

Reframing masculinity: How do male-identifying youth facilitators challenge or promote particular models of masculinity?

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ABSTRACT

Initiatives to empower women and girls have been an integral part of work to increase gender justice, reduce incidents of violence against women and girls (VAWG), and make way for a gender-equitable world (Garcia, 2021). However, it is now more widely understood that involving men and boys in these discussions is vital to achieving these goals (Flood, 2019; Greig, 2018). Gibbs et al. (2015) highlights the limited research on the role of facilitators in addressing masculinity. In this paper I draw on my PhD research, which uses photo-elicitation and semi-structured interviews to understand 20 male youth facilitators' understandings of masculinity and their potential to engage young people in reframing negative hegemonic masculinity and challenge gender binaries. I also explore their capacity and desire to act as role models for young people, and allies for feminist movements. I ask participants to reflect on their own positionality, discussing their visual representation of masculinity (through an image/photograph), possible motivations to reframe different models of masculinity and any challenges that may arise from this. My work is focused on the North of England to identify if locality impacts facilitators' experiences, recognising Northern culture, in particular, workingclass identities, economic decline, and community relations. Throughout the paper I am guided by a social constructivist view of masculinity, looking at how feminist and queer theory interact and acknowledging that facilitators may challenge gender binaries and endorse positive identities that are not exclusively masculine.

Keywords: feminist, hegemonic, photo-elicitation, queer, theory