

## Towards an ecological model of contextualizing perpetrators work

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Hyperbolically, there seem to be specific perspectives on domestic violence along lines of scientific disciplines: while psychologists are able to individualize and psychologize violent behavior, social scientists and political activists emphasize the political issue of societies, in which men are still socialized to act aggressively<sup>1</sup>. At least in central European countries, we see that of the many men exercising violence over the female partner or ex-partner only a few are voluntarily participating in perpetrator programs while the majority of men who are middle or high risk cases and an everyday threat to women and children, are not reached.

In Spain, significant legislative changes and their institutional implementation for the intervention and prevention of domestic violence have been made over the past 10 years. It has emerged from a country where domestic violence was an unspoken fact to a country with a very strict and effective system of prevention of and protection from domestic violence, for example with adapted data protection laws, state-funded perpetrator programs and a prison sentence for repeat offenders.

When it comes to the question of how effective perpetrator programs can be, “the system matters” was the major insight of the Gondolf study<sup>2</sup> (2001) as well as a fundamental answer to how to improve them. Since then, many perpetrator programs have been embedded in an institutional framework named the Coordinated Community Response (CCR) Model which was originally developed in the city of Duluth, Minnesota/USA. The Model coordinates the efforts of police, local courts and battered women’s shelters to make victims safer and hold batterers accountable.

Inspired by the Spanish example, the panel will discuss questions of what an ecological model of sustainable intervention and prevention of domestic violence can look like and how perpetrator work must be organized to be effective. This model reflects on the CCR model but broadens its perspective to the national (or even European) level, regarding the institutionalized interactions of women’s support services, criminal justice, probation and health systems as well as police orders, media discourses and awareness raising at the educational level.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, in Germany the issue of everyday sexism and sexual harassment has recently been discussed in a broader media discourse for the first time, which provoked innumerable aggressive reactions from men who felt offended.

<sup>2</sup> Gondolf, Edward W. (2001): *Batterer Intervention Systems. Issues, Outcomes, and Recommendations*. Thousand Oaks, CA, USA.