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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Do People Comment on Social Networks About Sexual Consent in TV Series? Rethinking Consent (or not) in Real Situations: Contributions from Debates in Social Media

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Abstract
Scientific evidence has established that sexual consent can be expressed with more than only speech acts. Moreover, scientific analysis of other elements beyond speech acts reveals that coercion can be clearly indicated. Theories on communicative acts contribute to this debate, introducing three situations where these elements can occur: ones of physical, institutional, or interactive power. However, the public comments on these situations on social networks (Instagram, Twitter and Reddit) has not been analysed before. Within the framework of the Spanish competitive project Consent (PID2019-110466RB-I00), we conducted a novel study on the comments and reactions made around the communicative acts that prevent or facilitate the identification of sexual consent in specific episodes of television series aimed at young and adolescent audiences internationally. Social Media Analytics (SMA) with communicative content analysis with predefined codes was carried out on 1465 tweets about sexual consent on Twitter relating to 10 television series and movies watched internationally. The results show that when viewing these scenes, young people: (1) open debates (albeit few, as yet) around communicative acts beyond the verbal and nonverbal ones; (2) take a position against whoever coerces and (3) perceive that they will be able to avoid future situations of a lack of sexual consent by remembering the image discussed and the communicative acts that were in it. In doing so, the results can promote healthy discussions of sexual consent among youth through prevention programs and critical media literacy activities.

Keywords Sexual consent · communicative acts · interactive power · social media content analysis

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Introduction

Social networks today represent a virtual organisation in which millions of people around the world participate. The impact of this digital environment cannot be ignored considering the influence of the events promoted by social networks and how they have a decisive effect on social structures and organisations (Venkatesan et al., 2021; Huo & Dong, 2020).

Recent studies have used audiovisual productions such as films or music to predict the potential effects of this consumption in many different countries around the world (Lotz et al., 2022). Sexism and the presence of sexual violence in productions aimed at young people, with a special presence in the lyrics of current music, are recurrent themes of analysis (Couto et al., 2022; Brewington et al., 2022) as well as the analysis of the language of desire in films (Duque et al., 2022). Although these research shows a worrying incidence of violence linked to sexual content and degrading behaviour towards women more specifically in music lyrics, the present analysis goes a step further by looking directly at the interactions posted on social networks linked to these audio-visual productions (films and television series aimed at young audiences) on specific issues on a highly topical issue: presence, lack of sexual consent and underlying attitudes towards the characters that display them.

In this sense, and considering the precedents, it is important to examine the relationship between the debates held on social networks based on sexual consent and the perception and modelling of it in society, especially among the young population. While social networks may play a role in shaping this perception, there are certainly numerous other influences at play (Degiuli & Nowotny, 2020; Beare & Boonzaier, 2020). Nonetheless, this research aims to examine the influence of media and social networks in shaping the understanding of consent beyond speech acts among youth, as the young population is identified as the most vulnerable to this influence due to their extensive use of social networks in addition to their period of age-related changes (Baldwin-White & Gower, 2021). Given the current scenario, there exists an opportunity to broaden the conceptualisation of sexual consent by introducing elements that extend beyond the verbal and nonverbal domains. For instance, interactive power is becoming increasingly more visible in the portrayal of affective-sexual relationships in various scenes of films and TV series. Therefore, this increasingly introduced dimension has given rise to the first debates surrounding the role of interactive power in relation to sexual consent, as will be explained in the subsequent analysis.

From "No Means No" To Affirmative Consent

The international debate on sexual consent in today's context is under constant discussion in the framework of changing campaigns and laws that seek to protect victims. In the realm of sexual consent, while various countries have established their own specific laws and regulations, there has been a notable shift in the overall approach. The prevailing trend has moved away from a "no means no" perspective towards embracing a more encompassing stance. However, many realities are still questioned and silenced, and many victims are revictimized (Vidu & Tomás, 2019; Willis & Jozkowski, 2018).

The concept of sexual consent under the "no means no" framework was based on the idea that consent was only valid when a "no" was explicitly communicated through verbal means. However, this approach has been questioned in the scientific literature for not fully accounting for the complexities of consent, as demonstrated by numerous reported cases of nonconsensual situations where a verbal "no" may not be feasible (Torenz, 2021; Javidi et al., 2020; O'Sullivan 2005).

In contrast to the "no means no" approach, the affirmative consent model emphasises that only a clear and enthusiastic "yes" from all parties involved constitutes valid consent. However, some scholars argue that this approach is also limited in its ability to protect against coercion, as it still places too much emphasis on verbal communication (Jozkowski et al., 2014). Even if a verbal "yes" is explicit, it does not always guarantee consent (Jeffrey, 2022; Dougherty, 2022). This can be observed in different situations, for instance, when an individual provides consent under coercive circumstances, such as when they are subjected to threats of force or the use of a weapon (Anyadike-Danes et al., 2023). In such cases, the affirmative consent model's emphasis on verbal affirmation does not necessarily ensure a consensual act (Edwards et al., 2022).

There are other situations where a verbal "yes" does not necessarily equate to consensual sexual activity. One such example is when girls give in to sexual activity after repeated refusals due to the pressure and persistence of their partner. They may feel uncomfortable and decide to give in out of fear of worsening the situation by continuing to resist (Beres et al., 2014).

In response to the challenges posed by scenarios where verbal consent is not enough to prevent coercion, most definitions of affirmative consent have been expanded to include nonverbal communication (Mattson et al., 2022; Halley, 2016). This involves incorporating elements such as recognising that silence does not indicate either consent or lack of consent and that nonverbal signals should be considered. Although the definition of affirmative consent may differ in detail across different legal agreements, most stipulate that it requires an "affirmative, conscious, and voluntary agreement to engage in sexual activity."[1]

According to the evidence, the most preferred way to express consent is through nonverbal cues or, to a lesser degree, through implicit verbal cues (Beres, 2010; Willis et al., 2019). It is also known that one of the reasons women find it more difficult to express refusal exclusively by verbal means is because talking about consent is widely thought to "wreck the mood" (Muehlenhard et al., 2016). According to Marcantonio and Jozkowski's study on "cues used by college students to decline different sexual behaviours'' (2020) with a sample of 650 youths from 18 to 24, implicit verbal cues to refuse sex include expressions such as "I'm in a hurry", "We don't have condoms'', or "I'm on my period". On the other hand, nonverbal cues usually comprise actions such as increasing physical distance, absence of eye contact or simply standing still. Some of the participants expressed their nonverbal reactions to the unwanted sexual encounter as follows: "I showed signs of discomfort", "by leaving my body parts awkward and uncomfortable" or "I did not kiss them or touch them back in any sexual way to let them know I was not interested" (Marcantonio & Jozkowski, 2020).

[1] California's 2014 Affirmative Consent Law.

This suggests that the concept of consent has been progressing, moving beyond verbal acts to encompass nonverbal ones as well. Nonetheless, the inclusion of nonverbal acts still needs more research that addresses essential factors that determine whether consent is freely given or coerced. Coercion of consent can occur in both verbal and nonverbal communication. Therefore, it is necessary to consider additional factors in communication to accurately distinguish between instances of consent that arise from dialogic interactions and those influenced by coercive acts, a distinction that can be ascertained through communicative acts (Flecha, 2022).

Sexual Consent From Communicative Acts

This approach sheds light on whether the interactions involved in the communication of consent (verbal or nonverbal) stem from "dialogic communicative acts" (indicating freedom) or "power communicative acts" (indicating coercion) (Soler & Flecha, 2010). This includes not only the verbal dimension and the nonverbal dimension of language but also the social context in which the interactions occur, the intention of the speakers, and the responsibility of communication (Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2020; Soler and Pulido, 2009). This understanding of sexual consent from communicative acts is defined as the absence of any kind of interaction of power (coercion), whether physical, institutional or interactive. It is a useful framework for understanding the concept and practice of consent.

Subsequently, we outline the following scenarios in which a lack of consent is indicated through communicative acts of physical, institutional, and interactive power.

Physical power interactions that invalidate sexual consent occur when an individual uses physical force, violence, or threats to obtain sexual activity, thereby violating the autonomy of the other person. These have been extensively analysed in scientific literature and are commonly identifiable, not posing significant challenges for the general population. *Institutional power* refers to situations where one person holds a position of superiority or advantage over another, which is usually associated with academic or workplace contexts. These situations are characterised by an underlying hierarchy, and sexual consent can be influenced by the fear of the consequences at multiple levels that may follow a refusal. The literature already emphasises the significance of considering power interactions when assessing allegations of nonconsensual sexual activity, particularly in cases where the accuser holds a subordinate institutional position (Adams et al., 2019; Stone et al., 2019). This notion aligns with the "doctrine of constructive force" employed by the US military, which acknowledges the impact of authority structures on a complainant's decision to acquiesce to sexual advances out of fear of potential repercussions for refusal (Dowds, 2020; Murphy, 1995).

These situations described above are a result of patterns of coercion stemming from physical or institutional power. However, the contribution of the theory of communicative acts also includes *interactive power.* Some power interactions are determined not solely by physical force or institutional inequalities but also by the social context and intentions of the individuals involved (Flecha et al., 2020).

Interactive power can manifest in various ways, such as when a group of friends at a party encourages one member to hook up with an individual they consider an

easy target, pressuring them by claiming cowardice if they refuse. Another example is when a person's intention is to engage in sexual intercourse, and they initiate steps in the sexual escalation process, taking advantage of those interactions that favour their intention. This may include the complicity of others when inviting someone for drinks, offering to escort them home, suggesting a more private setting, preparing a date for someone else who is not aware, creating a coerced context that makes it difficult to reject the invitation, or insisting despite perceiving resistance due to sexual scripts or others expecting acceptance. In doing so, the person, due to the interactive power, is effectively able to override the other person's will, leading to situations where consent may not be freely given.

From the same perspective, other articles also emphasise how consent must be informed, meaning that all parties involved must be fully informed, and the moment one of the agreements is broken, for instance, when one person removes the condom and it was not agreed upon, this also constitutes a violation of consent (Czechowski et al., 2019).

The responsibility that must be acquired by those involved in the sexual relationship is another element of communicative act theory and is often observed when women report that their nonverbal cues to express nonconsent are perceived as "unclear" and used often against them during a trial; meanwhile, the responsibility of the aggressor to ensure the person had the free context to decide is not questioned. In daily life, it is still accepted that by agreeing to a drink or going to the person's house, they are giving consent to sex (Burkett & Hamilton, 2012; Beres, 2014; Jozkowski et al., 2017; Jozkowski, 2015).

The theory of communicative acts emphasises the importance of considering the social context of the interaction, the intentions of the individuals involved, and the aspect of responsibility. According to this theory, sexual consent should be provided in an environment characterised by freedom and devoid of any physical, institutional, or interactive power dynamics that may exert coercion. (Flecha García & López de Aguileta, 2021).

In this upswing of popularity about consent, the scientific literature on this topic has analysed the content of some television series that present the issue of consent. However, most of the audio- visual materials that have addressed rape or consent topics have done so from a sex education perspective. Only a minority of these materials have focused on the difficulties of giving and understanding consent and have suggested the benefits of depicting scenes of nonconsensual sex where physical violence or resistance are absent as well as all forms of nonconsent expressed verbally, describing more subtle forms of coercion (Ryalls, 2020). Nevertheless, the underlying debates and their impact on the audience are unknown.

Therefore, within the framework of the project Consent (PID2019-110466RB-I00), an analysis has been made of the interactions, including reactions such as comments, likes, and shares, generated on social networks based on this type of audio-visual content. This analysis of media content has focused on the ways in which consent is expressed and understood from the theory of communicative acts, thus including not only the verbal and nonverbal dimension but also the whole underlying communicative framework in which sexual relationships are given.

Methods

Within the framework of CONSENT project PID2019-110466RB-I00, a Social Media Analytics (SMA) with communicative content analysis (Pulido et al., 2020) was carried out on a dataset collected from Twitter. In addition, a supplementary analysis was performed on data collected from Instagram and Reddit, albeit in a less extensive and systematic manner. The purpose of this secondary analysis was to provide additional support for the main analysis and validate the results across different social media platforms.

The analysis focuses on the discourse and the interactions obtained in the form of likes, shares, and comments of the messages. The analysis of the social media data focused on the interactions, and the unit of the analysis is the complete tweet, which means that not only the text written in the message but also links and images that accompanied the message are part of the unit of analysis, as well as if the message belongs a thread, rendering consideration of the context of the whole conversation necessary. The analysis follows the dialogic codebook explained in detail in the dialogic codebook (see Sect. 2.2). The search and selection of the social media dataset was performed based on the criteria explained in the next section on data collection.

Data Collection

To develop this study, the first step was to select a sample of social media data for analysis. The selection was made according to the following criteria:

Criterion 1. To Select the Series and Movies that could be Suitable for Searching the Corresponding Social Media data

The series and movies were selected according to 3 main points: (a) series or movies connected to young people who generate debates around sexual consent, (b) current series or films (oldest being from 2014), and (c) consumed by young audiences.

The selection of these series was carried out by two main groups: (a) the project's advisory committee[2], which consists of young individuals and youth organisations with recognised experience in the fight against gender-based violence from various geographic areas of Spain; and (b) the 77 young participants between the ages of 18 and 25 who took part in the fieldwork phase of the project, asking them if they were familiar with the TV series and movies or knew any other films or television series addressing these topics. The following are the selected series and films (see Table 1).

[2] The role of the Advisory Committee is to share their expertise, guide the project's development, and validate techniques, ensuring that the voices and realities of all end-users are consistently taken into account throughout the research process and in its conclusions, thereby guaranteeing that the results have a social impact on society.

Table 1 Initial sample of TV series and films

13 Reasons Why
After
Anne with an E
Bridgerton
Elite
La isla de las tentaciones [The temptation island]
Outlander
Sabrina
Sex Education
You

Table 2 Selection of the most popular hashtags on Twitter linked to the film "After"

Hashtag	Trend Points > 50
#After	60,3
#Aftermovie	57,2
#HeroFiennesTiffin	50,8
#Afterwecollidedmovie	50,3
#JosephineLangford	47,4
#Hessa	46,5

Criterion 2. Selection of the most Popular Hashtags Associated with Movies and Television Series for the Pilot Analysis on Twitter

For the pilot analysis, specific audio-visual material was chosen to extract the most widely used hashtags. The film "After" was selected because it garnered significant attention from both the advisory committee and the young individuals interviewed. The most popular hashtags on Twitter linked to the film were identified using the tool *Hashtagify* in order to proceed with the subsequent pilot analysis. Once the most popular hashtags linked to the film were identified (see Table 2), those that exceeded a trend of 45 points were selected, and the corresponding datasets were downloaded, including the last 1000 tweets.

Criterion 3. Pilot test to Evaluate the Suitability of the Selected Hashtags Associated with the Chosen TV Series and Films, Ensuring Alignment with the Study's Objectives

The pilot test was performed to check the suitability of the selected hashtags. It began with the most frequently used hashtag on "#After" on Twitter, and an analysis was conducted on the latest 1000 tweets using this hashtag within the dataset. However, the results of this pilot analysis indicated that this approach was not effective, as no messages related to the study's objective, specifically discussions on sexual consent, were found despite the popular hashtags associated with the movie.

To ensure the presence of discussions on sexual consent related to the selected TV series and movies, the analysis of the most popular hashtags was abandoned. Instead, datasets were downloaded by combining the name of the series or movie with a keyword associated with sexual consent, which had been identified during the systematic

literature review. Both hashtags and keywords were used, as they produced different results.

The downloaded datasets included the name of the TV series or movie combined with a sexual consent keyword. The combinations used are shown in Table 3.

Additional analysis was conducted on Instagram and Reddit to complement the main analysis on Twitter. Posts and comments related to sexual consent over the audio-visual materials selected were also found in these social networks.

This secondary analysis served as a means to support and validate the findings obtained from the primary analysis. While the analysis on Twitter was extensive and systematic, the analysis on Instagram and Reddit was more limited in scope, focusing on gaining insights into the discussions and perspectives related to sexual consent in these specific social media contexts. Ultimately, to ensure a more detailed examination, the Twitter sample was segmented based on the quantity and accuracy of the debates.

The main constraint for replicating the analysis from Twitter on Reddit and Instagram was that they did not allow the same combinations of words, requiring a different data retrieval approach. Thus, the following keywords were introduced as hashtags for Instagram (matching the hashtags used for Twitter as well), resulting in a total of 689,539 posts. On the other hand, for Reddit, communities related to the preliminary results of the analysis conducted on Twitter were searched (see Table 4), and discussions were found regarding the series Outlander and Bridgerton, discussing the absence or presence of free or coercive consent in the scenes.

Criterion 4. Analysis of Tweets Linked to Sexual Consent on the TV Series and Films Selected

After performing these searches on Twitter, the corresponding datasets were downloaded. The datasets included the last 1000 tweets of the corresponding resulting combination.

Searches that did not yield any results were eliminated, thus excluding some of these TV series and movies from the analysis. This was because none of the combinations with the series or film names produced any results. Some of these searches did

Table 3 Hashtag and keyword combination for analysis on Twitter

Combinations with hashtags and the name of the series or film	Combinations with keywords and the name of the series or film
#Consent + Name of the TV series/Film	Consent + Name of the TV series/Film
#NoMeansNo + Name of the TV series/Film	NoMeansNo + Name of the TV series/Film
#SexualConsent + Name of the TV series/Film	SexualConsent + Name of the TV series/Film
#NonVerbalCues + Name of the TV series/Film	NonVerbalCues + Name of the TV series/Film
#Coercion + Name of the TV series/Film	Coercion + Name of the TV series/Film
#CoercedConsent + Name of the TV series/Film	CoercedConsent + Name of the TV series/Film

Table 4 Instagram Hashtags and Reddit Communities for analysis

Instagram hashtags	Reddit Communities
#consent	13 Reasons Why: Netflix Original Series
	Consent but unwanted sex
#Consentissexy	Bridgerton Consent
#ConsentCulture	Bridgerton Sexual Consent
#ConsentMatters	Outlander Consent
#SexualConsent	Unwanted Sexual Consent
#NoMeansNo	Nonverbal Consent cues
#NonVerbalCues	Coerced Sexual Consent
#Coercion	
#CoercionIsNotConsent	
#CoercedConsent	

yield results (where the word combination resulted in at least one result), but after conducting the analysis, none of them were actually related to sexual consent. On the other hand, these searches led to accidental results from other materials that were not initially considered for the analysis and were incorporated after combining keywords and hashtags with the name of the series or film.

Therefore, the following materials were excluded from the analysis for presenting 0 results to the keyword combination introduced or not meeting the criterion of presenting a debate on sexual consent in social networks analysed: After, Sabrina, Elite, *La isla de las tentaciones* [The temptation island], Sex Education, You. These others were included as snowballing results: Pink, I may destroy you, Guilty, 365 Days, and Grand Army. In this way, the final sample of datasets to be analysed, including the additional materials found by snowballing, are those linked to the following 10 TV series and films: 13 Reasons Why, 365 Days, Anne with an E, Audrie and Daisy, Bridgerton, Grand Army, Guilty, I may destroy you, Outlander, and Pink (see Table 5).

It is worth highlighting that the choice of TV series and movies was not predicated on their portrayal of positive or negative examples of sexual consent. Rather, the selection criterion focused on their capacity to stimulate discussions on social media platforms regarding the occurrence or absence of sexual consent in specific scenes and the manner in which it was portrayed.

Criterion 5. The Period in which Messages from Social Media data were Published

We selected tweets from 23/06/2011 to 02/05/2021. In each series or film, a specific period has been taken into account depending on when the sexual consent debate has been most active; therefore, the table specifies the period of each series (see Table 6).

Criterion 6. Definition of Keywords and Hashtags Suitable for the aim of the Study for Extracting the Social Media Dataset

The fourth criterion is to select the keywords and hashtags combined with the names of the series and films selected in combination of keywords and hashtags related to consent. The keywords used for combination with the names of the audio-visual

Table 5 Initial sample of audio-visual materials and final sample

TV series and films suggested by youth	TV Series and Films discarded for not meeting the criteria	Accidental results from analysis (Snowballing)	Final Sample of TV Series and Films for analysis
13 Reasons Why	After	Pink	13 Reasons Why
After	Sabrina	I may destroy you	365 Days
Anne with an E	Elite	Guilty	Anne with an E
Bridgerton	*La isla de las tentaciones [The temptation island]*	365 Days	Audrie and Daisy
Elite	Sex Education	Grand Army	Bridgerton
La isla de las tentaciones [The temptation island]	You		Grand Army
Outlander			Guilty
Sabrina			I may destroy you
Sex Education			Outlander
You			Pink

materials coincide with the keywords employed in the systematic literature search conducted in a previous phase of the project: *#Consent, #NoMeansNo, #SexualConsent, #NonVerbalCues, #Coercion, and #CoercedConsent.* These keywords were combined both as hashtags (with the # symbol) and as keywords (without the "#" symbol) due to their widespread use.

The combination of hashtags and keywords with all the series and films selected generated 3652 tweets.

Criterion 7. Selection of the Final Dataset According to Suitability for Deepening the Analysis

The communicative content analysis required a deep analysis of each message, which prompted the need to establish a criterion for dataset selection. Each series and film was combined with different hashtags and keywords related to consent, resulting in the collection of the corresponding datasets. To ensure comprehensive coverage, datasets encompassing all selected series and films were included in the analysis. After reviewing all the datasets, the dataset with the highest number of tweets related to consent was selected for further analysis, resulting in a final sample of 1465 chosen tweets (from the 3652 obtained). This approach not only allowed for a more in-depth exploration of consent but also ensured that a diverse range of perspectives and discussions surrounding sexual consent in the context of these media productions were captured.

Table 6 Combination of keywords and hashtags selected and the dataset extracted

Series/Film	Period	Keywords	Obtained tweets from combinations
Pink	From 09/16/2016 to 18/04/2021	Combination of keywords of the film/series (Pink) and keywords related to consent (consent, nomeansno, sexualconsent, nonverbalcues, coercion, coercedconsent)	Tweets: 557
I may destroy you	From 24/04/2020 to 26/04/2021	Combination of keywords of the film/series (I may destroy you) and keywords related to consent (consent, nomeansno, sexualconsent, nonverbalcues, coercion, coercedconsent)	Tweets: 1222
13 Reasons Why	From 14/07/2013 to 26/04/2021	Combination of keywords of the film/series (13 Reasons Why) and keywords related to consent (consent, nomeansno, sexualconsent, nonverbalcues, coercion, coercedconsent)	Tweets: 311
Anne with an E	From 21/10/2019 to 15/04/2021	Combination of keywords of the film/series (Anne with an E) and keywords related to consent (consent, nomeansno, sexualconsent, nonverbalcues, coercion, coercedconsent)	Tweets: 28
Guilty	From 21/06/2013 to 26/01/2021	Combination of keywords of the film/series (Guilty) and keywords related to consent (consent, nomeansno, sexualconsent, nonverbalcues, coercion, coercedconsent)	Tweets: 43
Bridgerton	From 29/01/2020 to 21/04/2021	Combination of keywords of the film/series (Bridgerton) and keywords related to consent (consent, nomeansno, sexualconsent, nonverbalcues, coercion, coercedconsent)	Tweets: 742
Outlander	From 23/06/2011 to 23/04/2021	Combination of keywords of the film/series (Outlander) and keywords related to consent (consent, nomeansno, sexualconsent, nonverbalcues, coercion, coercedconsent)	Tweets: 459
365 days	From 15/03/2015 to 01/05/2021	Combination of keywords of the film/series (365 days) and keywords related to consent (consent, nomeansno, sexualconsent, nonverbalcues, coercion, coercedconsent)	Tweets: 85
Grand Army	From 04/09/2015 to 02/05/2021	Combination of keywords of the film/series (Grand Army) and keywords related to consent (consent, nomeansno, sexualconsent, nonverbalcues, coercion, coercedconsent)	Tweets: 43
Audrie and Daisy	From 24/09/2016 to 08/12/2020	Combination of keywords of the film/series (Audrie and Daisy) and keywords related to consent (consent, nomeansno, sexualconsent, nonverbalcues, coercion, coercedconsent)	Tweets: 162

Dialogic Codebook

The researchers who carried out the analysis of the collected social media data are specialists in social media research, consent, and gender studies. The unit of analysis is the complete message (tweet, Instagram post or reddit comment). This means that not only the text written in the message is considered but also two more pieces of information: if the tweet has images, video, or a link, the information provided in this link is also part of the unit of analysis, and interactions received were also included.

There are eight predefined categories and two dimensions. The eight predefined categories emerge from the existing scientific literature that was later applied to the social media dataset. The eight categories are (1) interactive power: unwanted sexual consent, (2) interactive power: nonverbal cues, (3) consent, (4) rejection of nonconsent, (5) consent support, (6) interactive power: sexual scripts, (7) interactive power: coercion, and (8) institutional power: coercion (see Table 7).

The following Fig. (1) show the visual model of the analytical categories chosen based on the findings of the scientific literature.

Regarding the dimensions, the transformative dimension corresponds to interactions that identify coercive elements when they exist and reject them while making visible the elements that allow for free consent and support this position. In contrast, the exclusionary dimension responds to interactions that do not identify coercive elements as negative and find situations framed in this context exciting, while rejecting situations in which elements that allow freely given consent, which are perceived as boring or *mood killing* (see Fig. 2). This research has focused only on the results of the transformative dimension.

Table 7 Dialogic Codebook and categories described

Code	Category	Description
1	Interactive power: Unwanted sexual consent	Sexual consent is given due to interactions of power even though it is perceived to be unwanted, not freely given
2	Interactive power: Nonverbal cues	Presence of nonverbal cues indicating consent or lack of consent.
3	Consent	Other: refers to consent but cannot be classified in other categories
4	Rejection of nonconsent	Rejection for lack of consent in a sexual scene
5	Consent Support	The visibilisation of verbal consent in a sexual scene is appreciated.
6	Interactive power: Sexual scripts	How shared beliefs and interpretations of sexual behaviours play a role in shaping social interactions of power
7	Interactive Power: Coercion	Situation of power with respect to the other in a given context (noninstitutional) (e.g., they are in the home of one of them, they are with the group of friends of one of them, age difference…).
8	Institutional Power: Coercion	One of the persons is in an institutional or hierarchical position of power with respect to the other, who may suffer consequences if he or she refuses to consent (e.g., is his or her superior at work, is a teacher of a student…).
0	Nonvalid	Does not discuss sexual consent in any of its forms of freedom or coercion.

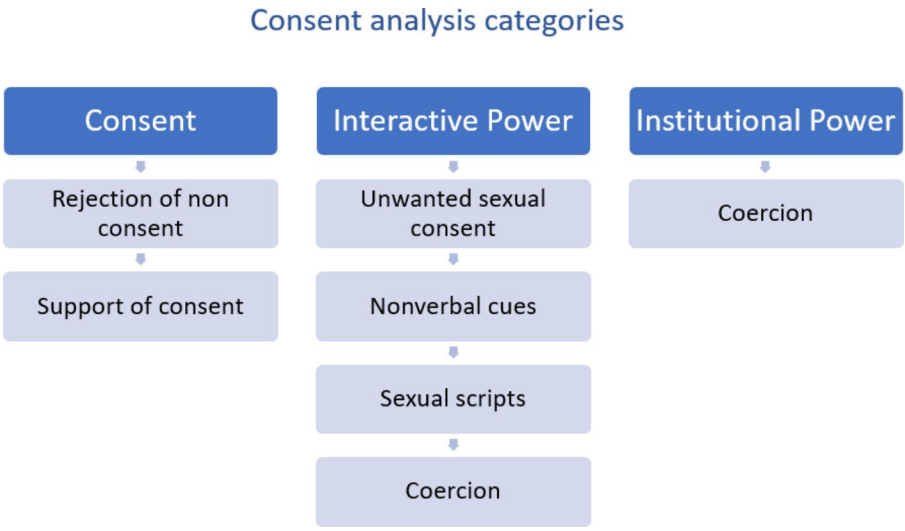

Fig. 1 Consent analytical categories

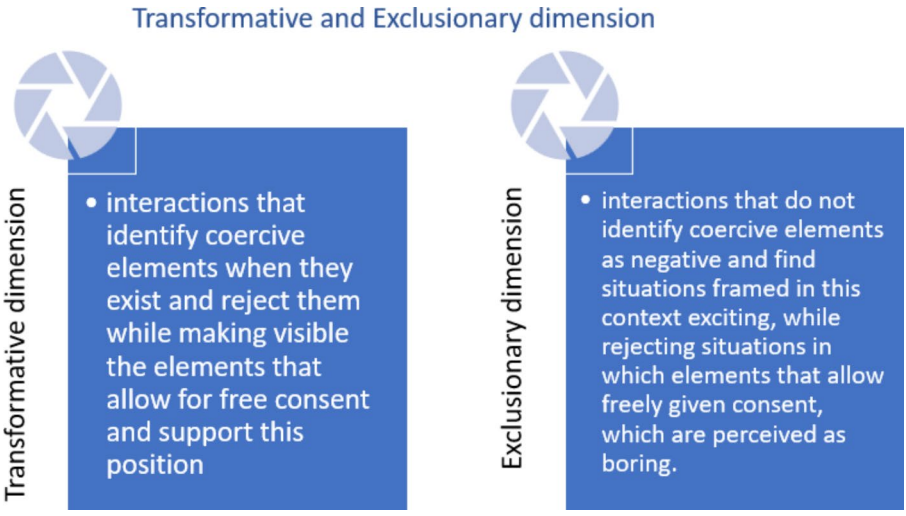

Fig. 2 Transformative and Exclusionary dimension

Ethical Considerations

We have followed the ethical guidelines for social media research recommended by the European Commission (2021). We have perceived the risk of harm to and conserved the anonymity of users. Additionally, we have read the terms, conditions, and legalities of each of the social media channels, and we have used only public information without identifying any user. Likewise, the data were appropriately coded and anonymized to avoid the possibility of traceability. Sets of data have been secured,

saved, and stored. The ethical criteria applied was reviewed and approved by CREA - Community of Research on Excellence for All - Ethics Committee and have received the reference number 20,211,227.

Results

The 1465 extracted messages were classified according to the dialogic codebook (see Table 7). Of these messages, 564 were not valid and were excluded from the analysis, and the 901 messages remaining were classified according to the eight categories defined (see Table 8).

What results indicate is that from the 901 messages on consent related to movies or television series scenes analysed on social networks, the most repeated category which encompasses all those interactions that after being analysed did not deal with sexual consent, is 4 "Rejection of Non-Consent". The next most repeated categories contained in 198 interactions were equally 3 "Consent" and 5 "Consent Support". Considering that category 3 encompasses all interactions that despite referring to sexual consent could not be classified in any of the categories, the most repeated reactions linked to sexual consent of movies and series are those that position themselves against nonconsensual situations followed by those that position themselves in favour of situations in which consent is explicitly present.

Topics related to sexual consent in the context of communicative acts that refer to nonverbal elements of communication, including the situation and interactions in which it takes place, also have a strong presence in the analysis, albeit to a lesser extent. More specifically, the following categories are in descending order: categories 6, 2, 7, and 8 are "Interactive Power: Sexual Scripts", "Interactive Power: Nonverbal cues", "Interactive Power: Coercion" and "Institutional Power: Coercion", respectively. Additionally, another aspect that was considered was the repercussions that each of the analysed tweets had on Twitter, measured in the form of likes, shares, and retweets.

Thus, these findings have been grouped into three main results classified into: (1) opening discussions on sexual consent linked to communicative acts beyond verbal acts, (2) positioning in favour of those series or films that reflect scenes of clear and

Table 8 Message frequency by category

Code	Category	Frequency
1	Interactive power: Unwanted sexual consent	10
2	Interactive power: Nonverbal cues	48
3	Consent	198
4	Rejection of nonconsent	340
5	Consent Support	198
6	Interactive power: Sexual scripts	85
7	Interactive Power: Coercion	21
8	Institutional Power: Coercion	1
	TOTAL	**901**
0	Nonvalid	564
	TOTAL	**1465**

explicit consent as well as rejection of those series that do not address situations in which consent is not given or is given when there is coercion, (3) perception that as a result of what has been commented, past situations of coercion that had not been experienced as such are identified and might be avoided in the future.

Opening Discussions on Sexual Consent Linked to Communicative Acts

First, although still few in number, discussions on communicative acts beyond verbal language are increasingly initiated. Specifically, many of the tweets refer to the absence of a verbal "no" linked to a lack of consent that can be conveyed in other nonverbal ways. Additionally, some of the examples go further and refer to silence as the absence of consent or to the fact that even a verbal "yes" does not always equal consent. On the other hand, a second part of the interactions in this result speaks of the situations of sexual consent that occur under the framework of deception or coercion linked mainly to a withholding of information that invalidates consent and that can only be understood by taking into consideration other aspects such as the context.

Thus, considering the multiplicity of situations in which sexual consent is analysed, the following examples are presented in terms of the theory of communicative acts that encompass all the elements mentioned above, verbal communication, nonverbal communication, withholding information to obtain consent, the situation in which the relationship takes place, the social context, and the responsibility of the individuals involved.

On the one hand, some of the tweets in this result reflect a controversy on Twitter between those who hold that sexual consent is understood only verbally and those who hold that situations which limit verbal consent cause many consensual situations in which consent is expressed in other, nonverbal ways not to be considered valid as consent. In this case, the two tweets refer to the film *Guilty* in which there is a rape, and the accused defends himself in the trial by referring to the fact that he was guided by her body language. The authors of the tweets allude to the common absence of verbal consent portrayed in most of the films and argued that if only verbal elements were considered, all of those scenes could be argued to be rapes. In their comments, words such as "everyone" (referring to all men and all women) are used to describe how they would "be guilty of rape". In addition, they refer to Hollywood films by saying that the sexual relations they depict never show the participants stopping short to ask: "Do you consent?"

Going into greater depth, a great number of interactions in this result refer to the scene in which the rape of the character Hannah, from the TV series *13 Reasons Why*, takes place. Two of the three tweets here relate to the rape where the victim offers no resistance and surrenders to her aggressor while remaining totally still. In the face of this physical response in which there is no struggle, no physical resistance, and no verbal "no", viewers still identified that consent is absent, which is notably true if attention is given to the rest of the elements referred to in the theory of communicative acts, and this is reflected in the scene and supported by the viewers.

In particular, the tweets refer to the absence of a verbal "no" despite the clear situation of nonconsensual sex and the need to go beyond outdated conceptions such as "no means no" or "only yes means yes". The latter is reflected in a tweet that refers

to a different situation of unwanted consent in the same series in which a verbal and affirmative explicit consent is given and yet, considering other elements portrayed in the scene, such as the presence of insistence by the boy or the context in which the victim feels intimidated, it is easy to see that this consent is given under duress.

In the same vein, some of the tweets about the TV series *Grand Army* refer to the fact that consenting to certain advances does not imply consent to everything that follows. This scene takes place in the backseat of a taxi in which a drunk teenage girl makes out with two boys who end up abusing her. One of the tweets states that making out with someone "doesn't mean" she was giving consent to press ahead. Additionally, another tweet explicitly mentions the contextual dimension in which being in a man's house even with the initial intention of having sex does not imply consent "even if" one of them gets naked with sexual intentions.

Finally, for this first finding, informed consent is mentioned as an essential characteristic for valid consent. That is, all parties involved in the sexual relationship must have all the information; otherwise, the actions cannot be considered consensual. The relevant example is from the TV series *I may destroy you* in which two characters implement a strategy of deception to achieve their sexual goals with a third character (a girl). The tweet reflects how the girl involved agrees to a threesome because she believes that they were all unknown to each other.

It should also be noted that this tweet is the most popular of all those analysed, reaching 747 likes and 250 retweets on Twitter. Even one of the replies to this tweet also has a large number of interactions in the form of likes and retweets (264 and 114, respectively), alluding to the fact that lying to obtain sex is "sexual assault". In response to that idea, a third intervention said that she had not noticed the coercion until reading the tweet.

Positioning in Favour of the Presence of Sexual Consent and Characters That Respect It and Rejection of Series or Characters That Ignore Consent or Coerce Consent While Leaving It Unaddressed

The second of the findings relevant to this analysis reveals how public discussions on consent related to series and films are mainly positioned against those who coerce others. The results in this line go in two directions. On the one hand, in the discourse, there is rejection of the characters who ignore, disregard, or assume consent from an action that is given under coercion. On the other hand, support and visibility is given to characters who obtain consent and ensure that they have it and relate in contexts of equality and respect.

Against Those who Coerce or Withhold Consent

The tweets of the first kind, rejection of nonconsensual situations, refer to series or films depicting a situation where sexual consent is absent, or if given, it is given in terms of coercion. However, the main critique lies in the fact that the series does not treat lack of consent from this perspective but on the contrary, treats the situation as normal and even tries to suggest these are exciting scenes. All the tweets refer to films *365 days* and a specific episode of the TV series *Bridgerton.*

Most of these tweets speak of the sexual relations reflected in these scenes as "idolizing abusive relationships" and "not a hot movie" and refer to the dangerous trait of making "rape, coercion and grooming look sexy". One of the tweets even expresses rejection of these scenes by saying how consent "turns me on", while another claims that portraying these scenes as sexy serves as an excuse for some men to ignore consent.

The last of the selected tweets referring to the TV series *Bridgerton* expresses dismay about a series that was apparently "concerned" with how informed consent works and yet left a rape scene "glossed over" and unaddressed. This last tweet is also particularly relevant from the point of view of reach, with 159 likes and 35 retweets.

In the same line, rejection of the absence of consent is one of the most popular themes for interactions on social networks analysed in this article. This tweet goes beyond the rejection of characters who do not take consent into account, and identifies the importance of the responsibility, another of the aspects in the theory of communicative acts that goes beyond verbal language, of each participant to know and affirm both whether consent is given and also how everybody knows whether they have consent or not. This is also one of the most popular tweets analysed in terms of likes, 97, and retweets, 48.

In Support of Characters who seek Relationships in which there is Consent

In the second part of this first result, most of the extracted tweets positively value scenes of explicit sexual consent that are usually reflected by one of the characters asking for it directly or indirectly, such as "are you sure this is okay?" or "May I?" In this case, the interactions analysed are mainly focused on the TV series *13 Reasons Why*, *Outlander* and *Bridgerton*.

Here, some tweets refer to these kinds of scenes as teaching about sexual consent, which characters portray as sexy. In particular, this theme refers to the case of *Outlander*, where the characters describe what they are about to do "walking the viewer" through how consent is agreed upon. The tweet perceives this feature as a "healthy dynamic".

In this result, most of the tweets go beyond the positive assessment of the situation and refer to the "sexy" nature of relationships in which it is obvious that there is consent, a trait that is acquired at the same time by the characters who make sure they have this consent. Notably, all interactions in relation to support for consent refer only to the verbal dimension.

Some tweets make use of the hashtag *#ConsentisSexy* and say that some lines from the main male character in *Outlander* could be used as "tips" on enthusiastic consent and add how sexy it is. This last tweet also has 157 likes and 3 retweets.

Other tweets refer to specific quotes that *13 Reasons Why* and *Bridgerton* have used to prove consent in the relationships they portray, such as "I burn for you". The viewers, as reflected in their tweets, find this kind of explicit sexual consent to be romantic and "really hot". Additionally, another tweet in the same vein adds to the assessment of these characters and insists on how they "love a man who asks for consent".

Perception that Past Situations of Coercion that Had Not Been Experienced as Such Are Identified and Might Be Avoided in the Future

Finally, the viewing of scenes not linked to visible signs of violence but to other types of coercion helps viewers relate past situations they have experienced and now identify as nonconsensual. In this sense, the underlying insights help to perceive that they will be able to avoid future situations of nonconsent by remembering the discussed image and the communicative acts that were in it. Most of the tweets associated with this result refer to the television miniseries *I May Destroy You* and the documentary based on a real sexual abuse report, *Audrie and Daisy*.

Linked to the change in the perception of previous situations after viewing the scenes of coercion and manipulation depicted in *I may destroy you*, the tweet identifies and relates these scenes to their own past experiences that they now recognise were not consented to. Specifically, the tweet recognises that most sporadic relationships she has had with men involved a type of coercion or manipulation. Thus, the reflections underlying the viewing of the series help to identify someone's own past experiences as coercive and leads to a desire for different relationships, expressed as the understanding that they deserve much better.

Along the same lines, the following example goes even further when the author of the tweet identifies that they found themselves in a situation that at the time they had already identified as nonconsensual but to which they did not know how to react because they were drunk and felt that because they had agreed to part of the advances, they could not go back. Moreover, the tweet also expresses that it was not until watching the documentary that she did not realise her own situation.

Finally, the last two tweets in this dimension allude to more subtle forms of coercion and the specific act of nonconsensual condom removal (NCCR) (Czechowski et al., 2019) as acts of rape which, although not typically conceived of as such, the series helps to identify. For instance, it highlights the obstacle that rape is always conceived of as a physically forced sexual act when there are many other forms of rape that do not involve the use of physical force. In this sense, the tweet also highlights how the series helps identify these other, less obviously abusive situations. It also makes explicit a reminder suggested by the events of the series: not to leave friends alone in a context like a bar.

Discussion

From the analysis of our results, it can be deduced that an increasing number of interactions around issues related to sexual consent include elements of communicative acts that derive from the evolution of conceptions of sexual consent and the greater visibility of this aspect in the scenes of various TV series and films.

It is notable that most of the analysed messages were linked to making situations of sexual consent visible, followed by the rejection of situations in which consent is ignored or obtained in a coerced manner. Therefore, a majority position is identified that supports the victims and rejects the aggressors, and according to the literature

in this field, it is this bystander attitude that contributes significantly to overcoming gender-based violence (Coker et al., 2011).

However, the outcome associated with the greatest impact is the last one, where viewing scenes of nonconsensual sex that are atypical in that they lack physical struggle but contain more subtle coercion techniques helps people to identify past situations that they had not previously associated with a lack of consent. After viewing these scenes, the tweets suggest that people who expressed this idea recognise that identifying a coercive situation would also have helped them to act in a different way. This leads to the inference that perhaps, in future situations, they will be able to identify or avoid coercion and decide more freely whether or not to have a sexual relationship with that person.

Tweets move towards making sexual consent more visible by recognising the expression of consent beyond verbal means as a necessary and desirable event in sexual relationships.

The fact that series and movies both portray desirable and attractive relationships in which there is clear sexual consent by all parties involved, whether expressed verbally or physically, may contribute to the incorporation and normalisation of sexual consent in more relationships. It can also help provide clues on how to ask for consent or how to express it verbally or physically, as it is known to be a great source of insecurity when it is conceived as "mood killing".

It is necessary that campaigns aimed at young people adopt the perspectives of consent linked to the theory of communicative acts to enable the identification and visualisation of consent in real situations. This perspective, which broadens the meaning of sexual consent, can also contribute to overcoming the generalised perception that verbalising or talking about consent is uncomfortable or "mood killing". Communication on this point can reinforce that relationships can also be fully consensual without this consent being made explicitly verbal, as this is the preferred form of consent expression according to research.

The promotion of debates related to the main results from social networks, such as the rejection of coercive characters, the visibility of characters who respect consent, and awareness of past nonconsensual situations, suggests a challenge to the prevailing coercive discourse (Racionero-Plaza et al., 2021). These research findings, supported by scientific evidence, indicate that the reproduction of these interactions, both online and in real life, can contribute to breaking down the dominant coercive discourse. By popularising and spreading the desire for egalitarian and coercion-free sexual relationships, these findings have the potential to foster healthy discussions on sexual consent among youth. This can be achieved through prevention programs and critical media literacy activities, which aim to address the influence of the media and promote positive attitudes and behaviours towards consent.

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