



Generalitat de Catalunya
Government
of Catalonia

Hegemonic masculinity and violence.

Social and organisational consequences



The key lies in the structural and time-bound nature of **hegemonic masculinity**...

... while **toxic masculinity** may seem like something specific, circumstantial to a particular relationship.

We prefer to talk about hegemonic masculinity BUT we are talking about the same thing:

a **dominant cultural model** in which “men” are defined by attributes such as **physical superiority, heterosexuality, repression of emotions**, etc.

Hegemonic masculinity **produces toxic behaviours.**

Toxic vs hegemonic masculinity

What's hegemonic masculinity

Defined in **opposition** to (Connell, 1995):

- femininity (being a woman),
- immaturity (being a child),
- and sexual deviance from the heterosexual norm (being homosexual).

Keeping this distance between the desirable and the undesirable (and what the others perceive) **produces violence** (against women, LGBT-based violence, etc).

Male domination is maintained by the idea that they have the right to regulate and judge what's right or wrong which reinforces the gender hierarchy.



From hegemonic masculinity to violence

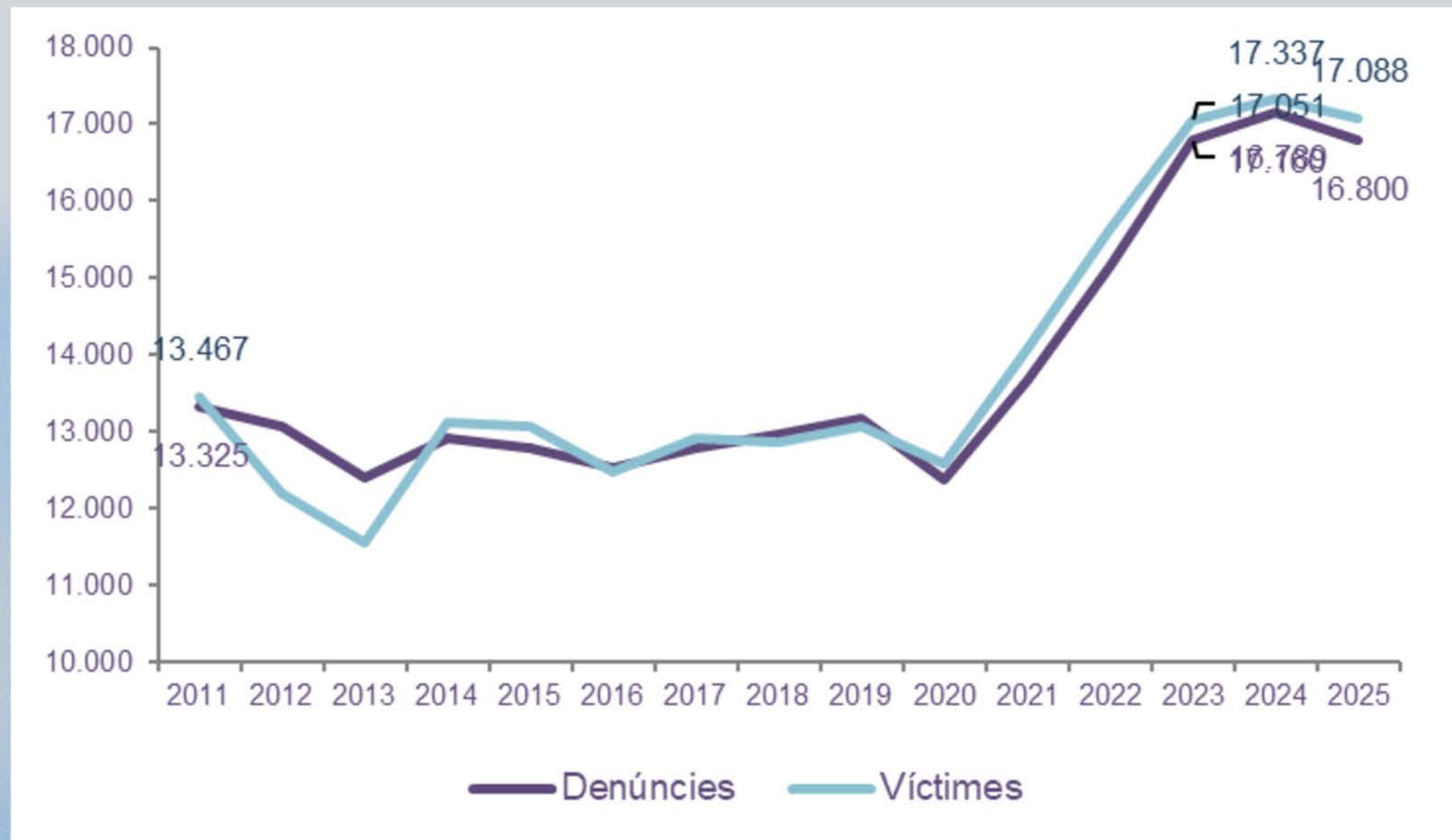
Direct violence

- Physical and sexual assault
- Harassment on the street or in the workplace
- Threats or intimidation

Symbolic violence

- Normalization of sexist behavior
- Jokes, comments, or language that delegitimize women
- Invisibility or minimization of violence

Violence in the context of intimate relationships



Data on reports received, Mossos d'Esquadra 2011 - 2025

Sexual violence - Key takeaways

Impact

Sexual violence is a widespread and persistent.

67.3% of women report having experienced some form of SV since the age of 15.

Reporting

Sexual violence has an exceptionally low reporting rate.

Only 6% of sexual violence cases are reported.

Digital sexual violence

Already affects 24.8% of victimized women since the age of 15.

Virtual space isn't neutral; it's a highly masculinized space.

Catalonia's Sexual Violence Survey, 2024



But also...

**Occupation of spaces, perception
of security, coping strategies...**

Occupation of spaces



Appropriation of public spaces

Places and time

More present more time

Invisibility of women

Avoidance strategies means less participation

Everyday power dynamics

Convey power and domination

Reproduction of inequalities and violence



Gender bias in security perception

The **cognitive dimension**: rational/cold calculation.

When we ask about the assessment of the level of security in the municipality, **we do not see significant differences** (6.7 for men and 6.6 for women).

The **emotional dimension**: we begin to see differences.

In the categories “quite concerned” and “very concerned,” women report values **3 percentage points higher** than men.

Men report being not at all concerned 5 percentage points more than women.

The **behavioral dimension**: coping strategies **44.5% of women have stopped doing things** for fear of being the victim of a crime; 21.8% in the case of men.

Catalonia Public Security Survey, 2022

What does this mean?

- **TO ACHIEVE THE SAME LEVEL OF PERCEIVED SAFETY, WOMEN HAVE TO MAKE MANY MORE SACRIFICES.**

NOT WALKING ALONE AT NIGHT, AVOIDING CERTAIN PLACES, BEING ACCOMPANIED, ETC.

- **TO BE FIRST-CLASS CITIZENS, WE NEED TO FEEL SAFE WITHOUT HAVING TO MAKE THESE CONCESSIONS AND SACRIFICES.**

- **AS A PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, WE HAVE A DUTY TO ACT AND ENSURE THAT THIS IS THE CASE.**

Behavior reproduction at the organizational level

01

Reproduction of behaviors at the organizational level

02

Normalization of hegemonic masculinity attitudes and roles

03

Masculinized professional cultures

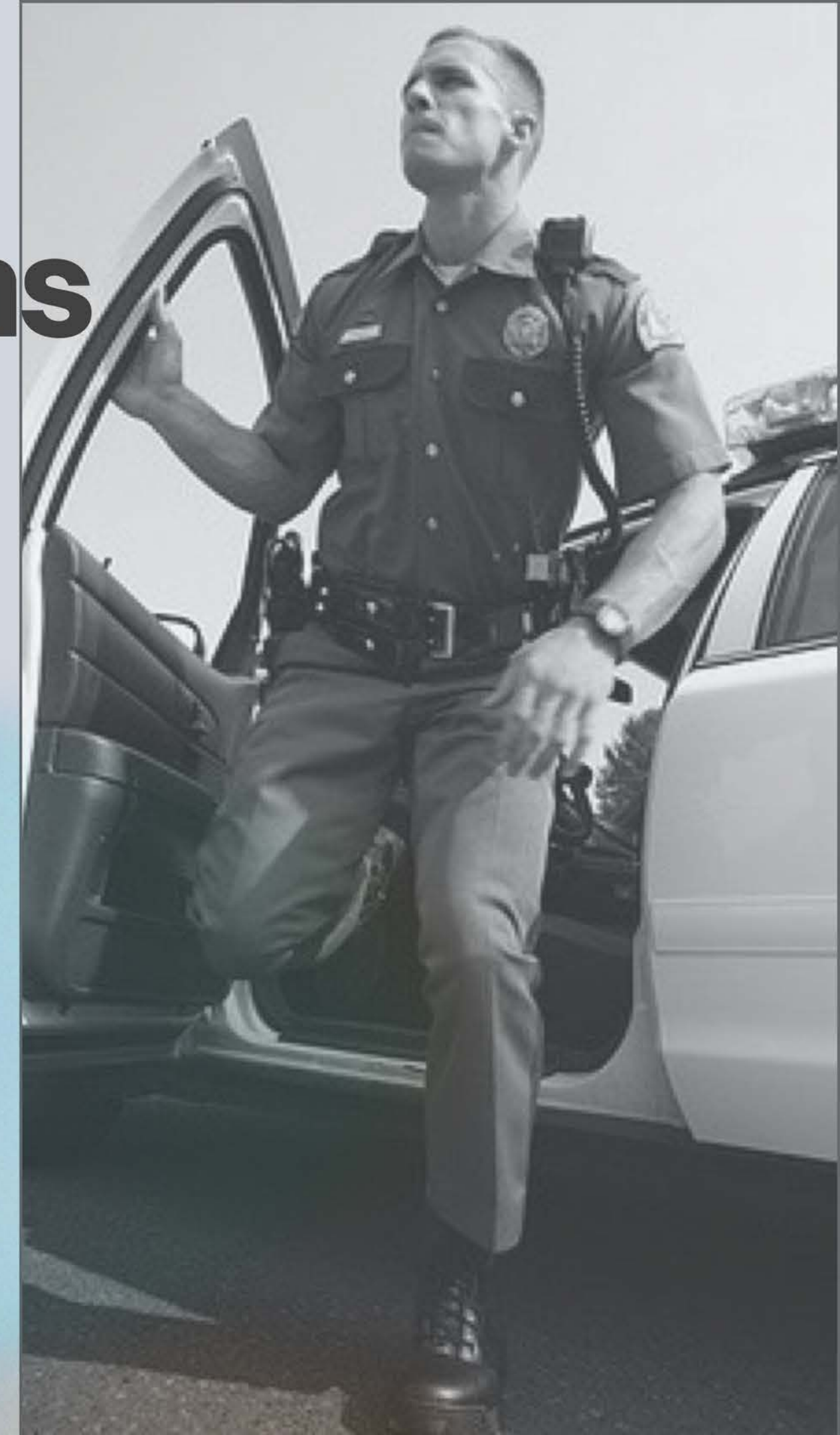


Masculinity in security and emergency organisations

Security and emergency services are defined by a **model of hegemonic masculinity** that has virtually occupied all symbolic, relational, and organizational space.

This model has made it **difficult for other ways** of being, relating, and practicing the profession to **take root**.

Values such as physical strength, emotional control, absolute availability, heroism, authority, or self-sufficiency have been **placed at the center**.



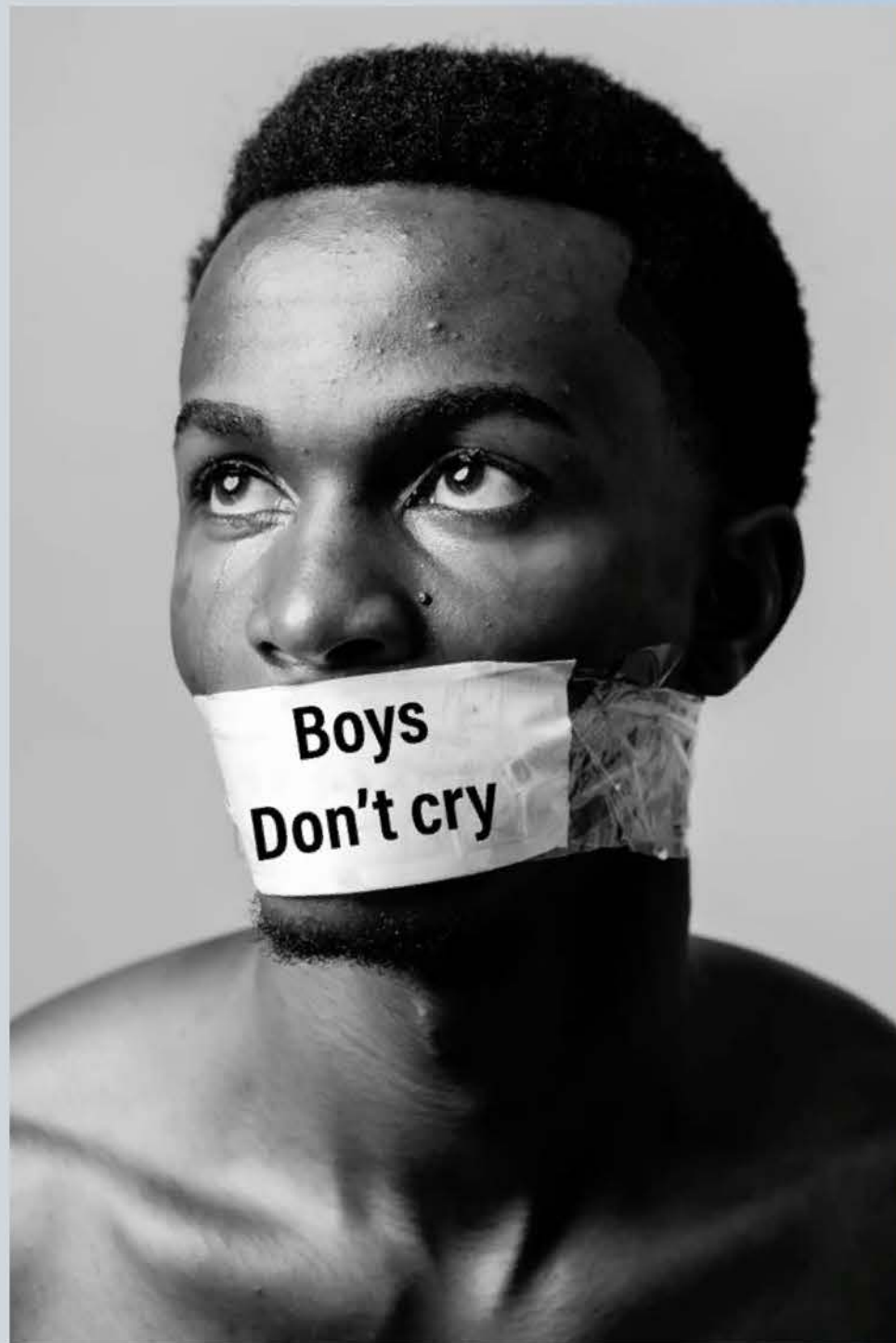
Women excluded, but not exclusively

(Hegemonic) masculinity functions as a **mechanism of exclusion** from the outside but also generates internal **dynamics of homogenization**.

No room for difference, doubt or vulnerability as they are perceived not masculine enough.

Men with a non-conforming masculinity have often **not found spaces** where they can freely show themselves.

Working on masculinity from within



Doesn't mean blaming individual men for existing inequalities, but...

rather **critically questioning a cultural model that has been presented as neutral** (yet consequences are far from neutral).

It requires allowing **other ways of being a man to flourish**: other forms of leadership, teamwork, and care.

Without this work, **feminist transformation remains incomplete.**

- Workshops with senior officers.
- Men focus groups.
- The man box.
- Men talking to men.

**Men need to rethink their own
masculinity**

Heroes (YES, but)

HEROISM -> deeply rooted in these organizations

We can't abandon it, they ARE heroes: They arrive when everybody is leaving.

BUT we must make it accessible to other people: this isn't just about physical strength but about mental fortitude, resilience in the face of adversity, taking care of the others...

We need to open up the concept of heroism.



Creating a feminization model

The guide summarizes the lessons learned during these years of implementing the feminization strategy or the “**feminist transformation**” of our security and emergency services.



It is designed to facilitate the deployment of similar strategies in other territories from a practical, accessible perspective aimed at different audiences with the capacity to act in the process.

The guide will be presented in June 2026 and will be disseminated internationally.

The perks of feminization

When operational bodies better reflect the diversity of the society they serve...

01

their ability to understand diverse realities and adapt their response accordingly increases.

02

they provide a public service that better meets the real needs of society

03

it promotes versatility, stimulates innovation, and generates greater collective and organizational intelligence.

In an environment where **the ability to anticipate, adapt, and respond is critical**, the feminization of teams is not only a commitment to equality but also to **operational excellence**.



Thank you
very much

for your attention