards the memories of the past tongue-kissing experiences. However, they explicitly acknowledged in the first and/or last question that, while those memories remained the same, reading the short text and watching the video changed their intentions and perceptions towards future tongue-kissing hook-ups. The text and the video made some of them reflect on the risks of tongue kissing in the new normal after COVID-19. Such is the case of P4, who showed no change regarding the memory of the only tongue-kissing experience she referred to because she already said in the pretest that it was not exciting and that, in fact, it was the result of her friends' and the boy's pressure. Nonetheless, in the post-test she expressed that she felt more conscious of the danger of tongue-kissing hook-ups due to the risk of contagion:

> "[I feel] the same, taking into account that from the beginning I remember it as something negative. But the video makes me be aware of the danger of contagion in these casual relationships"
>
> (P4, post-test).

Although she already associated rejection feelings with that experience in the pretest and, hence, remembered it in equally negative terms in the post-test, her sense of danger in tongue-kissing hook-ups as a potential way of getting infected increased in the post-test.

Other girls, in turn, stated that even though their memories of past experiences also remained the same, rejection feelings towards future potential tongue kissing increased. P6, for instance, did not write anything in the pretest regarding the first question but said the following in the post-test:

> "I remember them [the three experiences] the same, my feeling of the memory doesn't change. But when thinking of doing it now in the post-COVID period with someone I don't know, it makes me feel 'disgust'."
>
> (P6, post-test).

She acknowledges that, while her memories of the three experiences have not changed from the pretest to the post-test, she feels disgust when thinking of tongue kissing an unknown person in the new normal, a thought that, in the pretest, she had not expressed.

Similarly, although P5 acknowledged in the post-test that she remembered the tongue-kissing hook-up the same way as she did in the pretest, her future relationships might change:

"I think because of the video I can't stop thinking of the typical dentist's commercial with cartoons of bacteria jumping in the teeth . . . But let's say that today, I could go party and that scenario with A repeated, for as attractive I thought he was, I would repress myself and, for precaution, I wouldn't do it. I'm a bit scared of infecting my family and, to be honest, my desire to get into mass events and tongue kiss random people is gone"

(P5, post-test).

Her example clearly shows that she is more aware of the risks of similar situations for herself and her family, including explicit images of what the risks might look like in the mouth. In addition, in the post-test, she clarifies that she would not tongue kiss A, even though she still considered him attractive. She stated that she no longer desires to get into similar situations due to the increased worry about COVID-19 contagion.

4. Discussion

There is increasing literature on how COVID-19 is changing and will continue to change habits and behaviors in stable relationships [2,4]. However, a gap was identified regarding changes in hook-ups and, in particular, in tongue kissing. This article aimed at contributing to this gap by showing how a group of young heterosexual women might change both memories of past tongue-kissing hook-ups and intentions and perceptions towards future ones, after increasing awareness of tongue kissing as a potential source of transmission. Advancements in this issue can contribute to fostering a sustainable social development that allows citizens to take action in their own lives, while promoting social transformations on the fields of health and intimate relationships.

Overall, findings report that 12 girls out of 20 showed changes related to increased rejection between the pretest and the post-test. Some of these girls showed greater disgust and regret and less excitement and desire towards some or all of the tongue-kissing hook-ups they had referred to in the study. Others did not change their memories of past experiences but said they felt disgust when imagining tongue kissing boys they did not know in the new normal. Moreover, some girls indicated that they would not repeat past situations in the present or future.

Their changes are very significant, especially taking into account that the girls were asked to choose among the three most exciting tongue-kissing hook-ups. The account of P10, for instance, shows that an increased awareness of tongue kissing people with whom there is no guarantee of a dialogue based on validity claims about past relationships as a potential source of COVID-19 transmission replaced the excitement she first associated with one of the experiences. In line with research on the CDD [21,36], which pressures many girls to hook up with boys who disdain women, she explained that although she later found out he was cheating on someone else, it was an exciting tongue-kissing hook-up. The influence of the CDD might help explain why in some cases we do not make rational decisions, as Elster's example of Othello and Desdemona [17]. In the case of P10, while she regretted having made the decision of tongue kissing a boy with disdainful attitudes towards women, she liked it, in line with studies on the CDD [18]. Nonetheless, in the post-test, thinking of the health risks she took for herself and her family, she states that the hook-up was even less worthy. This might not only point to a change induced by rationality but also by emotions [17]. Whereas this change does not mean that she no longer remembers that experience as exciting, that aspect of the tongue-kissing hook-up is left out when remembering it in the post-test. Having participated in this study might provide her with an opportunity to look at the experience differently and remember more critical memories [36].

However, almost none of the girls showed increased rejection changes in all categories, and some of the girls who showed increased rejection changes also showed increased attraction ones. It is noteworthy that the grades assigned to the different tongue-kissing experiences changed the least, while some of the same girls who maintained them, which were overall quite high, stated they would

not repeat the experiences again. Although more research is needed to understand such contradictions, a plausible explanation is that the high scores respond to the expectations that are placed by the CDD in hook-ups. It might also be associated with the mirage of upward mobility phenomenon—thinking that those experiences increased their attractiveness. In addition, we also saw contradictions in the adjectives some of the girls chose to describe how they felt when remembering past experiences. While there were already some contradictions in the pretest, where girls put adjectives like shame and fun for the same tongue-kissing hook-up, these contradictions increased in the post-test. This might also be a result of the CDD, which pressures many girls to tell their friends they felt a lot of pleasure while, in reality, many of them felt disgust [25]. Some girls in this study might have started to transform autobiographical memories that were influenced by the fake narratives they told their friends and start remembering them as they really were—as something disgusting.

On the other hand, some girls did not express a change in the memories associated with past tongue-kissing experiences. Yet after reading the text and watching the video, they showed different intentions and perceptions regarding potential future tongue kissing. Some of them explained that, while they did not feel disgust towards past tongue-kissing hook-ups, they did feel it when imagining present or future ones. When thinking of the risks they would run when tongue kissing and the disgust related to it due to COVID-19 or other infections, one of them said explicit images of the pathogens came to her mind. In light of research that reports that increased sensitivity to pathogen disgust was among the psychological predictors of the adoption of health behaviors [9], having images of this might be a predictor of her future intentions for health prevention.

Some limitations of the study must be addressed. On the one hand, although the findings conclude that there is a change in their memories, perceptions, and intentions regarding tongue-kissing hook-ups, this study does not determine the stability and sustainability of such changes. Another limitation is that the study is based on participants' responses of their own self-perception regarding delicate personal experiences, which indicates that there can be some bias in their answers to the questionnaires. It could be argued that in some cases there might be discrepancies between what the girls reported they had felt in the tongue-kissing experiences and what they actually felt in those experiences. Last, given the small number of participants, these findings are not statistically representative. Hence, we cannot state that these changes are generalizable to a wider population. However, our aim was not to study changes related to tongue-kissing hook-ups in the whole population but among a small group of girls.

Further research should study the stability and sustainability of the changes reported here and the impact that such an increased awareness will have in these and other girls' future relationships, especially in terms of prevention of health risks and of gender violence victimization. In addition, future research in this line should focus more on whether the tongue-kissing hook-ups the girls are asked to remember respond to the models promoted by the CDD, that is, to violent and hegemonic masculinities who disdain and disrespect women, or not. Determining this might help understand the influence of the CDD in girls' health risk taking when tongue kissing. It might also help provide evidence on how increased awareness of tongue kissing as a source of transmission might contribute to girls' transformation of the language of desire, rejecting violent masculinities, and feeling desire towards egalitarian ones. On the other hand, a similar study with a sample that is statistically representative would help determine whether these findings are generalizable to the whole population or not. In addition, more research should be conducted in order to better understand the contradictions found within and between the different categories. Furthermore, while for this particular study the authors were interested in changes regarding tongue-kissing hook-ups among girls, it would be interesting and necessary to address the same issue among boys in future research.

Bearing all the above-mentioned in mind, it needs to be clarified that this study does not aim at criticizing tongue kissing and hooking up or stopping girls from doing it. The preventive socialization of gender violence respects all girls' and boys' freedom to hook up or have the relationships they want with whomever they want to [18,25]. What this line of research aims at is for girls to have all the information about the potential risks and consequences of engaging in sexual-affective relationships

with boys who respond to the traditional masculinity, so that they can make the best, informed choices if they so desire. As this line of research has always stated, the potential risks or dangers of a sexual-affective relationship does not depend on the relationship's duration but on the choice of the partner; more specifically, on whether the partner is someone who despises, humiliates, or cheats on other people or not [18,25]. Inevitably, however, we are talking about a saliva-transmitted virus. This means that the risk of getting infected by it increases when tongue kissing someone whose previous hook-ups are unknown. Previous studies have highlighted the role of dialogue and communication based on validity claims with partners in order to establish consensus on the conditions that will be met in order to engage in a relationship [2]. This can also be applied to casual-relationship partners, as long as those partners guarantee that there is consensus without coercion and honesty in such a dialogue [12]. Having this information might provide these girls with the tools to think about the risks before engaging in tongue-kissing hook-ups and, most importantly, to choose partners with whom they can establish a dialogue about their previous relationships based on honesty and consensus without coercion. Importantly, establishing such dialogues might help them confront the CDD and make decisions based on freedom and equality [23].

Last, it needs to be clarified that these findings do not entail a future decrease in COVID-19 (or other viruses) contagion nor an improvement in the quality of such relationships in society. Rather, it entails a change in some of this study's participants' perceptions and memories regarding tongue-kissing hook-ups, which could imply potential changes related to COVID-19 contagion and to tongue-kissing hook-ups. If further research showed that the findings presented in this study are a generalized tendency, which remains yet to be explored, the significance of such changes would lie on deep social transformations, which could be manifested in a decrease in the contagion of COVID-19 or similar viruses and an improvement in the quality of such relationships.

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5. The Emergence of the Language of Desire toward Nonviolent Relationships during the Dialogic Literary Gatherings

5.1. Presentation

Did my heart love till now? Forswear it, sight! For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night.

William Shakespeare - Romeo & Juliet

The article presented in this chapter, *The Emergence of the Language of Desire toward Nonviolent Relationships during the Dialogic Literary Gatherings,* focuses on the dialogic nature of humanity. Within this conception, it presents language at a deeply human tool through which individuals have the capacity to create meaning in interaction (Bruner, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978). In this vein, scientific literature shows that concepts such as love, attraction or desire are also socially constructed in intersubjective dialogues. In the development of such concepts, two types of language appear to be key. The first is the *language of ethics*, used to express what is good and convenient; the other is the *language of desire*, used the express what is attractive and desirable (Flecha et al., 2013; Gómez, 2015).

Drawing on research focused on the preventive socialization of gender-based violence, one can see how existing double standards in our societies lead to the separation of both types of language. This is particularly true when we look at the interactions that adults have with children and adolescents around sexual-affective relationships. In these, the language of ethics is often used; while children and adolescents used the language of desire when talking about these topics with their peers (Rios-González et al., 2018). The separation of both languages, leads these children and adolescents to develop separated understandings of what is convenient and what is desirable, being the latter often influenced by the CDD (Gómez, 2015). In consequence, many youths see attributes such passion and care, attraction and affection as irreconcilable on a single person.

Along these lines, the current article explores interactions regarding nonviolent partners and relationships within the development the educational action of the Dialogic Literary Gatherings (DLG). The evidence here provided show how in the context of DLG the language of desire towards nonviolent relationships and partners emerges in combination to the language of ethics. Such findings are in line with SO4 of the current thesis, aimed at identifying transformative actions that allow rejecting and / or overcoming coercive discourse in relation to pleasure.

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5.2. Manuscript

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The emergence of the language of desire toward nonviolent relationships during the dialogic literary gatherings

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ABSTRACT

The dialogic nature of human beings has widely been argued in the scientific literature. Language, as a cultural and psychological tool, has the potential to construct social meanings, including those related to love, attraction and desire. In these emotional dimensions of the self, people use 'the language of desire', defined as the capacity of language to raise attraction and be desired, while the 'language of ethics' is used to describe what is 'good' and 'ethical'. This article examines a dialogic intervention with 11–13-year-old children named Dialogic Literary Gatherings and explores its affordances to articulate both forms of language toward nonviolent models. 28 sessions from two elementary schools were analyzed, along with three focus groups with students. Main findings outline that dialogic features enable the emergence of the language of desire in combination to the language of ethics toward nonviolent relationships.

Language is the main tool through which human beings interact and exist in society. It allows us to learn, to go further and deeper in thought, learning and development (Bruner 1996; Vygotsky 1978). There is a wide spectrum of discourses and ways in which people communicate to construct realities and those can either perpetuate oppression or transform our relationships into more egalitarian and democratic ones (Freire 1997, 2018). Hence, the discourses in which people are socialized shape our thoughts, values and world views. Especially important are those discourses related to love, desire and attraction in early adolescence since they will play a critical role in their socialization toward egalitarian or violent relationships (Gómez 2015). In particular, research has shown the existence of what has been defined as a *coercive dominant discourse*. This discourse, which establishes a link between attraction and violence, might affect young people's socialization leading toward engaging in power or violent relationships (Puigvert et al. 2019; Racionero-Plaza et al. 2018). Under the influence of such discourse, many of the messages youth receive and produce can be articulated under two categories defined as the *language of desire* (LoD) – referred

to *the capacity [of language] to raise attraction and be desired* – and the *language of ethics* (LoE) – language form used to describe values (Gómez 2015; Flecha, Puigvert, and Rios 2016). These forms, used in everyday interactions, are not binary opposites nor universal concepts which are always separated. In the construction of sexual-affective relationships, these forms of language emerge and intertwine in a social context where our understanding of gender is changing and rapidly evolving from two traditionally accepted categories of femininities and masculinities. Moreover, LoD and LoE are not attached to a single gender conception or sexual orientation, nor do they only exist within traditionally accepted categories of femininities and masculinities.

Nonetheless, the above mentioned coercive dominant discourse promotes among many adolescents the use of LoD toward violent models and relationships portraying them as fun and exciting, whereas the LoE is often used in educational contexts by teachers or parents to describe those representing ethical values and relationships as good or convenient (Flecha, Puigvert, and Rios 2016; Puigvert et al. 2019). However, the latter are often perceived by youth as moralistic and lacking attractiveness. Consequently, this discourse socializes many adolescents and youth in associating violence with attraction (Flecha 2015).

Given the power interactions underlying the coercive discourse and its affection in many adolescents' socialization, interventional work needs to be done from schools at an early age to provide students with spaces where they can develop alternative, transformative interactions to act as critical thinkers and transformative human beings (Freire and Macedo 1987). Indeed, dialogue serves as the means through which these alternative interactions and relationships can be created. In Freire's (2018) words, '[dialogue] is an act of creation; it must not serve as a crafty instrument for the domination of one person by another (…) it is conquest of the world for the liberation of humankind' (p. 89). Hence, dialogue can elicit liberating forms of language through which students can critically reflect on what behaviors are portrayed as attractive in their discourses with their peers.

In this vein, this study addresses this challenge by analyzing in depth a dialogic space named Dialogic Literary Gatherings (DLG), a dialogue-based educational intervention conducted with 6th grade students from two schools located in two deprived, low socio-economic status neighborhoods surrounding Barcelona (Spain). This interventional work, where students engage in a collective interpretation of a classic literary text previously read, is especially relevant in such contexts where students might have fewer rich interactions that equip them with the skills and tools to reflect critically on their preferences and relationships. Indeed, it is especially significant to analyze this intervention in early adolescence, since this developmental stage is particularly important for their identity formation (Løhre 2020) and they start to differentiate between acquaintance or friend and sexual, intimate or dating partner (Cascardi et al. 2018). Thus, this study sets forth a pathway toward the exploration of DLG as an educational intervention that tackles dialogue as an opportunity in early adolescence to potentially convey transformative discourses that can challenge a coercive dominant discourse by engaging in critical reflections in which LoD may emerge toward nonviolent models and relationships.

In the following sections, an overview on language as a tool to construct attraction and desire is offered. Next, the dialogic features and functioning of DLG are reviewed. The methodology and analysis conducted in the two case studies are presented, followed by a discussion on the results achieved. Finally, limitations and conclusions of this study are acknowledged.

Language in the construction of attraction and desire

Love, desire and attraction are among the socially constructed concepts acquired through interaction with others in a situated social and cultural context (Gómez 2015). Vygotsky's theory of thought and language (Vygotsky 1978) presents language as a cultural and psychological tool, since its capacity to communicate cannot be separated from the social and cultural context in which communication takes place. Through the concept of *inner speech*, defined as the *internal reconstruction of an external operation* (Vygotsky 1978, p. 56), Vygotsky explains how language and thought interconnect, allowing the development of higher order mental functions. Because of the interactive nature of human beings, the internal representation of thought includes cultural manifestations constructed in interpersonal communicative exchanges. Accordingly, any concept integrated in an individual's mind has been constructed in a social process through language.

Drawing on the analysis of how people link attraction with feelings of desire and goodness through language, Flecha and colleagues (2013, p. 100) define the concept of the *language of desire* (LoD) as *the capacity [of language] to raise attraction and be desired*. Adjectives such as 'sexy' or 'exciting' are often used in conversations to express desire. Following this idea, further research on the coercive dominant discourse has revealed that many female teenagers living in different countries and contexts use LoD to express attraction toward less egalitarian masculinities (Puigvert et al. 2019). In addition to LoD, the *language of ethics* (LoE) is used to describe what is 'good' and 'ethical'. This language is primarily used in everyday life interactions within educational contexts by teachers or parents when discussing youth's relationships (Flecha, Puigvert, and Rios 2016; Rios-González et al. 2018). Indeed, many parents and teachers, when trying to educate children and adolescents in nonsexist ways, talk about dominant and violent partners as 'not good nor convenient', and they talk about 'good men' with no desirability (Flecha, Puigvert, and Rios 2016).9 The often separation of LoE and LoD shows that the detachment of the ethics and esthetic dimensions leads to language double standards: 'good' and 'nice' partners are portrayed as 'convenient', while dominant partners are seen as 'thrilling' and 'desirable' (Flecha, Puigvert, and Rios 2016). Instead, dialogic interactions (Soler and Flecha 2010), based on consensus and on lack of coercion, promote critical reflections on issues related to love and attraction, among others, that may foster the link between desire and attraction toward nonviolent models (Racionero-Plaza et al. 2018). It is only through dialogue, which entails 'mutual respect between the dialogic subjects' and a critical stance among them (Freire 1997, p. 99), that adolescents can question the desire and attraction linked to violent models. Dialogic interactions offer students the opportunity to express their feelings together with reason, uniting ethics and esthetic dimensions. Through dialogues that defy power interactions, affordances to transform their language and, eventually, their social realities, can emerge (Gómez 2015).

In light of this evidence, it is imperative to provide students with dialogic spaces and activities that foster the use of LoD and LoE to express both preference toward egalitarian and nonviolent behaviors and relationships and rejection toward dominant and violent behaviors and relationships. Among the diversity of dialogic interventions, the Dialogic Literary Gatherings (DLG) present an optimal opportunity for the development of desire attitudes and beliefs united with values and reasoning, as they are rooted in a transformative and emancipatory approach to co-create new realities (Flecha 2000, Freire 2018).

The interactive potential of DLG for the emergence of LoD linked with LoE

DLG are an educational intervention aimed at collectively interpreting literary classics. They are currently being implemented in over 6000 schools in Europe and South America, with students from kindergarten to adult education. Participants in DLG choose a classics book and agree on the pages to read. During the gathering, they share their thoughts on the reading in an egalitarian dialogue and collectively create meaning around the topics which have been elicited. In this context, all voices are heard based on validity claims rather than on power interactions, and new knowledge is constructed from an in-depth integration of all contributions (Flecha 2015). DLG draw from the understanding that social interaction in an egalitarian context allows for the collective creation of meaning, leading to the transformation and creation of new realities where attitudes of solidarity, respect and equity thrive (Flecha 2015). Indeed, DLG can be considered a 'situated genre' (Fairclough 2003), since during their development a specific context of interaction is created, based on the principles of egalitarian dialogue, collective creation of knowledge and solidarity (Llopis et al. 2016). Under this perspective, reading comprehension is regarded as well as an intersubjective process mediated by language, since participants share their thoughts on the readings and build understanding on each other's contributions (Soler 2015). Besides, DLG offer a particularly interactive context, since the proportion of children talk during this activity dramatically increases in relation to that of the average class, with children utterances being longer in words and richer in content (Hargreaves and García-Carrión 2016). These authors also show that more children usually participate in DLG than in the regular classroom, building on each other's contributions, rather than just intervening.

DLG have already demonstrated to foster deep reflection and critical thinking linked to prosocial behavior (Villardón-Gallego et al. 2018). Children in DLG create meaning together when reading and discussing the most precious universal literary creations and do so not only using conceptual knowledge, but also dealing with emotions and values. Reading literary classics in DLG fosters the discussion of topics of utmost relevance, as well as higher degrees of development. Some studies on classic literature show the influence that reading 'The Arabian Nights' at a young age has had for different English writers of the 19th century, such as Charles Dickens, Charlotte and Emily Brontë, Robert Louis Stevenson, as well as for their works (Styles 2010). Another study by Keidel and colleagues (2013) showed that reading Shakespeare activated more brain areas than reading common literary pieces, fostering higher-order thinking. Thus, in the DLG about universal issues such as love, death and life, beyond the meaning of words themselves, participants create new realities through their interactions, which transform the way in which they see the world and act in it.

Drawing from the characteristics which define DLG, such as an egalitarian dialogue (Flecha 2015) that enhances prosocial behavior (Villardón-Gallego et al. 2018) and allows personal and collective transformation (Soler 2015), we hypothesize that this educational action could promote the use of LoD together with LoE toward nonviolent models and egalitarian relationships.

Materials and methods

Design

This study has been designed as a case study (Stake 1995), with the aim to gain insights on the educational actions that take place in schools which show outstanding improvements,

School 1 (S1) and School 2 (S2). Two data sources have been used: participatory observations of DLG and focus groups with DLG participants.

The present study is framed within the Communicative Methodology of Research, which relies on the potential of dialogue to transform social realities (Gómez et al. 2019). Within this communicative paradigm, researchers, who bring scientific knowledge, and participants, who contribute their cultural intelligence, engage in an egalitarian dialogue in order to reach in-depth understandings of social problems and propose new solutions. The outcomes are, in turn, validated by the participants who have been involved in the entire research process. The added value of this methodological approach to achieve social and policy impact has been underlined in high-relevance European research projects (European and European Commission 2011).

Selection of case studies

Two schools implementing research-based educational actions, including DLG, were selected for this study. S1 is located in one of the most socioeconomically complex neighborhoods in Barcelona's metropolitan area. 95% of students have meal grants and 92% come from 28 different nationalities. S1 started implementing DLG in 2009–2010 and reversed its low results in 2015–2016, scoring above the Catalan average in standardized testing.

S2 is located in one of the poorest neighborhoods at the suburbs of Terrassa, near Barcelona. It has a 98% student diversity, with many students from unstructured families and at risk of social exclusion. After implementing DLG, among other research-based educational interventions, the number of students achieving a higher level in reading comprehension in standardized testing went from 17% to 85%.

Participants

113 students from S1 and S2 participated in the study. They were divided in 5 groups as follows:

S1 participants belonged to two 6th grade groups (11–13 years old) in the school year 2016–2017 and two 6th grade groups (11–12 years old) in the school year 2017–2018. Participants from School 2 belonged to a 6th grade group (11–12 years old) in the school year 2016–2017. Table 1 shows the characteristics of the sample.

Procedure

One of the researchers conducted participatory observations of 28 DLG sessions with all the groups (see Table 2). Students in S1 read and discussed an adaptation of Shakespeare's play 'Romeo and Juliet' translated to Catalan. Participants at S2 read and commented a Spanish adaptation of 'The Iliad', a Greek epic from the 8th century BC written by Homer. For DLG sessions, students previously read at home the pages they had agreed upon and then wrote down in a notebook extracts for the debate, together with a short reflection. In class, they discussed such extracts in an egalitarian dialogue with their peers. The role of the teacher during the activity was that of the moderator.

Table 1. Participants.

School	School 1				School 2	2 schools
School year	2016–2017		2017–2018		2016–2017	2 school years
Age range	11–12	11–13	11–12		11–12	11–13
Group	6thA	6thB	6thA	6thB	6th	5 groups
	21	24	23	26	19	113 students
Nº students	G 12 / B 9	G 11 / B 13	G 11 / B 12	G 14 / B 12	G 6 / B 13	54 girls / 59 boys

Table 2. Observations.

School	School 1				School 2	2 Schools
School year	2016–2017		2017–2018		2016–2017	2 School years
Literary Classic	Romeo & Juliet		Romeo & Juliet		The Iliad	2 literary classics
Group	6thA	6thB	6thA	6thB	6th	5 groups
Nº Observations	1	3	11	10	3	28 observations

In addition, children's voices were included through three focus groups conducted after the DLG sessions: 2 focus groups with students from S1 in 2016–2017 and 1 focus group with girls in S2. The aim was to deepen in some aspects that emerged during DLG. Both the observations and the focus groups took place at the corresponding schools and data was either audio recorded and transcribed or gathered through observations and notes taken by the researcher. A teacher was present during the focus group held at S2 and during the one with 6thB at S1, but not during the focus group held with some girls from 6thB at S1. Neither participants nor teachers had the focus group questions beforehand.

The researchers in this study had already met with the staff at both schools for previous studies. Once schools agreed to participate, teachers and families were informed of the nature and purpose of the study, of participation being anonymous and voluntary, and of data only being used for the purpose of the study. This information was included in the written consents. In S1, parental informed written consents were given to the principal's office during the academic years 2016–2017 and 2017–2018. Afterwards, the principal and the DLG teachers gave their informed written consents for the study to be carried out in both 6th grade groups. At S2, parental informed written consents were obtained for all students in 6th grade to participate during the academic year 2016–2017. The principal and the DLG teacher gave their informed written consents for the study to be carried out in 6th grade.

This study was conducted under the frame of the FP7 IMPACT-EV project (Flecha, 2014-2017), which followed the ethical requirements for conducting research in the European FP of Research. An ad hoc Ethics Committee of the IMPACT-EV project was established, which included three academics with expertise in Ethical Review Panels for national and international research. This Committee revised and fully approved the proposal and related ethics documents for participants.

Data analysis

Data analysis was an ongoing process during the data collection phase, which involved continual reflection, discussion and interpretation among researchers (Creswell 2009). All recorded focus groups and DLG sessions were transcribed and ordered into student utterances and analyzed together with the notes of the observations. Once the transcripts were finished, they were read through several times together with the observations' notes by each

researcher. Data analysis both of the DLG sessions and of the focus groups was conducted at the utterance level, rather than as a social interactional practice. Subsequently the bodies of data divided into utterances were classified in different categories. Initial categories were defined by consensus between researchers, after identifying those coming up in the dialogues about relationships and taking into account the previous literature about DLG. Initially, three broader categories were established: values, attitudes, behaviors. For each of these, two dimensions were considered: nonviolent relationships and violent relationships (Table 3):

Once data were classified upon these categories, we focused on deepening in the analysis of those dialogues linked to nonviolent relationships, and identified those moments in which LoD emerged, looking at attributes—values, attitudes and behaviors—which reflect both dimensions, goodness and attractiveness. Three categories reemerged: romantic love, attractiveness based on values, and courage. We defined these specific categories as follows (Table 4):

Once the categories were defined, all the selected data were re-reviewed and sorted in the established categories by two of the researchers independently. Next, both categorizations were shared and discussed. The extracts that rose any disagreements between the researchers were discussed and final categorization was decided upon consensus.

Results

The analysis of the gathered data shows the presence of LoD and LoE toward nonviolent relationships during DLG discussing 'Romeo and Juliet' and 'The Iliad'. 132 utterances were selected. This evidence was classified in three categories: romantic love (35%), attractiveness based on values (46%), and courage (19%) (see Figure 1).

Romantic love

Romantic love, which is based on equality and feelings, is a common topic in the literary classics. Romeo and Juliet's unconditional love for each other is one of numerous literary

Table 3. Emerging categories.

Classic works analyzed	Type of relationship	General attributes		
		Values	Attitudes	Behaviors
Romeo and Juliet, The Iliad	Violent relationships Nonviolent relationships	Selfishness Respect	Despise Gentleman; generous	Aggressiveness Empathy: Think in the other

Table 4. Categories of analysis.

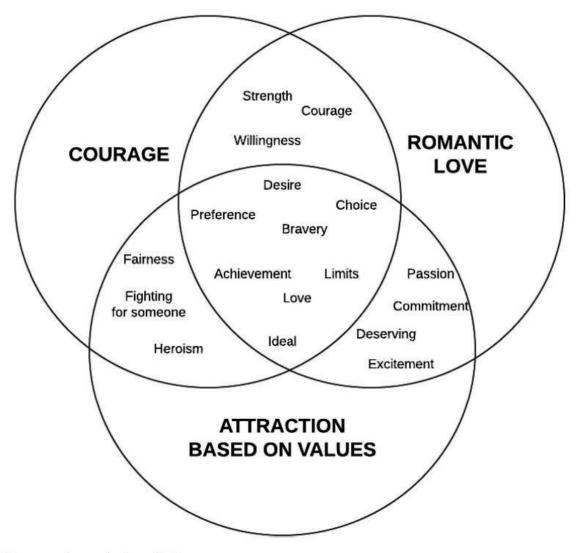| LoD identified in nonviolent relationships		
Category	Definition	Example
Romantic love	Attraction expressed toward ideal relationships that are based on mutual love	If you have love and willingness inside yourself, you can achieve anything
Attractiveness based on values	Attraction expressed toward nonviolent relationships described as desirable because of positive values	I want someone like Romeo
Courage	Attraction expressed toward someone described as brave, courageous, bold or heroic	[Hector] is good, brave and ever so handsome!

Figure 1. Categorization of LoD.

cases of romance. Students' dialogue about love is prompted by the text but freely and openly led by them. As such, they relate love with strength, willingness or courage. From the utterances selected for analysis, 46 utterances out of 132 (35%) were related to romantic love through the combination of LoE and LoD. Some examples of the dialogues are presented below:

- **P6:** [after sharing a piece in which Juliet tells her dad that love will give her enough strength] Juliet's statement makes me think of courage. I would not dare
- **P7:** I don't think it is only love, but also effort and willingness, or whatever else. I don't understand why she talks about love; I don't think love is for everyone, it could be anything else.
- **P8:** I think that love refers to Romeo. Romeo gives her enough strength
- **P9:** if you fight you will get what you want
- **P8:** I believe that love and willingness go together. If you have love and willingness inside yourself, you can achieve anything. If you commit to something and you love it, that is love, and you are willing to do it
- **P10:** that is passion, to like doing something

In this extract P6 uses the term courage to vindicate the power of romantic love. Love is what gives Juliet the strength to fulfill her destiny and therefore is presented, through LoD, as something worth considering. The conversation continues and P8 intervenes to share his understanding about Juliet saying 'love', but actually referring to 'Romeo', which could be understood as Romeo being her source of strength. This idea further evolves, and students discuss that love and willingness go together and that this is actually the key to achieving anything. Finally, P10 resolves with enthusiasm that loving something and being willing to do it is what passion is about. In their contributions, participants value romantic love by using LoD to describe it in terms of empowerment, will and passion, in addition to ethical descriptions. Talking about romantic love in such terms makes this type of relationships desirable and, eventually, it might contribute to addressing the dichotomy between passion and love.

In the following dialogue, LoD emerges related to love.

- **P11:** I would not care about our families fighting between them, I would fight for him
- **P12:** I don't care about the family. If I love her, I would be with her
- **P13:** I would leave him, it's not worth it to suffer over a boy
- **P12:** if you love him it's not the same
- **P14:** some say that they would forget about it, but I don't believe it's that easy to forget the guy you love
- **P11:** I would start as a friend, and if I see that he is still interested I would give him an opportunity. If he doesn't deserve me, then I wouldn't
- **P14 & P12:** first you need to be friends

In this episode children add value to the ethical dimension of romantic love by describing it with LoD as something worth fighting for. They comment that they would confront their families if necessary, in order to be with their love. Moreover, those who advocate for it try to tell the others how powerful and deep it is to fall in love with someone. However, P11, P12 and P14 also agree on the fact that before falling in love with someone this way, they would get to know that person and be friends before making a decision. Besides, P11 adds that she would not give an opportunity to someone that does not deserve her. These utterances show that in the discussions elicited by the reading of the literary classics, LoD is used to describe nonviolent relationships. During DLG children refer to these in terms that raise attraction, while they portray as unattractive anything that trespasses the established limits of what is acceptable in a relationship.

Finally, in the last dialogue, participants discuss with deep excitement about love and happiness, as two feelings that go together:

- **P15:** it's the most realistic book that I have seen
- **P16:** the excitement!!!!
- **P17:** there are all kinds of people. There are couples who are fine and are happy
- **P18:** the book gives a different perspective
- **P19:** It can work out well… if you love her and she loves you and you treat each other well it can work fine
- **P20:** actually, that's what love is for!!

In this last extract participants use LoD to express how romantic love is the key to a successful relationship. P19 explains that if people in a couple love each other and treat each other well, the relationship can be successful, and they can reach happiness. Talking about happiness or success in romantic relationships or referring to how exciting these relationships are increases the attractiveness of such relationships because it portrays them as highly desirable. In fact, P20 defines love as the vehicle to reach happiness and to enjoy being with your partner.

Attractiveness based on values

Who we consider attractive, or evaluating someone as attractive or not, is something present in everyday life, an element that emerges in teens' conversations and which is continuously approached in teens magazines, TV and series or social networks, all of them powerful socializing agents (Gómez 2015; Rios-González et al. 2018). As expected, this is another issue that emerges during DLG, expressed in 61 out of 132 utterances (46%). The following extracts provide evidence of how during DLG LoD is used to make the character feel attractive:

- **P6:** When you love someone who doesn't love you back, why do you keep loving this person? Why don't you let it go? Let it go, there are many other people! I don't understand! - [...]
- **P21:** What P6 is saying is happening to me. X is saying things to me all the time, and I don't like it and I tell him to stop. He calls me 'mamasita' and I tell him 'I am not your mamasita'

In this episode we see how LoD emerges in combination to LoE during discussion time and it is used both to render attractive nonviolent models and relationships, and to drive others away from bad relationships. Following this idea, one can observe that P6 starts by saying that people should let go of those who do not love them back. This statement empowers others to express and reflect on some relationships that do not make them feel comfortable. The LoD used in these interactions stresses out the idea that individuals have a choice. In addition, P21 clearly stands up to someone who is calling her names and she uses LoD to express her dissatisfaction and to stress that she does not belong to that person. Likewise, in the following dialogue a group of girls discusses the idea of the 'perfect guy' in relation to their past relationships:

- **P26:** the first one I had did look alike because he listened to me. If I wasn't well, he would make me laugh, so I felt better. It's over because he loved someone else
- **P27:** the first boy I fell in love with was a good guy. He was handsome, he paid attention to me, he treated me well. But the second one was handsome but didn't listen to me, he mistreated me. I prefer the first one of course. Now I would choose the first one
- **P28:** none of the guys I've been with looked like the ideal guy. They wouldn't pay attention to me at all and whatever happened to me annoyed them. Now if they let me choose, I choose the ideal one
- **P30:** I want someone like Romeo

DLG made girls reflect on their present and past relationships. In these utterances, they use LoD to express attraction toward positive relationships and partners and rejection

toward violent models and relationships. P25 talks about good relationships (LoE) as being fun (LoD), and most participants recognize that now they would choose the ideal partner over someone that does not make them happy. As P30 reflects, these ideas come from Romeo's way of being: he is seen as ideal because of his love for Juliet. Therefore, during the DLG girls reflect upon the idea that they can choose and that they actually want to choose the 'ideal' guy, which evidences the presence of LoD in combination with LoE toward nonviolent models and relationships.

Courage

Courage is a positive attribute highly linked with attraction and desire. Therefore, the use of such term to describe nonviolent models and relationships depicts that not only LoE is used, but also LoD, uniting goodness and attractiveness in the same person. Students' discussions about the characters reflect their tastes and preferences. They reject violent models, such as Achilles, who mistreats women and has slaves. From the dialogues analyzed, 25 utterances out of 132 (19%) have been found linked to courage.

- **P1:** if you tell me to choose between Achilles and Menelaus, I choose Menelaus (…) Yes, it's better than being with Achilles
- **P2:** ah, I would not choose either of them
- **P1:** [I would not choose Achilles] because he is mean. He didn't treat girls nicely, as if they were nothing
- **P3:** that's it, as if they were his slaves

As observed, P1 despises Achilles so much that she would rather choose Menelaus over him, and P2 would not choose either one of them. Therefore, in this case by saying that they would not choose him, LoD is being used to reject a violent model, which, in turn, brings closer the nonviolent one. However, it is relevant to observe in the following extract how the language used by the girls changes when they are asked about Hector:

- **Researcher:** why do you like Hector?
- **P2:** because he is brave […]?
- because he fights well. And also, because he helps his family, he treats them well, he takes care of his children…
- […]
- **Researcher:** who is the hero? Hector or Achilles
- **Girls:** Hector
- […]
- **P2:** because he is brave
- **P5:** because he is brave and he has fought and faced up to everyone. He is brave. However, Achilles was immortal because he couldn't be killed, only on the foot
- […]
- **Teacher:** well I don't know…, if you had to choose, who would you marry?
- **P1:** Hector! […]
- because he is good, brave and ever so handsome!

These girls describe Hector using LoD, emphasizing with enthusiasm positive characteristics about him and adding the esthetics to the ethical dimension of his character. P2 and P5 say that Hector is brave because he fights for those who he loves and treats them well, and P2 stresses out how he is someone who helps his family and cares for his children. As well on their side, P4 intervenes to say that she loves him. Moreover, the girls see Hector as an attractive guy, because they all agree on him being the hero. This way, terms such as *brave*, *love* or *hero* used when describing Hector reveal how the girls articulate LoD around a nonviolent partner in the context of the DLG.

Discussion

The emergence of LoD toward nonviolent partners and relationships during DLG

The analysis of students' discourse shows that LoD toward nonviolent models and relationships emerged among preadolescents aged 11–13 when discussing 'Romeo and Juliet' and 'The Iliad' in the context of DLG. Particularly, our results show that this language was used in combination to LoE when discussing romantic love, attractiveness based on values and courage.

The dialogic interactions fostered by DLG led participants to collectively define what love means to them. They did not only draw their ideas from high quality literary pieces, which promote higher order thinking (Keidel et al. 2013), but also brought their own personal experience and built on each other's thoughts. The egalitarian dialogues children exchange in DLG promote critical reflections about relationships which emerge in the context of classic literature. As seen before, the dialogic exchanges these children had around the book characters contributed to the creation of new realities and the transformation of existing ones (Flecha 2000; Freire 2018): LoD arouses in combination with LoE, leading to the collective construction of the attributes that render a character desirable. Indeed, as previously stated, the coercive dominant discourse influences their socialization into linking attractiveness to people with violent attitudes and behaviors, while nonviolent people and relationships are many times perceived as convenient but undesirable (Puigvert et al. 2019). Therefore, the fact that, during DLG, LoD toward nonviolent relationships emerges is of utmost relevance. These interactions contribute to the socialization of preadolescents in egalitarian relationships which show that love has nothing to do with pain, but with 'will and passion', as participants defined it. The fact that participants autonomously reach this conclusion is especially relevant because rather than coming from the outside as something imposed (for instance, by an adult), it comes from the inside as a collectively built meaning (Gómez 2015). The extent to which this can be a protective factor that might affect behavior remains, however, unexplored.

The second identified aspect refers to attractiveness based on values. Gómez (2015) already pointed out that the traditional model of sexual-affective attraction-election, by separating the use of LoE from LoD, has detached passion from stability and tenderness, making it impossible to picture those who represent good values as attractive. In this scenario, attractiveness is frequently linked to non-egalitarian partners and relationships. However, our main findings point out that in the context of DLG, students focus on positive values, such as the willingness to defend the people they love when describing what makes

them feel attracted to some characters like Hector. Thus, in the dialogic interactions that take place during DLG, participants collectively establish through the language they use that a desirable man must have values. The internalization of these socially constructed ideas (Vygotsky 1978) shapes the individual's understanding of the world around them. In this line, DLG could be the tool through which participants can reflect on and collectively decide what is good and bad for them to then internalize an alternative nonviolent model and use it in their worldviews and daily lives (Yuste et al. 2014). Following this idea, Puigvert (2016) has explored how through a variant of the DLG, the Dialogic Feminist Gatherings (DFG), female adolescents challenged the desire imposed by the coercive discourse. These interventions led them to redirect their feeling of attraction from violent to nonviolent partners. Similarly, in the discussions during DLG, participants shared their own memories and used LoD to reflect on them, opposing the coercive discourse by showing preference for nonviolent models. This idea is also related to the findings of Racionero-Plaza and colleagues (2018), who show that the reconstruction of autobiographical memories by incorporating the knowledge created in DFG leads to more critical recalls of such memories, thus reducing the chances of repeating such behaviors in the future.

Finally, participants in DLG used LoD to describe attraction toward brave men. Indeed, courage is a trait that makes participants see Hector as attractive, even though other men in the discussion are defined as handsome too. This suggests that during the social interactions occurring in DLG, participants use and direct LoD toward partners and relationships that share better values (LoE), but without giving up attraction and passion. In line with Yuste et al. (2014), using talk to collectively make meaning and construct knowledge about different masculine models can help participants reflect on what each model can offer and link attraction to those models that possess desirable traits.

Limitations and prospective

This small-scale study has explored the emergence of LoD together with LoE in two schools using two specific texts. This clearly raises several limitations that should be taken on in further studies. Regarding the design, it does not allow us to exactly determine whether and under which conditions the transformation of LoD occurs. While episodes analyzed contained dialogic features associated to the use of LoD toward positive relationships and values, there is not enough information to unveil the extent to which these dialogues have been prompted by the text or by the dialogic reading, or both. Another limitation is that data have been analyzed at the utterance level instead of at the interaction level. Analyzing the social interactional practices would have provided a richer and broader overview of the dialogic nature of DLG. Further research should account for capturing the dialogic interaction exchanges which characterize DLG.

Besides, the value of DLG as violence prevention tools should be further studied. DLG may potentially direct attraction toward romantic relationships and alternative models characterized by the union of egalitarianism, lack of violence and attractiveness (Flecha, Puigvert, and Rios 2016). This would allow the reconciliation of two key aspects for successful relationships. Moreover, they foster attraction through traits as bravery that have proven to be key in the overcoming of bullying and sexual harassment (Villarejo-Carballido et al. 2019). Last, further research should consider the limitations posed by the binary

conception of gender used in this study in order to be more inclusive, by including, for instance, members of the LGBTIQ + community as research participants in order to contribute knowledge to LGBTIQ + research (Serrano Amaya and Ríos González 2019).

Conclusions

The present study has provided evidence of the emergence of LoD, in combination with LoE, toward nonviolent behaviors and relationships. This fact not only sheds new light on the particularities of language during this activity, but also contributes to the existing knowledge about DLG as an educational action leading to processes of personal and social transformation. More specifically, it opens up an unexplored field to further study the potential of DLG to prevent gender-based violence and other forms of harassment.

This study contributes to the transformative potential of language and to the impact of DLG by showing that when adolescents interact and exchange ideas through dialogic interactions on the topics that the literary classics elicit, the ethics and the esthetics dimensions of social reality are again reunited in a combined use of LoD and LoE. This provides adolescents with greater chances to reflect upon and understand the possibilities that language opens toward new worlds where relationships based on freedom and love are possible.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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6. Challenging Bourdieu's Theory: Dialogic Interaction as a Means to Provide Access to Highbrow Culture for All

6.1. Presentation

Between you and me, it might be true that a college education cannot compete with folklore, with popular knowledge. Ordinary people know more, and generally, better than we do.

Antonio Machado

The contribution presented in the former chapter, provides evidence of a new impact identified in DLG, that is the emergence of the language of desire towards nonviolent relationships and partners in the development of this educational action. More precisely DLG are based in the reading of the best literary productions of humanity, and the subsequent exchange of understandings of such readings in an egalitarian and democratic dialogue.

However, reproductions theories such as Bourdieu's *Distinction* (1979) and *Reproduction* (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970) question that people from low socio-economic backgrounds can develop a taste, appreciate and benefit from highbrow culture. Indeed, under this frame, it is expected that only those from a high class, due to their habitus, are socialized in the taste and preference for highbrow culture. Alongside, the educational system only perpetuates these inequalities, to the extent that promotes the acquisition of a culture to which only some have real access.

Challenging such conception, the paper presented in this chapter provides evidence of how in the context of DLG, participants, regardless of their socioeconomic background, can benefit from reading and discussing the best literary productions of humanity. Based on a revision of secondary data, the current article provides evidence on how the DLG contribute to the development of each of the seven principles of dialogic learning, making social transformation a possibility for all.

Along these lines, this contribution reinforces the one presented in the former chapter by overcoming the unfounded claim that highbrow culture is only patrimony of the elite. In this vein, it shows how the new impact identified in DLG is available to any participant in such educational action, regardless of its socioeconomic background.

Challenging Bourdieu's Theory: Dialogic Interaction as a Means to Provide Access to Highbrow Culture for All, the paper presented in this chapter was published in May 2021 in co-authorship in *SAGE open* (SCOPUS Q2, 2020; JCR Q4, 2019;).

6.2.   Manuscript

Original Research

Challenging Bourdieu's Theory: Dialogic Interaction as a Means to Provide Access to Highbrow Culture for All

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Abstract
According to Bourdieu, class position is related to cultural capital, taste, and preferences. Accordingly, the author states that, because of their "habitus," those from high social classes have higher cultural capital and preferences for highbrow culture, which gives them more chances to succeed in life. On the contrary, those from low social classes have lower cultural capital because of their lowbrow cultural preferences, which makes it more difficult for them to achieve in a system that favors the dominant classes. Through the review of articles on Dialogic Literary Gatherings published in peer-reviewed journals, this article aims to provide more insights on how the principles of dialogic learning occur. The results of the review challenge Bourdieu's concept of "habitus," providing evidence of how socioeconomic status (SES) is not determinant to cultural capital.

Keywords
dialogic literary gatherings, habitus, literary classics, overcoming inequalities, SES

Introduction

Bourdieu's work has been widely studied. Although the reproductionist character of some of his concepts and theories have been the focus for a large part of the critiques of his work, there is no consensus on the extent to which concepts such as the "habitus" or the role of the educational system as a reproducer of inequalities are still valid in today's societies. King (2000), in "Thinking With Bourdieu Against Bourdieu," goes further in exploring the complexity of this controversy. Although concepts such as "habitus" have an important structuralist limitation, he argues that Bourdieu points at certain moments with lucidity toward overcoming the dualism of objectivism-subjectivism and agency-structure.

However, in "In Other Words: Essays Toward a Reflective Sociology" (1987), Bourdieu acknowledges that some of his theory was mainly structuralist. He explains that it was not after he read Gramsci that his positions began to shift toward new conceptions. At the time of his previous publications (Bourdieu, 1979; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970), his theory included two main concepts. The first one is "habitus," which defines and is defined by each class' tastes and lifestyles. Accordingly, those who belong to the elite have higher cultural capital than those from low social classes as they have a natural preference for highbrow culture because they are socialized in it from a very young age. The second idea is the role of the educational system as a reproducer of inequalities.

Following his approach, schools systematically reward the knowledge and behavior mainly mastered by the elite because of their socialization in it from an early age, while pretending that achievement is based on merits.

This Bourdieusian reproductionist theory (Bourdieu, 1979; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970) has highly influenced research on taste and school achievement. Even if the concept of cultural capital is still unclear (P. L. Andersen & Hansen, 2012; Davies & Rizk, 2018; Kingston, 2001; Lareau & Weininger, 2003), many have studied the correlation between it and socioeconomic status (SES). Some of them demonstrate a positive correlation between parental social class, cultural capital, and children's participation in cultural activities and tastes (Kraaykamp & Van Eijck, 2010; Sullivan, 2001; Xu & Hampden-Thompson, 2012). By contrast, others find that students from low cultural capital households can benefit from cultural capital acquisition even more than those from high cultural capital households (I. G. Andersen & Jæger, 2015; DiMaggio, 1982; DiMaggio & Mohr, 1985;

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Gofen, 2009; Kingston, 2001). This would contradict the structuralist equation of Higher social class = Higher cultural capital = Higher academic success.

Regarding taste and cultural preferences associated with individuals in each SES, studies show an overall decline in interest toward highbrow culture (Gripsrud et al., 2011; Purhonen et al., 2011; Van Eijck & Knulst, 2005), but not as strong for humanities students (Gripsrud et al., 2011) or women (Purhonen et al., 2011), which sets the focus on the role of education in highbrow culture socialization. In this article, we understand highbrow culture as defined in the scientific literature published in peer review indexed journals that provide evidence on studies of population cultural preference in different societies. Among these studies, those already referenced identify highbrow culture as "legitimate culture," like international classic literature, painting, or classical music, among other genres (Gripsrud et al., 2011; Purhonen et al., 2011; Van Eijck & Knulst, 2005). The different classifications of highbrow culture are not free of biases such as the one elaborated by Peterson and Kern (1996).

The question that still remains open is how cultural and educational practices counteract the link between social class and taste for everyone to interact with, and benefit from, legitimate culture. Therefore, this article aims to revise the relation between social class and taste presented and discussed in Bourdieusian productions (Bourdieu, 1979; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970). For that purpose, first, we analyze Bourdieu's cultural reproduction model against the mobility model and against the trends in taste and preferences related to each SES. Second, the dialogic learning conception is examined as a framework in which Bourdieusian tenets are challenged. In this scenario, the case of Dialogic Literary Gatherings (DLG) emerges as a tool to both democratize access to highbrow culture and foster social transformation through interaction for the individuals who participate in it and their entourage (Lopez de Aguileta, 2019).

The Cultural Reproduction Theory Versus the Cultural Mobility Theory

Cultural preferences have largely been associated with social class. Bourdieu (1979) developed the concept of "habitus," which refers to the framework that shapes an individual's behavior in the different "fields" in which he participates. The habitus is defined by a composition of the individual's economic capital (possessions), social capital (connections), and cultural capital (cultivation). Accordingly, the preponderance of each of these capital forms is what establishes the boundaries between each social class and a stratification within them. Due to its composition, the habitus is mainly transmitted by the family from an early age, but also by the school system in "differentiated" societies as it depends on the context in which the socialization process takes place.

Regarding the concept of cultural capital, Bourdieu (1986) explains that it exists in three states: embodied, objectified, and institutionalized. The *embodied state* is the cultural capital that an individual builds throughout his life through his own cultivation and becomes a part of himself. This process starts at an early age, requires time and personal effort, and it highly depends on the family's cultural capital. The *objectified state* is related to the cultural belongings an individual has, which depends on his family's capacity to have them (economic capital) and on his personal ability to access them (embodied cultural capital). The *institutionalized state* relies on the institutional recognition of a certain cultural capital, which gives monetary value to such capital and cultural value to the individual who possesses it. Therefore, the author indicates that because the schooling system assumes a certain cultural capital for all students, it is easier for students with higher cultural capital to succeed, whereas lower class students possess less cultural capital and are less capable of benefiting from it. However, he also concludes that because this fact is overseen by the system and its participants, academic results are presented as meritocratic and, thus, cultural capital becomes a tool for the elite to reproduce inequalities (Bourdieu, 1986).

Despite Bourdieu's (1987) categorization of his initial theory as structuralist, in the past decades to the present time, many are the researchers who have studied social reality from this perspective and found consistent results with its propositions, together with some controversies. Davies and Rizk (2018) examine the evolution of the concept of cultural capital in American educational research since Bourdieu developed it in the 1960s and 1970s. These authors identify three generations of researchers who have used the concept of cultural capital. The first generation understood the concept during the 1970s and early 1980s, within broader traditions of research on mobility, educational stratification, and conflict theory. The second generation from the 1980s to the early 2000s produced three variants of the concept. The third generation has elaborated these variants into three distinct streams. According to Davies and Rizk (2018), a first stream uses survey methods to conceptualize cultural capital as resources that determine student achievement. A second stream uses qualitative observations to interpret cultural capital as familiar strategies that align with the institutional rewards of schools. A third stream offers a more micro-oriented conception of cultural capital as reservoirs of meanings that facilitate ritual interactions.

The following are some examples of studies that have provided evidence on the application of Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital or its overcoming for the analysis of very diverse social realities, during different periods and places in the world, going beyond the classification developed by Davies and Rizk (2018) for educational research in the United States.

For instance, P. L. Andersen and Hansen (2012) found that, within each social class, those with more cultural capital

were also the ones with the higher grades. These inequalities increased along the schooling career and were stronger in oral exams than in written evaluations as they associate higher cultural capital with stronger oral skills. Sullivan (2001) found an unequal distribution of cultural capital, which was influenced by SES and education. Her results supported the idea that cultural capital is transmitted from parents to their offspring as she found that the cultural activities that children engage in are mediated by parental cultural capital and do not experience any school effect. Similarly, Weber and Becker (2019) state that Bourdieu's theory of cultural and social reproduction is their theoretical framework and apply it to the digital domain to identify whether there is social inequality in school-related internet use by European adolescents in terms of consumption (browsing) and productive activities (uploading/sharing). This was a descriptive study using data from the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2012 for the empirical analysis. It was identified that students with parents with higher education and more books at home tend to use the internet more frequently for school-related tasks than students from less-privileged families. This pattern was true for both browsing and sharing school-related internet activities. However, such a pattern is not replicated in the association between parental education and books at home with the frequency of adolescents' use of the internet for entertainment purposes.

In the same vein, Kraaykamp and Van Eijck (2010) found a strong correlation between parental embodied capital and their children's interest in highbrow cultural activities. However, this correlation was mediated by the respondents' own schooling levels and cultural participation, and the correlation between parental cultural capital and that of their children was weaker for younger cohorts. Furthermore, Xu and Hampden-Thompson (2012) argue that Bourdieu's cultural reproduction model better explains the schooling situation in countries with low governmental intervention as the school system is not able to overcome the inequalities between the different SES, either reproducing them or even aggravating them. However, they acknowledge that Bourdieu's model fails to provide a consistent framework to explain the association between children's family background and their performance in welfare states. Kingston (2001) also argues that the cultural capital model fails to explain why higher SES students tend to achieve better in school as it is neither due to exclusive cultural practices nor are these practices rewarded for being associated with the elite.

Nevertheless, other viewpoints, such as that offered by the mobility model, have challenged the Bourdieusian perspective on class and cultural capital. DiMaggio (DiMaggio, 1982; DiMaggio & Mohr, 1985) argues that the influence of cultural capital in the first years is not so determinant. On the contrary, he proposes that those from low social capital households benefit more from cultural capital acquisition than those who already belong in high cultural capital households. Moreover, the mobility model suggests that cultural capital facilitates interaction beyond social boundaries, rather than narrowing it to the individual's social class.

Consistent with DiMaggio's perspective, Gofen (2009) shows how first-generation higher education students are able to break the intergenerational cycle thanks to their parents' view on education, their relationship with their children, and their family values. Therefore, these first-generation higher education students become an example of cultural mobility. I. G. Andersen and Jæger's (2015) results were also consistent with the mobility model for the three countries in their study. Accordingly, even if they found that the returns to cultural capital considerably vary within the schooling system, they conclude that cultural capital has a positive impact on academic success and that this impact is especially powerful in low-achieving school settings.

Similarly, empirical evidence provided by European research counteracts the Bourdieusian perspective. Aiming at identifying strategies for inclusion and social cohesion, the large-scale European Union (EU)-funded INCLUD-ED project (Flecha, 2015) showed the positive impact on students' educational success, regardless of their SES, as a result of implementing what was defined as Successful Educational Actions (SEA). According to a longitudinal case study in one of the poorest Roma schools in Spain, children achieved outstanding results, reduced school absenteeism, and increased enrolment after implementing those educational actions (Flecha & Soler, 2013). The impact of this study was recognized by *Cambridge Journal of Education* with the Best Paper Prize. Since then, these actions have been replicated across contexts and cultures leading to similar results in very different contexts, including students with disabilities (García-Carrión et al., 2018b). Currently, these SEAs have been implemented in more than 9,000 schools (Spain, Portugal, Cyprus, Malta, Italy, Czech Republic, and United Kingdom; "ENLARGE SEAs. Successful Educational Actions in Europe," n.d.; "Schools as 'Learning Communities,'" n.d.; "SEAs4all–Schools as Learning Communities in Europe," n.d.; "Step4Seas," n.d.) and Latin America (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Peru; "Dialogic Gatherings Latin America," n.d.; "School as Learning Communities in Latam Network," n.d.) achieving outstanding results against all the odds. In Catalonia, the Economy Circle gave the 2017 Education award to "Joaquim Ruyra" elementary school. This illustrates how educational reproduction can be challenged. In a school with 95% of families living in poverty, receiving free school meals, and 92% of immigrant students from 30 nationalities, they achieved "above the average" for the students twice, with the highest scores in all subjects. These achievements are not only for educational success, as measured in standardized tests, but also for the reason these schools improve social cohesion in their communities and contribute to the prevention of violent radicalization (Aiello et al., 2018). In this vein, such research challenges reproductionist theories by demonstrating that SES does not define what individuals can understand or learn in a deterministic way. On the contrary, they

prove that social research–based actions are able to reverse those trends and give all children the chance to develop their potential.

Tastes, Preferences, and Skills: Are They Really a Class Matter?

Going back to Distinction (1979), Bourdieu establishes a cultural homology, according to which aesthetic preferences are set by the individual's habitus. Following this idea, high-class children would be socialized in "legitimate culture," in Bourdieu's words, the type of knowledge that seems valid for each individual in the same society from an early age. This socialization gives them more chances to succeed in a school system that values such knowledge. Consequently, the author indicates that highbrow culture becomes the tool for the dominant class to distinguish itself and perpetuate inequalities. Consistent with the culture–class relationship, Gripsrud et al. (2011) found that, between 1998 and 2000, more individuals from higher SES expressed their interest toward highbrow culture, whereas more individuals from lower SES showed preference for lowbrow culture. This is also consistent with Chan and Goldthorpe (2007), who found that the number of inactive cultural consumers of visual arts is greater among low-SES and low-educated individuals.

However, high-SES individuals seem to be broadening their cultural preferences toward the popular culture. Peterson and Kern (1996) confirmed the "omnivorous pattern" for the high-SES individuals in the American society, suggesting that they are more inclined to show an eclectic preference toward cultural consumption. These results have been replicated more recently affecting different forms of cultural consumption in Norway (Gripsrud et al., 2011), Finland (Purhonen et al., 2011), Holland (Van Eijck & Knulst, 2005), and the United Kingdom (Chan & Goldthorpe, 2007); however, Chan and Goldthorpe (2007) mention that even if the proportion of omnivores increases with SES, it cannot be asserted that high-SES individuals are mostly omnivores, at least regarding the visual arts.

Looking at these data, it seems obvious that consumption patterns are SES-related to some extent. It is easy to imagine how one's context shapes one's preferences and practices. However, the data show a lesser reproductionist pattern for taste than that of the Bourdieusian theory. All SES groups show an overall interest decline toward traditional "legitimate cultural" forms, especially regarding literature consumption (Gripsrud et al., 2011; Van Eijck & Knulst, 2005). This loss of interest toward "legitimate culture" is stronger not only among low-SES individuals (Gripsrud et al., 2011) but also among younger individuals (Gripsrud et al., 2011; Purhonen et al., 2011; Van Eijck & Knulst, 2005) as the stability in the number of omnivores identified by Van Eijck and Knulst (2005) was caused by a 10% drop in the interest toward highbrow culture among students with higher education. This interest drop toward "legitimate culture" among

individuals from higher SES is also observable in Chan and Goldthorpe (2007), who found that a quarter of the cultural inactives or nonconsumers of visual arts belonged to higher SES. Gripsrud et al. (2011) suggest that this overall interest fall for legitimate culture may be due to the decrease of the relevance of such culture in the students' lives, but it cannot be explained neither by the increase of omnivore consumers, as they did not find a larger amount of omnivores among the younger cohorts; nor by social mobility, as the cohort showing a stronger preference toward highbrow culture was also the cohort with the greatest social mobility.

Nevertheless, according to Purhonen et al. (2011), education, and not SES, better predicts highbrow cultural orientation. This is consistent with humanities students showing higher preferences for "legitimate culture" regardless of their inherited cultural capital (Gripsrud et al., 2011). Besides, "omnivores" are, on average, more educated than "inactives," despite having lower economical capital than them (Chan & Goldthorpe, 2007). Similarly, women from all SES backgrounds show a bigger preference toward legitimate culture in music, the visual arts, and literature than men from their same SES (Purhonen et al., 2011).

In addition, some authors argue that only linking highbrow culture to cultural capital does not completely cope with Bourdieu's understanding of this concept. Some argue that it should include the knowledge, skills, and competences that are key for academic achievement (Lareau & Weininger, 2003). Others propose to include stylistic aspects, such as ease and talent, whereas excluding those that are skill-related (P. L. Andersen & Hansen, 2012). However, Kingston (2001) argues that the concept of cultural capital has been expanded to include variables considered advantageous in life, such as working hard, which may have an effect on academic achievement, but cannot systematically be associated with a certain SES, nor are they rewarded for being associated with a particular SES either.

Narrowing our focus to the literary field, even if parental reading promotion fosters reading and greater preference toward quality literature, literary socialization in school correlates with adult literary engagement later on in life (Kraaykamp, 2003). This would again indicate that a successful educational intervention may have stronger effects on cultural capital acquisition than SES. Moreover, the way readings are approached and the extent to which students can relate to the topics they present could have an impact on taste (Garcia Yeste, Gairal Casadó, et al., 2018). Consistent with this idea, the educational intervention of the DLG has shown that highbrow culture can be appreciated and understood by all readers, regardless of their origin, initial educational level, or SES (Soler, 2015).

The Dialogic Learning Model

The Bourdieusian (1979) reproductionist theory centered an individual's potential on his habitus and the perpetuation of

the social differences in the school system. However, considering the analysis on the former sections, this model could be insufficient to analyze today's social and educational context, as it seems to be underestimating the impact of the educational system and the community in overcoming inequalities and democratizing access to "legitimate" knowledge.

Sociological research (Torras-Gómez et al., 2019) shows that, in today's context, more and more people want to have a saying in their community. Information and knowledge are available to all, allowing individuals to question authorities and ask for further explanations, in what Giddens et al. (1994) define as "demonopolization of the expertise." Elster (1998) also identifies a comeback toward participation in collective decision-making by those that are affected by such decisions. Therefore, more people seem to no longer be content by following the rules, but feel they have the right to question them and have a saying in their changing. In this context, dialogue could be the tool to reach consensus and come to agreements.

These dialogic manifestations are progressively observable in more fields, including the educational one. Even if education has traditionally been monologic from teachers to students, only a small part of what an individual can learn or may need happens exclusively in the traditional classroom. On the contrary, all interactions in the different spaces in which a student participates (i.e., school, home, and the street) contribute to his learning process. This is consistent with Bakhtin's (1986) multivoiceness which states that when we interact we bring to the conversation all previous dialogues and meanings that were created in such encounters. Vygotsky, as well, in his sociocultural theory pointed out the dialogic nature of learning when he situated interaction as the means to go beyond the actual learning and reach the potential learning, with language being the tool that allows knowledge acquisition (Vygotsky, 1978). Following this perspective, a successful learning environment should be able to go beyond the school walls and include the diverse voices present in the variety of contexts the student participates in.

Therefore, a communicative approach to education seems to offer a more suitable framework to understand how individuals incorporate cultural capital nowadays. This conception understands learning as an intersubjective process that happens through dialogue (dialogic learning) and, therefore, it determines that an individual builds his own knowledge in interaction with others (Racionero-Plaza & Padrós, 2010). This approach is particularly relevant because of the role it gives to the individual: whereas in reproductionist scenarios low-SES individuals seem to have little to no power to overcome contextual inequalities, the communicative approach makes each person actively responsible for his own transformation and that of the community through dialogue and consensus. In this scenario, the school can no longer be blamed for perpetuating inequalities as all voices are welcomed and considered based on the validity of their arguments, not on their status or power position. Therefore, this approach could

break the dichotomy, dominant–dominated, and offer a more democratic view of education by including in the dialogue those that are normally excluded from it (Gómez et al., 2019). Besides, this model could help understand why those from lower SES can actually benefit from the acquisition of cultural capital, which is both key to personal and social growth and to upward cultural and social mobility.

The dialogic learning model comes from diverse contributions including Freire's critical pedagogy (Ramis, 2018) and relies on seven principles (Flecha, 2000). (a) *Egalitarian dialogue* refers to the fact that arguments are assessed according to validity claims, not power ones. (b) *Cultural intelligence* is the intelligence all individuals develop in life experiences and interactions. (c) *Transformation* results from dialogicity: interaction transforms one's understanding of the world and of others. (d) *Instrumental dimension* regards the acquisition of knowledge and the development of skills used in dialogues. (e) *Creation of meaning* results from the collective interpretation reached by the different participants through consensus. (f) *Solidarity* emerges from the bonds created between participants and the proactive attitudes these interactions foster. (g) *Equality of differences* recognizes the right to be different to all individuals, while sharing the same rights when accessing opportunities.

The findings presented in this theoretical framework lead to at least two conclusions regarding the homology of the habitus (Bourdieu, 1979). On one hand, even if high-SES and high-educational level students are supposed to predict each other, the educational system in welfare states can compensate for background inequalities (Xu & Hampden-Thompson, 2012). For instance, the inclusion of evidence-based educational actions has allowed the academic success of children from minority groups in key instrumental areas such as mathematics (Díez-Palomar et al., 2018) or science (Gairal-Casadó et al., 2019) in school and out-of-school learning settings. Moreover, low-SES students' performance has also been increased through programs aimed at family training (Garcia Yeste, Morlà Folch, & Ionescu, 2018; Renta Davids et al., 2019) and community engagement (García-Carrión et al., 2018a). Hence, this would mean that the "habitus" is not as defining. This is supported by the fact that even if highbrow cultural preference correlates with high SES, it also does so with higher educational levels, suggesting that education can better predict cultural capital than SES. On the other hand, the presented data show that high-SES individuals neither feel as naturally attired nor are they as exposed to "legitimate culture." Actually, it seems that the number of young high-SES individuals with preferences for highbrow culture has declined (Van Eijck & Knulst, 2005) and that a high percentage of high-SES individuals are cultural inactives or nonconsumers (Gripsrud et al., 2011). Therefore, we understand that high-SES students would benefit from an intervention that maximizes their exposure to highbrow culture, allowing them to reflect and draw meaning from it. Moreover, as seen in this section, interaction may be a key component of learning in

today's society. Thus, activities that promote active communicative interaction and are based on the seven principles of dialogic learning should allow individuals to create new meanings and reach higher levels of learning (Racionero-Plaza & Padrós, 2010).

Taking all the above into account, it seems that only providing access to culture is not enough to overcome inequalities or to grant deep cultural knowledge. Thus, a proposal that looks forward to a democratic integration of culture that benefits all students and that allows them to learn from one another is necessary. Consequently, we have presented the dialogic learning model as an alternative that both challenges the Bourdieusian assumptions and offers a new framework of analysis based on the transformative power of interaction. Within this conception, the DLG are examined and discussed through the scientific literature, as an educational and cultural activity that promotes a democratic approach to legitimate culture for all (Flecha, 2015).

Method

The current research provides an analysis of articles indexed in the scientific databases of SCOPUS and *Journal Citation Reports* (*JCR*). Particularly, articles included in this review present the transformative dimension of dialogic learning. Specifically, they provide evidence of how participating in DLG results in the transformation of the educational trajectories of the participants. Thus, the current study can be framed as a meta-ethnography (Noblit & Hare, 1999), in the sense that it provides an explanation of the reality under study based on the experiences recounted by those involved, while allowing a cross-comparison of the different case studies reviewed. For this reason, selected articles include interviews with direct participants in the DLG.

Inclusion Criteria

Selected articles fulfill the following criteria:

- A focus on DLG, as defined in Flecha (2000)
  - Empirical;
  - Qualitative approach;
  - Inclusion of participants' voices.

Search Strategy

The Web of Science (WoS) and SCOPUS databases were used to gather relevant contributions in the scientific literature about the DLG. The keywords "dialogic gatherings," "literary gatherings," and "dialogic literary gatherings" were combined in the search. Articles not complying with the inclusion criteria were discarded.

Selection process. Retrieved articles underwent a two-step selection process. First, the abstract of all retrieved articles

was read. At this stage, all articles not complying with the inclusion criteria were discarded. Next, articles that had passed the first step were read in full to ensure compliance with all selection criteria. After this two-step process, a total of 15 articles were selected. All articles are of single participant/few participants.

Analysis

Seven different categories were established for the analysis, one for each of the principles of dialogic learning. The selected articles were then scrutinized to find evidence of the seven principles of dialogic learning (Table 1). The classification of the evidence into the different categories was accepted by all authors.

DLG

In our society, dialogue becomes the tool to reach consensus and create meaning. In this context, one of the main sources we have to acquire knowledge is reading. However, as Kraaykamp (2003) states, the acquisition of cultural knowledge and skills cannot be achieved by unconnected encounters with literature or culture, but "by intensive and lasting activation of available competencies in a respected social environment" (p. 236). In this context, DLG offer an answer from a dialogic perspective. DLG are based on the understanding that reading is an intersubjective process and focus on dialogue as the tool to collectively unveil the meaning of a text (Flecha, 2015).

Regarding their implementation, DLG begins with participants choosing a work of the best literary creations in universal history. These works include titles from different cultures, such as *The Arabian Nights*, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel García Marquez, and *Crime and Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoevsky, among many other universal literary works. Thereafter, they read at home the agreed upon pages and mark the passages to be discussed. Later, they share such fragments in class and engage in an egalitarian dialogue with their peers in which all voices are welcomed. In such discussion, every individual brings his own cultural intelligence, and new knowledge is collectively created thanks to all contributions (Flecha, 2015).

The intrinsic value of DLG can be explained through the seven principles of dialogic learning. In the following subsections, we will check these principles with DLG experiences in primary schools (Hargreaves & García-Carrión, 2016; Villardón-Gallego et al., 2018), in out-of-home child care (Garcia Yeste, Gairal Casadó, et al., 2018), in adult schools (Garcia Yeste et al., 2017; Racionero-Plaza, 2015; Ruiz, 2015; Serrano et al., 2010), as family training (De Botton et al., 2014; Girbés-Peco et al., 2019; Serradell, 2015), and in penitentiaries (Flecha et al., 2013; Pulido, 2015)

Table 1. Summary of Articles.

Participant's name	Age	Context	Characteristics	Ed. level	Location	Reference
Aisha	28	Family training	Moroccan immigrant	Secondary studies	Spain	Serradell (2015)
Alba	11	Primary school	Moroccan student. Intellectual disability. Ordinary class	Sixth grade (4 years behind)	Spain	Molina-Roldán (2015)
Amaya	12	Primary school	Roma student, suffered bullying and exclusion	Sixth grade (low reading/writing)	Spain	Aubert (2015)
Amina	31	Penitentiary	Moroccan prison inmate	No basic studies	Spain	Pulido (2015)
Clara	13	Secondary school (primary during DLG)	Student at a ghetto school. Speaker at the European Parliament	Middle school	Spain	Elboj (2015)
Connor	12	Primary school	Cambridge student	Year 6	United Kingdom	García-Carrión (2015)
Herman	Adult	Penitentiary	Dutch prison inmate	—	Spain	Flecha et al. (2013)
Isabel	Adult	Adult school	Adult learner. +30 years in DLG	No prior academic background	Spain	(Flecha, 2015)
Iñaki	Adult	Penitentiary	Spanish prison inmate	—	Spain	Flecha et al. (2013)
Lola	60	Adult school	Homeless woman	Did not finish secondary education	Spain	Racionero-Plaza (2015)
Manuel	14	Foster center	Foster care Roma male. Son to a negligent father	Secondary	Spain	Garcia Yeste, Gairal-Casadó, et al. (2018)
P1	Adult	Adult school	DLG for adults		Spain	Ruiz (2015)
Quilian	14	Foster center	—	Secondary	Spain	Garcia Yeste et al. (2018)
Samuel	Adult	Penitentiary	Spanish prison inmate	—	Spain	Flecha et al. (2013)
Teresa	76	Adult school	Adult learner. +24 years in DLG	No prior academic background	Spain	Garcia Yeste et al. (2017)

Note. DLG = dialogic literary gatherings.

Equality of Differences

In DLG, high expectations are held for everyone and all participants are encouraged to intervene. Therefore, DLG make it possible for everyone, but especially for the "lesser-academic" to participate in a debate from which they have traditionally been excluded. This is the case for newly literate adults; immigrant or minority mothers and students; homeless people and foster care children, convicts and ex-convicts, and children with intellectual disabilities (Soler, 2015). However, DLG are not only aimed at those with educational needs as they have fostered improvements in schools with a majority of students from higher social and educational backgrounds as well (García-Carrión, 2015; Villardón-Gallego et al., 2018).

By accepting and encouraging heterogeneity, in DLG, participants are given the right to be different from one another while enjoying the same opportunities. This scenario has positive consequences for the individual and the group (Serrano et al., 2010). Single individuals have the opportunity to freely decide to join, to develop their skills, to increase their knowledge, and to feel more integrated. As Amina, an inmate, explains, participating in DLG helped her realize that she was not an outcast, that her contributions mattered,

and that she could aid others (Pulido, 2015). Regarding the group, all members benefit when valid arguments are able to break the stereotypes imposed by society. Aisha, a Moroccan mom, expresses it in her own words: "Before they had, well, an opinion of you, that you're Muslim, they didn't realize that you live almost the same as they do, you think the same as they do" (Serradell, 2015, p. 910).

DLG also demonstrate that understanding classical literature is not exclusive to the elite, nor are they the only ones suited to critically think and express their thoughts. Without DLG, Amaya, a Roma girl with low reading and writing skills, and Alba, an immigrant student with intellectual disability, would have probably ended in a support class. For both of them, their right to quality education would have been neglected.

Egalitarian Dialogue

DLG are based on an egalitarian dialogue, thus everyone is equally considered regardless of their socioeconomic or educational background (Soler, 2015), including the moderator (Hargreaves & García-Carrión, 2016). In this scenario, the arguments presented to the debate are accepted based on validity claims, not power ones (Flecha, 2015). Thanks to

this disposition, participants feel that, in DLG, they can freely think and speak, without worrying about anyone judging them. As Teresa, an older adult DLG participant, puts it, "you feel you have the right to say what you think, and you dare to do so" (Garcia Yeste et al., 2017, p. 195). Moreover, this approach to literature and collective reading has demonstrated to encourage participation. The study carried out by Hargreaves and García-Carrión (2016) shows how the mean participation rate of 10-year-olds in a class setting was 78.5%, with 85% of pupil talk during the sessions and with the teacher assuming an egalitarian role.

Therefore, DLG provide a space in which all individuals are recognized and where shared ideas and experiences are carefully and respectfully listened to, which has an impact on the individual's self-perception and self-confidence (Racionero-Plaza, 2015). Accordingly, Flecha et al. (2013) express that, thanks to this sense of freedom and of being heard, inmates participating in DLG started to feel like human beings again. Amaya, a Roma student who used to be excluded in school, also began to intervene during DLG as this activity provided her and her classmates with a space in which they all were equal.

Furthermore, the fact that interventions are assessed according to validity claims encourages participants to provide grounded arguments and critically think. Serrano et al. (2010) describe that participants progressively get used to supporting their interventions with arguments. Samuel, an inmate, mentions that in these egalitarian dialogues confronted ideas were debated, leading participants to deep reflections and giving them the opportunity to change their viewpoints. Clara, a secondary student, also shares this feeling, stating that being able to listen to different ways of interpreting an idea allowed her to broaden her mind and understand people's different opinions.

Cultural Intelligence

Considering cultural intelligence means acknowledging that everyone has something to contribute, not only those with an academic background. As Connor, a U.K. student, portrays it, DLG made him aware that, despite not all his classmates knew everything he talked about, they knew many other things that he was not aware of. This sometimes meant that their view of things was completely different from his own. In this vein, following Bakhtin's (1986) theory, when participants exchange their understanding, they bring to the debate all their previous interactions and experiences, opening new debates and offering alternative perspectives, which leads to deeper meaning-making processes that could have not been reached individually. This is why in DLG all voices are included because all opinions are necessary to unveil new and hidden interpretations of the text.

Therefore, the more heterogeneous the participants are, the more enriching the dialogue becomes. We can see an example of this in Serrano et al. (2010), who explain how, while reading Delibes, a participant asked about the word "milana," the meaning of which he had not found. Thereafter, another participant, who was from the same region as the author, was able to describe the type of bird that a milana is. Hence, thanks to her cultural intelligence and the interaction, the other participants were able to build new knowledge.

Creation of Meaning

As Iñaki, an inmate, explains, during DLG they link the content of the reading with their own lives, reaching new understandings that would not have emerged during individual reading. In this vein, Alba recognizes the value of being able to participate in DLG because she is well aware of how much it has helped her to improve her reading comprehension and how, thanks to it, she is able to understand books that would otherwise be out of reach.

Indeed, reading literary classics, which revolve around timeless issues that have historically concerned mankind, pushes participants to analyze their own trajectories, past and future. Lola, a homeless woman, explains how the exchange of ideas in DLG allowed her to change her vision of her past. Relating with Ulysses' struggles in *The Odyssey* gave her the strength to want to move forward in life. This is also Amina's case who, after changing her feeling of not belonging in society, thanks to DLG, is now considering to study. Clara, as well, explains that participating in DLG allowed her to see the kind of people she wants to be around: She now has a very clear idea of the kind of life partner she wants to have in the future.

Therefore, in DLG, participants are well aware of the intrinsic value of literary classics as tools to reflect on their experiences and imagine and work toward any possible future. Just as P1 stated, "As Freire said, more education and reading for people means that we will be freer. We will be even freer if we read the higher quality books written through humanity's history" (Ruiz, 2015, p. 903). This is probably why Herman, an inmate, thinks that DLG will allow him to leave the prison as a richer man.

Instrumental Dimension

DLG contribute to the development of several competences. Connor mentions how this SEA helped him to deepen his reading comprehension, to improve his writing, and to learn vocabulary and concepts that he later transferred to other settings. Similarly, Serrano et al. (2010) explain how questions around vocabulary decrease with sessions because participants integrate the new words. Besides, the fact that DLG are based on communicative interaction highlights the importance of oral expression and active listening. This has a great impact on students like Amaya who realizes that, thanks to DLG, she can better express herself now; or on Isabel, who now feels able to express her own ideas and thoughts.

Moreover, DLG revolve around literary classics, ensuring that all participants access the knowledge and values these books elicit and increase their cultural knowledge. In addition, they foster participants to learn contextual facts around the book or to extend their learning to other areas. In this vein, Serrano et al. (2010) show that DLG participants gathered in groups outside the sessions to find more information on the discussed topics, or enrolled in courses to learn another language or skill. Connor and Clara explain how DLG had an impact on their performance in other school subjects. Manuel and Quilian, both in a foster center, mention how DLG boosted their interest in books. Therefore, DLG contribute to the acquisition and development of academic skills that are key to school success, allowing students to improve their self-perception and to overcome contextual factors that would have hindered their academic success.

Solidarity

During DLG sessions, discussions about solidarity, empathy, altruism, and social commitment are frequent. In this vein, Villardón-Gallego et al.'s (2018) results confirmed that young students increased their prosocial behavior after participating in DLG, possibly because of the awareness raised around these behaviors in the discussions. This type of behavior can be seen in adults, like Isabel, who explains that DLG pushed her to get involved in different social movements and fight for the inclusion of participants' voices in decision-making about their own education, or Amina, who dreams of becoming a social worker to help others, or in the inmates who participated in DLG in Flecha et al. (2013) and ended up creating a support group, thus transferring the solidarity bonds created during DLG sessions to other spaces in the penitentiary.

Besides, this activity fosters participants to know each other better, which improves their relationships and their attitudes toward certain collectives who were previously unknown to them. In this vein, Connor explains that DLG made some of his classmates, who were not talking to one another, start interacting outside class, creating new friendships. Amaya mentions that, after participating in DLG, some girls in her class started defending her before others, whereas earlier they would turn their back on her. These bonds have now become friendships that prevail outside school. One last example is Aisha's who, after getting involved in DLG, became very active in her neighborhood, supporting and inviting other women to the gatherings, so they would have the chance to learn too.

Transformation

In DLG, participants have the opportunity to transform their lives, thanks to the conditions created by the dialogic learning principles. When engaging in DLG, participants improve their knowledge and skills and develop social values. This contributes to their personal growth, to the way they interact with others, and to fostering active ways of social participation toward transformation. At a personal level, Alba's and Amaya's stories, among others, show how DLG increase achievement expectations for students with academic needs and positively contribute to their self-esteem and competence. This is also Lola's case who, breaking all stereotypes around homeless women, was able to transform herself through dialogic interactions. Similarly, the self-confidence that Amina got back through participating in DLG has encouraged her to resume her studies and build a new possible future.

DLG have also proven to foster transformation at a collective level. Ruiz (2015), an educator who moderated DLG, describes how this activity transformed her vision of the literary classics. Moreover, she mentions how the issues discussed around the books promoted participants' involvement in changing their neighborhood. Similarly, educators in the penitentiary center started to see inmates differently, because they were reading the literary classics, transforming the way they related to them. This gave the inmates the possibility to see themselves in a new perspective and imagine a different future (Flecha et al., 2013). Taking a look at the participants' households, De Botton et al. (2014) observed that Moroccan moms participating in their study explained that topics discussed during dinner at home became culturally richer after they started participating in DLG. This, in turn, changed the way in which their children saw them now, as more empowered individuals. Connor also explains that now he reads more with his mother, which has increased his brother's motivation toward reading. Regarding the classroom setting, Hargreaves and García-Carrión (2016) suggest that DLG transform classroom interactions, fostering participation and the exchange of ideas. Therefore, these experiences demonstrate how DLG empower participants and show them that other realities are possible. This allows them to overcome inequalities and freely decide who they want to be.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this article, we have attempted to question the Bourdieusian reproductionist theory (Bourdieu, 1979; Bourdieu, & Passeron, 1970) and its difficulties to describe the sociocultural context of the 21st century. Thus, through a literature review, we have challenged the concept of habitus and the relationship between taste, cultural capital, and social class, focusing on the transformative power of the dialogic model of education (Flecha, 2000). In this scenario, we have pointed out how an SEA such as DLG can contribute to overcoming the negative contextual characteristics that students may encounter and explain cultural mobility. DLG show how interaction on an egalitarian basis around high-quality texts has great transformative power for the individuals participating in them and their community.

The dialogic principles on which DLG are based lead to overcoming the conception that cultural preferences are determined by social class and cultural background (Bourdieu, 1979). Bourdieu's concept of "habitus" cannot explain how adults with low levels of education or children from socially and culturally disadvantaged environments enjoy reading and dialoguing with some of the best literary creations. DLG are an educational action that reverses the assertion that such literature can only be the exclusive privilege of the elite. In Bourdieu's terms, the cultural capital and social capital of people who participate in DLG grow exponentially. In doing so, DLG contribute to crossing the boundaries that label social classes culturally. Regardless of the socioeconomic background of the participants, DLG overturn the habitus transmitted in their social and family context in which they have been socialized.

DLG affect the transformation of the embodied state and the objectified state of cultural capital. These are not only contributing to accessing the institutionalized state of cultural capital, but are also creating new knowledge and meaning. Examples, such as the immigrant mothers of Moroccan origin who are participating in DLG and leading conversations about the books they read at dinner time with their families or the children from low socioeconomic backgrounds who through DLG are improving their competences in text comprehension, oral and written communication, and, as a consequence, improving their educational achievement, show this. The reviewed articles published in indexed peer review journals on DLG are providing evidence of how the structuralist equation that correlates low social class with low cultural capital and worse educational performance than those of higher social class is being reversed, in line with previous studies (I. G. Andersen & Jæger, 2015; DiMaggio, 1982; DiMaggio & Mohr, 1985; Gofen, 2009; Kingston, 2001).

The evidence gathered in the qualitative studies reviewed shows how the creation of meaning in the dialogic interactions that take place in the DLG has promoted a preference and taste for great literary creations. Thanks to the DLG, women who have just become literate, adults who have lived through processes of social exclusion that have led them to live on the streets or go to prison, and children from socioeconomically disadvantaged families now read and enjoy literature that was considered to be aimed at the social elites.

Therefore, we have argued that DLG prove that individuals from all SES backgrounds are capable of not only enjoying reference works of universal literature, but also relating their life experiences to the stories told in them and to later share their reflections, listen to those of others, and create new meanings. Moreover, the impact that DLG generate does not only strike them individually, contributing to their cultural capital, their social and communicative skills, and their values, but also their entourage. Family and community members of those participating in DLG benefit from the culture and knowledge that is shared and created in them, as well as from the solidarity attitudes that it promotes (Soler,

2015). Gripsrud et al. (2011) implied that the overall decline in interest for "legitimate culture" could be due to a decrease of the relevance of such culture in the students' lives. However, we have argued that a dialogic approach to literature ensures meaningful and consistent exposure to such culture to participants of all kinds as it shows them how the issues covered in literary classics are actually close to those in their personal experiences and in the life of others. Students, all of them regardless of their social class, have the power to learn, create, contribute, and transform, and reading the greatest literary creations dialogically elicits the knowledge and attitudes toward such transformation.

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7. Dialogic Reconstruction of Memory: a methodological contribution aimed at social impact on youth's sexual-affective relationships

7.1. Presentation

Any person could, if they were so inclined, be the sculptor of his own brain.

Santiago Ramon y Cajal

As presented in the methodological section, the current thesis is framed under the communicative methodology approach. The adoption of such frame was chosen due to the recognized impact that such orientation achieves, including the potential for personal transformation.

The study presented in this chapter draws, on the one hand, on research on qualitative methodology and dialogue, and, on the other hand on scientific studies on memory. More precisely this article draws on the Communicative Methodology (CM) and how this methodology has contributed to the overcoming of the instrumental use that dialogue and language had traditionally had in qualitative research. Indeed, Communicative Methodology does not to understand language as the means to access a preexisting reality. Conversely, it builds on the idea that understandings are generated in the intersubjective dialogue established between researchers and participants. Under such approach transformation is not something predefined, but rather, it is co-created in that same dialogue, and in the direction that those who participate in that dialogue wish.

Bridging the former with research on memory, the current article presents a new contribution within the Communicative Methodology of research, that emerges when orienting research on sexual-affective relationships to the achievement of social impact. Within the communicative interviews, participants have the opportunity to explore their own narratives in interaction with the researchers and under the light of scientific contributions with social impact. Indeed, within such process both interviewed researchers and participants identify a Dialogic Reconstruction of Memory (DRM) that takes place during the interview, and that continues after it. Within this process participants can progressively access and increasing percentage of their available memories. This interactive and intersubjective process allows them to reach new understanding of their own narratives, deepening in these as much as they want to free them from the influence of the Dominant Coercive Discourse. Furthermore, the current article contributes a series of modifications to communicative interviews that make DRM, together with the potential for personal transformation that DRM offers.

Thus, chapter seven, in which the research entitled *Dialogic Reconstruction of Memory: a methodological contribution aimed at social impact on youth's sexual-affective relationships*, contributes to SO1 and SO4. Regarding the former, it delves in the understanding of the coercive discourse and the preventive socialization of gender-based violence from a methodological perspective. As for the latter, it contributes a transformative action towards the overcoming of the CDD in relation to sexual-affective relationships, including pleasure.

The paper here presented has been accepted for publication in June 2021 in co-authorship in *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* (JCR Q1, 2019; SCOPUS Q1, 2020;). Since this is the only paper not published yet, after the manuscript the email of acceptance from the journal has been included.

7.2. Manuscript

Dialogic Reconstruction of Memory: a methodological contribution aimed at social impact on youth's sexual-affective relationships

Journal:	*International Journal of Qualitative Methods*
Manuscript ID	IJQM-20-0399.R4
Manuscript Type:	Regular Article
Keywords:	Narrative, Narrative Analysis, Narrative Inquiry, Narrative Research, Methods in Qualitative Inquiry
Abstract:	Methodologies of research aimed at achieving social impact, such as the Communicative Methodology (CM), have overcome the instrumental uses of language. Alongside these, research on memory has shown how this is not a static construct but one that is continuously evolving through social interaction. Research on youths' sexual-affective relationships achieving social impact currently combines these two frameworks. However, from a methodological perspective, what advancements allow for the achievement of such an impact has not been explored yet. The current paper contributes a new methodological contribution within the CM, the Dialogic Reconstruction of Memory (DRM). Six interviews were conducted with researchers studying both the sexual-affective relationships and participants in this kind of study. The results show how both interviewed researchers and participants identify the emergence of the DRM during and after communicative interviews. In turn, this leads to a series of modifications to communicative interviews and opens up possibilities for personal transformation. These findings open new avenues for research with social impact.

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Title: Dialogic Reconstruction of Memory: a methodological contribution aimed at social impact on youth's sexual-affective relationships

Short title: Dialogic Reconstruction of Memory

Abstract

Methodologies of research aimed at achieving social impact, such as the Communicative Methodology (CM), have overcome the instrumental uses of language. Alongside these, research on memory has shown how this is not a static construct but one that is continuously evolving through social interaction. Research on youths' sexual-affective relationships achieving social impact currently combines these two frameworks. However, from a methodological perspective, what advancements allow for the achievement of such an impact h

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interviews were conducted with researchers studying both the sexual-affective

relationships and participants in this kind of study. The results show how both

interviewed researchers and participants identify the emergence of the DRM

during and after communicative interviews. In turn, this leads to a series of

modifications to communicative interviews and opens up possibilities for personal

transformation. These findings open new avenues for research with social impact.

Keywords: Narrative, Narrative Analysis, Narrative Inquiry, Narrative Research,

Methods in Qualitative Inquiry

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Introduction

From instrumental to creative: dialog in qualitative methodologies

The dialogic turn in society has led to the introduction of dialog into people's lives, relationships, households, and institutions [Citation error]. In science, it has established a new way of understanding and constructing reality (Soler-Gallart, 2017). Decades ago, many researchers used subjects as tools or mere objects to obtain their expected results and outcomes. Currently, research funding institutions and citizens increasingly demand dialogic spaces in which researchers and research participants cocreate scientific knowledge that contributes to improvements to society (Soler & Gómez, 2020).

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However, dialog has not always had this role in scientific inquiry, particularly in qualitative methodologies. When the idea of dialog was introduced in the qualitative methodology, its role was primarily instrumental: language and dialog were viewed as instruments to retrieve information and get to the truth, which was thought to be *out there* (Crotty, 1998). The main goal was to conduct an objective analysis of the people and the situations being researched.

The notion of conducting qualitative research for social transformation took dialog in qualitative research one step forward. First, action research was developed to improve people's lives and concerns while contributing to social sciences' research interests (Liebenberg et al., 2020; Rapoport, 1970). Second, participatory action research then brought new advancements by introducing the idea that social transformation through research required subjects' participation

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(Tanabe et al., 2017; Beydon-Miller et al., 2020). Nevertheless, dialog was instrumental to achieving such transformative goals.

However, the Communicative Methodology (CM) overcame this instrumental use of language. The CM approach establishes that transformation is not predefined and that transformations are generated in the dialog between the researchers and the participants (Gómez et al., 2019; Gómez González, 2021; Soler-Gallart, 2017). Indeed, language does not transmit a reality that pre-exists but rather one that is created in the very communication. Thus, researchers and research participants establish an egalitarian dialog in which the former contribute scientific knowledge on the studied issue, and the latter brings knowledge obtained from their own experience. This intersubjective dialog allows the coconstruction of new

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knowledge that addresses citizens' concerns, contributing to the body of scientific

research with social impact (Aiello et al., 2020).

Therefore, the strategic action in which the researcher imposes their

interpretation and intentions for a preconceived goal is replaced by the

communicative action (Habermas, 1984). Moreover, the CM not only takes into

account speech acts anchored on verbal language, it considers communicative

acts. This means that all the elements that make up the interaction, such as

gestures, context, the speakers' intentions, or the consequences of the

interaction, among others (Searle & Soler, 2005; Soler & Flecha, 2010) are taken

into account, overcoming the verbal body-language binary. In particular, it

establishes dialogic communicative acts that aim to eliminate, or at least

minimize, power relationships to share and co-create knowledge together with

the research participants. Through such an approach, research can shed light on

issues so complex yet relevant as identifying what constitutes (the lack of) sexual

consent to promote sexual freedom (Flecha et al., 2020; Vidu Afloarei & Tomás

Martínez, 2019), among others.

Reconstructing autobiographical memories to craft desired selves

Research has shown that two types of memory exist: an available memory and

an accessible memory. Available memory is all that one can remember, and

accessible memory is what one can, at one point, remember and talk about

(Frankland et al., 2019; Tulving & Pearlstone, 1966). Autobiographical memory,

a specific form of malleable memory, refers to what we remember about past

experiences and how we remember them. Not only do our own experiences and

interactions shape who we are, but more importantly, autobiographical memories

build our own identity and perception of ourselves (McAdams, 2011; Racionero-

Plaza et al., 2018). Such memories gain form through the life narratives we tell

others and ourselves, influencing our emotions and prospective thinking (Klein et

al., 2010; Racionero-Plaza et al., 2018; Williams et al., 2008). By sharing

narratives of our life stories with others, we are co-constructing representations

of ourselves that become part of our accessible memory and, hence, our identity

(Bruner, 1987; McAdams, 2011).

The narratives we create are deeply shaped by social interactions and

discourses. Along this line, it has been found that there is a coercive dominant

discourse (CDD) that associates attraction with violence, imposing among many

youths a shared narrative in which people with violent attitudes are portrayed as

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desirable (Puigvert et al., 2019; Torras-Gómez et al., 2020). The CDD shapes

many girls' autobiographical memories and how they interpret those memories,

often recalling such experiences as exciting (Puigvert Mallart et al., 2019). For

instance, a recent study by Torras-Gómez and colleagues (2020) showed that all

participants who had hooked up with boys with disdainful attitudes felt bad and

disgusted while doing it, but that they felt pressured to tell their friends that they

had fun to fit into the shared narrative that violent boys are exciting. After

repeating these false narratives, they ended up interpreting those feelings of

disdain as pleasure. This socialization process has been found to be an

underlying factor for future gender-based violence victimization (Racionero-

Plaza, Ugalde, Merodio, et al., 2020). This urgent issue needs to be addressed

through research to prevent and eradicate violence victimization (San Segundo

& Codina-Canet, 2019).

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However, narratives can be transformed, and so can autobiographical memories

(Racionero-Plaza, Ugalde, Merodio, et al., 2020). Furthermore, interventions

based on social interactions can scaffold individuals' navigation around their

memories (Nelson & Fivush, 2004; Wagoner & Gillespie, 2014). When these

interventions are implemented based on scientific evidence on the link between

attraction and violence (Racionero-Plaza, Ugalde, Vidu, et al., 2020; Ruiz-

Eugenio et al., 2020; Salceda et al., 2020), it is possible to enter the available

memory and increase its accessibility. This contributes to reconstructing

autobiographical memories in the desired direction and opening up pathways to

construct future desired selves.

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Moreover, it is not only through interventions that memory is reconstructed.

Indeed, the brain, as Ramon y Cajal (1989) showed, is not static. Rather, it is

constantly changing and evolving based on individuals' interactions, and so is

memory. From the moment of birth, memory is socially constructed through

interactions and continues to be constructed and reconstructed through these

interactions throughout life. However, interactions do not necessarily remain

constant and, when these vary, so does memory. For example, a girl in a toxic

relationship might erase violent episodes of the relationship from her memory if

the way she recounts such episodes with her friends is influenced by the CDD

(Racionero-Plaza et al., 2018). However, if she changes her interactions, a

possibility will open for transforming not only her memory of past relationships but

also, related to it, the desire and pleasure in future relationships (Torras-Gómez

et al., 2020). Therefore, the fact that individuals can choose with whom they

interact gives them a chance to change such interactions and change their memory.

Studying this reality through research oriented toward achieving social impact under the CM has led researchers to identify changes in the CM itself. The current meta-research aims to analyze a new element emerging in research under such design: the reconstruction of participants' memory in communicative interviews. This paper pays attention to how this reconstruction occurs as a methodological contribution to the CM and the opportunities that such reconstruction opens for research participants to transform their lives.

Methods

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The current study is framed within the CM approach. Six communicative

interviews were carried out to conduct this meta-research (Gómez et al., 2019).

Communicative interviews attempt to establish a dialog between the researchers

and participants, engaging in the co-creation of new knowledge rather than

addressing participants with a series of predefined questions. Therefore, the

authors engaged in a dialog with participants who provided their experience either

as researchers or research participants in this study.

Participants

A total of six people participated in this study. Participants can be divided into two

groups based on their connection to research on youths' sexual-affective

relationships. In the first group, three scientists were interviewed: one female and

two male researchers. The three of them lead studies on youths' sexual-affective

relationships in the Spanish and European contexts. The interviewed researchers

were selected due to their long trajectory of conducting research aimed at

achieving social impact within the communicative framework.

The second group was composed of three women who had previously

participated as interviewees in scientific studies on youths' sexual-affective

relationships. In particular, the three had previously participated in several

interviews aimed at providing evidence on the reconstruction of youth's memory

about sexual-affective relationships under research framed within the CM. The

three women were purposefully selected because they had manifested that

participating in such research led them to transform their sexual-affective

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relationships, which had consisted of mistreatment and/or disdain in the past.

Table 1 presents an overview of the participants:

[INSERT TABLE1]

Data collection

This study gained ethical approval by the Ethics Board of the Community of

Researchers on Excellence for All (CREA) under approval number 20201202.

Participants were contacted purposefully via email. They were provided an

information sheet about the study and consent forms. These included information

on the aim of the study and the materials and procedures for data collection, a

statement informing that participation is voluntary, information regarding the

pseudonymization of data, and the explicit statement that participants could

withdraw at any time without having to provide a reason. Through the informed

written consent form, participants also consented to being audio-recorded and to

the publication of their data as part of the results. Participants were given time to

read all information and to ask questions. After explaining the study's objectives,

interviews were arranged with each of them separately. Interviews were

conducted by one or two researchers from this study via the Zoom virtual

conferencing platform. All interviews were audio-recorded, as agreed upon by

informed written consent.

In the interviews with researchers, the dialog revolved around their experience

conducting interviews on youths' sexual-affective relationships. More precisely,

the selected researchers were asked to reflect on the interviews they had

previously conducted to provide specific examples of how participants' memory

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was reconstructed and explain how and why such reconstruction occurred.

Furthermore, researchers were also asked about the impact that participating in

the research had on the participants.

The interviews with individuals who had been interviewed in studies on youths'

sexual-affective relationships were aimed at understanding their experiences

during and after the interviews. In this vein, participants were asked to recall

instances during those past interviews, or even moments after such interviews,

in which their memories were being reconstructed as a result of the interactions

with the researchers. In turn, they explained how much reconstruction had

impacted their lives and relationships.

Data analysis

All interviews were transcribed and read several times. Categories were generated from the analysis of the transcriptions deductively in light of knowledge from the scientific literature (Mayring, 2015). Three main categories were established. Within the first category, excerpts identified cover researchers' identification of participants' DRM in the methodology itself, particularly in the communicative interviews and after the interviews. The second category explains how the DRM has enriched the CM by generating modifications. The third category refers to transformations that the DRM enables among research participants. The categorization was conducted through a dialogic process in which the researchers involved discussed the content of the evidence and their

classification. A consensus was reached for those cases in which a disagreement

emerged.

Results

Following the data analysis, the results presented in this article outline 1) the main

result: the identification of the Dialogic Reconstruction of Memory (DRM) among

research participants during and after communicative interviews, 2) the

modifications provoked in the CM by attempting to analyze participants' DRM,

particularly in communicative interviews, and 3) the possibilities for

transformation in the methodology due to the DRM.

1. The emergence of the DRM in the CM

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To achieve social impact, the researchers interviewed frame their investigations

under the CM. However, when researching violent sexual-affective relationships

among youth, they observed the emergence of a new methodological contribution

within the CM. Drawing on existing evidence that shows how memory is

constantly reconstructed through social interactions, the interviewed researchers

point to how incorporating this knowledge in their research design has led to the

emergence of this methodological contribution. As R1 points out, researchers

using the CM have realized that the methodology itself provides participants with

new interactions and that these interactions contribute to reconstructing their

memory:

> The dialogic reconstruction of memory is based on the idea that memory
>
> is not static, but it is constantly changing according to a person's

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interactions. Memory is socially constructed through social interactions.

Those interactions do not necessarily remain the same, and as a person

changes their interactions, so does their memory. Now, we have ended up

introducing this Dialogic Reconstruction of Memory in the very research

process. This means that the research methodology has been

contaminated, in a good sense, by the object of study. How have we

identified this? Because we've seen that in that very research process,

new interactions occurred, which collaborated in the reconstruction of the

participant's memory. Hence, we not only study the reconstruction of

memory, but the study itself reconstructs memory. (R1)

Following this idea, the three researchers interviewed agreed that interviews

need to be based on dialogic communicative acts for this to be a dialogic process.

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This means that, rather than instrumentalizing interviews to achieve a certain goal

– such as obtaining specific information or making participants reconstruct

specific memories – interviewers provide a dialogic space whereby participants'

memory is reconstructed and transformed in the very dialog between the

researcher and the participant. As R1 explains,

In the very communication of the egalitarian dialog, there is a

reconstruction, an increase of the memory which had been destroyed, and

that's why it has to be reconstructed, not deconstructed [...] It is in that

dialog that memory is changing, it's being transformed through a

reconstruction. (R1)

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As R1 explains, the interactions that enable the DRM give interviews a pragmatic use of dialog toward transformation. Engaging in such egalitarian dialog allows interviewees to navigate themselves by deepening their past experiences during and after the interview process. Such dialog provides participants with the opportunity to become more aware of their own memory, increasing the accessibility to more of it:

> In one of my first interviews, the researcher said something, and suddenly I remembered something that I had completely forgotten, and I explained it to her, and then she helped me interpret it. After that, I remember I couldn't stop thinking about it, and one day I was on the subway, and suddenly I remembered something else. (P2)

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As the participant explained, the dialog with the researcher helped her remember

details she had forgotten. Furthermore, she could interpret her memories

differently and understand them better, reconstructing the meaning that such

memories had for her. While this does not in itself transform participants' lives, it

does allow them to increase their self-awareness. Furthermore, they

acknowledge that this is a hard but essential process to break free from the

consequences of those relationships:

I didn't want to recognize I had been mistreated; I felt like everything was

being torn apart. But if you don't demolish it, then that's when everything

will be horrible because the consequences will still be there. So knowing

this rationally, I work hard to dismantle it, and of course, when I do,

everything gets better. (P1)

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The participant explains that although she resisted reconstructing the memory of

a particular relationship, she knew she wanted to be free and that the only way

for that to happen was to reconstruct the narrative she had made up about it.

Similarly, P3 acknowledges that engaging in the DRM allowed her to unveil the

false narratives she had fabricated, which was a painful yet necessary step for

her to be able to create new narratives and a new identity:

> You know that some things are untrue, but the fabrication helps you live
>
> with your choices. And then, entering those memories threatens all of
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> that… I remember thinking, "OMG, this has happened to me, I have
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> allowed someone to treat me this way", and then feeling horrified,
>
> ashamed. I thought of myself as an empowered woman, and yet, I realized

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that such experiences put me as far from that idea as possible. But gaining

that consciousness [...] is what really empowers you because instead of

creating a façade, you have the chance to become who you want. (P3)

Hence, according to P3, engaging in these interactions has given her the chance

to unveil how she truly felt. The dialog allowed her to deepen her accessible

memory while reconstructing the available memory by gaining awareness and

unveiling the truth. Indeed, this process was also highlighted by the researchers.

On this account, R1 asserted:

So what happens when now you see 15% [of a memory]? That when more

appears, not only does the memory increase, but the dialog on that

memory also increases [...]. Suddenly, we discover 30%, not just 15%, and

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so on and so forth [...] and what happens when you expand your memory

and [...] you have 70%? That it is then that you can be free if you want to

because to analyze the determinants of our behavior is an act of freedom.

(R1)

Hence, just as memory is continuously reconstructed in interactions, dialogically

reconstructing it enables individuals to grasp and expand on previously destroyed

memories, allowing more memory to be reconstructed as the dialog on such

memory continues. Increasing memory and the dialog around it enables the

generation of new interpretations, helping participants better understand their

past and decide about their future.

2. How the DRM modifies communicative interviews

Incorporating the DRM in the CM has led to a series of modifications of the latter.

The main modification refers to researchers acknowledging that it is not enough

to analyze participants' memory at the moment of the interview. Rather, it

becomes necessary to analyze its reconstruction in the dialog of the interview:

The communicative methodology has suffered modifications […]. Up until

this moment, in those interactions, we would collect, for instance,

participants' memory. But we have realized that it is in the very research

process of the communicative methodology that we not only collect

participants' memory but that memory is transformed, reconstructed.

Then, what we modify is that we don't want to analyze participants' current

memory, but it is being reconstructed in the very research process and in

other interactions the participant has. We have enriched the

communicative methodology with that element. (R1)

In this excerpt, R1 introduces the descriptive element in DRM during interviews.

He points out that the goal is uncovering what participants initially remember and

how this memory is transformed in the interaction. In addition to this descriptive

element, other researchers interviewed point out the existence of a normative

dimension that is related to the ethics criteria that should be taken into account:

You don't go there [to the interview] with some questions, and that's it. You

need to walk in someone's shoes, there's no predefined list, it's a dialog.

You can know the central issues, but you can't prioritize that [you need to

prioritize] what is really relevant at that moment for that person to explain

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and remember and reconstruct. If we went there with a paper and [said],

"this is what you need to tell me about", well, memory doesn't work that

way. It's a thread from which to pull, but it is the person who pulls from it,

and you have to follow that thread. (R3)

In such dialog, grounding the interactions on dialogic communicative acts is

indispensable. This includes prioritizing the participant's wellbeing and freedom,

as it allows researchers to create a context in which participants feel comfortable

and free to share relevant memories from their past while leading it toward a

positive stance. This particular issue has also been stressed by individuals who

participated in interviews on these issues, as seen in P1's excerpt:

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It's very important that you don't feel judged, because if you start

explaining something and the person interviewing you makes faces like he

or she is thinking "oh my" [...] at the same time, if the orientation is "it's no

big deal", then I'll think that I don't have to change it. If you want to change

it, you need to see how hard it is. (P1)

As asserted by P1, the fact that researchers neither judge nor downplay the

importance of the matters being recalled contributes to reconstructing what truly

happened. Another aspect that the researchers indicated to be of importance was

providing evidence and examples obtained from previous research, also following

the thread of the conversation:

from the outset, when you asked [...] people did not know what to tell you,

but when you explained the situation, giving examples of situations that we

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knew [...] then yes, concrete situations came to their mind [...]. Then,

entering the conversation, [...] you pull the thread, "ok and in that moment,

what did you feel?", and then they remember what they felt, and you

continue pulling the thread of the situations they explain. (R2)

As R2 explains, examples allow interviewees to start accessing those memories

and explaining such experiences. Alongside this, the interviewers continue with

the dialogic reconstruction by asking follow-up questions, listening to

interviewees, paying close attention to the experiences they are sharing and how

they are talking about them, going deeper with the dialog.

3. Opening pathways for transformation

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Both interviewers and interviewees emphasized the transformative potential of

DRM. The awareness and better understanding of one's own past allows many

research participants to incorporate this new knowledge into their everyday lives,

leading to new possibilities:

freedom, when exercised in that way, provokes transformation. The DRM

does not generate transformation in and of itself; it generates possibilities

for exercising the freedom to generate that transformation. If you want to

be free, you have to work for it. What the DRM does is "I know myself

better, now I can be free if I want to". (R1)

From this excerpt, R1 highlights the potential for transformation generated from

the DRM, while he points out that such transformation ultimately depends on the

individual. In this vein, P3 asserts that she was finally able to understand why she

always found herself in undesired relationships thanks to participating in

communicative interviews that allowed her to begin reconstructing her memory.

Understanding herself better has freed her from engaging over and over again in

the same relationships that she knew were wrong for her, therefore opening up a

pathway to change her relationships in her present and future:

I remember thinking, "Why am I either with the wrong kind of person or in

the wrong kind of relationship?" And suddenly I felt free, I understood

things that I had done wrong… and it gave me the opportunity to change

them, to have a different life. If my current relationship is working, it is

because I have gained consciousness on the issues of past relationships,

and I am working on them. (P3)

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The DRM has helped P3 become more aware of the underlying issues in past

relationships and prevent them from reoccurring in current and future

relationships. As she affirms, that is the reason why her current relationship is

working, unlike the ones from her past. Along this line, P2 stressed how the

awareness and freedom gained thanks to the DRM was the key to transforming

her life:

the change was huge, I could really feel free for the first time in my life.

The more things I could remember about the people I had hooked up with

and about the things they did to me, the more disgusted I felt about them.

I suddenly knew what it was like to really have fun, to feel beautiful things

I didn't even know existed. I also felt more attractive. I started making true

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friends and feeling that all my dreams were coming true. That's really when

my life started to have meaning, before I was dead inside. (P2)

By choosing to be free, P2 explains that working to reconstruct past memories in

this new direction positively impacted many aspects of her life. Moreover,

participants also shared how choosing to change oneself also had an impact on

the lives of people around them:

I have changed some attitudes because I linked them to moments and

people who were never good in the first place. I see that I did not always

appreciate the people who were good to me, and now I try to. How can

you be happy with someone and make that person happy if you keep

valuing people who mistreated you? So questioning that and wanting to

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reverse it brings you healthier and more passionate relationships and more

happiness to those around you and to yourself. (P3)

As P3 asserts, being able to appreciate good people and reject those who were

not made her feel better and was a key step toward building happier relationships

for herself and those around her.

Discussion

The current study aims to analyze a new element that has emerged in the CM

through research on youths' sexual-affective relationships oriented toward

achieving social impact. The results of this meta-research highlight researchers'

identification of the DRM among participants in the methodology, particularly in

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communicative interviews. Along this line, the results point out how identifying

and analyzing the DRM of participants has contributed modifications to the CM.

Furthermore, it reveals the possibilities that engaging in the DRM has for

participants, allowing them to transform their memory, desires, and sexual-

affective relationships.

Researchers in the study revealed that, as they analyzed the reconstruction of

memory among youth, their interviews became the object of study. Based on

scientific evidence from fields such as neuroscience and socioneuroscience on

brain plasticity (Puigvert Mallart et al., 2019; Ramón y Cajal, 1989), they identified

that the interactions in which they engaged with participants were, like any other

social interaction, contributing to reconstructing their memory. Depending on the

interactions the person is having, such reconstruction might occur in different

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directions. If the CDD influences the interactions, the reconstruction will reinforce

the memory of violent episodes as exciting and will therefore socialize her toward

linking attraction to violence (Puigvert Mallart et al., 2019; Racionero-Plaza et al.,

2018). However, the CM aims to co-construct the reality desired by research

participants and citizens (Gómez et al., 2019; Gómez González, 2021). Hence,

because it is dialogic, the DRM offers participants the possibility of reconstructing

their memory in their desired direction during communicative interviews. This is

evidenced by the participants interviewed.

This aligns with other research framed within the CM aimed at generating social

impact (Gómez et al., 2019). These studies show that overcoming the hierarchical

gap between researchers and participants provides an understanding of the

reality that allows for transformation to potentially take place. However, in the

study of the reconstruction of memory, the identification of the DRM in

communicative interviews has led to modifications that advance the dialogic basis

of the CM toward the reconstruction of memory. This means that, instead of only

analyzing participants' memory during the interview, researchers who consider

the DRM move to analyze the reconstruction during the interview. Hence,

elements of the CM, such as not imposing the researchers' views or intentions

on the participants' narratives, not judging participants, or engaging in

conversations rather than asking prespecified questions, are directed, bearing in

mind that the participant's memory is being reconstructed.

Along this line, the dialogic process on which the DRM is based entails that the

researcher listens and responds to what the participant is sharing by providing

scientific evidence and examples and scaffolding the memory reconstruction. In

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line with previous research on the reconstruction of memory, such scaffolds include providing retrieval cues that ease individuals into accessing available memory (Frankland et al., 2019; Nelson & Fivush, 2004; Tulving & Pearlstone, 1966; Wagoner & Gillespie, 2014). Therefore, for this dialog to be constructed, knowledge from both the scientific community and the participants' lifeworlds is needed.

Research has shown that dialogic interventions aimed at social impact offers participants who have suffered violence the opportunity to reconstruct their memories of past violent episodes. This enables them to access and recall more critical memories and negative feelings toward violent relationships, allowing them to freely choose the relationships they desire (Racionero-Plaza, Ugalde, Merodio, et al., 2020; Racionero-Plaza et al., 2018). Moving one step forward,

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this study contributes new evidence on how this reconstruction occurs in

communicative interviews by analyzing youths' sexual-affective relationships

through more than just intervention programs. In this way, the DRM opens the

arena for the researcher and the participant to construct a shared understanding

of the reality being studied, promoting the possibility for the participant to achieve

the desired reality (Soler & Flecha, 2010; Soler-Gallart, 2017). One participant

asserted that having more knowledge about undesired issues from the past

allowed her to transform herself and prevent them from happening in her present

and future relationships. Some participants affirmed the findings from the study

conducted by Torras-Gómez and colleagues (2020). For example, P3 explains

that she can now feel freedom, happiness, and pleasure in an egalitarian

relationship through these dialogs. Importantly, the impact of the DRM goes

beyond the participants themselves, improving the lives of those around them.

This research presents some limitations and opens up new avenues for research.

First, the results obtained in the current study have not been explored

longitudinally. Thus, the current manuscript does not provide evidence of whether

the social impact of this kind of research is maintained over time. Future research

should explore the sustainability of the social impact of DRM. Second, the current

study presents a methodological contribution within CM, the DRM, and how it

modifies and enriches communicative interviews. Further research should

analyze how the DRM contributes to other data collection methods, such as daily

life stories or focus groups. In addition, future research should explore how the

DRM occurs in the methodology in different contexts, including with participants

with different sexual orientations and from different cultural backgrounds. Last,

this study leaves an open door for exploring how researchers' DRM occurs during

interviews with research participants.

DRM, emerging from research oriented toward achieving social impact, opens up

a dialogic space for participants to critically explore who they want to be and what

relationships they want. Therefore, qualitative research methodologies oriented

at obtaining social impact in this field are left with the essential role of enabling

research participants to reconstruct their memories, understand their pasts and

presents, and decide whether they want to be free or not. In essence, the DRM

enables participants to decide whether they want to be the architects of their own

brains (paraphrasing Santiago Ramón y Cajal (1989)) and, if they do, to pursue

the freedom to construct the narratives, themselves, and the relationships they

have always dreamed of.

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Table 1. *Participants*

Code	Profile	Gender	Expertise / Level of studies
R1	Researcher	Male	Researcher of national R+D and EU FP projects
R2	Researcher	Male	Researcher of national R+D and EU FP projects
R3	Researcher	Female	Researcher of national R+D and EU FP projects
P1	Participant	Female	MA Degree
P2	Participant	Female	MA Degree
P3	Participant	Female	MA Degree

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Title: Dialogic Reconstruction of Memory: a methodological contribution aimed at social impact on youth's sexual-affective relationships

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8. Results & Discussion

The current PhD thesis contributes new knowledge to the study of pleasure in sexual-affective relationships from a sociological perspective. Its ultimate aim is to provide youth with further scientific evidence that allows them to unmask the myths of coerced relationships, so they can freely choose the relationships they want to have, in line with the preventive socialization of gender violence.

The achievement of this general aim has been undertaken on the basis of four specific objectives. The results obtained will be presented and discussed in reference to each of these throughout the following subsections

8.1. The Coercive Dominant Discourse and the Preventive Socialization of Gender-Based Violence – New Contributions

As exposed in the article *Sociological Theory from Dialogic Democracy* (Chapter 2), we find ourselves at a time in which citizens are increasingly demanding solutions for the challenges they face in their daily lives. Indeed, citizens want to actively participate in the establishment of the social priorities to be addressed from governments and institutions, and demand scientist to provide scientific evidence that contributes to the overcoming of such issues of social concern. Such shift can be framed under the dialogic turn of societies mentioned in the first presented article.

Along this line, one of the issued of social concern is that of Gender Equality, as shown in the definition Sustainable Development Goals (*The 17 Goals*, n.d.). The current thesis contributes to this goal from the line of research on preventive socialization of gender-based violence (Gómez, 2015), which seeks the promotion of relationships free of violence and based on freedom. In order to address this goal, the mentioned line of research has identified the existence of a Coercive Dominant Discourse that through the socialization process links attraction to violence (Puigvert et al., 2019). The literature review conducted in the articles presented in chapters 3, 4, 5 and 7 allowed deepening the knowledge available on such context.

First when analyzing available literature on sexual pleasure and sexual-affective relationships, mixed results were identified. Some research on casual relationships pointed at participants expressing positive feelings towards such relationships, associated with the release of tension, the loss of control and having stories of sexual nature to share with friends (Pedersen et al., 2017). However, other research points at women engaging in such relationships feeling disgust and regret (Al-Shawaf et al., 2018). The reasons given to support these mixed results are diverse and often related to social double-standards (e.g. Armstrong et al., 2010). However, none of them can fully account for this mismatch. Along these lines, the current study introduces the CDD as a variable to explain sexual pleasure (or lack thereof) in sexual-affective relationships. Such contribution is in line with research on autobiographical memories (Racionero-Plaza et al., 2018) that points out at the malleable character of such memory, which can lead individuals to remember as positive experiences that were not. In a similar line, contributions from socioneuroscience have shown that the CDD indeed leads to the establishment of links between attraction and violence at a neural level, affecting the capacity of volition of the individual before the stimuli that trigger such connections (Puigvert Mallart et al., 2019).

Second, available scientific literature regarding sexual-affective relationships in pandemic had focused until now on stable relationships (Van Bavel et al., 2020). The current thesis has also contributed new knowledge on sporadic relationships in times of pandemic, as well as the analysis of the obtained results under the lens of the CDD. Results obtained show, in line of previous research

accounting for the CDD, how memories of past relationships can be tainted because of the influence of such discourse, as well as how dialogic interventions can contribute to challenging the memories created (Racionero-Plaza et al., 2020), opening new avenues for the preventive socialization of gender-based violence

Finally, the paper presented in chapter seven puts in relation for the first time research on the creative potential of dialogue with research on memory and sexual-affective relationships under the lens of CDD. In this line, the literature review conducted shows how the CM uptakes the potential of dialogue for the creation of new understanding, on how establishing such dialogues under the evidence on autobiographical memories allows for the emergence of a new methodological contribution within CM, which is the DRM. Such findings are in line with research on narratives (McAdams, 2011) that show how this can shape our understanding of the world around us, as well with research on available memory, that point out at the existence of mechanism that allow individuals to delve in the stored memories, expanding what one allows to recall at a certain point in time (Tulving & Pearlstone, 1966).

8.2. Sexual-affective relationships – coercion, transformation, freedom

The research presented in chapter three, *Our Right to the Pleasure of Falling in Love*, has allowed the classification of the experiences of the participants into three ideal types in the Weberian sense. First, we identify that some of the participants, despite being exposed to the CDD, never fell into its pressures and have always enjoyed relationships based on freedom. Such participants have always had partners who they find attractive and with whom they share common values and a common project. These participants also point out that they have always had the kind of relationship and partner that they identify as ideal since they were young girls, and have always rejected partners with violent attitudes or behaviors. Thus, participants in group one have egalitarian relationships based on freedom, in which feelings of attraction and care remain united.

The second group identified is comprised by those participants who acknowledge having fallen into the pressures of the CDD and who keep chained to its coercive narratives. In this vein, they narrate experiences in which they were coerced to engage in relationships and they acknowledge feelings of attraction towards boys with violent attitudes and behaviors. Nevertheless, they also acknowledge that for current relationships they prefer egalitarian partners, but they find these less exciting than the dominant ones. Young women in this group had an initial idea of their ideal type of relationship similar to young women in group one, however those in group two now feel that such ideal of relationship does not exist in real life. They now seek relationships that are convenient for them, but their feelings of attraction remain linked to coerced relationships, despite manifesting that they do not enjoy these.

The third of the groups is integrated by participants who manifest having fallen into the pressures of the CDD, but who now acknowledge the lack of freedom in such relationships and have actively broken with the coercions of the CDD. Indeed, participants in this group show how transformation is possible. These young women also shared as girls a similar perception to girls in the other two groups regarding their understanding of an ideal relationship. However, these women explain how at some point they fell into the pressures of the CDD, engaging with partners that portrayed violent attitudes and behaviors and giving up their dreamed relationship. Nevertheless, such women have now broken with the CDD by acknowledging the lack of freedom in relationships influenced by it, and now seek egalitarian partners for whom they feel attraction and love. Thus, their current relationships are based on freedom, and they have liberated themselves from the impositions of the CDD.

Along these lines, the research presented in chapter 4, *Changes in Tongue Kissing in Hook-Ups after COVID-19*, supports the research presented in the current regarding the type of relationship in

relation to the CDD. In this vein, we can find some young women who never engaged in such *morreos*, which would coincide with the first of the groups previously presented. From the young women who did engage in these coerced relationships, we can see different degrees of rejection of such experiences, which would be in line with the characteristics of groups two and three. In addition, the fact that some young women completely reassess and reject past coerced relationships is also in line with the transformative potential of relationships.

The findings regarding egalitarian relationships as reported by young women in groups 1 and 3 are in line with research reporting egalitarian relationships to be of a higher quality (Paik, 2010). At the same time, the findings reported for participants in group two are in line with research on the CDD that explains the separation between what is desirable and what is convenient, ultimately linking attraction to the former and never to the latter (Gómez, 2015; Puigvert Mallart et al., 2019).

8.3. Sexual-affective relationships and the social construction of pleasure

The research presented in chapter three, *Our Right to the Pleasure of Falling in Love,* delves in the pleasure that participants identify in their relationships. Following the classification of the three groups identified in the former section, this contribution unveils how the experience of pleasure is related to the partner and relationship of choice, which in turn is mediated by the CDD as we have seen.

In this vein, participants in the first group, who have not fallen into the pressures of the CDD, identify sexual pleasure in their current relationships. According to them the pleasure they feel is completely related to their egalitarian partner of choice and to the relationship they have built. Moreover, they acknowledge how they have never identified pleasure in relation to coerced relationships or partners with violent attitudes and behaviors. For these participants their best relationship is also their most exciting one.

Conversely young women in the second group acknowledge a lack of pleasure in the relationships in which they engage influenced by the CDD. However, participants in this group recognize that they often are not sincere about their real feelings, and they tend to share with their friends accounts of pleasure and excitement that they actually do not. The fact that they engage in such accounts, contributes to their configuration of pleasure associated to relationships in which it does not exists, which then prevents them from feeling pleasure in the egalitarian relationships they would like to have. For these participants their best relationship and their most exciting one are not the same.

Finally, young women in the third group identify the lack of pleasure in their past coerced relationships, as participants in group two did. However, on their case, they do not share anymore that they enjoyed such relationships when they actually did not. Indeed, sharing the lack of pleasure that they actually felt helps them reject the CDD. As well, after their transformation, these participants report feeling pleasure in their current egalitarian relationships, and they attribute such pleasure to their partner of choice and the relationship they have built with him, like participants in the first group. For these participants their best relationship is also their most exciting one.

Along these lines, the research presented in chapter 4, *Changes in Tongue Kissing in Hook-Ups after COVID-19,* support the research presented in this section regarding the influence of the CDD on pleasure. Overall, the feelings of rejection that participants identified increased in the post-test as compared to the pre-test. Some of the participants also recognize having memories of excitement, even though they recognize that they regret such experiences

The fact that those participants who are in egalitarian relationships report more pleasure is in line with other research showing that participants in romantic relationships reported higher levels of sexual satisfaction (Armstrong et al., 2012; Barnett & Melugin, 2016).

As well, the engagement of participants in sharing narratives that do not portray what really happened is in line with other research. In this vein, participants in Pedersen et al. (2017) report engaging in similar behavior. In the same vein, participants in the study presented in chapter 7, also report being aware that they were telling themselves and others a narrative that allowed them to endure what really had happened to them. Moreover, these findings provide new insights on the nature of the existing mixed-results regarding the relationship between pleasure and hooking-up. The fact that participants in group two acknowledge that they never enjoyed those coerced relationships is in line with participants in other studies reporting feelings of regret and disgust (Al-Shawaf et al., 2018).

8.4. Transformation – the overcoming of the Coercive Dominant Discourse

Four of the articles included in this thesis contribute evidence of transformative actions towards the overcoming or rejection of the CDD.

The first of these is presented in chapter 4, *Changes in Tongue Kissing in Hook-Ups after COVID-19*. Results in this article contribute a first transformative element from the perspective of reflection. Along this line, this research has shown the reported changes of participants regarding their memories of past tongue-kissing hookups, as well as their alleged perceptions that such reflection may have on their future experiences. Such changes are in line with interventions within the preventive socialization of gender-based violence that have proven successful in creating spaces for reflection that allow questioning the impositions that led to such relationships (Racionero-Plaza et al., 2020, 2018).

The second of the transformations is presented in the article on *The emergence of the language of desire toward nonviolent relationships during the dialogic literary gatherings,* included in chapter 5. In this vein, the article shows how intersubjective interactions within the educational action of the DLG allows the emergence of the language of desire, in combination with the language of ethics, towards nonviolent partners and relationships. Similarly, Puigvert (2016) and Racionero-Plaza (2018) have shown the positive results of the implementation of the Dialogic Feminist Gatherings, also based on dialogic principles, in the allowing young women to increase their awareness of the influence of the CDD in their relationships. As well, the fact the feelings of attraction towards nonviolent models are collectively constructed has also shown positive outcomes in other research, allowing participants to reflect on which are the characteristics they desire in such masculine models (Yuste et al., 2014). Along this line, the article presented in chapter 6, *Challenging Bourdieu's Theory: Dialogic Interaction as a Means to Provide Access to Highbrow Culture for All,* provides new knowledge that supports that DLG, based on the reading of the best literary productions of humanity, is not something that can only be accessed and enjoyed by a reduced elite, but that are beneficial and can be understood by all, in line of other research that has outlined the transformative potential of DLG for all (Soler, 2015).

Finally, the research published in chapter 7, *Dialogic Reconstruction of Memory: a methodological contribution aimed at social impact on youth's sexual-affective relationships* presents a new methodology within CM that emerges from the orientation of research on sexual-affective relationships to social impact. Such contribution, named Dialogic Reconstruction of Memory is possible thanks to a series of methodological adjustments introduced in communicative interviews. Such adjustments allow participants to progressively access more of their available memory, which in turn leads participants to a series of transformative reflections. These help them gain awareness of the pressures of the CDD and gives them the tools to build, if they so desire, relationships they want to have

in which sexual pleasure is also possible. Such findings are in line with studies that support the transformative potential of framing research under the CM (Gómez et al., 2019; Gómez González, 2021). Moreover, they are also in relation with research that shows the potential of narratives in the definition of one's identity and prospect behavior (McAdams, 2011; McLean & Pratt, 2006). Finally, it is also in line with research on autobiographical memory that shows the transformative potential of delving in what is recalled regarding certain experiences, as an opportunity for reflection and personal transformation (Racionero-Plaza et al., 2020, 2018).

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9.   Conclusions

Research on the preventive socialization of gender-based violence focuses on the overcoming of interactions influenced by the CDD. As we have seen along the different chapters, such dominant discourse socializes children and youth in the association of attraction and violence. At the same time, such approach based on prevention also focuses on the interactions that foster the overcoming of the CDD, by linking attraction towards nonviolent attitudes and behaviors and making relationships based on freedom a desirable possibility.

Moving forward in making such free realties a possibility for all requires understanding that engaging in relationships under the pressures of the CDD has not only consequences on the short term, chaining individuals to relationships in which there is not freedom, but also on the long term, affecting their capacity to have the relationships they have always desired and preventing them from enjoying these. Along these lines, the current thesis has contributed new evidence that links the capacity of young women to feel sexual pleasure in their relationships, to the partners and relationships they choose to have, which in turn are mediated by the influence of the CDD. The results here presented clarify not only how sexual pleasure is never identified by the participants in coerced relations, but also how these often lie to build a reality that allows them to endure engaging in relationships that they do not enjoy. Moreover, it shows how it also affects their capacity to actually enjoy the relationships they would like to have, since they have constructed a link between attraction and violence that prevents them from seeing as desirable partners who do not have violent attitudes and behaviors.

Furthermore, the research here provided has also shown how feelings of desire and attraction can be transformed through reflection and interaction. Indeed, research conducted during COVID-19 has provided new evidence showing how the current pandemic situation offers a new possibility for reflection regarding past relationships, and it points out at the potential effects such reflection can have in the prospective behavior of participants, as identified by them. Another of the transformative actions presented in this thesis are the DLG. The research conducted has shown how in the context of such educational action the language of desired towards nonviolent partners and relationships emerges in combination with the language of ethics. Indeed, such educational action offers participants the opportunity to reflect on the characteristics of their desired partner, uniting in the same person love and passion, care and attraction, setting the basis that will allow enjoying pleasurable and quality relationships.

Finally, the current thesis has presented a methodological contribution within the CM that emerges when research on sexual-affective relationships is oriented at social impact. Indeed, it shows that participating in the research allows participants to construct new understanding of their past experiences, progressively accessing more of their available memory. Participants in such research stress the transformative impact that participating in such research has had for their personal lives, beyond the contributions of the study, allowing them to better understand their personal narratives, to free them of the pressures of the CDD and to reconstruct them in the direction that they desire.

The first of the articles presented on this thesis pointed at the dialogic turn of societies and to the need to increasingly direct scientific research towards the overcoming of the issues of social concern, counting on the participation of citizens in the co-creation of such knowledge. From the very beginning, the motivation behind this thesis has been to contribute scientific knowledge that challenges and overcomes the pressures of the CDD, which push so many youths to coerced relationships. With the contributions here presented we have made another step towards the achievement of gender equality, so relationships based on freedom are a possibility for all.

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