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■ **Special Issue**
Managerialism and its influence on the contemporary world: analysis and reflections

■ **Contributions** Antonio Santos Ortega, David Muñoz-Rodríguez, María Inés Landa, Gustavo Blázquez, Cecilia Castro, Fernando Ampudia de Haro, Maria Medina-Vicent, Luis Enrique Alonso, Carlos J. Fernández Rodríguez, Ferran Giménez Azagra

■ **Special Issue**
Culture and Populism in the Global South

■ **Contributions** Stefan Couperus, Pier Domenico Tortola, Judith Jansma, Luis Martín-Estudillo, Dora Vrhoci, Carlos del Valle-Rojas, Juan Antonio Rodríguez del Pino, Juli Antoni Aguado i Hernàndez, Adrián Scribano, Zhang Jingting



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Debats. Journal on Culture, Power and Society

Debats was launched in 1982 as the journal of the Institution of Alfonso The Magnanimous (IAM) and shortly afterwards, of the Valencia Institute of Research and Investigation (IVEL). Its mission, then as now, is to foster and update the great debates on social sciences in the Valencian region, and to facilitate participation by leading experts in the field. The Debats journal is now a bi-annual publication. Its objective is to: (1) bring together current intellectual reflections on culture (both in its broadest sense of cultural practices and in the narrower sense of the Arts); (2) examine the links between culture and power, identity, geographies, and social change. The Journal covers matters that are relevant to Valencian society and its wider setting. That said, the aim is to make Debats a key scholarly publication in both Europe and further afield. Debats' starts from the perspective of the social sciences but it also aims to forge links with contemporary analysis and debates in the humanities, communication studies, and cultural studies fields. It calls for methodological pluralism while fostering innovation through the adoption of new research techniques and ways of communicating scholarly findings to a broader public. In a nutshell, the Journal is an invaluable tool for analysing emerging problems in the cultural field and in contemporary society. In playing this role, it takes a broad, multi-disciplinary view and combines social impact with scientific rigour in scholarly publications and debates at the international level.

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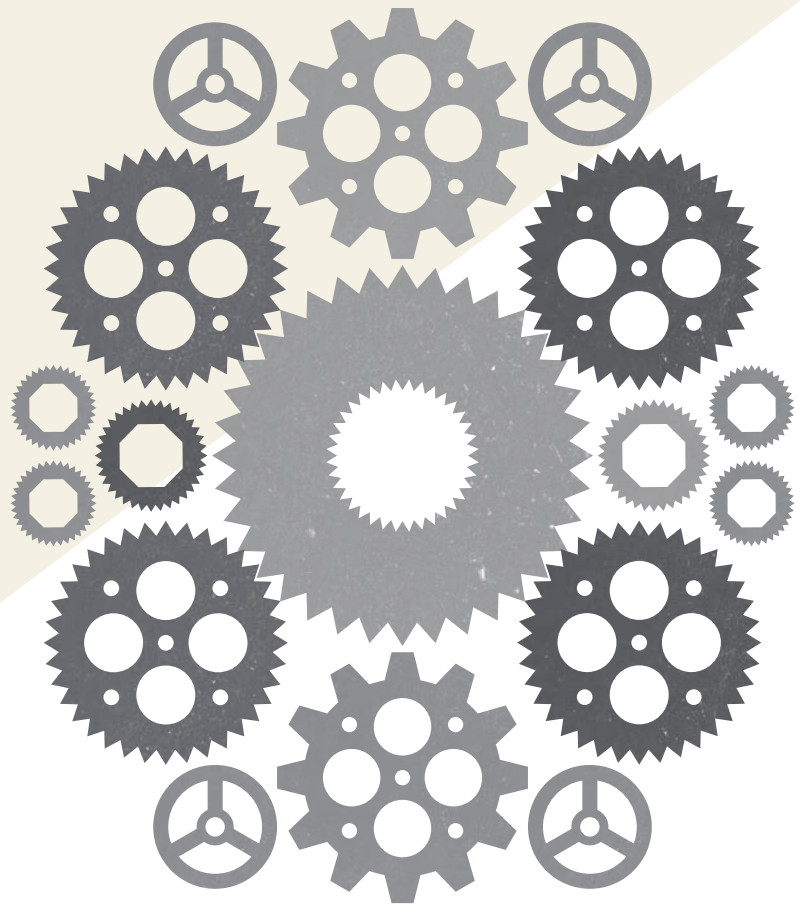
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Special Issue

Managerialism and its influence
on the contemporary world: analysis
and reflections



Presentation of the monograph. Managerialism and its influence on the contemporary world: analysis and reflections

Coordinated by

Carlos Jesús Fernández Rodríguez

UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE MADRID (UAM)

The world needs steady men like me

To give and take the orders

GENTLE GIANT

The success of managerialist ideas is one of the most salient features of organisational and employment spheres today. These ideas are enshrined in narratives that place management issues at the heart of contemporary concerns. This is not only so in the field of business management but also in other fields such as employment skills, teaching, and even the private realm. Managerialism has spread its mantra of the ‘need for better management’ to absolutely everything, demanding continuous reforms. The end result is that the doctrine has slowly but surely crept into every corner of citizens’ lives. Managerialism not only seeks to boost effectiveness at work but also involves pursuing a mercantilist approach inspired by ‘cost-benefit’ analysis, applying it to an ever-growing list of human activities. This trend is particularly strong in economic, labour, and organisational management fields. In fact, professional life today is proof of the proliferation of evaluation and management mechanisms (QA controls, service assessments, digital surveys, and the like). All these mechanisms supposedly measure the ability to deliver good service and to reach given aims (whether or not these be of a purely business nature). The techniques are built upon new ideas that clearly spring from the business world and that hold unchallenged sway, spawning yet more tools for boosting productivity and performance. This trend reflects a new Neo-Liberal Biopolitics linked to the success of Post-Fordism as a new Regime of Accumulation (Alonso, 2007). Here, one should note that this meaning of management is gaining ever more ground in “today’s discourses” (Alonso and Fernández Rodríguez, 2013a), and is being reproduced in many contexts and institutions. This is fostering a new social imaginary

in which entrepreneurs and other business-oriented souls are coming to represent a new, idealised contemporary subject who struts upon the Neo-Liberal stage upon which the market becomes the only space for organising society (Lazzarato, 2013; Moruno, 2015). While the most archetypal manifestations of these managerial ideas are to be found in the business books that stuff airport bookshops and shopping centres (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2002; Fernández Rodríguez, 2007a; Alonso and Fernández Rodríguez, 2013a, 2013b and 2018), it is clear from the foregoing (and as we shall see, from the following pages) that this discourse has seeped into every sphere (ranging from books on lifestyle to those on the quest for scientific knowledge) and holds great sway in the building of contemporary societies.

The monograph gathers a set of scholarly works taking diverse forms and approaches to yield new analytical perspectives on ‘managerialism’, which has become an odd but proto-typical manifestation of today’s Neo-Liberal Capitalism. By managerialism, we understand the ideology and discourse of those wielding power in companies (whether they call themselves businessmen, executives, directors, managers or middle managers) and whose moral values and practical recommendations are not only taken as guides on how to run firms but also on how to run society (and thus the individuals who make it up). In a nutshell, we speak of the so-called ‘management discourse’ concept (Alonso and Fernández Rodríguez, 2006, 2013a and 2013b; Collins, 2000; Fernández Rodríguez, 2007a; Fernández Rodríguez and Medina-Vicent, 2017; Gantman, 2005; Klikauer, 2015). The discourse tries to foist the same vision and behaviour on all social and economic players in the context of the market economy, which becomes the social sphere’s ‘Ground Zero’. Indeed, the management discourse has undoubtedly become hegemonic in today’s economy, reflecting what some authors such as Boltanski and Chiapello (2002) have defined as “the new spirit of Capitalism”, in which management values are now the system’s ideological kernel. Managerialism usually passes itself off as neutral, technical know-how. Yet it is no coincidence that the root of this discourse lies in the management techniques preached major companies and institutions (business schools, consultants, business gurus: Locke and Spender, 2011; Fernández Rodríguez, 2013). Nevertheless, beneath this thin veneer of objectivity lies an ideological, deeply-biased view whose purpose is to convince people that they must make their lifestyles dance to the needs of the economic system. Meanwhile, the dogma blinds people to the unfair distribution of incomes and profits, marginalising or overlooking other forms of social organisation that could curb the chaotic get-rich-quick mindset that has overtaken most 21st Century markets (Alonso and Fernández Rodríguez, 2013b). Furthermore, the impact of these ideas on social and institutional spheres is remarkable for they not only undermine our Welfare States (Du Gay, 2012) and the classic concept of “working citizenry” (Alonso, 2007) but also play a key role in justifying growing social inequality in this Neo-Liberal Age (Parker, 2002).

Given the pervasiveness of such discourses in constituting the new Neo-Liberal subjectivity (Laval and Dardot, 2013), we felt it was time to give *Debats* readers a monographic edition that reflected critically on the whole managerialist phenomenon. Following the journal’s present organisation in sections, we gathered a set of papers of great interest,

insight and originality, and by both home and international experts. They write from various perspectives, helping the reader discover the impact corporate facets have had on contemporary life. The first section of the monograph, titled Notes contains five papers covering diverse themes. The first of these — by professors David Muñoz-Rodríguez and Antonio Santos Ortega — describes how the discourse on fostering entrepreneurship has become the keystone of EU employment policies in the form of Strategy 2020. Here, one should note that both authors have done an excellent job in laying bare the spreading of the new entrepreneurship ideology — especially among young university students (Santos Ortega, 2014; Muñoz-Rodríguez and Santos Ortega, 2017). ‘Activation’ and ‘entrepreneurship’ are two central pillars in the managerial imaginary (Alonso and Fernández Rodríguez, 2013a) and have been widely used in European policies inspired in the *flexicurity* paradigm (Keune and Serrano Pascual, 2014). The authors use a comparative approach to explore the policies flogging an entrepreneurial spirit in EU Member States, stressing the huge influence the concept of ‘entrepreneurial subject’ has on EU institutions despite its glaring shortcomings in grappling with growing job insecurity. Here, one should note that the concept is one transcending traditional employment policies to constitute a lifestyle. The second paper also focuses on the issue of entrepreneurship but this time it covers highly specific labour practices. María Inés Landa, Gustavo Blázquez, and Cecilia Castro, researchers at the *Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas* (CONICET) [National Council for Scientific and Technical Research], study the adoption of an entrepreneurial lifestyle in leisure service sectors (specifically, in the fitness and children’s entertainment fields). The authors, who are familiar with such analysis (especially Landa, who has published fascinating articles on the role of the body in Post-Fordian Capitalism: Landa, 2014; Landa and Marengo, 2011), contribute studies of great ethnological and discursive value. They conclude that an entrepreneurial attitude is a valuable asset in professionalising these sectors. Nevertheless, they note that employment insecurity in these fields means that workers continue looking for other kinds of jobs.

The third paper in this section focuses on universities — another field in which managerialism has run riot (and whose effects are all too familiar to those working in this setting). The Sociologist Fernando Ampudia de Haro, in his fascinating work of Eliasian inspiration, analyses the codes and processes by which human behaviour is socially embedded (Ampudia de Haro, 2007 and 2010). His paper identifies managerialism’s main spheres of influence in universities, stressing scientific publications. Ampudia de Haro does so by critically analysing the teaching materials used in the courses universities offer their staff. These texts-codes are an ideal source for analysing the new subjectivity demands made on teachers and researchers. The consequences of this model are explored by the author, who warns of the threats they pose to informed scientific debate. The fourth paper in this section is by the researcher Maria Medina-Vicent. She focuses on a specific sub-genre of management literature that is mainly aimed at women and gives them advice on how to manage better and to climb the professional ladder. At the same time, books in this sub-genre build a highly idiosyncratic discourse on what it means to be a woman in a society assigning gender roles and giving no scope for squaring work with family commitments. Medina-Vicent, following on from

several of her earlier studies (Medina-Vicent, 2018), analyses a corpus of management books and shows how in the end, the values and behaviours preached to women reproduce all the old gender stereotypes — something that puts women managers at a disadvantage *vis-à-vis* their male colleagues and thus merely widens the gender gap. The *Notes* section ends with a research paper on management literature. It is by two professors at Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (UAM), Luis Enrique Alonso and Carlos Jesús Fernández Rodríguez. Together, they have written a lot about this subject (Alonso and Fernández Rodríguez, 2006, 2013a and 2013b; Fernández Rodríguez, 2007a and 2011). In their paper, the authors explore a sub-genre of managerial literature that has hitherto received little attention, namely managerial fiction. This embraces novels and fables in which the plot is linked to the work of managers. The audience of these gripping *oeuvres* comprises — as one might expect — corporate directors and middle managers. The stories are largely inspired by the works of the controversial writer Ayn Rand, who is the top author for many American Neo-Liberal politicians and corporate types who share her manipulative view of a world and of characters solely moved by the quest for business success.

The monograph section following Notes is titled *Viewpoints* and features four contributions from guest writers. The first of these is Prof. Ernesto Gantman of Universidad de Buenos Aires, author of major studies on managerialism (Gantman, 2005). He has recently specialised in bibliometric analysis of scholarly output in the Business Administration field (Gantman, 2011; Gantman and Fernández Rodríguez, 2016). His paper reviews what he terms ‘meritocracy fiction’ given that he sees no empirical evidence for today’s society being a meritocracy. He considers that the ‘meritocracy myth’ merely serves to justify today’s social order. The second contribution in this section is by the British professor Martin Parker, one of the leading voices in the Critical Management Studies academic movement (Hassard and Parker, 1993; Parker, 2002 and 2018; on Critical Management Studies, we recommend reading Grey and Willmott, 2005, and Fernández Rodríguez, 2007b and 2017). Parker focuses on the major changes the university world has undergone over the last few decades. His paper is highly critical of the emergence of a Higher Education market in which managers end up controlling universities. These arguments have been broadened in his latest work, *Shut Down the Business School* (Parker, 2018). The third paper in this section is by Prof. David Collins, one of the leading experts on management literature (Collins, 2000 and 2007). In the light of recent political events (specifically, Donald Trump’s electoral victory), Collins shows the links between the present social-political state of affairs and the runaway success of business best-sellers such as *In Search of Excellence* (by Tom Peters and Robert H. Waterman, Jr.). He considers that Trump’s victory will most likely achieve the same as the aforementioned bestseller, which sowed social division in 1980s America. The *Viewpoint* section ends with a commentary by the Uruguayan Sociologist Gabriel Abend on English as the *lingua franca* in the new Higher Education markets. Abend, whose works on corporate morality are indispensable in the analysis of business discourses (Abend, 2014), was kind enough to contribute this delightfully ironic, provocative, scathing paper for this monograph. It is inspired by Swift’s classic tale and is an experiment with a new genre — something that goes hand-in-glove with the aims of a cultural journal such as *Debats*.

This collection of contributions is concluded by an interview with the renowned British Sociologist Paul du Gay, one of today's great scholars in the managerialism field (Du Gay, 1996, 2012; Hall and Du Gay, 2003). In the conversation, Du Gay sets out his vision of the managerialist phenomenon and explores issues of great interest such as: the origins of managerialism; the relationship between managerialism and Neo-Liberalism; the logic of management versus that of bureaucracy; the economic inequality spawned by managerial practices; possible alternatives to managerialism. Finally, we include a review of the book *Estudios críticos de la organización* [Critical Studies of The Organisation] by Colombian professor Rafael Carvajal Baeza (2013), which reveals the growing interest in critical approaches to managerialism in Latin America's academic spheres. As editor of this monograph, I trust that this collection of works will foster a better understanding of managerialism and gives readers the tools he or she needs to make a more critical reading of the messages implicit in today's ubiquitous management discourses.

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The cult of the entrepreneur within the EU framework: The advance of an entrepreneurship activation model*

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ABSTRACT

This paper approaches the concept of 'activation' by looking at the notion of what an entrepreneur is. At present, the entrepreneur is Neo-Liberalism's Poster Child and is enshrined in EU-2020 programmes. It should be noted that the diffusion of entrepreneurship is taking place against the background of two great changes in the social and employment fields. The first is the progressive corporatisation of wage labour, with a drive towards individualisation and taking responsibility — mainly in qualified jobs. The second is the blurring of boundaries in salaried work due to the proliferation of new kinds of self-employment. Salaried work, especially for highly-skilled staff, is being re-cast in an entrepreneurial mould. This redefinition is forging new practices and archetypes that will transform the world of work. This paper therefore makes a deeper analysis of labour activation processes in the EU-2020 strategy through the idea of the entrepreneur.

Keywords: entrepreneurship, human capital, job insecurity, neo-liberalism, uncertainty, labour changes.

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INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurs in social and economic fields are now very much in the media limelight. The dissemination of their role is unprecedented and should be seen against the background of The Sub-Prime Crisis. Formerly confined to purely economic and business spheres, the cult of the entrepreneur has spilt over into social and employment policies. Entrepreneurs have been given ‘the glamour treatment’ and the cult permeates both media and political discourse (and even today’s *chic* left-wing circles). Indeed, the subject has begun to seep into private life and individual awareness. The cult of the entrepreneur is advancing by leaps and bounds and is increasingly being taken for granted. Television is stuffed with ‘personalities’ radiating entrepreneurial energy: cooks, musicians, dancers, talented youngsters in the technology and/or other fields. They are eagerly invited on to programmes so they can spread the word and ‘blow their own trumpets’ (the so-called ‘personal branding’ that exemplifies the entrepreneurship myth). There are also entrepreneurial businessmen yet over the last few years, what most stands out is the way a rag-bag of entrepreneurial notions has become part and parcel of subjects’ personal lives. This has all happened in the wake of The Sub-Prime Crisis. The result is today’s loose talk of ‘entrepreneurial spirit’ where it comes as something of a surprise to find the word *spirit* (with all its spiritual connotations) linked with *entrepreneurial*. Other associations, such as *company* and *spirit* are equally odd and — until very recently — were not in the same semantic field. These combinations (some might say oxymorons) are much like an invasive species that opportunistically take over a new habitat, replacing the native species.

While language and symbols are now saturated by the cult of the entrepreneur, it is in the social policy field that the cult is put into practice. Over the last few years, the pragmatic application of entrepreneurship has shaped the framework of job creation policies. One can say that the notion of entrepreneurship necessarily incorporates the idea of activation. This is because the entrepreneur is most commonly seen as someone who starts with a business idea, develops

it, and (if successful) makes a great deal of money. This paper looks at the concept of ‘employment activation’ through this notion of the entrepreneur, of which our Neo-Liberal Age is so fond. The concept has many manifestations, including EU programmes such as Strategy Europe 2020. This programme has already been transposed into the national legislation of many EU Member States.

The idea of entrepreneurship has gained ground over the last two decades (especially over the last ten years). In the process, it has slowly displaced other ways of looking at the world to the point where other visions of reality have either vanished or been forced to fit in with a new, hegemonic breed of entrepreneurship. Nowadays, it is hard not to find the cult of the entrepreneur entrenched in the legislative framework. Twenty years or so ago, the cult of the entrepreneur spread to the EU but now the entrepreneur is the framework. Entrepreneurship is now the central pillar of the Europe 2020 strategy, whose avowed purpose is to foster a ‘smart’, integrating economy.

A detailed analysis of how international institutions convey, support, and implement given kinds of action programmes would require long, complex argumentation that is beyond the scope of this paper. However, our point of departure is the idea that: international institutions in the economic field (Bruno and Didier, 2013; Bourdieu, 1999; Hibou, 2012); business associations and lobbies (Dixon, 1998; Stauber and Rampton, 2004); educational institutions and training bodies (Slaughter and Larry, 1997; Alonso and Fernández, 2013, 2018; Fernández, 2017); professional corporations, consultancy firms and experts (Berrebi-Hoffmann and Grémion, 2009; Vrancken and Macquet, 2012) all pull the strings — whether openly or behind the scenes — to implement or spread entrepreneurial values and practices, which socialised subjects then incorporate through subjectivisation processes (Serrano, 2016). The EU is a public, transnational institution which, influenced by the neo-Liberal context, fosters and makes choices, draws up co-ordinated strategies to disseminate, boost, and give effect to entrepreneurship and a certain notion

of the entrepreneur. This model is a strategic factor for companies currently getting EU funding and the entrepreneurship paradigm has become an icon of deregulation in both symbolic and material terms for such firms. It facilitates the kind of labour market behaviour and training that favours the movement of ideas and capital.

We pay special attention to the period following the onset of the economic crisis in 2007, given the ideological battles over welfare unleashed by the slump. Liberal advocates of social cutbacks opposed alternative visions. Their views have prevailed and have led to the adoption of specific social and economic policy programmes. At the moment, the battle within the EU over such issues seems to have been won by those preaching austerity. In any event, the crisis is giving rise to reformulations. Owen Jones (2014) has called this ‘Neo-Liberalism 2.0’ — that is to say, a kind of refounding of Neo-Liberal Capitalism’ after early doubts at the beginning of the crisis. In 2010, the phoenix rose from the ashes as it were, prompting a new drive to business profits and free markets (especially in financial markets). This use of a crisis to plough full steam ahead on the same course that took the economy onto the rocks was foreshadowed by none other than Milton Friedman (cited in 2014), who argued that only a crisis (whether real or imagined) produces real changes. In normal times, such changes would be politically impossible yet in a crisis, politicians can sell them as ‘inevitable’. Our initial hypothesis is that the entrepreneurship agenda has become ‘inevitable’ in this sense and now holds the EU in its thrall.

One should note that the spread of entrepreneurship must be seen against a background of today’s great social and labour upheavals. First, there is the steady corporativisation of salaried employment, with greater individualisation and accountability, especially in skilled jobs. Second, there is the crumbling of the bounds of salaried jobs stemming from a flood of new job types based on freelancing. Salaried work — especially for highly-skilled employees — is being re-thought and re-cast in an entrepreneurial

mould. This redefinition gives rise to new practices and archetypes that deeply affect the world of work.

In the first section (I), we delve into the meaning of the notion of the entrepreneur and the role he plays in the steady corporativisation of work. The second section (II) frames this idea in the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy, where we analyse the main document covering entrepreneurship, namely: *Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan. Reigniting the Entrepreneurial Spirit in Europe* (EAP). In the third section (III), we look at several programmes and measures in the entrepreneurship field and stemming from EU-2020. The paper ends with a final section setting out our conclusions.

APPROACH TO THE IDEA OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP: THEORETICAL ASPECTS

As to the notions of entrepreneur and of entrepreneurial activation, one needs to go back to the beginning of Industrial Capitalism to trace the roles of businessmen in laying the foundations of classic economic policy and considering how these are reflected in today’s world. Christian Laval (2015) analysed how Cantillon’s *Essai sur la nature du commerce en général* (1755) already put over the businessman as a man everyone should model his life on. In Cantillon’s view, the two biggest hallmarks of this mind set were: (1) heroism in embarking on a risky venture; (2) the element of calculation and rationality. Leaving aside the interest of following the spoor of the liberal businessman to describe the rise of the entrepreneur in today’s Neo-Liberal setting, we should like to briefly mention works from the modern era (Feher, 2007; Foucault, 2007, Bröckling, 2015) — specifically in connection with the concept of *human capital* formulated by several Chicago School writers (especially Gary Becker). It was Becker who coined the term *human capital* back in the 1960s to convey the idea that everyone possesses capital and strives to maximise its returns. He and his disciples argued that we make choices in every aspect of our lives and that these choices are based on cost-benefit

analyses. Our aim, the theory went, is that we seek to enhance aspects of our family and personal lives. All these behaviour patterns form part of the same utility function, whose sole purpose is to maximise one's personal 'income'. Even the most trivial decisions have a price and an individual is governed by this utility function when making his choice. Becker proposed this idea within the framework of American Neo-Liberalism, which stresses the role played by the individual in decision-making and economic behaviour. Everyone, Becker concluded, has to protect his own capital and take his own decisions. Thus there is no need for a State apparatus or regulations because society works all by itself. All that is needed is for individuals to strive, plan their behaviour and strategies in cost-benefit terms, and make their choices. Individuals, so the argument went, should behave like businessmen because this was the best way to maximise time and income. The idea was that life is 'capital' whose yield must be maximised. "The business of managing oneself" was what it boiled down to, commented Foucault (2007) in a text that has been widely echoed in recent sociological literature.

Following Michel Feher (2007), this reformulation of Becker's concept still belongs to Classic Liberalism, which saw *human capital* as the maximisation of future profits (which was also how the entrepreneurial model was understood throughout industrialisation). Nevertheless, from the mid 1980s onwards, a new twist was given to human capital that went far beyond the meaning given by Becker. The change was prompted by "the rise of Neo-Liberalism". Here, Feher considered that the business and employment worlds had been transformed by Financialisation, and with them the notion of human capital. Beyond 'the business of managing oneself' to maximise future 'incomes', human capital in the age of Financialisation invited the individual to see himself as manager of a portfolio of behaviours on which he took decisions. Such choices value the individual in question as a function of how attractive he is to companies. The difference this made was that individuals' decisions were less and less guided by obtaining future benefits given that

the setting was one of growing uncertainty. It was not enough for financialised 'human capital' (that is to say, workers) to passively mould themselves to the demands of funded companies. Instead, workers were expected to foresee changes and prove their worth in the marketplace. Yet the market was plagued with uncertainties so that it was impossible to know which values were most profitable. Companies too had no idea of which values should be chosen. One therefore had to strive to make oneself more attractive to bidders, to accredit oneself — a bit like submitting oneself for judgment by a ratings agency — in order to gain some credibility. Under this new financing approach to human capital, one not only needs to be highly-skilled but also be willing to prepare for a yet-to-be-divined future.

Christian Laval described these behaviours as 'ultra-subjectivisation', that is to say "shouldering the notion of one's infinite improvement in an endless, exhausting quest beyond oneself [...]. In this revamping or progression of human capital, the subject is seen as a mere human replica of capital itself: liquid, volatile, and mutable" (Laval, 2015: 29). *Job crafting* is the penultimate step in this craze for personal development, treating the worker as 'an investor in himself' who has to *invest* in his future, know how to re-invent himself, reconfigure himself, and — as if all this were not enough — re-orient his work and draw up an 'investment plan'.

Acting like an entrepreneur is the best way of sending messages on the attractiveness of one's human capital in a period in which there are no 'beaten paths' to follow. Steve Banks, Professor at Stanford University and father of the Lean Start-up movement, highlights the fact that there is no end of theory on why established companies work but that this is useless when it comes to guiding start-ups. The reason is because start-ups begin with an idea — there is no cumulative knowledge on which to draw and thus the only guarantee of success (if one can call it that) is 'intuition and art', which must later be supplemented by management tools (*El País*, 2014). Thus the worker of tomorrow's world is cast

as heroic visionary, artist and walking calculator. In her best-selling book *The Shift: The Future of Work is Already Here* (2012), the employment trends guru Lynda Gratton forecasts that tomorrow's employment world will be one of micro-entrepreneurs who have to train themselves while honing their networking and emotional intelligence skills.

This aesthetic of physical performance, dogged spirit, and business effort is supposed to make the 'human capital' discourse attractive. Yet one needs to look at the yawning gap between propaganda and facts, and between entrepreneurial rhetoric and business world practices. Although this is too ambitious an aim for this paper, it is worth looking at some of the contradictions between the ascetic ego [in the Freudian sense] demanded by a pretty theory and the grim reality of job insecurity in which cognitive work follows an iron entrepreneurial logic. The ideology of financialised human capital is a destabilising one over the short, medium, and long terms (Moruno, 2015). It creates uncertainty and inequality, making individuals responsible for managing themselves as if they were mere assets in a risk-capital portfolio, and it fosters the myth of equality of opportunities while hiding the true social conditions under which human capital and entrepreneurship operate. Moreover, it snares millions of young university students in what one might term 'the human capital trap' or the 'entrepreneurship trap'. The jaws of this trap are sprung by following the dictates of the human capital paradigm so that one behaves as if one were a company even though one knows that most firms die young. The risk capital fund run by Marc Andreessen (the creator of the very first web browser — Mosaic — and of Netscape) is considered by MIT Technology Review as one of the world's 100 most innovative people (MIT called him "a man who saw the future"). Andreessen analyses three thousand investment projects a year but only invests in fifteen. Of these, ten fail quickly, three or four stay afloat and — with a lot of luck — just one will become a big success (or in tech-speak, 'a unicorn'). Such successes are capable of yielding a one thousand-fold return for the risk capital fund but such 'unicorns'

only crop up every ten years or so. There are 803 risk funds of this kind in The United States and in 2014 some \$48,000 million was spent searching for the mythical beast (Friend, 2015). It is a quest that thousands of post-graduate students pursue, spurred to take part as entrepreneurial human capital.

EUROPE 2020 AND THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP REVOLUTION: THE BROAD LINES AND DOCUMENTS OF ENTREPRENEURIAL POLICY IN THE EU-2020 STRATEGY

What form do EU-2020 programmes take as part of the entrepreneurship revolution we are describing here? The key document on entrepreneurship in the EU-2020 plan is titled *Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan. Reigniting the Entrepreneurial Spirit in Europe* (EAP). This is the document that lays down the broad lines for fostering entrepreneurship. Although it is a continuation of *The Small Business Act*, dreamt up for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in 2008, its monographic treatment of the role played by entrepreneurs is both innovative and symptomatic of the EU's orientations. The EAP echoes the kind of epic business discourses that have characterised the proposals for supporting entrepreneurs made by major business centres, business schools, and business associations over the last few years as if they offered the silver bullet to slay the undead crisis. The statements made by EU heads speak volumes. For example, Antonio Tajani, EU Commissioner for Industry and Entrepreneurship from 2010 to 2014, came up with the following gem: "To make it very clear: more entrepreneurs mean more jobs, more innovation and more competitiveness. Becoming an entrepreneur and making a vision come true takes a lot of personal risk and effort. Entrepreneurs are the heroes of our time. Entrepreneurship is also the most powerful driver of economic growth in economic history. (...) If we can unleash Europe's entrepreneurial potential, we can bring back growth to Europe"¹. The message slavishly follows what one might term 'the

1 Statement consulted at http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-12_en.htm.

heroic discourse of entrepreneurship' and might just as well have been dictated by business associations².

The same EU-Big Business consensus can be found in the justification for the EAP, which is seen as key to recovering from the 2007 economic crisis and redressing the mass unemployment that came in its wake. The document begins by arguing that entrepreneurship is the answer to the crisis and even goes so far as to suggest that weakness in Europe's entrepreneurial culture was the reason for the slump. All this is based on the premise that entrepreneurship creates jobs and makes workers more employable. The EAP's first pillar proposes education and training in entrepreneurship to redress these shortcomings. To this end, the EAP draws up an action plan with alliances with international institutions such as the OECD, a pioneer in spreading the idea of entrepreneurship in schools. Here, the aim is to disseminate entrepreneurship through all levels of education and thus create an eco-system (a term littering the document and common in entrepreneurship jargon) that links the university world with the business world. This eco-system ranges from *teacherpreneur* (sic) in Primary Schools (Arruti, 2016) to university entrepreneurs. The EAP broaches the idea of funding these projects within the European Social Fund, differentiating them from the *Lifelong Learning Programme* (LLP), thereby boosting the scope and all-present nature of entrepreneurship education.

The EAP's second pillar is the creation of a setting that makes things easier for entrepreneurs. It comprises a set of initiatives that respond to the old, insistent demands made by business organisations: funding, tax breaks, new technologies, making it easier to set up and sell companies, plus measures giving failed entrepreneurs a second chance. With regard to fund-

ing, as well activating the EU's own funds, the aim is to create a European micro-funding market and to simplify procedures so that small companies can raise money from the private sector (mini-bonds, forms of collective funding, and access to 'business angels'). With regard to new technologies, the aim is to broaden training, boost dissemination and awareness of the use of new technologies, and above all to develop cyber-entrepreneurship. Cutting down red tape and regulations are among EAP priorities: the 'one-stop shop', streamlining of procedures and other forms of deregulation have started a race to cut the costs and time involved in setting up a company. Last, given the high percentage of failed companies and to prevent the spirits of *serial entrepreneurs* from flagging, the EAP makes provisions to give failed businessmen a second chance to show what they can do.

The EAP's third pillar pursues two goals: the first is to spread the measures to groups that are excluded by or under-represented in the entrepreneurial world. This strand goes under the name of *inclusive entrepreneurship*, of which the OECD has experience and that now takes form in the EAP. This 'inclusive entrepreneurship' covers 'conventional' under-privileged groups: women, the elderly, immigrants, the unemployed, the young. Plans are drawn up for all of them to help them start a company, with business plans, entrepreneurship training and company management, how to get funding, documentation systems and the dissemination of best practices. The second goal of this third EAP pillar is to boost and highlight the role played by entrepreneurs given that the EAP notes (somewhat surprisingly) that: entrepreneurs are discredited and the public knows little about them; there is a lack of entrepreneurship models; entrepreneurship is seen as an undesirable profession. A 'positive communication strategy' is planned, with an 'EU Entrepreneurship Day', the appointing of famous entrepreneurs from each Member State as "National Entrepreneurship Ambassadors", and in general ramping up promotion activities and boosting entrepreneurs' image in a business-friendly fashion. The EAP's drafters end the document with an apology for the entrepreneurship world: "A cor-

2 See for example, the reports of *Cercle d'Empresaris* [business association] (2009): "The entrepreneurial spirit: A key element for dealing with Spain's economic crisis". The comments made by the Dean of IE Business School, Santiago Íñiguez de Onzoño were in the same vein: "Entrepreneurs will be the next generation's heroes" (*El País*, 4/1/2015). Last but not least, it is revealing to consult the international business networking platform, *The Heroes Club*, mentors of the entrepreneurial spirit.

responding broader discussion in public, especially in the media, is thus essential for an entrepreneurial revolution. Public and private institutions should be encouraged to emphasise the social and economic importance of entrepreneurs not only as a legitimate career path but also as a matter of utmost national, European and international interest”.

Given that the entrepreneur bestrides today's media like a Colossus, it is surprising the EAP's drafters felt the need to praise entrepreneurs to the skies throughout the text and to highlight — of all things — our ignorance of the benefits they bestow on society. Since the beginning of the crisis in 2007, business circles in OECD countries have put the propaganda machine into full gear to laud entrepreneurs and companies. This gave rise to a new episode of what Tomas Frank (2000, 2013) has termed 'market populism'. This strategy consists of glorification of entrepreneurs, companies, and the Capitalist system in general and key business institutions in particular. The cheerleaders here are business circles and the most 'corporate-friendly' political parties. This strategy has been used before and — according to Frank — is intensified during economic crises, when companies' reputations and responsibility for the mess come into question. The outbreak of market populism spawned by the 2007 crisis took the form of bombarding the media with stuff on entrepreneurship and weaving a tale in which entrepreneurs were presented as the economy's salvation, with the finger of blame for the crisis being pointed elsewhere. The media blitz was also intended to strengthen the business lobby and demands that State regulations and funds be harnessed to serve entrepreneurs' interests. Entrepreneurs were presented as paragons of progress and innovation, given media haloes, and passed off as lovers of freedom (especially market freedom). One only need look at the spate of news items and initiatives (fairs, company accelerators, magazines, TV programmes, scholarships, internships, competitions, prizes, funding calls, and so on) to see that the 'entrepreneurship revolution' is already well under way.

The EU is wide open to these influences through a host of pro-entrepreneurship programmes in its EU-2020

strategy. It is not that the EU lacked business-friendly leanings before the 2007 crisis but from then on, the entrepreneurship groupies have become better orchestrated and organised, as one can deduce from the way the EAP is structured. Lack of space in this paper precludes us from delving into the details of all the related EU programmes and the seeding of entrepreneurship in European countries. Nevertheless, in the following section we describe several cases in which Member States have recently enacted national legislation on entrepreneurship to transpose the EU-2020 strategy.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP'S RESONANCE IN VARIOUS EU MEMBER STATES

The entrepreneurial spirit of the EU programmes described in the foregoing section is not only reflected in the European Union's own programmes but also in the legislation of each Member State. Over the last few years, many pro-entrepreneurship Acts have been passed. This means one can start assessing their impact on employment. We shall briefly review the cases of France, Portugal, and Spain. The aim here is neither to compare the data nor to exhaustively analyse each case. Instead, we merely show similarities among the entrepreneurship measures taken in various European countries.

In the French case, 'crisis legislation' was swiftly enacted to foster entrepreneurship. The *Statut d'auto-entrepreneur* [Statute of Self-Employed Entrepreneurs] was passed in 2009 and its scope has expanded greatly since then. The preamble to the Act lauds the ability of the legislation to help entrepreneurs by creating quality jobs, innovation, and autonomy. Nevertheless, with hindsight, one can appreciate its huge potential for spawning job insecurity. The real negative impacts of the Act have been described by Pereira (2010), Stevens (2012) and Abdelnour (2017). They include: (1) very low incomes for young self-employed entrepreneurs; (2) companies taking advantage of the system to outsource work (laying off workers and replacing them with self-employed 'entrepreneurs'); (3) making the 'entrepreneurs' pay their own Social Security contri-

butions, thereby saving outsourcing companies even more money; (4) effectively scrapping redundancy payments and severance procedures. In both social and employment terms, self-employed entrepreneurs pay dearly for being their own bosses. They have no right to unemployment benefits, they operate in a pseudo-corporate limbo in which Trade Unions cannot help them, and they feel (and are) isolated.

Thanks to the reverse alchemy of the *Statut d'auto-entrepreneur* (whereby salaried workers become dirt-cheap sub-contractors), roughly a million potential salaried workers have been turned into 'self-employed entrepreneurs'. Experts interpret this growth in self-employment as masking functional unemployment by spawning insecure jobs. The self-employed entrepreneurs receive income but they lose rights, security, and social protection. Here one should add an element of self-exploitation. This is the result of a downward spiral in rates, with the victims desperately offering cut-throat prices to attract the biggest companies.

"Portugal Discovers its Spirit of Entrepreneurial Adventure" was the breezy headline in *Forbes Magazine* in an August 2015 report. The famed publication described the astonishing speed with which an entrepreneurship culture had taken root in Portugal. There was a spate of private and public initiatives that gave rise to a host of projects, such as *Lisbon Challenge*, which was rated as one of the five most active 'start-up accelerators' in Europe (Coleman, 2015). Yet this yen for entrepreneurship in Portugal is nothing new. Back in the early 1980s, the *Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional* (IEFP) — the national training service — had a long history of programmes for boosting jobs through entrepreneurship. Since then, these programmes have placed large numbers of Portuguese workers in the *trabalho independente* [self-employed] category according to the *Instituto Nacional de Estatística* (INE) [national statistics bureau]. The figures show that self-employed workers make up almost 22% of Portugal's active population. These independent workers are popularly known as *recibos verdes* [green receipts] in Portugal because of the colour of the books of invoices they have to use to account for their business activity. The green receipts have

been considered by various authors (Soeiro, 2014; Matos, Domingos and Kumar, 2012) as the main mechanism driving job insecurity in Portugal. One of the reasons for this is the growing practice known as 'sham green receipts', which basically consists of replacing salaried workers by self-employed workers who invoice only one company (their real employer). This practice has led to widespread protest, led by movements such as *Geração à Rasca* [Struggling Generation], and *Precários Inflexíveis i Fartas/os d'Estes Recibos Verdes* [Sham Self-Employed Workers Sick of Green Receipts].

In this context, the Portuguese Government passed its *Programa Estratégico para o Empreendedorismo e Inovação* (PEEI) [Strategic Programme for Entrepreneurship and Innovation] in December 2011. The PEEI ties in with the EU-2020 strategy and its four main goals are: (1) the creation of a "more entrepreneurial society"; (2) boosting the number of innovative companies; (3) positioning Portugal among international entrepreneurship and innovation networks; (4) boosting foreign investment in Portugal. Through actions such as *Passaporte para o Empreendedorismo* [Entrepreneurship Passport], the *Rede Nacional de Mentores* [National Mentoring Network] and *Programa de Ignição* ['Ignition' Programme], the PEEI seeks to foster entrepreneurship and broaden the 'entrepreneurial skills' of the Portuguese. One should note here that the top co-ordinating body for this plan is headed by the Prime Minister and a Committee whose members are leading businessmen with links to Risk Capital Funds, Start-Up Accelerators, and other initiatives tied in with the entrepreneurship eco-system. Through the PEEI, as well as by meeting the demands of EU-2020, one can hazard a guess that the Portuguese Government is trying to deepen the penetration of the new entrepreneurship activation doctrine. Despite the big protests held by the *recibos verdes* (leading to a publicly-sponsored Bill, debated in the Portuguese Parliament in 2016) (Soeiro 2014; Estanque, Costa and Soeiro, 2013), the Government has forged ahead with its approach. It has done so without taking into account entrepreneurship's general failure to dent the nation's appalling joblessness (which is largely the fruit of the Government's stubborn, misguided policies).

The Spanish case is similar to the French one. The *Estratègia d'Emprenedoria i Ocupació Juvenil* [Strategy for Entrepreneurship and Youth Employment] 2013/2016 (EEOJ) was passed in 2013, together with the *Llei de suport als emprenedors i la seua internacionalització* [Entrepreneurial Support and Internationalisation Act] (LE). Both texts were drafted against the background of today's economic crisis and were driven by the symbolic rise of the entrepreneur. In their preambles, both the EEOJ and LE refer to Spain's alarming unemployment. What is surprising is the naturalness with which they suggest entrepreneurship as the solution and 'creating one's own job' as the only way out of mass unemployment. Both texts share the same (preconceived) idea that fostering entrepreneurship will boost job creation. Nevertheless, this apparently automatic link is not borne out by the analysis accompanying the two legal texts. In fact, quite the contrary given that both documents note how unemployment is hitting small companies and the self-employed harder than most (with difficulties in raising loans, companies going bust, little ability to create jobs, lay-offs, and red tape, among other problems).

The main steps taken by the EEOJ to promote entrepreneurs are: (1) the so-called 'flat rate contributions for the self-employed', based on first-year discounts for young people registering as self-employed (Spain's *Règim Especial de Treballadors Autònoms*); (2) establishing eligibility for unemployment benefit from the moment one begins to work for oneself, and widening the options for capitalising unemployment benefit when this is used for shares in a company; (3) the so-called *Emprén amb Xarxa* approach [Networked Entrepreneurship], which allows an entrepreneur whose business has failed, to once again receive unemployment benefit. There are also measures covering advice, and lastly, there is a *Contracte Generacions* [Generational Solidarity Contract] which gives a discount to entrepreneurs who hire someone who is both jobless and over 45.

These measures have already prompted criticism — for example of the 'flat rate', which clearly falls far short of what is needed to begin a business and give it a decent chance of survival. This measure suggests that anyone

can be an entrepreneur but fails to provide the means needed to make it so. With regard to the other measures ('squaring getting unemployment benefit with a business activity' and 'Networked Entrepreneurship'), both initiatives are a sign of desperation, given that they seek to make those on the dole believe that they must create their own jobs. Indeed, the first initiative suggests that someone without a job can both receive unemployment benefit and entrepreneurship subsidies. The second initiative allows someone to go back on the dole if he fails as an entrepreneur. These provisions show that the EEOJ has little faith in the chances of entrepreneurship succeeding and foreshadows a path strewn with failures and frustration, in which the subject fails as an employee and is fired, fails yet again as an entrepreneur, and then fails a third time when he goes back on the dole.

Given the foregoing arguments, the entrepreneurship picture painted by the EEOJ is far darker than the creative, innovative image of entrepreneurs trotted out for public consumption. The EEOJ is a canvas varnished with entrepreneurial jargon but beneath is a tableau of people who resort to entrepreneurship out of desperation and who are destined to cover low-skilled, poorly-paid activities. Instead of giving us the archetypal creative entrepreneur, the EEOJ palms us off with *lumpen entrepreneurs* doomed to provide low added-value products and services. An army of sham self-employed workers have been spawned by job insecurity over the last two decades. The new forms of self-employed entrepreneurship are the latest turn of the screw, blithely rebadging self-employed workers as 'businessmen'.

CONCLUSIONS

We can highlight three provisional conclusions. The first is that the impact of the entrepreneur cult is widening ever faster. The term 'entrepreneur' is used to mean all things to all men: as an economic actor in the corporate world; as a way of describing work; as part of an 'activating' employment policy; as an aptitude for acquiring knowledge and know-how;

(even) as an attitude to life. The entrepreneur is not merely presented as an economic actor but also as a way of life that will foster a business society in which legal or political issues — the very source of our rights and duties — become matters of ‘life management’ as if the individual were a company. The whole miasma surrounding entrepreneurs is presented in enthralling language, as if *Homo Entrepreneurus* [Enterprise Man] had a monopoly on passion, vision, and spirit. The idea that everyone has to create his or her job had become commonplace and promises to share the aforementioned virtues with whoever decides to take the entrepreneurial path. This is the language beloved by business publications and which is shared by the EU-2020 documents we analysed earlier.

The second conclusion is that the EU disseminates and subscribes to this ‘entrepreneurial spirit’, embodying it in its programmes. In this paper, we have seen the details of the *Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan* (EAP) and the measures it contains. This strategy consolidates an orderly market peopled by authoritative business actors ‘playing by the rules’ and who project a policy framework favouring companies and the free market. Public institutions are thus thrown open to competition, which then becomes the bedrock of the new political order. The most important aspect of this process, argue Dardot and Laval (2016), is the way the EU makes these market rules. Instead of being democratically drawn up through parliamentary debate, they are cobbled together by technocrats working hand-in-glove with corporate interests. The result is a supranational strategy that is imposed through EU rules. This homogeneous, supra-national approach saves Member States’ governments the dirty job of having to overcome resistance to these policies, thus ensuring market forces win the day. This process hinders the building of European unity based on political co-operation and social solidarity and instead establishes a technocratic government based on business logic and served by a host of bureaucrats, judges, and penalties. Such control over decision-making is

a theme of great interest today. Didier Georgakakis (2012) in his sociology of EU staff, Sylvain Laurens (2015), with her ‘micro-communities’ among EU bureaucrats, business lobbying, and the works by Dardot and Laval (2016) cited earlier all offer valuable clues to the ‘quick fixes’ dreamt up by high-level EU officials, the technical departments of central banks, and economic and financial bodies in EU Member States when it comes to making the rules. These groups share the same training based on US-influenced transnational members of the management class who have the know-how/power to impose rules, establish statistical and technical criteria and apply technocratic control to economic life. The “gentle monster of Brussels” of which Enzensberger (2012) spoke of is currently pulling the strings behind the stage-set of creative entrepreneurship.

The third conclusion is that the promises made by the entrepreneurship regime do little to: (1) tackle job insecurity and powerlessness (both ills mentioned in the EU documents analysed earlier); (2) foster a competitive, society based on knowledge, talent, and social cohesion. Instead, they spawn armies of freelancers, the self-employed and young businessmen. For these groups, the ‘entrepreneurial spirit’ means exchanging job insecurity as an employee for job insecurity as a self-employed entrepreneur by force of circumstances. Entrepreneurial excellence and success only occur under certain conditions that always favour the best-positioned members of society (who move in de-territorialised, trans-spatial settings and who can take risks when the odds are right). By contrast, the vast majority of mortals must work in local settings and on specific projects upon which their fate depends. This involves both greater flexibility and risks but without greater expectations. French *autoentrepreneurs*, Portuguese *recibos verdes*, and Spain’s *autònoms* are the flip side of the start-up unicorn. In the entrepreneurship universe, only a few stars shine brightly, concealing dark worlds and their *lumpen entrepreneur* denizens

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Entrepreneurship as a Lifestyle: The role attitude plays in the employment dynamics of workers in the fitness and children's party sectors (Córdoba, Argentina)*

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ABSTRACT

Within the framework of our research, the entrepreneur and variations on this concept emerged as a meaningful theme in the statements in interviews, and in the textual-digital material circulated in the recreation and entertainment spaces we surveyed. That is why this paper delves into the actions of the lifestyle through an analysis of the performances and practices of owners and workers in children's party venues, and in fitness gyms. The paper's introduction offers a spatial-temporal contextualisation of the political and economic scenario in which the services covered by our case studies were supplied. We go on to present some conceptual plots that we attribute to the entrepreneurial lifestyle and then proceed to examine the cultural and historical dynamics through which these businesses were set up as places for bodily well-being (gyms) and fun (children's party salons) — both things we identify as catering to Argentina's Middle Class. While our approach stresses emerging patterns linking both cases, it also highlights the special factors shaping the symbolic features of each cultural scene. The similarities and differences

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found between the two cases revealed how a host of entrepreneurs (usually young people) was spawned. These youngsters need certain attitudes and creative skills to pursue their social and financial goals. Entrepreneurship as a lifestyle presupposes certain attitudes

Keywords: neo-liberal governance, subjective modulations, service-based economy, attitude, fitness gyms, children's party venues.

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INTRODUCTION

The accumulation model established in Argentina from the 1990s onwards opened up the country's trade and finance to international markets. "We are part of The First World", proclaimed Carlos Menem, the country's President from 1989 to 1999.¹ The 'new' model (actually an old one, given its use in the last Argentine dictatorship (1976-1983)) included: liberalisation of the Finance sector; over-valuation of the nation's currency (under the country's *Ley de Convertibilidad* [Convertibility Act], the Argentine Peso was pegged at one US Dollar); the sale of State Companies; the attraction of foreign capital. These policies made imported goods a lot cheaper, rendering local products less competitive and brought many Argentine industries to their knees.

To complement these changes, a legal reform programme was put into effect in the employment sphere. This made it much easier for companies to hire and fire workers, boosting the growth of multinational businesses (Pierbattisti, 2008; Del Bono, 2002).

The 'employability' construct was a key element in this process and led to a paradigm shift in ways of thinking of and regulating employment in Argentina (Pierbattisti, 2008: 34). Among other aspects, there was a move from

'a job for life' scenario to one plagued by uncertainty, sub-contracting, and job insecurity. This sea change was the fruit of the aforementioned legal, political, and economic decisions. Symbolic and structural measures were also taken to introduce an employment model based on 'the entrepreneur' with a view to providing a flexible, profitable production system that was tried out by many companies during this period.

In addition, the application of social de-collectivisation policies, the rise in unemployment, the deterioration of working conditions, and the privatisation of public services led to growing segmentation of Argentine society (Svampa, 2005). During the 1990s, traditionally stable sectors of Argentina's Middle Class suffered unprecedented impoverishment (Minujin, 1992; Minujin and Kessler, 1995) and in the process created a new hybrid social stratum labelled by Minujin and Anguita (2004) as 'The New Poor'. Meanwhile, another sector of this transforming Middle Class was labelled 'The Innovative Middle Class', comprising those who had benefited from the political and economic changes of the period (Aguirre, 2004; Beltrán and Miguel, 2011; Svampa, 2001).

Various studies focused on new fields of meaning for part of the Middle Class, revealing the shift in the socialisation patterns of these groups based on the creation of a 'socio-spatial network' that widened the urban gap (Svampa, 2004: 61-62). Studies such as those by Svampa (2001, 2004) on gated communities, or

1 Double inverted commas are used for citations (whether translated or not) and single inverted commas for special terms or expressions. For stylistic reasons and for the sake of brevity, the masculine subsumes the feminine throughout.

those by Wortman (2003) on cultural consumption, showed the purchasing habits and urban practices spawned among the rising Middle Class at the time.

In this context, new consumption patterns heightened the distinctions and differentiation between the two ends of Argentina's complex Middle Class spectrum. These habits incorporated certain goods and desires, such as having money and the free time to indulge in commercialised leisure, given the contemporary, cosmopolitan image subjects wanted to build and adopt as their lifestyle. In big cities, shopping centres began to proliferate and became the new temples of mass consumption. For example, in Córdoba, a century-old State school in the city centre was bulldozed to make way for a shopping mall. Holidays abroad and shopping trips to Miami, posh parties, imported foreign cars, and luxury foreign clothes brands were all part of this new iconography of desire. "*Deme dos*" [Give me two!] and "*Pizza y champagne*" became typical expressions in these Neo-Liberal times as the 20th Century drew to a close.

This cultural, political, judicial, and economic milieu fostered the creation and growth of a new productive sector among the Middle Class, some members of whom faced the risk of stepping down the social ladder. Spurred by the wish to keep up their standard of living, some citizens took up jobs with multinationals as low-cost skilled workers, or became self-employed (Del Bono, 2002). Some of them chose to meet the needs and demands of a small segment of society eager to pursue an active, sporting consumer lifestyle or that sought cultural experiences linked with the commercialisation of training, fun, and leisure (Aguirre, 2004; Blázquez, 2012, 2016; Castro, 2016; Duek, 2006; Landa, 2009a, 2009b, 2011a; Wortman, 2003).

The consumer heaven based on fantasies of success and happiness soon vanished in the face of the baneful effects of a model dictated by market forces, cut-throat competition and flexible employment. The 2001 politico-institutional and economic crisis and the sudden collapse of the Peso-Dollar 1:1 convertibility ushered in the economic nightmare of the 1990s (Beltrán and Miguel, 2011; Ciuffolini, 2008).

In the following years, during the presidencies of Néstor Kirchner (2003-2007) and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (2007-2015), a form of government emerged that some authors have termed 'Neo-Developmentalist' (López and Vértiz, 2012) given its rhetorical 'inclusion' discourse. Nevertheless, as various studies have shown, apart from the few changes made, a subjective variant of Neo-Liberalism (with its stress on creativity, fun, and the entrepreneur cult) continued to operate in various iconic sections of Argentine society.²

According to Beltrán and Miguel (2011: 244), the impact of global changes, the economic situation over the last few decades, and the delicate position of the Middle Class in the 1990s were what led to the emergence of an 'entrepreneurial spirit' among creative youth working in the cultural production field. Taking research conducted in Córdoba (Blázquez, 2016; Blázquez and Castro, 2015; Castro 2016; Landa, 2011a, 2016) as our starting point, in the early 21st Century we find a burgeoning 'entrepreneurial lifestyle' that lets young Middle-Class workers join the labour market through the production of welfare and leisure services.

We shall now examine the subjective modulations of the entrepreneur role in fields affected by Neo-Liberal governance, especially those bearing on the emergence of a lifestyle combining the search for pleasure with managerialism (Bröckling, 2015). We shall then use these findings to present concepts supporting our hypotheses on how this lifestyle triggers the 'subjectification' that typifies Neo-Liberal governance (Rose, 2003: 251).³

Using this theoretical scaffold, we then analyse how the fitness and children's party sectors in Córdoba

2 Some researchers examining subjective manifestations of entrepreneurship in Argentina after 2001 include: Bayardo, 2015; Beltrán and Miguel 2011; Blázquez, 2016; Castro, 2016; Grinberg, 2009; Landa, 2011a, 2014, 2016; Landa and Marengo, 2010, 2012, 2016; Papalini, 2015.

3 Rose (2003: 251) proposes the term *subjectification* to denote the processes configuring certain kinds of subject. We are interested in the dynamic way that this concept foreshadows instability when the relationship between *subjection* and *subjectivation* is blurred.

worked in the late 1980s, focusing on the activities offered. This is followed by an analysis of the differences and similarities between producers of these cultural goods, in which we detected a “virtuoso performance” (Virno, 2005) that was prized in both sectors and which those providing the services termed ‘attitude’. *Performance* is a characteristic of this entrepreneurial lifestyle and involves workers’ eagerness and cheerfulness in meeting both their clients’ demands and their own. As ‘transformance’ (Schechner, 2000:13), attitude alters the relationship between leisure and work, and (re)produces agents capable of successfully, creatively, and cheerfully joining a service economy. Towards the end of the paper, we show that those ‘producing’ the services have been constrained by labour flexibility trends since the 1990s and form part of the emergence of a 21st Century entrepreneur embodying the ‘spirit’ of today’s Capitalism. What is clear is that entrepreneurship as a ‘lifestyle’ requires ‘attitude’.

SOME CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING SUBJECTIVE MODULATIONS OF THE PRESENT

The consolidation of Neo-Liberal employment policies has led to subjective transformations that have redefined the repertory of aptitudes, attitudes, and skills that determine how ‘the human factor’ is incorporated in the production process (Dejours, 1998). The ‘self-entrepreneur’ as an agent who is self-made, adaptable, makes his own living, and is creative and emotionally committed to the company (which is none other than himself) has become an icon for those social groups capable of meeting the functional and financial demands made by today’s organisational schema (Landa and Marengo, 2016).

Such subjectivity is discussed in the latest biopolitical theorising found in Foucault (2007), specifically when he studied the process whereby the introduction of Anarchic-Liberal governance converged with Ordoliberal rationality in Human Capital Theory. For the French philosopher, the notion that what makes us human can be seen as capital — that is,

as a resource — defines life in corporate terms. This, argues Foucault, constitutes an unprecedented assault on areas that hitherto lay in the personal sphere and were thus of a ‘non-economic’ nature. The end result is the creation of a subjective model whereby life can be wholly governed and controlled through economic principles, reflecting the American Neo-Liberal Governance notion of *Homo oeconomicus* as ‘self-entrepreneur’ (Foucault, 2007: 264-265).

Boltanski and Chiapello (2002) in their study on this ‘New Spirit of Capitalism’ considered that the ‘networked’ organisation of contemporary society, especially in the productive sphere, required both managers and workers to enshrine adaptability, change, communication, and creativity as key resources in pursuing their lives (which are seen as merely an endless stream of ever-changing projects). From the standpoint of a Fordian industrial engineer, the traits of 1950s production workers posed high risks. By contrast, the managerial model adopted by today’s companies is based on the wholesale roll-out of cognitive, affective, emotional, and communicative skills that turn workers into a high-value input (Landa and Marengo, 2011).

For these authors, the cultivation of the contemporary leader must combine the *savoir-faire* typifying Industrial Fordism with the *savoir être* in which a leader is the fruit of ‘individual experiences stemming from local contexts and special circumstances (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2002: 589). In this frame, worker training is not seen merely as the transfer of skills through a qualification but rather as incentives for “transferring professional know-how” through “mechanisms applicable to a host of tasks” (Dugué, 1994, in Boltanski and Chiapello, 2002: 589).

From the Latin American perspective, García Canclini and Urteza (2012) conducted a study on Mexico covering work organisation in the form of unstable projects as part of the creative strategies pursued by young people to enhance their economic and socio-cultural advancement. Other strategies they used included: diversification of tasks and knowledge;

participation in several projects at once; the de-institutionalisation of professional knowledge; valuing self-learning; joining in networks; use of social media (Blázquez, 2016; Jacoby, 2011).

As Foucault (1984) warned, Neo-Liberalism is an indirect style of social control, and ‘guiding behaviour’ whose radical innovation lies in charting a rationality of governance through the production of freedoms. At first sight, it seems contradictory — notes Gago (2014: 10) — “that this ingenious interweaving of both the personal and the institutional rests on a series of technologies, procedures, and emotions driving free initiative, self-entrepreneurship, self-management, and taking responsibility for oneself”.

In fact, it is a subtle web that requires constant interfaces between the technologies of power and of the ego [in its Freudian sense], as well as the eager consent of the governed, to ensure the system’s goal is achieved (Foucault, 1996). This synergetic articulation is expressed in subjective self-training processes that tie in with heterogeneous training such that “the exercise of power does not oppose the exercise of freedom” nor of obtaining pleasure (Vázquez García, 2005: 81).

Freedom, pleasure, subjectivation, and subjection all go hand-in-hand. The governance of behaviours is inextricably linked with the relationship subjects forge with themselves. This not only concerns the psychological relationship with one’s inner being — something known as ‘PSI practices’ — but also in the way the subject establishes a specific relationship with his body as a characteristic component of the “technologies of the ego” (Foucault, 1996).

Various disciplinary fields and thematic spheres have drawn upon Michel Foucault’s research on Neo-Liberal governance, acknowledging the principles and norms that make up our experience of the present (Laval and Dardot, 2013). One of the main contributors here is Nikolas Rose (1992) who, together with other British sociologists, discussed the changes in British politics under the Thatcher Government. Here, they drew on the strategy concept of ‘enterprise culture’.

According to Rose (1992), this notion delimits a set of discourses, practices, and measures that are inter-linked through three dimensions: Politics, Institutions, Ethics. These dimensions constitute a cultural and political programme that is forged and legitimised by fostering a regime of subjectivisation based on an idealised figure of an autonomous citizen who chooses his own lifestyle. This regime advocates managing one’s own life choices through decision-making and consumption practices to maximise one’s skills (and performance) and experiences (pleasure and well-being) in settings rife with growing competition and uncertainty (Rose, 1992).⁴

The figure of the ‘self-entrepreneur’ was fostered and legitimised as part of this process and was linked with a given lifestyle (Bröckling, 2015; Rose, 1992). The new form of subjectivisation proposed superseding the Fordist model of workers and the red tape of public institutions. It was particularly targeted at young people. Instead of the strict separation of spheres — between hobbies, cultural tastes, artistic pursuits, leisure, and work (which reflected the old scheme of things) — the entrepreneurship credo promised (and demanded) another lifestyle. The new life held out an apparently harmonious confluence of self-realisation, economic success, and a set of attitudinal requirements that would allow subjects to go forth and multiply as entrepreneurs.

Thus the new lifestyle combined diverse ethical and aesthetic regimes that were not necessarily consistent with one another but that taken as a whole, fostered plastic, consumable life which could be moulded, transferred and replicated at whim, and that were based on the ‘self-entrepreneur’ cult (Rose, 1992; Foucault, 2007: 264-265).

Activating the measures fostering *embodiment* and *performance* of the ideal subjectivism became a key component of production in the scheme of Neo-Liberal

⁴ For those who fail to adapt their behaviour to the ‘entrepreneurial culture’, there is expert help on hand through so-called ‘therapeutic cultures’ (Rose, 1992).

governance. This approach deliberately blurred the line between leisure and work to suit production and market requirements. As a result, the dichotomy between the time spent on production and on consumption was also blurred. The new ‘entrepreneurs’ — bombarded by discourses, best practices, and bamboozled by promises of success and personal satisfaction — actively sought to improve themselves under the unstable conditions spawned by the model (Bröckling, 2015).

We shall now describe the emergence of entrepreneurs in the fitness and children’s party sectors in the city of Córdoba. The organisation of business activities bearing on fitness and on fun reveals a special relationship between leisure and work that moulds entrepreneurs’ lifestyles in these sectors. We shall see how other forces also shaped the lifestyle and made up what we term attitude. These factors include: training a manageable body; affectiveness based on frustrating job satisfaction; the importance of leadership.

For this purpose, we use the empirical data gathered in two field studies in Córdoba. The first covers the observation and analysis of practices, texts and *performances* linked with fitness management in 2004 and 2016 (Landa, 2009a, 2009b, 2011a, 2011b, 2016). The second study used the same methodological approach and focused on the production model for children’s birthday parties in the period from 2013 to 2016 (Castro, 2016). This paper draws on data culled from observations of participants and in-depth interviews with various agents — owners, managers, instructors, activity leaders, teachers, and support staff — who showed said entrepreneurial attitude and whom we contacted during the period studied.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE FITNESS CULTURE

The fitness industry reached Buenos Aires in the mid-1980s and then expanded to other major cities in Argentina, such as Rosario, Córdoba, La Plata, Mar del Plata, Mendoza, and Santa Fe. The words ‘aerobic’ and later ‘fitness’ in Argentina were initially linked only with the promotion of systematic physical exercise,

an athletic body, and a healthy lifestyle. The terms then became commonplace in the media, and in the services and products found in Argentine cities, adding new nuances in the process.

The formation of this new economic sector basically comprised two stages: (1) take-off; (2) consolidation, and which together were identified as “the fitness boom” (Landa, 2009a). In the first stage, local instructors learnt and incorporated the new practices, such as high-impact aerobics, body-sculpting, focused exercises, and later ‘stepping’. The incorporation of these new practices and know-how occurred when some of the instructors came into contact with new gym/fitness practices in The United States or in Brazil, and through an American institute or its Brazilian representatives providing training in Argentina (Landa, 2009a, 2011a).

Those entering this new employment field had various reasons for doing so. The commonest ones were the active life style, constant travel, and being able to get a job quickly. Some of the respondents became instructors because a family member, friend, or colleague teaching physical education was already working in the sector. In other cases, they landed in the field “by chance” when outstanding students in aerobic classes were used to replace an instructor who failed to turn up. These students were then taken on by the gym as instructors.

For these youngsters, *fitness* became a *passion*, a lifestyle, a source of pleasure and opportunities, a chance to become popular and to make money. Many of these professionals, resident in Buenos Aires, travelled the length and breadth of Argentina, giving classes and attending events such as fitness congresses. These gatherings were key in forging networks and relations with trainers from other Argentine provinces or from neighbouring countries. In these gatherings, attendees pooled new know-how (“ideas and new steps”), sports apparel, film and music sequences for the daily grind in the gym, “recharging their batteries” as they made new friends who marvelled at the instructors’ ‘sexy bodies’ as they showed off their dance routines.

At these early stages, the pioneers gave a kick-start to the fitness industry and were the leaders in this cultural field. Tenacious, disciplined, highly aware of their body image, with strong social communication skills, pleasant and charismatic, the pioneers — many of whom considered themselves to be self-taught — mobilised a large and growing number of fans. Their careers show how some youngsters who began giving gym classes in Buenos Aires (and who continued honing their skills in a well-known school) rose to the rank of director or ‘trainer’ in these institutions and were prized not only for their professional know-how but also for their social abilities (“how to reach people”) or became part of the “star teachers” circuit. Others stood out as sportsmen in “competition aerobics”, which in that period conferred distinction on those working in the field, and/or became “presenters”⁵ sat national and international events in the world of fitness (Landa, 2011a: 73-76). By various routes, the instructors “who were then seen as pioneers” ended up training other instructors and in some cases were sponsored by international sports brands. In turn, some of these trainees later became master trainers themselves.⁶

The fitness world had consolidated by the end of the 20th Century. In these years, new tertiary training careers were set up, such as ‘group fitness instructor’ and ‘personal trainer’, and innovations in training programmes were imported.⁷ The official certifica-

tion of this know-how legitimised the work of the new professionals as the State regulated gym activities, quality, and infrastructure.⁸ At that point, the management of fitness centres played a central role.⁹

These changes (which began in Buenos Aires shortly before the 2001 crisis and later spread to the rest of Argentina) brought innovations in gyms’ management, marketing, and communication activities. These changes were reflected in the output of management texts specialising in the fitness sector, and in the holding of conferences to disseminate this knowledge (Landa, 2011a, 2011b, 2016). Another noteworthy development was the proliferation of consulting and instructional services in the ‘group fitness’ field, and were based on the franchise model. These measures standardised instructors’ roles in the company and gave greater management control over staff.

Part of this consolidation process can be found in the adoption of a new organisational model: the “gym network”. These firms were run by a management team with directors trained in accountancy and management. They aggregated various gyms, which members could choose as they pleased. The various gyms in the network forged a corporate identity through a common management model and through branding. Each venue was directed by a manager, who had two co-ordinators under him. One of the co-ordinators was trained in fitness and supervised instructors/trainers. The other covered gym administration and accounting, and supervised the salesmen.

This organisational dynamic contrasted with the management styles of those gyms run by individuals who had been trained in Physical Education, Body-Building, and Fitness but who had no formal Business

5 As one of the pioneer’s explained: “Being a presenter addressing conferences, giving courses, and teaching other teachers” (*Pionero del fitness*, 20/08/2007, Buenos Aires).

6 The local history reveals two kinds of actors who left their mark on Argentina’s fitness scene: (1) those who specialised in running aerobics schools and fitness events; (2) those who stood out because of their charisma and mastery of group fitness techniques. These classes were organised through a sequence of exercises lasting an hour in all, split into segments that co-ordinated and synchronised routine training movements with the instructor “facing the mirror” and/or the students from the stage, with the students mimicking his movements, accompanied by the beat of disco-style music.

7 The training programmes in vogue at the time were *spinning* and *indoor cycling*, Body Systems, Fitness Combat classes, aerobics, and later *pilates*.

8 Córdoba passed Municipal Ordinance 9938 in 1998 to regulate these business activities.

9 By *management*, we mean the discipline within the frame of Administration Science and Economics, whose purpose is to provide theoretical and practical know-how for managing and organising production processes in today’s companies (Fernández Rodríguez, 2007).

education.¹⁰ The new corporate-style gyms focused on: boosting sales; hoarding currency; retaining members; broadening the services offered by the network; continued staff training. By contrast, the individually-run gyms operated on a day-to-day, hand-to-mouth basis, dealing with business instability and competition in an *ad hoc* fashion. The same improvisation applied in the way they dealt with unforeseen snags with buildings, regulations, tax, and gym maintenance.

Training events in the fitness management field played a big role in the adoption of the new model. An example of such an event was that held by the management team of *Mercado Fitness* magazine in September 2009 in a Córdoba hotel (Landa, 2011a, 2011b). This gathering was attended by international and national specialists in the gym sector and targeted managers, entrepreneurs, gym owners, and professionals in the health and fitness field. In general, such events covered matters bearing on gym management, staff management, selling subscriptions, customer retention, and corporate leadership.

According to one of the main speakers, the event was heavily attended. This speaker (who is well-known as a “fitness pioneer”) is currently Regional Director of an internationally-renowned fitness company. She noted that gym owners were avid for management know-how. She said, “Many gym owners have no idea of management (...) they are teachers who one fine day set up a gym but do not have the foggiest notion of how to run a business. Guess what happened? Back in the 1980s and 90s, you could survive by muddling through. But today, if you do not learn to manage, you sink. That is why there were so many people at

Mercado Fitness in Córdoba” (fitness pioneer, turned businesswoman, 10/10/2009, Buenos Aires).

The earlier gym management models proved inefficient. Words such as *company, business, CEO, employee, human resources, memberships, users, customer loyalty strategies, and leadership* formed the (bare) bedrock of this ‘neo-language’, which openly criticised the organisational forms found in the first wave of fitness and physical education businesses. The new business models proposed at the aforementioned events spread through the local scene through a semantic strategy whose purpose was none other than to replace the symbolic features of a vocational approach to running gyms (Landa, 2016).

These proposals were not uncritically accepted by the attendees and ‘old hands’ in the sector. An owner-instructor in a Córdoba gym said that he had already heard of many of the proposals made at the 2009 training seminar and applied many of them, albeit in a somewhat slap-dash way. Nevertheless, the event gave him a ‘method’ and a way of ‘systematically’ applying it to labour relations.

The field work reveals that the managers of ‘networked gyms’ were more open to the dictates of *fitness-management*, while some of the owners of neighbourhood gyms lacked both the financial and/or symbolic resources to take new approaches. One of these gym-owners warned that the employment situation of group fitness instructors needed to be changed before managerial ideas could be applied to running gyms. Here, he noted that such instructors “earn little and most of it is cash-in-hand”.¹¹

Despite their differences, both managers of networked gyms and owners of neighbourhood ones followed various strategies to satisfy their customers. The former did so by diversifying their facilities and services, as well as providing greater flexibility in opening hours and training spaces for members. Meanwhile, the lat-

10 The field work revealed how various management strategies overlapped in the Córdoba gym scene. For analytical purposes, we identify three kinds of gym. These are: (1) “networked gyms”, which have already been described; (2) “neighbourhood gyms”, sited in city-centre areas and occupying medium to large-premises. Their owners (trained in physical education and fitness) assumed high risks in managing the gyms; (3) “garage gyms” (mainly found on the city outskirts, with poor facilities, few students, and little demand for *fitness*), in which a managerial approach and innovation were conspicuous by their absence.

11 “Cash in hand” denoting that these were informal jobs with no employment contract.

ter gyms offered a laid-back, fun, family atmosphere tailored to students' needs. Whether a marketing approach or a commonsense one was taken, the aim was the same, namely to yield positive experiences that gave customers/students a sense of well-being. Positive staff/instructor attitudes were key in delivering this outcome (Landa, 2011a).

The term 'attitude' refers to the willingness of subjects to enshrine the gym or company's interests in their behaviour on the job, to satisfy changing demands, and to fully commit themselves to their work. *Attitude* interwove these three strands in both the narratives used by the managerial model and by the 'local gym' model. The qualities required fell into three categories: (1) personal (high self-regard, emotional and corporal self-management); (2) in relation to customers (willingness to solve problems, initiative, being helpful, sensitivity to customers' potential needs, good appearance, positive communication); (3) in relation to the organisation (being responsible, making commitments, pitching in).

The result of this process meant committing oneself body and soul to the gym's business and becoming an entrepreneur in this cultural universe. Entrepreneurial and 'self-management' subjection processes created 'subjectivation dynamics' through which some agents saw themselves as "companies, brands, entrepreneurs".

THE SELF-EMPLOYED PROVIDING CHILDREN'S FUN

Two Argentine companies pioneered products organising children's birthday parties in the mid-1980s. They were Pumper Nic, and Neverland, both operating in Córdoba. The service complemented their existing businesses. Pumper Nic specialised in fast food, while Neverland ran amusement parks. Both adapted their facilities to hold children's parties.

In the 1990s, big multinational chains "such as McDonald's and Burger King" ate away at Pumper Nic's market in Córdoba, forcing the company to close in 1995. McDonald's used advertising techniques, gaudy

colours and the (re)creation of a circus atmosphere through a clown figure (Ronald McDonald) to enthrall children, whom it saw as influential actors in family purchasing decisions. Furthermore, McDonald's proposed "a family atmosphere" in which adults, teenagers and children all had their own space. McDonald's birthday party service included slides and ball pits¹² and coloured foam rods, "establishing a model that became hegemonic and that tended to homogenise other kinds of parties presented as alternatives" (Duek, 2006: 443). McDonald's birthday parties lasted between two and three hours, with "a common organisation of activities, presentation of the staff monitoring the activities, games in the ball pit, food, more games, and last of all, the birthday cake" (Duek, 2006: 243). This company, in addition to broadening the 'party' idea, rolled out discourses and rules on managing the service, and on labour relations stemming from the management discipline (Mangone and Reale, 2000).

These parties, outside the home and in a local commercial setting, were too expensive for some families. They were affordable for others but the novelty and allure of these parties slowly wore off. The growing demand for special ways to hold children's birthday parties led to the appearance of agents capable of satisfying this demand and coming up with new ideas. It was against this background that Middle Class families¹³ discovered that organising children's party was a business that needed little up-front investment and promised easy profits.

Some of the new suppliers merely offered some of the same attractions offered by McDonalds but in a scaled-down domestic setting, through the hiring of bouncy castles, ball pits, and table football.¹⁴ This unspecialised activity was used to supplement the household income. The items needed for the activity

12 Translator's Note: A net-enclosed area full of smallish plastic balls (too big to be swallowed) in which children run riot. Also known as *ball crawl*, *ball pool*, *ball pond*.

13 Middle Class (Editor).

14 Table Football (Editor).

were often bought with family savings or with the severance pay of one of the family members who had been laid off. Others took advantage of the trend towards holding children's birthday parties outside the home and began offering food, beverages, and entertainment by specialised staff at an exclusive venue. The first venues for these parties were very diverse — car-parks, video clubs, pizza parlours, restaurant, paddle-ball courts, and neighbourhood stores fallen on hard times (and whose owners were keen to try new ways to make them profitable).

This commercialised form of children's birthday parties outside the home took greater hold at the turn of the century. The market grew, with the self-employed taking a slice of the business, giving this new breed of entrepreneurs a chance to thrive. Using financial surpluses from the activity and/or taking out loans, some of the self-employed "discovered the business". Yet others went one step further and "joined the fray" by either building or renting premises with the idea of using them for children's parties.¹⁵ These entrepreneurs became owners of exclusive premises or salons offering food and beverages, catering to the different tastes of children and adults. Various leisure/recreational activities were laid on and run by specialised staff or monitors in purpose-designed premises.

Market forces meant that the owners had to provide "novelty" and "variety", and meet State regulations covering the activity and the facilities offered. These regulations sought to ensure the services met certain standards. Customer satisfaction and exceeding clients' expectations held out the prospect of profitably replicating the business model, confirming the business' good name and giving it a reputation for "professionalism".

¹⁵ The trajectory of these businesses was altered at the beginning of 2005 by Ordinance 10,840, which turned them into "public entertainment", special provision being made for: "Children's Party Salons". The Córdoba Municipalities Public Entertainment Department (DEP) was charged with administering, controlling, and regulating such premises (Tamagnini and Castro, 2016).

The market "incorporated the desire and the moral obligation to hold children's birthday parties in specific ways". Those who became owners of these businesses did so based on blood relations, friendship, and/or work connections with toy company salesmen and other suppliers of the paraphernalia needed for the parties. Furthermore, such salesmen and suppliers made the entrepreneurs aware of the growing demand for children's parties, kept them in touch with the latest developments, and helped spread word of the business.

Relations with and among teachers also played a major role in the way *salon* owners set up business and differentiated their offerings. We note that academic training courses were particularly effective channels for forging commercial networks that led to entrepreneurial ventures. Friends and colleagues from the fields of physical education, theatre, or nursery and primary education banded together to hold children's birthday parties in suitable premises, which were often but not always State-owned. They differed from the first wave of entrepreneurs (who came from commercial fields). The second wave comprised young Middle-Class professionals keen to offer something different by drawing on their personal capital and know-how in setting up salons, which they promoted as "recreation spaces". Their pitches included the promise of turning a party into a chance to develop children's psycho-motor, cognitive, and affective skills. In addition to "fun", the service now offered the chance of "learning something".

These jobs, they said, boosted their earnings, let them manage their own timetables and "be their own bosses" yet without renouncing their artistic and/or teaching interests. Organising these children's parties was a way for these self-employed entrepreneurs to enter the job market, make ends meet, and let them work in their chosen professions. It seemed the perfect marriage between "business" and "vocation".

The management of the projects run by these youngsters was supported by various social networks. Some of them, such as family networks, were of a more long-lasting nature and gave financial support, providing

collateral against bank loans, and venues (houses, commercial premises) to hold the parties. These networks also forged an *ethos* based on trust, collaboration, loyalty, and the give-and-take needed to run activities and co-ordinate children's parties.

Other networks, such as the complex, varied web of acquaintances, proved less stable but no less important (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2002; García Canclini and Urteza, 2012). Given the flexible production model then sweeping the board, those organising children's parties used these networks to take on a variable number of staff for the occasion. Most of these employees worked without a contract or 'on the side'.

The owners' hiring policies depended on the level of interaction between employees and customers. Those who had no direct contact with customers provided support services, for example cooking and cleaning, where no special physical or communication skills were needed. In these cases, what counted was sheer hard work. By contrast, special characteristics were demanded of monitors who had direct contact with children and who had to make sure they had fun.

Here, the owners hired Middle-Class youngsters, generally under the age of 24, and who showed dynamism, were team players, helpful and responsible.¹⁶ Many salons used women, given that the gentler sex generally is better in dealing with children. Many had special skills, such as make-up artists — something that was highly prized in coming up with more attractive, original offerings.

The staff running parties described themselves in the same terms as their employers: 'fun people', responsible, skilled at organising creative activities, team players, good at motivating others and at delegating tasks. Most said they "loved" their work and felt great empathy toward children.

¹⁶ Most of the salons employed two entertainers for each party. Depending on the size and characteristics of each salon, the same subject would usually run up to three birthday parties one after another.

In some cases, especially in the most commercially successful salons, the owners delegated some of their duties to workers, who played the role of "managers". This organisation allowed the owners to focus on legal and tax matters, advertising, and payroll duties. Sometimes, those owners with most capital outsourced work to specialists to perform these tasks.

The 'managers' represented the owners and dealt with the general co-ordination of the work team holding the party. They also dealt with customers and suppliers, and with starting and ending the activities. Those doing these tasks were relatives or friends of the owner or a senior monitor who had worked in the company and had shown work commitment, leadership ability, and responsibility in the job.

Monitors and managers need to be versatile in holding one children's party after another (one can think of the process as a production line). This is because they had to set the scene, receive guests, entertain the children, alter the length and intensity of the various activities, and deal with unforeseen events (such as arguments/fights). Moreover, entertaining is fast-paced, intensive work requiring a highly-organised, almost mechanical approach to the various stages of a party. The same stages are repeated over and over again for each new party. All those we interviewed said that the techniques and scripts in party salons were learnt by watching and doing. The monitors perform repertoires to elicit given responses by children. Although some 'best practices' are systematised and turned into virtual tutorials to teach new staff how to do the job, the fact is that these jobs are learnt by copying and working with others.¹⁷

Children's entertainers must control their own emotions. However tired and bored they may be, they always have to smile and be friendly when asked questions. That is because they must project happiness and a state of wellbeing at all times. Thus workers in-

¹⁷ The term "best practices", following Lugones and Tamagnini (2014), is taken to mean a set of actions that have given excellent results in a given context and from which similar future results in the same sector.

strumentalise their emotions to maximise commercial profits¹⁸. To the same end, they are always well turned-out. The person charged with the entertainment builds an earnest, professional façade to keep adult customers happy, while showing a more attractive, empathetic side to children. The purpose of the *performances* put on by these “emotion managers” (Blázquez and Castro, 2015) is to “spread happiness” by getting children to take their cue from the entertainer’s emotional state. That is why the entertainer needs to feel what he or she is offering as a product. “If you are not having a good time, if you are not having fun, the children can tell. The key is to enjoy what you are doing”, said one of the entertainers we interviewed.

Some of these youngsters have instrumental relations with the salons. They try to pursue other professional paths, such as music, psychology, theatre, or physical education and the job lets them put their knowledge into practice, gain some experience, and earn money to put towards their university studies. Other youngsters, with less schooling are more interested in the commercial side and stay in the children’s entertainment market with the aim of becoming managers or of setting up their own business. For the first group of youngsters, working as entertainers in children’s party sector is a fleeting stage that helps them put their knowledge into practice and to make some money on the side. For these respondents, it was merely a project for gaining professional and personal experience that could later be turned to good use in other projects. For the second group, the activity offered the chance of learning a trade and later of setting up a business to become entrepreneurs.

Going beyond the projects and goals of the owners, managers, and entertainers, workers’ production of children’s parties demanded the same attributes (relationships with themselves, with clients, and with entrepreneurship) as we found in the *fitness* sector. In both fields, great store was set by: (self-) leadership;

initiative; a ‘can do’ willingness to trouble-shoot; the ability to “roll up one’s sleeves”. Both cases reveal how in committing themselves to the company’s goals, whether in the case of gyms or the party salons, subjects became “self-entrepreneurs” who turned their own subjectivity into a resource and were responsible for managing both their bodies and their emotions.

SOME DIFFERENCES AND THE SAME ‘ATTITUDE’

As we saw, there was a boom in the coverage of *fitness* in the Argentine media in the 1980s and the new activity was spread through the practices of instructors, trainers, and pioneers who set up commercial projects and neighbourhood gyms. Decades later, the activity took the form of a thriving industry, spurred on by the *fitness-management* discourse and the forging of macro business organisations, such as networked clubs.

In the same period, there was a boom in children’s party venues. In this case, the process followed the reverse path (that is, from macro to micro scale). The party services emerged as a complementary but distinctive service in amusement parks and in fast-food chains. As time wore on, families and youngsters jumped on the bandwagon to join an entrepreneurial Middle Class, carving out a market niche solely focusing on children’s entertainment and in the process, greatly boosting the supply of such services.

State authorities drew up regulations covering activities, and premises in these booming sectors. A section on public entertainment was added to cover children’s parties. A special ordinance was drawn up for gyms, regulating their activities at the local level.

State intervention created a legal framework covering the development of these businesses as ‘safe establishments’, legitimising them in the public’s eyes. During this regulation, not all owners had the means to bring their premises up to the standards required by Law.

In addition to setting legal requirements, these ordinances required special actors. In the case of gyms,

¹⁸ Hochschild (1983) used the term “emotional work” to denote a wide range of service jobs that require workers to manipulate their emotions to meet their employer’s requirements.

a physical education instructor had to supervise all activities. In the case of venues for children's parties, there had to be one adult supervisor for every ten children. In both cases, owners complied with the letter of the Law (but not always its spirit) by adapting staff tasks to meet statutory requirements.

Legalisation of businesses led to steady 'professionalisation' of these sectors through the incorporation and creation of semantic and digital know-how and technology. Such measures stemmed from agents working in these cultural contexts. They contributed experience and innovation to boost the efficiency of self-management. In doing so, these agents differentiated themselves in the labour market and boosted the profitability of these businesses.

In the case of *fitness*, this process led to gradual 'formalisation' of the sector. As the industry grew and its organisational processes became more complex, so too did the need for new knowledge, actors, and working methods. The application of management disciplines to fitness enshrined "the future of the profession", conveying the need for business methods and accounting technologies to run gyms. The *management of fitness*, among other things, brought new actors (such as sales and service managers) and models (*fitness* entrepreneurs), who competed with the pioneers' vocational culture.

By contrast, the boom in children's party salons produced a trend towards greater formalisation in this sector. This was reflected in the outsourcing of specialists for administration, the delegation of tasks (co-ordination, team management, and client service), which some owners designated as 'staff managers', and the incorporation of franchise systems for local businesses.

Despite the differences between the two sectors, one can recognise the same 'virtuoso performance' among workers — something that boiled down to 'attitude'. The term meant both everything and nothing and was thus ideal for the symbolic-instrumental order found in gyms and in party salons. "Having the right

attitude" meant being and appearing to be an entrepreneurial subject, being helpful, aware of one's setting, and having a pleasant, seductive manner. It also meant quickly adapting to the flexible management approach found in both fields, to the instability in the local market, and to pulling through successive economic crises at the national level.

This 'attitude' took different forms depending on agents' functions, roles, and positions in these work settings. Owners (in both party salons and gyms), the managers of gym networks, and entrepreneurs were turned into 'personal brands'. Here, one can see a set of specific measures, such as the permanent quest for opportunities and the drawing up of differentiation strategies (both for themselves and for their businesses) to enhance the service offered and its profitability. For these subjects, their "entrepreneurial attitude" was what made the creation and realisation of their projects possible, while their "leadership ability" forged trust and loyalty between their staff and their customers.

These 'self-made' approaches were broadened to include "human resources" in the company, premises, or business. As we noted earlier, entertainers at children's parties and group fitness instructors had to embody a set of social, communication, corporal, and emotional skills, depending on what was needed by each business venture. Workers' subjective involvement in the commercial venture and their service orientation were seen as key to the business' success. This is because these factors had a big impact on product quality and on customer satisfaction. This "attitude" was also important in these subjects' professional career and continued employment. Success, staff, and the company were all rooted in workers' commitment to their tasks and job, the extent to which they identified with what they did, and the adoption of an entrepreneurial lifestyle. They managed and showed this commitment through the overall cultivation of their lives. In pursuing the desired attributes (joy, will, discipline, rhythm, dynamism), they had to transfer these to: others willing to actively consume their services; the workers they managed; the most delicate and intimate of interfaces — their bodies and their

emotions.¹⁹ In an idealised manner, entrepreneurs in gyms and children's parties had to turn themselves into paragons of the subjectivities they were proffering.

As part of this process, the dual perception of time characterising Fordist Capitalism was diluted and with it, the distinctions between work/leisure and production/consumption were blurred. Turning hobbies into entrepreneurial ventures and shifting from amateurs to professionals fostered an entrepreneurial lifestyle in which subjects "with attitude" were always willing to provide a service and permanently train for their next task.

In this scheme of things, leadership becomes the "art of managing bodies" to meet measurable production goals (Abraham, 2000: 35), while social life turns into a "managerial crusade" in which the figure of the entrepreneur appears as the stereotypical hero. The new lifestyle urges each subject to become his own leader. "Attitude" implies that to exercise leadership, the subject must first learn to manage himself if he is to seduce and manage others (customers, students, staff).²⁰

As we saw, through various paths, subjects turn themselves into a company, a "brand" that they seek to position in the market (and not just the job market). As part of this process, the inner man is turned into outer appearance, all thanks to the lightning-fast spread of information through social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram). Under this new order, the production of capital does not merely depend on selling one's labour. Today's Capitalism also exploits human beings' capacity for excitement or *potentia gaudendi* (Preciado, 2014: 41). Instead of ditching The Protestant Work Ethic, the "New Spirit of Capitalism" incorporates and

expands it following the "Weber-Hilton Principle" (Preciado, 2014: 212-214). The serial (and serialised) sinning of young people such as Paris Hilton or the Kardashian sisters does not hide rejection of Capitalism and Puritan ethics but rather shows their willingness to throw body and soul into becoming sex symbols for gain, and — through web cams, CCTV cameras and the like — to turn themselves into a globally transferable image. It is not hedonism and the seeking of worldly pleasures that orients consumerism but rather ruthless management of the excitation-frustration switch. The entrepreneurs in the fitness and children's party fields know that such management demands the whole-hearted participation of workers in job practices and, ideally, their sublimation in the 'flow experience' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1993). "Attitude" as "virtuous performance" reveals this demand. For example, instructors turn themselves into their own brand and company through their image (spread through audiovisual networks and media), portraying a healthy, active lifestyle that requires endless, painstaking cultivation of one's physical appearance. Such cultivation demands punishing daily routines, personal care and aesthetics that form part of the lives and lifestyles of these subjects. The owners of party salons spread contents bearing on children and family life, highlighting messages from customers thanking entertainers for their work.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Within the framework of our research, the cult of the entrepreneur and its various manifestations are revealed in the statements made by those interviewed and in the textual-digital material circulated in the leisure and entertainment sectors studied. That is why this paper delved into the dynamics of the lifestyle through analysis of the *performances* and practices of owners and workers in both the children's party scene and in *fitness gyms*.

The introduction gave a spatial and temporal contextualisation of the politico-economic stage on which the services covered in our case study were developed. We

19 For example, *fitness* instructors and entertainers must manage ill humour, tiredness, and muscle pains to convey joy and get participants to move, dance, and train. They also resort to 'sports drinks' to keep active and prevent dehydration.

20 Here, one should note that following Foucault (2009: 309), the ability to govern the external world supposes that one can first govern oneself.

then went on to examine: (1) the conceptual strands making up the entrepreneurial lifestyle; (2) the cultural and historic dynamics creating these industries selling fitness and fun to Argentina's Middle Class.

The focus highlighted the similarities in both cases but we also noted the differences. By observing both, we saw how an army of ordinary virtuoso entrepreneurs was created. These entrepreneurs were generally young, had to have 'attitude', and harnessed their creativity to cultivate a lifestyle to reproduce their socio-economic model. Despite the enthusiasm of these entrepreneurs, certain employment conditions hindered their unconditional commitment to their

jobs. The obstacles were: sub-contracting/outsourcing and job insecurity; the scant recognition they got for their efforts; the long hours worked; informal employment without a contract. Such conditions led to loss of motivation and weariness, which were penalised by their employers. Even so, these agents of the fun and fitness sectors felt forced to look for other jobs and projects that would allow them to enhance both their quality of life and standard of living. The new entrepreneurial cult (reflected in the fact that some agents described themselves as entrepreneurs) led to more self-governance (tending to foster hegemony) in the production of the subjectivities implied in the formation of a "New Spirit of Capitalism".

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University Managerialism and Scientific Publication

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ABSTRACT

The paper sets out a general approach to university Managerialism and its links with the scientific publication system. In an academic context, techniques and practices bearing on the management field include a specific view on why and how to publish, as well as what ends publication should serve. This work explores the discourse legitimising that view and reconstructs the behavioural and emotional human archetype it enshrines. The empirical materials used are the handbooks, guides and presentations targeting university staff with a view to boosting their publishing output. The paper ends with a critical assessment of the discourse and the archetype's implications in semi-peripheral academic contexts in terms of the production of scientific knowledge.

Keywords: impact factor, academic career, Norbert Elias, Neo-Liberalism, EC3metrics, Emerald, Springer.

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INTRODUCTION

Managing is what managers do. Management is a mix of knowledge and techniques that one applies to one's activities. The knowledge and techniques are usually acquired by taking a higher degree in Business or one of the many MBAs (Master of Business Administration) offered by universities and business schools. The curriculums cover various subjects: Accountancy, Finance, Business Strategy, Human Resources, Law, Marketing, Organisational Theory, Information Systems, and so on. Nevertheless, this pen picture would be incomplete without mentioning the mentality of those who generally run organisations. Management is not a neutral exercise (or a 'technical matter', as some might argue).

It includes values and norms regarding the behaviour and attitudes that are needed and desired in those staffing companies. We give those occupying posts of responsibility and who wield power a variety of names (managers, directors, executives, middle managers, coordinators). These individuals are privileged dispensers of a discourse that not only embodies said values and norms but which also dictates how the organisation and its members should be run. Management therefore inevitably implies individual subjectivism that is bound up with the foregoing technical requirements.

This paper takes up the issue to analyse a specific kind of subjectivism stemming from the managerial-

ist model found in universities and its manifestation in the production of scholarly publications. Today's "publish or perish" dynamic puts a great deal of pressure on those who teach and research at universities. The policy is rammed home by the Impact Factor (IF) for scholarly journals and international indexing of publications by myriad evaluation criteria, and measurements of professional performance and promotion. The purpose of these pages is to explore the publishing side of this archetypal teacher-researcher in relation to the managerialist mind set found in university administration.

To this end, the first part of this paper will characterise the managerialist phenomenon, identifying its main areas of influence to illustrate how it manifests itself in the university setting and what repercussions it has for scholarly publishing.

The second part of the paper focuses on the archetype of teacher-researchers spawned by university Managerialism. This archetype can be reconstructed from the teaching materials offered to teacher-researchers to boost their scientific output, which necessarily entails changing their publishing behaviour. Nowadays, it is common to find universities offering courses, workshops, and seminars to teach faculty how to publish in so-called 'high-impact journals', and thereby tailor their publishing habits to fit the desired pattern.

I consider that such teaching materials offer a good source for analysing the kind of subjectivism demanded of teacher-researchers. Here, I employ an approach similar to that developed by Norbert Elias to analyse the codes of conduct employed throughout the civilising process, reconstructed from manuals on courtesy, etiquette, and manners (Elias, 1987). Thus the aim is to study the code used in the setting of scientific publication. This code can be reconstructed using the guides, texts, and presentations found in the aforementioned courses, workshops, and seminars. The choice of the material analysed is shaped by my professional experience of the subject matter. My academic career began in Spanish universities and I currently work in Portuguese ones. Accordingly, no inferences should

be drawn as to the specificity or generalisability of the findings. That said, the material reveals a vision of scientific publication that is not confined to Spain or Portugal. Ambiguities and tensions regarding this vision are to be found in the academic communities of both countries.

Three dimensions are distinguished in analysing the aforementioned material. The first dimension bears on 'why', which is to say the general arguments justifying and legitimising the need to publish and what is considered 'the right way' of going about it. The second dimension bears on 'how', that is, the method to be employed in producing a study worthy of publication. The third dimension focuses on 'goals', covering the broader purpose of scientific publishing. In short, the analysis follows a simple 'question and answer' format. This approach breaks down the overall prescriptions of the training materials underpinning the behavioural and emotional code on scholarly publication.

The third part of the paper critically analyses said code. The archetypal teacher-researcher espoused by the code leads to certain scientific publication practices whose consequences are undesirable. These outcomes stem from the intellectual theft implied by treating research as a mainly individual activity and that is thus devoid of any socio-structural frame.

MANAGERIALISM: CHARACTERISATION AND PRESENCE IN UNIVERSITIES

Following Alonso and Fernández Rodríguez (2013), Managerialism is the ideology of those who wield power in organisations. It is the set of beliefs, ideas and values bearing on the intended effective governance of an organisation. Although the phenomenon is more often studied in the business field, it is not confined to this sphere and is applicable to any complex organisation (Fernández Rodríguez, 2007a). Managerialist ideology has historically been manifested through various kinds of discourse that have shifted with changes in the Capitalist system and in its accumulation cycles (Fernández Rodríguez, 2007b). These discourses take

various forms (books and management manuals, the training given by universities and business schools, events, lectures, tutorials, talks), all of which are used to pass on the contents and guidelines of whatever happen to be the management models in vogue.

In general, the main tenets of Managerialism are:

1. Organisations, regardless of their purpose and nature, can be managed using the knowledge, procedures, and techniques provided by the Management Sciences (Klikauer, 2015).
2. Such knowledge, procedures, and techniques are legitimised by their suitability for ensuring organisational effectiveness, efficiency, competitiveness, sustainability, flexibility, resilience, and excellence, given that these are the desiderata commonly preached by organisations. That is to say, the legitimacy of this know-how lies in the extent to which it is capable of reaching these goals (Klikauer, 2015).
3. Organisational settings pose challenges and limitations that require the use of management know-how, procedures, and techniques. Management know-how gives these settings different features that stem from historic changes in Capitalist profitability cycles. At different junctures, these settings have been seen as ones that are: scientifically predictable and calculable (the Taylorist-Fordist Model); balanced and prosperous thanks to moderation through the Keynesian Social Pact (Human Relations Model); Dynamic and Flexible (the Japanese Differentiation and Quality Model). The model that currently holds sway is one that stresses dynamism, innovation, and lauds the ever-changing nature of the market and the uncertainty engendered by a fiercely competitive setting. It shuns stability and routine. This constant change is sold as an open door to endless opportunities spawned by uncertainty. There is talk of a global, networked 'Knowledge Economy'. This characterisation stems from a set of attributes that organisations

set great store by: a pro-active, entrepreneurial attitude; leadership; innovation; cutting out red tape; teamwork; belonging to a corporate culture; boosting employability through the projects and opportunities an organisation offers its members (Chiapello and Fairclough, 2002; Alonso and Fernández, 2012, 2013).

4. Management knowledge, procedures, and techniques are mainly applied in business settings — it being understood that these are best for dealing with people and as a model of social relations. It is assumed that this management know-how is particularly effective in Free Market settings.

Managerialism's tenets are inevitably abstract. Their materialisation in a given organisation gives one a better idea of their scope. Bearing in mind the purpose of this paper, it is time to focus on universities and the managerialist vision found there so that one can deduce what approach to scientific output and publication has been adopted.

Universities' managerialist vision is based on the setting within which these institutions operate — one that is defined by the positive link between Science and Technology, and economic development. The importance of this link is highlighted by international bodies, such as the European Commission and the key role assigned to universities in reaching the goals set out in The Lisbon Strategy (CCE, 2005). Economic development fostering social progress is based on aligning knowledge with its industrial and economic application — that is to say, the soundness of the "knowledge-industry-market" sequence (De Angelis and Harvie, 2009; Santiago *et al.*, 2013; Marugán and Cruces Aguilera, 2013).

In this setting and in keeping with this role, universities are seen as institutions that compete in a global market to attract students, teachers, and researchers. Those that are successful in this endeavour boost the economic value of the knowledge they produce, their academic reputations and hence their chances of getting funding. The end result is that they raise

their market share, unlike their less successful competitors. The setting up of a European Higher Education Area under The Bologna Process begun in 1999 is an example of the mercantile approach to the university field. In such a setting, universities compete to attract students and seek convergence in qualifications in order to meet the demands of the job market, draw up learning quantification and certification schemes (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System — ECTS) and seek academic and geographic mobility among all those institutions taking part.

Universities' financial and budgetary autonomy are key parts in this mercantile configuration. Given that universities are market agents, their viability cannot depend solely on State support. Their ability to successfully compete will provide access to new sources of funding (Lorenz, 2012; Hyde *et al.*, 2013). The competitive dynamic fosters and requires performance measurement methods allowing comparisons to be drawn with other universities. Rankings stand out among these methods, in which institutions are ranked in order from best to worst, based on criteria such as: scientific output; the prestige of their faculty members; prizes; number of patents; public relevance; turnover; growth in the size of the student body, and so on. This auditing culture (Strathern, 2000) and its obsession with measurement are enshrined in *Times Higher Education*, which is produced by *The Times* newspaper group, and the Jiao Jiong University Ranking (better known as 'The Shanghai Ranking'). These two rankings reflect the state of the Education Market and the relative positions of their participants. They guide students, faculty and researchers in their decision-making. In a nutshell, they are tools summarising information for those operating in the university market.

'Excellence' is the symbolic goal of all this competition yet it is hard to pin down. It is usually based on a hotchpotch of criteria such as: quality, distinction, reputation, the relevance of the knowledge produced. It is The Holy Grail of the institution's activities and any university worth its salt trots it out in all its public statements (Gómez and Jódar, 2013; Herzog *et al.*,

2015). Seen in this light, it is little wonder that universities have become a happy hunting ground for Managerialism. In the context of competition among institutions, the generation of one's own funds, putting a market price on knowledge, and battling for market share, management knowledge and practices are presented as being the best option for attaining these goals in an ever-changing, volatile setting. In other words, managerial knowledge and practices are passed off as vital for any university operating in The Knowledge Economy.

This brings in its train a highly specific notion of what academic duties are (Kehm and Teichler, 2013). Scholars are expected to: boost their output of papers in high-impact journals; run projects that attract funding and boost market reputation and value; lead teams; train future researchers; draw up activities for transferring know-how to the industrial and business sectors. While not all these demands may be made at the same time, it is not unusual for this to be the case. Ironically, as some authors have noted, faculty members are expected to be busy 'one-man bands' (Villasante, 2016). Although this is now the dominant discourse when one thinks of universities, teaching, and research, there are others that resist this bleak vision. This resistance involves conceiving of the university as a repository of knowledge, and of faculty members as fostering a critical, civic awareness of the world. Such ideas are clearly at odds with the managerialist orientation and other discourses uneasily cohabit with it, as one can appreciate in the self-presentation universities make on their web sites (Santiago *et al.*, 2013), or in faculty members' practices (Anderson, 2008). Yet attempts to sweep such resistance aside cannot hide the managerialist demands made of individuals in terms of scientific output and publication:

1. A big part of the assessment of and scope for professional advancement depends on publishing in high-impact scientific journals as identified by *Web of Science* or *Scopus*. Space does not permit a detailed explanation of the rationale underlying these data bases (Ampudia de Haro, 2017) or

the Impact Factor (Archambault and Larivière, 2009). For the purposes of our argument, one simply needs to bear in mind that indexing and the Impact Factor (IF) are seen as indicators of research quality and relevance. These indicators are used to measure research efforts and to take management, planning, and funding decisions on such activities (Fernández-Ríos and Rodríguez-Díaz, 2014).

2. These indicators are built up from bibliometric data and are an important factor in drawing up university rankings and classifications, which in turn are used to promote and convey universities' prestige.
3. Higher rankings also raise the likelihood that research will prove more profitable and thus boost the chances of gaining new resources to fuel this 'virtuous cycle'.

A discursive nexus is established between the global context of 'The Knowledge Economy', the mercantile value of science, efficient knowledge management, the Impact Factor, and scientific output as indicators of market quality and value. In this sequence, the managerialist approach determines what scientific output is relevant and which journals are important. This not only means intervening in scholars' publishing practices but also in their values. The end result is that academics' natures and judgement become grist to the keen competition among universities and the goals stemming from it.

THE TEACHER-RESEARCH AS HIGH-IMPACT PUBLISHER

There is an intellectual style and emotional prototype in managerialist academe. Several authors have covered this subject (Hicks and Potter, 1991; Burrows, 2012; Gómez and Jódar, 2013; Fernández-Ríos and Rodríguez-Díaz, 2014; Goyanes, 2015), whether through qualitative methodologies, theoretical contributions, or general reflection. The path explored in this paper is an examination of the prescriptive discourse on

scientific publication, reconstructed using the training materials given to faculty members with a view to boosting their publications in high-impact journals. Said discourse determines the 'why' and 'how' of publication and what should be done with published papers. In other words, it attempts to both establish a publishing routine and to reshape the subjectivism of the individual so that he or she can be turned into a teacher-researcher-academic publisher.

The materials are used in seminars, conferences, courses, and workshops. They offer ideas, recommendations, and methods for boosting scientific productivity. Sometimes the materials are drawn from the main scientific publishing houses, which give training in collaboration with universities. On other occasions, they are provided by organisations specialising in scientific evaluation and bibliometric analysis. The selection I made of the materials is not systematic but rather reflects my professional experience. I have taken part as a student in various sessions of this kind and therefore have first-hand knowledge of the materials used. I would like to make these materials available to all readers. That is why I have chosen similar materials to those I was provided with but that are freely available over the Internet. Similarly, to show the cross-cutting nature of such materials, I combine sources published in Spain and in Portugal. In general, the scientific productivity discourse covering publication is trans-national in nature, although there may be local adaptations to specific academic cultures (Blagojevic and Yair, 2010).

The materials analysed are briefly described below:

- *Cómo publicar en revistas científicas de impacto* [How to Publish in High-Impact Scholarly Journals], by Daniel Torres-Salinas (2013), is a manual containing suggestions and recommendations for said purpose. The manual incorporates a set of activities developed by the EC3metrics company (which sprang from the EC3 research group *Evaluación de la Ciencia y la Comunicación Científica* [Evaluation of Science and Scientific Communication], Universidad de Granada). This company, as its web page shows, offers services covering:

the evaluation of research; scientific publishing houses and journals; advice on requesting sabbatical years for research; bibliometric training; scientific communication.

– *Informe APEI sobre publicación en revistas científicas* [APEI Report on the Publication of Scientific Journals], by Tomàs Baiget and Daniel Torres-Salinas (2013), is also conceived as a manual on what to bear in mind when publishing in high-impact scientific journals.

– Three initiatives forming part of the training imparted by Universidade de Aveiro (Portugal) to authors and researchers. In this case, those leading the publication workshops are representatives of some of the main publishing houses for international scientific journals. One of these is Springer, imparting two sessions — *Publishing Scientific Research* (Hawkins, 2012) and *Springer Updates: E-Books, journals and publishing tips* (Alkema, 2015). The other is Emerald, with its *Guía para publicar* [Guide to Publishing] (Tofolo, 2013). Springer, Emerald, Taylor & Francis, Sage, and Wiley-Blackwell between them publish no less than 66 % of the papers listed in *Web of Science*, which is owned by the Thomson-Reuters Group. In 2013, and covering just Social Science publications, Emerald published 16.4 % and Springer 7.1 % of all papers, percentages 4.4 and 21.3 times greater than their respective shares in 1990 (Larivière *et al.*, 2015). In both cases, we again find recommendations and instructions on publication in high-impact indexed journals, as well as a commercial plug on the two publishing houses' academic portfolios.

In reconstructing the code used in scientific publication, I pose the following three questions: (1) Why publish?; (2) How should one publish?; (3) What should one do with what has been published? As noted in the introduction to this paper, this approach is similar to that used by Norbert Elias in his work *The Civilization Process*. Taking this tack reveals the key points of the behavioural and subjectivism

model sought for application in academe. Although this model is a salient feature, it is just another component of the academic framework within which teacher-researchers operate. Meeting the code's prescriptions does not only depend on an individual's hypothetical merits. Here, we need to consider the set of structural factors driving compliance, including: the conditions for and opportunities to pursue an academic career; the procedures for evaluating teaching and research activities (which are inevitably linked with said career); the hegemony of English and of theoretical models from the English-speaking world. As we shall see further on, subjectivism is not only shaped by a given code. Although it is not the main goal of this paper, socio-structural conditions should always feature in any explanation of subjectivism in the academic world.

Why publish?

Publishing is never understood in a general sense. Rather, it basically refers to publication in high-impact journals. Outside this frame, publication has another purpose, which has nothing to do with determining the author's quality or productivity. This is so because: "Most scientific policies and evaluation of scientific performance rest on JCR-listed journals (Journal Citation Report) and Thomson Reuters listed publications" (Torres-Salinas, 2013: 25).

Having clarified this point, two arguments can be made for such publishing. The first is that high-impact journals are associated with positive values. The second is that publishing in them does a researcher's career a power of good.

As to the first argument, the list of 'HI' (High Impact) journals is taken as an indicator of the quality of a publication and, by extension, of the quality of the papers appearing therein: "There can be no doubt that impact factor is taken as the yardstick of a journal's quality by many academic communities" (Hawkins, 2015: 27). This judgement arises from the competitive dynamics prevailing when it comes to scholarly publication. Put baldly, a researcher's stock is greatly boosted by publishing in top journals.

This in turn spurs him to make more submissions, giving the journal editors a bigger pool from which to select outstanding papers. Competition thus acts as a qualitative filter (Torres-Salinas, 2013: 21). As to the second argument, the following quotation illustrates the positive dynamics set in motion by the publication of an HI paper, and that lead to printing of one's work in ever more prestigious journals:

[Publication in scholarly journals benefits both the researcher and the institution he works for. The researcher has a better career and will gain recognition as an expert in his field, which implies a virtuous circle of promotions, access to competitive examination and thesis tribunals, sitting on the editorial committees of scientific journals and congresses, gaining funding and staffing for his research group or lab, which in turn spawns new studies and publications in leading journals] (Baiget and Torres-Salinas, 2013: 9).

This 'virtuous circle' — on which Toffolo (2013: 13) and Hawkins (2012: 4) concur — provides a compelling set of reasons for publishing. From this standpoint, any reason given for not publishing in the charmed circle of high-impact journals is dismissed as inconsistent, no matter how reasonable it may be. Thus defending one's own language in the face of the growing sway of English; tackling local or national themes that international journals neither understand nor are willing to embrace; avoiding an endless wait between submitting a paper and receiving the evaluation; insisting that books and book chapters are more valuable than a paper in a high-impact journal are all arguments that are given short shrift (Torres-Salinas, 2013: 31-32). The managerialist response to such objections is a depressingly familiar one: "Change the focus; adapt to the international 'standard'; change your strategy; publish less overall and publish more in HI journals; change the subjects covered; Seek relevant issues in the field" (Torres-Salinas, 2013: 33).

How should one publish?

One should publish so as to maximise the positive effects of publication. These effects are initially linked

with the article's appearance in a high-impact journal and the consequent benefits for the author in terms of recognition, prestige, and career advancement. To this end, one must join or set up teams with various researchers given that specialised division of labour and cross-review may boost one's publication output. The only point that needs to be decided beforehand is the order in which the authors will appear in the publication (Torres-Salinas, 2013: 37-38, 41).

One should also remember to use English because it is the international language of Science (Hawkins, 2012: 6), which means papers have to be reviewed by native speakers specialised in the field. Poor writing raises editors' hackles: "Journals simply hate badly-written papers and have a special loathing for those written by Spaniards" (Torres-Salinas, 2013: 73). Then comes the moment to choose the journal in which the paper is to appear. Given that the problem boils down to offsetting a tiny number of papers with publication in the highest-ranked journals, one needs to be very careful in placing one's bets (Toffolo, 2013: 19). Furthermore, one needs to take editorial advice and timing into account and never choose those journals whose impact factors are waning (Torres-Salinas, 2013: 48).

The choice of bibliographic sources also needs painstaking care. First of all, it has to be up to date and provide lots of scope for spawning citations, which in turn will boost the journal's impact index and the researcher's reputation (Hawkins, 2012: 14). The sources must be both relevant and appropriate. That is why one: "should avoid exotic citations of little-known local authors"; "cite articles on the subject that have appeared in the chosen journal"; "not omit citations by one's competitors (for they may well be one's reviewers)"; "avoid lots of references to books, manuals, or textbooks" (Torres-Salinas, 2013: 61).

What should one do with what has been published?

Scientific Publication does not stop when a paper sees the light of day. That is because this marks the beginning of a process to make both the research results and the author better known. In other words, the idea is to raise the author's profile so that he can be seen as

someone churning out research (Toffolo, 2013: 53-55). *Discoverability* is the buzz-word used to capture this idea (Alkema, 2015: 12), which basically means the author can be tracked down by any search engine. At the same time, *discoverability* is linked to how hard the author blows his own trumpet. Here, he needs to come up with initiatives to explain what he does and what he publishes. The recommended media tools for this thrilling task are: personal web pages; participation in blogs and social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn); uploading presentations used in classes and congresses to the Slideshare site; keeping one's Curriculum Vitae up to date on institutional web pages. At the same time, he should not overlook academic networks and it is recommended that he have profiles on ORCID, *Google Scholar*, *Researcher ID*, *Scopus*, and *Academia.eu* (Baiget and Torres-Salinas, 2013: 87-88). Last but not least, he needs to stay abreast of the reactions to his paper by following citations on the aforementioned academic networks, and keep an eye on its social repercussions by following the number of 'Likes' on Facebook and Twitter. In a nutshell, "one has to bear in mind that the container, wrapping, support, or presentation — that is to say, the formal aspects — are just as important as the content. Indeed, we do not dare say so but we are tempted to say such aspects are more important than the content" (Baiget and Torres-Salinas, 2013: 90).

The 'why, how, and what' of the matter not only lead to a given pattern of behaviour and decision-making but also require a specific kind of subjectivism and way of regulating it. In this respect, the adaptation made by Torres-Salinas (2013) of Stephen Covey's 1989 classic self-help Bible, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* to come up with *Los siete hábitos de las personas altamente efectivas* [*The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Researchers*] is paradigmatic, clear and explicit:

The first three habits concern the researcher's private sphere: take a pro-active attitude instead of just hoping that "something will turn up" (Torres-Salinas, 2013: 10). This boils down to: (a) proposing articles, debates, and activities; (b) setting objectives and 'visualising' them so that they 'materialise'; (c) organising one's

times and tasks through Covey's matrix, which distinguishes between the following categories: 'important', 'urgent', 'unimportant', and 'not urgent'.

The next three habits fall within the researcher's public sphere. The first involves adopting a 'win-win' attitude instead of trying to hog the limelight in the research group. Above all, "publication should be seen as a victory for the group" (Torres-Salinas, 2013: 11). The second requires "understanding and being understood", in which he recommends reviewing one's opinions and accepting alternative views. The third habit is exploiting synergies in the division of labour within the group. The last habit — 'sharpening the saw' — enshrines all six of the preceding ones. The expression is lifted from Covey's *magnum opus* and refers to an apocryphal story of a weary lumberjack who spends five hours hewing down trees but who refuses to sharpen his saw because it would break his rhythm (Covey, 2003: 176). The 'sharpening' metaphorically alludes to the need to constantly innovate within the four basic dimensions of human nature, namely: Physical; Spiritual; Mental; Socio-Emotional. Applying this folksy homily to the field of publication, the highly effective researcher 'sharpen his saw' by: keeping abreast of developments in his field; reading scientific papers; learning new methods, techniques, and languages (Torres-Salinas, 2013: 12). Taken as a whole, these recommendations constitute a fully-fledged programme for regulating researchers' behaviour when it comes to publishing scientific papers.

CRITICISMS OF THE MODEL

The prescriptive discourse on scientific publication reveals a model of the teacher-cum-researcher-cum-publisher that enshrines four key features: (1) strategic self-hetero-vigilance; (2) utilitarian publishing rationality; (3) intellectual ritualism; (4) publishing self-absorption.

1. 'Strategic self-hetero-vigilance' is based upon bibliometric indicators. Among these indicators,

the impact factor of journals and the number of citations of one's paper allow one to calculate or estimate the relevance of both one's own and others' scientific output. This in turn lets one plan one's behaviour (Burrows, 2012; Berg *et al.*, 2016) and exercise reflexive control over one's publishing habits — which is a prerequisite for accumulating scientific capital (Bourdieu, 2008). This should be seen as a synthesis of technical knowledge and intellectual authority, giving the fortunate soul acquiring such wisdom the ability to decide (*vis-à-vis* his peers) what is or is not a legitimate practice or object of study. Furthermore, it allows him to increase his room for manoeuvre in the regimented university world and to plan his assault on the commanding heights of academe. The scope for manoeuvre is greatly boosted when the 'virtuous publication cycle' kicks in. Put another way, the path beginning with the publication of a paper in a high-impact journal is a rose-strewn one, leading to promotion, competitive examination and thesis defence boards, publishing boards, funding and staffing, and to the publication of further papers to build a bulwark against one's competitors.

2. 'Utilitarian publishing rationality' refers to maximising one's publication efforts. One can see it as an imperative that can be summed up as ensuring that one's actions boost the impact of one's publications. Such maximisation involves being able to estimate or even calculate the impact produced by publication, or in the vivid expression used by Alvesson (2012), the adoption of an 'ROIsearch mind set' (the term being a blend of the acronym 'ROI' (Return on Investment) — used in the business world — and 'research'). The term alludes to the 'why' and 'how' of publication and to the fate of what has been published. The purpose here is to decide the extent to which the researcher's investment in time and effort yields profitable returns.

Yet this kind of mind set contradicts certain institutional postulates characterising the classic scientific *ethos*: communalism; universalism; disinterest (McFarlane and Cheng, 2008). Briefly, *Communalism* means scientific knowledge as a common good that is freely accessible by the whole community. *Universalism* enshrines the notion that a researcher (regardless of his cultural and social background) can contribute to knowledge creation through the assiduous application of the scientific approach and scientific methods. Last, *Disinterest* is the suppression of personal preferences in validating or rejecting the conclusions of a research paper, basing one's judgement purely on the application of scientific methods and rigour. In stark contrast to this triad of values, 'utilitarian publication rationality' nurtures an 'ROIsearch' (sic) mind set, individualism, particularism, and self-interest. **Individualism** is linked to powerful incentives — reputation, recognition, career advancement, funding — that drive maximisation of the personal impact of publications against a background of fierce competition. It thus challenges the notion and value that knowledge belongs to everyone and is thus the sole preserve of no one. *Particularism* is linked to the specific conditions of those researchers who, for geographical, linguistic, or material reasons, occupy the commanding heights in the world flow of scientific publications. In other words, the point of departure for those either publishing or wishing to publish varies greatly — an issue I will cover in greater detail in the next section. Last, *Interest* refers to the opportunistic or 'strategic' choice of themes, methods, and approaches to *maximise* the impact of publications — something that leads to a spate of fashionable 'burning issues' and endless 'me-too' citations in which the goal is to jump on a bandwagon (Espeland and Sauder, 2007; Fernández-Ríos and Rodríguez-Díaz, 2014).

3. *Intellectual ritualism* refers to the standardisation associated with scientific publication. The 'why', 'how', and 'what to do with outputs' aspects of scholarly publication cover a highly restrictive,

uniform set of procedures whose sole purpose is to get papers into high-impact journals. This carries the obvious risk of spawning mass production of papers whose structure, drafting, language, focus, method, and theme are most likely to favour publication in such journals. Here, one can speak of *ritualism* insofar as said standardisation ignores what should be the primary purpose of publication (namely, communicating knowledge) and instead fosters sausage-machine production of ‘me too’ scientific papers.

4. *Publishing self-absorption* bears on the number of publications and citations as a yardstick of scientific distinction. Such activities are accompanied by a host of steps whose purpose is none other than to highlight the researcher and to propel the number of references to his *oeuvre* to dizzying heights. The peril here is that the researcher will be turned into little more than a PR specialist adept at banging his own drum and at puffing up the importance of his work. This over-the-top personal promotion nurtures the kind of ‘super-star mentality’ that is clearly discernible in the individual marketing initiatives peddled to researchers (Alvesson, 2012).

The aforementioned four dimensions make up a model of the teacher-researcher-publisher that draws on specific individual abilities for maximising publication opportunities, self-promotion, and self-evaluation. At the same time, characterisation of the academic setting as competitive and in which the rules are the same for everyone leads to a kind of ‘reciprocal vigilance’. This is where *hetero-evaluation* comes into play, which is to say the external monitoring of publication behaviour and snap judgements and opinions on the scientific and reputation value of the output. The accent is therefore placed on the individual and his willingness to accept and cultivate the prescribed pattern of scientific publication.

Nevertheless, such a model betrays the elements I consider vital for maintaining an informed debate on scientific publication. Approaching the issue from

the narrow perspective of the individual researcher means sweeping aside the socio-structural framework within which research takes place. The recommended mix of individual action and pro-active research has a lot to do with the position various countries and their respective scientific systems occupy in the world academic pecking-order (Alatas, 2003; Beigel, 2013). In this scheme of things, the system in The Iberian Peninsula is clearly lower down the pecking order, which is headed by The United States and The United Kingdom, and with The Netherlands and Germany well-placed in some branches of knowledge (Heilbron, 2014). Changing the analogy, the US and UK are at the centre of a system that pushes other countries to the edges.

At the centre:

- a. the knowledge produced is linked to questions and issues bearing on central societies, thus the English-speaking world’s theoretical models and traditions are given priority (Blagojevic and Yair, 2010);
- b. universities and research centres forge very close relationships with the main scientific publishers;
- c. English is the hegemonic language in the field of scientific publication and communication (Hamel, 2007);
- d. one finds the entities drawing up the main impact indicators, university rankings, and indexing systems.

On the periphery:

- a. there is a process of mediation and channelling of knowledge produced at the centre to adapt it to the languages used in the periphery (Bennett, 2014a);
- b. there are movements emulating those at the centre, replicating and internationalising their

publication patterns. The attraction exercised by the centre helps legitimise the teacher-researcher-publisher model. One of the main drivers of this emulation is the wholesale swallowing of the theoretical models and traditions found at the centre. As a result, local models and traditions are pushed into the background and are dismissed as little more than quaint irrelevances;

- c. there are also movements that are repelled by and distance themselves from the centre. This has to do with the precarious position of peripheral universities and research centres compared with those at the centre. Language barriers only make things worse because money has to be spent on translation, shrinking the chances of getting research funding. Here, one should also recall that the themes and objects researched bear on the national and/or local setting and are thus not easily ‘internationalised’. The problem becomes even more acute when ‘internationalisation’ is interpreted through the blinkered view of the English-speaking world (Blagojevic and Yar, 2010).

The prescriptive discourse on scientific publication tells us: (1) to adapt to the ‘international standard’; (2) to maximise impact; (3) of the wonders of the ‘virtuous cycle’ to be found in publication and self-promotion. Here, the discourse links the need to be pro-active and effective, which only blinds us to the socio-structural aspect of research publication (Ampudia de Haro, 2017). Including this aspect makes one wonder whether adopting the above discourse, practices, and publication model will do anything to ease tensions between the centre and the periphery. Even more importantly, what is passed off as a global competition on ‘a level playing-field’ is anything but. The fact is that the game is rigged, favouring a few who, moreover, are in a position to influence the rules (Meriläinen, 2008). In both cases, I consider that the model will do nothing to narrow the gulf between the centre and the periphery, or to foster fair competition. That is because its prescriptions overlook the socio-structural nature of research and focus excessively on the individual.

CONCLUSIONS

From the Neo-Foucauldian view of governance (Rose and Miller, 1992; De Marinis, 1999), taking an individual-based approach leads to a political rationale that permeates this publication model. Here, ‘political rationale’ alludes to a set of goals sought by those wielding power, to the principles legitimising that power, and the concept of the nature of the individuals so governed. In this case, it is a Neo-Liberal creed that tries to align goals with the supposed capacity for self-governance enjoyed by the individual as an autonomous being (Hyndess, 1997).

If we apply this scheme to the subject of this paper, one can readily identify the goals sought by managerialist governance in both the university and scientific publishing spheres. Against a background of competition, the quest for excellence is based on financial assessments of knowledge and the return on investment regarding reputation, gaining market share, and attracting funding and other resources. Following this line of reasoning, publication is one of the tools serving such ends. However, one should recall that it is a highly idiosyncratic way of looking at publication and the behaviour it entails. While we may assume that individuals are autonomous, managerialist governance aims and publication training clearly condition this autonomy. From that point onwards, although a researcher may act autonomously, he will nevertheless have accepted the precept underlying the offer, inextricably linking it with the prospect of maintaining or advancing his career. Turning down the offer will be construed as an unwillingness to adapt, an excuse, a refusal to accept personal and/or career development, and in general, as ‘the wrong attitude’. Seen like this, the Neo-Liberal rationale for this model of publication wholly overlooks the socio-structural aspect of the phenomenon and places most of the burden on individual initiative.

Such an approach dooms many researchers seeking publication to endless frustration. Yet how could this be otherwise when the recommended behaviour patterns presuppose sufficient resources (but that are

seldom available in the real world and then only to the favoured few)? Bennett (2014b) uses an ironic and apt phrase to describe this situation — “Butler Syndrome”. Here, he alludes to identification with a hypothetical upper class, in this case represented by ‘the centre’. This identification provides a veneer of academic and scientific respectability *vis-à-vis* a supposed lower class, represented by the periphery. On the one hand, there is a desire and plan to join the centre — something that would yield the researcher scientific capital, legitimacy, access to science management, and financial and reputational advantages in academe. On the other hand, there are the structural hurdles: less funding and serious organisational shortcomings, working in languages other than English (Cabral, 2007), and the fact that part of the research agenda covers local and/or national themes (here, the Social Sciences make little sense unless they are relevant to local society). All of these hurdles make it hard to square academic publishing with the notion of ‘internationalisation’ employed in the English-speaking world.

There are alternatives to the Neo-Liberal rationale that recognise both socio-structural limitations and their own limitations. To cite those I am most familiar with: Open Access Publishing (Sádaba Rodríguez, 2014); the challenge to high-impact journals as a criterion for evaluation, funding, contracting, and career advancement — a critical position enshrined in the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA, 2013); moderation in the use of present

schemes — recommended in The Leiden Manifest; the open reflection made by the *Indocentia* group on universities and the system for evaluating teaching staff (Fernández-Savater, 2016). None of these belittle scientific publication but neither do they leave evaluation of faculty quality at the mercy of supposedly objective bibliometric methods. Eugene Garfield, who is often attributed with giving birth to impact factors, says the following of his brainchild:

The use of impact factors to evaluate people has inherent dangers. In an ideal world, the evaluators would read each paper and come up with their own views (...) Most people do not have time to read all relevant papers and even if they did, their views would be condemned in the commentaries of those reading their papers (Garfield, 2006: 93).

Regarding inherent dangers, I believe that the archetype of the teacher-researcher-publisher and the intellectual theft that it is party to illustrate these perils. We live in an imperfect world but that is no excuse for not doing a great deal better. Debating the Neo-Liberal rationale governing managerialist discourse and finding ways to tackle structural inequalities and shortcomings could improve things no end. Here, I would take issue with Garfield and argue that any alternative programme needs to be based on a simple but ambitious premise. It is this, that researchers should have the time and the will to read and then be able to decide what is relevant and what is not.

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Woman, manage your life! The Life-Work Balance Discourse in Popular Management Literature Aimed at Women*

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ABSTRACT

Management posts have traditionally been held by men. Consequently, the business management normative model has dictated the rules women should follow. Among other reasons, this is why the issue of work-life balance has been sidelined in popular management literature. In keeping with these male-dictated rules, it was always blithely assumed that the manager's role was exclusively linked with his public presence — in other words, family and care issues were left out of the equation. However, as more and more women have become managers, new issues have shaped the management agenda.

In this paper, we study how the issue of work-life balance has been incorporated in popular management literature for women. We are particularly interested in identifying whether the discourse on women's presence in management enshrines: (1) a transformative, egalitarian vision (requiring policies fostering work-life balance), or (2) a view that sees women's traditional household roles as something belonging to the private sphere, leaving them disadvantaged and bereft of support as they pursue their management careers.

Keywords: management literature, gender perspective, work-life balance.

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INTRODUCTION

Analysing popular Management literature is one of the best ways to familiarise oneself with the business management discourse in today's Neo-Liberal society. The main reason this is so is because such works reflect

and spread the most popular management fashions (Collins, 2000; Clark, 2004). To the extent that corporate managers consume industrial quantities of such literature, one way or another the discourses in these works end up shaping business management and imbuing it with certain values, principles of action, and rationales.

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We should also bear in mind that business management's ideology forms part of the discourses in the economic, political, technological, social, and cultural spheres (Fernández Rodríguez and Gantman, 2011, p. 161; Fernández Rodríguez and Medina-Vicent, 2017). That is why it is worth seeking the keys to today's discourse on work-life balance, and to identify what companies have to say on the issue. Managers are the people charged with interpreting and applying management principles (Gowler and Legge, 1986) to matters such as the ones covered in this paper. Hence the importance of uncovering the kinds of discourses on life-work balance found in management literature aimed at women. Here, one needs to consider that the underlying premises found in the sub-genre influence management practice and thus condition the presence of women in companies — especially in senior posts.

We therefore look at the management literature focusing specifically on women when dealing with the issue of work-life balance. One should bear in mind that while most management literature is theoretically neutral, it nevertheless caters to an overwhelmingly male audience and therefore does not broach the matter. That is to say, the segment of management literature aimed at women has only begun to tackle the life-work balance issue. That in itself is a clear sign of the highly masculine bias in the management world.¹ In this context, before embarking on our analysis we need to briefly cover the phenomenon of management literature aimed at women. To begin with, one should recall that the business sphere has traditionally been a man's world and thus many of its structures and leadership models are male ones (Baxter, 2010; Hearn and Collinson, 1996). This trait is reflected in the popular management literature aimed at women (Kelan, 2008).

¹ According to data from Spain's *Instituto de la Mujer y para la Igualdad de Oportunidades* [Institute for Women and Equal Opportunities], specifically data from *Mujeres en Cifras-Poder y Toma de Decisiones-Poder Económico* [Women in Figures: Power, Decision-making, Economic Power] in 2018, women made up just 2.90 % of CEOs in Spain's IBEX-35 index of the biggest publicly-quoted companies, and a meagre 14.30 % of management posts. These figures have remained static since 2014.

From our point of view, the gradual incorporation of women in management posts is a prerequisite for the appearance of women's management literature (Orser and Elliott, 2015). If the target audience for managerial literature mainly comprises managers — as Pagel and Westerfelhaus (2005: 421) findings bear out — the logical deduction is that incorporating the gender variable leads to segmentation of the reader base precisely because it now includes women managers. Given this situation, the target audience of popular management literature over the last few decades has shifted to make managers identify with corporate story-telling.

In a nutshell, business is still mainly a man's world, especially when it comes to senior management. It is therefore little wonder that popular management literature reflects this. This bias is self-evident in the way men make up the ranks of management gurus (Clark and Salaman, 1996), and the scant attention paid to gender issues in the management field (Collinson and Hearn, 1994). Nevertheless, in books targeting career women, we find the emergence of issues that were hitherto seen as matters solely for women — including caring for home and family. That is why we must look at management literature specifically catering to career women if we are to tackle the discourse on life-work balance. By contrast, general management literature gives no clues on this score given that it basically caters to men.

This research paper has two goals. The first is to identify what the business management discourse on life-work balance is based upon. This is because we need to know whether the discourse takes a transformational, egalitarian vision fostering women's presence in senior management or, on the contrary, is based on stereotypes and excludes women by banishing such issues to the private realm.

Second, we take an ethical, feminist perspective on the work-life balance discourse found in said literature, seeking to discover whether it: (1) aims to doubly exploit women in both the productive and reproductive spheres, or; (2) liberates women from the imposition

of traditional gender roles. The ambivalence of the discourse on women managers' life-work balance and motherhood will reveal the dichotomies found in the employment world on both subjects.

The methodological approach taken in the discourse analysis of women' management literature focuses on the ideas and ideologies found in the works rather than on structural aspects. Here, the analysis follows the enunciative spoor in the texts and their behavioural advice for women in striking a work-life balance (and indirectly, in dealing with motherhood). Specifically, we seek to identify the values and behaviour patterns prescribed for mothers who are company managers, especially those holding senior posts.

Thus we must pay special attention to certain linguistic aspects of the prescriptive-imperative language used, and to the evaluative language. We use Appraisal Theory to analyse the aforementioned aspects in the works in our sample ² (Egins and Slade, 1997; Martin, 2000; Martin and White, 2005) because this offers a standard model for appraising the discourse and has been tried and proven in many academic contexts.

Using the indicators drawn up by Martin and White (2005), we make our selection based upon our research goals. First, we focus on the advice given to career women through mandates, imperative wordings, and/or prescriptions recommending behaviour, actions, or decisions, considering these in the light of our research goals. Here, we shall pay special attention to the modal verbs have to, must, ought to, should, can, could, do in both their positive and negative forms, given that they express need, obligation, and recommendations.

2 According to the author James R. Martin, *Appraisal Theory* refers to "the semantic resources used to negotiate emotions, judgements, and valuations, alongside resources for amplifying and engaging with these evaluations" (2000, p. 145). Thus said theory explores in what contexts and in what ways linguistic resources are used to express, negotiate, and naturalise given inter-subjective positions and, in the final analysis, the speakers' ideologies. This methodology is especially valuable because it leads us to negotiations on value judgements.

Second, we must identify the wordings that lead us to evaluative language — that is to say, those fragments that indicate actions and decisions that are deemed either 'good' or 'bad' for a woman's business career. Terms we label positive include: good, OK, right, value, nice, convenient, adequate, satisfying, possible. Terms labelled negative include: bad, wrong, mistake, error, failure, dissatisfying, impossible. Drawing on the methodological bases provided by Appraisal Theory, we shall discern which discourses run through the issue of life-work balance in this kind of literature. Here, we shall determine whether a transformational discourse is adopted or merely one that considers corporate women as mothers. Last but not least, to ensure our analysis is as broad as possible, we should also consider the following categories: work-life balance, personal life, care, children, family, motherhood.

IDENTIFYING PRO-BUSINESS LITERATURE

The burning question begged by this research is this: What values/behaviours/prescribed actions does popular management literature advocate for career women in relation to life-work balance and their roles as mothers? We therefore formulated the following research hypothesis:

Hypothesis:

The values and behaviours prescribed for career women and mothers (especially those in senior management posts) reproduce traditional sexist, gender stereotypes, placing such women at a disadvantage compared with their male peers, thus fostering immoral companies in which there is no scope for gender equality.

Taking a corpus as "a finite collection of materials, previously selected by the analyst for further work, and in which the choice of items is necessarily arbitrary to a greater or lesser extent" (Barthes, 1997), we can see that it should mirror the complex system of oppositions and confluences found in the whole body of literature. Furthermore, it should also show

some homogeneity in terms of the research criteria chosen (a point that will be explained in the following paragraphs).

The first criterion covers chronology. In this case, we will focus our study on works published between 2010 and 2015 so as to analyse the most recent values bearing on women in companies. The second criterion covers geographical scope, which is important given that most works of this kind are written by English-speaking authors and are published in North America or in The United Kingdom (Fernández Rodríguez, 2007) — although they have been exported on a large scale elsewhere (Fernández Rodríguez, 2011; Gantman, 2017). The third criterion covers authors and their popularity. In the management world, reputation and fame are vital in spreading the ideas contained in such books. The fourth criterion covers book reviews by mass circulation newspapers and well-known authors. If it proved impossible to find a book's total sales when we were making the selection, we looked at the number of searches on the Amazon web site as a proxy (given that Amazon ranks titles in this literature field by popularity/number of sales to clients).

Amazon's 'quality rankings' are based on the number of web sales (Noguera, 2015). In our case, we centred on the 'Business & Money' category and within that, on the sub-category 'Women & Business', which is where the works making up our theoretical corpus are to be found. For search purposes, we used the following key words: women's leadership, female leadership, business, entrepreneurship, success. Here, one should note that the list of books produced by the Amazon search engine is based on the popularity and relevance of titles.

The sample produced as a result is listed below:

1. Mistakes I Made at Work: 5 Influential Women Reflect on What They Got Out of Getting It Wrong, by Jessica Bacal (2014).
2. Work with me. How Gender Intelligence can help you succeed at work and in life, by Barbara Annis and John Gray (2013).
3. How Women Lead: The 8 Essential Strategies Successful Women Know, by Sharon Hadary and Laura Henderson (2013).
4. Who Says It's a Man's World: The Girls' Guide to Corporate Domination, by Emily Bennington (2013).
5. Lean In: Women, Work and the Will to Lead, by Sheryl Sandberg (2013).

THE DISCOURSE ON WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN POPULAR MANAGEMENT LITERATURE AIMED AT WOMEN

This section focuses on identification of the main premises in the discourse on life-work balance in popular management literature targeting women (hereinafter, 'the sub-genre' for short).

To begin with, one should note that work-life balance is one of the main subjects appearing in all the books chosen. This makes it reasonable to conclude that the subject is a central one in the sub-genre, even if it is not acknowledged as such. Nevertheless, instead of taking a common stance on the issue, each work takes a different line and in some cases, contradictory ones. Various citations on the issue are given below and from which one can draw conclusions.

First, one of the issues that crops up most often is the social pressure women feel in having to meet a host of demands, namely: having a successful career; having children; being faithful wives and good homemakers as demanded by tradition. Thus women are required to meet traditional gender roles in both the public and private spheres, and are expected to meet not only the demands of the socio-economic system but also those of family.

The pressure on women caused by such demands is acknowledged in these books. Nevertheless, the way the issue is tackled gives one reason to think that for women, having a career does not mean relinquishing traditional roles in the private sphere. Rather, there are grounds for believing that working women now suffer double exploitation of their time (Carrasquer, 2009).

Thus while all of the cited works recognise the heavy burdens placed on women as a result, the message they give to their readers is often contradictory, as can be seen from the citations below.

YOU CAN HAVE IT ALL

[She'd been thinking about the pressure that women can feel "to do everything"] (Bacal, 2014, p. 65)

[She can have it all. She just doesn't need to do it all!] (Annis and Gray, 2013, p. 240)

[A woman can be as ambitious as she wants to be, build a successful career that she can be proud of, and have a personal life that brings her joy and satisfaction — regardless of whether she's single or married, and with or without children or others to care for] (Annis and Gray, 2013, p. 241)

[Without fear, women can pursue professional success and personal fulfilment — and freely choose one, or the other, or both] (Sandberg, 2013, p. 24)

[The good news is that not only can women have both families and careers; they can thrive while doing so] (Sandberg, 2013, pp. 23-24)

[We need more portrayals of women as competent professionals and happy mothers — or even happy professionals and competent mothers] (Sandberg, 2013, p. 24)

YOU CAN'T HAVE IT ALL

[You can't have a life and a career. Read what that woman executive is saying on her article, "You can't have it all"] (Annis y Gray, 2013, p. 240)

[But, they (women) realize they cannot be everything to everybody at the same time, and that's okay] (Hadary y Henderson, 2013, p. 145)

[Due to the scarcity of this resource, therefore, none of us can „have it all“, and those who claim to are most likely lying] (Sandberg, 2013, p. 121)

[Having it all is best regarded as a myth. And like many myths, it can deliver a helpful cautionary

message] (Sandberg, 2013, p. 121-122)

[Trying to do it all and expecting that it all can be done exactly right is a recipe for disappointment] (Sandberg, 2013, p. 123)

[Over the years, I learned that you can have it all — just not at the same time] (Bennington, 2013, p. 31)

Comparing these citations from the sampled works, one can appreciate a certain 'strategic ambiguity' (Eisenberg, 2009) in the authors' arguments. This stems from the contradictory advice given on how women should square their professional and personal lives. The bits of advice/prescriptions tendered to women are so vague that one really cannot say whether the books encourage their readers 'to have everything'³ (that is to say, to be successful managers and mothers at the same time) or 'not to have everything' (that is, to choose between either a career or having a family). In other words, we cannot say one way or the other whether the books advocate a 'career-comes-first model', a 'family-comes-first model' or a 'go-for-both model'.

The books thus do not urge a given behaviour pattern but rather adopt a 'free choice' discourse strongly linked to what one might call "The New Spirit of Capitalism" (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2002), which we shall discuss further on. Such 'strategic ambiguity' is counter-productive for readers, bearing in mind that women mainly buy such books to guide their actions in the company. Yet from our standpoint, such ambiguity comes as no great surprise given that the point of departure is one in which women are pinned down in 'no-man's land', bombarded by demands from all sides, and face diverse perils. By refraining from saying whether they 'can have it all' or 'not have it all', women are made all the more vulnerable, putting them in a position where any decision they make can

³ The dilemma of 'having it all' is strongly present in current Feminist political theory (Genz, 2010). While this does not always refer to work-life balance, it does reflect on the contradictions that women are subject to in the Neo-Liberal setting.

draw fire from society (Hayden and O'Brien, 2010). This Kafkaesque situation also follows the Neo-Liberal script (De Miguel, 2015).

Second, while strategic ambiguity is a key feature of the sub-genre, the analysis lends weight to the argument that the books in question generally reject the notion of a work-life balance. The authors consider that the concept does not reflect the experience of women who have both a career and a family, given that from their standpoint, such a lifestyle would imply two different lives, not a melding of both. Accordingly, no true balance is to be struck because the authors create two lifestyles for their readers and leave a yawning gap between them instead of finding a way to bridge them. Neither do the authors put forward any other concepts that might meet the needs of career women. This is odd given that the writers claim to know those needs so well. These shortcomings are palpable in the following citations:

[The idea of work-life balance is not necessarily helpful. If you are immersed in your work and raising a family, you might feel a lot of good things—but it may not include 'balanced'] (Bacal, 2014, p. 71).

[The idea of 'work-life balance' with the concept of 'managed disequilibrium' (a phrase she first heard from Google's Eileen Naughton) because no ambitious woman is ever going to feel that things are „in balance“. Instead, we have to find what's meaningful to us and create conditions in which we can thrive] (Annis and Gray, 2013, p. 103)

[The phrase 'work-life-personal life balance' suggests a need to create time equality between two competing lives, as if the possibility of finding an optimal distribution of time between both lives can be found. This is a near-possible task, particularly for women] (Annis and Gray, 2013, p. 231)

These passages also reveal another key idea in the books, namely the basis for choice. While it is clear that readers are entitled to make up their own minds, there is a discourse surrounding choice that leads us to the idea that at the end of the day, each woman

must decide for herself what her life priorities are. The books are imbued with a wholly individualist logic, as if work-life balance were an individual problem (that is to say, merely a question of deciding what is most important to us as women).

This approach trivialises the issue and minimises a problem that affects women's lives in today's society. Nevertheless, this individualisation of collective problems responds to a Neo-Liberal logic that, when it comes to gender issues, places the burden of guilt and responsibility on the shoulders of individuals (Gill and Scharff, 2011; Kelan, 2010), as one can see from the citations below:

[You have to decide what you want to do and when. Some women have chosen to have a family early and a career later; others have focused on their career early and had a family later. Many have decided to do both simultaneously. You do not need to focus exclusively on one or the other] (Hadary and Henderson, 2013, p. 37)

[Based on your values, you have to decide what aspects of your life take precedence at different times] (Hadary and Henderson, 2013, p. 146)

[You have to make one thing a priority and achieve balance that way, rather than trying to everything all at once] (Bennington, 2013, p. 31)

[They are told over and over again that they have to choose, because if they try to do too much, they'll be harried and unhappy] (Sandberg, 2013, p. 23)

[She decided how she wanted to manage her career and family and never claimed that her choice should apply to anyone else] (Sandberg, 2013, p. 161)

By heaping the burden of choice onto individual women, corporations are shirking their duty to manage such issues, leaving it up to governments to act in this field (Sørensen, 2017). We shall see that the issue of life-work balance affects the vast majority of women working in the public sector and who have families (whether children, or the elderly for whom they care). Yet despite this, the problem is dealt with as if it were

one of ‘personal organisation’, thus depoliticising the feminist struggle and once again applying a Neo-Liberal approach that disarticulates feminism (Park, Wahab, and Bhuyan, 2017). In other words, from the standpoint of these ‘self-help’ books, work-life balance is one that each woman must face for herself in splitting her time between work and family commitments. We thus again witness how these works skate over gender equality issues, taking a stance that treats such matters as purely personal ones. Needless to say, this individualist approach does nothing to change the world for the better:

[Many women have learned that what is more important is establishing rituals and routines your children can count on] (Hadary y Henderson, 2013, p. 154)

[Ask your family members what is most important to them. (Hadary y Henderson, 2013, p. 146)

[There will be times when you have to leave work to deal with your kids and times when you have to leave kids to deal with your work] (Bennington, 2013, p. 23)

[Decide where you are choosing to spend time and what can be cut immediately, knowing your boundaries will shift as your kids grow] (Bennington, 2013, p. 41)

[I had to decide what mattered and what didn’t and I learned to be a perfectionist in only the things that mattered] (Sandberg, 2013, p. 123)

As can be seen, instead of demanding more work-life balance policies within the corporate structure and shared responsibility in couples, such books only contribute to building a Neo-Liberal individualist argument in which women must learn to organise themselves to overcome the barriers they face (Springer, Birch, and MacLeavy, 2016). The sub-genre skates over the structural issues faced by women who find it impossible to strike a balance in their lives (Carrasquer, 2009; Moreno, Moncada, Llorens, and Carrasquer, 2010). The upshot is that they face a double burden: work and family. On this score, Sheryl Sandberg’s book (2013) refers to hiring helpers to look after children.

She cheerily notes that when a woman has a career and is a mother, she can always get other people to take charge of her offspring:

Even though Dave and I are extraordinarily fortunate and can afford exceptional child care, there are still difficult and painful decisions about how much time our jobs require us to be away from our family and who will pick up the slack. (Sandberg, 2013, p. 111)

[We hired a nanny, but she couldn’t solve all our problems] (Sandberg, 2013, p. 106)

[He reasoned that we were the central figures in our son’s life, but forming an attachment to a caregiver was good for his development] (Sandberg, 2013, p. 137)

[The ‘nanny issue’ is interesting for it reveals that both a key aspect of the problem has been passed over, and the homogeneity of the audience addressed by these books. The point is that not all women have the wherewithal to hire such services, which are dear to say the least. In other words, the writer speaks from a highly specific (privileged) position and comes up with hiring a nanny as a universal panacea when very few women can afford them. Sandberg’s well-heeled circumstances are hardly typical of most women. At the same time, one wonders whether the gender roles fostered by these books are the old ones, which do nothing to build greater sex equality. The measures she recommends give no help in striking a real balance between one’s work and family commitments] ⁴

In this respect, we find these works resort to another common idea — that of ‘mommy guilt’ (sic), the term used by the authors to denote mothers’ pangs of conscience for not coming up to society’s (and their family’s) expectations. In these books, women

⁴ At the same time, these ideas lead us to a particular kind of feminism in these works, that is to say, an ‘institutional feminism’ that embraces specific demands. It is one that appeals mainly to Western women and ignores other feminist experiences and demands that spring from other roots (Reverter-Bañón, 2011)..

are urged to dump their guilt and to feel at ease with decisions that seem hard to take at the outset. Nevertheless, the idea of blaming oneself takes us into the psychological realm (Bort, Pflock, and Renner, 2005), recalling the rhetoric found in the traditional self-help genre⁵ (Papalini, 2006; Siurana, 2018). This is typical of the demands made by Neo-Liberalism, which makes individuals feel guilty for the system's failings and urges them to help themselves (Laval and Dardot, 2013).

At the same time, such discourses on ditching guilt give some scope for building a model of another kind of mother, though not one that is that transformative (Godrin, 1995), as one can see in proposals for alternative, subversive forms of motherhood (Llopis, 2015). We list give various citations covering the 'mommy guilt' pandemic below:

[Reining in the Mommy Guilt] (Bennington, 2013, pp. 23–32)

[Employed mothers and fathers both struggle with multiple responsibilities, but mothers also have to endure the rude questions and accusatory looks that remind us that we're short-changing both our jobs and our children] (Sandberg, 2013, pp. 122–123)

[So if you're giving your all to your job and to your kids while they're in diapers, maybe that means you have to say no to excessive travel, joining the industry association, applying to grad school, or fund-raising for the library gala] (Bennington, 2013, p. 25)

[Parenting isn't a day-by-day or week-by-week gig, so forgive yourself (and your boss) if you occasionally have to miss out on something cool because your job needs you] (Bennington, 2013, p. 29)

[Because of work obligations, I've missed doctor's appointments and parent-teacher conferences and have had to travel when my kids were sick] (Sandberg, 2013, p. 136)

As one can see from the citations, the issue is treated in pseudo-psychological terms. There is talk of renouncing certain things, of pardon, blame, and so forth but this discourse does not touch on the structural problems that lie at the root of working mothers' difficulties in managing their daily lives. While work-life balance is discussed, there is no mention of shared responsibility within a couple (Maganto, Etxeberria and Porcel, 2010). In other words, the burden falls wholly on the woman, not on the couple, the corporation, or the government. It thus seems odd that these books talk about the need to overcome exclusive roles and the work pressures parents feel when they want to put more into their private lives:

[If women want to succeed more at work and if men want to succeed more at home, these expectations have to be challenged] (Sandberg, 2013, p. 108)

[As women must be more empowered at work, men must be more empowered at home] (Sandberg, 2013, p. 108)

[Employees who use these benefits often face steep penalties ranging from substantial pay cuts to lost promotions to marginalization] (Sandberg, 2013, p. 114)

[When male employees take a leave of absence or just leave work early to care for a sick child, they can face negative consequences that range from being teased to receiving lower performance ratings to reducing their chance for a raise or promotion] (Sandberg, 2013, p. 114).

[Fathers who want to drop out of the workforce entirely and devote themselves to child care can

5 One of the key differences between management literature and traditional 'self-help' literature is that the former focuses on individual self-management within a corporate setting, whereas the latter covers self-management in a wide range of settings — family, love, money management, affective relationships, and so forth. Even so, they have certain points in common, such as stress on the notion that everyone should take the blame for his or her failures and take up the reins of his/her life. That said, the first genre centres on personal success in one's job whereas the second focuses on the path to individual happiness in a more basic and possibly more spiritual sense (Béjar, 2018).

face extremely negative social pressure] (Sandberg, 2013, p. 114)

[We all need to encourage men to lean in to their families] (Sandberg, 2013, p. 113)

[We need more men to sit at the table... the kitchen table] (Sandberg, 2013, p. 120)

[Women are surrounded by headlines and stories warning them that they cannot be committed to both their families and careers] (Sandberg, 2013, p. 23).

This pseudo-psychological discourse largely reflects the modern expansion of psychology, whose roots lie in a process of social individualisation and a powerful process of depoliticisation among subjects (Rodríguez López, 2016). Thus even though these books say gender roles need reconstructing, they do not supply any of the tools needed to do so, nor do they mention the feminist struggle or the need to politicise the issue. There is an interesting component in the approach taken to the issue by several authors, namely the stress on one's partner. I think two observations are worth making in this connection. The first is that the vision given of the 'partner' is fairly limited, leaving out any experiences that are not those of Western wealthy, middle-aged white heterosexual women. Second, it is odd that Sheryl Sandberg tackles this issue by urging business professionals to plan ahead — even before accepting promotion in a company, and to choose a partner (usually a man) who is willing to look after the children.

We can therefore say that the family models and love-life covered in these works have more to do with traditional heterosexual lifestyles (Leto De Francisco and O'Connor, 1995) than with a heterogeneous vision of the processes at work (Llopis, 2015). In other words, the books seldom consider the possibility that the readers are single mothers or have less conventional relationships (Goldfeder and Sheff, 2013). This gives us a clue to the specific group of women targeted by this sub-genre, namely well-educated, wealthy WASP women with the means to strike a better work-life balance.

[Nina McLemore says that one of the keys to success is to marry well (...) Today, it means marrying someone who supports your aspirations and is willing to be a full partner in managing your joint personal life] (Hadary and Henderson, 2013, p. 154)

[Anyone who wants her mate to be a true partner must treat him as an equal —and equally capable— partner] (Sandberg, 2013, p. 109)

[And contrary to the popular notion that only unmarried women can make it to the top, the majority of the most successful female business leaders have partners] (Sandberg, 2013, p. 110)

[Not surprisingly, a lack of spousal support can have the opposite effect on a career] (Sandberg, 2013, p. 110)

[The things that make the bad boys sexy do not make them good husbands] (Sandberg, 2013, p. 115)

To sum up, in analysing such books, we continually come across the individualisation of a social issue — work-life balance — that instead of being solved by career women through an 'optimal' choice of their future partners (the prescription made by the sub-genre) is one that should instead be dealt with through the public sphere. Here, the path to a solution lies in making it a matter of public debate, tackling it in the political sphere, and turning it into an ethical issue on the agenda of companies and trade unions. Yet at no point have we seen any reference to a corporate work-life balance policy, the need for ethical management of such a policy and to rekindle a feminist struggle within organisations. Instead, this literature tries to neuter the issue, refusing to broach gender inequality as the starting point for discussing motherhood and work-life balance in firms, among other matters (Smithson and Stokoe, 2005). That is why we can conclude that the work-life balance discourse in the sub-genre is uncritical, individualist, conservative, and meets the needs of 'The New Spirit of Capitalism' rather than those of women. Consequently, the discourse in such books is wholly depoliticised and only serves to ingrain gender inequality even more deeply.

CONCLUSIONS

Analysis of the sampled books led us to conclude that the sub-genre has two key features that: (a) condition the discourse on work-life balance and motherhood; (b) turn the issue into one that is wholly individualised, depoliticised, and psychological in nature. These two features are: (1) the psychological approach taken; (2) the depoliticised nature of such works. These two strands are tightly interwoven to form a conservative discourse on women in companies. While not overtly sexist, the sub-genre nevertheless enshrines a highly uncritical notion of gender inequality in firms, revealing a lack of feminist discourse in the business world.

A feature found in each and every one of the books is their psycho-analytic nature. Here, we refer to the advice that such books dispense on the need for women to search their souls, delve into their psyches and question their personalities in order to boost their self-esteem and do better at work (Hazleden, 2003). In other words, instead of encouraging women to band together, to be critical of their setting, and act for themselves and for other women, they are urged to individually solve their problems and tinker with 'The Inner Woman'. This kind of 'empowerment' can be seen as being of a spiritual, individually-centred nature rather than being group-based (Redden, 2002). Such an approach may well lead to personal changes but it does nothing to remedy society's structural inequalities.

The sampled literature does not solve women workers' difficulties in striking a work-life balance nor does it offer alternative models for tackling the issues. The psychological approach only serves to come up with an uncritical, depoliticised discourse on gender equality in companies, foregoing the chance of building policies that would really transform women's roles in firms. That is why it is little wonder that motherhood and work-life balance are treated as personal challenges, not as matters calling for collective interest and action. Here, there are many similarities between the sub-genre and the mainstream discourses found in the self-help literature in that they both treat women's discontent as a pathological condition (Ebben, 2015).

Both distance women from the feminist struggle for gender equality. Thus whichever theme or issue is tackled by the books (equal pay, sexual harassment, learning to be more assertive, and so on); the approach is always individualist and Neo-Liberal in nature. In this respect, it seems there is a translation of the women's corporate business spirit to their role as women. The sub-genre does not stint on the language of mock-heroism and self-sacrifice common in corporate leadership literature but in this case applies it to the field of 'family management'.

Examining the results of our analysis, we can conclude that our initial hypothesis is confirmed (restated below for the sake of convenience):

The values and behaviours prescribed for career women and mothers (especially those in senior management posts) reproduce traditional sexist, gender stereotypes, placing such women at a disadvantage compared with their male peers, thus fostering immoral companies in which there is no scope for gender equality.

While the advice tendered to women (who are both senior managers and mothers) is open-ended and leaves it to readers to decide whether they want to perform both roles, the books' prescriptions are contradictory. This muddled advice leaves women defenceless, thrusting the burden of choice on them in a way that is typical of Neo-Liberal societies. This burden is made all the harder to bear through its intersection with gender.

We can conclude by saying that the feminist struggle is wholly secondary in this literary sub-genre, which turns each woman into a kind of 'Lone Ranger' fighting single-handed in big business' badlands. This kind of struggle is always framed in individual terms, thus depoliticising women, distancing them from demands for equality, and making them even more vulnerable to exploitation. In a nutshell, books in this genre do women a great disservice by frivolously reducing grave social issues to an internal struggle that leads to small conquests for a few lucky (well-placed) individuals but that renounces a collective war waged on gender inequality that would benefit the many.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

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Managerialism and Fiction, or the Fiction of Managerialism: from Ayn Rand to novels for executives

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ABSTRACT

The aim of management books is to spread new theories in the field among company executives. Such publications are one of the pillars of managerialism. Perhaps the oddest manifestation of the phenomenon is novels focussing on senior executives heroically battling for business excellence through the application of a managerial technique. In this paper, we put this curious, rarely-explored literary genre under the spotlight. We not only analyse the salient features of such literature and its main ingredients but also highlight the major stylistic influence of Ayn Rand's works. The novels of this influential neo-Liberal writer foreshadowed the new narrative form.

Keywords: management, fiction, managerialism, Ayn Rand, literature.

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“Optimism comes more naturally to the fortunate of this world than to the homeless. Yet the overblown optimism found here bears no relation whatsoever to ordinary experience such that even the most moderate observer finds himself torn between idealism, revolutionary wrath, and the darkest sarcasm.”

Conviene tener un sitio adonde ir,
in EMMANUEL CARRÈRE (2017: 338)

“Power works through individuals rather than against them, and helps build the individual, who at the same time is power’s vehicle.”

Castigo y sociedad moderna,
in DAVID GARLAND (1999: 168)

INTRODUCTION¹

One of the most singular manifestations of managerialism is undoubtedly business literature (something called *managerial* or *management* literature). This genre targets managers in that its goal is to instruct and guide them so that they can meet the challenges posed by today’s turbulent global markets (Alonso and Fernández Rodríguez, 2006 and 2013; Fernández Rodríguez, 2007). Such works are incredibly popular and fill the shelves of the sections on business at large bookshops and at airports. They all contain recipes, behavioural guides and action models for vacillating executives seeking a direct, specific framework for application in today’s modern Capitalist world (characterised by accelerating change and market uncertainty). Business managers see these texts — which are often written by leading management gurus (Huczynski, 1993; Collins, 2000; Gantman, 2005; Fernández Rodríguez, 2007) — as possible answers to the many questions arising from their daily tasks, and as action plans. Nevertheless, these texts have other purposes too. Their pages describe the cognitive framework for the new Knowledge Economy, which Boltanski and Chiapello (2002) defined as ‘The New Spirit of Capitalism’ — a term that now enjoys wide currency.

Managerial literature aims to present a structural view of business and, above all, to implement more effective procedures in companies and other organisations (non-governmental, public, and so forth). Unlike academe (which focuses on organisational research — Managerial

Science if you will), *Managerial Literature* completely ignores many aspects of the real world in complex modern organisations (Huczynski, 1993; Fernández Rodríguez, 2007). To begin with, the ‘literary’ genre does not pay enough attention to conflicts, alternatives, ends, and the choice of means. Rather, it only takes the narrow perspective of the director or manager — a subject that takes up most of the discourse. These *managerial* texts pass off directors and managers as both the source and the guardians of reason and initiative in companies, casting all other stakeholders (staff, clients, and the social and economic context) into the shade, relegating them to mere objects of managerial action (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992).

Such texts are written to persuade and are largely the handiwork of experts (although there are many simple compilations, or books published by firms). These experts are often ‘business gurus’ (Micklethwait and Wooldridge, 1998; Jackson, 2003; Collins, 2007). In most cases, these texts have a quasi-scientific purpose, although in previous studies (Fernández Rodríguez, 2007) stress was laid on the fact that such studies formed part of specific sub-genres. In our view ‘managerial fiction’ is one of the most interesting of these sub-genres for it is one where the trials and tribulations of managerial efforts are wrapped in fiction. This brief paper will examine the special features, implications, and controversies of such fiction.

We have approached the study of managerial fiction as part of a broader movement of cultural production and consumption in the Neo-Liberal context of Late Capitalism. We have both combined and reconsidered the meanings given to major Ultra-Liberal literary works and to short Post-Modernist business tales. We see

¹ This paper forms part of the results of a research project “*Marcos Sociales del nuevo mundo Económico y Empresarial: de la producción al consumo* (MSEE)” [Social Frameworks in the new Economic and Business World: Producing Consumption (MSEE)], funded by Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (UAM)..

this fiction as an ideological production in the broad sense of practical policy, which is expressed through assessments that make groups of people aware of where they stand in the scheme of things and of social conflict (Williams, 1980). The purpose of ideologies is to attribute meaning to social acts. This exercise is one ridden by conflict. Ideologies are forms of existence and ways of pursuing social struggles, of mastering meaning processes (Ipola, 1982: 73), and as Clifford Geertz (1988: 200 et seq.) says, ideologies put forward empirical goals regarding the nature of society and the direction it should take.

Managerial ideological discourses, especially in fiction, thus become an asset and express the experience of a social group, constituting a sequence of choices that explain why some are chosen to lead and others are not (Ricoeur 1975: 94 et seq). In this case, the literature reveals that cultural production is far from a simple mechanism for imposing messages on others. Rather, it is an active process that both sets the basis for drawing up and coding the group's messages, and for the decoding and reception of those messages by other groups and social classes. Business fiction is a (sub)cultural practice for building an ideological discourse that treats the ordering of experience as a class language: "Awareness cannot be linked to experience without a given language between the two that organises understanding of the experience. Here, it is important to stress that the same set of experiences can be articulated in more than one language" (Jones, 2014: 97).

In its cultural dimension, business fiction is mainly seen as consumption and is thus an act of economic reproduction. However, it is also a social reproduction practice (Bourdieu and Darbel 1969). That is to say, all this venial literature focusing on the business world is a good and therefore has an economic value, an accumulation value, and growth. Yet it also serves well-studied social functions, such as its ability to build and express identity. Here, the purchaser opts for this cultural consumption and in so doing, both identifies with and is identified by a lifestyle and an active way of understanding the world (Lee, 1993). This gives scope to reconstruct a *habitus* to configure

a personality that is individually expressed but socially constructed (Bourdieu, 1988; Jenks, 1993). The fiction genre has become a key element in Post-Modernist cultural sensitivities (given that major analytical tracts are now considered lifeless and dull). The genre's ideological efficiency is shown in those business tales in which all the values of Late Capitalism are naturalised and idealised (business heroism, risk-taking, extreme individualism, the free market, creative freedom, and so on). Unlike boring classical management manuals or soporific, instantly forgettable Power Point presentations, these tales are personalised and made 'fun' because this (whether in the form of a hobby, leisure, or merely distracting the attention and dispersing the efforts of one's ideological foes) has become the hallmark and moral icon of the contemporary representation of the world (Postman, 2016).

Our goal in this text is therefore to describe the main features of this odd genre, which despite a growth spurt in the 1980s, has a singular precedent: the literature of the controversial novelist Ayn Rand. She was a pioneering writer who is the forerunner of many of the leading figures in today's Neo-Liberalism. Her *oeuvre* is exotic and far-removed from the stylistic canons of her era yet her books laid the foundations of business tales in the 1980s and beyond. In this paper, we split our presentation into three parts. The first gives a lengthy description of Rand's contributions to building an epic, pro-market individualist plot in her novels, which (whether explicitly or not) were to inspire the managerial fiction that emerged under Reaganism. Second, we explore the features of business fiction in its contemporary forms. Third, we end the paper with a brief discussion of the implications and limitations of such works in explaining the world of management work.

AYN RAND: THE ETERNAL FORERUNNER

The pioneer of Managerial fiction — Ayn Rand — is a disconcerting, odd character whose work still influences the genre today. Whenever pretensions of exerting economic influence and literary sub-genres are mixed, we

come across characters like the Russian Alisa Zinovyevna Rosenbaum, born in Saint Petersburg in 1905 and later naturalised as an American citizen under the name of Ayn Rand. Her father was a well-established pharmacist but the family's possessions were confiscated during The Russian Revolution. It seems her ambition to become a script-writer in Russia's State Institute of Screen Arts was dashed, leading her to emigrate to The United States. Once there, she set up in Hollywood, where she did all kinds of jobs in various studios, departments, and creative teams. She married an actor and focussed on what was to become her obsession during those years, namely writing (or helping to write) film scripts. Here, her script-writing background was to shape both the books she later wrote and indeed managerial fiction as a genre (Heller, 2009). The whole thrust of her work involved conveying brutally simple ideas (the virtues of selfishness, the evil wrought by mediocrities, individualism as the supreme value) in an attractive way and with an interesting plot so that the reader could identify this with his managerial status and in so doing, could boost his ego, shed any guilt he might have about his money-grubbing behaviour, and legitimise his lack of social commitment.

Rand's rabid anti-collectivism was enshrined in a host of publications, talks, autobiographical novels, and TV and radio programmes. She spread the message further by nurturing a band of followers eager to join a personality cult and defend this anti-Communist propagandist up to the hilt (Walker, 1999). Her influence has been strongly felt from the 1940s to the present. Any number of American Senators and Congressmen, English Conservative politicians, showbiz folk, and successful US businessmen drawn from various sectors (Industry, Finance, Computing, Technology, and so on) have formed a 'network' (sect) defending her supposed 'philosophy', which she termed 'Objectivism'.

Yet the 'Objectivism' vaunted by Rand and her fans is nothing more than an amateur pseudo-philosophy mashed up from a superficial reading of Hobbes, Burke, Hume, and even Nietzsche (in its most extreme form of Austrian Liberalism). Rand's 'Objectivism' is merely a mercantilist fantasy proclaiming the supremacy of

an entrepreneur (a man) engaged in a Holy Crusade against The Forces of Darkness (which is to say, bureaucrats, the State, the envy of lesser men, and the authoritarian inefficiency of taxation and fiscal policy). Rejecting mysticism, religion, and humanitarian idealism, Rand's goal is to uphold boundless freedom, the goodness of greed, radical individualist ontology. This involves decrying the weakness and foolishness of all those who think of others, of the common good, of social and public ends — and in the final analysis, the futility of trying to civilise society.

Perhaps Ayn Rand's biggest, most profitable best-sellers are the two that catapulted her to the fame she still enjoys today. These two mammoth novels are: *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged*. Neither of these books seek (or indeed achieve) any kind of literary expressiveness or creative voice. Rather, their sole purpose is to exemplify — to script-write — the behaviour of Rand's archetypal Anarchist-Liberal Man (and which always entails letting companies go on the rampage). Written in the 1940s and 1950s, just when Keynesianism and Organised Capitalism were the dominant discourses in Economic practices, Rand's novels seemed doomed to oblivion or ostracism. Yet between them, business and generalist magazines, film producers, Ultra-Conservative circles close to right-wing of The Republican Party, and the *National Review* praised Rand and her novels to the skies, thereby creating a myth. Rand's virulent Anti-Communism and anti-trade unionism served the interests and American corporate policy as The United States entered The Cold War (after a brief and tense alliance with The Soviet Union during The Second World War). Rand's message was that 'The American Way of Life' was threatened and that only heroic businessmen stood in the way of collectivism and Communism. For Big Business and its political allies, it was just what the doctor ordered (Weiss, 2012).

Yet Rand's success was not confined to The United States. The English-speaking world had (and continues to have) armies of followers eager to keep her work alive. Thanks to the pressure exerted by business schools and their acolytes, the classic publishing house Penguin (which had earlier refused publish Rand's books) was forced

to relent as the so-called ‘Conservative Revolution’ gathered steam. Penguin was reduced to publishing Rand’s two mammoth novels as part of its ‘Modern Classics’ collection. This was expanded to include other titles as Conservative and Neo-Liberal governments came to dominate Britain’s political landscape. Indeed, things have reached such a pass that works by this strange author now form part of the literary and philosophical themes covered in British secondary education syllabuses (Freedland, 2017). In Latin America, her *oeuvre* has been published and republished ever since the 1950s (the editions currently in Spanish bookshops were published in Argentina (Rand, 2003 and 2004)). There, several powerful groups have openly followed Rand. Her books are associated with currents in Chilean and Argentine ‘Neo-Liberalism’ — the same ones that defended military coups to re-establish economic order in accordance with Hayek’s dictates (in which the market comes before democracy) and those of The Chicago School afterwards. Even under Franco’s dictatorship in a politically anesthetised and gagged Spain, the Nazi-loving publisher and Catalan Falangist Luis de Caralt brought out several of Rand’s novels in the 1960s (no doubt after changing some of the Argentine translations, liberally sprinkled as they were with Americanisms). His ambition was to publish her complete works together with other big names in the world literature of the period. Caralt’s closeness to business circles at the time gave his editions a clear lobbying edge in a Spanish economy that had been shaken up by the 1958 Stability Plan [*Plan de Estabilización*] and had yet to fully modernise.

The Fountainhead was written in 1943 and its success led to a film version directed by King Vidor in 1947, in which the protagonists were Gary Cooper and Patricia Neal. The pedestrian story recounts the life of Howard Roark, an architect who wants to create a new, radiant architecture. In this quest, he has to defend his ideas against mediocrities, bureaucrats, and failed construction companies. After graduating, he becomes a mere building worker who is then rescued by (among others) a rich woman whom he admires and falls in love with. She helps him and puts up with his fiery personality to the point of accepting what many have interpreted as

rape. Thanks to her financial help, he designs wonderful houses but the contractors and other ‘usual suspects’ on Rand’s list (State politicians, interested parties, and cowards) ruin Roark’s beautiful idea. The irate architect decides to blow up the buildings, which causes ‘collateral damage’. The climax comes where Roark defends himself in the trial, in which he argues that the value of creativity, individualism — the fountainhead of *ego* — is what drives progress. He defends man’s right to rebel against routine social conventions. The novel features innumerable stereotyped characters: hide-bound architects, cowardly politicians, and confused magnates (who always end up backing creative individuals). Those trying to frustrate the entrepreneurs’ efforts include critical journalists and envious intellectuals, mediocrities and Socialists whose egalitarian discourse and espousal of collective is used to brow-beat talented businessmen. The women in these fairy-tales are breathless admirers of the gifted men and virile entrepreneurs who waft through the pages. The detail of these stereotypes is particularly relevant if we compare *The Fountainhead* with books with similar themes but of greater literary merit, such as the controversial *Sometimes a Great Notion* by the acid author Ken Kesey, who depicts a family of lumberjacks resisting the blandishments of a striking trade union (Kesey, 1964).

In 1943, Rand’s book was still an oddity (even though the anti-collectivist discourse emerged towards the end of The Second World War, as one can see from Friedrich A. Hayek’s famous *The Road to Serfdom* [*Der Weg zur Knechtschaft*], which was published in 1949). When the film version of *The Fountainhead* appeared in 1949, the context was more favourable to this doctrinaire message (Hayek, 2005). The beginning of The Cold War, McCarthyism, the policies pursued by the big film studios against the trade unions of technicians, workers, actors, and script-writers, and the reaction of American Conservatives against British social policies all nurtured such ideas. Indeed, Rand’s animosity against Britain was explicit in one of her novels (and in the film script, which she wrote herself), in which she pilloried Harold Laski — a political theorist who had been a Labour Party icon. All these factors created a best-seller and a runaway success for Rand, who was

swift to brand anything that rejected or nuanced her strange moral philosophy as ‘Socialist’, ‘cosy intellectual’, ‘retrograde’, ‘collectivist’, ‘bureaucratic’. Yet her philosophy boiled down to nothing more than an ode to the thrusting male entrepreneur and the impossibility of deflecting him from his course through communal ideas or programmes. Hers was a world in which the only path to prosperity and progress was paved by giving individuals free rein to seek profit and trample anyone who stood in their way.

In 1957, Rand published her second mammoth novel, which we have taken as an example of business fiction. In *Atlas Shrugged* (a book running to over a thousand pages, with the same underlying structure as *The Fountainhead* but even more over-egged with moralising sub-plots lauding individualist, anti-social ‘rationalism’. This time round, it is engineer and businessman Hank Rearden who develops a wonder-metal (the eponymous ‘Rearden Metal’) but which the government, mediocrities, and intellectuals are all bent on wresting from him and declaring as a social good. The female protagonist is Dagny Taggart, who against all the odds (corrupt State interventionism and family advice) and with the help of a few talented individuals creates a railroad using Rearden Metal. Yet the most original (and openly pro-Capitalist) part of the book is the sub-plot in which: (1) the great American industrial and business geniuses vanish; (2) The United States goes into irreversible decline, stifled by egalitarian legislation supposedly fostering the common good and public needs but actually only benefiting the bushwhackers bent on doing down heroes such as Hank Rearden. This is where John Galt steps out of the shadows — a mythical figure who is still popular. Galt is a secretive, silent, unsung hero who is holed up in some remote spot, organising a strike by talented businessmen in order to bring society to a grinding halt and fan the flames of revolt. The battle flag Rand chooses for these revolting Capitalists is (believe it or not) the dollar sign. This uplifting struggle against the mediocrities, corrupt, and collectivists in Government has a ‘happy ending’ in which Galt and Rearden bring the country to its knees. This forces the government to scrap the

taxes and other duties that would otherwise hold back Rand’s band of brave, visionary wealth-creators.

This monstrous dystopian work triumphed in a period in which the *genre* was on the upswing — other dystopian novels published about the same time or slightly earlier were George Orwell’s *1984* (1949) and Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* (1932). The fear of nuclear war with The Soviet Union was at fever pitch, and the terror of losing ‘The American Way of Life’ and the country’s military and political hegemony in the Eisenhower era was palpable at the time. The book’s triumph was fostered by the most conservative (right-wing) circles of American Republicanism, business magazines, the ‘Ultra-Liberal’ Mont Pèlerin Society (MPS), and a wolf-pack of fans — that is to say, young business school students and aspiring market heroes. This audience found Rand’s ‘literature’ irresistible, with its mix of *Boys Own Paper* derring-do, the Frontier Spirit, and facile justifications for ruthless selfishness and lack of social commitment, topped off with exaltation of the individual. It was the Capitalist equivalent of a wet dream.

Rand’s relations with the world economic right-wing have been long, close, and not without conflict. Ludwig von Mises praised *Atlas Shrugged* for its vitriolic criticism of left-wing intellectuals. Both Rand and Mises considered intellectuals to blame for fostering the ‘bureaucratic spirit’ and ‘moral bankruptcy’ driving government’s Socialist policies, and of unravelling the Industrial Revolution. Alan Greenspan, President of The Federal Reserve between 1987 and 2006, was a die-hard ‘Objectivist’ right from the early 1950s and one of Rand’s followers. His blind belief in the rational behaviour of financial markets (an almost direct transcription of Rand’s rational individualism but applied to the nation’s finances) led to the bursting of one of the biggest stock market bubbles ever. The devastating financial crisis followed in its wake in 2008. The father of Anarchist Capitalism, Murray Rothbard, praised the film adaptations of the books. Yet Rand’s relationship with other Neo-Liberal economists of The Chicago School (such as Milton Friedman and George Stigler) became tenser and more distant to the point where our audacious authoress denounced their ‘subjectivism’. Yet

the Utilitarian Theory of Value is subjective by definition and thus sits ill with the supposed ‘objectivism’ of Rand’s folksy, home-spun moral philosophy. If this were not enough, she denounced their ideas as immoral and — though it is hard to credit — as conducive to creeping Socialism (Burns, 2010).

Nevertheless, Rand’s influence on American business and economic discourse had become scandalously obvious over the years and through succeeding governments. During the Keynesian era, conditions were not propitious to the kind of wholly unregulated Libertarian Capitalism vaunted by Rand. Yet it was precisely the literary support and the strategy of fictionalising hard-core ‘slash-and-burn’ Capitalism that made room for her in the American imaginary. This fame (some might say notoriety) was to prove of key importance in re-launching such theories during the long Neo-Liberal cycle beginning in the 1980s. Over all these years, there has been a wave of statements by Conservative politicians, management gurus, businessmen, technologists, and artists of all kinds (ranging from music to comedians) who have been inspired by Rand’s ‘business’ novels.

‘The New Spirit of Capitalism’ analysed by Boltanski and Chiapello (2002) at the dawning of the new century gave Rand’s discourses on Anarchic Capitalism a shot in the arm. The sight of multi-millionaire entrepreneurs who began their technological empires in Californian garages, Web prophets, the informal pioneers of Silicon Valley, the new mystique of libertarian talent and limitless creativity has triumphed as a stereotype. For Rand groupies, these ‘makers and shakers’ are opposed by the ‘resident evil’ of bureaucrats, Civil Servants, politicians, dull academics and failed old-hat left-wing intellectuals with an axe to grind. It seems that Rand’s message is now re-emerging not in the offices of MPS and American Republican Senators but among the blithe, deregulated, glittering, hyper-individualist world of technology networks and companies. The packed public presentations of Apple’s new products touted by Steve Jobs seem like scenes lifted from *Atlas Shrugged*, a book that Steve Wozniak, Apple’s co-founder vaunted as the one that had guided

his life. Peter Thiel, co-founder of PayPal (the world’s most used Internet payment system and the main financial backer of Facebook) is also an enthusiastic follower and admirer of Rand, whom he considers to be the most influential business writer. Even the so-called ‘Collaborative Economy’ wraps itself in the flag of ‘Objectivism’ —Travis Kalanick, CEO of Uber, uses the original book cover of *The Fountainhead* as his personal logo on social networks (Keen, 2015). It would be impossible to list every American senior executive (from whatever sector) who has warmly recommend reading one of Rand’s two novels, or who say it was their favourite book. We shall see that the image of the entrepreneur who has become a millionaire by bravely taking on mediocrity and political bureaucracy has become the hallmark of The Trump Era.

In large measure, the historical success and long life of Rand’s output can be put down to her great skill in weaving alluring novels that various generations of young American have seen as expressing their ideal of independence and self-affirmation. George Stiglitz puts the post-adolescent appeal of Rand’s books almost on a par with Tolkien’s *Lord of The Rings* but also points to its appalling consequences when it comes to American executives’ macro-economic reasoning (Freedlan, 2017). The symbolic effectiveness of these novels lies in their clever mix of literary *genres* running from melodrama to adventure stories, sagas, and mystery tales, and whose verisimilitude makes the reader identify with all of the values in the sub-text. These values are very simple (not to say simplistic) and echo folk culture. However, they gain special symbolic meaning when they are linked with the reader’s ideal self in the most Freudian concept of the father figure of personality (Freud, 1973). This is because they reaffirm the reader’s own imaginary trajectory. Rand’s career as a script-writer helped her organise her stories well, make them pleasant and even interesting to read, and opened broad horizons for a reader with a leaning to an individualist, will-driven vision of the world, reinforcing his ideal self (Freud, 1970). Those readers with a guilty conscience stemming from criticisms of Capitalism as both selfish and inhuman felt liberated by Rand’s ‘anything goes’ credo.

This is where the contradictions and paradoxes surrounding Rand arise. The author's 'Objectivist' philosophy was supposedly rational and anti-idealist, yet she used it to pursue the most arbitrary, unrealistic, and historically unsustainable ideal of a mythological 'Super Man'. She is rabidly anti-religious because of the irrational basis of such beliefs yet her works build a boundless mysticism based on idolatrous worship of a god-like entrepreneur who greatly overshadows the skilful, astute figure identified by Schumpeter. In the end, Rand — the goddess of market forces and individualism — gained much of her fame because of the weaving of networks, circles and even 'collectives' (as Rand's most fervent henchmen call themselves), all with strong sect-like connotations (the business project and publishing house spreading Rand's 'thought' in Argentina is called *Grito Sagrado* [The Holy Battle-Cry]). They recall those utopian communities inspired by Saint Simon or Auguste Comte that, in their relentless pursuit of their 'vision', began singing the praises of reason, Science, and positive thinking, only to end up creating new rites, weird masses, and worshipping their founders as the new deities of an anti-religious faith. Here, it is worth considering the four definitions of a literature proposed by Terry Eagleton (1993 and 2016). It was Rand's two mammoth novels that brought her the greatest success and made the biggest public impact. These two books combine: (1) a representation of the real world that is expanded out of all proportion in the literary sphere; (2) a specific, self-referencing language; (3) non-pragmatic presentation (for the books are novels, not academic tracts or textbooks); (4) making readers believe that they are exceptional works reflecting a higher plane of truth and human sensibilities than that represented by purely instrumental thinking. All of these features give Rand a mantle of timeless greatness spun from a threadbare mental scheme. Her tales were taken by many in the society of her time as a key to understanding and interpreting the world, and as a guide to behaviour.

In a field apparently distant from Rand's astral plane, we find the literature of the working-class. Jacques Rancière (1997) has taught us to realise that the revolutionary proletarian ideal owed much to groups of

French artisans mobilising identity through readings of romantic works and the tales of Victor Hugo (who glorified poetry and the higher values of Art). These workers spent much more of their meagre earnings and free time buying books or newspapers than they did mugging up on the scientific study and comprehension of history's laws of materialism (Fundamental Marxist ideas that, curiously enough, were also passed off as 'objective'). For Rancière, instead of the unfolding of the results of an analytical history, what we find in reconstructing the itineraries of specific, contextualised social agents is a sentimental, intellectual, and political education built upon overlapping images based on tales of heroism, stories of heart-rending suffering, and albums of stirring emotions. It is difficult here to separate the interplay of the real world and fiction for any narration (in whatever genre) is simply a way of telling a story through a set of signs in order to create meaning from the author's social standpoint.

Rancière's insights are especially enlightening when we see how managerial fiction has been so successfully presented and fostered over the last few years. The genre has sought to appropriate meaning in the social world (and indeed of human activity as a whole) in terms of managerial function (Salmon, 2008). 'Story-telling' has become the buzz-word in corporate presentations, and management has given it a twist in all its formats, levels, and spheres. Stories, emotions, and new works of fiction intermingle in a torrent of homilies churned out by the great story-makers in which the bounds between the real and imaginary blur. 'Business gurus' (a mixture of technology visionaries, prophets of competitiveness, and moralists preaching the supremacy of the market) are the high priests of this new cult. They invent futures that they peddle as likely, while rejecting or demonising other futures they consider impossible. Thus story-telling has invaded every nook and cranny of the business world and of the economy in general, conquering the commanding heights of post-truth politics. The social-legal rationale of action spanning from Kant to Weber that was the linchpin of enlightened modernity has been unhinged — hence the managerial opprobrium heaped on bureaucracy. It has been displaced by affective, neo-charismatic

forms of legitimisation in which the business world has rebuilt its hegemony on the notion of the exceptional person. The narration of this idealisation is used to boost business productivity and to de-institutionalise labour relations.

MANAGERIAL FICTION AFTER RAND

With the consolidation of Neo-Liberalism in the 1980s, Rand's influence can be seen in the managerial recipes dished up by fiction writers for their target audience. It is as if the runaway success of the authoress of *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged* gave those mouthing the management discourse the key to influencing their readers. This key basically boils down to a hotchpotch of Freudian identification and projection in the avatars the authors use to play out the gripping epic of management activity. Only thus can we grasp that fiction is seen as a valid strategy for spreading the management message. Yet there is a difference between past and present: while Rand built a philosophical framework that gave meaning to entrepreneurial individualism, modern managerial fiction applies the same behaviour patterns to managers and workers alike. In today's corporations, these not only identify with the rebel who fights 'against the odds' (apathy, conformism, red tape, and so on) but also with his feelings. The new man, though a bit 'square' and prudish, differs from Rand's rigid, ruthless and repulsive 'hero'. In fact, the new managerial fiction is a little less 'black and white' when it comes to the dynamics of management decision-making, and tosses in sentimental sub-plots for the protagonists. Nonetheless, today's fiction is written in a highly amateurish literary style (proof of which lies in the awkward choice of names for the characters). Yet these sub-plots are mere embellishments of the *leitmotiv*. Their only purpose is to obtain a 'gift' (in the sense meant by Propp, 1981) that will help the protagonist(s) beat his/their competitors in the ruthless battle for survival in which today's companies are engaged.

In any case, contemporary managerial literature has developed two overlapping literary genres: the fable

and the novel. In the fables, there is a fictionalisation of the behaviour that one should follow and the text ends up taking the structure of the classical fable such as those by Aesop or La Fontaine. A good example of this model is *Who Moved my Cheese?* by Spencer Johnson (2000), in which the protagonists are mice and 'the little people' who wonder who or what has taken their cheese. They later discover that the only way to stop others carrying off the cheese is to keep moving it around. The tale alludes to the need to adapt to permanent change. Some other key texts on the same lines are *Aesop's Management Fables* (McCann and Stewart, 1997), in which they re-write Aesop's fables to give advice on management; *Fish!* (Lundin *et al.*, 2001), in which a group of fishermen work in a team, and *A Paperboy's Fable* (Patel, 2016), in which a poor but enterprising boy becomes a successful businessman. All these allegorical texts are miserable apologies for literature but nevertheless proved to be runaway best-sellers. The case of *Who Moved my Cheese?* is paradigmatic: it is one of the best-selling books this century in any genre. In Spain, one of the most successful books has been *La buena suerte*, by Rovira Celma and Trías de Bes (2004) [Translated into English as *Good Luck. Creating The Conditions for Success in Life and Business*]. It follows the same successful formula as Johnson's tale. In the American's case, two friends meet and one recounts the fable to the other. In the case of *Good Luck*, the story is of two knights who seek a magic clover in a fable where good luck is not a result of blind chance but rather of creating the circumstances in which Fortune will smile.

Despite the recent success of these fables, the novel enjoys greater acceptance among both the propagandists of managerial theories and the general public. Management novels follow the fictionalisation patterns already mentioned in fables but their contents are more highly developed given that they have a narrative structure offering greater scope. Here, Rand is clearly the benchmark even though little mention is made of her among the best-selling authors. Some writers opt for novels because they already have a strong track record in organisational thought. Here, one can highlight Peter Drucker, the great manage-

ment guru, who published two novels both of which were lambasted by critics: *The last of all possible worlds* (1982) and *The temptation to do good* (1983). Drucker — possibly the key thinker in the management field (Fernández Rodríguez, 2008) — sought to frame his defence of good management practices in the first of these two novels. Yet the results of his efforts were less than thrilling, not least because he put a stone in his shoe by contextualising the story in inter-war Europe. The second book, which was less ambitious in its aims, is set in a conflict-riven university (what university is not?). Once again, this work makes it plain that Drucker would do better to stick to other kinds of literary fare for managers. Later on, a new generation of authors began to re-interpret the rules of the new genre through a growing number of publications. Authors that have stood out are Tom DeMarco, with *The Deadline* (1997): a novel about project management; Patrick Lencioni and his *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* (2002); and Stefane Swanepoel with *Surviving Your Serengeti* (2011). In Spain, various writers in this genre have enjoyed great success — as is the case of Fernando Trías de Bes, with books such as *La buena suerte* [*Good Luck*] (2004), and Juan Carlos Cubeiro, with his trilogy *La sensación de fluidez* (2001), although there are also short stories, such as Pozo's collections of tales (2016).

Nevertheless, the most classical works in this sub-genre are: *The One Minute Manager* (1983), by Ken Blanchard and Spencer Johnson, which spawned a host of *One Minute Manager* novels that Blanchard continued with other authors; *The Goal: A Process of Ongoing Improvement* (1993), by Eliahu Goldratt and Jeff Cox, into which we shall now delve to discover most of the keys to this sub-literature. We shall begin with the protagonist, who faces various problems in managing an industrial plant. Beset by the demands made on him by the company's senior managers, Rogo has to turn the management of the business round in short order (he is given just three months to pull it off). Rogo personifies the American middle-manager in terms of his character, cultural references and lifestyle (with allusions to his marital problems, replete with flaming rows that lead to him breaking up

with his wife and — surprise, surprise — with whom he makes up later on). The purpose of this managerial fiction is to enshrine some of the problems arising in conventional management literature (and supposedly based on real cases) in a work of fiction, giving glimpses of the protagonist's virtues and vices. Nevertheless, the questions posed by the main character faithfully reflect the obsessions of corporate consultants and gurus:

[— It's the damn competition. That's what's killing us. Ever since the Japanese entered our markets, the competition has been incredible. Three years ago, they were beating us on quality and product design. We've just about matched them on those. But now they're beating us on price and deliveries. I wish I knew their secret.

— What can I possibly do to be more competitive? (Goldratt and Cox, 2004 (Third Revised Edition): 25).

This is the challenge Rogo faces. In the novel, the main character has an odd ally — a ghostly character called Jonah, Rogo's erstwhile teacher in the past, and an expert in various subjects. The book proceeds through a kind of Socratic dialogue between the two in which the wraith-like mentor keeps pointing Alex Rogo in the right direction, helping him re-examine his goals and act accordingly:

[If the goal is to make money, then (putting it in terms Jonah might have used), an action that moves us toward making money is productive. And an action that takes away from making money is non-productive. For the past year or more, the plant has been moving away from the goal more than toward it. So to save the plant, I have to make it productive; I have to make the plant make money for UniCo. That's a simplified statement of what's happening, but it's accurate. At least it's a logical starting point] (Goldratt and Cox, Goldratt and Cox, 2004 (Third Revised Edition): 47)

Jonah leads a confused Alex Rogo back to the paths of 'common sense', orienting his actions so that they dovetail with corporate reasoning. Rogo soon follows the advice of his mentor, who never tires of telling

Alex that he needs to reflect if he is to find the answers for himself. A typical and oft-repeated passage in the novel runs as follows:

[— "You're leaving?" I ask.

— "I have to," he says.

— "Jonah, you can't just run off like this."

— "There are clients waiting for me," he says.

— "Jonah, I don't have time for riddles. I need answers," I tell him.

He puts his hand on my arm.

— "Alex, if I simply told you what to do, ultimately you would fail. You have to gain the understanding for yourself in order to make the rules work," he says] (Goldratt and Cox, 2004 (Third Revised Edition): 95).

Jonah acts as a coach and spiritual (spirit?) advisor, helping Alex find his own path. Following his guru's advice, Alex Rogo begins to apply various measures on the production side that gradually change the way the plant works, making it profitable:

[Throughput is going up as marketing spreads the word about us to other customers. Inventories are a fraction of what they were and still falling. With more business and more parts over which to spread the costs, operating expense is down. We're making money] (Goldratt and Cox, 2004 (Third Revised Edition): 254).

In the end, business success (reaching this goal is not just about making money but also about formulating and creating change) leads the protagonist to make the following change at the end of the book:

[— "At the same time," I continue, "can you imagine what the meaning is to being able to hone in on the core problem even in a very complex environment? To be able to construct and check solutions that really solve all negative effects without creating new ones? And above all to cause such a major change smoothly, without creating resistance but the opposite, enthusiasm? Can you

imagine having such abilities?"

— "Alex, that is what you have done. That's exactly what you have done in our plant."]

(Goldratt and Cox, 2004 (Third Revised Edition): 343).

In the end, what it boils down to is acquiring certain skills to change the mind set within an organisation — something that involves self-examination in which the manager not only has to reflect on his goals but also to ask himself questions and get his underlings to think about their daily work and goals, and even their personalities and their attitude to life. This process is reproduced in all management novels. If we look at some other works — for example Spanish ones in the same genre — we shall see that Goldratt's scheme is followed almost to the letter. We can see this in texts such as the novel *La sensación de fluidez* by Juan Carlos Cubeiro:

[He thought of Leopoldo Zoe: This manager has an edge! He has time to swim, exercise, breathe deeply, he has a hearty laugh, and he practices archery. He creates an atmosphere with a buzz, full of Baroque music and photos of beaches. He knows what his leadership priorities are; he leads with humanity and humility and is so energetic. I thought he was a 60-something has-been just a week ago but what drive and purpose he has! I could learn a great deal from him!

Jesús did not know that in the room next to him, Leopoldo Zoe was thinking of the marvellous opportunity that Reptelco had given him to show Jesús the ropes. He had shown that 'human nature' can be developed and that someone who was distant and cock-sure could still become more effective as a leader. He had at least asked himself a few searching questions] (Cubeiro, 2003: 168).

Once again, we see the same ingredients: in Cubeiro's book, Jesús Bauluz is the guru and Leopoldo Zoe in the one seeking the Holy Grail (that is, becoming a leader). Yet again, we find parallel stories linked with emotions (which are so important in contemporary Capitalism: Illouz, 2007). Then there are the contrived

names given to the characters (Sid y Nott, Leopoldo Zoe, etc.), reflecting an amateurish writing style, and the resort to ‘unliterary’ devices such as summarising the main ideas in a chapter, trouble-shooting guides so as to give the idea that the novel has an educational purpose. The author constantly speaks directly to the reader, as one can see in the book’s prologue:

[That is why I hope, Dear Reader, that you will use this story on leadership to reflect on what you do in your job so that you can advance in your team management] (Cubeiro, 2003: IX).

Almost all management novels follow a similar scheme. They are based on presenting management efforts as the need to take the right decisions; they melodramatically present good and bad practices and pass both practical and moral judgements on them. Indications on which practices are ‘good’ and which are ‘bad’ is based on management criteria serving the company’s interests. In these novels, the manager is faced by choices shaped by inevitability: there are no rational alternatives to the prescribed option, in which adopting a new viewpoint, action plan, or discovering a new management technique is presented as the ‘gift’ that will lead to business success (Fernández Rodríguez, 2007). In this respect, all the novels show a similar structure to the tales described by Propp (1981), with a framework based on the need to make inevitable ‘either/or’ choices between staying in a rut (marked by stagnation, failure, and helplessness) or embarking on change (involving co-operation, common goals, a new management culture,). In the latter case, the idea of change is imbued with almost revolutionary mystique, selling it as the fix that will deliver management and business success given a little effort. In general, the narrative is one that stresses individualist values without a psychologising framework, suggesting that given stimuli may boost a manager’s motivation and that of his workers. It rests on the notion that human nature is easily shaped. Such literature also rejects any contextual or sociological context. Thus issues such as economic exploitation, social conflict, ideological manipulation, or inequality (Fernández Rodríguez, 2007; Alonso and Fernández Rodríguez, 2013) are simply overlooked. There is sometimes the

odd reference to labour disputes but these are always settled in short order by managers who are capable of turning losses into profits.

As one might expect, the discourse in these novels coincides with those of management. A certain prescriptive style is used, peppered with expressions such as “one must”, “one should”, and in many cases acronyms and easily-memorisable lists are used (Huczynski, 1993; Chiapello and Fairclough, 2002). The description of situations is wedded with a prescription, which not only works like a dose of salts but which is also intended to stimulate and enthuse the reader. Furthermore, these novels are plagued with ‘mythological elements’ in the Barthesian meaning of the term (Barthes, 2000), where the messages imparted by the characters in the tale have a strong ideological tinge. Among these mythologies, there are abundant references to some of the examples described earlier (Fernández Rodríguez, 2007), among which one can highlight the following:

- a. The Mythology of Management Styles: The novels differentiate among management styles. On the one hand, the chosen style explains the novel to readers and is the one enshrining the behaviour needed to ensure business success. The remaining management styles have shortcomings or are just plain wrong and following them inevitably leads to organisational failure.
- b. The Mythology of Co-operation: This is based on the assumption that at the end of the day — no matter what the potential conflicts (broached at the beginning of the novels) — both managers and workers share the same interests. Social conflict either does not exist in the company or if it does, it is the result of bad management or the workers’ apathy and irresponsible behaviour. In general, the problem lies in failure to adapt to change and lack of flexibility by some members of the company.
- c. The Mythology of the Committed, Free Worker: Workers are presented as highly motivated, willing to accept any change that management

comes up with. Workers are pro-active; exemplary in their commitment to the company, and their interests are those of the firm. They hate bureaucracy because they want to be free and closer to clients. The novels paint an alluring picture of the new organisation. Here, the ‘new’ company is held up as one that is fun to work for, full of exciting challenge as it bravely battles against a conservatism linked to old, inflexible work practices and red tape.

- d. The Mythology of the Committed Manager: If workers are highly-motivated, it is because their bosses are. Managers do not skulk in their offices or in glass skyscrapers but rather take a personal interest in the work of their employees. Tasks are portrayed as exciting because they are ‘engaging’. When others are passive, our super-heroes give their all (especially their time: in most of the novels, there is a sub-plot portraying the tensions caused by the little time spent by the manager on his wife and children, the stresses of family life, and so on).

These mythologies justify certain ways of organising work, describe a given behaviour pattern intended to inspire readers, and that are a call to action. The narratives are articulated around what Bormann (1983) terms as ‘fantasy themes’ (dramatised messages), in which various persons (usually members of the company, although they may also be external agents such as consultants, friends, and family members) share a group fantasy through a sequence of acts (the situation supposedly being based on real events) (Jackson, 2001; Fernández Rodríguez, 2007). The reader, as onlooker, ends up projecting himself in one way or another through the actors in the tale and the stories told. Here, the stories are similar both in their subject matter and in how they unfold. Indeed, they all follow the same narrative nexus: the manager-cum-hero has joined a company that is in dire straits but has a gift, a magic wand, or some other management technique that will miraculously transform the firm’s fortunes and lead to a happy ending.

Another element that should be highlighted is the use of characters inspired in the manager-hero model, albeit with some nuances. As Fernández Rodríguez (2007) states, one of the features of managerial books is the way they employ the so-called executive-cum-hero, closely linked with the classical hero. Here, one should note that the classical hero — who has fallen by the wayside in modern literature — was a literary figure whose life only had meaning if it was linked to some great task that was fully-defined and that required unswerving resolution, flawless execution, and utter conviction (as Bajtin, 2003 notes). The hero’s behaviour and acts predestine him for success and to serve as a paragon for lesser mortals — a model that forces the authors of management texts to frame their discourses as dogmatic monologues (Fernández Rodríguez, 2007). If this were not so, the goal could not be obtained: “In the contrary case, failure would bring a moment of ‘guilt and responsibility’ and the aesthetic unity of the hero’s destiny would be shattered. In such event, the hero would be freed from the shackles of Destiny but not from readers’ moral judgement and opprobrium. When the hero is founded on blame and responsibility (...) he ceases to be himself, and the author’s projection of the key elements (...) is lost. In such case, the whole literary edifice comes crashing to the ground” (Bajtin, 2003: 155-156).

Nevertheless, there are some nuances to the hero in these management novels, given that their personalities are leavened with few humanising traits. For example, in *The Goal* we see that the protagonist — Alex Rogo — has family problems and is sometimes tired and confused. Nevertheless, his actions in his personal quest seem to follow a narrow path wending its way through the tale’s ‘message’. In other works, such as *RRelatos HHumanos* [‘Human Tales’, the forced Spanish spelling making reference to ‘HR’ or Human Resources] compiled by Pozo (2016), various authors present diverse pen-pictures of the trials and tribulations facing management in times of crisis. The narrative is liberally sprinkled with rows, funerals, cafés, and tensions designed to stop the reader’s interest flagging. Yet in the end, success wins

the day and the moral of the tale is trotted out on what it takes to be an executive-hero. The variation in the protagonist's behaviour and relation to the established norm is remarkably narrow if we compare it with the unpredictability found in modern literature (Lotman, 1978). Thus the characters in these novels are far removed from modernity and are much closer to the classical form of *exemplum*, or a narrative whose sole purpose is to hold up an example for emulation which, according to Barthes (1990), is a form of gentle persuasion. Boltanski and Chiappello noted that: "Their orientation is not constative, but prescriptive. In the manner of edifying books or manuals of moral instruction, they practise the *exemplum*, select the cases employed according to their demonstrative power - what is to be done as opposed to what is not to be done. - and take from reality only such of its aspects as confirm the orientation to which they wish to give some impetus" (Boltanski and Chiappello, 2007: 58).

CONCLUSIONS

Managerial ideas are highly influential in the business world, which is due in great measure to the extraordinary reach enjoyed by its propagandists — especially business management experts and gurus. Some of them have chosen certain channels to spread their message over the last few decades, one of which is fiction — 'managerial literature' — in the form of novels and fables. In them the reader — a harassed professional more often than not — puts himself in the shoes of a successful (fictional) executive in a quest for The Philosopher's Stone of managerial technique that will transmute his career into gold (or more prosaically, professional and financial success). The construction of these works has a notable precedent in Ayn Rand's novels, the leading author among highly influential business and political leaders defending the struggle of the individual entrepreneur against the State, bureaucracy, and collectivism, generously larded with a mystification of selfish tax avoidance/evasion as a philosophy of life, as set out in *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged*.

The works of contemporary management novelists do not have the same aetherial epic quality given that they try to empathise with their readers by throwing in pen-pictures of the characters' emotions (frustrations, losses, family problems). Nevertheless, they share with Rand a manipulative view of the world in which business success is the only goal in sight. In pursuing this Holy Grail, they follow a rigid narration whose closest forerunner is the Mediaeval *exemplum*. Managerial fictions, like other works of 'business literature', are built upon structural contrasts between behaviours. In these novels, a main character sets out the sequence of actions and their alternatives, identifies the 'right' choice (that is, one serving the company's interests and its management style). Great stress is placed on mobilising the manager in order to make his job sound more thrilling. To achieve this identification, a character — typically a company manager (an executive-hero) achieves business success by adopting a given management technique, and whose actions are used for moralising exemplification.

Despite the appearance of a few elements in the narrative that lend a certain realism to the characters (such as their daily concerns, personal relations and the like), the iron rhetoric of personal growth (of a straitjacketed kind) and the human condition ends up bowing to the stereotype. These management novels thus foster a narrow, biased view of the business world in which the characters are mere marionettes despite the authors' attempts to humanise them. In the end, they give way to the same archetypes Rand built of 'rebels with a cause' (which is no other than the pursuit of wealth no matter who gets hurt).

Both distance women from the feminist struggle for gender equality. Thus whichever theme or issue is tackled by the books (equal pay, sexual harassment, learning to be more assertive, and so on); the approach is always individualist and Neo-Liberal in nature. In this respect, it seems there is a translation of the women's corporate business spirit to their role as women. The sub-genre does not stint on the

language of mock-heroism and self-sacrifice common in corporate leadership literature but in this case applies it to the field of ‘family management’.

Examining the results of our analysis, we can conclude that our initial hypothesis is confirmed (restated below for the sake of convenience):

The values and behaviours prescribed for career women and mothers (especially those in senior management posts) reproduce traditional sexist, gender stereotypes, placing such women at a disadvantage compared with their male peers, thus fostering immoral companies in which there is no scope for gender equality.

While the advice tendered to women (who are both senior managers and mothers) is open-ended and leaves it to readers to decide whether they want to perform both roles, the books’ prescriptions are contradic-

tory. This muddled advice leaves women defenceless, thrusting the burden of choice on them in a way that is typical of Neo-Liberal societies. This burden is made all the harder to bear through its intersection with gender.

We can conclude by saying that the feminist struggle is wholly secondary in this literary sub-genre, which turns each woman into a kind of ‘Lone Ranger’ fighting single-handed in big business’ badlands. This kind of struggle is always framed in individual terms, thus depoliticising women, distancing them from demands for equality, and making them even more vulnerable to exploitation. In a nutshell, books in this genre do women a great disservice by frivolously reducing grave social issues to an internal struggle that leads to small conquests for a few lucky (well-placed) individuals but that renounces a collective war waged on gender inequality that would benefit the many.

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Emotional Transition in Social Movements. The PAH Case

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ABSTRACT

We find that some fractured societies, in grappling with Neo-Liberalism as a political project, embark on an emotional transition to win hearts and minds for new, fairer policies to tackle inequalities.

Thus, there are 'affective spaces' facilitating this emotional transition, thereby allowing the building of collective action. For these spaces to work well, they must be configured as chains of interaction rituals, which use emotional transformation to drive social change.

This paper is based on a documental analysis and an ethnographic study carried out between 2013 and 2018 in several assemblies of and actions taken by the PAH (a platform for those affected by home foreclosure) in several Catalan municipalities. It was conducted by participatory observation, focus groups and in-depth interviews with activists.

Keywords: ritual of interaction, collective action, emotions, emotional transition.

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INTRODUCTION

Interest in emotions has grown and broadened to the point where the 'Sociology of The Emotions' is now a discipline in its own right. Applying this new discipline to social movements has rendered notions of irrationality or an artificial separation between emotions and reason (whether instrumental or instinctive) obsolete as drivers of collective action. In this respect, Jasper (1997) opened a new path in noting that cognition, morale and emotions are inseparable from an analytical standpoint.

Even so, models seeking to explain how social movements harness emotions to foster collective action still

lack a suitable theoretical-methodological base. That is why this paper tries to chart how the emotional transition linked to affective areas takes place through interaction rituals, which constitute the basis for mobilisation. However, before embarking on empirical and theoretical reflection, one first needs to accept a set of premises.

First, one needs to define social precariousness as structural dispossession stemming from dodgy, unpredictable living and employment conditions that above all reflect imperatives covering "flexibility, availability, multi-location and mobility in both temporal and spatial terms" (Ricceri, 2011: 68). This objective reality has to

be placed against the background of Neo-Liberal power, which takes the form of a subjective, political project (Lazzarato, 2006). This domination is masked behind formulas of individual responsibility, moral obligation, and individuals' acquiescence in their dispossession. This boils down to exploiting emotions in the management of inequalities, which in the final analysis are simply forms of social control (Lazzarato, 2006).

Second, one needs to assume the concept of a dual subject — that is to say of a reflective subject and of a social actor who combines the decisions and autonomous actions and criticisms of others configured through the special features of each social interaction and in keeping with certain norms, codes, group/social values.

Third, stemming from the second point, one has to accept that the answer to such domination-based affectivity is also a political task that develops in parallel with the creation of an alternative affectiveness. This political, protest-based political praxis requires the emergence and management of emotions that are experienced within the social movement to achieve both cognitive and affective liberation.

RITUAL INTERACTION CHAINS AS A MODEL OF EMOTIONAL TRANSITION

Collins' (2009) theoretical proposal is one of a situational Sociology in which ritual is conceptualised as a "mechanism for focusing both emotion and attention, creating a temporarily shared reality" (Collins, 2009: 21). This is a temporal unit, a meeting between "human bodies charged with emotion and awareness by virtue of chains of previous gatherings" (Collins, 2009: 18). The subjects or actors thus pass through a social reality conceived as an emotional market in which there are various kinds of interaction depending on their emotional charge and, above all, a corporal process. The actor seeks rituals with the greatest emotional charge until he or she dominates every field, be it institutional or non-institutional.

Thus the characteristics of an Interaction Ritual (IR) are:

(1) the physical meeting of two or more persons such each actor influences the others, whether or not they happen to be aware of it; (2) the presence of barriers that make it clear who is taking part and who is not; (3) shared focus on the same object, making it possible to create a common awareness; (4) an emotional experience and mood shared by participants (*Ibid.*: 72).

Where the process works well (that is, where it does not fail or become 'forced', as happens in some cases), a kind of consonance emerges from shared attention and feelings, creating a collective emotional and cognitive experience. Collins precisely describes the effects of the interaction ritual: (a) affiliation, social emotion; (b) individual emotion in the form of self-confidence, enthusiasm, and initiative for action; (c) the creation of symbols representing the group, whether they be words, gestures, or icons; (d) shared morality, in which it is one's duty to participate in the group, respect and defend its symbols, and in which undermining group solidarity is reprehensible (*Ibid.*: 73).

This ritual enshrines a motivational model in which bodies seek other bodies to share moments of collective effervescence in a continuous material-social flux oiled by emotional consonance — both corporal and cognitive-symbolic — that gives ritual its socially transformational role in interactions ranging from the micro-social level to the face-to-face one. Thus Collins (2009: 66) states: "An intense ritual experience creates new symbolic objects and energy driving greater social changes. IR is a mechanism for change."

At this juncture, it is worth asking what emotions are shared in these rituals and how the path to emotional transition (and thus social mobilisation) is paved.

METHODOLOGICAL AND CONTEXTUAL NOTE

The analysis in this paper is based on a socio-constructionist perspective of emotions (McCarthy, 1994; Enciso and Lara, 2014), which argues that emotions exist because they are socially constructed. This configuration process occurs at three levels (Boiger and Mesquita,

2012): (1) momentary interactions; (2) relational interactions; (3) the socio-cultural context (incorporating the first two), understood as a framework modelling and limiting meanings and thus what can be emotionally expressed (i.e. following the social norms governing emotions) (Kemper, 1981). In this respect, the situation (Miles and Huberman, 1984) is considered as the unit for analysing emotions expressed through practices, language, and social interaction. These situations are covered by assemblies and actions forming the repertoire of protest and are defined as an event (Dubet, 2010; Lazzarato, 2006) — that is, a moment opening up new collective forms of relationship and interpretation of the social setting, and as a reformulation of individual and collective priorities. Last, the data are analysed from a hermeneutic perspective based on grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Charmaz, 2006), as a form of “inductive approximation where immersion in the data yields the point of departure for a theory on the phenomenon” (Guillemette, 2006).

This study stems partly from field work carried out for a doctoral thesis between 2013 and 2015; however this work later stretched out to 2018. In total, fifteen in-depth interviews were conducted of activists (eleven women, four men) drawn from five PAH assemblies (Barcelona, Girona, Badalona, Blanes, Sant Celoni) and a discussion group with four activists from PAH Baix Montseny (Barcelona) and PAH Blanes (Girona). As to participant observation, this was through direct involvement in various kinds of assembly (co-ordination, general, new cases, working parties, and local committees). In addition, there was participation in protests such as bank occupations, plastering bank branches with protest posters¹, marking empty flats, rallies, demonstrations, ‘alternative’ social fairs, celebrations, and informal gatherings. There were peaks and troughs in this participation between 2013 and 2018. The Ethnography was completed with a documentary analysis of the materials produced by the groups, such as manifestos, collective action manuals, social works, and press notes during this period.

1 In some cases, bank branches were ‘invaded’ and plastered with protest posters on the inside too.

PAH was chosen for study for two main reasons. The first was that it clearly incarnated individuals who had been or were about to be evicted from their homes. The second was the clear importance of emotions in the construction of their collective action — something that strongly emerged in the first part of the fieldwork (2013-2015). In this respect, it is worth saying that what spurred the writing of this paper were the results of the doctoral thesis and its discourse analysis (Conde, 2009), which revealed major translations between two semantic fields, each expressing a given discursive position. One of these discourses was based on the victim-member, the other on the activist-member. Among other things, these discourses were nurtured by agency of a strongly emotional nature (Giménez, 2017). This basis served to build the paper’s hypothesis on emotional transition.

At this juncture, readers need to bear in mind the following information on PAH, the social movement studied in this paper.

Plataforma d’Afectats per la Hipoteca (PAH) [Foreclosure Victims’ Platform] is a movement that was set up in Barcelona in 2009, stemming from the *V de Vivenda* [‘H’ for Housing] movement. PAH gradually spread its reach throughout Spain. The movement’s aim was to defend the right to housing yet most of its actions focused on defending property — specifically that of people with mortgage arrears facing the prospect of foreclosure and eviction². The movement’s organisation steadily became more complex but each local assembly had a lot of freedom in deciding its strategies and actions for defending its members’ right to housing. PAH produced a wide range of manuals (on drawing up actions and social initiatives; negotiating with banks; stopping the wave of foreclosures and evictions). This local autonomy fostered great democratisation given that each municipality or promoting group could set

2 Translator’s note: Here it is worth noting the highly anomalous nature of Spain’s mortgage system. A mortgagee who falls behind with payment not only faces repossession but is also left with a lifelong debt (the outstanding mortgage). This, combined with irresponsible lending before the 2008 financial crash, sharp Spanish banking practices, and a property boom of surreal proportions foreshadowed a social disaster

up an assembly based on collective learning without having to stick strictly to PAH's organisational structure whether at the regional level (in Spain, the so-called 'Autonomous Community' tier of government) or at the State level.

What kind of people sought PAH's help? Here one should distinguish between promoting groups and activists. The former were drawn from bodies usually representing marginalised groups — members or former members of political parties and/or trade unions. The activists were overwhelmingly women with limited education and political experience. Many of them were immigrants who were precariously employed and had not been previously politically socialised. While some men took part, it was largely women who led the movement, the committees, and who made the biggest effort.

EMOTIONS INVOLVED IN THE TRANSITION

Going beyond the classification of emotions presented by Goodwin and Jasper (Goodwin *et al.*, 2004; Jasper, 2006a), we focus here on how these emotions are linked to political action, specifically with collective dispute. When it comes to emotions, these are neither an automatic knee-jerk response nor the product of awareness and great deliberation. Rather they are a form of information processing which may be faster than our brains can grasp (Leventhal and Tomarken, 1986). Thus, according to Nussbaum (2001: 23), "Emotions always imply the idea of an object together with its prominence or importance thus they always involve appreciation or evaluation". So emotions play a regulatory, stratifying function in the pursuit of certain ends, making them strategic elements in collective action. From this standpoint, Jasper (2006b) proposes five human goals: (1) reputation; (2) sensuality; (3) connection; (4) impact on the world; (5) curiosity. According to him, these five goals form part of and become visible in social movements. This paper focuses on the emotions associated with reputation and forging links, given their relevance in building mobilisation — something that emerged from our earlier fieldwork.

Reputation, defined as "a desire for due honour, pride and the recognition of one's own humanity" (Honneth, 1995), is developed through a *moral battery*³ powered by pride and shame. It is a response to the affective control processes implied by fear (Gould, 2001; 2003; 2009) and the threat this poses subjects' dignity. Here, pride and shame are two moral emotions given that they imply value-judgements on the object to which they are applied. Second, the link, understood as a feeling of belonging, of awareness that one is part of a group, is manifested through love and enthusiasm that in turn forge affective loyalties based on participation and on long-term collective action (Jasper, 1998; Polletta and Jasper, 2001; Flesher Fominaya, 2010). Last but not least, the impact is linked with expectations of action, which give hope and confidence and — linked to these emotions — confer the power of agency (Wood, 2003). Such expectations and emotions constitute the collective feeling that the group's actions will prove successful and that they will form the basis for future actions until their goals are reached. One should recall that emotions can be activated by opposing forces, which is simply a zero-sum game: enthusiasm/apathy, hope/desperation, trust/mistrust.

The emotional journey taken by the subject through his or her participation in the social movement can be seen as a four-stage temporal framework. Each individual trajectory stresses one of these stages in terms of intensity and duration, even though some individuals may not complete this transformation. Thus there is a first 'accumulation stage' stemming from a sense of injury and threat. The second stage involves joining the movement and of emotional bonding. The third stage involves emotional reparation. The fourth stage covers taking action in the context of a dispute.

3 Jasper (2012) used the term *moral battery* to define a category of two antagonistic emotions that might be likened to the anode and cathode in a battery, which power action once they have been connected. The most studied 'battery' has been pride-shame, based on studies of gay and lesbian movements.

STAGES IN THE EMOTIONAL TRANSITION

Accumulation

This is the first stage and takes place outside a social movement. The individual finds himself or herself subject to the logic of Neo-Liberal domination, under the thrall of its subjectivity and of its affective control (stemming from precariousness and thus from social vulnerability) (Lazzarato, 2006; Giménez, 2018).

Mainstream PAH members are subject to foreclosure proceedings (that is to say, they face losing their homes because of mortgage default). These individuals feel threatened, ashamed, guilty, and isolated and in general, that they have failed in life (Giménez, 2017). As GD1D1⁴ noted: “You see someone who is crestfallen, on the verge of tears, lost, and who is at their wit’s end”. The situation is felt as a stain upon one’s honour, a direct threat, loss, and discrimination. The individual feels vulnerable and that all his or her expectations in life have been brought to naught, constituting a brutal negation of the subject’s self-determination. The social precariousness of those who find themselves in such dire straits was noted earlier, as was the need to ensure social control through subjects’ acquiescence to such inequities. Thus, we see a mobilisation cycle in which many of those on the lower social rungs band together to escape the dire straits they find themselves in. The grim prospect of dispossession is the catalyst for resistance and emancipation (Schierup and Bak Jørgensen, 2016). Thus, we find members of Sindillar (a house-cleaners’ Trade Union), the *Iai-oflautes* [a ‘grannies’ protest group sprung from the 15-M movement] *l’associació de cambres de pis* [room-cleaners’ association], *Las Kellys* [hotel-room cleaners association] and the *Sindicat de Manters de Barcelona* [Barcelona Street-Hawkers Trade Union], to give just a few examples of those with dodgy jobs. These groups also highlight the way the crisis has dashed expectations and sparked a shared perception of a grave threat to their well-being and dignity.

We are therefore speaking of people in tricky circumstances who have been deeply scarred by the Neo-Liberal project, and the inequitable treatment meted out by the economic and social system in both the welfare and wage spheres (Lazzarato, 2006). These people find themselves in a very weak position, in which the burden falls on the individual. This is in keeping with the logic of domination, which each individual internalises through the projection of negative emotions that keep them submissive and in the thrall of the powers that be.

When this point is reached, what is it that makes an individual paralysed by these emotions take the plunge and join a social movement? According to Dubet (2010), this leap is taken when the individual (and thus an ethic actor) feels at odds with the forces of domination hindering him or her from acting as a free agent. From the emotional standpoint, one can hypothesise the need for good standing (reputation) as a life goal — that is to say, that there is an inextricable link between blame and shame on the one hand and pride on the other, constituting a ‘moral battery’ (Jasper, 2012) as the main mechanism spurring participation in a social movement.

The second stage in the process begins once the individual has taken this important first step.

Emotional reception

The first contacts tend to be informal conversations with a member of the group, or even a chance meeting at a public event or during a protest (gathering, occupation, talk). When someone takes part in an assembly for the first time (whether as a situation or an event), the emotional welcoming process kicks in and takes clearer form. That is why an interaction ritual is played out, allowing transformation of initially negative, weakening emotions into other emotions that are more invigorating and that spur both individual and collective action — in other words, those that are needed to build the emotional agency needed to forge a strong movement. Yet why can we say that the ritual form begins in the assembly?

⁴ See the list of codes used for interviews and discussion groups

The first reason — following Collins' (2009) criteria — is because the assembly is a physical meeting of people whose attention and communication focus on the same subject, namely the various forms taken by social vulnerability (foreclosure proceedings, eviction, precarious housing, long-term unemployment). These are intense experiences that touch on the key aspects of people's lives and thus trigger deep cognitive and emotional responses in those suffering such vulnerability. In the words of PAH1:

We think the welcome is very important because it's when people get the chance to unburden themselves and cast off their sense of guilt. Many people feel guilty that they took on debt. The important thing is to help them lift this weight of guilt off their shoulders and calm down. Some people are mired in despair so it's important to help them take a deep breath and see the strength of collective action, that a problem shared is a problem halved. We show them the problem lies in the system, not in them. We show them that guilt will get them nowhere and that the solution lies in collective action.

This approach forges greater empathy, an almost spontaneous feeling of a community of fellow-sufferers among all those attending the assemblies, drawing a symbolic line tracing the bounds of what lies inside the assembly and what beyond it.

All the individuals in an assembly clearly have a common awareness of the same cognitive-symbolic object. Yet the event also creates a shared emotional experience, which is key for firing the energy needed to change things. We therefore speak of the assembly as where ritual interaction takes place. It is a forum where people gather, and an event that manages and develops symbolic, cultural, cognitive, and emotional processes, shaping collective transformation founded on shared experience.

The second reason, as mentioned earlier, is that the transformational nature of ritual lies in its power to spark the emotional energy leading to collective euphoria, cathartic moments when corporal, material,

and social moments meld to create a great upwelling of emotional consonance. The emotional and collective energy generated by this triple confluence (corporal, emotional, and cognitive-symbolic) is what gives the ritual its transformative power and role. Thus, entering an assembly is a moment for emotional unburdening in which the individual publicly confronts his/her sense of shame, the scars inflicted by Neo-Liberal subjection, and the threat posed to his/her good standing. In welcoming assemblies, new members rise from their seats, grab the microphone, and pour out their woes. They give emotional discourses, not political or strategic ones. They talk about the threats made by the bank following mortgage default, how their children may be taken into care, of the helplessness they feel after years of unemployment or of living in sub-standard housing⁵. These emotions are understood and shared by everyone else in the assembly. It is a moment of collective recognition of 'us and them', of comrades 'in the same boat' but also of other disadvantaged groups (for example, hotel and house cleaners). Someone then bursts into tears, their voice breaking with emotion and shame. A few moments go by and then the group applauds, encouraging the speaker to go on: "Courage Ángeles! You can do it! You are not alone". Some members get up and hug the speaker, encouraging him or her to finish". As noted by interviewee PAH2, "The value of the assembly is the sense of empowerment — it's a bit like Alcoholics Anonymous, right?"

This initial group interaction sublimates the materialism of bodies, objects and space and their expressions and dispositions, turning all these elements into a continuum of shared emotional energy, and — as noted earlier — of emotional consonance. The empathy, the emotional unburdening open up a path in which shame, guilt, isolation, fear, the stain on one's honour and worth give way to their emotional opposites.

⁵ These comments are taken from various witnesses who were observed in PAH Gironès and PAH Badalona assemblies in 2014.

Emotional Reparation

This involves recovering one's damaged reputation, following Honneth's concept (1995). This emotional reparation is made by steadily forging and strengthening a link between awareness of belonging to the group and boosting participation in the movement. This feeling of belonging to certain kinds and forms of collective identities represents "a basic human need for loving emotions (Berezin, 2001), pride (Scheff, 1994), and enthusiasm (Collins, 2009)". Its importance lies in the fact that such identities and sense of belonging forge affective commitments and loyalties between the individual and the group (Jasper, 1998; Polletta and Jasper, 2001), making it easier for each individual to take on collective practices, goals, and values. It is an incorporation of the 'collective self' filtered by each subject's reflections, allowing for varying degrees of adherence to the central elements of collective identity. This gives rise to mutually compatible but varying individual interpretations of that identity.

The link, belonging, collective identity, and a whole set of accompanying cultural, moral, emotional, and symbolic contents are assimilated and re-interpreted by individuals through immersion in activists' gatherings and events. These are community spaces and interaction structures (Tejerina, 2010) making up stable relational networks that forge trust and give mutual support. The movement's daily routine comprises attending assemblies, advisory committees, tendering help in negotiations, squats, performances, training workshops, celebrations of successes, making placards, talks, and anniversary dinners. The result is the construction of a space for the movement in which different interaction scenarios play out through rituals of varying emotional intensity and that more or less standardise the use made of symbolic instruments. This continuum allows a recent recruit to assimilate the elements involved in the ritual, their distribution, their hoped-for impact, and their purpose. Each expressive-symbolic formula, whether it be silence, a stirring slogan, a hug-in, or an aesthetic feature (T-shirts, disguise, placard) has its place, moment, and function in the ritual, and each ritual has its own collectively constructed rules.

This process of forming affective loyalties also appears in moral emotions (Traïni, 2009), which consist of approval or disapproval of given attitudes and behaviour patterns in the group. Thus, defending group purposes, values, and symbols is 'right' whereas acting on behalf of other, selfish interests is 'wrong' and runs counter to the group's moral code. As Activist PAH3 put it, "In my view, they come along and when their problem is solved, it's 'Thanks and I'm off'. In my book, that's just not right". This moral projection of community-nurtured affectiveness and emotions is also one of the impacts of the interaction ritual.

[I say that the PAH has the power to turn a victim into an activist and that is wonderful. Speaking for myself, I was in a terrible state when I joined the assemblies — I was knocked for six. But after a few days, I was in fine fettle and ready to do battle] (Interview with PAH4).

Then several weeks or even months go by since that first assembly. The shame, blame, and loss of dignity borne by that individual fade as he or she takes part in the interaction rituals more or less often, and with greater or less intensity, gradually leading to active participation in the movement. The subject acquires an emotional repertoire that mixes love, pride, enthusiasm, affective and moral loyalty towards the group, giving him/her what it takes to join in the political battle.

Activation for battle

The last stage of activation is both political and deliberative, such that the object on which emotions are projected undergoes a complete transformation. Hitherto, in taking part in the movement, the subject's emotions stemmed from the thwarting of his/her expectations in life. As noted earlier, such expectations/goals are generally those imbued by the powers that be and include such things as: looking after one's family; earning a decent wage; owning one's own house; having a good standard of living. At the same time, the ritual of cognitive and emotional transformation has advanced to the point where there are basically two objects of the individual's emotions. The first is the group, whose

members have taken part in the subject's emotional healing through the projection of trust, joy, pride (in belonging) and affective loyalty. The second is one of agency, which involves turning the threat to one's reputation, pride, and dignity into a weapon with which to fight. Hence, initiative, hope, and enthusiasm accompany these discursive, symbolic, strategic, and organisational strategies for countering threats.

These dominant emotions include indignation and are linked to a desire to make an impact and produce change. The wish to make an impact (Jasper, 2012); to "change the world" is one of the main incentives for the movement's political action. However, one of the impacts of the ritual is of a pragmatic, contingent nature. A fellow member's lack of social security coverage, his/her health problems, unpaid wages, or homelessness are all issues that the group takes to heart and for which it collectively seeks solutions. Thus practices in the rituals and in discourses include criteria covering effectiveness and efficiency. The verbs used to express indignation and initiative include 'discussing', 'evaluating', 'fighting', 'attaining', 'organising', and 'solving'. This does not mean that hugs, weeping, applause, and in general cathartic moments disappear but rather that the agency discourse also embraces strategic, pragmatic considerations in taking the struggle further.

[You have to come and empower yourself, fight for your house, fight for your rights, you have to defend your home. If you do not defend your home, I cannot do it for you because I do not know what you want to do with your home...] (Interview with PAH5).

In fact, when PAH carries out a 'social action' (that is, occupation of a block of flats so that it can house members of the group), it employs a liberation ritual that includes welcoming the re-housed families, festooning the building with materials proclaiming the movement, holding both 'welcome' and protest meetings; exhibiting symbols; community singing. All these elements act as props to set the scene for collective euphoria and emotional consonance.

In the initial stages, the stimulus provided by a ritual (capable of generating collective emotional energy) focuses on the need to welcome newcomers and to heal an individual who feels ashamed and threatened, and so needs rescuing. According to one of those interviewed:

[Someone who was weeping today or two weeks ago and was suicidal or whatever, will be laughing two weeks hence, doing things, and helping others who maybe found themselves in the same boat] (Interview with PAH2).

The small victories won by the movement also play a part — for example a 'social action' or stopping an eviction. As Activist PAH6 noted, "Nothing gives people a stronger will to keep fighting than does a victory, and PAH has won many small battles". These victories provide a measure of the movement's impact and justify PAH's practices and aims given that they make the interaction ritual both more plausible and measurable in terms of outcomes.

Thus the strategic value of actions is subsumed in their ability to foster emotional consonance and a sense of belonging that ensures the updating, ratification, and continuance of a movement's interaction rituals in all their forms.

Last, one should reflect on the final stage of the emotional transition, which is the disappearance of the emotions driving collective action. The fact that it was not possible to interview those who no longer take part in the movement limits interpretation of the phenomenon. One also needs to bear in mind that the process of emotional exhaustion and of abandoning activism do not necessarily stem from a loss of the ritual's effectiveness. Rather, as we have tried to show here, there are other factors at work that lie beyond our analysis.

CONCLUSIONS

First of all, one must draw attention to the leading part played by women in the processes of emotional

and political transformation described in this paper. From a socio-demographic perspective, one can hypothesise that the low educational, social, and political ‘capital’ of the movement’s members typifies patriarchal (traditional) socialisation patterns in which home ownership, motherhood, and marriage are the hallmarks of adult life. From this, one can argue that there is a transfer of child-rearing and care tasks from home to the movement’s social and political sphere. As Hochschild states, the lack of other means “forces women to create resources based on feelings” (Hochschild, 1983: 163) — something that is in part possible because of the emotion management skills girls acquire during their childhood socialisation (Jasper, 2012). Yet this hypothesis needs nuancing. What is really relevant is women’s ability to convert emotional capital into political capital and activism, such that caring tasks, emotional healing, providing support, and listening to others are taken on and practiced by the whole group, regardless of gender differences. Thus women emerge as promoters of emancipatory change. From this standpoint, gender socialisation is a major factor explaining how social movements use affectiveness and emotions as resources for collective action, projecting political meaning, and for collective responsibility in caring for others.

Second, some studies on the relationship between emotions and the construction of collective action assume that feelings — such as indignation, pride, or a sense of injustice — drive action from the outset. Without under-estimating the importance of such feelings in catalysing collective action, the emotional transition model suggests that the start of the individual’s path in a movement needs to be sought in the individual’s preceding emotional state. This is the one found when the subject enters the movement and is defined by the ‘welcome’ ritual. This state is defined and explained by the previous ‘accumulation’ stage. Thus, as we have said, the emotions beginning the process are shame, guilt, and threats to the subject’s dignity.

In addition, assuming that collective emotional energy underlies the transformational process, one should reject the notion of an ‘emotional market’ mooted by Collins (2009). Here, it is not so much a question of offering diverse rituals of varying intensity but rather of ensuring the right ritual elements are present at a given event, for example in an assembly. Put another way, while one can accept that emotional energy is the product of subjects’ own practices in an interaction setting, these people are not energy consumers but rather energy producers. This change in the actor’s role allows one to say that there are symbolic and emotional incentives fostering ongoing participation in this ritual. In this respect, the continuance of the event and the emotional conditions for interaction make the aforesaid transition possible. Emotions projected on the link and impact (enthusiasm, affective loyalty, hope, initiative) constitute the main axes of emotional consonance.

One should also note that while the ritual provides scope for the creation of new symbols differing from or opposing those of the powers that be, the model does not establish what constraints act on the configuration of the ritual itself. By the same token, specification is lacking when it comes to the kinds of emotions and their distribution in the ritual — a shortcoming that this paper has sought to mitigate. Yet one has to admit both the value of Collins’ (2009) model for determining the elements required by an interaction ritual from a social constructionist and symbolic interactionist perspective, and the model put forward in this paper.

Finally, one should state that Situational Sociology needs to be applied if we are to gain a better understanding of the impact and social changes that social movements are capable of. In taking such an approach, the analysis should cover both the symbolic conditions under which the interaction takes place and the inner life of social movements, paying special attention to the transformational potential of emotions.

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INTERVIEW CODES AND DISCUSSION GROUP

Discussion Group 1:

GD1D1: Woman, mortgage victim and activist*, 50-55 years old, without a previous experience of activism, promotor of PAH Baix Montseny (Barcelona).

Interviews:

PAH1: Woman, mortgage victim and activist, 35-40 years old, member of the local PAH assembly in Sant Celoni (Barcelona Province), without previous experience of activism.

PAH2: Woman, mortgage victim and activist, 35-40 years old, promotor of the local PAH assembly in Badalona, previous membership of PSUC (Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya [Catalan Socialist Party] and neighbourhood associations.

PAH3: Woman, activist (without mortgage problems), 45-50 years old, promotor of the local PAH assembly in Badalona, previous membership of PSUC and ICV (Iniciativa per Catalunya-Verds).

PAH4: Woman, activist (without mortgage problems), 55-60 years old, promotor of the PAH Gironès assembly (Girona), previous membership of CCOO (Comissions Obreres, a major Trade Union).

PAH5: Woman, mortgage victim and activist, 55-60 years old, member of the PAH Gironès assembly, without previous experience of activism.

PAH6: Woman, mortgage victim and activist, 50-55 years old, without previous experience of activism, member of PAH Baix Montseny (Barcelona).

* Affected by foreclosure proceedings.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Ferran Giménez Azagra was awarded a PhD in Sociology from Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea (UPV-EHU) [University of The Basque Country]. He is currently a Secondary School Teacher at l'Institut Ribot i Serra, Sabadell, specialising in Social-Community Intervention. Giménez is also an Associate Professor at Universitat de Barcelona (UB) in the Department of Teaching and Educational Orientation. His main current lines of research are social construction processes in social movements: collective identities, collective action frameworks, subjectivities and emotions.



Special Issue

Culture and Populism in the Global South



Presentation of the monograph. Culture and Populism in the Global South

Coordinated by

Pablo Valdivia

UNIVERSITY OF GRONINGEN

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INTRODUCTION

The debate on populism has been in the limelight over the last few years. Factors such as the 2007 Financial Crisis, the emergence of populist parties in Europe, and ideological polarisation (seen in Trump's arrival at The White House and in Brexit) beg questions about the geo-political balance struck in The West after the fall of the Soviet bloc in the 1990s. The successive crises unleashed after the fall of Lehman Brothers and the swift rise in various far-right parties in Europe reveal the fragility of The Capitalist Order, which is far from solving structural social problems. Hence the popularity of the word *populism* in media debates trying to explain the emergence of new political players opposing hegemonic discourses on the contemporary world.

There is also intense debate on populism in academe. Studies on populism have also taken centre stage in The Humanities and Social Sciences over recent years as a result of political, social, and cultural construction processes in various contexts. These processes have shown that the notion of *populism* is a very pliable one, and is used by governments, opposing ideologies, and diverse political regimes to suit their purposes. Experience of Latin American populism provides interesting comparisons with the brands of populism found in Europe and in The United States, which are articulating the drivers of inequality in what has become known as 'The Global South'.

This monographic issue reflects theoretically on the current state of affairs, taking the most recent critical approaches to the subject as its point of departure.¹ This special issue seeks to close the present research gap by: (1) examining the mobilisation of a set of multi-disciplinary, trans-national theoretical perspectives to fully grasp the complex relationships between culture, inequality, and the public sphere in The Global South; (2) taking a critical approach to the cultural-political challenges posed by populist discourses and attitudes; (3) critically delving into the political, historical, cultural, and linguistic models shaping individual and collective imaginaries in The Global South; (4) undertaking critical reflection on the multi-disciplinary theoretical tools helping us to come up with analyses and models in keeping with the new social, cultural and political phenomena making up what we term ‘populist cultural narratives’.

The reflections contained in the papers are the fruits of: (a) rigorous analysis and pooling of ideas among scholars drawn from several countries; (b) three Winter Schools on “Culture and Populism”, forming part of the official programme of Winter Schools run by Groningen University. The first edition of this Winter School was held at Universidad de Granada in 2017), and in Valencia with the collaboration of Universitat de València (UV) (in the two subsequent editions, both held at Colegio Mayor Rector Peset in the third week of February in 2018 and 2019). There, academic and cultural centres in The Netherlands, The United States, Spain, France, Portugal, Peru, and Chile raised several key questions for framing the debate on the challenges currently posed by populism.

This monographic issue includes some of the most important contributions arising from these gatherings, offering a multi-disciplinary perspective on the subject. Stefan Couperus and Pier Domenico Tortola open the debate with the (ab)use made of history in populist discourse. An analysis is then made of some of the core discursive elements, such as the dichotomy between “us and them” (in Judith Jansma’s paper), the logic behind negating the hegemonic order (explored in Luis Martín-Estudillo’s paper), or the narrative elements of a nostalgia for a utopian past (Dora Vrhoci’s contribution), concluding with the Latin American case, which is analysed by Carlos del Valle. The monographic issue thus offers a broad analysis contributing to future studies on populism — a phenomenon that is increasingly present in the discourses and policies adopted by diverse political players on the world stage.



¹ Among others, see Nestor García Canclini, *La globalización imaginada*, 2009; Manuel Castells (ed.) *Aftermath: The Cultures of the Economic Crisis*, 2012; Boaventura de Sousa Santos (ed.), *Epistemologías del sur*, 2014; Ruth Wodak, *The Politics of Fear: What Right-Wing Populist Discourses Mean*, 2015; Manfred Nowak, *Human Rights or Global Capitalism: The Limits of Privatization*, 2016; Lars Rensmann, *The Politics of Unreason: The Frankfurt School and the Origins of Modern Antisemitism*, 2017; Manuel de la Fuente and Pablo Valdivia (eds.) *Culture, Crisis, and Renewal in Spain*. Special Issue in *Romance Quarterly*, 2017; Pablo Valdivia, *Spanish Literature, Crisis and Spectrality: Notes on a Haunted Canon*, 2018, among others.

Right-wing populism's (ab)use of the past in Italy and the Netherlands

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ABSTRACT

Historical analysis is increasingly used as a tool in the study of present-day populism in Europe. The past is often explored as a source of analogies through which to examine today's populism, and at other times in search of causal mechanisms to explain the current populist wave. In this paper we focus on a third kind of link between populism and the past, namely the ways populist movements and leaders use and abuse history and historical memory in their quest for mass support. This angle on the populism/history nexus can yield deep insight into the ideological make-up of these movements and their voters, and populism's discursive dynamics and strategies. Focusing on contemporary right-wing populism and its approach to the dark past of European countries, the paper conducts an exploratory analysis that posits three ways in which the past is (ab)used by populists: (a) the positive reassessment of dark history; (b) the recourse to fake history; (c) the evocation and subsequent denial of links with the dark past. In examining each, we use examples taken from the cases of Italy and The Netherlands to check the plausibility of our categories across different national cases.

Keywords: populism, history, Italy, the Netherlands.

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INTRODUCTION

Populism, particularly in its right-wing version, is one of the most interesting, and arguably the most worrying contemporary developments in the politics of European and other Western democracies. The rise of

populism has been mirrored by a large, growing body of scholarship examining its origins, characteristics, trajectories and effects in various national contexts (e.g. Canovan, 1981, 2005; Taggart, 2000; Mény and Surel 2002; Mudde 2007; Albertazzi and McDonnell

2008; Wodak 2015; Moffitt 2016; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2017; Müller 2017; Eatwell and Goodwin 2018).

A small but growing part of the work on Europe's right-wing populism looks at the latter's connections with history, and more generally the past. For example, comparisons between contemporary populism and a number of historical experiences — above all inter-war Fascism — are often made to identify analogies and differences in the nature and broader political context leading to either phenomenon (e.g. McDougall 2016; Eatwell 2017; Finchelstein 2017; 2018). Other scholars examine history “genealogically,” that is trying to trace causal links between past events and critical junctures and the emergence and success of today's populist movements, operating through institutional as well as cultural/ideological mechanisms (e.g. Taggart 2000; Fieschi 2004; Mammone 2009; Caramani and Manucci 2019).

A third way in which right-wing populism and the past can be linked is by looking at the way populists use history in their language, references and symbols as a way to win and consolidate popular support. A less systematically analysed aspect of the populism/history nexus is populists' use (and abuse) of the past. This not only sheds much light on the ideological and cultural make-up of these political movements but also tells us a lot about their voters.

Broadly speaking, one can split the politically exploitable past into two categories: the good, or “noble” past, and the bad or “dark” past. The former comprises all those events, historical stages or individual characters that are seen in a mostly positive light within a country's cultural mainstream, and that help articulate a nation's self-image and a national imaginary. Gilded stories of national independence, liberation or unification the celebration of national heroes, war victories, and the like belong to the noble past. The “dark” past, conversely, includes parts of (national) history that are commonly viewed negatively and as a source of national shame. Fascism, collaboration with it, and war, as well as colonial and imperial atrocities occupy

a central place in Europe's dark past. Yet, depending on the countries concerned, other episodes and stages (for instance, anti-Semitism, racism, genocide, civil war, dictatorship, and so forth) may carry equal weight.

While right-wing populism (ab)uses both pasts, we contend that its link with the dark past is especially worth examining. The largely uncontroversial (at least nationally) nature of the noble past yields two results. The first is that populists have to compete with other parties in exploiting history for political purposes. The second is that such exploitation is usually a kind of ‘appropriation race’ to use the good bits, with all the parties and movements (including populists) each trying to pass themselves off as the true heirs of a given historical stage, figure, and so on.¹ The dark past is an altogether different game that right-wing populism mainly plays on its own. Yet populism's dalliance with the dark past poses several challenges in using it for political ends. Thus looking at the way populists deal with these challenges not only helps trace the contours of their ideational outlook but also yields a better understanding of the discursive and rhetorical tools, expedients and manipulation these movements use in their quest for (mainstream) political support.

This paper looks at three ways a sector of right-wing populism uses and abuses the dark past. They are: (a) the positive reassessment of dark history; (b) the recourse to fake history; (c) the evocation and subsequent denial of connections with the dark past. The goal is not so much to test an exhaustive typology but rather (and more modestly) to start putting some order to this topic and smooth the path for more systematic studies later on. This exploratory analysis will use the cases of Italy and The Netherlands to illustrate the ways in which right-wing populists exploit the dark past. This selection of cases is, broadly speaking, in

1 Consider, for instance, repeated attempts by Italy's Silvio Berlusconi — in many ways a founding father of contemporary right-wing populism in Europe — to acquire political legitimacy and respectability by portraying himself and his *Forza Italia* party as carrying the legacy of Alcide De Gasperi, a founder of both the Italian Christian Democratic party and the country's post-WWII republic (*La Repubblica* 2003).

line with a “most different” comparative research design. While Italy and The Netherlands are quite different in terms of political history, political culture, national imaginaries and the mobilisation of collective historical memory, both countries have seen the upsurge of tainted historical tropes, metaphors and references in right-wing populist discourse, as will become clear below. By choosing two different political and cultural contexts within which right-wing populists have employed similar discursive, rhetorical and narrative strategies, we hope to show the plausibility of our preliminary classification of cases.

In the next three sections of the paper, we expound the three above-mentioned modes of populist (ab) use of the past. For each of them we present, first, a general description, and then illustrations from Italy and The Netherlands. In the fifth and final section we conclude by recapping our argument and reflecting on the implications of our findings for future work on the theme of populism and the past.

REASSESSING THE DARK PAST

The most straightforward way in which right-wing populists use and manipulate history is simply by putting the dark past in a positive light. This, we submit, is done mainly through three, partly overlapping, discursive strategies. The first is by simply reinterpreting certain controversial historical events, junctures, or characters more positively. Here, those aspects, angles and nuances that put them in a better light are the ones that get highlighted. The second is by shifting and keeping the narrative focus on some (inevitably) positive aspects of an overall negative historical stage or experience. The third is by minimising the gravity of and/or national responsibility for those bits of the dark past that are harder to downplay, presenting them as mistakes, the work of traitors, actions taken under duress, and so forth.

Taken together, these three ways of reassessing history amount to an ambitious endeavour by populists to recast bits of the dark past as noble. The goal, in do-

ing so, is twofold: on the one hand, populists aim to mobilise and embolden a certain part of the electorate on the far right of the political spectrum (especially if these voters are still sitting on the fence). On the other hand, and perhaps even more ambitiously, populists want to push the dark past into the cultural mainstream so that they can court more moderate parts of the electorate by reassuring them that it is safe to vote for right-wing parties.

In Italy, reassessment of the dark past mainly covers the Fascist period. Such re-evaluation is also made by the left end of the political spectrum, especially as left-wing parties shift to the centre (e.g. Mammone 2006; *La Stampa* 2018; Curridori 2018). Yet unsurprisingly, it is among right-wing parties that such revisionism of *Il ventennio* [the twenty years of Fascist rule] is most common. Such attempts usually come as variations on the common theme of “Mussolini also did good things,” gilding the dictatorship’s achievements in an effort to rehabilitate the country’s Fascist past. This excerpt from Michaela Biancofiore (in Ruccia 2013), a prominent member of *Forza Italia* (the party founded by Silvio Berlusconi), expresses this kind of revisionism well.

Mussolini did many positive things, [especially] in the area of infrastructure, and in re-launching Italy. ... He then took the country to war on Hitler’s side and that was a mistake. But take Bolzano ... [when] Fascism arrived here, there were still open-air sewers... sewer networks in Italy, not just in Alto Adige, were built by Mussolini. Motorways were built by Mussolini. In Bolzano, the whole area where the hospital now stands, that vast piece of land would not exist today ... because back then there was a swamp, which [the Fascist government] drained exactly as it did with The Pontine Marshes ... where they created jobs for many peasants from Veneto, who then settled there. ... These things cannot be forgotten. ... It is true that [Mussolini] was a dictator but dictators sometimes leave behind great works. ... Like all great men — and Mussolini was a great man of history — it was

not so much him but rather his inner circle ... who perpetrated violence in his name.²

The above quotation contains many of the tropes of this kind of reinterpretation, including the notion that Benito Mussolini was a victim of his entourage. Roberta Lombardi, one of the leaders of the Five Star Movement, proposed a very similar depiction of “Good Fascism” in a controversial blog post on the topic (in Sofia 2013): “before it degenerated, [Fascism] had a national sense of community taken fully from Socialism, and great respect for the State and for family.” Here, it is little wonder that Matteo Salvini’s far right *Lega* has come up with the most extreme reassessments. In an interview, Mario Borghezio — a notorious party firebrand — (in Davi 2015) took historical reassessment beyond Italy’s borders, to propose a positive reinterpretation of the Nazi regime:

If there is a character [of that period] that I very much like, it is Walther Darré (who was what we would today call Minister for the Environment). It was he who introduced environmentalism in politics. ... not to mention [Nazi advances in] other areas such as scientific and cancer research. ... There has yet to be a historiographic school able to better interpret that period. ... Of course, the Holocaust page remains a blot on the record.

In contrast to Italy’s associations with Fascist movements or actors, such references have remained a taboo in the Dutch political landscape up until the present day, apart from a marginal neo-Nazi fringe. References to the Dutch inter-war National Socialist movement (*Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging*) are used sparsely, though hyperbolically by the left and the right alike to accuse (political) opponents of (high) treason, Fascism or racism. As such, it is not inter-war authoritarianism or Fascism that shape right-wing populist’s discursive strategies on the dark past. Rather, the colonial past has been (mis)used to whitewash one of the blackest pages in Dutch history. Whereas the public and intellectual discourse on the history of slavery and enslavement, imperialism, and colonial

violence (particularly the post-war colonial conflict in Indonesia) has increasingly accepted the nation’s collective guilt, right-wing populist or ‘nativist’ leaders tend to challenge this interpretation. Worryingly, centrist politicians have also begun tapping into this revisionism, thus confirming Ruth Wodak’s (2015) observation of right-wing populist *topoi* becoming mainstream in political discourse.

Ever since the Christian-Democratic Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende infamously proposed the invocation of the “Dutch East India Company mentality” in 2006, which was heavily criticised by the media and parliament, references to the colonial past in political discourse have been contrite. Against the backdrop of the disclosure of new historical revelations of Dutch imperial misbehaviour and atrocities, there is a broad scholarly and public consensus on Dutch wrong-doings overseas.

Recently, statues of (in)famous captains and traders of the Dutch East India Company, as well as streets, squares and buildings named after them, became contested as part of the globally emerging discussion about “decolonising” society and public spaces. In this context, right-wing populists and nativists started deploying an apologetic counter-narrative on a “noble” or even nostalgic colonial past.

When a bust of a 17th century aristocratic slave-trader was removed from a public building, the right-wing national-populist Martin Bosma (member of Geert Wilders Freedom Party, PVV) saw it as “part of an endless ‘politically correct’ iconoclasm threatening our history and our culture” (in *Elsevier* 2018). Similarly, Thierry Baudet, the leader of the conservative-nationalist *Forum voor Democratie*, nostalgically argued that “once, the whole world belonged to us” after which he added that the “last bit of grandeur” should not be given up, referring to the overseas Dutch territories in The Antilles (in *Trouw* 2017). On other occasions, Baudet and his party used depictions of (alleged) East India Company ships and at one point he had an interview on a replica vessel because the East India Company “was a splendid enterprise and an adventure like no

2 This and all subsequent translations from Italian and Dutch are by the authors of the article.

other" (*Forum* 2017). Many similar examples may be mentioned here, including statements made by local right-wing populists, that challenge the narrative of colonial guilt and reiterate 19th century-style celebrations of a glorious imperial past shaped by the splendid virtues of the Dutch.

As such, the piecemeal reassessment of the Dutch colonial past in terms of being complicit in the slave trade, enslavement, genocidal violence, and the oppression of peoples, has been challenged by the revisionists. This revisionism has three strands: (1) Apologism ("good things came out of colonialism"); (2) Nativism (some critics see it as "whitewashing" "black" history); (3) Nostalgia ("we should be proud of our colonial achievements"). Such responses are largely represented by right-wing populists in Dutch political and public discourse. National virtues and ideals are projected on a mythical past and the "dark side" of that history is downplayed or simply ignored.

USING FAKE HISTORY

As well as re-assessing historical stages, facts and characters, populists can simply make up history, inventing events, embellishing other cases, using wrong data, invoking imaginary pictures of the past and so forth. They engage in what Furedi (2018, 87) has termed the manipulation of memory "in order to manufacture a glorious golden age and a heroic national past". We call these strategies "fake history" to highlight their connection with the now popular notions of "fake news" or "post-truth" claims, which populists are particularly apt to resort to in mobilising their electorate. Making up historical facts and data is a slightly more sophisticated version of the same game.

This second kind of abuse of history is similar to and sometimes overlaps the first. In a way, re-assessing certain historical events, stages or characters is an exercise in falsifying history. The historian Andrea Mammone (2006) captures the overlap between these two kinds of distortion quite well with the notion of "artificial history". To the largely undisputed historical narratives

and interpretations of the past, "fake history" adds something new to colloquial understandings of the dark past. It presents inaccurate, false counter-evidence to mitigate a given dark past. It might, subsequently, disclose an alternative "darker" past of "others". These might involve circulating exaggerated or made-up facts, data or events but may also imply the depiction of an imagined "fact-free" past that fits the populist allegory of the people's "true history".

While populists' goals in using fake history are largely similar to those behind historical reassessment, fake history seems less likely than the previous case to show top-down dynamics. While some fake history is fostered by political leaders, the latter need to tread carefully lest they be publicly debunked. Therefore, this kind of abuse of history mainly spreads sideways rather than trickling down from the top. Needless to say, social media are a particularly conducive channel for spreading such lies (for instance through historical memes).

The fabrication of parts of Fascist history is a prolific field in Italy's political discourse. A particularly recurrent theme, closely connected to the re-assessment of Mussolini's regime, is the attribution to the latter of achievements that in fact belong to other periods of history. A common preconception is that the Fascist regime set up the first countrywide pension system and the corresponding pension fund, INPS (*Istituto nazionale della previdenza sociale*). This piece of fake history — the forerunner of the INPS was founded in 1898 — has gained wide currency in recent years among right-wing populists in their efforts to show how the oft-slated Fascist regime was more compassionate than today's mainstream, technocratic governments and their obsession with fiscal discipline. The League leader Matteo Salvini (in Mollica 2018) is a frequent proponent of this piece of fake history: "Many good things were done during the Fascist period, for instance the introduction of the pension system". Echoing Salvini, Roberta Lombardi (in *Globalist* 2018) added "When it comes to Fascism, there is a principle [i.e. anti-Fascism] in our Constitution to which I wholly adhere. But if I think about the INPS, I believe that it

was a victory for civilisation”.

Instead of attributing someone else’s achievements to the Fascist regime, another branch of fake history minimises or even denies the dictatorship’s crimes, violence and the destruction it wrought at home and abroad. In this category we find every conceivable variation on the theme of “Good Italian, Bad German” which blames all of Italy’s worst acts during WWII to the “evil influence” of Nazi Germany (e.g. Mammone 2006; Morgan 2009; Focardi 2013). Once again, while this sort of narrative is also used beyond the right of the political spectrum, it is right-wing populist movements that find it especially useful politically. Another case of this kind of fake history is shown by Silvio Berlusconi’s extravagant claim (in Hooper 2003) that “Mussolini never killed anyone ... [he] sent people on holiday”, referring to the regime’s practice of confining political enemies in remote places, such as islands, to neutralise them politically by cutting their links with the rest of society.

Last but not least, some fake history stresses Italy and Italians as victims of foreigners as an indirect way of softening criticism of the Fascist regime. A case in point is that of the “Foibe Massacres” of Italians living in Dalmatia and Venezia Giulia by Yugoslav partisan, a historical event far from being fake but for which the number of victims is regularly inflated by right-wing populists well beyond the proven figures. Interestingly, this is also a case where photos have been shamelessly used to whip up hate. For instance, there is the now infamous picture showing an allegedly Yugoslav group of soldiers preparing to execute five unarmed civilians. This is used over and over again by right-wingers (e.g. by former Minister and President of the Lazio region, Francesco Storace, in Lonigro 2016) to demonstrate the cruelty of Communist partisans against harmless Italians. Experts have proven that the picture shows the exact opposite — namely Italian soldiers (recognisable by their uniforms) about to execute some Slovenian civilians during the Fascist occupation of Slovenia in WWII.

In The Netherlands, wartime experiences of National

Socialism, the Holocaust and collaboration with the Nazi occupiers still translate into a dichotomous moral scheme of “good” and “evil” in public discourse and attempts to re-write the story are avoided (at least publicly). Consequently, World War II-related matters are usually shunned by right-wing populists in their invention of fake histories. As with the reassessment of a dark national past, the colonial and imperial Holland of yore is used to spin fake histories or to present fact-free historical illustrations. Clearly tying in with the apologetic counter-narrative of a noble Dutch imperial past, right-wing populists have spoken about “Dutch victimhood” in colonial history. Although this is a subtler kind of manipulation than fake histories, in this discursive strategy Dutch right-wing populists make highly dubious historical claims peppered with alleged ‘facts’ that always turn out to lack clear empirical support and transparent references. One recurring trope is the alleged enslavement of Dutch (white) people by Muslim Arabs.

Starting as a loose reference to a polemic article in the *Jewish World Review* by the American economist Thomas Sowell (2010), the idea that more Europeans were enslaved by Muslims in North Africa than Africans enslaved in the United States was taken up by anti-Islam politicians. In The Netherlands, Martin Bosma echoed Sowell’s claim in a provocative book, written as an indictment of the “left-wing”, cosmopolitan vested interests in Dutch and European politics and society. Bosma argues that public understanding of the Dutch national past amounts to “historical photo-shopping” by overlooking “centuries of Islamic dominion” to which Dutchmen and other Europeans were “subjected” (Bosma 2010). As Sowell’s claim went viral again in 2016, a Dutch quality newspaper decided to fact-check it (NRC 2016). Initially, the NRC confirmed Sowell’s claims. Thierry Baudet re-tweeted the fact-check a year later in a new public controversy, this time over the practice of black-facing during the arrival of *Sinterklaas*, a Dutch Christmas festivity with strong colonialist and racist connotations. As public intellectuals and historians started pointing to historical inaccuracies and false evidence in NRC’s fact check, the newspaper rectified

its statement and concluded that Sowell's claim was false and unsustainable. Baudet and his party, however, kept alluding to the "Dutch slaves" trope at rallies. This is what Fascism and populism expert Federico Finchelstein (2019) referred to as the populists' use of "deliberate falsehood as a weapon against the truth" when it comes to history.

Another discursive strategy frequently employed by right-wing populists, particularly by Geert Wilders and his Freedom Party (*Partij voor de Vrijheid*), is the invocation of a historically inaccurate national image. This false image is shaped by vague historical iconography of a homogenous, self-governing Dutch nation. In early November 2017, Wilders (in the *Tweede Kamer* [Lower House, Dutch Parliament] 2017) delivered an impassioned speech in parliament on such an imaginary Dutch past, on which core values of self-determination, national sovereignty and cultural homogeneity were projected:

Our country was once the most beautiful country in the world, with its own borders, its own culture. We spent our money on our own people. We had decent health care for our elders ... We had a strong, self-willed, and above all a proud country ... Nobody was able to break us. We were sovereign. We took our own decisions. We were masters of our own country and our own borders ... The Netherlands was The Netherlands. How different ... is it today! Our country is up for grabs. Our interests have been harmed. Many Dutchmen have become aliens in their own nation ... Our country, our home, the miracle that our ancestors have built with blood, sweat and tears, is being given away.

When the progressive liberal MP Alexander Pechtold asked Wilders which period he was actually referring to, Wilders replied: "Before 1850, approximately". This sort of anachronistic blending of chauvinist welfarism, national sovereignty and ethno-cultural unity has served repeatedly, both visually and discursively, as a mythical national imaginary — a "fake" national past that depicts the people's historical "heartland" and forms part of Wilder's political discourse (Taggart

2000). Though not directly linked to countering a dark national past, this mythical national imaginary clearly challenges the empirically sustained "dark" Dutch past that has risen to prominence in intellectual and public discourse. In his study on the Freedom Party, Koen Vossen (2017, 41) argues that such narratives of the alleged historicity of 'the people' fit the construction of a national culture that is a "recognisable, indivisible phenomenon that goes back centuries" and should serve as the bedrock of "national pride".

EVOKING AND THEN DENYING CONNECTIONS TO THE DARK PAST

Populists also use references to the dark past in a third, subtler way by distancing themselves from and denying connections between themselves and negative historical cases, periods or characters. This is a last resort, so to speak, which populists adopt on those aspects of the dark past that are broadly deemed unacceptable and that are unlikely to be down-played or falsified. Racism in general or anti-Semitism in particular are examples of these aspects.

What is interesting in such denials is that they very often come after right-wing populists have actually done or said something that evokes, in the audience's minds, the very connection that is later denied. Such a response is not altogether surprising. The two parts, hinting and denial, often go hand in hand in what looks like a perverse "bait and switch" move, in which the populist 'kills two birds with one stone': on the one hand, he/she gains credit in the eyes of extreme sections of the electorate through the use of certain statements, symbols, or some subtler forms of "dog whistling" (Wodak 2015). On the other hand, through denial they reassure the more moderate voters and political actors about their democratic credentials. This apparently inconsistent but fully intentional dual message is an established communicative feature of right-wing movements, as documented for instance by Cheles (2010) in connection with Italy's post-Fascist party *Alleanza Nazionale*.

As shown above, Italian right-wing populists often woo part of the population by putting a gloss on the country's Fascist past. At times the appeal is brutal and without excuses. However, here we are talking of a softer approach that eschews plain-speaking and instead draws on symbols, buzzwords, gestures, and the like. For example, Matteo Salvini would never openly present himself as a Fascist sympathiser. Yet he has been photographed both in the company of the leadership of *Casapound* — a social movement openly inspired by the Fascist ideology — and wearing clothes from a brand connected to it. This makes one wonder where his sympathies lie.

Salvini's most recent invocation of Fascism, however, relates to the use, via social media, of a number of buzzwords and quotes commonly associated with *Il ventennio* [the 20-year period of Fascist rule]. In a response to his critics tweeted on the 29th of July 2018 (the same day as Mussolini's birthday), Salvini wrote "many enemies, much honour" (*tanti nemici, tanto onore*), which is only a slight variation on the slogan *molti nemici, molto onore*, famously attributed to the *Duce* (*Il Messaggero* 2018). Then there were two similar "incidents", in which Salvini used Fascist quotations phrases within a few days of each other. In one, Salvini wrote on his Facebook page that "He who halts is lost" (*chi si ferma è perduto*) (Ruccia 2018). In another, as he commented on the European Commission's warnings about Italy's 2019 budget, Salvini proudly stated "I don't give a damn!" (*Me ne frego!*) (Adnkronos 2018).

The Five Star Movement (*Movimento 5 Stelle*) is by no means immune from such invocations. Beppe Grillo — the comedian who co-founded, and remains the charismatic leader of the Five Star Movement — for example once stated in the presence of some journalists that he had nothing against a *Casapound* member joining his movement — a statement that many saw as an attempt to attract support from that side of the political spectrum (*La Stampa* 2013). Speaking of symbols, Grillo often intersperses his shows with the call *Italiani!* shouted in the same manner as Mussolini used to, as he addressed crowds from his Palazzo Venezia

balcony. Yet this effective comedic device could, once again, also be seen as an attempt to wink at a certain part of the electorate, while at the same time defusing the issue of Fascism by making fun of it.

The latter observation is important because it takes us straight into Italian right-wing populists' preferred strategy for denying any link or proximity to the country's dark past. For instance, they claim that Fascism is a thing of the past and thus any attempt to link them to that ideology would not only be false but also meaningless. This strategy is especially important for the Five Star Movement, which has built much of its political narrative on its transcendence of the left and right labels. For instance, when asked about his father's open adherence to the Fascist ideology, Alessandro Di Battista (in Sannino and Vecchio 2017), one of the Five Star leaders, responded that it is more important to be honest than anti-Fascist, and that "talking about Fascism in 2016 is like talking about The Guelphs and The Ghibellines." [12th and 13th Century political factions in Mediaeval Italy]

Denying the possibility of a return of Fascism under a different guise is a recurrent way of denying embarrassing connections on the part of more openly right-wing populists. Both Salvini and Giorgia Meloni — the leader of *Fratelli d'Italia* [Brothers of Italy], a smaller right-wing party — used this approach when Luca Traini (the *Lega's* former municipal candidate and a Nazi sympathiser) fired on a number of African immigrants in Macerata in February 2018. The racist nature of the attack and the use of political violence in the country was clear. Yet Salvini (in *Il Fatto Quotidiano* 2018) commented that "This idea of a Fascist danger, of the return of Fascism, of a new wave of black shirts, is surreal to me, and it is used by a political faction that has shown its hollowness over the last six years". Salvini's words echoed those by Giorgia Meloni (in *Globalist* 2018):

Politicians should worry about those [foreign] terrorists based in Italy rather than continuing this surreal debate on the return of Fascism. What happened in Macerata is the deed of a violent

lunatic, period. If *Mein Kampf* was among his readings, that's his business. It is not the return of Fascism.

In its formative stages, Geert Wilders's Freedom Party (*Partij voor de Vrijheid*), founded in 2006, associated itself with symbols previously used by the Dutch National Socialist movement in the 1930s and 1940s. When the party presented its logo in 2008, historians were quick to point out its troubling resemblance. The seagull at the centre of the logo combined with the word "freedom" was very similar to a 1941 poster printed by the Dutch National Socialist movement and the logo of its youth league (*Historisch Nieuwsblad* 2008). Geert Wilders responded furiously, by stating that he cannot "Take into account every bad organisation in the world that has used symbols" and that the comparison made between his party and the national socialists could only occur to someone with "a sick mind" (in *Trouw* 2008). In other statements, he distanced himself from any National Socialist inclination or endorsement arguing that the seagull was the idea of the advertising company he commissioned to design the party logo. Despite the obvious similarities, the Freedom Party kept the logo unchanged, though it has featured less frequently in its propaganda over the last few years.

A few years later, the Freedom Party again sported a symbol that was reminiscent of the Dutch National Socialists' visual repertoire. In 2011, two MPs of the Freedom Party decorated their parliamentary office windows with the so-called 'Prince's Flag' [*Prinsenvlag*], a horizontal tricolour of orange, white and blue. This particular flag was frequently used by the Dutch National Socialists in the 1930s and 1940s as an alternative to the official Dutch flag (red, white, blue) but has had a much longer history. The flag was first flown by Orangists during the Dutch revolt against Spanish domination (1568-1648) and also inspired the South African government to design the flag that became associated with the apartheid regime (*The Economist* 2015). During the last few decades, Dutch neo-Nazi and ultra-nationalist fringe movements have also adopted the flag in their iconography. As such, the flag has multi-layered meanings that allude to an opaque

nexus of patriotism, racism and collaborationism. No official response was forthcoming from either Wilders or the two MPs involved but the flags were removed from the party offices as newspapers widely reported on their dark connotations.

That was not the end of the Prince's Flag however. During a Freedom Party rally in The Hague in September 2013, various versions of the tricolour were spotted in the audience, showing how Wilders's supporters accepted it as a banner. In the same week, four MPs of the Freedom Party, among them Bosma, wore a Prince's Flag pin on their lapel during the annual parliamentary general debate (NRC 2013). No formal public statement was issued by the party or Wilders, after questions arose about why the MP's wore the pin that had clear ties with Dutch National Socialism. In the years that followed, Martin Bosma kept praising the flag as "The century-old symbol of our freedom" (*Twitter* 2015), also alluding to a "Great Dutch cultural union" between the Netherlands, Flanders and South Africa's Afrikaner community (*de Volkskrant* 2014).

Of a different kind, but nevertheless similarly tapping into the no-go zone of the Dutch dark past of World War II and interwar Fascism, is a remark made by Thierry Baudet at an event in 2017 that was picked up on by radical right-wing blogs and, ultimately, by the mainstream media. Baudet observed a "self-hate ... that we try to transcend ... by homeopathically diluting the Dutch population with all peoples of the world" (*NPO Radio 1* 2017). At first, Baudet rejected all racist accusations and refused to accept the reminiscence with pre-war racial purity metaphors and eugenics. In a national television show he stated that he "didn't want to say anything about race ... It is about culture", then adding that he would not use those words again seeing what sort of "bewildering" fuss it had created (*NPO 1* 2017). Nevertheless, coded, racialised variations have been included in his declarations on alleged 'national self-hate' or on *omvolking*, or *Grand Remplacement* in the words of the French conspiracy theorist and writer Renaud Camus. Both terms are used to refer to a supposed elitist conspiracy whose purpose is to mix ethnic Dutchmen with other

‘peoples’, something to which both Wilders as well as Baudet have often referred (Oudenampsen 2019).

These examples show how right-wing populists and nativists use tainted tropes from a dark past by denying any connection with that past and distancing themselves from it. However, they also refuse to accept that particular expressions, metaphors or symbols contain semantics that have an undeniable relationship with a given dark national past. One could argue that complex or historicist reasoning about the past is consciously avoided in favour of the projection of a national ideal onto a mythical or nostalgic past which, allege the populists, has been obscured by the “politically correct” and “cosmopolitan” elites.

UNDERSTANDING THE POPULIST MOBILISATION OF NATIONAL PASTS

Mainstream politicians often articulate a “noble” past as part of Whiggish readings of ongoing progress and cultural advancement; (national) history moves forward to ever greater freedom, prosperity, equality and inclusion. References to well-known “dark” historical episodes may also be part of this narrative, emphasising national resilience and the polity’s ability to return to the noble path of progress. The arrival of a substantial number of right-wing populist politicians in parliaments and executive bodies in Europe has challenged this long-standing discursive, rhetorical and narrative strategy in mainstream politics. The past has become a new battlefield in which the populists challenge the hitherto accepted explanations of shameful periods of history and shamelessly attempt to downplay them or brighten them up. Exploring this nexus between populism and the dark past, we have proposed three analytically distinct strategies with which right-wing populists assess, address or allude to their nation’s dark historical episodes: (1) the positive reassessment of dark history; (2) the recourse to fake history; (3) the evocation and subsequent denial of connections with the dark past. All three strategies disclose how right-wing populists read against the grain of established master narratives of a nation’s dark past.

As our examples from Italy and the Netherlands have shown, these pasts revolve around recurring themes and tropes. In Italy these are drawn from the era of Mussolini’s Fascist reign, whereas in the Netherlands the colonial past, both early modern as well as new imperialist, is the main — though not the only — breeding ground for right-wing populist politically motivated rewriting of the past. Regardless of the discursive strategy employed, the (ab)uses of dark pasts are geared towards the reclaiming of a “mythical” or “true” national past that has been blurred by hegemonic political correctness. The populists present this fabricated past as a crucial reminder to the people in its struggle against: migration, globalism, Europe, corrupted elites and national “self-hate” — the forces that have thwarted national progress. Whether reassessing a dark episode, inventing historical facts or images, or engaging with a “forbidden” past, the strategies employed often culminate in direct or indirect allusions to an imagined past in which national virtues and self-determination went hand-in-hand with the ethno-cultural homogeneity of the country’s natives. At the end of the day, it is all about reclaiming the “true” history of the people. As populism scholar Cas Mudde (2016) puts it, people “let themselves be seduced by an imaginary public past that is mostly in line with their own imagined private past anyway”. This process may result from top-down public interventions (as with reassessing a dark past) to more horizontal mobilisations of historical inaccuracies (as with fake history). A recent study analyses why Dutch and French voters opted for Wilders and Le Pen. It reveals this twofold dynamic, showing how fabricated pasts tap into vernacular national identity discourses that strike a chord among supporters of right-wing populism (Damhuis 2018).

This essay has only begun to address and order the political mobilisation of dark pasts by right-wing populists in public and political discourse. In line with a “most different case” strategy of comparison, it has explored a limited number of illustrative Italian and Dutch instances in which discursive strategies are applied to a contested past that strikes a chord with

the general public. Research on the radical right or right-wing populism has shown that these strategies have spread across Europe, other prominent examples, to name but a few, being the late radical right Austrian politician Jörg Haider, the French radical right Le Pen dynasty and the Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orbán. A comparative, systematic empirical inquiry

into these and other examples is needed to test the preliminary typology of discursive strategies we have proposed. We believe such a research agenda will enhance our understanding of the ideational make-up of right-wing populists and the way in which the past is mobilised politically in their discursive and rhetorical repertoires.

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Culture in the Name of the People? Towards a typology of populism and culture

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ABSTRACT

Populism is a topic that has been widely studied over the past decades but mostly from a political perspective. These contributions mainly focus on the analysis of populism as a (socio) political phenomenon placed in a historical, global context. A second field of interest covers the mass appeal of populist parties. The latter is not only a timely, highly relevant issue right now but also sheds light on the flaws of liberal democracy.

While a lot of academic effort has been put into defining populism and explaining the reasons for its success, the underlying cultural beliefs on which populist 'us and them' dichotomies are based remain unclear. We shall therefore come up with a typology of culture and populism. This typology will reveal how various aspects of culture (such as popular culture, cultural images, and literary works) are prevalent in the populist construction of 'us' and 'them'.

Based on examples from France and The Netherlands (two countries with major right-wing populist parties), the typology will differentiate between *sociofacts*, *mentifacts* and *artifacts* (cf. Huxley), and their use and appropriation by populist actors. The artifacts category comprises what I call 'organic authors' and 'appropriated authors', a terminology borrowed from Gramsci. The difference between the two, as will be shown, is the author's identification with and articulation of certain kinds of ideas.

Keywords: cultural studies, populism, cultural identity, France, The Netherlands.

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INTRODUCTION

"If you believe that you are a citizen of the world, you are a citizen of nowhere. You don't understand what citizenship means". This famous statement made by Theresa May shortly after the Brexit vote¹ exemplifies

the centrality of cultural identity in contemporary politics. The notion and alleged importance of the culturally-grounded national identity has made a strong come-back in today's political discourse, not only among the parties of the populist right, but also on a much broader scale. For instance, in their manifesto for the 2017 General Election, the Dutch Christian-Democratic Party (CDA) insisted that children should learn the Dutch national anthem and its

¹ Theresa May's conference speech in full : <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/10/05/theresa-mays-conference-speech-in-full/>

history at school. This policy was incorporated in the final agreement of the coalition government, of which CDA is part. Hence, it can be said that adherence to a national identity is presented as a way of dealing with complex societal challenges such as multiculturalism and globalisation.

At the same time, culture is also used to convey a political standpoint. A good example is PVV leader Geert Wilders²'s recent attempt to set up a Muhammad cartoon competition, which was cancelled after mass demonstrations in Muslim countries, most notably in Pakistan. It is clear that in this case the aim was not to celebrate culture through artistic expression but rather to use it as a political stick to stir up a hornets' nest, for it is well known that Muslims consider pictorial representations of The Prophet as blasphemous. Wilders admitted that he cancelled the competition to protect Dutch citizens from the wrath of Muslims, whom he considers to be violent and intolerant.

Culture and politics are a fruitful combination, as culture is key in building a feeling of community within a geopolitically-defined space (the nation). Following Anderson (2016), the nation should be considered "an imagined political community", in which a group too large for all members to know each other still experiences a bond, a "horizontal comradeship" primarily based on a common culture. As we have seen in the examples above, culture can be a set of common values and traditions that help define who 'we' are but it can also be used to stir up hostility towards 'others'. This approach fosters a political worldview, with culture being used to underline a given political agenda.

This paper will propose a framework for understanding the role that culture plays in contemporary politics by focusing on populist parties. Having a strong 'us and

them" narrative, in which society is split into 'good' and 'bad', is largely built upon a cultural understanding of a common identity. Following Rensmann (2017), I will argue that this notion of a culturally-based identity is strongly articulated by populist parties. That is why I will analyse the ways in which populists explicitly use culture. This will follow a brief introduction on populism and its dichotomies.

Given that culture is a fairly broad concept, I shall propose a typology covering the various kinds of culture and their use by populists. This can range from cultural images and symbols — a more folkloric interpretation of culture — to the use and appropriation of cultural works such as literature, cinema and art. This approach — as advocated by Rensmann (2017) — should shed light on populism as a mostly cultural, authoritarian reaction to modern society.

After the first, more general part in which I define populism, the scope will be narrowed down to the contexts of France and The Netherlands. These two countries have sizeable populist parties, which closely work together as allies in the European Parliament. Being opposed to (further) European integration and immigration, these parties strongly defend national sovereignty and identity, and, for this reason, provide interesting case studies.

WHAT IS POPULISM?

If 2016 marked the global breakthrough of populism, with the Brexit vote in June and Donald Trump's election in November, the populist storm does not seem to have abated. The so-called 'Patriotic Spring' of 2017 temporarily halted in France and The Netherlands, although both the *Front National* (FN) and the *Partij voor de Vrijheid* (PVV) still ended second during their respective presidential and legislative elections. A populist 'Autumn Storm' reached Germany in September 2017, where *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD) was the first nationalist far-right party to win seats in the Reichstag/Bundestag since World War II. Only one month later almost 26% of the Austrian electorate

2 Geert Wilders is the leader of the Dutch *Partij voor de Vrijheid* (Freedom Party), a far-right populist party established in 2005. Wilders is particularly known for his anti-Islam discourse, for which he has been tried several times. In 2016 he was found guilty of incitement to discrimination and hatred targeting Dutch citizens of Moroccan descent.

voted for the right-wing populist *Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs* (FPÖ), which is now part of Austria's coalition. In 2018, several European countries experienced a spate of populist electoral gains, most notably in Italy, Hungary, Slovenia and Sweden. Outside Europe, there was the widely disputed re-election of president Maduro in Venezuela, followed by the election of Bolsonaro in Brazil later that year. In other words, it is clear that populism is still a political force to be reckoned with both in Europe and beyond.

The rise of populism has also attracted considerable scholarly interest, as shown by the number of recent contributions on the topic, most notably the publication of Mudde and Kaltwasser's *Populism, A Very Short Introduction* in 2017. Most scholars try to define what populism is, given that the word is used to describe very broad political phenomena in widely-scattered geographical areas embodying different political traditions (ranging from Latin American left-wing presidents to European far-right parties) (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017). Consequently, there seems to be little consensus on whether populism is an ideology, a movement, a political style or a discourse. For the purpose of this paper, I will stick to Mudde's (2004) minimalist definition of populism, which takes into account the core concepts that all populisms share, while at the same time acknowledging the various forms these movements take. Mudde and Kaltwasser (2017: 6) define populism as follows:

Populism is a thin-centred ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic camps, the 'pure people' and 'the corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression of 'The People's Will'.

This definition, or ideational approach, sees populism as a 'thin-centred' ideology, in contrast to a 'full' ideology, meaning that it can be combined with other ideologies. If populism determines the presence of the three core concepts, the 'host-ideologies' define the way in which they are interpreted. For example, if populism is merged with Socialism, being part of the people or the elite is mostly a socio-economic

question, as we see for example in countries such as Venezuela and Bolivia, or in Europe in left-wing populist parties such as *Podemos* in Spain and *Syriza* in Greece. On the other hand, when populism is combined with nativism, the people is constituted on an ethnic base, for example the 'real' French, Hungarians or Americans, excluding minorities such as Roma (gypsy) or (Muslim) immigrants.

Another much debated issue is why people vote for populist parties, and, more specifically, what has encouraged them to do so in such large numbers now. As argued by Laclau in his influential work *On Populist Reason* (2005), populism emerges when there is a "multiplication of social demands". However, these social demands, or "neglected concerns" (Judis 2016) are numerous and are therefore often categorised in terms of society's existing social and cultural fault lines (Kriesi *et al.* 2006, Rensmann 2017, Rodrik 2017). In general, one can say that populist voters revolt against the establishment because they have a burning sense of injustice or feel that their way of life is threatened. That said, the precise nature of these (perceived) challenges may differ among countries, regions and probably even among individuals.

The populist worldview simplifies a complex reality, explaining the problems of an imagined homogeneous people by blaming the elite and by scape-goating the 'others'. This idea of antagonism is key to theories on populism, resulting in horizontal and vertical dichotomies (Rensmann 2017). The vertical dichotomy — between the people and the elite — is an essential part of populism. Populists argue that the elite (which can be a political, economic, or cultural one) is alienated from the ordinary folk (Rooduijn *et al.* 2016), and therefore does not represent the people anymore. This, according to the populist view, is the world upside down; the idea of popular sovereignty implying that the will of the people or *general will* should be decisive. In her 2017 campaign video³, Marine Le Pen, leader of the French far-right party *Front National*,

3 Clip from Marine Le Pen's official campaign: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FYWnuQc5mYA>

illustrates this antagonism when telling her audience that the choice they will be making for the elections is crucial, in her own words, “*un choix de civilisation*” [a choice of civilisation]. Either they continue “(...) with those who lied, failed, betrayed, who misled the people and who lost France”, or they decide “(...) to put France back in order”. The slogan of the campaign being “*Au nom du peuple*” [In The People’s Name]. It is not hard to guess who those liars and traitors are, and why the French people need Marine Le Pen for France to be “independent, respected, prospering, proud, sustainable and just”.

As well as setting the people against the elites, most populists tend to exclude an ‘other’ from being part of the people. This mechanism is referred to as the “horizontal dichotomy” (Rensmann 2017) or “exclusionism” (Rooduijn *et al.* 2014). While some scholars argue that this exclusion of a dangerous ‘other’ is purely a characteristic of right-wing populism (Judis 2016, Mudde 2013, Rooduijn *et al.* 2014), Rensmann (2017: 126) disagrees and states that this exclusionary discourse is also found in populist parties that are generally classified as left-wing. Here, he points to the German *Die Linke* and *La France Insoumise* which – although being situated at the (far) left of the political spectrum – do openly defend a nationalist agenda. He adds that the left-right classification is the wrong tool for typifying the various kinds of populism, and suggests that we look at other aspects:

Despite their cross-national distinctions, however, all ‘right-wing’ and most ‘left-wing’ populist actors share key common ideological denominators shaped by authoritarianism, anti-liberal, anti-pluralistic vertical *and* horizontal dichotomies, which implicitly or explicitly endorse cultural exclusivity, identity and denigration of ‘others’.

In other words, and to come back to Mudde’s (2004) definition of populism as a thin-centred ideology, whether a populist party is left-wing or right-wing does not determine their adoption or rejection of nativist ideas. Actually, the mere fact that populism aims at an imagined homogeneous people suggests that

some sort of exclusion is inherent in the populist view given that such homogeneous peoples are a figment of the imagination and are thus created by excluding members that look different or behave differently.

Like the vertical dichotomy (in which populists stress the gap between the people and the elite, and, importantly, also the elite’s unwillingness to narrow it), the horizontal dichotomy is also multi-layered. According to populist ideas, the ‘other’ constitutes a serious threat to the imagined homogeneous people, implying that ‘the people’ is morally good and the ‘other’ inherently evil. It is also important to note that the ‘other’ is projected as a homogeneous entity, just like ‘the people’ and ‘the elite’. Evidently, this homogenisation of the ‘other’ is highly problematic, especially when talking about groups such as ‘immigrants’ or ‘refugees’, which obviously comprise people from varying nationalities, religions, socio-economic backgrounds and education. By defining an out-group, a self-group is formed on the basis of a dichotomy: ‘they are lazy immigrants’ versus ‘we are hard workers’. Excluding the other helps thus to build one’s own (national) identity (cf. Wodak 2015).

My assumption is that this double ‘us and them’ mechanism (which is a feature of the populist mind set) builds upon and contributes to a cultural understanding of the people’s common identity. That is why this paper will focus on the links between populism and culture. Often thought to be mutually exclusive (populism dismisses culture as a waste of time and money, while culture perceives and represents populism as its disturbing ‘other’), I will argue that things are much more complex. The next section will give an overview of (recent) scholarly contributions on the topic of populism and culture, after which I will focus on the use and appropriation of culture by populists.

POPULISM AND CULTURE

In 2006, Kriesi *et al.* mentioned the prevalence of cultural factors over economic ones in the populist right’s agenda, and in recent academic contributions

this idea has taken root. In their paper, Kriesi *et al.* (2006) conclude that “parties of the populist right do not stand out for their economic profile” and that “it is on cultural issues where they support a demarcation strategy much more strongly than (untransformed) mainstream parties”. Focusing on the populist right, they claim that this emphasis on cultural issues is a much more powerful way of uniting a large group of disillusioned people from widely differing economic groups.

This idea of both an economic and a cultural cleavage is also present in Rodrik (2017), who splits people into the ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ of globalisation. If the former is a characteristic of left-wing populism, in which the schism between working class and (financial) elites is accentuated, the latter exploits the cultural gap based on the identity of the ‘people’ versus outside groups such as immigrants and technocratic institutions (EU), raising the spectre new ‘competitors’. The division between economic and cultural factors explaining the populist vote can also be found in Gidron and Hall (2017: 6), who look at the populist right. Taking one’s ‘subjective social status’ as their main focus, they assume that both socio-economic developments as well as new cultural frameworks (i.e. multiculturalism, gender equality) make many feel that they are no longer respected and recognised by society. Also Goodhart’s (2017: 9) distinction between ‘Somewheres’ and ‘Anywheres’ points to ordinary people’s feeling of inferiority in comparison with others (the elite). He claims that mainly cultural values lie at the heart of the dissent stemming from this:

Their appeal [i.e. of populist politics] is primarily motivated by cultural anxiety and hard-to-measure psychological loss. Economic loss is a factor too — a significant majority of the 56 per cent of British people who describe themselves as ‘have-nots’ voted Brexit but if it [the Referendum] had been primarily about economic loss, the populists of the left would surely have been stronger.

These different sets of cultural values (progressive versus conservative) provoke cultural clashes; a “cultural backlash” (Inglehart and Norris 2016), “culture

wars” (Furedi 2018, Nagle 2017), or in Rensmann’s (2017) words, a “cultural counter-revolution”. As such, populism speaks to the people whose voices once belonged to the dominant cultural normative discourse but that are now overruled by those advocating progressive social values.

The cultural clash can also take place on an international level. Furedi (2018) describes “conflicting attitudes towards cultural values” between Hungary, led by a conservative right-wing populist party, and the EU. At the same time, many Western European populist parties have a strong tendency to contrast ‘our’ modern Western values to those of the ‘other’, usually an Islamic culture, considered backward (Brubaker 2017, Moffitt 2017). An “Identitarian Christianity” is defended, a common Western European ‘culture’ which includes liberal progressive values such as gender equality, gay rights, secularism and freedom of speech versus the allegedly intolerant Islam. These examples clearly show that culture is an essential tool for mobilising people, playing on the people’s discontent with changing cultural values.

The term ‘populism’ also appears in the Cultural Studies field, most notably in relation to popular culture. McGuigan (1992: 4) invokes the notion of “cultural populism”, seeking to underline the importance of studying the symbolic experiences and practices of ordinary people in contrast to ‘culture with a capital C’. A parallel can be seen between this neo-Gramscian conception of cultural studies and the vertical dichotomy of the people opposed to the elite. Here, it is worth mentioning the literary phenomenon of *le roman populiste* in early 1930s France, (Paveau 1998). According to the authors of the two manifestos, Thérive and Lemonnier, people should have a central place in the narrative: “one should depict the little people, the *mediocre* people, who are the mass of the society, and whose lives also have their *dramas*” (Lemonnier 1930, quoted in Paveau 1998: 48).

More recently, Bax (2016) adopted the term “literary populist” to describe the work of Dutch novelist Leon de Winter, who uses populist rhetoric to position

himself both as a public intellectual and a literary celebrity. The public intellectual writes columns for newspapers and is invited to talk shows as a political commentator. By contrast, the literary celebrity seeks commercial success, writing books that are no more than entertainment. Supported by his reading public (the people) and denounced by literary critics (the elite), Bax writings echo the discourse and rhetoric of populist politicians — something that is also reflected in De Winter's political novels.

All three authors share this wish to identify with the people and their way of life because they see them as more 'authentic'. However, while using the term 'populism', it should be made clear that this interpretation of populism does not follow Mudde's (2014) definition of the phenomenon (cf. above) but rather merely highlights some of its key aspects. In the case of the *roman populiste*, the emphasis is on the people — a borrowing from the Russian *narodniki* (populists) in the late 19th/early 20th century. Bax, on the other hand, focuses on the populist rhetorical tools of simplification and polarisation that are part and parcel of De Winter's *oeuvre*. This indicates the extent to which populism has become an ambiguous term, used across different disciplines, and reminds us that we should be aware of its diverse uses and meanings.

Rather than echoing a political phenomenon, culture can sometimes help us understand or reflect on complex (political) realities and the cultural values at stake. Here, the so-called 'Trump bump' comes to mind, that is, the sudden popularity of certain dystopian novels after Donald Trump's election as President of The United States. Shaw (2018) and Rau (2018) examine the appearance of a new literary genre of post-Brexit novels (BrexLit) and the lessons to be learnt from them. In a similar vein, according to Berg-Sørensen (2017), culture can serve as a "diagnosis of a current ideological crisis in European democratic culture". Working on the controversial novel *Soumission* (2015: 143) by Houellebecq, he notes that the author uses satire to "expose, mock, make us laugh, unmask, and, thus, criticise those in power and with authority."

In sum, we have seen that culture and populism are studied in relation to each other, but that there are different ways to do so. The most frequent link is the cultural discontent fuelling the success of populism. Rather less studied are the parallels between populism and popular culture, and the role of culture and literature as a way to critically reflect on the world. However, the use of culture made by populists has received scant attention. An earlier case study revealed that the novel *Soumission* was held up by members of the *Front National* and right-wing journalists as a dire warning and to urge their audiences to vote for a way out (Jansma 2018). The following section will draw up a typology of populism and culture to give a clearer picture of how populist parties appropriate culture for their own ends.

TOWARDS A TYPOLOGY OF POPULISM AND CULTURE

Before moving on to analysing the populist cultural narrative, one should reflect on the notion of culture and in particular on the ways it can provide a useful tool for populists. Following Hall (1986: 26), culture includes "the actual grounded terrain of practices, representations, languages and customs of any specific society. I also mean the contradictory forms of "common sense" which have taken root and helped to shape popular life." This anthropological approach implies that culture is a system of "shared social meanings" (Barker 2000: 8), as opposed to the concept of 'Culture with a capital C' (cf. Leavisism). This latter (elitist) interpretation of culture sees it as "the best that has been thought and said in the world" (Arnold 1960, quoted in Barker 2000: 36). In other words, the opposition between 'high' and 'low' culture bears on whether culture is seen as "the high point in civilization" (Barker 2000: 36), or the product of ordinary life.

Traditionally, three types of culture can be distinguished (Barker 2000, McGuigan 1992, Nachbar and Lause 1996): elite culture, popular culture and folk culture. Whereas the latter is an oral transmission of *artifacts* — including legends and family recipes — within a limited community (family, friends), the other two

are of a more public nature. The main difference between popular and elite culture, according to Nachbar and Lause (1996: 16), is that the former is produced on a large scale and that it aims to reach a mass audience. Elite culture, on the other hand, targets a more exclusive audience, having specific interests or knowledge. The authors stress their conviction that intelligence and wealth are not essential ingredients for elite culture:

“Elite” is specialised and limited to those interested enough to learn the specific knowledge needed, but not merely the culture of the rich and intellectual.

Evidently, this distinction between folk, popular and elite culture is a blurred one.. A director of an Art film will try to sell as many tickets as he can. A Bach fan would probably need to hear a lot of pop music before he could appreciate it, and vice-versa. This shows the inherent limitations of trying to pigeon-hole the complex concept of culture into clear-cut (hierarchical) categories, and explains the endless argument about what constitutes art. Although this classification of culture is far from ideal, it does give us a good starting point for the negotiation of power and culture. Here the Gramscian concepts of ideology and hegemony come into play, in other words, the notion that the dominant ideas are the ideas of the ruling class. Given that ideology and hegemony are unstable factors, culture is “a terrain of conflict and struggle over meanings” (Barker 2000: 60-61). Popular culture is highly relevant when it comes to ideology and hegemony, as it is built upon what Gramsci calls “good sense” or a “cultural mindset” (Nachbar and Lause). The study of popular culture focuses less on the aesthetic value of an artifact and more on the cultural beliefs and values underlying it and how people react to it. It is easy to see the parallel between this neo-Gramscian conception of cultural studies and the vertical dichotomy of the people and the elite. This has been and is still a topic of interest in the study of populism (cf. Hall 1985; 1986, Laclau 2005, Hart 2012). However, before looking into several examples of populist uses of culture, we need to analyse the mechanisms for

creating a national identity on the basis of shared values and beliefs.

If, as Anderson states, we consider a community to be mainly culturally-based and if we interpret culture as the whole set of shared values and beliefs, then the question is how this applies to populist discourse. As discussed above, populism is a thin-centred ideology and is based on the three core concepts of the people, the elite, and the general will. I have claimed that the concept of a homogeneous people is inherently exclusive, and based on the principles of a common culture. This cultural component is therefore not limited to the far right but it is more explicitly expressed by parties with a strong nativist character, such as the *Front National* (FN) and the *Partij voor de Vrijheid* (PVV). Besides an alien ‘other’, seen as a threat to the people’s national culture, the elite is demonised for not being able or willing to stop the country losing its identity. In a speech at the *Estivales de Fréjus* [Fréjus Summer Festival] in September 2016⁴, Marine Le Pen articulated the purely cultural bond between the French people:

We are the French nation. Millions of us are linked by unseen, unbreakable bonds, united by love for our country, our language, our culture. The nation’s hearts beat as one, and we share the same breath, the same hope. (Marine Le Pen, 18th September 2016)

Culture in this case is a tool to unite the people through common denominators. It is distinctive, because it allows the people to define themselves as French, and set themselves apart from other peoples (for instance, the British, the Germans). Not only is culture a way of defining the self but it is also quintessential of the people’s existence and its values: What is France if it is not a free, non-aligned nation that upholds the rights of each of the world’s peoples to choose their own destiny? (Marine Le Pen, 18th September 2016). The question is clearly rhetorical, highlighting the idea that

4 Discours de Marine Le Pen aux Estivales de Fréjus: <https://www.rassemblementnational.fr/videos/discours-de-marine-le-pen-aux-estivales-de-frejus/>

without the populist definition of culture, the notion of Frenchness is nothing but a hollow shell. A transformation of the system of shared values and beliefs inevitably leads to a loss of the identification with - and thus distinctive function of - the culture, and even a detachment from the achievements of the democratic state such as Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. This is closely linked to the third and last implication of the populist definition of culture, namely its hegemonic character. According to the populists, other cultures, most notably non-European ones, are intrinsically backward; see the following quote by Geert Wilders during a Pegida⁵ meeting in Dresden, Germany⁶: “Our own culture is the best one. Immigrants should accept our values, not the other way around. (Geert Wilders, 13th April 2015). This ties in with the notion of *Leitkultur* — the leading culture of a country — that newcomers should assimilate (cf. Ossewaarde 2014). Interestingly, Wilders regards German and Dutch cultures as equally good, as they are both founded in the so-called Judeo-Christian tradition. He contrasts them with immigrant cultures, implicitly pointing to Islam, which threatens our allegedly superior Western European cultures.

The examples above show how populist leaders argue that culture is not only unique to each people but also quintessential and strongly hegemonic. That said, it is still not clear how this translates into a populist cultural narrative. This issue will be the main focus of the following section.

THE POPULIST CULTURAL NARRATIVE

In order to distinguish between these ideas and traditions on the one hand, and specific products on the other, I shall use Huxley’s (1955: 17) terminology of

sociofacts, *mentifacts*, and *artifacts*. The first two apply to what he calls social and mental constructions, such as kinship and political and economic institutions in the case of *sociofacts*, and symbols, rituals and beliefs for *mentifacts*. Examples of *artifacts* include buildings, tools, vehicles, and indeed anything that can be “classified according to the human needs and desires which they subserve – nourishment, health, shelter, clothing, enjoyment, adornment, communication, and so forth.” In other words, whereas *mentifacts* include the shared values and beliefs of a certain culture, *sociofacts* are about how these ideas are reflected in visible, societal structures, whereas *artifacts* constitute the material productions of a given culture. For the purpose of this paper, the definition of *artifacts* will be narrowed down to artistic productions, as I am interested in those products that target our imagination and emotions. Figure 1 shows a schematic representation of this typology.

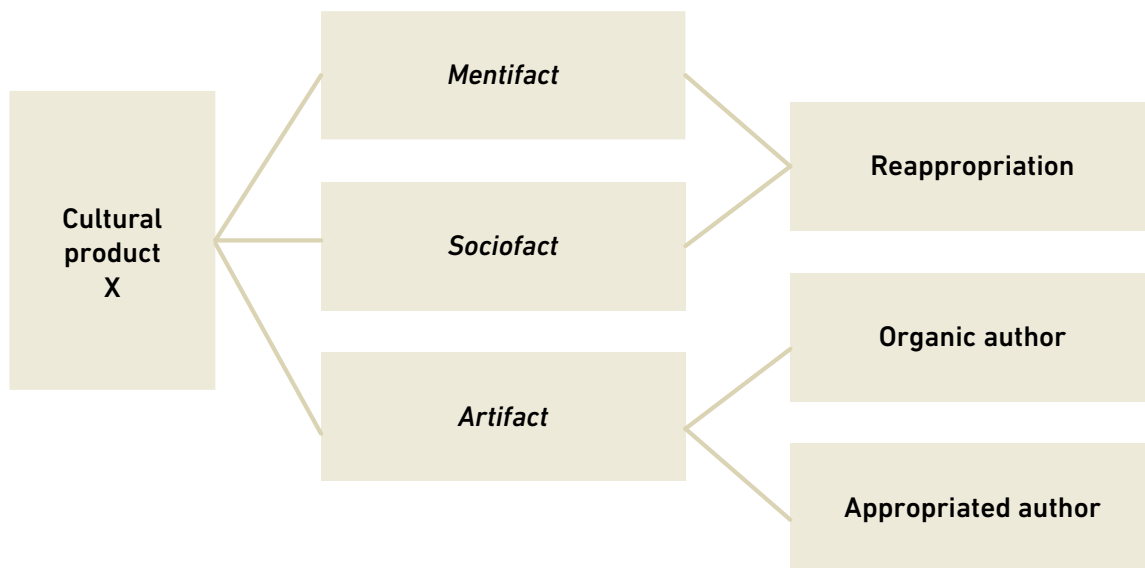
An example of a sociofact in both France and The Netherlands includes Judeo-Christian festivities, most notably Christmas. Both FN and PVV share the idea of the threat posed by a multicultural society, in which there is no longer any place for traditional religious festivities. A PVV member of parliament even speaks of a “cultural war against our identity.”⁷ The main idea is that by trying to be more inclusive towards non-Christian groups – for instance by calling Christmas the “winterfeest” (winter feast), or Easter eggs “verstoppeitjes” (“Treasure Hunt’ eggs), the traditional Christian aspects, and thereby ‘our’ culture, are being lost. This idea of secularisation with the aim of more inclusion (or perhaps just more commercial success) is also present in France, and strongly linked to the presence of the traditional *crèches de Noël* (Nativity Scenes) in public places and their (in)compatibility with laicism. The FN considers these nativity scenes to be part and parcel of French culture and strives to maintain them in public buildings such as town halls, even though France’s lay principles and legislation forbid religious symbols in public buildings.

5 Acronym of *Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes* (Patriotic Europeans against the Islamisation of The West), a far right-wing movement originally founded in Dresden (Germany) in 2014

6 *Pegida* speech Geert Wilders, 13th April 2015: <https://www.pvv.nl/36-fj-related/geert-wilders/8286-speech-gw-pegida-130415.html>

7 Zwarte Piet wet: <https://www.pvv.nl/75-fj-related/harm-beertema/9440-zwarte-piet-wet.html>

Figure 1



Typology of the populist use of culture

This idea of laicism, with its separation between State and Church, could be considered a mentifact, as it is an abstract value that is a key characteristic of French society. Institutionalised through the 1905 Act, this value took more specific form in the realm of *sociofacts*. However, it is important to note that it is not the 1905 Act but rather the underlying belief in laicism (dating back to The French Revolution) that often sparks fierce debate. An example is the *burqini* [bikini-cum-burqua] ban on some French beaches in the summer of 2016, which led to the police forcing Muslim women to remove the garment. Yet discussions have also arisen in other countries about the compatibility of ‘our’ Western society and ‘their’ religious symbols (for instance, in The Netherlands, where laicism is not explicitly enshrined in Law). In 2009, Geert Wilders introduced the notion of *kopvoddentaks*, or ‘head rag tax’, a highly pejorative name for a tax that would apply to those wearing head scarves in public. In general, we can observe an equivocal interpretation of laicism. In the case of Marine le Pen, this translates into the rejection of the principles of French laicism when it relates to the presence of certain religious

objects that are part of the Judeo-Christian tradition, such as the afore-mentioned nativity scenes. However, when talking about Islam, she is a fierce defender of laicism, willing to ban Muslim head scarves. This shows how the idea of ‘Identitarian Christianity’ (cf. above) works in practice. The basic idea is that ‘our’ Judeo-Christian feasts and traditions (and which are part of our (European) culture) are under constant attack by other ‘intolerant’ religions and cultures, whose influence should be kept at bay (cf. Wodak *et al.* 2013).

An important feature that *mentifacts* and *sociofacts* have in common is the idea of the reappropriation of historical events, symbols or figures. This is in line with Renan’s (1882) analysis of what defines a people: “having common glories in the past and a will to continue them in the present; having made great things together and wishing to make them again.” This glorious past is constructed not only through recalling past glories but also by forgetting past disgraces. Renan considers the essence of a nation is that “all of its members have a great deal in

common and also that they have forgotten many things.” The concept of forgetting implies practical issues, like belonging to an ethnic group (whose origins are buried in the mists of time) that forgets shameful historical events, such as colonial wars, or in Renan’s example, the St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre. Closely related to forgetting is Hobsbawm’s notion of “invented traditions”; the construction of values and norms of behaviour, which are repeated and appear to be an unbroken continuation of the past (Hobsbawm 2012). In other words, a certain tradition (mentifact or sociofact) takes place regularly and exists presumably because things were done this way since time out mind. The problem lies not in the invented tradition but in the unshakeable (and mistaken) belief in its authenticity, the disregard of alternative pasts, and the idea that it must be followed in its ‘pure form’ if one is to stay true to one’s culture. This, as we have seen above, makes invented traditions the playground of populist parties, claiming that ‘others’ and the ‘elite’ want to destroy these cultural manifestations, and with them, most of the national culture.

Anderson (2016: 210) underlines the importance of what he calls the *emplotment* of history, which is to say the creation of a historical narrative stressing an imagined fraternity, in which forgetting plays a crucial role:

“English history textbooks offer the diverting spectacle of a great Founding Father whom every schoolchild is taught to call William the Conqueror. The same child is not informed that William spoke no English, indeed could not have done so, since the English language did not exist in his epoch; nor is he or she told ‘Conqueror of what?’ For the only intelligible modern answer would have to be ‘Conqueror of the English’, which would turn the old Norman predator into a more successful precursor of Napoleon or Hitler.”

This reappropriation of major historical events, figures or symbols is not only used to build the idea of a common national history but also to shape current

challenges. To repeat Renan’s words, it is the will to continue the glories of the past in the present. These challenges are linked to the presence of the alien ‘other’, the horizontal dichotomy, and both FN and PVV insist on the threat that Islam poses to French and Dutch (Judeo-Christian) values and beliefs. Interestingly, when looking at the speeches of populist leaders, one can find many parallels with historical events involving an ‘us’ and ‘them’ dichotomy.

Wilders refers to imperialism, calling Dutch citizens of Moroccan descent “colonists”⁸, speaking of a “sharia-infiltration”⁹ and hinting at the emergence of “Eurabia”¹⁰ during the final speech of his trial. Wilders also draws a historical parallel with Nazism, comparing The Koran to *Mein Kampf*,¹¹ stating that The Koran contains even more anti-Semitism and appeals to hate and violence than *Mein Kampf*. New-comer Thierry Baudet (*Forum voor Democratie*) refers to Nazism in a slightly more subtle way, that is to say, without mentioning it explicitly. He stresses the ‘purity’ of civilisations, and warns against immigrants, who — according to him — are the reason for the “homeopathic dilution” or weakening of Western Civilisation.

Wilders’ predecessor Pim Fortuyn, who was the first Dutch politician to openly question Islam and the multicultural society, was assassinated in 2002. He spoke of the fights against Islamic fundamentalism

8 Inbreng Wilders tijdens ABP: <https://www.pvv.nl/12-in-de-kamer/spreekteksten/1288-inbreng-wilders-tijdens-apb.html>

9 Wilders en De Graaf: Sharia verbieden is heel goed plan: <https://www.pvv.nl/83-fj-related/machiel-de-graaf/6811-wilders-en-de-graaf-sharia-verbieden-is-heel-goed-plan.html>

10 Het laatste woord van Geert Wilders bij het proces: <https://www.pvv.nl/36-fj-related/geert-wilders/3939-het-laatste-woord-van-geert-wilders-bij-het-proces-sp-1560346816.html>

11 Interview Geert Wilders in het AD: <https://www.pvv.nl/36-fj-related/geert-wilders/9336-interview-geert-wilders-in-het-ad.html>

as ‘crusades’¹², linking recent events to the mediaeval religious wars. His column ends with the words “History repeats itself, time after time”.

In France, Marine Le Pen has compared the immigration crisis of 2015 to the barbarian invasions of the 4th century¹³, leading to the collapse of The Roman Empire. She implied that action was necessary in order to prevent the barbarians from reaching France, presumably to stop The French Republic and its modern civilisation coming to a sticky end.

The examples above show how a cultural narrative is constructed through a selection of *mentifacts* and *sociofacts* to stress the image of a powerful people versus an enemy in the present and near future. At the same time, this ‘enemy’ or ‘other’ is put in a much more negative light, using references to historical events bearing on the ‘us’ culture. The next part will discuss how *artifacts* contribute to the construction and confirmation of the populist narrative.

Looking at *artifacts*, we should distinguish between those that were created to support a populist discourse and those that were not. Based on the notion of “the organic intellectual” (Gramsci 1971) (that is to say, someone who identifies with (and speaks in the name of) a given class), I will refer to the first category as ‘organic authors’ and the second as ‘appropriated authors’.

An example of an organic author that springs to mind when thinking of the Dutch case is a short film that was produced by Geert Wilders — *Fitna* (2008). The film is intended as a searing critique of Islam, showing fragments from The Koran next to footage of Islamic terrorism. Seeking to demonstrate

the threat Islam poses to The Netherlands, the film is a continuation of Wilders’ party programme, which seeks to ban Islamic influence. This harsh criticism of Islam and a strong defence of freedom of speech are perhaps what struck him when he read Oriana Fallaci’s work. Wilders claimed that it was after reading Fallaci’s *The Force of Reason* that he decided to found his own party¹⁴. He also won the *Oriana Fallaci Free Speech Award* in 2009.

Another key event in Geert Wilders’ political career was the murder of Dutch film director Theo van Gogh after the release of his Islam-critical film *Submission* in 2004. This film and the killing of van Gogh are a special case meriting more detailed study. It seems that Van Gogh could qualify as an ‘organic author’ but at the same time his murder has been appropriated by many others. The killing is a hot topic in the PVV and an important part of Wilders’ *Fitna*. Interestingly, the above-mentioned ‘literary populist’ Leon de Winter wrote the novel *VSV* (2012) on the reappearance of Van Gogh as a guardian angel.

Two examples of French organic authors include Éric Zemmour and Renaud Camus. The former argued in his essay *Le Suicide Français* (2014), that mass (Muslim) immigration was leading to France losing its cultural identity and authenticity, hence the idea of a French suicide. This idea of cultural loss is put forward by Renaud Camus, author of *Le Grand Remplacement* in 2011. He theorises that the native population will be reverse-colonised by Muslim immigrants, thus ‘mutating’ the given country and its culture. An important aspect of this theory is the complicity of the political establishment at both the national and at the European level. With their generous immigration policies, driven by a supposed loathing of their native inhabitants, they would encourage people from Maghreb and Sub-Saharan Africa to move to Europe. Although this might sound a bit far-fetched — in fact, it was characterised as ‘*complotiste*’ (that is, as

12 De geschiedenis herhaalt zich, keer op keer: <http://www.pimfortuyn.com/16-islamisering/388-de-geschiedenis-herhaalt-zich-keer-op-keer>

13 Marine Le Pen compare la crise des migrants à la chute de l’empire romain: <http://www.lefigaro.fr/politique/le-scan/citations/2015/09/15/25002-20150915ARTFIG00111-marine-le-pen-compare-la-crise-des-migrants-a-la-chute-de-l-empire-romain.php>

14 Patriottische lente in Milaan: <https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2016/01/30/patriottische-lente-in-milaan-1581420-a210117>

a ‘conspiracy theory’) by Marine Le Pen — Camus remains a source of inspiration for some PVV politicians, whom he joined on a demonstration march in January 2018¹⁵.

The second category of authors (that is, the ‘appropriated authors’) is best illustrated by French writer Michel Houellebecq. His latest novel *Soumission* (2015), in which the Islamisation of France in the near future is depicted, was used by populist actors and right-wing journalists to underline the cultural dangers we are facing, linking them to the ideas of Zemmour and Camus. However, a deeper analysis of the novel and the author’s intentions reveals a different message. In fact, the novel is critical of the simplistic ‘good versus bad’ dichotomies characterising the populist discourse (Jansma 2018). In other words, although the novel was not intended as right-wing populist propaganda (indeed, quite the opposite), it was appropriated as such by FN populists. This shows how a novel can become a part of a political strategy, in which it is used to promote a given worldview and a linked political agenda.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has analysed the various ways in which populist actors in France and The Netherlands engage with culture. Although populists often seem unenthusiastic about culture with a big ‘C’ (which they dismiss as “left-wing hobbies” and argue that should not be subsidised by the tax-payer), the appropriation of cultural products is ever-present in their discourse. Culture has the power to connect a people (an imagined community) on the basis of shared values and beliefs but also to draw sharp lines between ‘us’ and ‘them’. As such, a hegemony of cultures is constructed, which presupposes ‘our’ culture to be better than ‘theirs’.

I have looked at populists’ use and appropriation of culture. My purpose here was to come up with a typology of populism and culture. By first making the distinction between artifacts, mentifacts and sociofacts, one can get a more accurate idea of what ‘culture’ means. I have shown that mentifacts and sociofacts are prone to: reappropriation; notions of memory and oblivion (Renan); invented tradition (Hobsbawm); emplotment (Anderson). All of them are key mechanisms that need to be taken into account. As far as artifacts are concerned, I have suggested two categories — *organic authors and appropriated authors*. In the latter case, the interpretation of the artifact often seems at odds with what the author intended. Here, deeper analysis of both artifact and its reception is needed to establish whether this is indeed the case.

It should be said that any attempt to draw clear lines between artifacts, mentifacts and sociofacts is doomed to failure. While cultural categories are clear-cut, cultural products are often ambiguous and blur boundaries. Depending on the perspective, a cultural object could be both considered a mentifact and a sociofact. However, as we have seen above, we are interested not only in which kinds of cultural products make up the populist narrative but also how they are interlinked, and how they make up the whole populist narrative.

More research is needed to ensure systematic investigation of actual discursive practices of cultural appropriation. Specifically, this not only means analysing more cultural products but also scaling up analyses (for example, by using digital tools). Such an approach is needed to grasp how a variety of populist and non-populist actors engage with culture, and more precisely, which linguistic patterns and rhetorical devices can be found (cf. Jansma 2018; Wodak 2015). Not only will this give us the tools to decode the populist interpretation of cultural products but it will also reveal the importance of culture for the populist agenda. One hopes that such insights will lead to the building of a new, more inclusive cultural narrative.

15 Kasteelheer slaat alarm over cultuur van Europa: <https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2018/01/22/kasteelheer-slaat-alarm-over-cultuur-van-europa-a1589332>

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

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The Art of Refusal: Notes on the Poetics of *No*

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ABSTRACT

This essay proposes an approximation to the different ways in which the visual arts have dealt with versions of the word NO since Marcel Duchamp created his NON in 1959. This form of explicit negation has been explored in different formats and with myriad meanings by artists such as Boris Lurie, Santiago Sierra, Bahia Shehab and Maurizio Cattelan. I examine how their works emphasize political dimensions of refusal, questioning realities and notions that are prevalent in art as well as in other spheres. Their contributions also create new links that develop in several directions—associating people, ideas, art and history.

Keywords: refusal, negation, engagement, political art, Marcel Duchamp, Boris Lurie, Santiago Sierra, Bahia Shehab, Maurizio Cattelan.

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It is not easy to say *No*, we are told. It is something that many adults need to re-learn even though *No* is one of the very first words we acquire when learning to speak. Many children and most teenagers seem to have no problem saying it, at least to their parents. Later in life, uttering it becomes a challenge for some people. As with so many challenges nowadays, this one has been commodified, turned into something that can be mastered with a well-oriented technique — which, of course, can only be properly grasped if you buy the right book. A few bear the title of *The Art of Saying No*; readers approach them for purposes of “individual empowerment”.

While being able to say *No* is the subject of many self-help books, *The Art of No* has received less attention. *No* is a short yet powerful word which is literally at the centre of a number of major artworks, from poems and songs to paintings and sculptures. Though there are distinct implications of its use in different mediums, sometimes verging on a divorce from language — becoming but line, shadow, pattern, etc. — its diversified appearances retain a common emphasis on a compelling need to refuse a given reality.

Since the late 1950s, several artists have attempted to make *No* unfamiliar, special to us again, with effects

that are not confined to the linguistic realm. As Michael R. Leaman suggests, “When language appears in painting or art, we can be sure that the reason for this is beyond the merely aesthetic [. . .] that words here have a special meaning — one beyond normal language and communication” (Leaman, 2010: 10). The explicit inclusion of words in visual art has been most evident in two periods: before the invention of the printing press, and in Postmodernism (Hunt, 2010: 17). In the specific case of art based on *No*, the aesthetics call attention to the social intricacies of refusal. Rather than the reassertion of individualism that fuels the self-help industry, such artistic manifestations tend to stress the political dimensions of negation. However, when considering the art of *No* it is worth recalling the difficulty of denial; that negation is a challenge that can bind many people together, empowering them as a collective based on refusal. These works conceived as negations, exalting *No* (and words with similar meanings) foster a strong *positive* sense of community. They challenge taken-for-granted realities and conceptions in art and in other realms of our lives. At the same time, these works create new ties that grow in different directions, linking people, ideas, art, and history.

WE ARE NOT OF THAT WORLD

In 1963, the popular Spanish singer and composer Raimon (born in 1940 as Ramón Pelegrero Sanchis) wrote a song under the title *Diguem no* [Let us say no]. It soon became something of an anthem for those who opposed the Franco dictatorship in Spain. This was also so for those who did not speak Catalan (the language of the lyrics) because even if they could not understand the rest of the message, every listener could grasp what the recurring *no* meant.

A couple of things stand out in Raimon’s simple yet powerful tune. One is that it stresses refusal not only as a form of antagonism and rejection but also — and perhaps more importantly — as an element of communion. Raimon starts the song, seizing on the closeness of his listeners, with the words: “*Ara que som*

junts” [“Now that we are together”]. He goes on to raise his voice against arbitrary power, violence, poverty, and the imprisonment of people for political reasons. To avoid the regime’s censorship, Raimon avoided specifying the identities of victims or perpetrators, an ambiguity that reinforces his song’s relevance to for many contexts of oppression.

To all of that, Raimon says “no”; and in public performance, he has the audience join in his chant repeating *No*. As in prayer, or in a choir, saying something in unison with other people dilutes individuality, creating a special relationship that shapes a group. A shared refusal, a unified *No*, intensifies that togetherness. At the same time, it is a declaration of collective antagonism: when we say *No* to something together, the otherness thereby created accentuates our own sense of commonality. This, of course, can all go horribly wrong when that “other” generated by the refusal is another group or individual constructed as an enemy or a threat. Yet this is clearly not the case with Raimon’s song, which fosters fraternal feelings.

Even in appearance, at a very superficial linguistic level — that of spelling — *No* may look like the root of the first-person plural pronoun *we* in Romance languages. In Latin we see *nos, nobis* and in the Romance languages it spawned we see *nosaltres* in Catalan, *nosotros* in Spanish, *noi* in Italian, and *nós* in Galician and Portuguese. There is something of the *No* in these pronouns that refers to a group in which the speaker is included. However, there is no etymological link because the word *No* is not related to the Latin origin of the current Romance forms for *us* and *we*. This false etymology linking the adverb of negation and the pronoun may go far poetically but not linguistically. Yet most art is closer to poetry than to linguistics.

Raimon ends his song stating that “*Nosaltres no som d’eixe món*” [“We are not of that world”]. That is, the singer and his implicit audience distance themselves from the world the live in. Which world is it that he refuses both for himself and for those singing along with him as they chant *No*? “That world” is one that traps them and which must be rejected because it

is corrupt and unjust. Its unfairness was evident to the generation coming of age in the early 1960s with a renewed sense of social justice and, in Spain's case, a growing political awareness that made them question the moral and historical underpinnings of Franco's dictatorship. The political context in Raimon's native country has changed a great deal since then but the song's message is still relevant today at a world level. It is a message that does not merely assert a negation of reality but also raises the question of the alternatives.

Confronting the world with a *No* implies recognising its present nature, thus creating a chance to transform it. Slavoj Žižek claims that "Philosophy begins the moment we do not simply accept what exists as given . . . but [when we] raise the question of how is what we encounter as actual also possible. What characterises philosophy is this 'step back' from actuality into possibility" (Žižek, 1993:2). In other words: the most original and powerful thought comes into being when we make an effort to see what there is — the structures in which we exist, the world we are in — not as something natural, necessary, or inescapable but as the result of historical choices which could have been different, and that can still be changed. This "step back" is not confined to philosophy. I would add that certain works of art are fecund "theoretical objects" (as Mieke Bal calls them, following Hubert Damisch) that may prove very productive because they let us deepen the conception of the actual as one possibility among many. When we fully engage with these artworks, considering their richness of their production, circulation, and reception, "a compelling collective thought process emerges" (Bal, 2010: 7).

Art, in this case what I call *the art of refusal*, of which the different works centred on the *No* are a prime example, can generate a new look at the world, opening a void in reality to make room for new possibilities to exist or at least be imagined. Very recently, philosopher Santiago Zabala warned that, in his view, "An aesthetic force is needed to shake us out of our tendency to ignore the 'social paradoxes' generated by the political, financial, and technological frames

that contain us" (Zabala, 2017: 5). Art (including literature) and philosophy are forces with the potential to create dissent from established forms of thinking and acting. They put critical distance between us and the commonplaces that keep things the way they are, the frames that constrict our lives and prevent the kind of change that favours the many and not the few. "No, we are not of that world", sang Raimon. The emergence of new worlds requires many strong *Noes* to the old one — *Noes* that unite people and send them in new directions. A few contemporary artists have been exploring the aesthetic and political force of this most direct negation. Their approaches have a history that is over half a century old.

FROM MAURICE BLANCHOT'S LE REFUS TO MARCEL DUCHAMP'S *NON*

Barely four years before Raimon started to sing his *No*, the French writer and public intellectual Maurice Blanchot (1907-2003) published a text titled "*Le refus*" ("Refusal"). This brief essay, which appeared in October 1958, in the second issue of the short-lived magazine *Le 14 Juillet* — a name with obvious revolutionary resonances — is as much a manifesto as a poetics of refusal.

At that moment, France was in a state of great political turmoil, mainly because of the tensions arising from its colonial hold over Algeria. Blanchot's reason for writing "*Le refus*" was to express his opposition to the return to power of General Charles de Gaulle, who a few months before had headed the government. In Blanchot's words, "*porté, cettefois, non par la Résistance, mais par les mercenaires*" ["brought, this time, not by The Resistance but by the mercenaries"], who were fighting against those seeking Algeria's independence (Blanchot, 1971: 131, no. 1). Yet, Blanchot does not mention General de Gaulle by name in the original version of his text, which transcends its initial function as political commentary. Nowadays, as well as back then, it can also be read as a broader embrace of what the author calls "*la force du refus*" (Blanchot, 1971:130) ["the power of refusal"].

For Blanchot, refusal is a kind of power that unites people and, perhaps counter-intuitively this produces a new affirmation. *“Les hommes qui refusent et qui sont liés par la force du refus, savent qu’ils ne sont pas encore ensemble. Le temps de l’affirmation commune leur a précisément été enlevé. Ce qui leur reste, c’est l’irréductible refus, l’amitié de ce Non certain, inébranlable, rigoureux, qui les tient unis et solidaires”* (Blanchot, 1971:130) [“Those who refuse and who are bound by the force of refusal know that they are not yet together. The time of common affirmation is precisely what has been taken away from them. What they are left with is the irreducible refusal, the friendship of this sure, unshakable, rigorous *No* that unites them and shapes their solidarity”]. Blanchot goes on to claim that refusal is a moral obligation, one whose direction is clearer in some cases than in others. He implies that on some occasions it is obvious that one must reject the *status quo*. It was crystal-clear that the German occupation should be rejected by any decent citizen but the need to refuse what was represented by the allegedly alternative order of Marshall Pétain in Vichy France (names which the author refuses to mention) was perhaps not so clearly seen at the time. Similarly, rejecting De Gaulle in 1958 was an uncertain option, as the General offered a pragmatic way out of a difficult political situation. Thus, Blanchot writes, *“Ce que nous refusons n’est pas sans valeur ni sans importance. C’est bien à cause de cela que le refus est nécessaire. Il y a une raison que nous n’accepterons plus, il y a une apparence de sagesse qui nous fait horreur... refuser n’est jamais facile”* (Blanchot, 1971:130-1) [What we refuse is not without value or importance. This is precisely why refusal is necessary. There is a kind of reasoning that we will no longer accept, there is an appearance of wisdom that horrifies us . . . refusal is never easy].

Today, six decades later, we face many other realities that are plainly unacceptable — for instance, gender violence. Yet somehow others broadly accept ‘lesser’ or ‘inevitable’ evils. Inequality furnishes one such case. Tax reform that may put more money in citizens’ pockets at the expense of future social welfare is another. So too is the present defective functioning

and direction of institutions such as The European Union, which needs to change and improve in so many ways, and do a much better job of meeting people’s needs and aspirations. Therefore, refusal often involves rejecting seemingly “acceptable” options that on closer examination are not. Alas, this is not the most comfortable or the easiest thing to do. Therefore, according to Blanchot, *“Nous devons apprendre à refuser et à maintenir intact, par la rigueur de la pensée et la modestie de l’expression, le pouvoir de refus que désormais chacune de nos affirmations devrait vérifier”* (Blanchot, 1971: 131) [“We must learn how to refuse and to maintain intact this power of refusal, by rigorous thinking and modesty of expression that each one of our affirmations must evidence from now on”]. I shall come back to the issue of refusal’s “modesty of expression”, a sort of sobriety that *No* – a short, direct word – naturally lends itself to.

Blanchot’s proposal begs questions about the nature of refusal. For him, refusal is power — yet it is not clear what kind of power it is and what it should be used for. It is not passive power, for it can unite people through activism. Yet activism often requires hard work but little is said about its nature. It sets the foundations of affirmation, which could be seen as the root of a new yet elusive hope. Perhaps the very vagueness of Blanchot’s “power of refusal” explains its remarkable artistic scope over the last few decades. The word *No* (probably the most direct expression of refusal in The West) has been used to spark expectation of social change not only in literature (and I would include song lyrics such as Raimon’s in this category) but also in the visual arts.

However, it is important to re-examine the apparent straightforwardness of *No*. At first sight, a *No* is completely univocal in its meaning: it is the shortest, most direct way to reject something — even if it encompasses the whole world, which a *No* elevated by art can attempt to do. Yet what we expect from art these days is not clear, definite responses. If we take artworks as hard-and-fast solutions, we may have failed to grasp art’s elusive yet greatest power — its ability to spawn uncertainties and questions, to unsettle our world.

According to Verena Krieger, ambiguity is an essential — even “normative” — aspect in the aesthetics of most art today but its political potential is just as important. Semantic openness, embraced or heightened by the lack of interpretative guidelines from the artists, shuns propaganda. In fact, contrary to first impressions, the simple *No* proves to be highly ambiguous. Its apparent simplicity is misleading. Most of the works of art centred on *No* cannot be taken as implying a straightforward refusal.

As we have known from at least the 1960s, traditionally our systems of thought have been constructed on dualities: man/woman, white/coloured, centre/periphery, and so on. The first of each pair is understood to be superior to the second. These binaries, of course, reduce the infinite complexity of the world to a very poor, simplistic framework. It may seem that the *Noes* endorse one of the most primal of those dichotomies (yes/no), and, with a bold move, overthrow the hierarchy to claim *No* is the greater of the two. Yet rich artistic proposals tend to avoid such simplistic reversals. How these *Noes* are stated, in ways that are basically ambiguous, avoids falling into yet another one of those binary couplings: *yes/no*, or, in this case *no/yes*, as the first item is bestowed with greater powers. Many ambiguous *Noes* worked on by artists in the last half century foster new types of associations. Each of them puts forth a refusal of a set of conditions that limits freedom but also, and perhaps more importantly, these *Noes* offer an opening to something else. In many cases, that something else is an invitation to reaffirm community bonds.

I shall come back to this issue later. First, it is worth taking a brief look at the history of the isolated, extant *No*, beginning with Marcel Duchamp whose contribution underpins many of today’s art practices. As is well known, he strongly opposed the established tradition of Fine Arts, and pioneered a whole new way of understanding Art. This became apparent when he exhibited — or rather, tried to exhibit — his ready-made *Fountain*. This piece, initially created in a factory as a men’s urinal, was famously rejected by the Society of Independent Artists, when Duchamp

submitted it for its inaugural show in New York in 1917 under the pseudonym “R. Mutt”. The work, with its implicit rejection of tradition, and rejection by the artist’s colleagues, opened a new period in the history of art — one in which we still live. And although it ushered in a change in paradigm, to some extent, *Fountain* can be seen as an exemplary iteration of that “modesty of expression” that Blanchot demanded.

In August 1959, only a few months after Blanchot had published *Le refus*, Duchamp again took something from ordinary life and presented it as a work of art. This time it was the word *No* — which we use almost unconsciously. Duchamp’s work *Non* was used to illustrate the cover of a book of poems by Pierre-André Benoît titled *Première Lumière* [First Light]. This etching presents three letters that are both fragile and powerful. The word is tenuous, with the thin, hand-inscribed lines forming the separated letters. Yet it is also very commanding: the upper-case letters stretch across the central rectangle from top to bottom, arranged together to offer their authoritative, primal message of negation. For Arturo Schwarz, “The one-syllable word ‘NON’ epitomises Duchamp’s philosophy of life, which is a clear refusal of all academic strictures, all calls for moral or aesthetic conformity” (Schwarz, 1997:820). Yet his message is more than just a personal statement. There is something distinctly Biblical in the title of the piece: “In the Beginning was the Word”, and this time the word is *No*. While the art of refusal lends itself to political readings of today’s world, one can also suggest links to other themes with a communal dimension. From this standpoint, the *No* would signal a primal negation as the basis for the social. Roberto Esposito has pointed out in his suggestive writings on the origin of community, developed from the word’s etymology (rooted in the Latin term *munus*, meaning “gift”, but also “debt” or “obligation”), that “the public thing [*res publica*] is inseparable from no-thing [*niente*]. It is precisely the no-thing of the thing that is our common ground [*fondo*]” (Esposito, 2010:8). In this work by Duchamp, Creation is re-founded in a constructive fashion but in this case through negation — albeit a fruitful one, as the art he has spawned shows. The primacy of this

thinly-inscribed word, this tenuous ray of black light, illuminates the path for bolder *Noes* that have sprung up here and there ever since Duchamp etched *NON*.

BORIS LURIE'S *NO!ART* AND SANTIAGO SIERRA'S *NO GLOBAL TOUR*

In 1959, when he created the illustration for the cover of *Première Lumière*, Duchamp had lived in New York on and off for over four decades. In that same year, in the same city, a group of artists followed the ray cast by that first light and were united in refusal. *NO!art* was a marginal movement active in the early 1960s New York art scene, just as the city was “stealing the idea of modern art”, as Serge Guilbaut famously put it. The group has been called “a politically-committed version of Pop Art” (Kraus, 2017: 7). Its main proponent was the refugee Boris Lurie, who was born in 1924 in Leningrad and was raised in Riga, Latvia, in a Jewish family. The female members of his family were killed in the woods of Rumbula, along with 25,000 other Jews, mostly women and children, in two days in Autumn 1941. Against all the odds, Lurie and his father both survived several concentration camps. It was there where Lurie got the basics of his art education (Kraus, 2017: 7). In the late 1940s, Lurie moved to New York, where he started exploring the impact of The Holocaust through his art. This was hardly a popular choice in a society that wanted to forget about the war and move on. In the late 1950s, after a spell in Paris, Lurie worked in NYC again with his friends and colleagues Sam Goodman and Stanley Fisher. With the support of gallery owner Gertrude Stein, they created *NO!art*, which denounced the dangers of a society in which they saw the rise of new, lower profile forms of Fascism. As with other aesthetic manifestations of refusal, *NO!art* encompasses both a rejection of social forms of oppression (consumerism, racism, sexism, populism, the cult of personality, anti-intellectualism, etc.) and the art practices that either condone or ignore them.

Lurie expressed his refusal by embracing *No* and, for several years, used it over and over again, in many

formats, usually in works based on paint and collage. Lurie's *Noes* connect the easily accepted with the most extreme example of modernity gone awry — Fascism. His works of negation remind us of the need to reject realities that are tolerable and even desirable for many of us. For Lurie, they harbour or conceal realities that he and his friends in the *No* movement saw as verging on a new incarnation of Fascism. Lurie's *Noes* are a refusal of forms of life that both spawn and conceal what some thinkers have called “slow violence” and others call “mature Fascism” or, as in Antonio Méndez Rubio's (2015) memorable Spanish acronym, FBI or *Fascismo de Baja Intensidad* or [low-intensity Fascism].

The *No* becomes Lurie's main motif and theme in a series of works on canvas and other less noble materials such as cardboard. All this strikes the viewer with the force of raw refusal. Lurie's *oeuvre* is energised by his personal history and his deliberate rejection of a society that seems to flourish on the same principles that led to the catastrophe of World War II and The Holocaust. Among Lurie's early 1960s works are leather suitcases covered with paper and fabric collages, yellow stars of David, multi-colored oil paint, and stencil inscriptions, among which some *Noes* are particularly conspicuous. They are pieces ready for travel, a moving memento of the journeys that he and so many others had to endure. The line between war refugees and other immigrants is blurred, as in his work *NO, Love You (Immigrant's NO!suitcase #1)*, from 1963, which gathers the negation, the yellow star used to identify Jews under Nazi rule, a newspaper clipping showing massacred bodies, and a swastika. As in most of Lurie's work, there is a call to distance ourselves from a world that we do not want as our own, as Raimon would sing that very same year. Yet this is a distance that allows for perspective, providing the clarity of vision that will lead to a succinct, radical response (*No*). It is as much a way of dealing with a traumatic past as a signpost placed there to guide us to the future. It is thus a tool for survival.

Lurie's suitcases were moving (in both senses of the word). Santiago Sierra's *NO GLOBAL TOUR* takes refusal from Lurie's personal dimension (which was a bor-

derline secret, as he barely showed his art from 1970 onwards) to a very public dimension. Sierra displayed a large portable sculpture of the word *NO* at different sites, each with its own political connotations. Sierra (b. Madrid, 1966) is best known for his incisive work on the ways economics affects human relationships at all levels. In keeping with this concern, his art addresses issues such as media bias, civic conformism, and the absurdity and exploitative nature of many forms of labour. Not surprisingly, his art has already been linked to that of Lurie (Kugelmann, 2016: 115).

A spirit of collective rejection infuses Sierra's *NO, GLOBAL TOUR*, a project he started in 2009. Sierra first had a large sculpture of the word *NO* built in wood in Arial typeface. It weighed half a ton, and measured about 2 meters high by 4 meters wide. One could say that these dimensions create a tension between the "modesty of expression" which Blanchot demanded for refusal and the *hubris* of size. Two other *Noes* of the same size were later built, one of them in Canada, the other in Carrara marble, which is quite a bit heavier. In its different materialisations, the piece was shown in various locations around the world, mostly in Europe and America. It was placed in a variety of contexts, including residential neighborhoods rich and poor, industrial areas, commercial hotspots, and places of political significance. For instance, it was taken to Brussels, where it was placed near NATO headquarters and the European Union's buildings. In New York City, the sculpture was taken to sites such as Wall Street, the UN headquarters, and The Rockefeller Center. Other locations were less memorable. Inevitably, each context suggested a different meaning for '*NO*'. Some of the locations themselves competed with the work for spectators' attention along with all the other stimuli found in urban settings. As of October 2017, Sierra's *NO* was travelling around Ireland.

The movements of the piece were documented in a sort of 'road movie', one that goes against most of the conventions of the genre. Sierra's film is in black and white, with no music or dialogue. Not a single word is heard during the two-hour long film. The lead character, of course, is the '*NO*' sculpture. What viewers see

on the screen during the film is the team working to make the sculpture, the frictions and the flows in its transportation, the sharp contrast in locations (from industrial landscapes to wealthy urban districts) and the reactions of the people who come across it, ranging from indifference to (more often than not) curiosity and taking a snap of it with a cell phone.

Aside from this work, Sierra has presented other pieces that had the word *NO* at its core: for instance, *NO projected above the Pope*, an action piece in collaboration with the German artist Julius von Bismarck, which took place during the mass that the pontiff celebrated at the World Youth Day in Madrid (2011); or a big tarpaulin featuring the two letters in white over a black background conspicuously hung in a commercial area in Linköping, Sweden, in 2012.

Sierra does not spell out what his *Noes* reject. The title of the longest-standing work (*No, Global Tour*) points to a refusal that is global, in the geographical sense, as it travels around the globe, but also in the sense of totality: his is an absolute, global *NO*, seemingly a negation of everything. It even negates itself as a sculpture. That is because to begin with, sculptures are not supposed to move. Sierra's despair and anger over the state of things seems to be such that he advocates starting with a clean slate. There is, without a doubt, a nihilistic drive in this work. Yet there is also a clear wish to communicate at the most basic level in a way that is easily understood. The *NO* is a message whose clear meaning is a very primal refusal but it is also one that is open for the spectator to complete. That is to say, it requires some work to engage with it beyond taking a selfie. "What are you saying *NO* to?" the viewer may ask. With its blunt semantic openness, the work's response suggests a question in the same direction: what do *you* refuse?

Beyond his work on *No*, Sierra has remained very active in his creative engagement with refusal. His *Black Cone. Monument to Civil Disobedience* (2012) commemorates the protests of the Icelanders against the measures that their government planned to take following the 2008 crash of the country's financial system. Sierra's

piece is a six-foot-high monolith placed in front of the Icelandic parliament. The rock is apparently cracked open by a metallic black cone. The fracture of the monolith was the result of a performance that Sierra carried out using several wedges. The cone, which is reminiscent of the *capiroto* or pointed hat that the Inquisition used to stigmatise its victims (and which was depicted by Goya in several works), was placed later. One could say that it stands for ill-treated victims' ability to make cracks in a system that is not as solid as it seems.

As Sierra is one of just a handful of contemporary Spanish artists of global stature, institutions in Spain have hailed him as a paragon of the nation's creativity. Yet, Sierra declines to serve any government or to advance the interests of any nation. In 2010, the Spanish Government (then led by the Centre-Left Socialist Party) tried to award him the National Prize for Visual Arts. In a move unprecedented in the history of the award, he refused the accolade — and the thirty thousand Euros that went with it. Sierra's letter of refusal to the Ministry of Culture declared that the prize puts the awardee's prestige to work for the benefit of the administration. The missive's last paragraph read: "El estado no somos todos. El estado son ustedes y sus amigos. Por lo tanto, no me cuenten entre ellos, pues yo soy un artista serio" [We are not all the State. The State is you and your friends. Therefore, do not count me among them for I am a serious artist] and it went on to conclude: "No señores, No, Global Tour" (No, Ladies and Gentlemen, No, Global Tour). Sierra then 'elevated' his letter of refusal to the status of showpiece, putting a framed copy of it for sale at the 2011 Turin Art Fair for the same amount as the prize.

BAHIA SHEHAB'S *A THOUSAND TIMES NO* AND MAURIZIO CATTELAN'S *L.O.V.E.*

An artist is therefore sometimes intentionally explicit about his or her refusal. That is the case with Bahia Shehab and her work *A Thousand Times No*. In 2009, this Egyptian-Lebanese artist (born in 1977) was invited to contribute a piece for an exhibition in Germany

commemorating the one-hundredth anniversary of the first show of Islamic art in Europe. Shehab gathered a thousand different visual representations of the Lam-Alif, which represents the word "no" in Arabic. They were written, printed, stitched, molded, engraved and cast over the last fourteen centuries on a variety of sources, from vases and tombstones to books and walls from many different places around the globe.

Shehab's work started as a negation of a world that in her own view rejects her as a Muslim woman. In a text accompanying the project, and which was later published in an impressive book, she stated:

"When you want to deny all of the stereotypes that are imposed on you and that try to define your role in the world. When you want to reject almost every aspect of your reality. [...] When you want to negate all the accusations that go hand in hand with your identity. When you want to refuse to be an imitator or follower of The West, yet you also refuse the regressive interpretation of your heritage. 'A thousand Noes' are not enough." (Shehab, 2010: 6)

Her stance of rejection and at the same time of self-affirmation is made very clear through these words. I would add that her work reminds us of an eclipsed history. The *Noes* Shehab collected are in a way an archeology of a linguistic, cultural and religious community that stretched from Spain to India and China, and whose memory has been ignored in many of those places where it is now in the minority. This legacy has been negated too often, refused by the dominant narratives. Yet it points, among other things, to the existence of a Muslim tradition in Europe, which too many in the continent blithely discard as if it were something completely alien to their history when there is much that Europeans owe to the lengthy exchanges between Christianity and Islam.

Shehab created a large Plexiglas curtain with one square bead for each Arabic-language *No* that she gathered. She also compiled them in a book, placing the *Noes* chronologically, stating the places where she found them, their media, and their original patrons.

Shehab's beautiful object is the materialisation of a research project on typographical history; a door that can be opened to reveal a rich past. However, as often happens, the present came knocking. Shortly after she showed her piece in Germany, the turmoil of The Arab Spring reached Egypt, bringing a tsunami of hope for social and political change in its wake. The government reacted violently and the artist decided to use a number of the *Noes* she had collected to protest against this turn of events. She spray-painted some of them in public spaces throughout Cairo, with different messages of refusal that condemned despotic political developments. The stencilled graffiti included: "No to military rule"; "No to a new pharaoh"; "No to violence"; "No to burning books"; "No to the stripping of veiled women", among others. Each one of Shehab's messages was a response to specific abuses by the authorities. The ancient inscriptions that she had gathered for the exhibition in Germany were revived when and where they were most needed and contributed to the collective refusal of impunity.

Shehab's *Noes* are a gift to the community to which she belongs. In 2016 she was awarded the UNESCO-Sharjah Prize for Arab Culture in recognition of her work calling "for all sectors of society to come together and unite around a simple request to bring justice to all", in the words of the official jury report. At the end of the foreword, the artist writes "Accept this book as ammunition for refusal in the face of all powers that try to impose on you that which you cannot accept" (Shehab, 2010: 7). The volume's own imposing format, with its compact quarto size and over a thousand pages in hard cover, are reminiscent of a brick or some other object ready to be thrown in protest.

The *No* is the central piece of *the political*, lies at its heart, and is its clearest, most succinct expression. Of *the political*, not of *politics*, at least in the terms in which Chantal Mouffe distinguishes them: for her, *the political* is "the dimension of antagonism ... constitutive of human societies". She distinguishes this from politics which, she argues, comprises the ways "through which an order is created, organising

human coexistence in the context of conflictuality provided by the political" (Mouffe, 2005:9). Conflict is, therefore, inherent in social life. Politics cannot eliminate it; however, politics often *suppresses* conflict, sweeping it under the carpet, so to speak, yet it constantly re-emerges, sometimes in the form of art. The art of refusal is that special portion of political art that puts the "dimension of antagonism" in the limelight, revealing the unavoidable conflictivity of our social existence. That said, not all political art is the art of refusal: Socialist Realism, for instance, is clearly political art but seldom aligns with the art of refusal.

A certain degree of dissent is therefore something that is cause for celebration insofar as it contributes to the vitality of democratic communities. The embodiment of that stance has begun to find its way to symbolically relevant spaces, as was the case with Sierra's *Monument to civil disobedience*. Other works of monumental refusal have appeared recently under more ambiguous terms. At the very centre of *Piazza Affari*, the square in Milan where the stock exchange has its headquarters, there is a large statue made of Carrara marble, the same material that Michelangelo and Bernini favoured. However, no one would mistake this public sculpture for a work by these masters, as it represents a hand with only its middle finger up, thus producing a gesture usually considered offensive and even obscene. Upon closer examination, it becomes apparent that the other fingers are not flexed. They appear to be cut, or time-eaten. If it were not for the severed fingers, the statue could be seen as showing the infamous Fascist salute. That would be particularly apposite given that the Milan stock exchange is housed in *Palazzo Mezzanotte*, a 1932 building that is a hallmark of Italian Fascist architecture (Mezzanotte is the last name of the architect who designed the building, but it also means *midnight*, a word whose ominous connotations fit a Fascist palace like a glove).

The sculpture bears the title of *L.O.V.E.*, which stands for *Libertà, Odio, Vendetta, Eternità* [Freedom, Hate, Vengeance, Eternity]. It was created in 2010 by the Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan (b. Padua, 1960). Because of its location in the *Piazza Affari*, in front of the

stock exchange, many assume that the eleven-meter tall sculpture refers to the economic crisis affecting Europe – the South in particular – from 2008 onwards. Yet one can make at least two other readings of Cattelan’s work. It can be seen as symbolising the reaction of the “common people” against the finance sector, its abuses, and how it was showered with public funds during the Euro crisis. Yet the sculpture faces away from the stock exchange, not towards it. Thus it could also represent the dealers who work there, the interests they represent, and what they may mean to say to the citizens crossing the square: *Fuck you*.

Initially, the statue was supposed to stay in *Piazza Affari* for just a couple of weeks. Cattelan decided to donate it to the city providing that it graced the square for the next forty years — another instance of an artistic *munus* of refusal with the potential for fostering a sense of community. Nancy Spector has pointed out that the work is the culmination of Cattelan’s “concept of a civic monument that refuses to commemorate or coalesce around culturally sanctioned ideologies” (Spector, 2011:59). After much controversy, the local government decided to keep it there. Cattelan’s monumental piece can hardly be ignored. The sculpture celebrates a gesture of stark yet

ambiguous refusal. It invites walking round it in either appreciation or rejection. Its imposing presence is a reminder of the continuing relevance of immediacy; of the substantial difference between ‘the real thing’ and an image on a screen; of the physicality required to reclaim public space from the relentlessly insatiable markets; of our relationship with the places we inhabit. Given its semantic openness, each passerby is challenged to make sense of the monument. It is a frozen movement but one that gets people to gather round, question things, and act.

In October 2012, to celebrate the donation, *Piazza Affari* was turned into a ballroom with a band (Orchestra Manolo) playing for hours, with impromptu dancers. The entire city of Milan was invited with free admission. There was plenty of street food, and people danced until midnight around Cattelan’s marble *L.O.V.E.* Dancing to the music of refusal, social links are performed and perhaps re-imagined. At midnight, once the music had ended in front of the *Palazzo Mezzanotte*, the dancers could carry on chatting. A work of art brought them together in harmonic refusal. It was then up to them to continue the conversation and to keep moving on the basis of an incipient affirmation.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

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Paradise Lost: Explaining Populism as a Response to the Fragmentary Nature of Time, Space, and the Rapid Pace of Technological Advancement

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary societies and technologies are evolving at an ever-swifter pace. Advances in the field of Augmented Reality (AR) and in Computer Science at large have led to games that let us immerse ourselves in worlds stuffed with zombies, robots, or pokémon critters. Globalization is making the world ever more interconnected, and the development of diverse social media platforms is changing the way people engage with politics and culture in their daily lives. Time and space have arguably never been more liquid, fragmentary, and compressed. Against this host of developments, Postmodern ideas on the fragmentation of time and space, the rupture in personal and national identity narratives, as well as the concept of «utopia,» can provide theoretical tools, shedding light on how various agents react to the rapid pace of technological change (such as Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and digitalization), and subsequent alterations in Man's perception of time and space.

This paper reconstructs the key tenets of Postmodern thinking on cultural phenomena, showing how the changing experience of time and space (induced by globalization, and technological advances) bear on the recent successes of populist parties in Europe and beyond. Furthermore, the paper places populists' narrative of and nostalgic mourning for an ideal past in a longer continuum of utopian and dystopian thinking. This is then interpreted as an attempt to build a vision of a homeostatic space that, once conceptualized as a rhetorical tool, serves to forge bonds among '(good) people'.

Keywords: european politics, technological development, populism, utopia, postmodernism.

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INTRODUCTION

Contemporary societies and technologies are evolving at an ever-swifter pace: advances in the field of Augmented Reality (AR) and in Computer Science at large have led to games that let us immerse ourselves in worlds plagued by zombies, robots, and *pokémons*. Globalization is making the world ever more interconnected, and the development of diverse social media platforms is changing the way people engage with politics and culture in their daily lives.

Throughout history, the gathering pace of technological development and growing global integration, have affected human societies in various ways. To give a few examples, the process of modernization¹ can drive a shift from traditional to secular-rational values, and thus facilitate the establishment of democratic political cultures (Inglehart and Welzel, 2009). Likewise, globalization² and advances in ICT (e.g., smart phones, laptops, desktop computers) can influence how we experience time and space. Thus the fact that two people can have a real-time video chat even though, say, one lives in San Francisco (US) and the other in Maastricht (Holland) cuts the ‘distance’ between the two parties. Changes in our perception of time and space may show up later in different spheres of political and cultural life.³

1 In its understanding of ‘modernization,’ the paper uses the following definition from Inglehart and Welzel (2009: 34): “Modernization is a syndrome of social changes linked to industrialization. Once set in motion, it tends to penetrate all aspects of life, bringing occupational specialization, urbanization, rising educational levels, rising life expectancy, and economic growth”.

2 The paper understands globalization in the following way: “A trans-planetary process involving increasing liquidity and growing multi-directional flows as well as the structures they encounter and create” (Ritzer, 2011:2).

3 This paper assumes that globalization and subsequent technological developments, such as the developments in the field of ICT, induce changes in diverse fields of human activity. It should be noted, however, that there are also authors who are more ‘cautious’ about the impact of these developments on our perception of time and space. See Kaufmann (2002/2016), especially Chapter 1, for an insightful summary of some critical voices on globalization and ICTs’ influence on our perception of time and space.

In his philosophy of Postmodernism, David Harvey (1990: 240) coins the term “time-space compression” to describe the effect of processes which “so revolutionize the objective qualities of space and time that we are forced to alter, sometimes in radical ways, how we represent the world to ourselves”. We can think of globalization, ICT advances and the recent digital transformation⁴ as processes that “revolutionize the objective qualities of space and time,” given that they may render our experience of them fleeting and fragmentary.⁵

It might be easier to visualize these changes in our perception of time and space (triggered by globalization and technological transformations such as digitalization) by drawing on George Ritzer’s (2011) description of (I) solid epochs, and (II) liquid epochs.

(I) Solid epochs are those predating today’s globalization. They are characterized by a “solidity” of people, things, information, and places (Ritzer, 2011). “Solidity” describes worlds in which “barriers exist and are erected to prevent the free movement of all sorts of things” (Ritzer, 2011: 5). In other words, “solid” worlds are ‘fixed’ to a single geographical place, while the movement of time in these worlds is slow, as is the overall mobility of people, things, and information. The Nation-State is a good example of a political entity that constructs barriers restricting mobility, and remains, as a result, remain ‘frozen’ in time and space. Ritzer observes that Nation-States exude a sense of ‘fixity’ common for “solid,” pre-globalization epochs because they hinder the easy flow of information, people, places, and things.

(II) Liquid epochs are shaped by globalization, and they facilitate the mobility of people, things,

4 By “digital transformation,” the paper primarily refers to the increased use of digital technologies, including social media, online games, and mobile phones, in diverse areas of human activity.

5 The following binary pairs can add more clarity to the paper’s understanding of “ephemeral” and “fragmentary”: ephemeral-permanent, ephemeral-ceaseless; fragmentary-whole, fragmentary-unbroken.

information, and places (Ritzer, 2011: 6). Liquid phenomena, even epochs, are fast-moving and hard to control. Ritzer exemplifies this by pointing to the borderless nature of interaction on social media networks, such as Facebook and Twitter. The key ideas behind Ritzer's notion of liquid phenomena are also encapsulated in what Vincent Kaufmann (2002/2016: 12) refers to as the "fluidification of society," by which he means the "growth of mobility," and the increasing speed of "the movement of goods, information and ideas". Ritzer and Kaufmann's ideas essentially stem from the notion of "liquid modernity," introduced by Zygmunt Bauman in his seminal piece *Liquid Modernity* (2000). Bauman uses the term "liquid modernity" to describe an era characterized by intense disintegration of time and space, in which both become highly elusive. It is an era in which those who are "the most elusive, those free to move without notice" are the ones who rule the roost (Bauman, 2000: 120).

Bearing in mind this distinction between solid and liquid epochs, social and political entities can respond to the processes that "revolutionize the objective qualities of space and time" (e.g., the transition from solid to liquid epochs; globalization, and technological developments), in different ways. They can either adjust to these processes and changes, or they can reject them.

To put this into perspective; according to Ritzer (2011: 4), although the contemporary world is increasingly fluid, it is often the case that demands "for new forms of solidity are the result of increased fluidity". These 'demands for solidity' occur when the symbolic authority of personal and collective national identity narratives (often tied to the spatio-temporal entity of a 'solid' Nation-State) start to diminish. In Harvey's interpretation, the fragmentation of time and space (which both become transitory and diffuse) can disrupt the continuity of personal and group identity narratives. This disruption, in turn, can trigger nationalistic and authoritarian sentiments (i.e., demands for "new forms of solidity").

Besides the loss of stability and continuity in personal and group identity narratives, another reason for new 'demands for solidity' is the greater complexity of life in today's modern, globalized world. This complexity, according to Christopher Bollas (2018: 69), splits the global community into "individuals of wealth, power and influence, who operate empires derived from the increasing use of high-end technology" (those who are "at home with globalization"), and the rest, where the "complexity of modern globalized living has gone beyond the capacity of most people to comprehend it", and who have been unable to identify with the high-tech universe of modernity (Christopher Bollas, 2018: 70). Bollas identifies this split as a trigger for authoritarian, nationalistic sentiments.

Today, the global political playground has seen a revival of nationalistic and authoritarian feelings in the form of populism. Populist political parties and politicians have made themselves felt, and have been enjoying increasing electoral success. To illustrate, in Eastern Europe, populist radical right parties such as *Fidesz* (Hungarian Civic Alliance) and the Polish *Prawo i Sprawiedliwość* (Law and Justice, PiS) have either gained or consolidated government positions (Rensmann, 2017). The 2008 financial crisis has aided the success of "left-wing, anti-austerity" populist parties in Greece (*Syriza* — Coalition of the Radical Left) and Spain (*Podemos*) (Mudde, 2016: 25). The Western European political scene has seen right-wing populist parties, such as France's *Front National* (National Front, FN), the Dutch *Partij Voor de Vrijheid* (Party for Freedom, PVV), and the German *Alternative für Deutschland* (Alternative for Germany, AfD) challenge "mainstream political competitors" and the "very framework of existing constitutional liberal democracies" (Rensmann, 2017: 1). Studies on populism also treat the election of Donald Trump as the 45th president of the United States and the Brexit referendum as expressions of populism (Bollas 2018; Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2018).

Apart from their nationalistic and authoritarian sentiments — as seen, for instance in *Front National's* promise to "return France to the monocultural glory of

its past” in response to mass immigration and growing unemployment (Mudde, 2016: 26) — populist parties and politicians are often characterized by an anti-modernity, anti-pluralism, and anti-cosmopolitan stance. At the same time, they regularly appeal to almost-utopian ‘the good old days’ of a pre-globalized past (e.g., Trump’s endless pledges to “make America great again”), that are lost because of both the transitory nature of modern time and space, and the diminishing symbolic authority of local geographic spaces, and the political entity of the Nation-State. In their rhetoric, populist parties frequently operationalize narratives based on an over-arching idea of a common national identity that connects a homogenous ‘(good) people’.

This paper delves deeper into the links between: globalization; ICTs and digital technology; technologies’ impact on perceptions of time and space; populism. It draws on Ritzer’s, Kaufmann’s and Bauman’s insights into liquid and solid epochs to consider why populist parties have recently enjoyed political success. Components of this analysis include: (1) the scope for a nationalistic, authoritarian backlash; (2) the changing experience of time and space; (3) globalization as a trigger for such changes; (4) the advance of ICTs and digital technologies. The paper also discusses populists’ rhetorical use of the notion of a ‘lost’, almost-utopian ‘glorious past’ and a ‘solid’ Nation-State to fuel their electoral success.

The component parts of the paper’s central argument are numbered below for the sake of clarity. They are:

- (I) that the sheer speed of recent technological advances changes how we experience time and space, rendering both of them ever more liquid, fleeting, and fragmentary. This notion is used as the backbone for the paper’s theoretical framework;
- (II) that time/space fragmentation rips the fabric of national identity narratives. This in turn leads to loss of faith in the notion of a single, coherent, ‘solid’ national identity. Populist parties respond by trying to resurrect the idea of a shared past;

- (III) that the ‘shared past’ enshrines a given spatio-temporal configuration⁶ and is utopian in nature, letting populists use it as a rhetorical tool to marshal support, and:

- (IIIa) helping them appeal to voters by evoking nostalgia;

- (IIIb) employ a binary utopian-dystopian logic that passes off the past as utopian and the present as dystopian, thus creating two binary pairs: utopia-dystopia; past-present;

- (IV) The rhetoric function of aforesaid utopian spatio-temporal configuration fuels populist parties’ success.

Political and Social Sciences literature on the dynamics of populist parties has paid little heed to theories in the Cultural Studies and Humanities fields. Instead, scholarly work on populism has been confined to identifying key actors, party politics, mapping the electoral success of populist parties, characterizing the electorate, and articulating the main features of such parties’ ideology. Yet there has been scant research on the cultural undercurrents fuelling populist parties’ success. A recent exception is Lars Rensmann’s (2017: 124) attempt to argue for a “cultural turn” in studies of contemporary populist politics, in which he uses an interdisciplinary theoretical lens drawing on Political Sociology, Political Psychology, and Media Studies to analyze the contemporary cultural context facilitating the electoral success of populist parties.

This paper draws on insights from Cultural Studies and Political Sciences to build an interdisciplinary theoretical framework to explain the recent electoral success of populist parties in Europe and elsewhere. This framework is built on: a collection of secondary literature covering Postmodernism; Game Studies;

⁶ By “time-space configuration(s)” this paper understands the following: (I) configuration denotes “an arrangement of parts or elements in a particular form, figure or combination” (Oxford English Dictionary [OED], n.d.); (II) “time-space configuration” describes an arrangement of specific temporal and spatial elements in a particular configuration.

AR and digital technologies' ability to alter our perceptions of time and space; Utopian Studies; the functional aspects of the concept of Utopia in the field of rhetoric; insights from the Psychology of Nostalgia. The following sections detail the relevance of these fields to the paper's theoretical framework. Unlike recent studies on populism, the paper takes the changing experience of time and space (from a Postmodernist perspective on cultural phenomena) as a key variable in explaining populist parties' success.

A Postmodernist perspective has been adopted (with time/space experience as a key variable) given its scope for taking a different approach for analyzing how populist parties' build and revive identity narratives. We posit that the rhetoric exploiting these narratives largely explains populist parties' recent electoral wins. There is a great deal of literature on the roles played by nationalist identity-construction in populist politics. Yet scant consideration is given to either (1) changing perceptions of time/space, or (2) time/space compression. Yet, as we shall argue, both constitute a key variable in explaining the formation of collective identities and the rhetorical use made of an imagined utopian past built upon them. The paper ends by drawing together the strands to highlight the links between globalization, technological changes, and populism.

The paper is structured as follows. The next section starts by exploring some key ideas from the philosophy of Postmodernism, such as time-space compression and meta-narratives. It then pairs these ideas with insights on the national identity narratives opened up by technological transformations and globalization. The section ends by seeing how populists appeal to a 'solid,' shared past. The second section focuses on 'Utopia' and its rhetorical function. The overall theoretical framework is applied at this juncture, using further examples from populist politics. Each of the sections starts with a detailed description of its structure to give an overview of the corresponding sub-sections. The conclusions reflect on theoretical and/or methodological issues and the paper's limitations.

THE DISINTEGRATION OF TIME AND SPACE, AND A "QUEST FOR SECURITY" IN THE WAKE OF EPHEMERALITY

Two ideas from the philosophy of Postmodernism are central to this paper's analysis of populism. The first concerns the tension between the singularity and plurality of truth and meaning as reflected in Jean-François Lyotard's notion of meta-narratives, and articulated in his seminal work *The Postmodern Condition* (1979). The second centers on the notion of time-space compression as developed by David Harvey in his book *The Condition of Postmodernity* (1990).

This section begins with a discussion of meta-narratives, focusing, in particular, on their application to time and space. The discussion then takes a slightly different direction and re-constructs the key tenets of time-space compression as applied to thinking on globalization and recent technological transformations. The section ends with a discussion on how these ideas bear on the recent surge of negativist sentiments (e.g., anti-modernity, anti-pluralist, anti-cosmopolitan) and the appeal to a common past ('the good old days') so commonly resorted to by populist parties.

The notion of meta-narratives in the context of national identity politics

To begin, the tension between singularity and plurality is a *leitmotif* of Postmodern thinking on culture and arises from different ways of seeing truth and meaning. While 'a singular approach' to truth and meaning takes a one-dimensional stance, stressing their universality, 'the pluralistic approach' (characterizing Postmodernism) stresses their multi-dimensional, subjective nature, and thus takes a relativist stance.

The antagonism between these two approaches to meaning and truth is reflected in Lyotard's notion of meta-narratives. Meta-narratives, or grand narratives⁷,

⁷ Following Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition*, this paper uses the terms "meta-narratives" and "grand narratives" interchangeably.

are linked to ‘the singular approach’ to meaning and truth. These narratives can be seen as “stories about the world that strive to sum it all up in one account” (Lyotard, 2004: 355). In other words, meta-narratives seek to ‘fit’ everything into a single narrative frame, adopting a Procrustean approach to the bits and pieces of information encountered to bed them down in their narrative schemes, leaving little room for alternative interpretations.

This way of processing and organizing information, as reflected in the notion of meta-narratives, possesses takes on ‘totalizing’ shades in the view of most Postmodern thinkers. In *Postmodernism or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991), Fredric Jameson illustrates this view and emphasizes the ‘totalizing’ nature of meta-narratives by writing that they “obliterate difference” and ultimately create “massive homogeneity” (Section I).

To give an example, in line with Postmodern reasoning, grand philosophical narratives, such as Marxism, have a “totalizing dynamic” that renders the individual’s identity increasingly trivial *vis-à-vis* the ‘authority’ of their schemes (Jameson, 1991, Section I). This “totalizing dynamic” is manifest as the individual becomes incorporated into a narrative framework that processes him/her according to its own rules. In the case of Marxism, this translates into screening and categorizing individuals based on their economic status and class, which, in turn, allows for the construction of two antagonistic camps: ‘The Proletariat’ and ‘The Bourgeoisie’.

A similar dynamic is present in meta-narratives of cultural identities, or narratives of a collective past, associated with nationalistic ideologies based upon recognition of a homogenous *Volk* linked to a particular time/place and enduring until the present. Narratives of a collective past—“national imaginings”—possess a sense of continuity, thus becoming transnational and ‘transhistorical’ (Anderson, 1991: 50). Such national-identity narratives are a common ideational component of populist parties. For example, the German AfD claims to act on behalf of (ordinary) German citizens and

to fight for the sovereignty of the German Nation-State (Caiani and Kröll, 2017). Similarly, the Italian far-right political party *Forza Nuova* (New Force, FN) presents itself as the defender of the Italian people, displaying a “nationalist conception of the people” when it describes it as “the totality of subjects living in the [Italian] homeland” (Caiani and Kröll, 2017: 347).

In sum, the central idea of this section is that Postmodern thinkers revolt against the totalizing nature of meta-narratives. Under a ‘Postmodern perspective,’ for example, a person born in Italy is not necessarily only identified as ‘an Italian’ but can have multiple identities; similarly, the land area of Italy can be identified as being both “Italy,” and as “Europe”. By allowing the co-existence of multiple meanings, Postmodernists essentially destabilize ‘fixed’ or singular meanings.

The meta-narrative of a common past as a spatio-temporal configuration infused with meaning and value

The tension between singularity and plurality, as well as the Postmodern destabilization of a ‘fixed’ meaning helps explain the transformations in our perception of time and space. These perceptual changes stem from globalization and the giant strides made by technology. These in turn reveal the dynamics at work in the cultural and political spheres.

Postmodern insights on meta-narratives, as well as the underlying tension between singularity and plurality can be applied to time and space perceptions. We conceptualize these phenomena and the forms they take as *constructs* shaped by specific social, political, and cultural contexts (Dickens and Fontana, 2002). As cultural constructs, different space/time configurations are imbued with the meanings and values, and shaped by contexts. At the same time, these time-space configurations shape the identity narratives found in their given social, political, and cultural contexts.

To put this into perspective, as cultural constructs, different time/space configurations can acquire different meanings and values for different groups

of individuals. According to Pierre Bourdieu, the meanings and values of different social groups (e.g., social classes and sub-cultures), and different individuals are unendingly projected onto specific spatio-temporal configurations (Bourdieu, as cited in Harvey, 1990). This process of value/meaning assignation, and the subsequent act of recognizing these meanings and values by a given group lets it achieve “social and logical integration” (Bourdieu, as cited in Harvey, 1990: 215).

The collective practice of attributing values and meanings to different spatio-temporal configurations can lead to myth-building. These myths — such as that of “A Thousand-year-old-Austria” (Wodak, 2009: 194) — can be equated with the Postmodern notion of meta-narratives. Here, both the temporal and spatial elements becomes ‘fixed’ as it were within a given configuration, and in the process acquire a meaning and/or value binding them together in a compact whole.

At the same time, the myths stemming from a given spatio-temporal configuration, and the values and meanings imbuing its symbolic matrix foster “the identity of a place — its social structure, its political character” and its “local culture” (Massey, 1994: 120). The spatio-temporal configuration of Saint-Petersburg, Russia, in the time of Peter the Great shows how myths linked to a given spatio-temporal configuration influence the identity of place. After its foundation in 1703, the city became associated with diverse cultural myths that later influenced the identity of its local culture. The city’s foundation had apocalyptic connotations because its role as the new capital was seen as a break with Russian medieval tradition. Yet at the same time, it enshrined hopes that Russia would become part of ‘modern’ Europe (Wachtel and Vinitzky, 2009). Today, Saint-Petersburg is still seen as Russia’s European Capital, and this image of the city is a recurring motif in narratives on Russia’s position *vis-à-vis* Europe.

Two things are given “pre-eminent importance and positive connotations” in the construction of a collective past in modern Austria. One of them is the

Hapsburg monarchy, the other is the Independence Treaty of 1955 (Wodak *et al.*, 2009: 194). According to Wodak *et al.*’s study (2009: 194), Austrian politicians are laying more stress on spatio-temporal configurations of a national past, suggesting that the cultural myth and idea of “A Thousand-year-old Austria” is firmly embedded in the national consciousness. Other periods of Austrian history are fairly neglected when it comes to politicians’ speeches to raise national awareness.

Similar myths of collective pasts allow radical right-wing populist parties to operationalize “*political imaginaries* and different traditions,” and evoke “different nationalist pasts in the form of *identity narratives*,” to problematize diverse issues in contemporary politics, such as immigration or unemployment (Wodak, 2013: 26, emphasis in the original).

All in all, the link between a given geographical space and slice of time can become a national meta-narrative or myth that is endlessly repeated and imbued with culture-specific meanings and values. These myths also help build identities associated with a particular place, as well as its social and/or political character. Thus a ‘solid’ time-space configuration, such as that of “A Thousand-year-old Austria,” can play a central role in national-identity narratives that are then incorporated in the political rhetoric of today’s populist parties.

Time-space compression, the dismantling of time-space configurations, and the loss of continuity

The fixation between spatio-temporal configurations and their meaning and value (as reflected in the notion of meta-narratives and, later on, in myths of national identities) have become destabilized. According to David Harvey’s theory of Postmodernism, this destabilization stems from ICTs and digital technologies, which “revolutionize the objective qualities of space and time” and result in time-space compression.

Globalization can be seen as a narrative, or story, of “temporal progression” and “spatial expansion” (Boym, 2001: 32), as it ‘shrinks’ the distance between

places. Consequently, “solid” realities become increasingly “liquid” (Ritzer, 2011: 5) as the transfer of information, cultural goods, and people flow more freely across borders. Rapid technological transformations (the soaring use of online chats, video conferences, and so on) make communication ever faster and more efficient. These advances in communication compress our experience of time and space and, in so doing can ‘unfix’ our attachment to local communities.

Recent developments in digital and computer technologies (such as, the introduction of Augmented Reality (AR) settings in mobile games and similar platforms) show how novel technological developments fragment our experience of time and space, as understood in ‘Postmodern terms’.

The AR mobile game *Pokémon Go*, developed by Niantic in 2016, lets players simultaneously acquire a sense of presence in several spatio-temporal dimensions: the immediate surroundings of the city streets and the virtual simulation of these streets on their smart-phones. This virtual setting is inhabited by creatures called *pokémon*. Through the virtual simulation of our immediate surroundings, *Pokémon Go* extends players’ spatial experience, and remaps “our lived space into places of play” (Hanson, 2018: 195). In a similar fashion, the visual novel video game *Steins Gate*, developed by 5pb and Nitroplus, lets players enter a multi-verse in which several time-space configurations co-exist. The players follow the protagonist Okabe Rintarō⁸ as he travels through time and space and manipulates events in different spatio-temporal configurations.

According to Hanson (2018: 196), *Pokémon Go*, *Steins Gate* and similar games, change our experience of time and space. This is because the game gives players ways to manipulate time and space by pausing, saving, deleting saved data, and replaying specific game sequences. Thus the games have “the capacity to

alter the lived experiences of players, transforming the spaces and times that they inhabit”. With these examples in mind, the changes in the way we engage with the real world via digital technology can break our attachment to our immediate, local surroundings as we spend ever more time in virtual spaces, instead of in the world around us. The same logic can be applied to online social networks, as we may spend more time chatting to someone on the other side of the world and engage less with the locals.

Similarly, the dynamic exchange of cultural goods makes our everyday lives increasingly transcultural (ranging from Libby’s famous *pumpkin pie mix* around the world to the incorporation of elements of Russian culture and language into Narita Ryōgo’s Japanese light novel series *Durarara!* (2004-2014)). As a result, our sense of spatio-temporal distance across the globe diminishes. As Doreen Massey (1994: 120) observes, the global and the local are becoming increasingly intertwined: “The global is in the local in the very process of the formation of the local”. Our experience of time and space, in short, is becoming increasingly ‘compressed’.

Harvey (1990: 284) notes that time-space compression can have a “disorienting and disruptive impact” on how we experience these dimensions. In his view, this “disorientation” stems from a diminishing sense of “absolute space” and the predominance of experiencing space as a fragmentary phenomenon, or as “relative space”. In other words, “relative space” begins replacing “absolute space”. In turn, this substitution challenges the “power,” or symbolic value, embedded in ‘solid’ spatio-temporal categories and their associated meta-narratives as it creates a ‘dismantling effect’ in which temporal and spatial elements of a given configuration become ‘unfixed’ (Harvey, 1990: 257). The ‘dismantling’ of spatio-temporal configurations therefore weakens the symbolic power and/or authority of these configurations (which, one should recall, are built through collective practices). Thus, time-space compression renders the individual incapable of linking “signifiers together meaningfully” and he

8 Japanese names are written in their proper order, with family name preceding given name.

or she subsequently loses “a sense of temporal continuity,” and is “condemned to experience a world as a series of unrelated presents in time” (Dickens and Fontana, 2002, pp. 393-394). Time-space compression ends up destabilizing a fixed identity linked with a specific spatio-temporal configuration.

In Massey’s view, time-space compression threatens personal identities by undermining the stability individuals derive from focusing on a single spatio-temporal category (Massey, 1994: 123). Consequently, the time/space compression in tandem with globalization and technological advances may drive individuals to build singular spatio-temporal dimensions serving as “a source of authenticity and stability” (cf. Ritzer’s demands “for new forms of stability”) (Massey, 1994: 122). This recourse is seen in populists’ pledges to recover lost pasts and traditions. For example, the Italian *Forza Nuova* stated that it works for “the regeneration of the people’s traditions” (Caiani and Kröll, 2017: 346).

In short, globalization and recent strides in technology (such as AR video games) can fragment our experience of time, and diminish our sense of belonging to a local community. These processes can destabilize ‘solid’ spatio-temporal configurations (such as the Nation-State), leading individuals to feel disoriented, insecure, and bereft of their identities as the world ‘liquefies’ around them. Such feelings can lead to demands for the rebuilding of a stable, ‘solid’ spatio-temporal configuration, such as the Nation-State.

A present-day “quest for security”

It is within this dialectic of ephemerality (induced by globalization and the subsequent recourse to a common past as a source of stability) that nationalistic sentiments and a growing re-affirmation of the local find its roots. This dialectic is found in populist parties across the political spectrum. In her inspiring study, *The Future of Nostalgia* (2008: 38), Svetlana Boym writes that the “rapid pace of industrialization and modernization increased the intensity of people’s longing for the slower rhythms of the past, for continuity, social cohesion, and tradition”.

In other words, the increasingly ephemeral nature of time and space both boosts the need to ‘re-establish’ a static spatio-temporal configuration bounded by precise borders, such as those offered by a clearly-defined idea of a nation.

Harvey (1990: 306) observes that the rise of nationalism and the subsequent revitalization of the past are tantamount to a “quest for the security that place always offers in the midst of all the shifting that flexible accumulation implies”. The present fragmentation and multiplication of virtual time-space versus ‘real’ time-space makes people seek re-affirmation of a nation’s borders. This is a counter-reaction to the Postmodern destabilization of ‘traditional’ spatio-temporal categories and the sense of continuity they provide: “on the one side there are the dominant groups who evolve in a mobile space [i.e., ‘the cosmopolitan elite’], and on the other are the excluded who evolve in a fixed space [i.e., ‘the people’], chained to localism through circumstances” (Kaufmann, 2002/2016: 14). Against this background, the anti-globalization, anti-pluralistic, and anti-modernization sentiments expressed by diverse populist parties stem from the changes induced by globalization and time-space compression.

To wrap up, this section’s three main propositions were: (I) spatio-temporal configurations can be imbued with the meanings and values of various groups of individuals, consequently acquiring the role of a perpetual meta-narrative which helps build group identity; (II) the ephemeral nature of Postmodernity can destabilize the sense of a continuous identity associated with a specific spatio-temporal configuration; (III) the nationalistic, authoritarian, negative sentiments that characterize populists’ ideological stance can be seen as a counter-reaction to the ephemeral nature of Postmodernity, manifesting themselves in populists’ endless appeal to a common past.

REVIVING LOST UTOPIAS

Bearing the previous section’s three central assumptions in mind, this section develops the argument that

populism's tendency to revive the past (appealing to a meta-narrative of a common cultural identity) has utopian connotations. This construct of a 'utopian past' as a single, coherent spatio-temporal configuration (versus ephemeral Postmodernity) is a strong tool for mobilizing the masses. It fosters support for populist parties by triggering nostalgia and using a binary utopian-dystopian logic.

This section begins with a brief discussion of the concept of "utopia" and focuses on utopias' ability to trigger reflection on possible or alternative worlds. Within the theoretical framework of this paper, we discuss how dissatisfaction with the ephemeral nature of Postmodernity undermines coherent identities. The disorientation identified by Harvey triggers populists' nostalgic appeal to the past. The section ends with a discussion of the rhetorical power of such utopian constructs.

National past as a utopian meta-narrative

According to Gregory Claeys (2011: 9), the concept of utopia in every age is "some variation on an ideal past, and an ideal future," and the relationship between the two and the present. The term was initially coined by Thomas More who used it as the title of his book *Utopia* (1516/2014) as the name of an unknown, isolated island in the story. In the fullness of time, the term came to take on various meanings. It can denote "imaginary, paradisaical places," or a specific narrative associated with utopian literature (Vieira, 2010: 4). Etymologically, utopia is "a place which is a non-place, simultaneously constituted by a movement of affirmation and denial" (Vieira, 2010: 4). This contradictory dynamic of "affirmation and denial" is simultaneously manifested in the (I) *affirmation* of the idea of a utopian ideal, and (II) *denial* of its 'actual,' physical existence.

The concept of utopia often takes a mythical or imaginary hue. The ancient Greek myth of The Golden Age is an example of a constructed, utopian spatio-temporal configuration which serves as a container of all those aspects of life that the Greeks considered to be ideal (Claeys, 2011). At the same time, such myths can be seen as meta-narratives that help build a continuous

cultural identity for a given community. They reflect meanings and values that are collectively projected on other spatio-temporal configurations

The notion of utopia is essentially founded on the consideration of "alternative solutions to reality" (Vieira, 2010: 5). It contains the image of 'the good place' (Vieira, 2010: 6) and it reflects "visions of improvement" (Claeys, 2011: 12). Within this context, utopia can also be seen as a "reaction to an undesirable present and an aspiration to overcome all difficulties by the imagination of possible alternatives"⁹ (Vieira, 2010: 7). These alternatives can also result from remembrance: discontent with the present can trigger a revitalization of the past, either a fictional one, or a real one. John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667), an account of the angelic rebellion, for example, can be seen as a narrative appealing to a lost, utopian place. The narrative conceptualizes Paradise as an ideal, utopian realm, and nostalgically mourns for its loss after Adam and Eve's expulsion from Eden — an act which created a 'dystopian' present (Claeys, 2011).

The aforementioned discontent with the present lets populists revitalize the construct of an ideal past as an answer to an imperfect present. The previous section has already discussed how globalization and technological progress are rendering time/space ephemeral, compressing time/space, and creating disorientation by supplanting "absolute space" with relative space" (Harvey, 1990: 284). Time-space compression thus "threatens" individual and collective identities. This occurs because the phenomenon may fracture a sense of stability based on a single, coherent spatio-temporal configuration that functions as "a source of authenticity" (Massey, 1994: 123). It is precisely this fracture in the continuity of traditional, 'fixed' identities that is leading populist parties to revive the notion of a homogenous one based on a common meta-narrative of a utopian past.

⁹ This paper will primarily use "utopia" as a concept denoting "imaginary, paradisaical places," as well as for its propensity to trigger reflection on "possible alternatives". Its literary functions are left aside.

The nostalgic appeal of shared pasts

In her influential study on nostalgia, Boym (2001: 30) writes the following:

Modern nostalgia is mourning for the impossibility of mythical return, for the loss of an enchanted world with clear borders and values; it could be a secular expression of a spiritual longing, nostalgia for an absolute, a home that is both physical and spiritual, the endemic unity of time and space before entry into history.

Her description of nostalgia as “a mourning for the impossibility of mythical return, for the loss of an enchanted world with clear borders and values, and for the “endemic unity of time and space,” parallels Postmodern ideas of a loss of the continuity of meta-narratives of a national past, as well as the disintegration of the unity of time and space.

This aspect of nostalgia — the mourning for the loss of “clear borders and values” — is also discussed by Clay Routledge (2015: 34). He writes that “self-discontinuity,” or “a sense of disruption or disjointedness between one’s past and present self,” triggers nostalgic sentiments, thus facilitating populists’ appeal to ‘the good old days’. Nostalgia essentially occurs when individuals or groups attempt to “regain a sense of identity and continuity through recognizing and redefining a shared past” (Milligan, 2003: 381). Nostalgic sentiments inspired by the revitalization of the past contribute to people’s “efforts to meet belongingness needs” which are disturbed by the liquidity and ephemerality of globalization (Routledge, 2015: 51).

These nostalgic sentiments, which echo the idea of mourning for a ‘paradise lost,’ are discussed in a number of recent studies on populism.

In his analysis of nationalism, populism, and the sociological factors that led to Brexit, Craig Calhoun (2017: 57) writes that the Brexit vote was not only a vote against the EU but also a vote for “the good old days,” motivated by discontent with Britain’s multicultural, globalized British present. Calhoun describes the Brexit

vote as an expression of English nationalism that yearns “for Britain to be Great again” and a renewal of its decades-old identity. The Brexit vote essentially channeled “frustration, rage, resentment, and insult — as well as a hope that a vanishing way of life could be saved and a proud national identity celebrated” (Calhoun, 2017: 58).

A comparable example comes from Poland. Szymon Wróbel (2011: 445) observes that Polish populism is characterized by “disappointment” over recent socio-political transformations, such as “democratization, Europeanization, and *globalization*” (emphasis added). In his study on populism in Eastern Europe, Juraj Buzalka (2008: 757) identifies the “politicization of the rural past” as a common trait of Polish populism and coins the term “post-peasant populism” to describe “a type of modern, populist political culture based on a non-urban social structure and imagined rurality” (Buzalka, 2008: 763). Furthermore, the rhetoric of Polish populists draws heavily on yesteryear and mobilizes support by appealing “to continuity with moral times in the past, the safeguarding of an essentially Christian tradition” (Buzalka, 2008: 757).

Forza Nuova’s earlier-mentioned claim that the political party works for “the regeneration of the people’s tradition” (Caiani and Kröll, 2017: 346), *Front National’s* promise to return France to “the monocultural glory of its past” in response to mass immigration and growing unemployment (Mudde, 2016: 26), as well as Victor Orbán’s (*Fidesz*) acquiescence in and encouragement of nostalgia for the era of Miklós Horthy (Hann, 2015: 103), Hungarian admiral and statesmen who served as Regent of the Kingdom of Hungary between the two world wars, also exemplify how populists have been revitalizing national pasts, and ‘mourning’ for the loss of ‘the good old days’.

Similarly, in his recent paper on the cultural conditions of populist politics in Europe, Lars Rensmann (2017: 125) observes that the “implicitly anti-universalistic, anti-pluralistic notion of ‘the good people’ as a homogenous identity also automatically carries

cultural weight” and “presupposes the defense of a cultural identity” against the pluralistic character of liberal-democratic societies. Under the present paper’s theoretical perspective, Rensmann’s thought can be extended into the idea that the “defense of a cultural identity” also stems from the waning symbolic power of authoritative spatio-temporal configurations linked to these cultural identities and stemming from growing detachment from local communities.

Populists’ appeal to the past can be seen through the lens of nostalgia. Under this perspective, the breakdown of time-space configurations and the loss of continuity in national identities lead to a nostalgic mourning for ‘the good old days’. At the same time, dissatisfaction with globalization allows populists’ to treat the past as a utopian construct and use it to put the present in a bad light.

The rhetorical power of utopia

The utopian dimension of populists’ appeal to a common past comes to the fore once we pair the metaphor of “imagined communities” (Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (1983)) or of *Imagined States* (Luisa del Giudice and Gerald Porter (2001)) with insights from the utopian studies discussed in the previous section.

“Imagined Communities” and “Imagined States” result from processes by which Mankind “constructs and locates itself in [...] worlds, places and territories of the mind” (Giudice and Porter, 2001: 1). These imagined communities, or States, provide “alternate and parallel possible worlds” (Giudice and Porter, 2001: 2) and, as visualizations of alternate or possible worlds, acquire a utopian hue, paralleling Vieira’s description of utopia as a concept grounded on “alternative solutions to reality”.

Creating imagined states or communities can also be seen as a process of ‘fixing’ a cultural identity to a specific point in time and space; serving as a vision of an alternative world that interlinks members of the community who are seen as belonging to

that world. The meta-narrative of a common past interlinking ‘the good people’ can thus be seen as a spatio-temporal configuration which projects an alternative solution in the wake of dissatisfaction with the present. Populists’ nostalgic appeals to meta-narratives of a ‘utopian past’ function as a rhetorical tool to mobilize the masses. This helps explain the recent electoral gains made by populist parties.

Rhetorical theory suggests that the construction of an “imagined” or “better world existing in the minds of both speaker (*rhetor*) and audience” is a strong means of persuasion (Portolano, 2012: 114). Throughout history, speakers have used the concept of utopia, based on characteristics “drawn from the audience’s collective character,” to create an empathetic link between them and their listeners (Portolano, 2012: 114). The speaker, consequently, can use this link to mobilize the audience. The utopian appeal to the past, in particular, by drawing on nostalgia, is an effective tool for eliciting strong emotional reactions (Routledge, 2015). Along these lines, the act of “restructuring,” “displaying new connections” can function as strong identity claims and inspire public enthusiasm (Van Stokkom, 2012, PART ONE: Emotion, Antagonism, and Deliberation).

Utopias’ dualistic mode of reasoning helps mobilize and inter-link members of a perceived community. According to Claeys (2011: 32), utopian discourse has always been characterized by a certain dualism of thought given that a utopia is always accompanied by a dystopia.

This dualistic approach typifying the utopian tradition becomes important once we place it within the wider frame of populist thought. Just as utopian discourse has a dualistic hue, so too does the ideological stance of populist parties in their construction of a perceived in-group and an out-group. Specifically, a central component of populist ideology is a tendency to divide people into two “homogenous and antagonistic camps, ‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corrupted elite’” (Mudde and Kaltwasser, 2017: 6). Here, “the pure people” category (linked by a common meta-narrative of a utopian past) matches the ‘utopian side’ of

the binary, “the corrupted elite” category (often characterized as ‘the globalized winners’¹⁰) (Rensmann and Miller, 2015: 15) matches the ‘dystopian side’.

Donald Trump, for instance, tends to use terms that set the stage for a binary conceptualization of “the good people” and the “the corrupted elite”: “Typical examples are ‘stupid’, ‘mess’, ‘terrible’, ‘mistakes’, ‘not good’, ‘lousy’, ‘bad’, ‘flawed’, ‘losing’, ‘failing’, ‘ineffective’, ‘loser’, ‘horrible’, ‘weakness’, ‘not strong enough’, ‘too much emotion’, ‘unsuccessful’, ‘disruptive’,” which create “a clear binary between tough, successful, hard-working winners and weak, unsuccessful, lazy losers” (Fuchs, 2018: 185). A similar dualism in thought — the binary of “anti-elitism,” or “anti-pluralist dichotomy” — is part and parcel of populist ideology on a wider scale (Rensmann, 2017: 125).

In a nutshell, populists’ appeal to a common past — ‘the good old days’ — seen through the prism of utopian studies, can be interpreted as a result of dissatisfaction with the present. Specifically, the revitalization of a single, coherent spatio-temporal configuration of the past gives ‘the people’ a sense of continuity *vis-à-vis* the ephemeral nature of time and space induced by globalization.

Meta-narratives of the common past enable populist parties to single out an identity narrative from the Postmodern chaos of the coexistence of multiple identities, and the inherently pluralistic nature of liquid, globalized epochs. Within this context, the past becomes a homeostatic, utopian realm; a ‘Paradise Lost’ that forges links among ‘the people’ and which, through its nostalgic, rhetorical appeal, fosters support for populist parties.

¹⁰ Ritzer’s (2011) insights on globalization can also be used in conjunction with populists’ dichotomies of the winners and losers of globalization. In Ritzer’s view, the elite members of any society can travel and participate in the exchange and flows of information and goods with greater ease, thus profiting from the advances made in transport and communication technology, whereas less prosperous members of society tend to be at a disadvantage and this respect.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has sought to construct an interdisciplinary theoretical lens offering a new way of looking at the recent electoral gains racked up by populist parties, such as Hungary’s *Fidesz*, France’s *Front National*, or Germany’s *Alternative für Deutschland*. In contrast to recent studies in the field of political sciences, this paper took the changing experience of time and space as a key variable to explain populists’ appeal to ‘the good old days’ and the votes this elicits.

The rapid pace of technological development and change are manifested in globalization and parallel technological transformations (such as ICT and digital technologies). These changes in our experience of time and space lead to the disintegration of authoritative spatio-temporal configurations. This in turn ruptures national identity narratives, destabilizing collective and personal identities. Populists appeal to a common, immutable national past. This links a homogenous ‘(good) people’, mends the rift, and unleashes a nostalgic, quasi-utopian mourning for a pre-modern, pre-global past. The utopian nature of this spatio-temporal construct makes it a strong rhetorical tool for boosting support for populist parties.

Although this paper has sought to provide an interdisciplinary theoretical lens for examining the recent populist surge, it only explains one aspect of populists’ recent electoral successes (albeit one largely neglected in studies on the subject). That said, this paper has not dealt with economic factors, such as the 2008 economic and financial crisis, which prominently features in the discourses of populist parties in Southern Europe. The same applies to factors falling within the Political Sciences field, for example, the influence and role of the European Union. Furthermore, the mosaic of theories and areas touched upon in this paper is a rich one and may have occasionally led us off our argumental path.

Yet setting these limitations aside, this paper extends theoretical scholarship on populism by adding a new angle, and, in doing so, crosses disciplinary boundaries between cultural and political studies. The

paper brings to the fore the effects of globalization and technological transformations on contemporary populist politics, and highlights the rhetorical power

of the concept of 'utopia,' thus offering a new explanation for populists' quest to regain 'Paradise Lost'.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

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A Critique of The Civilising Rationale: Strategies for producing marginalisation*

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ABSTRACT

The radical distinction between civilization and barbarism used in the discourse of the national states of Chile and Argentina during the second half of the XIX century, not only was used to justify the genocidal military intervention of the territories inhabited by the mapuche indigenous from the south of both countries; but also inaugurated a conflictive relationship that remains to the present. The main objective of the paper is to identify the scope of the "civilization project" initiated during the second part of the 19th century and expressed during the 20th and 21st centuries through different and broad forms of marginalization, both ethnic and -by extension- immigrant, the criminal and LGBT+ groups; in such a way that it is a historical, systematic and institutionalized process of producing marginalities, which considers various production strategies of the intimate enemy, especially from the cultural industry available in each time.

The results show how "marginal/marginalized" is produced and reproduced, through policies of death, dispossession, inclusion/exclusion, in a constant relationship from moral, criminal and neoliberal rationalities.

Keywords: civilization project, critique of moral and civilizing reason, production of the marginalities.

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INTRODUCTION

When the politician, intellectual, and former Argentine President Domingo Faustino Sarmiento wrote *Facundo o Civilización y Barbarie* in 1874, it sparked a public and political discourse of such performative power (in both semantic and in practical terms) that it played a key role in the occupation of the southern lands of the Mapuche Indians by the Nation States of Chile and Argentina. The work had a deep symbolic, cultural, and political impact: “*Facundo* is the clamour of modern culture against the feudal twilight [...] Sarmiento’s words seem to issue from the heavens in a kind of latter-day Sinai” (Ingenieros, 2000: 191). It also had great economic impact given that it suggested the inevitable: “The tropical interaction between symbolisation on the one hand and economic and linguistic production on the other [because] language and currency are measures. Language is the measure of Man’s ideas [...] while currency is the measure of objects’ value” (Shell, 1981: 14 and 16).

As a result, Sarmiento’s work sheds light on many things, including the conflictiveness seen today. This does not arise from the work’s literary nature — which is wholly ‘modernist’ — but rather because of its relationship with bourgeois ideology and practices (Rodríguez, 2003), from with the book both stems from and expresses. This helps explain why *Facundo* still echoes today. Its continued relevance mainly stems from an ability to transcend the mindset of the era — that of a utopia of ‘free subjects’ (that is, of non-barbarians) — whose supposedly libertarian ethos hid a desire to replace the workforce — the purpose actually underlying the ‘civilising project’ (del Valle, 2018b). Sarmiento’s writings betray the racial ideas underlying his work:

The development of reason follows the same rules. Savages’ skulls are all the same size and all savages think the same, which is to say that they do not think at all, they merely feel. In a state of barbarism, one can already see skull differences, and the emergence of opinions among those few individuals who begin to wonder [...] A sea of blood will be needed to put both races on an equal footing and many illustrious white men

will fall victim to the knives wielded by races pursuing their *vendetta* as they shout “Death to the filthy, cheating whites!” (Sarmiento, 1915: 195 and 260)

The foregoing is an example of the criteria that were to be used in institutional measures to reduce the native question to a merely ‘racial’ issue, and in which the ‘civilising project’ of the Nation States became part of an on-going effort to neutralise, dispossess, and criminalise Indians and thus write them off politically. Without political recognition, there could be no autonomy or emancipation because Indians were given no scope for changing their lot or negotiating in the drawing up of plans. This flagrant de-politicisation explains why the Mapuche Indians have been kept marginalised ever since the mid-20th Century.

This paper first presents a theoretical-conceptual approach to delve into how the civilising rationale¹ not only imposed a marginal status on the Mapuches but how this has lasted until today. In the process, we identify the features of the historical and systematic institutional processes that conjured up an image of Indians as the home-front foe and the special role played by the discourses of a hegemonic cultural industry in making it stick (del Valle, 2019, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c, 2017, 2016). Last, a model is proposed for analysing the discourses of this ‘civilising’ matrix, especially in fostering forms of marginalisation.

THE CIVILISING RATIONALE AND THE PRODUCTION OF A HOME-FRONT FOE AND FORMS OF MARGINALISATION BY THE CULTURAL INDUSTRY

Since the second half of the 20th Century, the cultural industry has played a key role in conveying the ideas

1 Considering the importance of the discourses present in the ‘civilising project’, in my view the notion of ‘civilising rationality’ reveals those ‘enlightened’ aims attributed by their authors in the sense that the ‘rationality’ of the ‘civilising project’ justifies the ‘irrationality’ of their practices. That is because acceptance of this contradiction opens the door to combining massacres and management, or more precisely, massacre management.

underlying the Nation State's 'civilising project'. This project has been hawked as 'truth', which after its proclamation, must be made accessible to "all intelligences, overcome public resistance to the passions and interests raised against the notion and become part of peoples' most deeply-held beliefs" (Sarmiento, 1850: 64). In this respect, it is clear that there was a need to articulate the 'civilising project' and the media of the period.

In addition, we understand the 'civilising project' as a hegemonic social, cultural, political, and media narrative whose purpose was the imposition an all-white, masculine, 'enlightened' South American ideology that automatically marginalised many groups (Indians, blacks, women, the uneducated lower classes, and so on). In a broad sense, we consider the 'civilising drive' in opposition to the natural world (Elías, 1988), in which what is seen as 'civilised' or 'barbaric' constitutes a naturalisation, fetishisation, or discrimination arising from interactions. The notion of a 'civilising project' is thus a purely social construction and in this case stemmed mainly from an elitist, aristocratic notion of society, and from hegemonic aims.

Here, one should also consider the cognitive and cultural measures used to further this project, for example, in the model used for interpretative frameworks (Adorno, 1988). In this respect, we can see two approaches at work, one resting on similarity and the other on opposition. Together, they form part of a wholly binary logic in which one part is accorded greatly inferior status.

The point of departure was Greek Philosophy, which saw all complex forms as a duality in which one natural element prevailed over another: perfection over imperfection; strength over weakness; virtue over vice [where] the subject by recognising himself also recognises the other. The urge to define the nature of 'the other' stems from the subject's need to define himself and his own limits. As a cultural process, the subject may see the creation of 'the other' as an inescapable demand, be he coloniser or a

native. The discourses created on — and for — the colonial subject did not stem merely from a desire to understand 'the other' but rather from the need for the subject to distinguish himself in hierarchical terms from 'the other'. (Adorno, 1988: 61 and 66)

In addition, the cultural industry (Yúdice and Miller, 2008; Horkheimer and Adorno, 2007; Zallo, 1988) is shaped by any body or entity whose work is oriented towards the production and reproduction of ideas and information from both the standpoints of material exchanges and the social relation of meaning. Thus the cultural industry includes the production of both fiction and non-fiction. In the case of literature, we are especially interested in its ideological content:

Literature has not always existed. The discourses that we apply today to literary works reflect a historical reality that only emerged from a given set of strict (historical) conditions. These conditions were of an ideological nature characterising 'modern' or 'bourgeois' formations in general. (Rodríguez, 2003: 5)

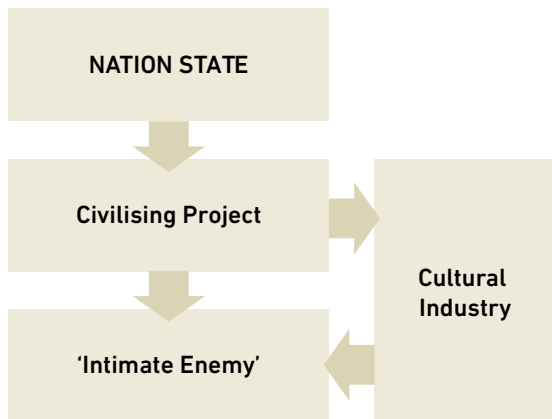
In the case of *The Press*, we are interested in its mass production, its ability to produce and distribute symbolic contents, its consumer (reader) orientation and the role it plays in ideological and social reproduction (Zallo, 1988).

One of the main modes and strategies adopted by the cultural industry is its representation of the Mapuches as the home-front foe of the Nation State and as a hurdle to the latter's civilising project. Here, a home enemy is constructed by Nation States as the 'threat from within'. In the past, the threat has been interpreted as a neighbour, a fellow-countryman, or an ally but what really counts is that he is one's 'enemy'. The fabrication of an enemy is not only a social, military, or cultural deed, it is also a political one that becomes part and parcel of a true institutional conscience that has great power to reproduce itself, allowing the Nation State to maintain an unlimited social role and to endlessly proselytise: "Modernity, like modern science, could live with everything except irrelevance and a limited, non-proselytising

social role” (Nandy, 1983: 102).

While the path taken in conjuring up this enemy has been a slow, winding one, it has reached its goal. It began with highly metaphorical, stigmatising discourses spread through the cultural industry, especially in the literature of the elite and the hegemonic Press. Stigmatisation has always been a highly effective strategy because when the coloniser states that the native is weak, he is suggesting that protection [of the kind proposed by the colonist] is needed because of the Indian’s perverse nature, base instincts, sadism, and thieving ways. This image is then used as a pretext for strong policing and harsh ‘justice’. (Memmi, 1971: 3)

Figure 1



The strategy for producing an enemy (author’s scheme).

SOME OF THE STRATEGIES USED FOR THE ‘CIVILISING PROJECT’

Within the overall strategy for producing an enemy, the ‘civilising project’ was supplemented by other radical approaches that were gradually implemented in the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries. In a nutshell, all these cases involved producing and reproducing psychological strategies for political ends. Rhetoric was to play a central role in pursuing a social strategy.

The aim was to elicit emotional reactions stemming from the interaction between a set of affective impulses and social pressures [...] to spread the structure, uses, and the prevailing social norms. In this context, rhetorical strategies served to shape, consolidate, and give cohesion to the dominant system, and were thus clearly of great practical value. (Galiñanes, 2009: 112)

The first of these strategies is the ‘Death Policy’ (Mbembe, 2011), incorporating a set of policies designed and implemented by Nation States during the second half of the 19th Century which decided who had to die in order to consolidate the ‘civilising project’. These decisions were linked to the need to exercise sovereignty and thus they reveal a constant kind of relationship that would be nuanced by the powers that be depending on the context. It was a relationship in which bureaucracy and the use of terror in the ruthless exercise of sovereignty went hand-in-hand: “Here, we can see the first syntheses between massacres and bureaucracy in an incarnation of Western rationality” (Mbembe, 2011: 36).

The second strategy combined dispossession and depoliticisation through a set of policies drawn up and put into effect by the Nation States. This involved finding ways to take the Indians’ supposedly ‘barren’ land away from them. Here, we understand this dispossession as:

A process that, through the exercise of violence and duress, permanently deprives individuals and/or communities of their acquired rights, their human dignity, lands, property, and social, economic, and cultural rights (Sánchez, 2009: 30).

Last and without prejudicing the measures described above, the most effective policy against the enemy within is to systematically portray its marginalisation, turning this into the norm. This is the case of “Criminal Law applied to the enemy” (Jakobs and Cancio, 2003), an expression that refers to a set of special or exceptional laws created or invoked against a group of persons who are seen not as citizens but as foes. The main feature of such Criminal Law it is

that is prospective rather than retrospective. In other words, it covers what might happen and is thus of a ‘preventative’ nature. That is why the sentences stemming from it are so severe and involve the suspension of due process and other constitutional guarantees.

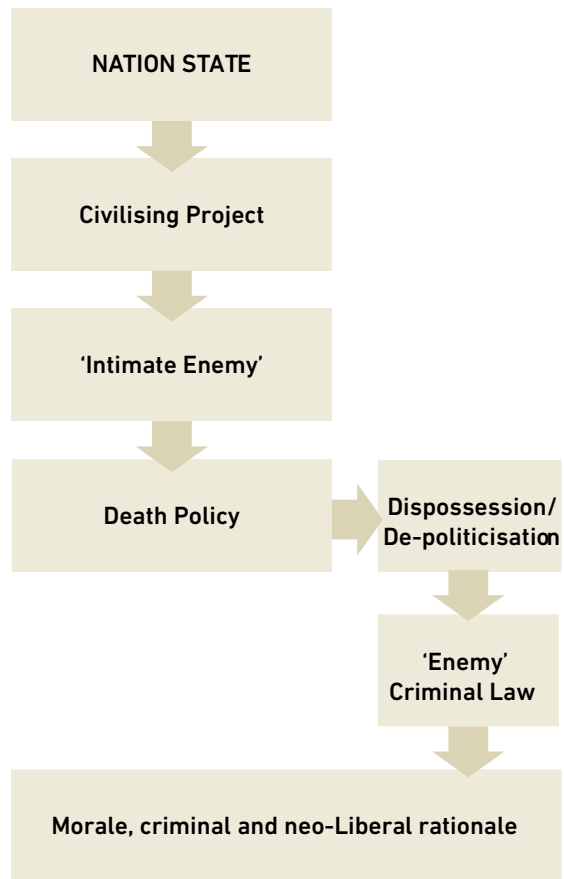
Such use of Criminal Law is tantamount to a declaration of war by the judiciary on individuals considered to pose an especially grave threat [...] and goes hand-in-hand with ruthless instrumentalisation of security measures for dealing with certain kinds of danger. In using these instruments, the State does not speak of citizens but rather threatens its enemies [...] the identification of an infractor as an enemy by the Criminal Law is neither a designation of ‘the other’ nor an identification of him as a source of danger that needs to be neutralised. Instead, it is recognition of the agent’s normative power to characterise the ‘infractor’ as perverse by demonising him. (Jakobs and Cancio, 2003: 86, 87 and 88)

A notable feature of such Law is the moment of its emergence, which is when Nation States bring it into being. This foundational instant coincides with what Derrida terms “terrible moments” because such laws are usually accompanied by “suffering, crimes, and torture” stemming from what Derrida calls the “mystic nature” of such junctures:

It is the Law that suspends Law itself. It breaks with established law to create a new body of law. This juncture, this epoché, this founding or revolutionary moment for the Law is a moment when law itself is held in abeyance. (Derrida, 1997: 92)

In a more specific setting, the production of the Indian as a foe of the Nation State is based on a moral, criminal, neo-Liberal rationale (Misse, 2018; Vieira, 2017) — in other words, on a set of supposedly rational arguments based on frames of reference as to what was considered moral, normal, and modern at the time for a given case.

Figure 2



.Various strategies for producing an enemy (Author).

THE SCOPE OF THE CIVILISING PROJECT

It is clear that what was begun in the mid-19th Century was a project that was political, economic and military in scope. In *Arjiropolis o la capital de los Estados confederados del Río de La Plata* (1850), Sarmiento laid the foundations of this project, namely “that Trade and Industry is the source of wealth for any State” and that “among the political powers of the State are those of ‘making peace and waging war’”.

This civilising rationale was also applied in the succeeding centuries, albeit with nuances. Nevertheless, the core remained the same, namely different forms

of conjuring up and neutralising an enemy by pursuing a strategy of marginalisation.

One of the most interesting aspects for this research is to grasp the systematic way in which Indians were turned into an ‘enemy within’ over time. This was achieved both through the discourse on the Nation State and through the cultural industry. The impact was not only broad and general on the relationships between the societies and cultures involved but also affected the daily lives of the natives. This is where the moral, criminal, and neo-liberal rationale sprang from (Misse, 2018, 2014, 2010). Its source was the complex interplay of certain social and cultural groups in which deep intervention of a historic, systematic, and institutionalised nature led to great self-conviction regarding the naturalness of criminal behaviour. Nevertheless, one needs to bear in mind that crime springs from a given social interaction. Hence the ethical meaning attributed to certain deeds by “moral entrepreneurs” (Becker, 2009) and power groups so that certain kinds of behaviour (but not others) can be labelled as ‘criminal’ or ‘delinquent’. The next step is then to label and punish the individuals/groups exhibiting said behaviour. That is why the meaning of crime is endlessly debated because it is criminal subjection that spawns the criminal subject.

This process has many implications. On the one hand, the criminalised subject reacts just as colonised subjects did when others identified them with nature, passion, the feminine, and with domestic, rural, and pagan spheres. The natives so typified were contrasted with the values of the colonists who were considered to enshrine: culture; reason; masculinity; public and courtly spheres; chivalry; Christianity. (Adorno, 1988: 66)

On the other hand, criminal subjection evidences a struggle for the heart and mind of the other. It betokens another kind of struggle covering the production and reproduction of the status assigned to the underdog and resistance to it through endless self-questioning by the colonised. In this process, the subject is torn between: (1) what he was and what he wanted

to become; (2) what he is now and what he is turning into. Both inflict great emotional pain and lead to self-alienation. To be fully cured of these ills, the subject needs to put an end to his alienation yet this can only be brought about by a complete end to colonisation, even during times of rebellion. (Memmi 1971, 28)

Subjection is a complex phenomenon because it both implies subordination to the powers that be and the subject’s resignation to his lowly status.

Criminal subjection refers to a social process through which negative expectations of individuals and groups become so commonplace and widely accepted that they are taken as gospel truth and as justification for said subjection. [...] The crime is reified and enshrined in the subject supposedly responsible for the stigmatised crimes. [...] There is a fundamental difference between (1) a discrediting attribute (stigma, labelling, negative stereotype, prejudice) and (2) social expectation that ‘the other’ both wishes and is able to do evil. When it comes to defining sociability patterns, this difference is especially salient in the former case given that conflict may arise from an attribute whereas in the latter, the attribute arises from expectations of conflict (Misse, 2018: 191, 192).

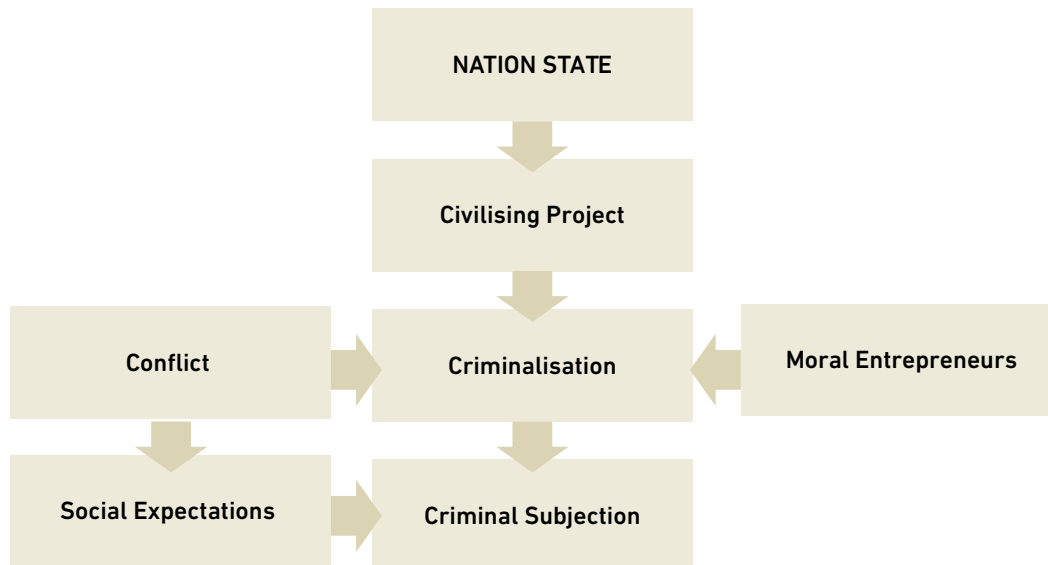
TOWARDS A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS MATRIX ON MARGINALISATION

We use this specific theoretical-conceptual framework to understand the discourse produced by the cultural industry in constructing Indians as the mortal enemy of the Nation State. We put forward a matrix to capture and analyse that discourse.

First, we consider the aforesaid discourse as a social practice that:

- a) is part of a social process of discursive production and takes a given position within it and through self-reference;

Figure 3



Production of criminal subjection (Author).

- b) directly or indirectly covers a pre-existing “cultural premise” that is linked to a system of dominant (or subordinate) representations and values whose complex, contradictory articulation defines the ideology of this society;
- c) is presented as a ritualised and regulated social practice by apparatus within the framework of a given setting. (Giménez, 1981: 125)

Second, we consider two expressions of the discourse within the cultural industry, to wit literature and the press. One centres on the national literatures, which in the West coincide with the political construction of nationalism and that are also heirs of the same ideological and spiritual framework that gave rise to the Liberal Revolution and the Capitalist Order. Here, nationalist literature has weaker links with the aesthetics of the art form than it does with nationalist politics (Mariátegui, 2000). The other centres on the hegemonic press and basically covers the papers used by ‘the powers that be’ to amplify and echo their discourses for the political construction of nationalism.

This Press is used as an ally to popularise the message and acts as a political player in its own right.

Third, we examine the organisation of cultural projects by the ruling classes. These projects vary depending on the period, and reveal both continuities and changes:

- 1) The culture of the elite. This takes up some of the habits of the aristocracy and *l’Ancien Régime* — that is to say one characterised by prestige, privilege, differentiation, and appropriation.
- 2) The distributive project, which focuses on literacy, education, journalism, etc. In this project, the goal of ‘the powers that be’ is to boost the cultural level of the working classes but only in order to serve their own interests.
- 3) The goal is to turn a profit. Mass literacy, urban concentration, social restructuring, and industrialisation create new target audiences. A

cultural consumer market springs up that offers Capitalists succulent investment opportunities. Culture is thus transformed into a powerful industry, which gives rise to the emergence of mass culture (Ford, 2016: 72 and 73).

Last, we use the idea of producing forms of marginalisation as a way of highlighting the performative nature of the discourse. This covers not only the discourse’s scope for referring to a given reality but also for constructing it in an arbitrary, self-interested fashion. Thus marginalisation is the result of a social, cultural, political, and economic process focusing on the desire to exclude previously singled out groups or those entering the country. The strategies used, their order, and intensity varies depending on the case. Making enemies of and criminalising target groups leads to marginalisation because it is not sufficient to label ones foes and criminals, they have to be pushed to society’s fringes.

Here, we propose a matrix incorporating the aforementioned concepts, and operationalised as categories for gathering and analysing discourses:

CONCLUSIONS

The goal of the study was to draw up a theoretical-conceptual approximation to a historic phenomenon, namely the systematic, institutionalised marginalisation of Indians. This approximation also sheds light on the exclusion of other groups in today’s world, examples being immigrants, prisoners, and various LGBT groups. All these groups form part of our study, which adopts a multi-country perspective, as does the *Proyecto Anillo de Investigación en Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades* [Ring Research Project in The Social Sciences and The Humanities]: “Converging Horizons: Production, Mediation, Reception and Effects of Representations of Marginality” (SOC180045), which is currently under way in Chile, Argentina, and Brazil).

The strategies we observe since the 19th Century to the present range from ‘Death Policies’, appropriation measures, and criminalisation strategies through various special laws making up a body of Criminal Law targeting the enemy. All this was made possible by the ‘civilising project’ and while its origins are clear, it still holds sway in our societies today in the form of a social, cultural, economic, political, and media

Figure 4

	Death Policy	Dispossession Policy	‘Enemy’ Criminal Law	Moral, criminal and neo-Liberal rationale	Moral, criminal, and neo-Liberal subjection	Marginalisation
Category/ Description	Explicit or implicit reference to policies aimed at eliminating a group	Explicit or implicit reference to policies aimed at dispossessing groups of their lands	Explicit or implicit reference to exceptional or special laws targeting groups	Explicit or implicit reference to moral values to discredit or stigmatise the group	Explicit or implicit reference to persuasive moral arguments against the group	Explicit or implicit reference to the group’s marginalised status

discourse of a hegemonic nature. The goal is always the same — to use various strategies to impose the ideology of a white, masculine, enlightened South America and to highlight and exalt it by contrasting it with marginal groups (Indians, blacks, women, the uneducated lower classes, and so forth).

These issues require eternal vigilance and are of great interest to Social Research. Basically, the presence of myriad diverse socio-cultural groups — characteristic of today's complex societies — together with the role played by a media industry serving certain lobbies give rise to “deep uncertainty about exactly who is ‘one of us’ and who is not. This is true to such an extent that

the various marginalisation and exclusion practices we see constitute ways of tackling this uncertainty “dismembering the body of the suspected culprit” (Appadurai, 2007: 18).

We have thus seen how these marginalised subjects are produced by resorting to diverse psycho-political strategies ranging from moral, criminal, and neo-Liberal rationales imposed by certain social groups with the goal of excluding other groups. We have yet to discover the distinctive features of today's strategies towards this end, and to grasp the interactions among the various groups, especially those between “established and marginalised groups” (Elías and Scotson, 2016).

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Valencia's 'Men for Equality' movement. An assessment of some of its protagonists

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ABSTRACT

The *Men for Equality* movement [*El movimiento de hombres por la igualdad* - HPLI], although a fairly recent phenomenon, already has a forty year track record in Valencia. The movement has had its high and low points. After the trail blazed by protagonists in Valencian society, a period of consolidation followed in which those who came after them kept the movement going. A qualitative study carried out by the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology records the impressions of those men who kept the movement alive between 1975 and 2018 despite the odds at the outset. These voices are analysed within frameworks for interpreting movements. As a social movement, *Men for Equality* developed new codes of behaviour and meaning. The results reveal the need – now greater than ever – of a paradigm shift in masculinity in Spain and Valencia.

Keywords: men, equality, Valencia, discourse analysis.

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INTRODUCTION

To begin with, one should say what a man is. There is no single definition of masculinity – rather, it is a many-faceted idea. Definitions of manliness are of a relational nature. At the very least, they are socially defined and, as Pierre Bourdieu (2000) notes, masculinity exists in opposition to femininity. Thus

Western Society treats men and women as bearers of differentiating elements. This approach re-elaborates the social construction of manliness through the emergence of a hegemonic masculinity that not only subjugates women but also those men who do not fit the accepted model (Connell, 1997; Kimmel, 1997; Kaufman, 1997).

It is generally accepted that the division of the sexes is a social construct. Thus Kimmel states that:

Virility is not static or timeless but rather is rooted in history. By the same token, it is not a manifestation of an inner essence but instead is socially constructed [...] within a cultural framework. That is why virility means different things in different ages and for different individuals, (Valdés and Olavarría, 1997: 23).

This model of a man imposes a definition that is not homogeneous and that can be made to fit any given cultural context. There is a broad range of opinions within the feminist movement. There are those who see masculinity as a gender construct that can be altered (Carabí and Armengol, 2008: 9). Yet there are also other approaches to the subject, such as the one taken by Judith Butler (2007), who argues the need to subvert the notion of genders. In any case, the term ‘masculinity’ is highly elusive. When one asks social agents, these are unable to flesh out the notion with specific content. The concept is rooted in the collective imaginary of a society furnishing a prototype of masculinity that conditions studies on men.

Masculinity thus becomes a kind of dominant patriarchal structure. The category is an unsettling one, and some feminists view it with suspicion. As Marta Segarra notes, masculinity is present in most social and intellectual discourses as transparent (Segarra and Carabí, 2000: 174), yet, as Marqués states, “Men are neither so alike among themselves nor so different from women [...] although the patriarchal system treats people as if they were identical to others of their sex and very different from those of the opposite sex” (Valdés and Olavarría, 1997: 18). Little by little, as occurred with women before them, men who are homosexuals and/or come from racial and ethnic minorities are defining themselves in new, alternative ways (Guasch, 2006: 103).

Despite efforts to permanently fix what constitutes ‘true masculinity’, such attempts reveal successive crises in male identity, marking cultural transforma-

tions questioning generally-accepted ideas on the male prototype (Montesinos, 2002).

One needs to clarify “What it is to be a man” given, as Marqués notes, that one runs the following risk:

We have spent so much time saying what a real man is [...]. These highly atypical men define themselves as normal or even as paradigmatic. Corporate masculine megalomania is such that any attempt to work on masculine identity runs the risk of falling into idolisation of one’s own sex (Valcuende and Blanco, 2003).

One should note that men tend to exalt masculinity when this trait is questioned — hence the need to anchor the analysis of ‘masculinities’ beyond point-scoring and of asserting one’s virility.

The masculine stereotype is the most common and hegemonic, offering an ideological alibi that is difficult to put into practice because, among other reasons, there are many kinds of masculinity (Connell, 1997) stemming from the various gender relations shown by men themselves.

When one speaks of masculinity or femininity, it concerns the emotional base upon which identities are forged. This scheme thus swiftly goes beyond the individual and takes us to culture and representations of what makes a man (Gilmore, 1994).

In analysing social change in The West and the tensions arising from the persistence, crisis, or overcoming of modernity, one can look at masculinity not just as a socio-cultural representation of the gender system but as a political category (Whitehead, 2002). This is why it is reflected in citizens’ social organisation and is translated into a set of privileges.

These privileges can be seen in the very notion of manhood, which implies power (Bourdieu, 2000). Yet this approach to sexual differentiation is both attributive and distributive given that each group has cultural attributes that both define it and determine its hierarchy. It is precisely this approach that is now in crisis.

This prevailing model of masculinity is showing cracks and new models are slowly emerging to tackle new circumstances. In a nutshell, understanding masculinity and gender relations is a complex affair. The notion of masculinity is still under construction (Guasch, 2006: 17) in what is a never-ending process.

We refer to those heterosexual men from fairly well-heeled classes (above all the Middle Classes). These, now exposed to the real foundations of Neo-Liberalism (whose values serve to legitimise such men) now find themselves de-legitimised. As a result, they feel all at sea and without bearings. These men see how old marks of legitimacy (family, State, country) have become multi-faceted, changing beyond recognition. One needs to approach these men from a gender perspective, following the advice tendered by contemporary feminist theories in order to map an undisputed position (or at least undisputed until recently) of the dichotomy of modern genders, and follow up on the efforts made in *Critical Studies on Men* to highlight the gender brand of these men. One can thus reveal gender to 'the genderless' — a gender that is invisible but transparent (García, 2009: 3-4).

One should recall that the model on which *Men's Studies* is based has lost its validity given that it no longer reflects the complexity of masculine identities. It also does very little to explain the power relations among men themselves. This is why the study of these identities needs to find new theoretical reference points (Menjívar, 2010: 64-65).

As Amoroso (2000) suggested, a woman lays claim to her occupation of the social space as a subject. The new masculinities call for a change in paradigm, demanding a more pro-active role for pro-feminist men, the removal of patriarchal hegemonies, and stressing the need for measures fostering true parity. It boils down to making place in society for a new subject. There is one observation that should be borne in mind amid all the theoretical vagaries in this field:

We are living through a period of cultural change [...] That means both men and women build

their identities from the same traits, which instead of giving certainty regarding one's membership of a gender, leads to confusion and even to unacknowledged fear. (Montesinos, 2004: 16)

Thus, the crisis of masculinity arises from the fading away of the traditional, hegemonic model of manliness and the difficulties in finding an alternative model of masculinity.

While new explanations of the concept of masculinity have sprung up, these are not isolated events but rather part of a continuum in a changing society that needs to consider whether there is uniformity among what that been termed 'the new masculinities'.

THE MEN FOR EQUALITY MOVEMENT IN VALENCIA (1985-2010)

The Men for Equality movements in Valencia (1985-2010) as social movements

One can say that the *Men for Equality* movement is a social one, following Raschke's classic definition, namely:

A collective actor that: often mobilises; is based on highly symbolic integration and scant specification of its role; pursues a consistent goal; avoids fundamental social changes and adopts variable measures and organisational forms in pursuing its ends (Raschke, 1994: 124)

There was a social and cultural movement in Valencia between the 1970s to the early 1990s. Although it was not a large movement, it was very active. In this context, we find two individuals who sparked a different kind debate on what would become known as "new masculinities".

In 1985 Joan Vílchez launched two men's groups from the Sexology Society in the Valencian Autonomous Community. His reason for doing so was that he felt there was a lack of communication with other men. Those taking part included J.L. García Ferrer, Rafael

Xambó, Juan Goberna, and José Manuel Jaén, among others. Josep Vicent Marqués' reflections were the inspiration for the initiative, which took up Fina Sanz's invitation to create men's groups similar to those set up by women to seek a more equal relationship between the sexes.

The psychotherapist Fina Sanz designed Meeting Therapy [*Terapia de Reencuentro*]. This model is based on the integration of psychology (especially clinical psychology), sexology, education, and a gender and community-based perspective. Its theoretical model also draws on conceptual contributions, methodologies and techniques from other disciplines and cultural traditions. In this case, a person is seen as an individual whose sex is defined by physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, behavioural, and social aspects.

Work has been done on intra-personal and inter-personal processes, linked with community relations, within a preventative approach (self-knowledge, human development, education for health) and therapy (understanding of symptoms and the use of therapeutic resources to change one's life). It also considers setting up groups of experts whose work has great social impact in spreading values fostering good manners and peaceful relationships. Those taking part included some men who used this methodology to set up a men's discussion group, which was later called *Espai d'Homes* [Men's Space], co-ordinated by the psychologist Jesús Gallent.

In addition, Josep Vicent Marqués' showed strong leadership and was someone with a major presence on both the Valencian and the Spanish scenes in the 1980s and 90s. Indeed, it was during those decades that he wrote on the role of men, beginning with his PhD thesis: *La construcción social del varón* [The Social Construction of Men] (1982), in which he covered the *macho* ['stud'] image of men in newspaper ads and among university students. Yet he stated: "Nothing has always been considered masculine — or feminine for that matter" (Marqués, 1991: 172). He also said the following:

A powerful set of deeds, omissions, slogans, orders, supporting or dissuasive measures — whether parents or the general public are aware of them or not — turn a child into a boy or a girl, who then grows into a man or woman. The aim is to create the kind of people accepted by society and who, though differing in their outlooks, are then given freedom and access to power. (Marqués, 1982: 55)

At the end of the 1990s, Marqués returned to Valencia where he was Full Professor of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Universitat de València (UV). He set up various groups to discuss many subjects, among them the role of men in modern society.

Despite these two poles of reflection, the men's social movement failed to take off. These fifteen years (1995-2010) fell in a period in which men played little more than a token role when it came to gender equality. Some forums were kept but their analyses underwent changes. There was a gradual turnover in members, reflecting generational succession. The membership, which at the outset was mainly drawn from academe, began to reflect a broader swathe of society. Accordingly, we can speak of true *Men for Equality* movements, as Michael Flood (1996) notes, albeit with some caveats.

This token role is no hurdle to the two components found in the classical distinction between an instrumental approach (aimed at 'the powers that be': the ecological movement) and the expressive approach (identity oriented: the feminist movement) defended by Rucht (1992) and further developed by Melucci (1998). In this period, rebuilding of the collective identity took place outside the institutional sphere, with meaning given to individual and collective action (the expressive component) and getting political and social resources to instrumentally further that identity. This link fostered self-assessment practices and direct measurement among the diverse agents in their daily lives.

"This construction of collective identity, the ability to recognise others and be recognised as part of the

system of social relations” (Melucci, 1987: 139), is based on affective solidarity and personal involvement that movement networks give rise to — camaraderie, collegiality, integration, social support, and so on. These are general requisites for participation in most groups and facilitate mobilisation. Nevertheless, the solidarity that keeps a movement together cannot be separated from political identity (Melucci, 1987; Diani, 1998; Tejerina, 1998). Here, following the line taken by Habermas (1999), and Cohen and Arato (2000), one must recall that the twin strategies of Civil Society (instrumental and expressive) are harnessed to foster freer, more democratic societies. That is why it is worthwhile hearing the voices of some of the men who have kept this movement alive.

Movements as 'labs' for creating and spreading meanings

To begin with, one needs to recall that constructivist approaches in social movements became important from the 1980s onward (Calle, 2003). A salient feature was the way the rational world was re-framed from various perspectives (Snow and Benford, 1992) in both cultural and identity terms (Melucci, 1987, 1998), as well as in a symbolic and epistemological fashion (Johnston, Laraña and Gusfield, 1994; Laraña, 1999). This helped foster mobilisation cultures (Tarrow, 1992, 1997) and macro-social orders (Inglehart, 1998). Melucci (1998) stresses that the most important contribution was terming problems differently, framing them in a language and a discourse that were at odds with those used by 'the powers that be' at the time.

Melucci's (1987, 1998) studies on the 'cognitive resources' used by networked movements to maintain unity and to challenge power structures can be taken as a starting point. Here, the "cognitive approach" taken by such movements as forms of activity gives rise to new kinds of social identities, and the "cognitive practices" noted by Eyerman and Jamison (1991). One can say that in the process of rebuilding a collective identity, a movement is not merely a response to changes (the 'negative' part of the protest, as it were) but rather constitutes a social 'lab' facilitating the emergence of new ideas,

codes of behaviour, and meaning. This gives rise to a mix of knowledge, experience, and affectivity that gives birth to new forms of inter-personal relations, sense-making structures, and alternative projects.

The sum of all these phenomena creates a 'social reality' which, according to Manuel Castillos (1998: 25), can be seen as the first step in processes of social change, and by extension, of the legitimacy of new knowledge, values and practices (Inglehart, 1998). Taking this perspective as their starting point, the discourses of *Men for Equality* were structured by the analysis of interpretive frameworks for studying movements.

METHODOLOGY: ANALYTICAL DIMENSIONS AND INDICATORS

A movement is a 'process'. It comprises a host of interactions generating mobilisation (Melucci, 1987; Tejerina, 1998; Laraña, 1999). Given the complexity of this analysis, the empirical approach taken to the work has basically been a qualitative one, given that only thus that one can access the dimensions that are the subject of the study.

The unstructured interview technique was employed whereby the ideas, discourses, and positions of members were openly explored using the language used by the subjects (Ortí, 1993; Taylor and Bogdan, 1994; Vallés, 1997; Calle, 2003). While this research technique does not incorporate either the measurement or reproducibility of quantitative methods, the value of symbolic resources such as discourses lies in the fact that the situations covered are dealt with in significant terms for participants and their goals (Ortí, 1993).

Although the techniques for gathering data are qualitative in nature, the universe of the study is clearly bounded, to wit: a social movement in a well-defined area and during a given period. The number of interviews is considered sufficient to achieve 'saturation' of the information needed in the form of "intentional

Table 1 The sociological profile of the men interviewed

Code	Association/ Body	Age	Education	Employment status	Type of Association
E.1	AHIGE	52	Secondary Education	Unemployed	Campaigning
E.2	Stop Machismo	54	Primary Education	Self-employed (bookshop)	Campaigning
E.3	CEGM - Centro de Estudios de Género y Masculinidades	42	Higher Education	Working (European projects)	Self-reflection and studies
E.4	ESPAI D'HOMES	58	Higher Education	Working (Psychology practice)	Self-reflection
E.5	Colectivo de Hombres	61	Primary Education	Retired	Self-reflection

Source: Authors

sampling” or “theoretical sampling” (Ruiz and Ispizua, 1989; Taylor and Bogdan, 1994; Vallés, 1997; Rivas, 1998). A sample was sought in which the information was obtained from a diverse set of interviewees drawn from various organisations comprising the movement, ranging from the most dissident ones to the most self-reflective ones. This quest was based on an approach linked to the analytical dimensions, allowing discovery of a range of perspectives within the movement to reach an “overall discourse” covering the symbolic space of the production of meanings from the standpoint of the social agents (thus reflecting the diversity of those agents).

To draw up the movement’s ‘overall discourse’ and the ‘basic framework’ within which *Men for Equality* operated, we applied interpretative approaches in analysing the in-depth interviews with various members of the movement. The interviewees are listed in Table 1 above.

To simplify the data so as to obtain a practical, systematic number of categories, we took the “ideal type framework” proposed by Rivas (1998, 1999). The content was modified to adapt it to the analysis of

the following dimensions and strategies in the “basic framework”¹ (Schemes 1 and 2):

- 1) *The Diagnosis/Framework of Injustice*. This defines a situation as unjust or illegitimate, includes its causes (whether these be processes or persons), and calls for a response. It is a cognitive or intellectual judgment on what is fair or equitable and is also emotionally cognitive.
- 2) *The Prognosis/Call for Action*. On the one hand, it includes various channels for changing the situation, and is a call for action. A solution is proposed for the diagnosed problem, specifying what should be done and who should do it. It includes the goals, strategies and tactics to be followed and is linked to shared programmes, ideas and beliefs. It also includes a framework

1 Within a framework, one needs to differentiate between structure and strategies. According to Rivas, one needs to indicate that the “framework strategy” comprises the framework dimensions and the thematic areas they refer to (which we call ‘dimensions’ or ‘frameworks’) on the one hand, and on the other “framework strategies” (that is to say, techniques used by movements to interpret each thematic area).

for those protesting (who must not be those held responsible for the problem). In addition, the costs and benefits of the status quo are set forth, underlining the legitimacy of both the ends and means of the action taken.

- 3) *Motivating frameworks/agency dimension.* This develops the reasons justifying the action. It is the framework for the chances of success of the actions taken to achieve the stated goals. It includes moral re-evaluation by the group, which reflects on the mobilisation practices of its forerunners and on continuity between

past and present. There is a need to establish a vocabulary for the rationale justifying action to further the cause.

- 4) *Identity-based Communication Strategy.* This pursues the construction of a sense of belonging while blaming a given actor for the ills that the movement seeks to remedy. It is a definition of 'us' versus 'them', without which the goal of collective action would be merely an abstraction. One also finds the movement's utopian projects within this framework, and that form part of its identity.

Scheme 1: The ideal framework: framing dimensions

DIAGNOSIS/FRAMWORK OF INJUSTICE	
Definition and description of a situation considered unjust or illegitimate	
	<i>Indicates an issue in/for the public debate. Defines it as a problem and highlights the gap between how things are and how they should be.</i>
Causal attribution	<i>Definition of the cause. Definition of the agents.</i>
PROGNOSIS/CALL TO ACTION	
Channels for action to change the current state of affairs	
	<i>Proposal of a solution to the problem (what must be done and who should do it). Goals framework (strategies and tactics). Legitimacy of the goals (in relation to the identity-based framework).</i>
Framework for those targeted by the protest	
	<i>Framework for those targeted by the protest and the solutions expected of them.</i>
MOTIVATING FRAMEWORKS/AGENCY FRAMEWORK	
Effectiveness. Consideration that actions are not unchangeable	
	<i>Framework for the chances that the movement's efforts will succeed. The validity of the mobilisation (linked to the prognosis).</i>
IDENTITY	
Identity-based communication strategy	
	<i>Social movements' self-legitimation strategy. Rationales that justify action in favour of a cause. De-legitimisation of 'them', showing that 'they' are either unwilling or unable to solve the problem.</i>

Scheme 2: The ideal framework: framework dimensions and strategies

Framework dimensions (thematic areas)	Framework strategies (techniques for interpreting thematic areas)
1. The theme and interpretation of the problem	
1. Indicate a question for public debate	1. Give it a concept or slogan. 2. Make it empirically credible through a reference to the real world.
2. Define the issue as a problem, highlighting the gap between how things are how they should be	1. Specify the problem by referring to daily experience. 2. Put it in context or within a broader scheme (frameworks, schemes, scripts, etc.). 3. Dramatise: foresee future implications.
2. Causal attribution	
1. Definition of the cause	1. Assign a concept ('male chauvinism', Neo-Fascism, etc.). 2. Attribute it is external actors or groups: 'they' are responsible
2. Definition of agents	1. Personalise the actors responsible. 2. Attribute them with intentions. 3. Attribute them with vested interested that run counter to the common good. 4. Moralise: Consider them illegitimate agents in the movement's public communications.
3. Framework of the goals and the chances of success	
1. Framework of goals	1. Give them a concept or slogan. 2. Make them specific by spelling out the benefits for those affected by the social ill and set ways to achieve the goals. 3. Schematise: Link the goals to the highest values.
2. Framework of the chances of success	1. Make historical references to the success achieved by forerunners. 2. Estimate the number of potential participants: the more participants, the greater the chances of success. 3. The greater the echo in the media, the greater the chances of success.
4. Framework for those targeted by protests and those expecting solutions to be proposed. De-legitimise them	
	1. Personalise those targeted by protests. 2. Attribute them with vested interests. 3. Moralise: Consider them illegitimate agents in the movement's public communications. 4. Consider them as corrupt.
5. Social movements' self-legitimation	
	1. Show that the movement's members represent collective, universal interests. 2. Self-attribution with a key social value (for example, a 'Peace' movement). 3. Enlist trustworthy persons and institutions for the cause. 4. Seek credibility on the subjects covered. Place issues within a framework. Make accurate predictions.

Source: Rivas (1998, 1999)

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS: “WE WERE JUST A HANDFUL”

The dimensions of the discursive framework used by the Men for Equality movement

With regard to the analysis of the movement's meaning frameworks, the main findings are as follows:

The diagnosis of the situation and the problem are clearly delimited. Members of the movement show the injustice of gender inequality and the violence it spawns through statements that take the form of slogans such as:

In reality, it is a group of men fighting gender inequality. [E2]

Violence is a man's problem but women are the ones who suffer as a result. [E3]

The world would end without women. [E3]

Other parts of their discourse try to show the empirical validity of their proposals. These cover both the diagnosis and the framework covering the movement's chances of success — within the motivational frameworks — by stressing the credibility of the themes and issues dealt with.

The movement achieves said credibility by showing that its discourse is not an abstract one but that it bears on real issues:

We produced a manifesto opposing reform of Spain's Abortion Act and it was not only because of its provisions. It is odd that once again it is men who set the limits for women. Symbolically, it is pretty awful that a Minister can make the law for every woman in Spain, which is to say 51% of the country's population. [E3]

Taking this as a starting point, the social movement seeks congruence with the culture of the people it targets in order to define injustice as a problem, stressing the gap between how things are and how things should be, and to this end using specific daily experiences such as the following:

They [women] have had to think like men. We are partly responsible for the change in attitudes towards violence and in daily relations. We have often worked on issues such as sharing tasks, social life, and time together... [E3]

In the *Men for Equality* movement, the narrative is developed in a three-pronged fashion, covering: (1) changes in men's attitudes to 'male chauvinism'; (2) inequalities in couples' relationships; (3) personal life is a 'political' issue — a thread that ran through the discourse. In relation to the first point, we find the following statements:

It is impossible to eliminate male chauvinism from this society without changing men. [E2]

What we want is for groups of men to shape the social debate and society as a whole. [E5]

We listen to all kinds of men. It is a talking shop where men come licking their wounds, they complain that their wives are the worst of the worst, and so on. Little by little, the group starts looking at things differently — something that implies solidarity. That is why the group is an open one. [E4]

Inequality in a couple's relationship underlines both the sex and power differences, evidenced by the following statements:

They create a relationship in the couple based on power models, linked to models of male power. That is to say, the person holding power is the one representing all the traditional, patriarchal male values. It makes no odds whether the one 'wearing the trousers' is a man or a woman. The point is that it creates a state of violence in which one person is under the other's thumb. This spawns permanent conflict — something that is easy to detect and is very similar in many cases. [E3]

Someone has to run the household, look after the children, the sick and the needy. That is where we men fall short. [E5]

With regard to personal life being a ‘political’ issue, this refers to a scheme that goes beyond the individual and links us to the culture and representations of manhood:

This is a *sine qua non*; that is, any proposal on the subject has to be based on one’s own experience. I believe that is the right approach and it is the one that is currently powering this space. [E4]

For me as a man [...] I really believe in change and I strive to bring it about. I work on what I really enjoy, which is spurring change. [E5]

At the Trade Union level, at the socio-educational level [...] I seek ways to introduce such things [...] That is especially true for those who think that social change involves men. [E3]

In addition, the delimitation of injustice is put within the broad context of male hegemony — something that the movement stresses above all and that is evidenced by the following words:

What dominates the world is male chauvinism and violence, both of which are masculine values. [E2]

The problem does not lie in a specific dysfunction or a given model of society but rather with the person representing this sexuality, be it a man or a woman. [E1]

The literature of the English-speaking world in the 1940s, 50s, and 60s produced a given model of man, of which Humphrey Bogart is a prime example. It was a model in which ‘real men’ did not show emotions and it is one that has lasted until the present. It depicts a kind of ‘super-hero’ who can overcome anything, including his own emotions. [E3]

Likewise, the discursive framework for the issue dramatises this situation and augurs future consequences. This is revealed in statements such as:

The problem is the model set for young men. For example, the notion that “the more manly one is, the better one controls one’s emotions”. [E3]

What would happen if women downed tools and stopped taking care of children and so on? This is what comes out of these changes. For example, I say to my children: “Can you imagine what would happen if mothers went on strike”. It is a frightening idea, right? “I remember when my mother was not around and it was awful”. It is not only that normal life is suspended for a day; the whole daily routine goes to pot. “Daddy couldn’t find the *Nesquik* [a children’s drink], which was kept next to the biscuits. He dressed me with socks of different colours...” [E3]

Without women, the world would come to an end. [E3]

Within the causal attribution framework, defining the cause implies harsh criticism of masculine values (‘male chauvinism’) and male control and power. This criticism extends to the control/power exercised over other men, the male breadwinner (as opposed to the caring father), and the economic model and Capitalist system in general. The ideas are often tantamount to slogans, such as:

Male chauvinism dominates the world and constitutes violence. Both are masculine values. [E2]

Father’s Day in Spain (the 19th of March) — *The Day of The Egalitarian Father* for us [...] — is dedicated to the model of the male breadwinner. This model must be changed and put over as a model of the caring father. [E3]

For example, things are pretty clear when it comes to the economic model, which only works because there are women who keep it afloat. [E5]

The poor distribution of work in the world means that the Capitalist system only works thanks to the fact that women work a double or triple shift. [E3]

Having defined the cause, this is attributed to external agents, who are held responsible for the injustices. The ‘culprits’ are non-egalitarian, ‘male chauvinist’ men. In the case analysed, those seen as the cause of these ills are also the ones targeted by protest. It

is impossible to separate the two groups, which are clearly delimited in the corresponding discursive strategies and, as a result, are wholly de-legitimised. Specifically, the personalisation used to these ends can be seen in statements such as these:

Men are responsible for most of these problems. [E5]

Violence is a man's problem but women are the ones who suffer as a result. [E3]

The issue of equality cannot be tackled without dealing with men. [E3]

At the same time, these actors are not only seen as the cause of the problem but also to be fully aware of the fact:

True equality can be achieved only if men change their oppressive mind set. [E3]

Social change has everything to do with men. [E3]

Unlike elsewhere, the movement's discursive framework did not attribute vested interests to those opposing the common good during the period studied. Nevertheless, for the reasons discussed earlier, the targeted agents were considered as lacking legitimacy, as the following comments reveal:

In fact we suffer from non-physical aggression from traditional 'male chauvinism'. [E2]

We get called all kinds of names, they call us *femini-nazis*, of being women's lap dogs and goodness knows what else. [E2]

In relation to the agency framework and motivating discourses, the framing of goals and the chances of success, the aim is to build a new model of society and members see their priority as working towards equality. Thus the goals are framed as slogans or concepts such as:

Men against gender inequality. [E2]

It is impossible to eliminate male chauvinism from this society without changing men. [E2]

True equality can be achieved only if men change their oppressive mind set. [E3]

We need to work on men to achieve social change. [E3]

Members opine that achieving the proposed goal (a new, egalitarian society by changing men), would benefit society in various ways. The main benefit, they argue, would be the building of more equal relationships between the sexes. This, they posit, would then free society of the problems stemming from the traditional self-destructive patriarchal model:

Everyone wins by being brought up in a more egalitarian society. That is because there are no pressures and one does not have to prove one's worth to anyone. The self-destructive component is eliminated once the traditional patriarchal model has gone. The social benefit of a sea change in equality is clear. [E3]

Apart from the benefits, the movement's members also stress the legitimacy of these value-charged goals, linking them to overcoming the problem through the values characterising a more egalitarian society:

Men have to change their oppressive mind set and that is why it is so important to work with men, right? [E3]

It is impossible to eliminate male chauvinism from this society without changing men. [E2]

What we want is for groups of men to shape the social debate and society as a whole. [E5]

The issue of social change has to be approached by working with men. [E3]

This framing highlights two of the movement's strategies — one instrumental and the other expressive — which coalesce around the goal of creating freer, more democratic societies. In analytical terms, this forms part of proposed solutions to the problem — the movement's goals — within actions to overcome the present state of affairs.

The chances of success were also framed within the period studied, although it was not a recurring discourse. Here, we find statements such as:

Fortunately, this is changing and men are getting increasingly involved. [E3]

Yet nobody is under any illusion that it is going to be easy:

In general terms, my research at schools shows the scale of the problem. It is a serious issue that men still sit on their hands when it comes to household chores ... [E3]

Nothing is being done in Valencia. [E2]

No special references are made to the success enjoyed by their forerunners given that the movement is still an incipient one, save for occasional statements such as:

There is a group of men called *Espai d'Homes* [Men's Space] but it is very much a private affair. I think they will be at the demonstration on the 8th of March. [E2]

Indeed, from this discourse one gets the impression that a certain sector of the feminist movement both suspects and rejects the *Men for Equality* movement:

The feminists give us a hard time because there is little public money for equality policies. The feminists say: "Now that we have scraped together a bit of cash, come protest with us for whatever..." It's a problem. "We have spent goodness knows how long trying to put women on the map and now you are asking the same for men?" I understand how the women feel [...] Many men feel they are being turned into scapegoats. This explains why they think us coming along is the last straw. We have to tread carefully lest we offend them. [E1]

Although the movement is a highly expressive one, it does not overlook the instrumental side and the call for action:

The issue of equality cannot be tackled without dealing with men. [E3]

There are three strands in this framing: (1) how action is taken; (2) action targeting men; (3) action targeting society. In the first case, we find statements that refer to a change in education and the need for commitment:

First, we act in the education field because when it comes to therapy, repetition works. [E5]

A group of men is a [therapeutic] reflection group but there are also much more social aspects too because there is a need to commit oneself to social change sooner or later. [E3]

The following statements were made in the context of specific actions targeting men:

In the meetings, each member speaks about his experience, of a problem, of how to deal with things without resorting to violence but instead being receptive and open-minded when it comes to dealing with conflict.... This is another way of peacefully solving problems. [E2]

Men began to turn up for the group sessions in 2000. A typical comment was "Now what? I was married, I had a wife but I have no friends now. I am on my own". That was reason enough to say, "Look, we have a gathering on one Friday a month. If you feel like coming along..." [E4]

In the case of actions focusing on society, there were statements on the following lines:

We want the group to talk about things that concern us but we have also done some things outside our circle. [E2]

In *Foro d'Homes* [Men's Forum] [...], things are more public — our actions focus on the outside world. We always hold meetings but they end up with a public session. [E2]

I also spent a year working at Picassent prison on rehabilitating those convicted of domestic violence. I realised that some of them who had taken the programme could attend the group. [E4]

We actively work on the streets to cover the equality issue. [E5]

We undertake specific actions two or three times a year. This is especially true in October before all the activity in November to mark *The International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women*. We leave a little time before the 25th to stress male responsibility for such violence. There is also a lot of work around the 8th of March. The new date — the 19th of March — strikes me as a golden opportunity for fostering change. For us, it is *The Day of the Egalitarian Father* ['Father's Day' elsewhere]. [E3]

Potential membership of the movement is delimited by several aspects: the incorporation of individuals in the group; the expected identity-based motivation set out in the description of the movement; the birth of collectives from mixed groups; the number of participants; generational succession. Nevertheless, the analysed discourse makes no references to media dissemination of the movement's activities. The subject of an individual's incorporation in the movement crops up in statements such as:

I needed to share my feelings with more men. Where could I find these men? I began to meet men who were worried. [E2]

I joined but it was like a gathering and from then on I started attending once a month. [E2]

Men with partners were asked to review their behaviour and think about how things stood. From then on, they joined the group... because they were seeking support. [E5]

After a therapeutic initiative in which I took part as a user, I met other men and I began undergoing the process they had talked about. [E4]

With regard to motivation and incentives for solidarity, some the statements made include:

The special feature of *Espai d'Homes* [Men's Space] [...] is that it needs to be a closed one in order

to strengthen trust among its members and the relationship arising from it. [E4]

Here, one should note that the movement's groups sprang up in the mid-1990s:

Espai d'Homes [...] was founded in 2005 but back in 1994 and 95 we began creating small groups of men. [E4]

Nevertheless, they sprang from mixed groups of men and women:

It was suggested that women work on one part and men on another and that they then pooled ideas to reach consensus. When these training periods finished, these small groups of men emerged and continued from there. [E4]

Here in Valencia, a group run by Josefina Sanz adopted a perspective based on feminine and masculine psycho-eroticism that spoke of constructing sexuality between men and women. It involved the genders working separately but pooling their findings. The first men's groups emerged from that. [E3]

Furthermore, the participants were a mixed bag:

The forty-two members have a strong track record of social intervention in various spheres: trade unions, science, therapies, and so on [E3]

The network is very eclectic. There are all kinds of people, ranging from those working only on a given subject to [...] those doing jobs that have nothing to do with gender issues. [E3]

The sociological profile is very diverse, with an equally diverse educational profile. [E5]

The make-up of the groups changes over time because there is a natural turnover of members:

There are roughly ten of us in the group but there were a lot more in the past. [E2]

At one point there were twenty or twenty-two in the group of which seven of us were men [at the group's inception with Fina Sanz, who set up Espai d'Homes]. [E4]

Men join and leave all the time [In Espai d'Homes]. [E4]

This agency framework is also reflected in the movement's networks:

We call on the women to do things but they do not reciprocate. [E1]

I began in men's groups in Andalusia; the movements that sprang up were *AHIGE* (Men's Association for Gender Equality, and *Heterodoxia*... [E4]

Many of them were part of *AHIGE* men's circles. There was active involvement. [E3]

Generational renewal is also highlighted:

Now three or four younger men have joined. [E2]

Nevertheless, the interviewees also highlighted the movement's development, which has shifted from members with more academic backgrounds in the past to people drawn from a broader range of social sectors today:

The group changed after that [...] Now there are people who are not professionals but rather who are just ordinary folk. [E2]

Being in the university, there are groups that are more scholarly and are more strongly linked with reflections on research models of masculinity. [E3]

When it comes to framing those whom the protests target and from whom solutions are expected, we should stress that in the period studied, the discourse was not aimed at institutions but rather at the agents blamed for causing injustice.

The identity-based communication strategy (playing on self-legitimation of both members and the movement) was used to convey the idea that collective, universal interests were being represented that could only be met by driving change [E5],

making a big leap forward towards equality [E3] and rooting out male chauvinism [E2]. All this effort and commitment had several implications:

I often said to my pupils: "Working on this subject with you now means you will not come looking for answers in twenty five years' time. This work is bad for my wallet but good for your lives". [E3]

Even though this meant being misunderstood by society and other social movements:

What I found is that when I spoke to people, they said: "So, what's all this then?" They simply had no idea... [E2]

I understand why the feminists are wary. You always have to explain things. This is why they think us coming along is the last straw. We have to tread carefully lest we offend them. [E1]

They also attribute their movement with a core social value:

Men against gender inequality. [E2]

In addition, 'they' are the self-same men, both agents of the diagnosis, and targets of the protest. They de-legitimise themselves by showing that they are unwilling to solve the problem and to change their oppressive behaviour in which violence is used to settle conflicts.

Discursive innovations

Various studies have been carried out to determine changes in the contents of discourses and communication over time (Ruiz and Ispizua, 1989). In the case of movements, McAdam (1994: 59) states that working class identity — which at first glance seems to be objectively based — actually arose from the workers' movement. Likewise, Tarrow (1997: 192) shows that Mansbridge discovered some of the expressions date from the early periods of the women's movement (for example *machista* [male chauvinist]) had its origin in a word used by the poor to broadly cover actions that one's colleagues disapproved of. One can also read of new environmentalist perceptions of the world in Diani (1998: 255).

As with other movements, one can also find various discursive innovations. Thus we can find things that shape reflection on the traditional roles assigned to men:

A group of men is a [therapeutic] reflection group but it also has more social aspects. [E3]

It is impossible to eliminate male chauvinism from this society without changing men. [E2]

It also involves questioning these traditional roles:

It is a talking shop where men come licking their wounds, their wives and the worst of the worst, and so on. Little by little, the group starts looking at things differently — something that implies solidarity. [E4]

One should not forget the importance of forging more expressive relations and solidarity with other men, and be able to share one's feelings and concerns without feeling any less a man for it:

The problem is the model set for young men. For example, the notion that "the more manly one is, the better able one is to control one's emotions". [E3]

Being receptive and open-minded when it comes to dealing with conflict... This is another way of peacefully solving problems. [E2]

That is why they see this transition not as a loss but as a gain:

True equality can be achieved only if men change their oppressive mind set. [E3]

They reflect on masculinity, power, sexuality, fatherhood, violence, and sexual and sentimental relationships:

Men with partners were asked to review their behaviour and think about how things stood. From then on, they joined the group... because they were seeking support. [E5]

The problem does not lie in a specific dysfunction or a given model of society but rather with the

person representing this sexuality, be it a man or a woman. [E1]

There is also the transformation of *Father's Day* (19th of March) into *Day of The Egalitarian Father* instead of the 'breadwinning father':

For us, the Day of the Egalitarian Father sparks a curious debate that turns a Judeo-Christian celebration of the breadwinning father (or 'providing father') into a caring father. Here, we understand 'caring' in a holistic, emotional, and affective sense and thus our father is also an egalitarian one. [E3]

This reveals how the *Men for Equality* movement creates new codes of conduct, using a different language from that of 'the powers that be' to describe problems.

CONCLUSIONS

From the end of the 1970s to the beginning of the 1980s, certain groups became aware of the gender issue from a psychological standpoint. Later on, without ditching their theoretical-practical ideas, these movements began to make an impression on society and appear at various events, including the 8th of March demonstrations.

Josep Vicent Marqués played a key role in many initiatives, both individual and collective ones. Nevertheless, during the first decade of the 21st Century, the presence of these movements on the public stage was merely a token one (at least in Valencia).

This study gives voice to some of the men who kept the movement's flame burning. These voices are analysed within frameworks for interpreting social movements. Examination of the discursive dimensions and strategies revealed a 'basic framing' that was well drawn up, featuring all of the elements one might expect: diagnoses/framing of injustice; prognosis/call to action; framing of agency drivers/dimensions; identity-based strategy. Here, one should note that the agents (other men) causing the injustices are those targeted by the

protest. Neither group can be understood without the other. No special reference is made to the movement's forerunners given that it was of an incipient nature. Although these groups were highly expressive, they kept the instrumental side and the call for action in view, even though there were no references to this in the discourse.

One can also see how, as a social movement, it came up with new codes of conduct and meanings, using different language and discourses from those of 'the powers that be'.

Another point that can be highlighted from the analysis is the shift in the make-up of groups and the membership. Back in 2011, a university-inspired

group gradually began reflecting on the need for men to mirror changes in Spanish and Valencian society, especially in relation to feminism. This link can be seen for example in the framing of causal agents and the harsh criticism levelled at the economic model and the Capitalist system — something directly linked to the strikes held on the 8th of March.

The study's findings reveal the pressing need to change the concept of masculinity in Spanish and Valencian society today. That said, one should not forget that 'new masculinities' are still under construction. Such ideas are inseparable from demands for a paradigm shift in which men would take a more pro-active role in eliminating patriarchal hegemonic elements and in coming up with a new kind of man.

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Internet Celebrities Bodies/Emotions in China's Society 4.0

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ABSTRACT

Internet celebrities, as a group of stars spawned by the market economy and The Internet, reveal both the state of Internet culture and the transformation of mass media in China. The bodies and pictures of these 'celebs', while unique, also take on a cultural symbolism. The 4.0 Revolution is the carrier of social practices and kinds of interaction in which the social media play a very special role. In this paper we will focus on the intersections and ruptures between the *body-individual*, *body-subjective* and *body-social* (Scribano, 2007) of Chinese Internet celebrities and the articulations and links between *body-image* and their *body-in-movement*. With the introduction of Chinese social media platforms such as WeChat (微信), Sina Weibo (新浪微博), Douyin, we try to trace links between the sociability, experiences and social sensibilities of the Internet celebrities and their influence on Society 4.0.

This paper: (a) looks at the Chinese social media as a virtual platform for the Internet celebrities; (b) delves into the images and practices of the Internet celebrities; (c) highlights the link between body, sensation and perception regarding social celebrities; (d) shows the kinds of sociability and social sensibilities exhibited by celebrities in China's Society 4.0. home foreclosure) in several Catalan municipalities. It was conducted by participatory observation, focus groups and in-depth interviews with activists.

Keywords: internet celebrities, body, sensibility, China.

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INTRODUCTION

The soaring popularity of social networks has been one of the innovations marking the dawn of the 21st century. We find them playing a role in everything from *The Arab Spring* to Spain's *Indignados* and the *Occupy Wall Street* movement, and in the use of mobile devices to buy anything. In this context, China, as 'The World's Factory' has turned into an industrialised, highly technological society over the last forty years thanks to the Reform and Opening-up Policy, which was drawn up by Deng Xiaoping in 1978. It was he who made Capitalist reforms to a Communist Command Economy and, in so doing, lifted over 740 million Chinese out of poverty.¹

Entering the 21st Century, China also faces the 4.0 Revolution. Smart Cities, Smart Industries, cyber-physical systems (the Internet of Things (IoT), Cloud Computing); Cyberbotics, Total Automation, Revolution 4.0 are all terms that we have become familiar with. In this sense, China's Online Celebrity phenomenon has spawned an industry.

In "Bodies of Digital Celebrity", Pearl and Polan (2015: 190) insist that in The Digital Age, the new media industries can puff up ordinary people as talented individuals. Yet we cannot ignore the importance of bodies.

"It's easy in a digital age that speaks of the virtual to think that celebrity is now something inef-fable (.....). But even as new media can create celebrity at a distance, across the gulf of time and space, it still often comes back to bodies."

The authors (Pearl and Polan, 2015: 190) also mention the link between traditions in culture studies and the issues of bodies, of corporeality, of materiality.

"Much of the power of celebrities lies in their vivacity."

Wang Junbing (2018) analyses the concept of 'Grass-roots Media', which could give everyone the chance

to become a celebrity. However, these celebrities need wide-ranging know-how to supply what the public demands. That is why one needs to assiduously study the latest trends, news, and social language found on various platforms (Facebook, YouTube, LINE, Instagram etc.).

In addition, Lin (2018) investigates the performance of the body with the self-governance practices imposed by China's Party-State, especially in the case of female celebrities. The author used the terms "staging the body", "defending the body" and "instrumentalising the body" to describe how Ye Haiyan, as a female 'celeb' performs with her body to reach her goals.

"Ye has staged her body as a channel of political transgression, defended her body for sexual rights and instrumentalised her body for activist goals. In this sense, the practices of this female Internet celebrity's body performances are never external to the Party-State's rationality but internal to its governmental project, which raises issues of resistance with regards to the microphysics of the body." (Lin, 2018: 777)

XuXu and Stephen Pratt look at the Chinese Generation Y and use Self-Congruity Theory to understand the congruence between endorsers and potential tourists to evaluate the effectiveness of endorsement. They believe that in the tourist area, destination marketers should consider using Social Media Influencers (SMIs) to promote tourism-related products and destinations. Zhang Yanhui and Chen Fuwen (2018) examine the influence of online celebrities in the advertising business and the way this has changed customers' awareness and boosted certain kinds of consumption.

In 2015, the Chinese Premier, Li Keqiang, proposed a strategic plan for the country dubbed "Made in China 2025" (中国制造 2025). Its goals include: (1) boosting domestic Chinese content of core materials to 40 per cent by 2020 and 70 per cent by 2025; (2) focusing on high-tech fields, including the: pharmaceutical, automotive, aerospace, semi-conductor, IT, and robotics industries (Li, L. 2018). As a result, this plan

1 Statistics from Xin Hua News Agency. Available at http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2018-12/10/c_1123833866.htm

is also considered the Chinese version of Industry 4.0, similar to the concept of German Industry 4.0. “Made in China 2025” aims to foster innovation and remove bottlenecks in industrial development to transform China from a world factory into a fully-fledged industrial power.

According to the *2018 China Online Celebrity Economic Development Insight Report*,

“By May 2018, cyber celebrities with over 100,000 fans rose by 51 per cent from a year ago. Their total followers rose 25 per cent to 588 million”.²

The boom in Internet celebrities has greatly influenced Chinese society. It already commands huge audiences and it is likely that these will continue to grow.

Internet celebrities have a huge influence and social impact on China, especially at the moral level. They set society's standards and moral direction and thus shape political sensibilities. Given that we know that body(ies) and society(ies) are systematic objects of research in which affectivity and sensibilities are strongly present, the numerous theories on emotions can be grouped under a tripartite classification: Determinism, Social Constructionism, and Social Interaction.

Gross and Feldman Barrett (2011) tried to evaluate the differences of perspective on the “generation” and/or “regulation” of emotions by splitting current scholarly perspectives on the subject into four large groups: (1) models of basic emotions; (2) evaluative models; (3) psychological construction models; (4) social construction models.

For over a decade, Scribano has sought an explanation for the importance of the “existential turn” in social theory³, advocating a closer link between the studies

of the body and emotions⁴. He has also argued the need to explore the intersection of these works by looking at the roles both colours and feelings play in relation to the issues raised⁵.

However, when we talk about celebrities in China, we should bear in mind that little research has been done on the relationships between ‘celebs’ bodies, emotions, and social influence. *The Internet and New Social Formation in China*⁶ (2016) shows how entertainment-consuming users form specific audiences through the mediation of technologies in today's networked society. It also delves into how fans are turned into target audiences. *Cyber-nationalism in China: Challenging Western media portrayals of internet censorship in China*⁷ (2012: 3) describes the emotions of web users in China (their frustrations, attitudes and so on) and compares Liberalism in Chinese and Western communities.

“The rising tension between Chinese bloggers and Western media has highlighted a major difference in the understanding of the natures of nationalism and censorship between China and the West.”

There is a close link between changes of sensibilities and Society 4.0's transformations.

Advances in high-tech have led us to Society 4.0, in which mobile communication devices (cell phones,

2 2018 China's Internet Industry Report. (online) http://www.iresearchchina.com/content/details8_40769.html, access 21st March.

3 Scribano, A. Complex societies and social theory. *Social Science Information*. 1998, 37, 3: 493-532.

4 Scribano A. Geometría del conflicto: estudios sobre acción colectiva y conflicto social. Córdoba: Universitas; 2005. Scribano A. Primero hay que saber sufrir! Hacia una Sociología de la ‘espera’ como mecanismo de soportabilidad social. In: Scribano A, Lisdero P (Editors). Sensibilidades en juego: miradas múltiples desde los estudios sociales de los cuerpos y las emociones. Córdoba: CEA-UNC-CONICET; 2010.p.169-192. Scribano A. Sociología de los cuerpos/emociones. RELACES. 2012, 10: 93-113.

5 Scribano A. *Policromía corporal. Cuerpos, Grafías y Sociedad*. Córdoba: Sarmiento Editor; 2007.

6 Zhang, W. *The Internet and new social formation in China: Fandom publics in the making*. Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, 2016.

7 Jiang, Y. *Cyber-nationalism in China: Challenging Western media portrayals of internet censorship in China*. Adelaide: University of Adelaide Press, 2012.

tablets) have become spaces for production, editing and for storing images. Scribano (2017) argues that Mankind is going through a stage in which our senses converge with the world of technology in a quest for discovery and authenticity.

Chinese social media such as WeChat, QQ, Weibo is a paradigmatic example of the metonymic way practices are changing our ways of forging social bonds, experience, and sensibilities. The McKinsey consulting firm states:

“Industry 4.0 as a new phase in the digitalisation of the manufacturing sector is driven by four engines: an increase in the volumes of data handled by industrial companies; increasingly powerful and cheap computers; the ability to analyze and process data; the continuous improvement in the interaction of people with machines, robots and 3D printers.”⁸

Social Networks spring up and are globalised in the context of the convergence of these trends: the widespread use of social networks, the 4.0 Revolution and the emergence of ‘image makers’. It is against this background that one can see the emergence of 4.0 societies. We can see practices typifying social networks in general (digital marketing, charity and political campaigns, etc.). Other practices have either already been consecrated or are being consolidated.

This paper: (a) observes the Chinese social media, which act as a virtual platform for the country’s internet celebrities; (b) delves into the images and practices of the internet celebrities; (c) highlights the link between body, sensation and perception in relation to the whole social celebrity scene; (d) reveals the kind of socialisation and social sensibilities arising in Society 4.0 through these celebrities.

BODY / EMOTION A FIRST APPROXIMATION

The presence of celebrities in social networks takes place in and through bodies / emotions. It is the sensibilities associated with the presence of these bodies that allow us to better understand societies.

One path to understanding the body’s role lies in looking at the distances and bridges between *body-individual*, *body-social* and *body-subjective*. This entails underlining the connections between the experience of the body as organism, the experience of the body as a reflective act, and the practice of the body as a social construction. A *body-individual* refers to phylogenetic logic, to the articulation between the organic and the environment; a *body-subjective* takes wing from self-reflection, in the sense of the ‘I’ as a centre of gravity through which multiple subjectivities are formed; and finally, a *body-social* is society made flesh, as it were (*sensu* Bourdieu).

These three basic body practices both organise and are organised by logics regulating the senses. Gradual progress and constant metamorphosis of sensibilities are ways of appropriating the body’s energy, the connections between diverse body-sensations which, taken together, form one of the pillars of domination and of autonomy.

This kind of ontological re-description demands a discussion of the differences between body and social energies but lack of space precludes us from embarking on one here. To maintain the ‘state of things’ assigned to the individual body, it is vital that body-energy becomes an object of both production and consumption. Here, it is body energy that is the source of the social energy found in society. The power to plan, carry out, and resolve the consequences of the actions of agents is what constitutes social energy.

A second path to understanding the body’s role is to draw on and reconstruct what we already know about the body through body-image, body-skin and body-movement. These three ways of inscribing the corporal in a narrative offer a reconstructive analysis

8 “Are you ready for the 4th industrial revolution?” McKinsey & Company. (online). <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/operations/how-we-help-clients/capability-center-network/overview>, access 20th March 2019.

of how we can see the corporal aspects of celebrities' impacts on sociability, sensibility, and experiences of everyday life as social phenomena.

First, body-image is an indicator of the process of 'I see they see me'; body-skin indicates the process of how one 'naturally-feels' the world; and body-movement is the inscription of the body within a field of possible actions. These three ways of reconstructing body experiences may be seen as paths for analyses and interpretations of how bodies appear on the social stage. Tensions and processes are at work between: the social parts of the body; the body there; posture; the body as a significant social structure; the elaboration of the body-image, which every agent must build and manage.

The senses appear to be natural but they are also the results of a social process, which give rise to the social construction of the body-skin. Consequently, sociability and social sensibilities get entrenched as the 'natural' way of 'feeling the world'.

Body-movement is a mediation of both the power and impotence of the body and social energies. There are ways in which bodies can act, that is to say that they are able to act depending on social energies and social inertia. In other words, there are certain kinds of action that embody the social geometries of displacement as well as social inertia. In this process, seeing, smelling, touching, hearing and tasting coalesce into potential sociability, indicating social devices for the regulation of sensations.

In other words, such actions bring bodies closer or distance them from the aforementioned dialectics. Sensations, as a result and antecedent of perceptions, give way to emotions which can be seen as the manifestation of the action and effect of feelings. They are rooted in how we feel about the world, building perceptions associated with socially-constructed forms of sensations. At the same time, organic, social senses also permit mobilisation of uniquely individual traits while they carry out the 'unnoticed work' of incorporating the social via emotions.

A privileged form of connection between collective action and social fantasies and phantoms lies in the fact that the body is the locus of conflict and order. It is the place and *Topos* (Gk. Τόπος) of conflict through which much of the logic of contemporary antagonisms passes. From this standpoint, we can see the formation of a political economy of morality, that is to say, forms of sensibilities, practices and representations that put domination into words. In this context, we understand that mechanisms determining what is socially tolerable are structured around a set of practices-made-body who purpose is the systematic avoidance of social conflict. The processes displacing the consequences of antagonism are presented as specular scenarios unpinned (dis-embedded) in space and time. These allow both individual and society to accept the notion that social life always takes a certain form.

Then there are devices for regulating sensations. These consist of processes for the selection, classification, and the elaboration of socially-determined and distributed perceptions. Regulation implies tension between the senses, perceptions and feelings that organise special ways for individuals and groups of "seeing oneself-in-the-world" and of "appreciation-in-the-world".

Chains and cognitive-affective schemas that connect (and disconnect) social practices as narratives and worldviews made flesh, are processes that we characterise as ideological. The identified mechanisms and devices are a practical and procedural hinge on which the interactions between emotions, bodies and stories hang. Systems' social bearability mechanisms do not operate either directly or explicitly as "attempted control", nor "deeply" as processes of focal points of persuasion. These mechanisms operate "almost unnoticed" in the paths beaten by habit, in the frames of common sense, through the construction of sensations that seem the most "intimate" and "unique" possessed by each individual as a social agent. The social media offer opportunities for ordinary people to become celebrities and exercise influence as social agents. Their behaviours and social practices affect fans' emotions and actions.

The politics of emotions require regulation, shaping how social order is produced and made bearable. In this context, we understand that social bearability mechanisms are structured around a set of practices that have become ingrained and whose main purpose is the systematic avoidance of social conflict.

The forms of sociability and experience are strained and twisted as if constrained within a Moebius Strip along which sensibilities arise from regulatory devices and the aforementioned mechanisms. The need to distinguish and link the possible relations between sociability, experience, and social sensibilities becomes crucial at this point. Sociability is a way of expressing the means by which agents live and interactively co-exist. Experience is a way of expressing the meaning gained while being in physical proximity with others, as a result of experiencing the dialogue between the individual body, the social body, and the subjective body, on the one hand; and the natural appropriation of bodily and social energies on the other. For the body to be able to reproduce experience and sociability, bodily energy both needs to be produced and consumed. Such energy can be understood as the force needed to preserve the ‘natural’ state of affairs in systemic functioning. At the same time, the social energy shown through the social body is based on the way individuals’ energy is spent and apportioned through movement and action.

Thus, sensations are distributed in accordance with the specific forms of bodily capital; and the body’s impact on sociability and experience reveals a distinction between the body of appearance, body of flesh, and body of movement. Social sensibilities are continually updating the emotional schemes that arise from the accepted and acceptable norms of sensations. They fall just a little long or short of the interrelationships between sociability and experience. Sensibilities are shaped and reshaped by contingent and structural overlaps taking diverse forms of connection/disconnection among various ways of producing and reproducing the politics of the body and the emotions.

The politics of sensibilities are understood as the set of cognitive-affective social practices tending to

the production, management and reproduction of horizons of action, disposition and cognition. These horizons refer to: (1) the organisation of daily life (the day-to-day routine, wakefulness/sleep, eating/fasting, etc.); (2) information to sort preferences and values (adequate / inadequate; acceptable / unacceptable; bearable / unbearable); (3) parameters for time / space management (displacement / location, walls / bridges; enjoyment).

Three concepts become relevant in this context: “practices of wanting”, “practices of feeling” and “interstitial practices”. Practices of feeling are those that involve heterogeneous sets of relationships between sensations and emotions. Interstitial practices are those social bonds that break the political economy of the moral and that structure sensibilities. ‘Wanting practices’ involve the potential links between hope, love and enjoyment, and are social relations that link us to “doing with” the other. Associations between the aforementioned practices, social bearability mechanisms, and devices to regulate sensations might help us better understand the state of social sensibilities.

In the next section we reconstruct the scenarios and contexts where the practices of these bodies are carried out within the Internet framework.

CHINESE SOCIAL MEDIA

It is well known that China — the world’s largest social-media market — differs greatly from the western world for there is no Facebook, no Twitter, no YouTube. So, what do people use in China? The “Top 10 Social Media Sites to Connect with Chinese Consumers”⁹ lists: WeChat, Sina Weibo, Youku, Miaopai and Yizhibo, Douban, DianPing, Renren, Tencent Weibo, PengYou, Diandian.

⁹ Top 10 Social Media Sites to Connect with Chinese Consumers. Available at <https://smallbiztrends.com/2017/07/chinese-social-media-marketing.html>

WeChat, also known as Weixin, is a multi-purpose mobile voice and text app. It was invented in 2011 and now has over one thousand million monthly active users (Lie and Cao, 2014). Sina Weibo, which means 'microblog', is like Twitter and Facebook rolled into one. Sina Weibo's content is fast-moving and the celebrities always have their followers and space to discuss some 'hot'/listening topics in Weibo. Youku is similar to YouTube, containing videos covering various topics. Miaopai and Yizhibo are platforms with live streaming and short videos. Douban is a space where people can share their opinions on books, films, music etc. Dianping has similar features to Yelp and TripAdvisor, letting users review restaurants. Renren operates much like Facebook but is no longer as active as Weibo or WeChat. Tencent Weibo is another "microblog", where users can share videos, photos, and text messages of up to 140-characters. PengYou, or "friend" in Chinese characters, is a platform with social features and is another product from the company that came up with Tencent Weibo.

An internet celebrity is someone whose fame mainly stems from their Internet presence. It refers to a person who is popular online because of an event or behaviour pattern and who influences society (which tends to copy its idol). Internet celebrities perform actively in the social media and they undergo a metamorphosis from social media phenomenon to a-social, political and economic influencer.

The stars' emotions, aesthetics, and values are changing consumption patterns, lifestyles, and public ideas, exerting a deep influence on Chinese society. Zhang and Seta (2018) analyse the situation and functions of online celebrities or *Wanghong* (the Mandarin Chinese term for these modern idols) in the culture of grassroots popularity. Becoming an online celebrity in China has become a profitable 'profession', an inspirational role model, a morally questionable by-product of internet economies, and in general a widely-debated social phenomenon among local users. The authors believe that the popularity of the *Wanghong* arises from Chinese social media sites and from narratives of profes-

sionalism and economic aspirations that strike a chord in contemporary China.

According to the *Report on Internet Attitudes in China 2018*¹⁰, the most discussed topics covered "new era", "good life" and "the universal two-child policy". "New era" is a Chinese umbrella term for the innovative, international, better living conditions, better education and fairer gender relations. "Children, youth, work, and food have become "the four great things in a good life." In 2016, China brought in the "universal two-child policy", "health" and "husband" became the main factors influencing the desire to have children. Another point made in the 2018 Report is that there are two major semantic communities in the digital field in China. One mainly involves "a new era of social diversification"; the other community covers 'new era' celebrities, who are young, hot-blooded, patriotic and keen on social responsibility. Thus online celebrities in China's digital society have greater scope for influencing others through the 'tools' of the country's social media and thus contributing to China's new age.

EMOTIONS, IMAGES AND PRACTICES

China has seen massive changes over the past 40 years. If we look at the experience of three generations (X, Y and Z), one can see how the country's transformation has changed people's lives and shaped how they see the world. Generation X (early-to-mid 1960s to the early 1980s) was born during China's Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). Their educational experience and life style were deeply influenced by politics. Members of this generation in China grew up believing that loyalty to the State and institutions would be rewarded. Then with the Reform and Opening-up Policy in the 1980s, many western elements made a

10 《中国网络社会心态报告（2018）》发布三大话题引发关注, 中国新闻网, 2019年01月21日. Three topics of Report of the attitudes of internet in China 2018. Web of Chinese News. 21st January 2019. (online) https://www.pishu.com.cn/skwx_ps/bookdetail?SiteID=14&ID=10197082 access 21st March 2019.

big impact on China with the advent of pop culture, American cinema, nightlife, American brands, and Western teen slang. China also developed a strong cell phone culture, and soon had the highest number of mobile users in the world. Thus Generation Y (the 1980s and 1995s) grew up with societal change. These individuals were born under China's one-child policy, which was introduced in 1979. As a result, most of them were only children. With the love and care of two parents and four grandparents, they tend to be self-confident and have high self-esteem.

Then Generation Z (mid-1990s to mid-2000s) also became a social phenomenon. With China's booming economy and rapid technological development, these individuals have different lifestyles and shopping habits. Generation Z is the first Chinese generation to have been born in a fully modern, digitalised country so they are highly connected and willing to share their feelings through social media. Many of them are making live broadcasts on Douyin, Taobao, Weixin etc. They have their own fans and become online celebrities. It is within this framework that we need to examine the feelings elicited by today's Chinese celebrities and the influence these 'stars' exert.

In examining reflections and theories on affection, emotions and feelings¹¹, we found references to seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth-century social philosophers, including Descartes, Montesquieu, Bentham, Pascal, La Mettrie, and Darwin, among others.

Early social scientists such as Comte, Durkheim, Fourier, Marx, Sombart, Simmel, and Weber also stated that emotional control is yet another form of discipline, and that it affects social practices, relationships and worldviews in a reciprocal, dynamic way¹². To a great extent, such concerns are also addressed in contemporary social theory from different perspec-

tives by Bourdieu, Giddens, Foucault, Agamben and Esposito. In this context, Brian Turner and David Le Breton are seen as forerunners of social studies on the body, as are Kemper's, Hochschild's, Scheff's, Collins', and Illouz's studies on the emotions.

A different perspective on the theoretical traditions usually underpinning studies in this field is given by classic authors on the subject: Nietzsche, Merleau-Ponty, Spinoza, and Marx. Yet other approaches are suggested by the work of contemporary sociologists such as Goffman, Simmel and Elias, by the philosophy of Derrida, Butler and Deleuze, and by the psychoanalysis of Freud, Lacan and Zizek.

The popularity of online celebrities in China shows the direction taken by ordinariness. Footage of the celebrities is not confined to television and films, and the 'celebs' are clearly identifiable with common folk, unlike the Hollywood stars of yore. With the swift development of social media, the public chooses its idols to suit its tastes. The new online celebrities know how to grab the public's attention by sharing their own experiences and emotions.¹³

In the case of online celebrities in China, one can also see the interaction of their bodies and society. Their bodies and images on the media can be circulated, downloaded and copied as symbols and models. The online stars are part and parcel of consumers' daily life. On the other hand, as common people, we are all under the thrall of online celebrity culture. As a result, more and more people become fans (whether voluntarily or passively) and relate intimately to the celebrities. Here it is opportune to look at body positions and modalities in a broader context.

The tension between individual, subjective, and social bodies is one of the keys that will shed light on the

11 Smith H, Schneider A. (2009). Critiquing models of emotions. *Sociological Methods & Research*, 37,4, 560-589

12 Gross J, Feldman Barrett L. (2011). Emotion generation and emotion regulation: one or two depends on your point of view. *Emotion Review*,3, 8-16.

13 For "emotion management" view see Hochschild, A. R. (1990). Ideology and emotion management: A perspective and path for future research. En T. D. Kemper (ed.), *Research agenda in the sociology of emotions* (p 117-142). Nova York: University of New York Press.

connections between the geometries of bodies and grammars of action that are part of China, Asia and the Global South. The phenomenon of online celebrities also creates tensions and sense when joining the corporal perspective with view from the standpoint of sensations. The logic of 'attracting fans' in the form of a host of "likes" may be easy and convenient but it can also give rise to problems and social tensions. As Wang Bing (2018: 147) says, "With a collective carnival, a small text or a video could get numerous clicks, spread, comments and even a virus-like witness. The number of followers has become the vote of the celebrities. In this sense, the new media has become a digitalised 'celebrity-making' machine."

As mentioned above, this paper seeks to clarify the practices of Internet celebrities in China to shed light on the current politics of sensibilities.

CELEBRITIES: BODY, SENSATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS

The *2018 China Online Celebrity Economic Development Insight Report*¹⁴ published by Sina Weibo and I-Research, concludes that the scale of online celebrities' industry is constantly expanding and many new areas are emerging. The number of celebrities is rising and the age of fans is falling. Advertising has become the easiest way for celebrities to make money and expand their influence — something that has been recognised by advertisers. From the gender perspective, the number of male celebrities rose by 49.9 % in 2008. Over half of the celebrities are from big cities such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. One should also note that celebrities are generally well-educated. According to the survey, 77.6% held a bachelor's degree and 13% had a master's degree. The ranking of online celebrities in China 2018¹⁵ analysed by Daily Web, shows that the first five celebrities are 回忆专用小马甲 (small vest

for the memory), papi 酱 (papi sauce), 小野妹子学吐槽 (gossip from sister Xiao Ye), 我的前任是极品 (a crazy ex) and 同道大叔 (Tong dao A uncle). From the

Image 1



回忆专用小马甲¹⁵ (small vest for the memory)

Source: <http://m.gaochengnews.net/wanghong/24647.html>

Image 2



papi 酱 («papi sauce»)

Source: <http://www.ikanchai.com/article/20160713/88465.shtml>

14 *2018 China Online Celebrity Economic Development Insight Report* (online)

15 Ranking of online celebrities in China 2018 (online) <http://www.enet.com.cn/article/2018/0818/A20180818052679.html> access 21st March 2019.

weird nicknames, we might guess that these are not actors or actresses but rather ordinary people with lots of online fans. Given that they lack the professional training of film stars, when they achieve fame, they often run into trouble when their traits and acts are at odds with their social identities.

Online celebrities could come up with emotional branding to forge strong ties with consumers. They could go online to accompany their fans and use their unique styles to capture yet more fans — for instance, through text, images, photos, videos and live broadcasts to show their sensations, understanding and experiences of some products, news items, etc. Many celebrities undergo cosmetic surgery, put on make-up, or wear bizarre clothes to please their fans when they broadcast live.

The short video app Douyin (launched as 'A. me' in September 2016) not only offers a space for celebrities but also for ordinary people to express themselves. Originally conceived as an app for user-made music videos, Douyin is now multi-functional and covers everything from pranks to pets and sport stunts. Every clip is up to 15 seconds long and the app offers myriad editing tools, filters, and effects, such as slow-motion and camera blurs.

The impressions woven by online celebrities create sensations that give rise to two worlds — an internal one and an external one. The former is of a social, subjective, nature. The latter covers what we might call 'the natural world'. Such configurations are formed in a dialectic tension between impressions, perceptions and their results, giving sensations the 'meaning' of a surplus or excess, bringing them closer and placing them beyond the dialectic.

In contemporary Chinese society, one can see the reflection of *body-individual*, *body-subjective* and *body-social* from the popularity of online celebrities. Their body-subjective is the self-expression of their body-

individual, but affects fans' multiple body-subjective. Their body is also a social body that exerts great influence on Chinese society. For example, Papi 酱 attended China's Central Academy of Drama, where she received her bachelor and master degrees. She has worked in entertainment as an actor and assistant director. Now, nicknamed "Papi 酱", she is an internet celebrity who shot to fame by posting original sarcastic videos via social media. She uses self-expression to discuss burning social issues and has her "own opinions". Therefore,

Image 3



Exhibition de Zhou Jie "36 Days"

Source: <https://news.artron.net/20170725/n946895.html>

her body-image is not individual and fractal but has "social functions", expressing the "daily", common body. Many ordinary people are inspired by her example, using their bodies in artistic ways and go on to become online celebrities.

In 2014, Zhou Jie, an artist, put on a personal show called "36 Days" that revealed her sleeping naked in an exhibition space. This became a social event and many people criticised her, arguing the toss as to whether the show was Action Art or Erotic Art. Her body is not a self-expression of her feelings but rather a social body that society beholds.

The Internet celebrities try to take advantage of their body-image to influence their fans' 'natural feelings' and in so doing, build the body-skin of the people and spawn a body-movement akin to sociability.

16 He always uses the profile of his dog 'NiuNiu' to make his audience laugh

FINAL REFLECTIONS

Sullivan and Kehoe (2017) stress the importance of celebrity morality given that “In China, the State, which has long promoted role models for their patriotism, heroism or exemplary role-fulfilment, uses celebrities as a vehicle for promoting nationalism, traditional virtues and the pursuit of modernity. It has identified celebrities as purveyors of “spiritual goods”, exhorting them to “perform conscientiously, behave respectfully” and “take the lead in setting an example for society.” Chinese celebrities need to create positive images and be a spiritual model for the public. That is why it is important to understand the policy of emotions as a strategy for constructing social sensibility.

In China, sensibilities are supposed to reflect ‘Core Socialist Values’ covering: prosperity; democracy; civility; harmony; freedom; equality; justice; The Rule of Law; patriotism; dedication; integrity; friendship. The production and consumption of Internet celebrities in China is thus conditioned by this context. In this sense, the celebrities are considered as the vehicle and the expression of “voices from the top” to educate and rule people. On the other hand, the machine gives ordinary, common people the chance to become stars in online talent shows. Thus the celebrities also represent the “voice from the lower and middle classes”

on social issues, including justice and equality.

Chinese social media has its own tools such as WeChat, QQ, Weibo etc. in which Internet celebrities perform. Micro-celebrities for micro-environments and the masses light two paths for turning one’s personal image into “popularity”, “fame”, and “recognition”. The culture of “grabbing attention” has become a planetary phenomenon and is part of a life lived through images enshrining the notion of instant enjoyment and gratification. The images and practices of China’s online celebrities embody collective attitudes and are expected to obey China’s Internet management policies and to contribute to society as a whole. In such a context, ordinary people have a greater chance to become celebrities and make their voices heard.

Finally, Society 4.0 is shaping the digital economy. The sensations and emotions of China’s online celebrities enshrine sociability and arouse social sensibilities. Internet celebrities open a window on the daily life of the Chinese today, revealing their concerns, worries, hopes, and dreams in a country that is advancing rapidly on a high-tech path, mirroring the giant strides the country has made over the last forty years.

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 - **Book chapter:** DiMaggio, P. (1991). Social structure, institutions and cultural goods: The case of the United States. In P. Bourdieu, & J. Coleman, (ed.), *Social theory for a changing society* (pp. 133-166). Boulder: Westview Press.
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Checklist for preparing submissions

As part of the submission process, authors must check that they fulfil all of the following conditions:

1. The submission has not been previously published or submitted to another journal (or an explanation has been sent via 'Comments to the publisher').
2. The submission is filed as an OpenOffice or Microsoft Word document.
3. Wherever possible, a DOI has been provided for each of the references.
4. The text spacing is 1.5 lines; font size is 12 points, and italics are used instead of underlining, except for URLs. All of the illustrations, figures, and tables are placed in the text in their corresponding positions, rather than at the end of the text.
5. The text meets the bibliographic and style requirements described in the 'instructions to the author' section in the author's guidelines.
6. If the submission is sent to an expert reviewer, all instructions should be followed to ensure anonymous review.
7. The author must comply with the ethical standards and good practices of the journal, in accordance with the document describing these which is available on the *Debats* website.

The files should be sent to: secretaria.debats@dival.es

In the event these instructions are not followed, submissions may be returned to the authors.





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