— Journal on Culture, Power and Society

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Special Issue
Culture and genders. Arts and professions

Contributions Marta Casals-Balaguer, Anna Villarroya, Tino Carreño, Emanuela Naclerio, João Oswaldo Leiva Filho, Sumedha Bhattacharyya, Pamela Santana Oliveros, Maria Patricio-Mulero

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Contributions Marta Casals-Balaguer, Anna Villarroya, Iva Nenić, Tatjana Nikolić, Angels Bronsoms, Paula Guerra, Miguel Ángel G. Escribano, Dafne Muntanyola-Saura, J. Ignacio Gallego, Jordi Baltà, Gigi Guizzo, Àngel Mestres, Juan Pecourt, Sandra Obiol

Miscellaneous

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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 (IVEI). 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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Special Issue

Culture and gender: Arts and professions

Presentation of the first monograph, 'Culture and gender: Arts and professions'

Coordinated by
Marta Casals-Balaguer
UNIVERSITAT DE BARCELONA

Anna Villarroya
UNIVERSITAT DE BARCELONA

This monograph, from the *Debats* journal, *Revista de cultura, poder y sociedad* (Debats: The Journal of Culture, Power, and Society), entitled 'Culture and gender: Arts and professions', presents the first of two special issues that will focus on the theme of culture and gender in contemporary society. It places special emphasis on the analysis of gender inequalities in cultural fields, specifically in the musical, theatrical, and dance arts scenes in different countries. It also focuses on the problems associated with cultural and artistic work, the gender gap in terms of access to cultural resources, goods, and services, and the role of gender in the professionalisation of disciplines in cultural fields.

This issue comes at a time when movements such as *#MeToo* or *#OnSónLesDones* have put attacks against female artists, their difficulties in accessing places of power, and the lack of recognition and visibility of their work on political agendas. Likewise, international organisations such as UNESCO have warned of violation of the cultural rights of women and of the least represented genders in various publications (*Culture and working conditions of artists: implementing the 1980 Recommendation concerning the Status of Artists,* 2019; *Freedom and creativity: defending art, defending diversity,* 2020; *Re|Shaping policies for creativity addressing culture as a global public good,* 2022) and different countries have adopted measures to try to face this problem.

The current global crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic has, however, shaken these more recent stimuli, especially because of the lack of focus on gender equality in the rescue and aid programmes launched all over the world (Conor, 2021; Villarroya Planas, 2022). Hence, analysing how the pandemic has affected and is affecting groups of creative and cultural workers differently, especially women and underrepresented genders has become especially relevant. Indeed, the fact that care responsibilities are a determining factor in the inability to generate income during the crisis may exacerbate (gender) inequalities in the long term. This is particularly relevant for freelance or self-employed artists and cultural professionals who may experience more discrimination in their career progression or even entry into the labour market because of care responsibilities.

In this context, the monograph presented below contains six articles that lay out research on gender issues in artistic scenes from different countries around the world (Bangladesh, Bolivia, Brazil, Spain, France, and Italy), mainly focused on the disciplines of the performing arts (theatre and dance) and the gender inequalities that exist in these fields in terms of the construction of the professional artistic trajectories of creators, producers, and consumers.

Three articles are presented within the scope of the artistic discipline of theatre: one focuses on the artistic scene in Spain; another, in Italy, and the third one, in Brazil. On the one hand, the article by Tino Carreño and Anna Villarroya, entitled 'Gender disparities in the performing arts labour market', shows, based on the analysis of a survey, the gender inequalities manifested in terms of remuneration in the performing arts sector in Spain. On the other hand, we also present the article entitled 'Young actresses at work: an analysis of gender and power inequalities in the Italian theatrical sector' by Emanuela Naclerio, which, based on a qualitative analysis, examines the experiences of young actresses in the Italian performing arts environment, considering both aesthetic and emotional aspects related to theatrical work.

Lastly, the article by João Leiva, entitled 'The place of women in the theatres of São Paulo: from playwrights to performers', focuses on the theatrical artistic scene in the city of São Paulo (Brazil) and puts the spotlight on the inequalities suffered by women working in this field. Specifically, Leiva presents a quantitative analysis based on data from 1,466 theatrical works performed in the city of São Paulo throughout 2018. His analysis shows the gender gaps present in the positions of direction, dramatics, performance, and set design, among others.

In relation to the field of dance, this monograph presents three research-based articles, two of an ethnographic nature, focused on dances originating in Bangladesh and Bolivia, and a third related to the appropriation of public spaces through dance, in this case, based on group interviews. Thus, the fourth article in this monograph, by Sumedha Bhattacharyya, is entitled 'The gender paradox: professionalisation of a form of traditional martial arts, *Lathi Khela*, in the sociocultural context of Bangladesh',

and presents an autoethnographic investigation on the tradition of the martial arts dance, *Lathi Khela*, in Bangladesh. By studying the artistic practices of this dance and the innovations that have been incorporated in this context, Bhattacharyya explores the role of gender and tradition defined through the construction of dance and the repertoire and choreographies that characterise it.

For her part, Pamela Santana presents research entitled '*Macha Caporal*: bridging gaps, embodying resistance', focused on the performative practices of female groups that appropriate the movements and costumes of the male *Macho Caporal* character from the traditional *caporales* dance from Bolivia. Through this practice, which was created as an act of rebellion and discontent with the pre-established roles in this traditional dance, women have made visible the dynamics of inequalities and sexist attitudes present in the folk settings of the city of La Paz.

The sixth and last article in this monograph, entitled 'Dancing in the street as feminist empowerment: The choreographic discourse of the BellyWarda and L'Armée des Roses collectives', by Maria Patricio-Mulero, focuses on the analysis, based on collective interviews, of the choreographic discourse of the BellyWarda (FatChanceBellyDance©) and L'Armée des Roses (cancan) troupes, two French companies committed to spreading feminism on public streets. The article delves into the appropriation of urban space, interactions with the public and their reception, and social links between dancers and the transmission of feminist values and was based on observation of their dance performances and interviews from the point of view of the sociology of emotions, phenomenology of urban spaces, and women's studies.

On a final note, we would like to express our gratitude to everyone who collaborated in the preparation of this monograph, especially in writing and reviewing the articles.

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Gender disparities in the performing arts labour market

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to analyse gender inequalities in the performing arts sector in Spain, and more specifically, the disparities evident in relation to remuneration. Based on a sample of 800 professionals, our results revealed that the employment situation in Spain is worse for women, who continued to be paid less than their male counterparts. This held true even when women performed the same duties, had a higher level of training, held the same positions, or had been working in the sector for the same number of years as men. An understanding of these inequalities, and especially of their multidimensional character, could help both government agencies and private sector organisations to develop and implement measures that promote gender equality, which now forms the basis for cultural diversity in the performing arts.

Keywords: performing arts, gender inequalities, women, labour market

SUMMARY

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INTRODUCTION

It was not until very recently that gender inequalities in the cultural sector began to generate interest in the fields of sociology and employment studies (Banks and Milestone, 2011; Eikhof and Warhurst, 2013; Conor, Gill, and Taylor, 2015; Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2015; Hennekam and Bennett, 2017; Eikhof, Newsinger, Luchinskaya, and Aidley, 2019). Among the issues that have aroused the greatest interest among researchers is the underrepresentation of women in the cultural workforce (particularly in creative roles and decision-making positions), their limited access to resources, as well as the conditions of more precarious jobs. This is despite women representing the majority of students undertaking university degrees related to professions in cultural fields (Guerra, 2009; Carreño, 2010; European Union, 2019; Fundación SGAE, 2021).

Most of the studies published in this area to date have focused on the Anglo-Saxon cultural sphere and the most industrialised sectors of culture (especially the audiovisual arena) and have used qualitative techniques to examine the experiences of women in the industry (Eikhof et al., 2019).

Although the professional profile and socioeconomic situation of the collective of artists and other cultural professionals most closely linked to the performing arts sector have been the subject of debate and interest for years (Benhamou, 1997; Steiner and Schneider, 2013; Lena and Lindemann, 2014; AISGE Foundation, 2016), knowledge regarding the differentiated reality of men and women in this area is still scarce. Only recently have gender inequalities in the labour market of these professionals captured the attention of national and international professional associations, as well as academia.

Thus, the following sections of this study present a review of the main studies, both international and in Spain, that have addressed gender inequalities in the performing arts sector. Next, reference is made to the methodology used and results obtained, and finally, the main conclusions of the analysis are summed up.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: GENDER INEQUALITIES IN THE PERFORMING ARTS SECTOR

At an international level, it is worth noting the studies promoted by professional associations such as the Société des Auteurs et Compositeurs Dramatiques (Society of Dramatic Authors and Composers or SACD) in France that, since 2012, has periodically published figures on the presence of women in live shows. Another example is the League of Professional Theatre Women that, as part of the 'Women Count' initiative, assesses progress towards the equal and equitable recruitment of female playwrights, directors, designers, and other professionals in off-Broadway theatres (Wade Steketee and Binus, 2015).

Other studies promoted either by the sector itself or by its administration, have influenced the existence of inequalities both in terms of access and professional progression, as well as knowledge of the main barriers that women artists must face. In the former group, it is worth highlighting the study by Freestone (2012), who, after analysing the 10 most subsidised theatres during the 2011–2012 season in England, came to the conclusion that women continued to be underrepresented in the theatrical sector by a persistent ratio of 2:1. Moreover, based on an analysis of the gender stereotypes encompassing the hiring of female performers in several European countries, and also considering the age variable, Dean (2008) concluded that, in general, men enjoy longer professional careers as performers than women do. Therefore, as a group, men are more evenly distributed by age group, professional category, and income levels. For their part, women are concentrated in the younger age groups, have fewer opportunities to choose their occupations, have shorter professional lives, receive lower incomes, and frequently occupy the lowest professional categories. These authors also showed that a higher proportion of women were in lower income brackets and fewer were present in those with higher incomes.

In France, several studies commissioned by the French Government's Department of Culture and Communication also highlighted gender inequalities in the cultural labour market. Thus, using data from 2011 referring to the audiovisual and live performance sectors, Gouyon (2014) concluded that women represented only 29% of the authors of the SACD and received just 24% of the royalties generated by the society. Behind these results is the lower participation of women in theatre and street arts, the fact that they perform activities other than those carried out by men, and their reduced presence as composers and increased presence as authors of texts and as choreographers. The study also highlighted how, in cases of the same category and discipline, remuneration differences were observed for live shows.

Regarding the gender inequalities related to professional progression, the study by Freestone (2012) also showed that fewer women participated in the management of the governing bodies of the 10 theatres analysed (33%), or in the authorship of productions (35%), artistic direction (36%), or hiring of artists (38%), with women representing the majority only at the level of executive direction (67%). Of all the employed personnel (direction, design, sound and light technicians, and composers, etc.), only 23% were women. With the aim of examining the determining causes of these inequalities, Freestone (2012) also analysed female representation in these theatres and identified a relationship between the low number of female playwrights and relative absence of roles for actresses in the theatre sector.

Indeed, Kerbel (2012) came to a similar conclusion in a study for the United Kingdom on opportunities for young women in youth theatre. Of note, in their survey study of 291 teachers and young residents at theatres across the country, 75% of the participants described their organisation as predominantly female. Despite this, both teachers and theatre residents pointed out the difficulty in finding scripts with enough female roles given the high number of female students.

The study by Dean (2008) also delved into the perceptions of the performers. Thus, while women perceived their gender as a disadvantage in many of the dimensions considered in the study (number and range of roles, income, and ageing, etc.), men saw their gender as a neutral factor. Dean also found differences in performers' perceptions of employment opportunities, with 57% of women compared to 6% of men believing there was a lack of opportunities for gender reasons.

At the level of the Spanish state, the studies in the performing arts sector published to date have mainly analysed gender inequalities either in stage programming or in the configuration of work teams. Within the former group, it is worth noting the pioneering study by the Coordinator of Spanish State Performing Arts Fairs (or COFAE, from Coordinadora de Ferias de Artes Escénicas del Estado Español in its original Spanish) on the participation of women in the programming of COFAE fairs in 2016 (Fernández, 2016). Of the seven disciplines analysed, five (71.5%) were dominated by men (performance, direction, authorship, set design, and technical) while women outnumbered men in only two (28.5%) areas (costume design and distribution).

Ramón-Borja Berenguer and Pastor Eixarch (2017) obtained similar results when they analysed the participation of women in devising the programming for a range of public theatres and auditoriums in Spain in the 2015–2016 season. According to the authors, the participation of women in the shows was 6% for direction or musical composition; 18% for writing, versioning, adaptation, or the production of dramatics; and 44% for choreography. In addition, only 21% of the venues were directed and/or managed by women. In a similar study for the Autonomous Community of Aragon, Pastor Eixarch (2015) estimated the presence of women in creative processes (authorship and composition, etc.) as well as in the management of the performing arts sector (theatre, opera, dance, and popular music concerts) to be around 22% in this community.

In addition, with a local scope as well as a gender focus, Cabó and Sánchez (2017) also analysed the cultural programming of the Barcelona City Council between 2016 and 2017. They found that, for festivals, the role of the main performer or soloist went to women in only 27.3% (2016) and 35.1% (2017) of cases, respectively, and that it exceeded 40% for large auditoriums. Finally, in performing arts centres, only 24% of the productions (in 2016) and 32% (in 2017) were performed by women.

This latter group of studies related to working groups shows that, as in other cultural sectors, women form the majority presence in these teams, although their presence was token in technical and managerial tasks. Furthermore, the study by Fernández (2016) revealed an equal presence of women in work teams (comprising 51% women and 49% men), although their analysis by professional category showed how positions of responsibility and decision-making were mostly occupied by men (with the exception of production, a role performed by women in 73% of cases). Their work also observed that in fairs with executive direction or management roles occupied by women, the working team also comprised a female majority. However, the reverse was true when these aforementioned positions were occupied by men, whereby the majority of these roles were then occupied by men.

In the same year, Veiga Barrio (2016) carried out a gender analysis of the Centro Dramático Nacional (National Dramatic Centre, or CDN), the first theatrical production unit created by the National Institute of Performing Arts and Music (INAEM from the Instituto Nacional de las Artes Escénicas y de la Música), an autonomous body of the Spanish state Ministry of Culture and Sport. This work also showed the unequal participation of men and women in the management teams of the CDN, with more men fulfilling artistic and technical tasks. Furthermore, the study highlighted the invisibility of women as a consequence of their lower participation in management activities, use of sexist

language and images, favoured dissemination of works written by men, and greater participation of men in training and educational activities.

More recently, a report carried out by the SGAE Foundation (2021) also found high percentages of gender discrimination in the performing arts, music, and audiovisual sectors. Based on an analysis of the employment situation of its members, the study pointed out the existence of two types of discrimination: on the one hand, thepresence of more men than women in positions of power (vertical segregation), and on the one hand, and a wage gap. In this context, this present article aimed to deepen the analysis of gender inequalities in the performing arts sector in Spain and to specifically examine the inequalities manifested in terms of remuneration.

METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach of this study was based on reviewing the relevant literature on the subject at both the national and international levels. Given the absence of a registry or census of professionals in the Spanish performing arts sector that would allow us to approach the characteristics of their occupations from a gender perspective, in the empirical part of this research we designed, administered, and analysed an appropriate questionnaire to complete this task. Similar problems are also present in other cultural sectors, as highlighted by Gallego, Muntanyola-Saura, and Gil Escribano (2020) in their analysis of gender inequalities in the Spanish music industry.

The questionnaire we devised contained questions related to the sociodemographic characteristics of the participants as well as the nature of their employment, and was validated (in terms of response time, understanding of the issues, relevance of the research, and possible contributions) through a pilot test carried out on 16 individuals with similar characteristics to the target population. The primary information obtained from the questionnaire came from a group of professionals who, throughout 2018, attended one of 14[1] specific fairs from the total of 18 fairs organised by COFAE at that time. The aim of this study was to analyse,from a gender perspective, the main sociodemographic (age, gender, and highest level of education) and employment variables (employment type, annual salary in 2017, professional profile, functions performed, artistic sector, years of experience in the sector, field of activity, and autonomous community) of the performing arts professionals in Spain. Thus, we administered our questionnaire to attendees of COFAE fairs to allow us to reach the agents involved in the processes of creation and production (companies and individual artists), distribution, commercialisation, contracting shows (technical staff in public administrations or cultural facility managers), as well as other agents that form the backbone of the sector (such as professional or festival associations), all of them at the level of the Spanish state.

As spaces whose primary objective is revitalisation and generation of the performing arts sector market, fairs help to forge relationships between producers and consumers (programmers who attend to buy) while also serving as an exhibition space and distribution channel for the performing arts (Llacuna Ortínez, 2017). The fairs fulfil three operational objectives: they (1) are forums for discussion and exchange of experiences and projects; (2) promote contact between professionals which facilitates commercial exchange; and finally, (3) serve as platforms to distribute products more quickly and efficiently (San Salvador del Valle Doistua and Lazcano Quintana, 2006). According to these same authors, after organising any type of theatre fair, the hope is that it will have served to help companies conduct their professional activities and make it easier for

1 Madferia, Feten, dFERIA, Mostra Igualada, Feria de Artes Escénicas y Musicales de Castilla-La Mancha, Fira de Teatre de Titelles de Lleida, Umore Azoka, Mostra de Teatre d'Alcoi, Galicia Escena PRO, Palma - Feria de Teatro en el Sur, Feria de Teatro de Castilla y León, FiraTàrrega, Feria Internacional de Teatro y Danza de Huesca, and FIET.

programmers to discover new shows or creators and increase sales, thereby boosting the market.

In this sense, as a meeting point for cultural professionals (Doistua Nebreda, 2016), the market for performing arts fairs offers a rich ecosystem of professional profiles already present in the sector and, therefore, were appropriate scenarios for completing our analyses.

To determine the definitive scope of this study area, we analysed and filtered the 4,090 accredited professionals that attended the 14 fairs considered. In this process, international professionals as well as anyone who had attended several of these fairs were eliminated, leaving us with a final sample of 2,778 professionals. During the fieldwork process, which took place between May and November 2018, the survey was sent electronically (through the SurveyMonkey platform) four times during four different periods, each coinciding with the end of different fairs. During this period, to ensure an adequate response rate, a minimum of one reminder was sent for each survey mailing (Dillman, Smyth, and Christian, 2014). Considering the final sample range, and given that we obtained 800 valid survey responses, a final sampling fraction of 0.287 was reached. In the event that this sample of 800 individuals had been randomly selected from the pool of 2,778 identified professionals, the assumed margin of error would have been ± 2,926 (when applying a 95% confidence interval).

The statistical analysis of the data was carried out using SPSS software (version 25.0; IBM Corp., Armonk, NY) for Macintosh. Specifically, we first performed a descriptive analysis of the sociodemographic and employment variables linked to gender, followed second by adding the salary level variable. In both circumstances, we used various statistics to study possible significant relationships. Thus, where the associated significance was less than 0.05 when applying Pearson's chi-squared test, ANOVA, or Pearson's coefficient, the null hypothesis (independence of all the variables) was rejected and the existence of a statistically significant relationship between the assessed variables was confirmed. However, when using ANOVA, if it was possible to assume the normality of the data but not its homogeneity or homoscedasticity, we instead used the non-parametric Kruskal–Wallis H and Mann–Whitney U tests through the Levene statistic. In addition, in the latter case we rejected the null hypothesis if the associated significance was less than 0.05. Only results for which statistically significant differences were observed are presented in the following sections.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

As shown in table 1, a total of 800 professionals from the performing arts sector in Spain answered the questionnaire. Representing 54% of the sample, women predominated, alongside professionals with a higher education (78.2%). The average survey responder age was 45.82 years, and they had a mean 18.4 years of experience in the sector. It is worth noting the high educational level of the majority of the sample, with more of these professionals having a higher education than the average for individuals in this cultural occupation (69.1%) and in Spain (42.9%), according to data from the Cultural Statistics Yearbook (*Anuario de Estadísticas Culturales*) for 2018 (Ministry of Culture and Sports, 2018).

The distribution, by gender, of the professionals that participated in the survey differed from that collected in the Cultural Statistics Yearbook, nor were the activities exactly the same. Thus, in 2018, while the percentage of women employed in 'design, creation, translation, artistic, and entertainment activities' was 41.1%, the percentage of professional women in the performing arts rose to 54% in our sample. At the remuneration level, 40% of performing arts professionals had a gross annual income of less than €24,001. In 2017, the mean annual earnings per worker amounted to €23,646.50, according to the Spanish National Statistics Office (Instituto Nacional de Estadística or INE) data. This data accounts for the high precariousness of the performing arts sector, in particular, and of the cultural sector, in general, as also

highlighted in previous studies (Zafra, 2018; Muro, 2019; Gallego, Muntanyola-Saura, and Gil Notary, 2020; SGAE Foundation, 2021).

The predominant professional profiles of the COFAE fair attendees were those of theatre company members (36%), technical personnel from public administrations (22%) and permanent facilities (13%), and finally, festival and fair staff (10%). Therefore, there was a balance between professionals who had attended the different fairs with the aim of buying or selling. The former accounted for 45% of the attendees (including public administration, facilities, and festival staff), while the latter represented 44% (bringing together theatre companies and distribution companies).

Regarding the different job roles of the professionals, 37% performed directive and management functions, followed by technical and management tasks (28%), and creative and/or artistic tasks (21%). In terms of their field of occupation, more than a third stated that they worked in the public sphere (28% in local administration and 9% in other bodies). The remaining 72% worked in the private sector, with the most important group being freelancers and self-employed businesses (26%).

At the territorial level, the autonomous communities of the survey participants attending the COFAE fair were distributed into three groups: 49% from communities with the highest income per inhabitant (Madrid, the Basque Country, Navarra, and Catalonia); 30% from communities with an intermediate income level per inhabitant (Aragón, La Rioja, the Balearic Islands, Castilla y León, Cantabria, Galicia, and the Valencian Community); with the remaining 21% being from the communities with the lowest income per inhabitant. This distribution did not differ excessively from the that of the cultural employment by autonomous communities included in the Cultural Statistics Yearbook. According to this source, in 2018, cultural employment in the first group of communities accounted for 50% of all employment, while in the second and third groups it represented 26% and 24%, respectively. However, caution should be applied when considering these figures because they refer to overall cultural employment and not only that of the performing arts sector.

Table I Description of the sociodemographic and employment variables of the sample

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
GENDER IDENTITY		
Women	430	54 %
Men	366	46 %
Non-binary	4	1 %
Total	800	100 %
AGE		
Under 35 years	102	13 %
Between 35 and 44 years	257	32 %
Between 45 and 54 years	282	35 %
Over 54 years	159	20 %
Total	800	100 %

MAXIMUM EDUCATION LEVEL		
Doctorate degree	25	3%
Postgraduate or specialised master's degree	226	28%
Undergraduate university degree (4–5 years)	241	30%
Undergraduate university degree (3 years)	134	17%
Other non-university-level education	174	22%
Total	800	100%
YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN THE SECTOR		
More than 20 years	246	36%
Between 13 and 20 years	218	32%
Between 6 and 12 years	148	21%
Less than 6 years	77	11%
Total	689	100%
ANNUAL REMUNERATION (2017)		
Less than €18,000	291	40%
€18,001–€24,000	177	24%
€24,001–€36,000	129	18%
More than €36,000	131	18%
Total	728	100%
PROFESSIONAL PROFILE		
Theatre company member	251	36%
Public administration technician	158	22%
Worker at a permanent facility	90	13%
Festival and fair staff	67	10%
Distributor	58	8%
Others	54	8%
Management team member in another type of activity (professional associations or association coordinator, etc.)	27	4%
Total	705	100%
PREDOMINANT WORK ACTIVITY FUNCTION		
Direction and management	258	37%
Creation and/or artistic	148	21%

Management or services staff, etc.	199	28%
Others	75	11%
Administrative staff	20	3%
Aide/assistant	5	1%
Total	705	100%
OCCUPATION SCOPE		
Local management	191	28%
Freelancer or self-employed (business or professional)	177	26%
Public limited company or limited company, etc.	132	19%
Associations and foundations, etc.	95	14%
Other public bodies	64	9%
Cooperative	32	5%
Total	691	100%
AUTONOMOUS COMMUNITIES		
Madrid The Basque Country Navarra Catalonia	318	49%
Aragon La Rioja The Balearic Islands Castile and Leon Cantabria Galicia The Autonomous Community of Valencia	196	30%
Asturias The Canary Islands Murcia Castilla La Mancha Andalusia Extremadura	135	21%
Total	649	100%

GENDER INEQUALITIES AMONG PERFORMING ARTS PROFESSIONALS IN SPAIN

Analysis from a gender perspective shows how women receive lower salaries (45% receive salaries of less than €18,000 compared to 34% of men), are less represented in leadership and management roles (29% perform management functions compared to 45% of men), and more represented in process management and services (33% compared to 23%). This is despite having a higher educational level (36% of the survey participants in this work had specialised postgraduate and master's degrees compared to 19% of their male counterparts). These results account for the vertical segregation and 'sticky floor' that mainly affects women by keeping them in the lowest levels of the labour pyramid, with little upward mobility and invisible barriers to their professional advancement.

Likewise, the mean age of the female surveyees was younger compared to men (15% were aged over 54 years compared to 25% of the men), which became a possible disadvantage for professional progression, especially when this is dependent on years of experience in the sector. Another aspect to highlight was the predominance of women living in the group of autonomous communities with the highest incomes per inhabitant, probably because of the increased opportunities for job placement as a result of the generally greater cultural offer (both public and private) in these areas.

Table 2 Significant differences between gender and the remaining variables.

VARIABLE	ABSOLUTE FRECUENCY (%)	
	WOMEN	MEN
ECONOMIC REMUNERATION		
Less than €18,000	176 (45%)	113 (34%)
€18,000–€24,000	68 (17%)	60 (18%)
€24,001–€36,000	95 (24%)	81 (24%)
More than €36,000	50 (13%)	81 (24%)
Total	389 (100%)	335 (100%)
FUNCTIONS		
Creation and/or artist	66 (17%)	81 (25%)
Direction and management	111 (29%)	145 (45%)
Management or services staff, etc.	123 (33%)	76 (23%)
Administrative staff	17 (4%)	3 (1%)
Aide/assistant	4 (1%)	1 (0%)
Others	57 (15%)	18 (6%)
Total	378 (100%)	324 (100%)

EDUCATION LEVEL		
Doctorate degree	11 (3%)	14 (4%)
Postgraduate or specialised master's degree	154 (36%)	71 (19%)
Undergraduate university degree (4–5 years)	132 (31%)	109 (30%)
Undergraduate university degree (3 years)	63 (15%)	70 (19%)
Other non-university level education	70 (16%)	102 (28%)
Total	430 (100%)	366 (100%)
PROFESSIONAL PROFILE		
Local administration technicians	85 (22%)	72 (22%)
Team member at a permanent facility	36 (10%)	54 (17%)
Festival team member	28 (7%)	39 (12%)
Theatre company member	130 (34%)	120 (37%)
Member of a management team for another type of activity	20 (5%)	7 (2%)
Staff member for a distributor	44 (12%)	14 (4%)
Other profiles	35 (9%)	18 (6%)
Total	378 (100%)	324 (100%)
AGE		
Less than 35 years	59 (14%)	41 (11%)
Between 35 and 44 years	141 (33%)	116 (32%)
Between 45 and 54 years	164 (38%)	116 (32%)
Over 54 years	66 (15%)	93 (25%)
Total	430 (100%)	366 (100%)
YEARS OF EXPERIENCE		
Less than 6 years	52 (14%)	24 (8%)
6–12 years	95 (26%)	52 (16%)
13–20 years	117 (32%)	100 (32%)
More than 20 years	105 (28%)	141 (44%)
Total	369 (100%)	317 (100%)

AUTONOMOUS COMMUNITIES		
Low per capita income	51 (15%)	94 (31%)
Average per capita income	104 (30%)	81 (27%)
High per capita income	191 (55%)	125 (42%)
Total	346 (100%)	300 (100%)

One of the most important findings from this analysis was the salary differences between men and women. This aspect is explored in depth in the following sections, relating it to other variables such as age, professional profile, years of experience in the sector, and the type of tasks performed by different groups.

Table 3 Significant differences between gender, financial remuneration, and other sociodemographic and employment variables.

		ECONOMIC REMUNERATION				
	VARIABLE	LESS THAN €18,000	BETWEEN €24,001 AND €36,000	BETWEEN €18,001 AND €24,000	MORE THAN €36,000	TOTAL
	AGE					
Women	Under 35 years	76%	18%	0%	6%	100%
	From 35 to 44 years	47%	22%	24%	7%	100%
	From 45 to 54 years	40%	14%	32%	14%	100%
	Over 54 years	29%	16%	26%	29%	100%
	Total	45%	17%	24%	13%	100%
Men	Under 35 years	71%	14%	6%	9%	100%
	From 35 to 44 years	40%	20%	21%	19%	100%
	From 45 to 54 years	24%	19%	29%	28%	100%
	Over 54 years	23%	16%	29%	32%	100%
	Total	34%	18%	24%	24%	100%

	EDUCATION LEVEL					
Women	Doctorate degree	55%	0%	18%	27%	100%
	Postgraduate or master's degree	42%	17%	25%	16%	100%
	Undergraduate university degree (4–5 years)	39%	20%	29%	12%	100%
	Undergraduate university degree (3 years)	40%	19%	28%	14%	100%
	Other non-university -level education	69%	15%	11%	5%	100%
	Total	45%	17%	24%	13%	100%
Men	Doctorate degree	31%	8%	31%	31%	100%
	Postgraduate or master's degree	15%	17%	32%	35%	100%
	Undergraduate university degree (4–5 years)	36%	12%	27%	25%	100%
	Undergraduate university degree (3 years)	33%	27%	22%	19%	100%
	Other non-university -level education	47%	20%	16%	18%	100%
	Total	34%	18%	24%	24%	100%
	PROFILE					
Women	Public administration technician	8%	14%	58%	20%	100%
	Permanent facility staff	28%	19%	31%	22%	100%
	Festival and fair staff	71%	25%	0%	4%	100%
	Theatre company member	65%	16%	9%	9%	100%
	Staff member for a distributor	48%	9%	23%	20%	100%
	Others	51%	27%	18%	4%	100%
	Total	45%	17%	24%	13%	100%

Men	Public administration technician	7%	14%	49%	31%	100%
	Permanent facility staff	20%	11%	31%	37%	100%
	Festival and fair staff	41%	26%	18%	15%	100%
	Theatre company member	56%	17%	12%	16%	100%
	Staff member for a distributor	29%	21%	21%	29%	100%
	Others	28%	24%	20%	28%	100%
	Total	34%	17%	25%	24%	100%
YEARS OF EXPERIENCE						
Women	Less than 5 years	65%	15%	15%	4%	100%
	Between 6 and 12 years	47%	23%	19%	11%	100%
	Between 13 and 20 years	37%	19%	32%	13%	100%
	More than 20 years	41%	12%	27%	20%	100%
	Total	45%	18%	25%	13%	100%
Men	Less than 5 years	46%	13%	29%	13%	100%
	Between 6 and 12 years	44%	10%	23%	23%	100%
	Between 13 and 20 years	31%	20%	25%	24%	100%
	More than 20 years	31%	16%	26%	27%	100%
	Total	34%	16%	25%	24%	100%
FUNCTIONS						
Women	Creation and/or artist	65%	15%	9%	11%	100%
	Direction and management	32%	17%	32%	19%	100%
	Management or services staff, etc.	41%	20%	28%	11%	100%
	Total	43%	18%	25%	14%	100%
Men	Creation and/or artist	54%	15%	17%	14%	100%
	Direction and management	27%	15%	26%	32%	100%
	Management or services staff, etc.	18%	22%	37%	22%	100%
	Total	32%	17%	26%	25%	100%

As shown in table 3, the moment considered in their professional lives does not influence men and women in the same way. Analysis of the lowest economic remuneration interval, less than €18,000, showed how women more often received lower salaries in every age group. These differences were accentuated in the 45 to 54 years age group, in which four out of 10 women received this average salary, with this proportion reducing by almost half in the case of men. At the highest economic remuneration level, that of more than €36,000, the percentage of women was also lower than that of men in every age group. Although these differences still existed in the case of the youngest group, they were smaller.

This trend coincided with the general trend in the economy, in which wage differences by sex were, in general, greater as the age of the workers considered increased. This can be explained by the better qualifications (occupation and education, etc.) of younger women compared to older ones (INE, 2019). The fact that, for both men and women, the youngest age group had the lowest levels of remuneration (although these young people usually had higher levels of training) was probably because of a generational gap in the occupation of positions of management (Cabañés Martínez, 2017) and may have also represented a trend in the economy in which older workers usually occupy the most senior roles and have the most experience in the workplace (INE, 2019).

From the theoretical perspective of human capital (Becker, 1983), one might argue that women received lower salaries and occupied worse jobs than men because of their lower productivity levels as a consequence of their lower endowment of human capital. Delving deeper into this approach, it can be seen that at all training levels, women more frequently received salaries of less than €18,000. Thus, more than 40% of women with a postgraduate level of training received a salary of less than €18,000 while, under the same conditions, 15% of men were in the same situation. For income levels exceeding €36,000, the exact opposite happened: regardless of their educational level, women were less represented, with the greatest differences between them being at non-university levels (at 13% higher for men).

This difference could perhaps be explained by the late incorporation of women into the labour market in general, and into the cultural market in particular. In addition, the professionals benefiting from this difference were older and joined the workplace after the dictatorship in Spain. This would have coincided with the advent of public cultural policies and a time when there was a great demand to fill new positions in the administration and in which, in some cases (such as in cultural management), no official training regulated these professions (Carreño, 2010; Cabañés Martínez, 2017).

Based on all the above, we can deduce that the theory of human capital provides insufficient theoretical elements to explain this segregation in its entirety (Aldaz Odriozola and Eguía Peña, 2016) and so perhaps leading to the thought that the lower remuneration of women at the same age and with equivalent educational levels as men could correspond to differences in their professional profiles or the functions they perform. An analysis of job profiles showed that in the salary interval below €18,000, the presence of women in each of the profiles was higher than that of men. The most pronounced differences in this income bracket could be seen between staff working in the field of festivals (71% of women and 41% of men) and the distribution of men and women working in shows.

In the latter case, in which many more women work than men (Fernández, 2016), an explanatory factor could be the age of these professionals as well as particularities linked to the performing arts and training sectors. This may either be because of a lack of economic resources making it difficult to hire a team to specifically sell their products, or the theatre companies' lack of knowledge in relation to these tasks. Thus, there is a demand for new professionals with profiles enabling them to carry out all

the functions related to distribution. This increased demand may mean that distribution companies (usually set up by men) require highly trained personnel, the majority of whom are women—as shown by studies on the gender of training in the field of cultural management (Guerra, 2009; Carreño, 2010). At the other extreme—that of incomes exceeding €36,000—the differences between women and men persisted in every job profile and were more pronounced among technical professionals in public administrations. Only 20% of the women with this profile earned more than €36,000 compared to 31% of their male counterparts. In this specific case, the differences could be explained by age and years of experience, which were both linked to holding managerial positions (especially by men) within the [Spanish governmental] administration (Carreño and Villarroya, 2020). Thus, it can be observed how, in both men and women, the perception of higher levels of income was closely linked to the stability provided by work in a public administration or in cultural facilities. In both cases, 50% of workers who earned high incomes had one of these profiles.

It could be argued that the concentration of women in lower income brackets, even when not justified by their age, educational levels, or professional profiles, might have been because they performed different functions. However, the data still showed a concentration of women (41%) working in management and service roles that earned less than €18,000, while this figure dropped to 18% in the case of men. In artistic and managerial tasks, both of which are the most recognised functions, 65% and 32% of women were in the lowest income brackets, respectively, compared to 54% and 27% in the case of men. In the income range above €36,000, men were more often present in every category, with the greatest differences (13% more men) being detected in direction and management roles.

The corresponding increased perception of income being linked to management functions when carried out by men could also have responded to the masculinisation of spaces more commonly linked to high culture (such as, for example, large auditoriums or theatres), while the presence of women would be more frequent in facilities and activities with more modest budgets and projections (Cabó and Sánchez, 2017). In general terms, it is also true that "in the collective imagination,

success is often identified with progressive and uninterrupted career paths, [which is] much more difficult for women, who are more likely to experience discontinuities and slowdowns in their careers due to the roles of care" (González Ramos, Vergés Bosch, and Martínez García, 2017, p. 76). Bearing in mind that experience in the sector may be a fundamental requirement, especially in job offers linked to leadership and management functions, this could be one reason for these salary differences.

However, as shown in table 3, regardless of the years of experience in the sector, more women still remained in the lower income brackets. This inequality was especially notable among professionals with fewer than five years of experience in the sector: while 65% of women with less than five years of experience earned less than €18,000, this percentage dropped to 46% for men. There were also gender differences in the income segment above €36,000, regardless of the years of experience in the sector. The difference between the sexes was smaller in the group of workers aged over 20 years regardless of sex. A possible explanation for this profile of closer parity may be that the few women who do manage to enter the labour market early in their professional careers and gain more than 20 years of experience are able to cover senior management positions that balance, to a certain extent, the percentage in the bracket with the highest perceived salary. Indeed, the study on gender in the Spanish music industry by Gallego, Muntanyola-Saura, and Gil Escribano (2020) also highlighted experience (years in the sector, which entails an increased reputation and knowledge of culture jobs) and adaptive strategies to gain authority as factors that favour successful career paths.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Based on this survey study which gathered a sample of 800 professionals working in the field of performing arts in Spain, we were able to analyse gender inequalities among those employed in this sector and, in particular, relate this information to salary remuneration. It has already been shown that women receive lower salaries (Muro, 2019; Villarroya and Barrios, 2019; Fundación SGAE, 2021), are underrepresented in creative roles and management positions (Fernández, 2016; Veiga Barrio, 2016; Villarroya and Barrios, 2019), and work more frequently in the third sector without holding positions of responsibility in the same proportion as men, despite having higher educational levels (TBR, 2008; Villarroya and Barrios, 2019).

In line with other studies in cultural fields, women in this labour market were also slightly younger than their male counterparts (Dean, 2008; Carreño, 2010; Cabañés, 2011; Muro, 2019; Villarroya and Barrios, 2019; Gallego, Muntanyola-Saura, and Gil Escribano, 2020), which, in the case of female artists, could be explained by the increased difficulty of working, after a certain age, in the performing arts (Muro, 2019). This could become a disadvantage for career progression, especially when advancement is dependent on years of experience in the sector. Previous studies, such as the one conducted by Villarroya and Barrios (2019) on gender inequalities in cultural employment in Catalonia, point to opportunities for professional progression as the area in which there is the greatest discrimination between men and women. Both men and women suggest that care tasks and the consequent difficulties in reconciling professional, personal, and family life as the main limiting factor for professional progression among women. This factor is also accompanied by other aspects such as the 'glass ceiling,' a term that alludes to the artificial obstacles and invisible barriers preventing women from reaching higher positions in the organisational pyramid, whether public or private, and regardless of the domain.

Another notable aspect highlighted in studies on the cultural sector (Villarroya and Barrios, 2019; Carreño and Villarroya, 2020; SGAE Foundation, 2021) and in other sectors such as technology (González Ramos, Vergés Bosch, and Martínez García, 2017) is the overqualification of women. This, together with constant work and the greater effort required, makes it possible for women to reach the same positions as men in masculinised environments (González Ramos, Vergés Bosch, and Martínez García, 2017).

Beyond these results regarding gender inequalities in the performing arts sector, this research also made it possible to gain a more accurate understanding of the wage discrimination to which women are subjected. Thus, we saw how the differences in income in the cultural sector were not caused by lower educational levels as the theory of human capital might suggest, nor by poorer job profiles, the types of functions performed, age, or years of experience in the field. Even when controlling for all these factors, many more women were concentrated in lower income level brackets compared to men, thereby confirming the results of international studies on the performing arts sector (Dean, 2008; Gouyon, 2014) and national studies with a broader scope (SGAE Foundation, 2021).

All of the above puts the gender inequalities that artists and other performing arts professionals in Spain must face squarely on the table. The characterisation of these inequalities can help both public administrations and the private sector, either in the establishment of new measures to promote egalitarianism in the sector or in the development and application of artist's statutes. In any case, it is important to point out that the demand for gender equality in the cultural sector, in general, and in the performing arts, in particular, must be understood from a broad perspective that encompasses inclusion, accessibility, and democratisation in the arts (Joseph, 2015, 2017). In this sense, the culture sector is vital when it comes to breaking harmful and outdated stereotypes and promoting cultural diversity based on gender equality (EIGE, 2016).

The future lines of research this study have opened up include, on the one hand, the need to deepen our understanding of the distinctive features behind each performing arts discipline. In this sense, gender inequality may manifest in vastly different ways, for example, in the dance versus the theatre sectors. On the other hand, these peculiarities may also differ depending on the nature of the agents, be they technical professionals from public administrations or members of a theatre company, for example. Finally, it would also be interesting to investigate other variables related to gender discrimination in the performing arts sector, such as, for example, our knowledge of the barriers that make it difficult for women to access certain professions in the sector or to achieve positions of responsibility and decision-making roles, professional recognition, or make their work more visible.

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Young actresses at work: an analysis of gender and power inequalities in the Italian theatrical sector

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ABSTRACT
From the time the ban on women performing in theatrical plays was lifted in mid-1600s England to the communicative impact of the ongoing #MeToo campaign, the presence of actresses on stage has always had the capacity to profoundly question and significantly reduce societal norms related to gender and cultural spaces. Using a qualitative methodology, this paper analyses young actresses' experiences of work in the Italian performing arts sector, considering aesthetic and emotional aspects related to theatre work. The occupational environment, described through the sector's specific datasets and surveys, appears to be characterised by marked power asymmetries in terms of age and gender which, in turn, is embedded in young actresses' everyday bodily and emotional experiences of work.

Keywords: gender inequalities, cultural work, theatre actresses, Italy, performing arts

SUMMARY

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INTRODUCTION

Although the ideal creative artist has been associated with male romantic and heroic types (Bain, 2004; Taylor and Littleton, 2012), recent feminist analysis frames young women at the centre of the emphasis the contemporary cultural industry places on entrepreneurship and creativity (Conor et al., 2015; McRobbie, 2009). The cultural sector presents itself around narratives of equality, coolness, and diversity (Gill, 2002; McRobbie, 2002), but scholars underline that working practices reproducing gender, race, and class inequalities are widespread in working environments (Barrios and Villarroya, 2021; Friedman et al., 2017; Simon, 2019). Along with many artistic domains, the performative arts sector is highly dependent on public policies and has even been considered avant-garde in its processes of labour market flexibilisation (Bataille et al., 2020; Menger, 1999). Nonetheless, in a working environment characterised by informal dynamics and by the predominance of project-based activities, young workers occupy an increasingly vulnerable position within them (Armano and Murgia, 2013; Bertolini et al., 2019; Hennekam and Bennett, 2017).

In the context of the performing arts, women's presence on the artistic stage has a controversial history of both stereotyped and emancipatory representations (Davis, 2002; Pullen, 2005). Considering the body as a bearer of cultural meanings in the public sphere, feminist literature has underlined how women engage in an ongoing confrontation with asymmetric logics and disciplinary projects (Bartky, 2015). Thus, women in professions where look and appearance are consubstantial with the labour itself (Mears, 2011) and where recruitment practices are explicitly based on physical appearance (Dean, 2005; Donovan, 2019), are particularly exposed to aesthetic scrutiny (Wolf, 1991).

Thus, taking into account gendered and power inequalities in the performing arts sector, the present article analyses young actresses' accounts of work in the Italian context and presents results from qualitative research that took place in Milan during 2019 and 2021. Considering the role the forced unemployment that affected the performing arts during 2020 and 2021 played in amplifying both pre-existing gender inequalities (Özkazanç-Pan and Pullen, 2020) and creative workers' vulnerability (Comunian and England, 2020), this paper considers actresses' accounts of their pre-pandemic work. Starting from the contribution of cultural studies to understanding gender in the cultural production sector (Conor et al., 2015; Gill, 2014), and based on sociological reflections that consider the role of aesthetic and emotional labour (Entwistle and Wissinger, 2006; Hochschild, 1983), this essay explores the gendered dimension of young women's working practices in the performing arts.

The article is organised as follows: the first section delineates the literature's contribution to the study of young women and cultural work and reviews scholars' reflections on the concepts of aesthetic and emotional labour. The second section describes the research context and methodology adopted in this work. Using descriptive statistics, the third section traces the contours of the labour market and careers of actresses and the features of the Italian theatrical system. The final section presents a reflection on the gendered implications of actresses' working practices in relation to the sector's standards of beauty and performativity and the unequal distribution of power along the axes of age and gender.

GENDER, BODIES, AND INEQUALITIES IN CULTURAL WORK

In post-industrial societies, culture and entertainment have often been enthusiastically considered a vanguard and a crucial economic sector (Florida, 2002). Creative and artistic work has become associated with fashion and 'cool jobs' in the popular imagery, producing what can be considered a 'problematic normalisation of risk' (Neff et al., 2005, p.308). In line with general trends in the cultural sector, over the past 30 years the Italian theatrical environment has witnessed an increasing number of aspirants competing for short-term employment positions (Gallina et al., 2018). In fact, both the length of the *tournée* (tour) and the time dedicated to the production of shows consistently declined and has impacted the length of actors' engagements (Serino, 2020). Furthermore, recent labour market reforms paved the way for the spread of hybrid employment relationships (Armano and Murgia, 2017) in which performers are increasingly hired not only as employees but also as independent workers, thereby making semi-dependent or formally autonomous contracts increasingly common in the sector (Bertolini and Luciano, 2011). Thus, the ability to develop personal tools to face insecurity in the labour market is a crucial task for young workers.

The cultural sector appears to be driven by talent, coolness, and meritocracy (McRobbie, 2003) but studies devoted to the analysis of inequalities in the workplace have shown how workers' multiple positionings and unequal possibilities are reproduced (Acker, 2006; Gill, 2002). In the context of the performing arts, Deborah Dean (2008) considers the interrelation between the concepts of race, gender, and age in structuring the possibilities of accessing a highly segmented working environment for the female workforce. Starting from the position of common sense regarding the sector, an analysis of the opportunities of access to the theatrical sector in Britain confirms that actors from privileged family backgrounds not only had fewer difficulties in this sense compared to their working class colleagues, but were also granted more favourable economic treatment (Friedman et al., 2017).

Regarding the U.S.-based cinema industry, the work of Samantha J. Simon (2019) started from Acker's reflection of gender in organisations (Acker, 1992) and considered the work of talent agencies, by showing how they reproduced the inequalities of race and gender. In turn, the work of Christina

Scharff (2015, 2017) regarding the experience of young female musicians working in the classical music sector highlighted the relationship between an entrepreneurial ethos and gendered dynamics in the construction of artistic subjectivities. Reflecting on the Italian institutional context of classical music, Clementina Casula (2019) considered female musicians' professional trajectories and reflected on the gendered inequalities that characterised their education and career paths. Furthermore, feminist scholars of the sociology of the arts have analysed the role of cultural gendered constructions in relation to women's positionings in the history of the arts, shedding light on the subaltern position that women occupied in the world of art and how men had privileged access to artistic professions (Nochlin, 2021; Pollock, 1999).

In an increasingly entrepreneurial-led context, women's positions seem to be split between the possibilities offered in a reflexive and individualised landscape (Beck, 1992) and the risk of experiencing dynamics of gender re-traditionalisation (Adkins, 1999; Banks and Milestone, 2011). If, in the past, the figure of the successful entrepreneur bore masculine traits (Bruni et al., 2004), nowadays young women are considered the entrepreneurial subject par excellence (Scharff, 2016), in a context where communication abilities are increasingly requested in the labour market (Grugulis and Vincent, 2009; Nickson et al., 2012). Hence, Arlie Hochschild's concept of emotional labour (1979, 1983), which was originally employed to describe the working domain of care and services, has been increasingly adopted in the past 20 years in scholars' reflections on cultural industries (Grindstaff, 2002; Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2008; Mears and Finlay, 2005). Moreover, the attention paid to the socio-psychological dynamics of cultural work has been at the centre of an increasing number of cultural work analyses in recent years. These studies have underlined emotional labour's relationship with both entrepreneurial stances and precarisation processes (Ashton, 2021). Thus, several authors have reflected upon the role of project-based working and informality in creative environments in the development of instrumental social relationships (Neff, 2012; Wittel, 2001), especially regarding 'compulsory networking' (Neff et al., 2005, p.308).

By directing increased attention towards physical practices in academic analyses, the concept of aesthetic labour has been used to try to overcome the notion of emotional labour's distinction between internal and external dispositions (Witz et al., 2003). The notion of aesthetic labour has been mainly studied in relation to employees (Warhurst et al., 2000) but the work of Dean (2005) was pivotal in extending the concept of aesthetic labour to freelance performers' recruitment practices. Following a phenomenological analysis (Crossley, 1996; Csordas, 1990), scholars have problematised the need to understand the embodiment of labour practices and now consider aesthetic labour to be a possible extension of the concept of emotional labour (Entwistle and Wissinger, 2006). Indeed, in the field of professional fashion models, women's performance of emotional labour and the management of body capital has been regarded in relation to irregular occupational patterns (Mears, 2011; Mears and Connell, 2016; Mears and Finlay, 2005). The relationship between aesthetic labour and identity formation has further been considered in the work of Sylvia Holla, who analysed the fashion practices of models from an anthropological standpoint (Holla, 2016, 2020).

Some authors have highlighted that aesthetic ideals such as feminist thought (Butler, 1990; Grosz, 1994) and symbolic interactionism (Goffman, 1979; Kessler and McKenna, 1985) are created in specific sociocultural environments and mirror asymmetric gender, race, and class relationships (Skeggs, 1997). Indeed, pointing to the structures of power and inequality at stake in different contemporary sectors, an edited collection of essays on 'aesthetic entrepreneurship' has been introduced to indicate the increased attention on normative aesthetic values and its entanglement with entrepreneurial and neoliberal ideals in women's experiences of life and work (Elias et al., 2017).

RESEARCH CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY

The data presented in this paper are based on qualitative research aiming to explore Italian actors' and actresses' working experiences and was conducted between 2019 and 2021. Considering the crisis the entertainment sector encountered following the COVID-19 pandemic, this analysis focuses on actresses' narratives of work in reference to a time before March 2020 and considers Italian National Social Security Institute (*Istituto Nazionale Previdenza Sociale* or INPS) statistical data relating to 2019. The main fieldwork was carried out in Milan because of its relevance to the Italian creative and cultural sector. In the past decades, one third of the city's population was directly employed in creative and cultural industries (Bonomi, 2012). Indeed, the vivacity of cultural production is directly reflected in the performing arts' sector. Considering data from 2019, collected and elaborated by the Italian Authors and Publishers Association (*Società Italiana degli Autori e degli Editori* or SIAE), the majority of the theatre business was focused in the Lombardy region of Italy (Annuario dello Spettacolo, 2019) both in terms of the number of shows performed (16.3% of total in 2019) and as the location for businesses that received public funds for theatre activities (18.91% of total in 2019).

According to Gallina (2013, p.22), the Association of Italian Entertainment Industries (*L'Associazione Generale Italiana dello Spettacolo* or AGIS) gathered 128 acting companies (*compagnie*) in Lombardy, 79 of which are located near Milan; out of a total of 30 theatres financed by the state, 21 were in Milan. The theatrical vocation of the city was not only due to La Scala's presence. The first Italian public theatre, Piccolo Teatro, opened there in 1947 with the intent to provide the citizens not with mere entertainment but with artistic and socially valuable cultural productions (Colbert, 2005; Locatelli, 2015). Development of the theatre offerings has further been sustained by the City council through a network of conventions and funding opportunities that generate a fertile environment for the growth of theatre projects (Calbi, 2011).

However, over the past 20 years, activities related to the live performance sector have suffered from contraction of the state's economic funding (the *Fondo unico per lo Spettacolo* or FUS) for the entertainment industries (Ferrazza, 2019, p.36). Despite the growing attention and support live performance has received from the private sector, and while established organisations have managed to navigate the crisis, new proposals and experimental projects have found it difficult to be sustainable in the urban environment over the past 10 years (d'Ovidio and Cossu, 2017; Gallina, 2013). Moreover, the role of the public has become central for theatres' cultural programming (Taormina, 2006). Thus, when the COVID-19 crisis sunk the sector during March 2020, the live entertainment industry had already been struggling to maintain economic sustainability before then, making the coming years a crucial challenge for both publicly and privately funded entities.

The fieldwork performed for this current work consisted of the collection of field notes in online and offline interaction spaces and the performance of in-depth interviews with workers. Following the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic and necessity for physical distancing, several research participants were recruited and interviewed remotely via spaces such as Skype or Zoom. The interviews lasted from 40 to 100 minutes and were recorded with audio and/or video support with the written consent of the participants. After the meetings, the recordings were transcribed in Italian and were anonymised. Following a first open-ended and colloquial start to the interviews, they were then guided according to the following topics: education, working practices, personal satisfaction, and future expectations. To try to comprehend the structure and functioning of the Italian theatrical field, contextual interviews with field experts were also conducted and quantitative data from different sources including the INPS or the Italian General Confederation of Labour (*Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro* or CGIL) union were analysed.

This present analysis considers 11 interviews conducted with actresses aged between 27 and 36 years who had 3 to 8 years of experience in the performing arts sector, along with five contextual interviews with field experts. Thus, the category of 'young' actresses was constructed around both their biographical age and career experience. Considering both institutionalised and informal working environments, some of the interviewed actresses had attended established state-funded theatre academies while others had had a heterogeneous education. Embracing the diversity of performing arts, the sampling choice was open to workers in various theatre genres (such as cabaret, drama, or experimental theatre), that had specific variations in production processes and informal regulations. All the research participants had an Italian ethnic background and held either a Bachelors' degree or an equivalent issued by an artistic academy. With the purpose of obtaining different points of view on the performing arts working environment, this paper considered the accounts of two private theatre school directors, one coordinator of a publicly-funded acting school attended by some of the interviewees, one agent and manager, and one union member.

Table 1 **Descriptive data for the research participants.**

NAME	AGE	ACADEMIC TRAINING	GENRE	WORKING MORE OR LESS THAN 5 YEARS
Mary	29	No	Various	Less
Candy	31	Yes	Drama	Less
Mirana	35	Yes	Various	More
Alicia	34	Yes	Various	More
Selene	30	Yes	Comedy	Less
Ermione	29	Yes	Clownery	Less
Juno	29	Yes	Drama	Less
Tamara	29	Yes	Experimental theatre	Less
Nina	30	Yes	Drama	More
Morena	27	Yes	Various	Less
Bruna	36	No	Various	More

Source: Prepared by the authors.

To describe the Italian context of occupations in the performing arts, this paper considered data from: (i) the 2019 INPS National Social Welfare Observatory on performing artist occupations; (ii) national research on performers' working conditions commissioned in 2017 by the Communication Workers' Union (*Sindacato Lavoratori della Comunicazione* o SLC)-CGIL and the Vittorio Foundation (*Fondazione Di Vittorio*); and (iii) research on gender inequalities in Italian

theatres conducted in 2019 by *Amleta*, the feminist collective of actresses.

The analytical process was influenced by grounded theory assumptions (Charmaz and Belgrave, 2012) and concerned interviewees' narratives about themes such as the body, vulnerability, passion, and careers. The collected data was approached from an intersectional perspective to explore age and gender interactions, leaving race and class dimensions for future research. The Italian state does not collect statistical data on the race or ethnic origin of the population (Ambrosetti and Cela, 2015), meaning that data concerning individual ethnic backgrounds is not available (Pagnoncelli, 2010) and so proxies must be used to grasp the effects of these variables. Thus, we considered the research participants' interviews in terms of gender, educational background, and career opportunities as well as other categorisations emerging from interviewees' narratives such as sexual orientation.

GENDER INEQUALITIES IN THE ITALIAN THEATRICAL CONTEXT

In recent years, scholars who have analysed gender inequalities in the Italian context of work have—despite the rise in participation of women in the job market—underlined the persistence of occupational exclusion (Bertolini, 2010; Bozzon, 2008; Reyneri, 2009). Furthermore, in a context where careers and working environments are constructed and run through a specifically masculine structure (Gherardi, 1995), the relationship between gender, work flexibility. and life trajectory has also been highlighted (Saraceno, 1991, 2002). In particular, in the performing arts, the working environment appears to reproduce a gendered occupational segregation between creative professions in the masculine domain and mostly feminine administrative occupations (Proust, 2017). This also occurs along the lines of traditional female and male tasks (Fraisse, 2000) where dressmakers were usually women and technicians were usually men.[1] In this section, we use quantitative data collected in three sector-specific surveys to detail the main features of actors' work in the theatre sector in Italy, focusing especially on young women's positions.

The Italian theatrical environment has undergone several transformations during the last century that have shaped actors' occupational and career courses (Serino, 2020). Nowadays, actors' work is predominantly project-based and is organised around short contracts lasting from one day to several months, thereby making short periods of unemployment an organic part of the sector (Gallina et al., 2018). According to the survey *Vita da artista* (Life as an artist)[2] (Di Nunzio et al., 2017), in 2015, more women working in the live performance sector experienced periods of unemployment lasting more than six months than men (16.4% female vs. 11.5% male; p.23). Furthermore, actors are traditionally considered employees but, as has happens in other working domains, hybrid employment relationships are rising and semi-dependent and formally autonomous contracts are increasingly common in the sector (Bertolini and Luciano, 2011).

Thus, considering that the Italian welfare system is based on dependent employment, the uncertainty of social protection during periods of unemployment or underemployment is likely to expose workers to hardship and blackmail (Armano and Murgia, 2017). In 2015, among the artists who did not benefit from

1 INPS data collected on performing arts workers in 2019 shows that women were overrepresented in certain occupational categories. For example women represented a total of 12% of the technicians employed but outnumbered their male counterparts in sectors such as administration (70% of the workers) and in costume, make up, and set design (71% of the workforce).

2 *Vita da Artista* is a national research survey on the living and working conditions of workers in the performing arts sector, promoted and financed by Fondazione Di Vittorio and the SLC-CGIL union. The research is devoted to mapping the main aspects of artists' experiences and to supporting union and workers' association interventions. The results were presented in 2017 and were based on 2,090 questionnaires completed by a non-probabilistic sample of respondents and collected during 2016 and 2017 through an online survey (Di Nunzio et al., 2017).

unemployment indemnity, 43% did not meet the required criteria for accessing this allowance (Di Nunzio et al., 2017, p.23). Furthermore, according to *Vita da artista* (2017, p. 22), irregular working conditions are more likely to be faced by young people (50.7% of workers aged under 30 define it as "fairly common") and by women (39.4 % of women vs. 35% of men). If, in the past, medium-high daily salaries used to compensate for moments of unemployment, after the 2008 crisis, Italian performers' earnings are now considered to be just above the poverty line (Turrini and Chicchi, 2013). Indeed, in 2015, 83.4% of female workers who completed the survey declared that they earned less than 10,000 euros per year, a figure also reported by 93.9% of respondents aged under 30 and 78.4% of all the actors contacted (Di Nunzio et al., 2017, p.18).

In this context, a useful source to trace the contours of inequalities in actors' and actresses' employment positions are the data collected by the INPS Observatory on performing artists' occupations.[3] Considering data referring to 2019, before the COVID-19 outbreak, 16.4% fewer women were working in the acting profession than their male colleagues. With the intention to collect data on gender differences in the performing arts, the *Amleta* feminist collective of actresses analysed performers' presence on the main Italian theatre stages between 2017 and 2020 and found that actresses constituted 37.5% and actors 62.5% of the total number of workers.[4] Thus, this field research highlighted that the underrepresentation of women in theatre, performing arts, television, and cinema is widely known among professionals in the sector, who recognise its impact on women's careers, beginning with their education. The following excerpts from our research interviews with field experts illustrate this recognition:

> For women the issue is, unfortunately, related to the job market. There are more parts for men than for women and so on and so forth. This is the biggest problem for actresses; the competition is fiercer. —*Astianatte, 46 years old, director of a private theatre school.*

> It's a man's world, therefore representations are predominantly of male characters, there are fewer [dramaturgical] parts for women. Women's difficulties in succeeding are enormous compared to men's. Canonical beauty is still very important for women while for men, obviously, this is less so… For example, ageing: a woman of sixty years old is old, but at sixty years old a man has become very 'interesting'. —*Alina, 48 years old, actors' manager.*

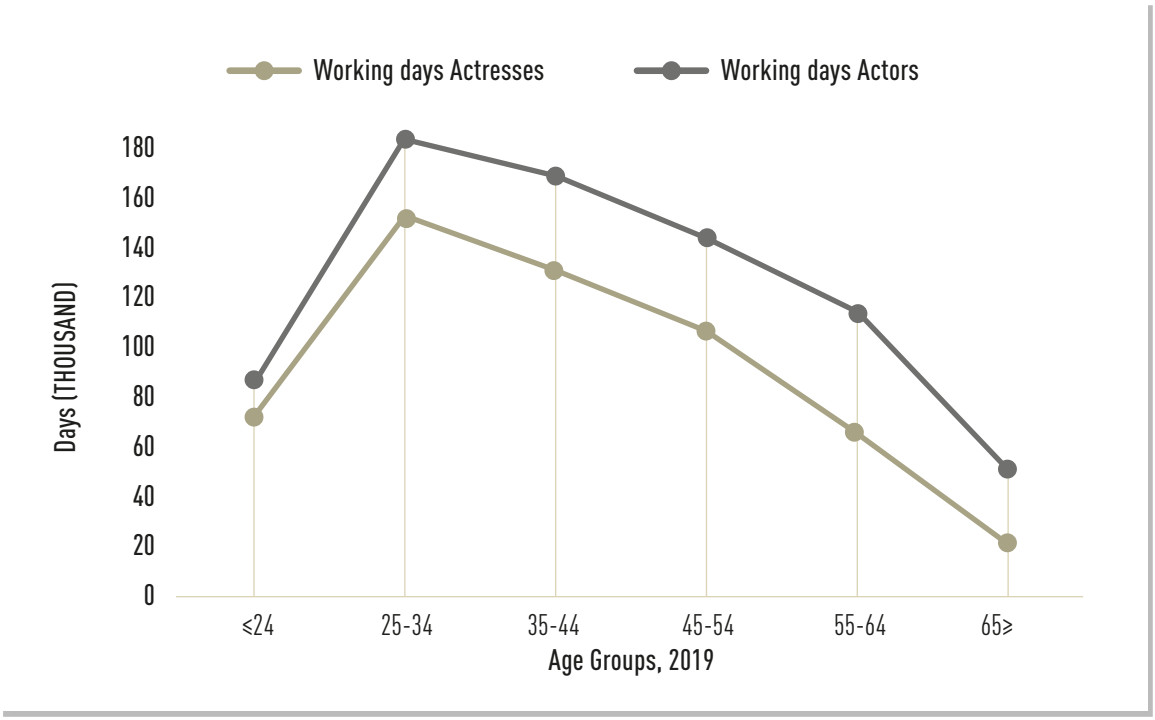
Despite their different positions in the institutional field, both Astianatte and Alina acknowledged the presence of a gender issue in the entertainment sector as well as its cultural origins. *Figure 1* considers the cumulative number of worked days of actors and actresses in 2019 divided by their age groups and allows for further reflections on gender inequalities and career trajectories. The overall career pattern appears to be similar for both men and women. It registers a peak of opportunities between 25 and 34 years and a slow decrease over the years, a trend that can be compared to other occupations in which body capital is central (Bertolini and Vallero, 2011; Mears, 2011; Wacquant, 1995). Nevertheless, women appeared to be working less than their male colleagues at every stage of their careers and the gender gap originating during their late 20s continued to characterise each subsequent cohort of actresses. Looking at the number of worked days for each cohort in 2019 also gives insights into

3 The INPS National Social Welfare Observatory on performing artist occupations is a statistical dataset made available to the general public by the INPS; the data are updated every year and are gathered from the administrative archive of the monthly taxes paid by employers (*Uniemens*) and contains information regarding (i) worker identification; (ii) working contracts; and (iii) unemployment and other indemnities.

4 *Amleta* is a collective of actresses created in 2020 to gather evidence for and contrast gender inequalities and discriminations in the entertainment industry. The survey referenced is available at: https://fb.watch/4pLZpv89Uy/. According to my fieldwork notes, the group extracted the data on gender participation in theatrical ensembles from Italian theatres' websites during April and May 2020.

society's dominant cultural representations. Thus, the media industries seemed to prefer representing males over females and youth over older people, painting the contours of a job market in which age and gender are the central variables of employment opportunities.

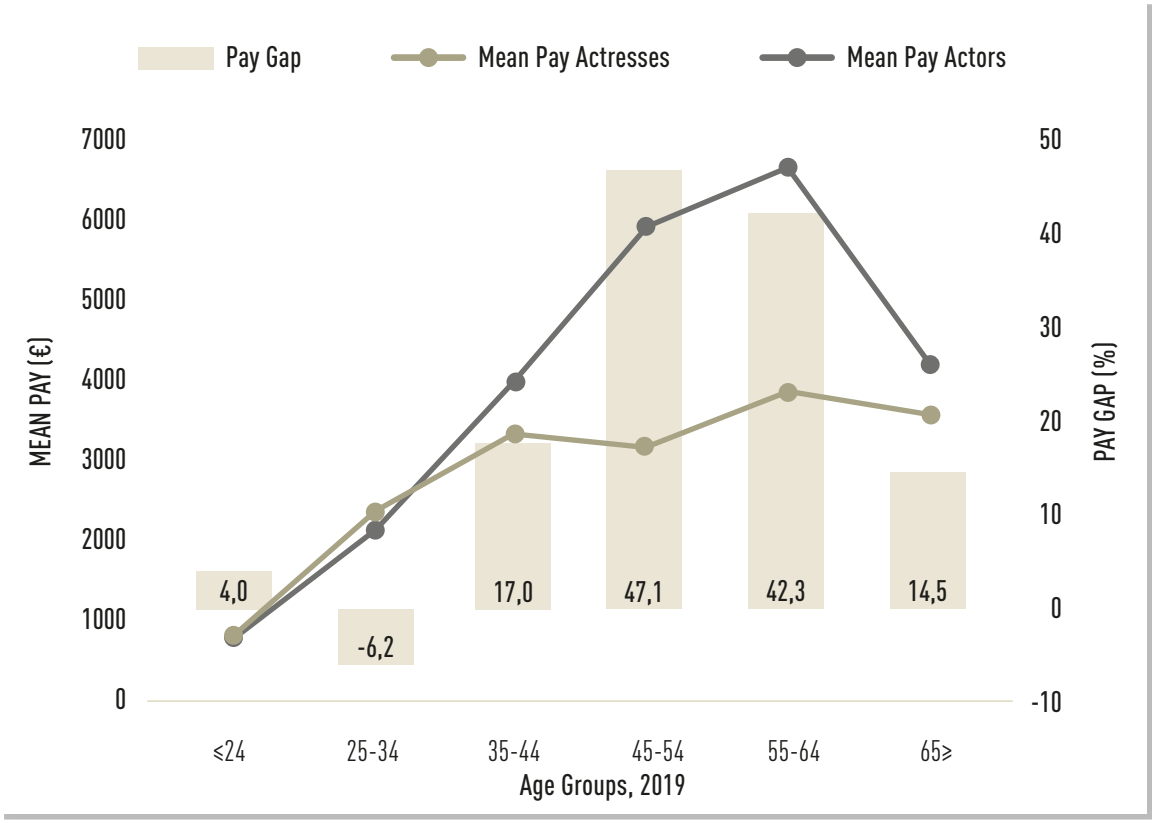
Figure 1 The cumulative number of worked days in 2019 (professional category of actors).
Calculated by the author. The figure shows the cumulative number of worked days by actresses and actors in the year 2019 divided by their age groups. *Source:* INPS, 2019.



SOURCE: Instituto Nacional de Seguridad Social Italiano (INPS), 2019.

According to INPS data, considering the average retribution of actresses and actors in 2019, women earned 30.4% less than men. In relation to figure 2, which shows the gender pay-gap related to age cohorts, it appears that differences in wages started to become marked in the cohort aged 35 to 44 years and peaked in the successive decade, reaching 47.1%. Concerning young actresses aged 25–34 years, the figures show that, in 2019, they cumulatively earned 6.2% more than male colleagues in the same cohort. This feature is characteristic of spectacle professions where gender and sexuality are traditionally intertwined (Mears and Connell, 2016).

Figure 2 Gender wage-gap (percentage).
Calculated by the author. The figure shows the gender wage-gap, i.e., the average differences between the remunerations of actors and actresses in 2019 divided by their age groups. *Source:* INPS, 2019.



SOURCE: Instituto Nacional de Seguridad Social Italiano (INPS), 2019.

In this context, the absence of a formal qualification to access the job market and growth in the number of aspirants has fostered the increased relevance of informal rules and professional networks (Bertolini and Vallero, 2011). Thus, inequalities are equally related to earnings and working possibilities as they are to symbolic and aesthetic capitals. As happens in several creative environments, social and professional networks have emerged as a means to validate actors' reputations and trustworthiness and, ultimately, to distribute work (Alacovska, 2018; Gandini, 2015). Therefore a concerted and consistent effort must be devoted to enhancing personal and professional relationships and to maintaining and increasing professional skills among actors. This represents a series of economic and relational investments that are particularly onerous for young workers at the beginning of their careers (Bertolini et al., 2019). Furthermore, in this context, power inequalities have specific connotations in terms of age and gender. According to data gathered by *Amleta's* survey, 76% of theatre artistic and administrative directors and 78.4% of theatrical directors are men. Considering the INPS 2019 data, the cumulative data for actresses showed that their earnings were 38% less than the total salaries of male directors and playwrights. At the same time, a total of 18.4% of actresses employed in 2019 were aged between 20 and 24, while directors'

biggest cohort comprised males aged 40 to 44. Thus, in the context that adult males held the majority of leading positions while young women constituted the largest workforce section, power appears to be related to age and gender.

AESTHETICS, GENDER, AND POWER ON AND BEYOND THE STAGE

The systems' attention to age and gender, and to the related aesthetic aspects, emerged from the interviews as something that characterises actresses' experiences of work not only in terms of career possibilities but also as an impact on their emotional well-being. Institutionalised practices in the sector, theatrical tradition, and scenic exigencies open and close spaces of possibilities to actresses and define a standard in relation to both physical form and body adaptability and to their emotional peculiarities (Naclerio, 2020). Some interviewees openly criticised the unwritten rules of beauty that dominate the auditions system. Among them, Mary, an actress and feminist activist, stressed the importance of legitimising non-compliant bodies on the stage.

> This constant request of being absolutely compliant with the beauty norm that is requested of an actress, but why? […] It is limiting and humiliating, we know that very well. —*Mary*.

Other actresses pointed to the constant work needed to maintain an employable—and compliant—body, mentioning eating practices, meditation, and sport activities and the engagement in a constant learning activities to perfect their abilities or acquire new skills. Candy and Mirana, who both studied in prestigious academic settings and worked in big theatrical productions, said the following.

> It is very important to have a body that is ready […] there are directors that ask you to run for hours or to perform extenuating choreographies […] I experienced [having to stand] in heels for two hours; it is the most painful thing that I've ever done, your body needs to be ready. —*Candy*.

> There is a lot of carelessness, there's the idea that they do with you what they want, right? So, today is a 'Yes', tomorrow is 'Oh my gosh you've lost too much weight, you're too skinny'. —*Mirana*.

Even if accounting for different episodes, from Candy and Mirana's words emerges a sentiment of disposability and disempowerment surrounding the relationship between young actresses' bodies and their working practices. If it is true that not only women's bodies are marked by aesthetic norms in spectacle professions (Mears, 2011; Wolkowitz, 2006), it is also true that women's bodies are at the centre of asymmetric attention and gendered ideas. In the following extract, Alicia exemplifies the masculine structure of the theatrical sector that she came to understand through academic training and working experience in different theatrical genres. As happens in other working environments (Gherardi, 1995), a white, cisgender, and middleclass ideal man is taken as the reference term both of working practices related to consumer tastes and to aesthetics and artistic aims.

> The feminine voice, for example, […] is often higher, while in the theatre [we're asked] to perform in deep voices […]. It's as if the feminine body isn't accepted, the feminine voice is shrill. —*Alicia*.

Thus, it appears that actresses are trained to embody, through practice and exercise, physical features that are canonically ascribed to male actors, hinting at the intrinsically masculine structure of the sector. Thus, the public nature of the actor's figure and the historical prevalence of male workers has set the standard not only for the technical skills required from actresses but also for what concerns employer's expectations in relation to working long hours when debuting (Bertolini and Luciano, 2011). In particular, theatre work is characterised by late evenings, social relationships with journalists or fans, and by working during public holidays and festivities. Both Selene and Alicia were in their 30s and, during our interaction,

longed for the possibility of forming a family and having a more regular life.

> A part of me would like to have a child, the other part of me knows that I should stop, therefore, I am postponing this decision […]. But I know that if I had a job that could provide me with more security, I'd do it. —*Selene*.

> If you want to have a kid, for women, it's a problem [in your career], at least for a while, you can't do it. —*Alicia*.

The consideration of those features, alongside the instability that characterises theatre careers and the reduction of social security, echoes the discourses of the interviewees on topics related to maternity. In line with analyses considering the relationship between insecurity and life trajectories (Saraceno, 1991; Solera, 2012) emerges the fact that the combination of scarce economic security, low salaries, highly unstable career paths, and short term contracts have led young women to postpone maternity to an indefinite time in the future, when they presume that their economic conditions and career positions will have improved. In a context where body capital is central and young actresses represent the majority of the workforce, their relationship with directors and producers appears to be at the centre of gender and age-related power structures. Similar to the outcomes of project-based working activities, actresses are responsible for both finding new working opportunities and negotiating their personal salaries. Indeed, during the interviews, Candy and Selene openly spoke about their emotional difficulties in the phase of negotiation.

> 'Could you please respect me? Even though I'm a 30-year-old woman. Or is it that only 50-year-old men are respected?'… It is not easy at all. —Candy.

> At the end [of the negotiation] I'm always the one who gives up […]. I think, 'after all they're doing me a favour in hiring me'. I always have this thought, but it shouldn't be like this. —*Selene*.

Like the excerpts quoted above, several interviewees reported feelings of discomfort related to the possibilities of being listened to and considered because of their age and gender. Selene's excerpt points to the emotional involvement that characterises young aspirants' approaches to acting possibilities. In line with previous research (Hakim, 1991), the young women interviewed appeared to be highly committed to and satisfied with their job, even when not believing they had been adequately rewarded (Arvidsson et al., 2010; Murgia, 2015). In this picture, directors and producers not only controlled the economic negotiation but, considering the informality of the sector's recruitment practices, also held the power to select aspirants and drive young actors' careers towards success or failure. Mirana started to work soon after she left theatre school. She described herself as very young and unprepared for the strenuous environment of cinema and television production. During her interview, she talked about the first and most successful part of her career as being characterised by negative emotional and interpersonal experiences that affected her body and her feelings towards acting, leading her to take a break from the stage.

> Several times I thought that I had to be attractive, because this is how people behaved [around me] or maybe because I was afraid to say no […]. Then I started to realise that in this work, especially if you are a woman, you need to protect yourself enormously. —*Mirana*.

As the #MeToo movement brought to light, the highly aestheticised and sexualised position of actresses' work often entertains an ambiguous relationship with directors' central roles in the professional community. Ermione worked in big theatre productions for several years but, following a troubled relationship with a director, she decided to temporarily withdraw from large theatres and to work on smaller artistic projects. Even if she did not like the ambiguity of the working environment, Ermione believed she was cut off from the 'seduction game' played between actresses and producers/directors because of her sexual orientation.

> I've felt completely deprived of this [seductive] power because I'm gay […] several times I had the impression I had been considered and observed less. —*Ermione*.

Both Mirana's and Ermione's excerpts depict an environment where differences of power produce discrimination and emotional discomfort. The pervasiveness and dangerousness of these injustices and psychological distress was frequently recounted in their collected interviews. Young actresses talked about hazing practices, depicted themselves as 'exposed', and explained the necessity to protect themselves in a sexualised and aestheticised competitive environment. As Mirana and Ermione did, several interviewees reported having taken a break from highly rewarding theatre or cinema production work out of the necessity for less stressful and more spontaneous working environments, despite being in the early years of their careers. Thus, through ongoing self-reflection, these workers were engaged in continuous emotional work on themselves and their careers with the aim of finding and keeping an emotional space of comfort and realisation.

CONCLUSIONS

In this article, I explored young actresses' working positions in Italy using qualitative and quantitative sources. The gendered implications of these working practices were strictly related to, on the one hand, the sector's emphasis on physical appearance and the relevance of stereotyped representations and, on the other, the project-based nature of the occupation. In this context, the data presented here suggested that women occupy a particularly vulnerable position: they face more unemployment and underemployment and earn and work less than their male colleagues. Consistent with other findings for occupations in which body capital plays a central role (Bertolini and Vallero, 2011; Mears and Connell, 2016), most working opportunities were made available to young adults. The aestheticised and sexualised nature of the occupation also led young women to experience a reverse pay gap, whereby actresses aged between 25 and 34 earned slightly more than their male peers. Furthermore, while the majority of aspirants were young women, the positions of power central to the occupational field—directing and producing—were mostly held by adult males who controlled both auditions and salary negotiations.

Thus, analysis of gender and power inequalities in this sector must consider precarious employment conditions as well as the relevance of informal aesthetic norms. As occurs in many entertainment professions, ongoing attention to physical techniques and appearance is required to maintain and enhance employability. Linked to this, feelings of disempowerment and inadequacy were often reported by the interviewees in relation to body-centred working practices. Similar to several other sectors of cultural work, alongside the centrality of aesthetics, low income, instability, compulsory socialising, and the sector's fundamentally masculine structure combine to affect actresses' decisions to postpone maternity (Bertolini and Luciano, 2011). Thus, the theatre sector can be defined as a context of strong power asymmetry connoted in terms of age and gender, in which relationships between employers and employees are often ambiguous. In this context, both aesthetic and emotional factors are involved in finding work opportunities and in salary negotiation. Thus, a need for ongoing self-reflection emerges, whereby emotions are modified and negotiated in relation to both the working environment's characteristics and actresses' personal desires.

This present analysis used the theatrical sector to deepen the literature's contributions to, and to raise awareness of, gender inequalities in cultural work. The use of qualitative and quantitative data allows us to consider both structural characteristics of performing art environments. In turn we can reflect upon the peculiar emphasis on appearances typical of exhibitive professions to grasp young actresses' bodily and emotional experiences of inequality.

Finally, the results of this work suggest that current lines of research on cultural work should be expanded to consider both gender and other structural inequalities such as race and class.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

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The place of women in the theatres of São Paulo: from writing to performing

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ABSTRACT
The aim of this article was to provide quantitative information about the gender gap in theatre production in the city of São Paulo (Brazil), thereby helping to raise awareness of the inequalities faced by women in the field. The text compares the opportunities available to men and women working in seven different theatre-related occupations and is underpinned by a mapping of 1,466 plays performed in the city throughout 2018. The data were collected from three weekly guides published by the local media and two monthly publications: a theatre guide and a magazine from a cultural institution that ran 20 cultural venues in the city. Any gaps were then filled by directly contacting theatre venues and the producers of the plays. There was a significant imbalance towards men in the two most strategic theatre production jobs: men wrote 77% of the plays and directed 78% of them. Thus, male professionals were a huge majority precisely in the functions responsible for building the discourse that reaches audiences. Compared to women, this left them in a much better position to express their values, ideas, and perspectives. This gap was smaller when considering performers, of which 46% were female. Women were also largely absent in technical occupations given that they were a minority among lighting directors and set designers. However, women represented the majority among costume designers. The most unexpected result was the parity among producers, with 52% being women. All the aforementioned gaps increased when the number of performances were considered. On average, women worked less in plays that provided more working time that were therefore, more likely to have higher salaries. This current study also showed that when women were responsible for writing, directing, or producing a play, the gender gap was reduced in all the other functions.

Keywords: Gender inequality, economy of culture, performing arts, creative workforce

SUMMARY

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INTRODUCTION

Arts professionals are proud to highlight how the area is interested in embracing causes associated with civil rights, racial minorities, and a progressive agenda. But can we say that support for these causes is manifested not only in works of art, through their content and storytelling, but also in their practices and in the way art is produced? This article investigates this question, focusing on the issue of gender representation in the performing arts by analysing the place of women in the theatres of São Paulo, the largest city in Brazil. It looks specifically at the number of women in the labour market with respect to seven different occupations within theatrical production: playwright, director, producer, performer, lighting director, set designer, and costume designer.

Starting with a brief contextualisation of the cultural scene in Brazil and São Paulo, the text details the data set supporting the article and highlights the challenges of using quantitative data to investigate an area characterised by intermittent jobs and large groups of self-employed professionals, as well as by diverse means of production, which combine commercial plays, independent producers, and the work of artist collectives. It also includes a brief description of theatrical activity in the city as a way to provide a better perspective of the performing arts scene beyond the data.

The investigation was anchored in a comprehensive mapping survey of theatre production in the city of São Paulo in 2018, which registered 1,466 plays and a total 13,993 performances, including

commercial and independent plays. On the one hand, the data collected in São Paulo showed that most plays were written (77%) and directed (78%) by men. On the other hand, women were predominant among producers (52%), a strategic decision-making position. The results showing a bias against women are consistent with most of the studies conducted in other countries. Since there no single consolidated method to collect and analyse data about theatre production is available, especially regarding the professionals working in the sector, the researchers explored the topic based on the available information, which varied from country to country.

In France, Coulangeon, Ravet, and Roharik (2015) conducted their work using data from an employers' association (*Caisse des Congés Spetacles*). In the United Kingdom, there were studies working with data from a private company providing ticketing and marketing services to theatre venues (Purple Seven, 2015); research by Elizabeth Freestone with *The Guardian* focused on the top 10 subsided theatres in England from 2012 to 2013 (Freestone and Higgins, 2012); and an initiative funded by the Arts Council analysed data from the National Portfolio Organizations from 2015 to 2018 (Sphinx Theatre, 2020). All the UK studies were supported by meaningful, but not exhaustive samples. In Spain, data came from the Active Population Survey (Ministerio de Cultura y Deporte, 2021), although these were not specific to theatre (they also included other performing arts), as well as a study focused on actors and dancers that had included 3,000 interviews (Fundación AISGE, 2016). Regardless of the data set supporting the investigations, and their limitations, all the research yielded similar results which reinforced the existence of a gender gap in favour of men.

In the case of São Paulo, the data analysis explored the quantitative results from four different perspectives, always supported by descriptive statistics. First, it looked at the absolute number of men and women working in seven occupations in theatre production (number of professionals). Second, it explored how these results fluctuated when we considered the number of plays. Third, it added the number of performances to the analysis because these were a better reference of the global labour market. This approach showed that the imbalances in the market share occupied by men and women recorded in the first two steps increased when we looked more deeply into the data. Finally, we analysed how having a man or a woman in a decision-making position impacted the gender distribution of the other six occupations. This cross analysis showed that inequalities were reduced when a play was written, directed, or produced by a woman.

Lack of data

In spite of several developments in cultural policies in the last three decades, such as the creation of culture secretariats in states and municipalities and of the National System of Culture, implementation of fiscal incentive laws and public calls for subsidies in the three levels of government, and opening of the National Agency for Cinema (*Ancine, Agência Nacional do Cinema*) and Brazilian Institute of Museums (*Ibram, Instituto Brasileiro de Museus*), a huge gap still remains in Brazil in terms of compiling basic statistics about the cultural scene. The country has not built public awareness regarding the importance of gathering simple data about cultural production. Brazil has not yet implemented its Cultural Satellite Account, the "gross domestic product (GDP) of culture," does not have an official cultural habits survey, and there is no official public department or private institution producing regular data or reports about theatre production.

In fact, the gap is not exclusive to theatre because it affects most cultural sectors in the country. The only activity that managed to gather some data at a steady rate was cinema, thanks to the work developed by Ancine (www.ancine.gov.br), the public agency for the audiovisual environment, as well as private companies like Filme B (www.filmeb.com.br). Established

in 2009, the Brazilian Institute for Museums (IBRAM in its Portuguese acronym[1]) published some initial data about the sector in 2013, but the initiative had a short reach and did not stimulate the further and deeper collection of data.

This scenario makes it difficult to build evidence-based diagnoses about the multiple challenges facing the cultural scene, thereby undermining the government's ability to implement measures to effectively address them. The situation is particularly worrying in the performing arts where the data shortage is more critical. Beyond that, the COVID-19 pandemic added another layer of problems to the cultural arena. First, the entire live performance market—one of the most affected sectors in the world—was hit hard. The pandemic also increased the multiple inequalities in the whole job market, including the gender gap.

In the particular case of Brazil, there was a final challenge. President Jair Bolsonaro's government undervalued the importance of culture, provided limited public funds for the area, and did not support gender equality. The Ministry of Culture was extinguished in 2019 and the new Secretariat of Culture was assigned first to the Ministry of Citizenship and then in the Ministry of Tourism. In the three years of Bolsonaro's administration, the Secretariat of Culture had five secretaries and the National Foundation for the Arts (*Funarte, Fundação Nacional de Artes*), which managed the performing arts in the country, had six presidents. Indeed, official data available on the online service of the Federal Senate (https://www12.senado.leg.br/orcamento/sigabrasil) shows that Funarte saw its budget reduced by 26% between 2015 and 2019 (values adjusted for inflation as of to December 2020). These factors reinforce the importance of producing data about theatre activities as a way of raising awareness about the challenges facing the sector, including the gender gap.

Theatre context

Regardless of this lack of data in the country, it is possible to find some highlights regarding the theatrical scene. Brazilian theatre production is highly concentrated in the cities of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, following a tendency also found in developed countries in the global north. The same situation is also seen in France (Menger, 1999), Spain (Colomer, 2016), and the United Kingdom, where most theatre venues and performances are concentrated in Paris, Madrid, Barcelona, and London, respectively. With an estimated population of 12.4 million inhabitants[2], São Paulo is the largest of the 5,570 cities of the country. In 2019, the average salary of formal workers was 4.1× the minimum wage (totalling around 718 euros in November of 2021), the 17th highest among Brazilian cities, compared to 2018 when the GDP per capita was the 271st highest.

Even though no comprehensive research allowing us to quantify the growth of the theatre market in recent decades in São Paulo is available, several factors influenced its development. These include a meaningful improvement in education and recovery and expansion of the Brazilian economy from the mid-90s to 2015, as well as some specific legislation that helped to increase investments in the area. Theatre production was boosted by incentive tax laws created at the federal (*Lei Rouanet*) and state levels (*Proac-SP*) and by a specific municipal program designated to fund artist collectives in São Paulo, the Theatre Promotion Law (*Lei de Fomento ao Teatro*).

Concerning education—a key driving force to stimulate people to engage in cultural activities (Bourdieu, 1979)—the country doubled the number of people enrolled in universities from 2001 to 2010. Thus, this significant improvement in education has started to build an audience for the theatre. In developed countries, access to theatre activities is quite stable among people aged 20 to

1 IBRAM, the *Instituto Brasileiro de Museus* (https://www.museus.gov.br).

2 All the data used in this paragraph came from https://cidades.ibge.gov.br/brasil/sp/sao-paulo/panorama.

60 or 70 years old, as shown by the series of official surveys conducted in France (*Pratiques Culturelles en France*) and Spain (*Encuesta de Habitos y Practicas Culturales*). In contrast, data from Brazil show that attendance is higher among younger people but that it begins to decline much earlier, when people reach their 30s and 40s (Souza e Silva, 2018), thereby reflecting a generational gap in terms of education levels. Thus, with greater access to universities, new generations are more likely to attend cultural activities, including the theatre.

Economic development increased supply and demand for cultural goods and services. The number of cinemas mapped by Ancine (https://oca.ancine.gov.br/)—which were at their lowest levels in 1995 (1,033)—doubled to 2,045 in 2005 and reached a historic high in 2019 with 3,507 outlets. During this period, several cultural venues, including theatres, museums, and historic buildings, were inaugurated or restored. Some of them attracting tourists from all over the country and abroad, such as the Museum of Tomorrow (https://museudoamanha.org.br/) in Rio de Janeiro. Theatre also benefited from two decades of growth, from 1995 to 2015, particularly in the cities of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Although the purpose of this text was not to detail this process (important work that must be carried out), some references could help to understand how the scenario shown in the mapping study, as well as some of its characteristics, were promoted. Economic growth boosted the development of theatre in the city in two main directions: by expanding funding for production and stimulating the opening of new cultural venues for the performing arts.

Increased funding came especially from incentive tax laws and public calls for grants. Implemented in 1991, the Rouanet Law designated R$5.9 billion[3] (€904 million)[4] to theatre activities between 2000 and 2018, 42% and 28% to the states of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, respectively. Indeed, following the federal legislation, many states created similar mechanisms. The Program of Cultural Actions of the State of São Paulo (*Proac – Programa de Ações Culturais do Estado de São Paulo*) was implemented in 2006, and, beyond the tax incentives law, the *Proac-ICMS*[5], also included a call for grants, called the *Proac-Editais*. In 2002, the city of São Paulo has created special legislation called the Theatre Promotion Law, to promote the activities of theatre collectives that carry out continuous research and production work. The first mechanism was integral to boosting the production of commercial plays, particularly musicals, which were also supported by the *Proac-ICMS*. The 'off-Broadway' productions, plays with less commercial potential and the works of collectives were supported mainly by *Proac-Editais* and the Theatre Promotion Law.

Parallel to that, economic growth had at least two direct impacts on the number of theatre venues in the city. Funded by a tax associated with commercial activities, the SESC-SP[6] (the São Paulo Commerce Social Service) opened several cultural venues in the city this century, also increasing the number of plays contracted for performances in its cultural venues. Municipal legislation from 1991, which required the building of at least one theatre and one cinema in new shopping centres, simultaneously contributed to increasing the number of commercial theatres in the city of São Paulo since the late 1990s. Unfortunately, no systematic data has been collected that would allow us to build a clearer picture of how these two factors (funding and new venues) impacted the theatre market, particularly regarding the number

3 Values corrected for inflation by the IPCA-E up until January 2021.

4 Conversion on 24 May 2021: 1€ = R$6.5.

5 The ICMS (*Imposto sobre Comercialização de Mercadorias e Serviços*) is a state tax charged on the circulation of goods and services.

6 The SESC-SP is one of the leading private cultural and leisure institutions in São Paulo, with 43 venues in the state and high profile artistic and cultural programming.

of plays performed in the city, audiences, and job opportunities that have opened up. This work still needs to be done.

MAPPING METHODOLOGY

Regardless of the multiple blind spots, this brief sketch allows us to glimpse a panorama of São Paulo theatre production characterised by different funding sources, great diversity in production style, and a corresponding variety of theatre venues housing these plays. Even though the picture painted by the mapping study dates to 2018—two years after the beginning an economic crisis that interrupted a positive cycle spanning two decades—the image still shows the outlines of growth registered in the previous 20 years. The surveying of theatre production in the city of São Paulo was funded and conducted by J.Leiva Cultura & Esporte (www.jleiva.co), my consultancy company, with the cooperation of three theatre associations, the Independent Theatre Movement of São Paulo, Association of Independent Theatre Producers (MOTIN and APTI, respectively, in their Portuguese acronyms[7]), and Theatre Cooperative of São Paulo[8], which facilitated contact with theatre producers.

The data collection was supported by information published in cultural guides from the leading newspapers and magazines published in the city, accompanied by the work of contacting independent theatre venues and cultural producers to include as many plays as possible in the mapping. The main sources of information were the weekly guides published by newspapers *Folha de S. Paulo (Guia da Folha)* and *Estado de S. Paulo (Guia do Estadão)*, the magazine *Veja (Veja São Paulo)*, and the monthly guides *OFF Guia de Teatro* (www.guiaoff.com.br)—a publication specialising in theatre—and *Revista Em Cartaz* (https://www.sescsp.org.br/online/revistas/tag/5557_EM+CARTAZ), which presents cultural activities from 20 cultural venues from the SESC-SP. The contact work was also important because these publications do not include all the plays running in the city or their complete production details.

The results were debated with theatre professionals in a seminar in July 2019 and are accessible in the report *A força do teatro na cidade de São Paulo* (JLeiva, 2019). There were certainly gaps in the mapping, particularly from smaller and independent venues, open public spaces (like parks), and cultural institutions that do not stage regular theatre performances. However, these gaps did not compromise the robustness of the sample because these venues had a limited market share in the overall theatre scene of the city. From the original data collection, which recorded 1,638 plays performed in São Paulo, 1,466 were considered in the gender comparison of this present study.

Plays providing no information about their professionals were excluded. Stand-up comedies and all foreign productions were also eliminated. The former because the mapping was not sufficiently comprehensive to include every play from this genre and because the study of stand-up acts requires specific methodology because they take place in venues where several short 10 to 20-minute performances are presented on the same day. The latter were excluded because the focus was on the local labour market. The mapping included other Brazilian theatre productions not from São Paulo. Regardless of the regional origin, these plays provided a job opportunity in the local theatre market. It is also worth pointing out that after São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro was the most important theatre hub in the country and that a meaningful number of commercial plays produced in either of these cities also tour in the other.

Final sample

The final sample included data from 1,466 plays and 269 different cultural venues or spaces in the

7 MOTIN: *Movimento dos Teatros Independentes de São Paulo* (http://www.motin.org.br) and APTI: *Associação dos Produtores Teatrais Independentes* (https://www.apti.org.br).

8 Cooperativa Paulista de Teatro (https://www.cooperativadeteatro.com.br).

city of São Paulo, totalling 13,993 performances[9] in 2018. Regarding genre, the plays were split between those intended for children (450) and those aimed at adults (1,017), according to information disclosed by producers or the cultural guides we consulted. In some cases, when no direct contact with the producers was possible and there was no information available in the cultural guides, the classification was made based on the synopsis of the play. Productions with no age restrictions and aimed at the whole family, were classified as being for adults. The data showed that 79% of all performances recorded were aimed at adults, even though 69% of all plays were targeted to this audience.

No distinctions were made regarding the funding sources or the kind of production (commercial or alternative). The former information was much more difficult to collect (the mapping gathered only some of its highlights but did not allow any in-depth analysis) while the latter was quite complicated and required conceptual definitions beyond the scope of this article. Since the production details of the cast and creatives were not available for all the plays, each of the seven functions investigated here has a different sample size. Most of the publications included only the name of the playwright, director, and the main performers. Even though we tried to contact the producers to complete missing data, it was impossible to gather exactly the same kind of information for every play. Many producers did not answer our emails and, beyond that, each production disclosed information about their cast and creatives differently, including or excluding specific professionals depending on their understanding of the creative process and contributing artists. Nevertheless, with additional online research, we managed to collect sufficient data for all seven functions being analysed.

Information about gender was added two years after completion of the mapping, specifically for the purpose of this article. In Portuguese, in most cases, it is possible to identify whether someone identifies as male or female by reading their name. In cases of doubt, the information was consulted online. Nonetheless, we realise that this method did not allow us to include all gender identities or expressions which would only have been possible by contacting all the professionals (around 7,000 people) directly. However, we believe the sample gave us a fairly accurate picture of the job market for women in the performing arts in São Paulo, the ultimate objective of the study. The mapping also registered several collectives of artists within the seven functions. In these cases, it was impossible to identify the gender of the artists working in each collective or how many professionals participated in each function. The growing importance these groups have achieved in the cultural scene of São Paulo in recent years justifies specific research into how they are addressing the gender issue.

Figure 1 shows the main details of the final sample, including the number of plays and performances, division between productions for children and adults, number of plays with data for each of the seven functions investigated, and the corresponding data by the number of performances. All the figures presented in this study were derived from this database. In the case of playwrights, directors and performers, most of the data was available for the plays (97%, 94% and 91%, respectively). For all the other functions, the information was accessible for more than 50% of the sample: 76% for producers, 55% for lighting design, 54% for costume design, and 53% for set design. The plays for which we had information from all seven functions represented 40% of the total sample (585 plays) and were responsible for 49% of all the performances. Although a significant number of plays were mapped, we must mention the negative caveat that some plays were performed very little (only 10 times), reflecting the fact that most productions are from Friday to Sunday, and many plays are for children (often performed once a week). There is an ongoing discussion among theatre producers regarding how to expand the number of performances of plays.

9 The original mapping registered 277 different venues/spaces and 15,348 performances.

Figure 1 Sample details of the plays performed in the city of São Paulo.

General Information
Data collection: 01/01/2018 al 31/12/2018
Local: City of São Paulo
Number of plays: 1.466
Number of presentations: 13.993

GENRE	N° of plays	Percentage
For children	449	31 %
For adults	1,017	69 %
Total	1,466	100 %

GENRE	N° of performances	Percentage
For children	2,950	21 %
For adults	11,043	79 %
Total	13,993	100 %

Number of plays with available data for each function investigated

FUNCTION	N° of plays	Percentage
Playwright	1,417	97 %
Director	1,377	94 %
Producer	1,120	76 %
Performers	1,333	91 %
Lighting design	799	55 %
Set design	783	53 %
Costume design	791	54 %

Number of plays according to the number of functions with available data

N° of functions	N° of plays	Percentage
1	48	3 %
2	70	5 %
3	248	17 %
4	187	13 %
5	155	11 %
6	174	12 %
7 (all)	584	40 %
	1,466	100 %

N° of functions	N° of performances	Percentage
1	171	1 %
2	461	3 %
3	2,193	16 %
4	1,866	13 %
5	922	7 %
6	1,506	11 %
7 (all)	6,874	49 %
	13,993	100 %

Results

The results were compared by gender by taking different approaches. In the first approach, we looked at the number of men and women who worked on at least one play in 2018, considering the seven different functions previously mentioned. In other words, professionals who worked on more than one production in the same job role on them all, were counted just once. However, if they had performed different functions in different plays, the number of different job roles were counted as a way to compare the proportion of men and women performing each specific task.

These results showed a huge gender imbalance among playwrights and directors, the two key figures in theatre production. Of all the professionals who staged a text and directed a play, only 29% and 27%, respectively, were women. Interestingly, producers—the function that could be considered the third driving force in theatre production as a strategic job with at least some decision-making power—showed a fair balance between the sexes. Some 52% were women, the same participatory share they have in the Brazilian population[10], according to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE in its Portuguese acronym[11]). This result will be explored in more detail later in this text. Figure 2 shows the percentage of men and women who worked in the theatres of São Paulo when (a) we did or (b) we did not count artist collectives. In the case of producers, some companies were sometimes mentioned as managing this function.

The technical functions were biased in terms of the work performed by women, who were mainly costume designers (57%), and were strongly underrepresented among lighting designers (25%) and set designers (36%). In this sense, one hypothesis is that the results could reflect traditional labour values, which are likely to have influenced the training market in the past, by attracting or rejecting women, thereby eventually helping to reproduce these gender differences in theatrical work. Therefore, women would have been given fair opportunities to work as costume designers but would not have been seen to be as fit as set designers or lighting designers—technical activities commonly associated with being 'men's work.'

When considering the cast, the gender gap was reduced, with women representing 46% of all the performers. This percentage was exactly the same as registered in France (Coulangeon, Ravet, and Roharik, 2005), even though the context and data source were completely different (the French researchers worked with information from a employers' association). Given that the determining factor in the selection of a man or a woman for a character Is based on who the playwrights had decided to represent in their scripts, the fact that these writers are predominantly men (71%) plays an important and decisive part in the gender of the cast. Perhaps this is because each gender would be more likely to talk about their own issues, thus influencing the gender of the characters portrayed on stage.

10 https://educa.ibge.gov.br/jovens/conheca-o-brasil/populacao/18320-quantidade-de-homens-e-mulheres.html

11 IBGE: *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística*

Figure 2. Number of professionals in each function.

The results are shown considering (a) artist collectives and companies and (b) only men and women.

Men represented 71% of the playwrights and 73% of the directors.

Function	Men	Women	Collectives	Companies	Totals	
Playwrights	925 66%	387 27%	100 7%	0	1,412 100%	N° of Professionals Percentage
	925 71%	387 29%			1,312 100%	
Directors	797 70%	301 26%	46 4%	0	1,144 100%	N° of Professionals Percentage
	797 73%	301 27%			1,098 100%	
Producers	390 32%	422 35%	273 22%	133 11%	1,218 100%	N° of Professionals Percentage
	390 48%	422 52%			812 100%	
Performers	2,724 54%	2,314 45%	50 1%	0	5,088 100%	N° of Professionals Percentage
	2,724 54%	2,314 46%			5,088 100 %	
Lighting designers	412 70%	135 23%	45 8%	0	592 100%	N° of Professionals Percentage
	412 75%	135 25%			547 100%	
Set designers	407 56%	226 31%	98 13%	0	731 100%	N° of Professionals Percentage
	407 64%	226 36%			633 100%	
Costume designers	268 38%	355 51%	78 11%	0	701 100%	N° of Professionals Percentage
	268 43%	355 57%			623 100%	

Note: Professionals who worked on more than one play, but in the same function (always as a director, for example), were counted just once. Professionals who performed two or three different functions were counted twice or three times, once for each function they worked in.

Elizabeth Freestone, who carried out research in this field in 2012 in partnership with *The Guardian* newspaper, blames William Shakespeare[12]. We are allegedly reproducing a tendency derived from the days when plays were written for all-male companies. Her study indicated that only 16% of the characters created by Shakespeare were women. Of note, the bard was the playwright with the highest number of productions (29) and performances (240) considered in this current study, even more than 350 years after his death. What amounts to simple censorship was confirmed when we looked at the gender of the performers while also considering the gender of the corresponding playwrights. When the latter were men, 60% of the characters were also men; in the plays written by women, 54% of the characters were women. The data collected by Freestone showed figures of 63% and 49%, respectively, but only considered playwrights of new plays. Another difference was that her sample included only plays performed in the top 10 subsided theatres in the UK.

In the second and third approaches to this work we focused on the number of plays and performances, respectively, providing some nuances to the analysis while also referencing the potential gender gaps in earnings. The differences in between the former (number of professionals) and the latter approach (number of plays) were because some professionals can work on more than one production and some plays use more than one professional to fulfil the seven functions analysed here. Thus, beyond the artists' collectives, plays and consequently, performances, can employ multiple men or women for each of these tasks. Indeed, this current mapping registered men and women working together in all of the seven functions, with the producers reporting that some plays split a specific task between a person and an artist collective.

Regarding the comparison with the number of professionals mentioned above, we will now focus only on the plays in which only men or women had been in charge of each of the seven functions, excluding all the other multiple variants. Figure 3 (the number of plays) and figure 4 (the number of performances) show results for all the available combinations and confirm that this choice did not compromise the analysis because most of the plays fit into these categories. The exception was for the performers, which will require a specific analysis because this function does not have 'one person in charge.'

In addition, further investigation regarding the work of producers will be required because artist collectives are highly involved in this role. These current data reaffirm the gender imbalances, with the varying data pointing towards an increase in the gap disfavouring women, as already identified in the analysis of the number of professionals. While there were slight differences in the results for production and the three technical functions when using the second and third approach, the imbalances (which were already quite significant), were extended even further for the key functions of playwright and director.

12 https://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2012/dec/10/women-in-theatre-research-full-results

Figure 3. Number of plays considering the gender of the person responsible for each function.

*Data includes plays in which an artist collective or a company was responsible for a function.**

Women wrote 23% of the plays and directed 22% of the productions.

Function	Men	Women	C	M+C	W+C	M+W+C	Totals	
Playwrights	892 63%	260 18%	77 5%	20 1%	15 1%	153 11%	1,417 100%	N° of Plays Percentage
	892 77%	260 23%					1,152 100%	
Directors	955 69%	277 20%	50 4%	5 0,4%	3 0,2%	87 6%	1,377 100%	N° of Plays Percentage
	955 78%	277 22%					1,232 100%	
Producers	283 25%	273 24%	273 24%	82 7%	117 10%	92 8%	1,120 100%	N° of Plays Percentage
	283 51%	273 49%					556 100%	
Lighting designers	549 69%	165 21%	47 6%	0 0%	0 0%	38 5%	799 100%	N° of Plays Percentage
	549 77%	165 23%					714 100%	
Set designers	389 50%	204 26%	101 13%	10 1%	3 0,4%	76 10%	783 100%	N° of Plays Percentage
	389 66%	204 34%					593 100%	
Costume designers	237 30%	330 42%	68 9%	42 5%	44 6%	70 9%	791 100%	N° of Plays Percentage
	237 42%	330 58%					567 100%	

* C: artists' collectives. In the case of producers, the data also includes the plays produced by a company.

M+C: plays in which the function was led by a man and an artists' collective.

W+C: plays in which the function was led by a woman and an artists' collective.

M+W+C: plays in which the function was led by a man and a woman or by a man, a woman, and an artists' collective.

As an example, women accounted for 36% of all the set designers. Considering the number of plays, they oversaw this function in 34% of the productions, which in turn corresponded to 31% of the performances. Similar minor variations were found for lighting designers and costume designers. The pattern was also similar for production, which had a fairer balance: 52% of all the producers were women and they were responsible for 49% of the works, accounting for 46% of the performances.

Figure 4. Number of plays considering the gender of the person responsible for each function.

*Data includes plays in which an artist collective or a company was responsible for a function.**

Women wrote 19% of the performances and directed 18% of them.

Function	Men	Women	C	M+C	W+C	M+W+C	Totals	
Playwrights	9,367 68%	2,260 16%	384 3%	132 1%	115 1%	1,449 11%	13,707 100%	N° of Performances
	9,367 81%	2,260 19%					11,627 100%	Percentage
Directors	10,115 75%	2,175 16%	242 2%	7 0,1%	6 0,04%	962 7%	13,507 100%	N° of Performances
	10,115 82%	2,175 18%					12,290 100%	Percentage
Producers	3,377 30%	2,820 25%	1,971 18%	733 7%	950 9%	1,239 11%	11,090 100%	N° of Performances
	3,377 54%	2,820 46%					6,197 100%	Percentage
Lighting designers	5,975 72%	1,653 20%	192 2%	0 0%	0 0%	480 6%	8,300 100%	N° of Performances
	5,975 78%	1,653 22%					7,628 100%	Percentage
Set designers	4,621 55%	2,122 25%	679 8%	63 1%	10 0,1%	870 10%	8,365 100%	N° of Performances
	4,621 69%	2,122 31%					6,743 100%	Percentage
Costume designers	2,939 35%	3,244 38%	596 7%	549 6%	577 7%	599 7%	8,504 100%	N° of Performances
	2,939 48%	3,244 52%					6,183 100%	Percentage

* C: artists' collectives. In the case of producers, the data also includes the plays produced by a company.

M+C: plays in which the function was led by a man and an artists' collective.

W+C: plays in which the function was led by a woman and an artists' collective.

M+W+C: plays in which the function was led by a man and a woman or by a man, a woman, and an artists' collective.

However, the data for playwrights and directors showed a deeper and more meaningful change. When we considered only the professionals who wrote a text performed in São Paulo in 2018, 29% of the playwrights were women. The data for the plays showed that 23% of the productions had a text written by a woman. Another decrease in female involvement was seen for the performances for which the playwright was female in only 19% of the cases. As shown in figure 5, the data for direction followed

a very similar critical pattern. Women represented 27% of the professionals directing a production but directed 22% of the plays, with the percentage for the performances being even lower at just 18%.

Figure 5. Percentage of women considering the number of professionals, plays, and performances.

Women accounted for 27% of the directors but were responsible for 18% of the performances.

Function	N° of Professionals	N° of Plays	N° of Performances
Playwrights	29%	23%	19%
Directors	27%	22%	18%
Producers	52%	49%	46%
Lighting designers	25%	23%	22%
Set designers	36%	34%	31%
Costume designers	57%	58%	52%

These latter figures seem to reproduce the data describing the gender gap previously registered by IBGE. A report launched in 2020, using data from 2019, showed that among those employed in managerial functions, the percentage of women decreased when we considered positions with higher salaries[13]. The data for playwrights and director were particularly worrisome because they referred to the two driving forces behind the theatrical discourse of the ideas and experiences represented to audiences on stage. They reflected an imbalance in the labour market which directly impacted the opportunities women had to express themselves and be heard.

In turn, the analysis of performers required a different approach because the number of professionals involved in each play varied from one actor in monologues to dozens of people in some musicals, thereby providing multiple combinations of men and women in each production. Thus, analysis of the overall data regarding performances provided a better estimate of a possible imbalance between the opportunities for both genders. Based on the aggregate figures, we registered information about the actors in 1,333 plays corresponding to 13,400 performances (96% of the whole sample). Considering the number of artists playing a character in each of these performances, we calculated that each performer took to the stage a mean 72.44 times. Of these, the performer was a man in 57% of the cases and a woman 43% of the time: results very similar to those observed in our first approach (54% vs. 46%), but once again with a slight shift against women.

Although the mapping did not include information on salaries, ticket sales, grants, or sponsorships, it

13 https://biblioteca.ibge.gov.br/visualizacao/livros/liv101784_informativo.pdf

is reasonable to infer that plays with more performances were likely to be in a better position to pay higher salaries. This is because these plays probably had larger audiences and, potentially, more grants and/or sponsorships. Given that the participation of women in all seven functions analysed here was clearly lower than that of men when considering the number of performances, it was quite likely that men had higher mean earnings than women. Indeed, the IBGE report (2021) indicated that in 2019, on average, female employees received 78% of the mean salary of their male counterparts when the entire labour market was considered.

This would not necessarily occur only because of a gap between the salaries of men and women working in the same kind of production and under the same conditions, which is a problem frequently mentioned in other professions. The information provided by this current mapping study was insufficient to allow us to confirm or rule out this hypothesis, even though this tendency was very likely also present. Nonetheless, there were more male professionals and they had an increased number of performances compared to women, meaning that men had more 'working days' than women. This was not only because more men were working in theatre than women, but also because their presence was greater in plays that had more performances. Of note, a similar tendency was also previously found in Spain (Actis, 2016) in a study that confirmed that women were concentrated in the labour market segment that had fewer jobs per day.

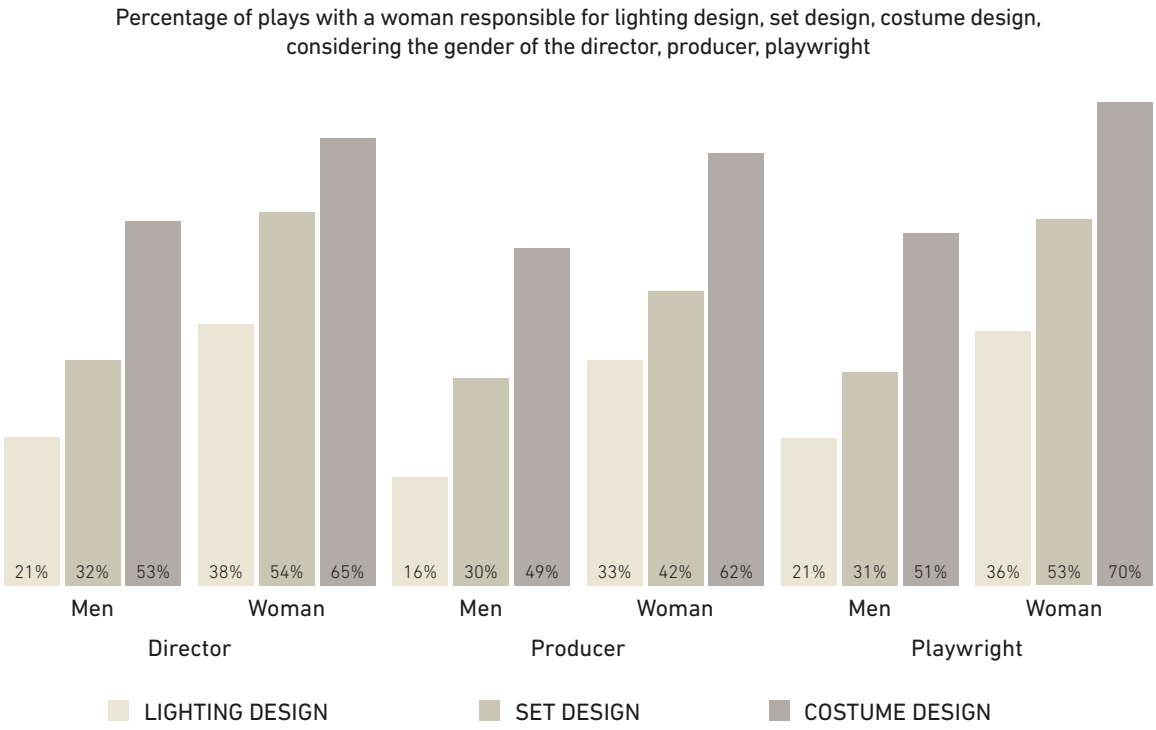
This argument is not exclusively valid only for professionals more likely to be paid 'per performance' or by the month, but also for those who might be paid by the job, such as set or lighting designers, for example. Plays with more performances are more likely to pay better salaries and/or offer a bonus for a number of performances exceeding a certain baseline. Thus, the earnings of each theatre professional is another example of a topic that should be explored in further studies. Finally, comparison between plays for children and for adults did not present any meaningful differences in the averages for the three approaches described so far. While this job market was more fragmented (7 performances per play compared to 11 in the case of adult plays), the relative position of women seemed to be quite similar in both genres.

DECISION-MAKING

Gender inequality reduced once women managed to become playwrights, directors, or producers of plays because having a female professional in these functions increased the likelihood of women being used in other relevant positions. However, inequality increased when we examined plays in which these three functions were performed by a male professional. The analysis first considered playwrights, splitting the plays in two groups: one with at least one male playwright and one no female playwrights and the other with the opposite configuration (at least one female playwright and no male playwrights). Given that the process did not consider the authorship of artist collectives and plays written by both a man and a woman, the final sample for each function was slightly different from those adopted in the previous approaches.

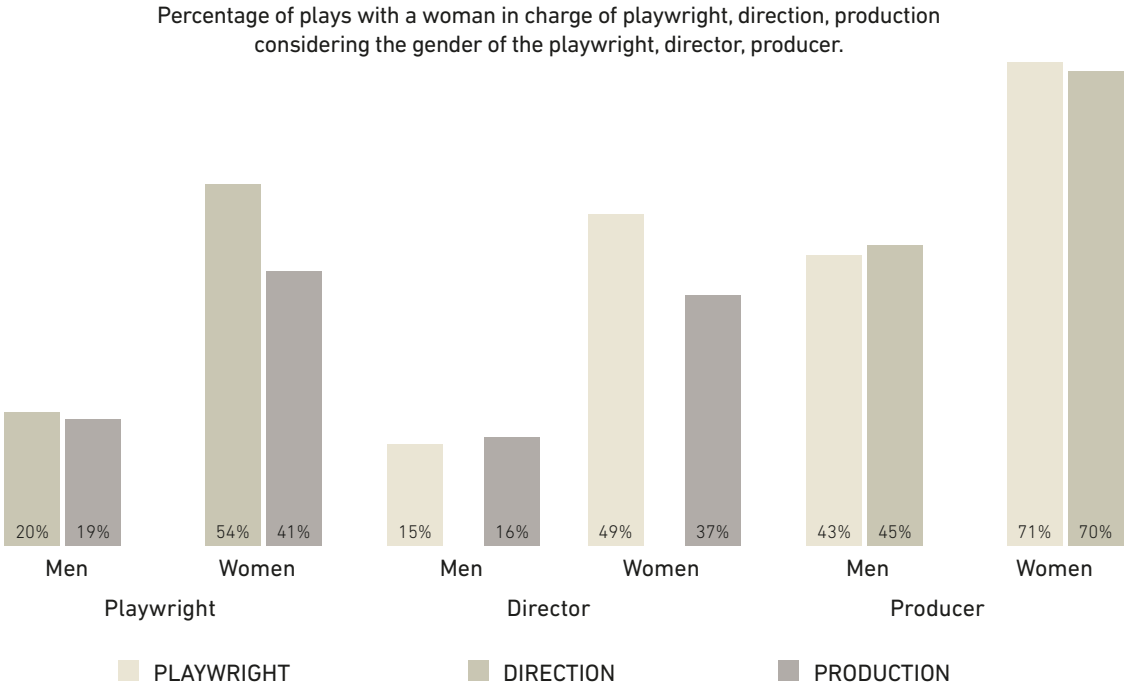
The results (see figure 6) showed how having a female playwright, director, or producer implied different patterns of gender distribution in lighting, set, and costume design. For example, 36% of lighting designers were female in these plays compared to 23% in the overall sample. In turn, 53% of the set designers were women compared to only 31% for plays with male playwrights. Finally, considering costume design—a function already dominated by female professionals (58% in the total sample)—the imbalance against men increased so that 70% of production costumes were designed by women. Figure 6 also suggests these changes were higher when the comparison focused on the playwright or director when considering, of course, living playwrights, probably because these professionals have the most power to make decisions.

Figure 6. How the gender of the decision-makers impacted the presence of women in technical positions.



The same pattern was seen when we compared only the three key positions, as shown in figure 7. The plays written by at least one man were also directed by a man in 85% of the cases, a percentage even higher than the 78% observed in the overall sample. This additional imbalance towards a 'male cast' also happened for the other five functions. However, the pattern was reversed when compared to the plays written by at least one woman. While a woman directed 15% of the plays written by a man, this percentage more than tripled, to 49%, when considering only plays written by women. The percentage of woman-produced plays, which was 52% in the overall sample and 43% for plays written by men, reached 71% if the play had been written by a woman.

Figure 7. How the gender of one decision-maker impacted the presence of women in the other decision-making positions.



How to read the figure: Among plays with a male playwright, 20% were directed and 19% were produced by a woman. Among those with a female playwright, 54% were directed and 41% were produced by women.

These data show a clear change in gender distribution when a man or woman was in one of these three key positions. However, the interpretation of these results requires some attention because these three functions can interact with each other in multiple ways to influence the ways a theatre production is built. Some hypotheses could help the understanding of the possible dynamics behind the numbers. First, for plays written by deceased authors, the leading position is the director or producer. Considering that most dead playwrights were men (the presence of women is much higher among living playwrights), we can risk saying that the likelihood of someone deciding to restage a play of a dead author is higher among men than among women, regardless of whether the decision comes from a director or producer. This would produce a kind of a 'Shakespeare effect' by which men write about men, thereby encouraging more men to stage these texts.

For living authors, the decision to produce a play may come from one of these three key functions. The playwright can invite a director or a producer, or the latter two professionals may look for a text to stage. In some cases, the same professional plays more than one of these functions. These different possibilities define how the decision-making power is distributed among these functions. Only a specific survey and in-depth interviews could clarify how these different processes are articulated, how they are distributed in quantitative terms, and how they influence the gender of the professionals hired for other functions.

The data for producers, which showed almost no gender gap, were a positive indicator for women and are a sign that things could be changing. Once again, the lack of previous data prevents a precise analysis regarding the speed and intensity of this change, and especially of the reasons behind it. An important refer-

ence for this discussion is the fact that this tendency was also found in the audiovisual field. A report from Ancine (2019) showed a similar gender gap pattern to the one seen for theatre. There was a huge gap in women working as directors or screenwriters (22% of the films released in 2018, in both cases) and a strong presence of women as executive producers (43%). In terms of the technical functions, only 15% of the films had a female director of photography, representing a higher imbalance than for lighting designers in theatre (23%). However, the percentage of films with a female art director was quite balanced at 57%. Unfortunately, the report did not explore reasons for these findings that could help interpret our current results.

On one last note, I would like to present a couple hypotheses regarding the strong presence of women as producers that could drive future research. First, their presence could reproduce the stereotype and structural prejudice that touts women as gifted and organised professionals present to assist men, as found in old-school offices and in most executive situations (where the secretary was never a man). Second, it could also have an 'open door effect' because, as the interaction between playwrights and directors is stronger, many women can only find opportunities to work as producers.

These two lines of thought question whether this data represents 'good news'. Indeed, prejudice and obstacles against women in empowered positions would pave the way for female professionals towards production only. Nonetheless, this strategic function would unquestionably drive further changes to mitigate the gender gap. As the data shows, more women-driven productions also equates to a greater likelihood of women being contracted to work in other theatre activities. Furthermore, because the producer can also initiate and construct theatre productions, the presence of more female producers could also increase their presence as future playwrights and directors. In this regard, a report from IBGE (2010) showed that women formed the majority (57%) of students enrolled in arts courses at universities. This figure supports the open door effect and also indicates that past education and training gaps are being left behind, with increasing pressure to break down barriers and open the doors still closed to women in the theatre job market.

CONCLUSIONS

Theatre production in São Paulo reproduces the gender inequalities registered in the Brazilian labour market as a whole. First, more male than female professionals worked in five of the seven functions we investigated here. According to the IBGE, in 2019, 74% of men were part of the working force, while the percentage was much smaller for women (55%). Second, the gap was higher among decision-makers. While the IBGE registered that men occupied 63% of the management positions, this mapping study showed that a huge majority of plays were written (77%) or directed (78%) by men. Salaries seemed to follow the same tendency, even though this work did not allow financial comparison. The data showed that the percentage of women in one of the seven functions examined decreased when we considered the number of performances, suggesting that men occupied the best positions: plays with more performances.

However, there is an important caveat. The production figures were reasonably balanced between male (48%) and female (52%) professionals, indicating that women have been able to access at least one important role in theatres. After the director and playwright, producers still have a lot of decision-making power and influence the hiring of more female professionals. Comparison of plays produced by men and women showed that when a female professional led the production team, more women were present in the other functions we considered when compared to the plays produced by a male professional.

This trend was even greater when the same analysis was repeated with directors and playwrights, given

that they are the main driving forces inside theatre productions. The critical point being that these are precisely the functions with the lowest likelihood of having a woman in charge. Moreover, these are the key positions from which women could express their viewpoints, talk about their problems, and share their perspectives on the world with audiences. Thus, these key functions do not just represent another 'job position' in the 'theatre market' but rather, they are a pivotal source of expression and ideas. The labour market gap in playwright and direction positions for women implies a mismatch in opportunities for women to speak and to be heard, which must be urgently addressed.

There is an alarming lack of data about the theatre market in Brazil, which clearly limits the analysis of the results we gathered here in our mapping. There are no historical series nor any institutions producing systematic quantitative information about theatrical activity in the country. These data could indicate how the overview presented here relates to previous years and how it could develop in the future. Publishing basic data about the plays performed in Brazil could help policy makers to develop evidence-based policies, cultural agents to understand the market they are part of, and cultural institutions to face the main challenges they will meet in their daily activities. All three of these aspects could also help to inform public policies, raise awareness about the gender gap, and develop initiatives to foster the presence of women in the different functions of theatre production. This is particularly important in the current context in Brazil marked by the consequences of the pandemic, lack of government support in cultural fields, and absence of public initiatives to raise awareness about the inequalities faced by women in the theatre job market.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

João Oswaldo Leiva Filho is a PhD student at Goldsmiths University (London). He holds a degree in economics and a master's degree in cinema (both from the University of São Paulo, Brazil), as well as a master's degree in cultural management from the Open University of Catalonia (Barcelona). Leiva is currently studying different areas of culture at his consultancy company and has edited two books about cultural habits in Brazil.

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The gender paradox: professionalisation of a form of traditional martial arts, *Lathi Khela*, in the sociocultural context of Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

In the midst of a COVID-19 pandemic-struck India, this paper was born as an autoethnographic and analytical inquiry; it presents qualitative and multimodal research into a martial arts dance tradition, *Lathi Khela*, conducted from 2017 to 2018. This practice developed as a martial art, with little or no patronage, during the colonial days of the still undivided Bengal. Indeed, it still lives on as a popular martial arts dance tradition in many districts and rural communities of Bangladesh. Compared to other districts, the Lathi Khela group from Narail has continued this practice through innovative methods. The distinctive character of the district is governed by the multi-generational practitioners of Lathi Khela and their creative choreographies, as well as the knowledge it articulates and embodies. Moreover, in Narail, this previously male-dominated profession has also included women since 2008. The focus of this work was the role of gender in the continuity of the Lathi Khela tradition in this district. This was achieved through five semi-structured, demonstrative interviews intuitively applied in the field. The research also drew on an ongoing conversation on Facebook with M. Rahat, an experienced Lathi Khela practitioner, who took stock of the current cultural landscape of the practice in the context of COVID-19. On the one hand, the women of this district occupy a contested space when representing this male-dominated tradition, and on the other, they physically embody lives within the patrilineal boundaries of kinship and marriage. The performativity of gender is thus, directly connected to the symbolic meaning of *maan*, that is, the prestige attributed to the female body within the sociocultural contexts of the Lathi Khela.

Keywords: Lathi Khela, gender, female body, woman, autoethnography, prestige, gender capital

SUMMARY

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INTRODUCTION

> *I was born in Berhampore, West Bengal (India) and have always heard stories about Lathi from my grandmother. She would tell me of the country of her childhood, now the country of East Bengal (Bangladesh), where she lived and spent her youth in Rajshahi. She had to immigrate to West Bengal before the Liberation war of Bangladesh in 1971.*

For this article, my intention to write an autoethnography arose from an intuitive and immediate connection with autoethnography as a "cultural analysis through personal narrative" (Boylorn and Orbe 2014, p. 17). To paraphrase Ellis and Bochner, autoethnographers look back and forth through an ethnographic wide-angle lens, focusing outward on cultural aspects of personal experience; then inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract and resist cultural interpretations (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 739). The autoethnographic approach to this work, completed during the COVID-19 pandemic—as one of the most vulnerable moments of the human condition, placed me "in a matrix of always already political activities as one passes through a myriad of cultural experiences" (Ettorre, 2017, p. 2).

If "autoethnographers reveal several layers of consciousness that link the personal to the cultural" (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 739), it is important to highlight how I gained my knowledge of this form of martial arts. This further informs my "social positioning as well as experiences of the cultural freedoms and constraints one encounters" (Ettorre, 2017, p.3). Through autoethnography, I realised that this research went beyond the object–subject

distinction and "provides to intimate knowledge of sensitive issues and a powerful argument for its use as a tool for understanding self and society" (Ngunjiri, Hernandez and Chang, 2010). For this role, I wish to clarify my position as a South Asian student interested in *Lathi Khela*, as a researcher and a curious person exposed for the first time to a cultural practice remarkably close to home (which is now West Bengal). This vernacular culture is similar to my own but, remains divided by our political geographies. I am an outsider in many ways and an insider in others.

It should be noted that the current geopolitics etched in my mind a certain need to recognise that I could not conveniently use this culture as my own. I needed to unlearn and relearn and accept the possible results of overwriting my overconfidence as a vernacular Bengali with hitherto unseen realities. How then could I revise, rewrite, and re-investigate something that has been around for centuries and has been written about several times before? I tried to author this article during a pandemic—a time of crisis—both through the lens of my vulnerabilities and via the oral history of this ethnographic dance master's degree project and performance analysis. I tried to understand the role of gender as part of a living tradition in Bangladesh, whose identity seems to fluctuate between nation, people, and place, much like the times we live in today. Thus, this work collects anecdotal references that serve as autoethnographic observations[1] about my knowledge, learning, and understanding of Lathi Khela from the year 2017 to the present.

Through a total of 15 interviews and specifically focusing this article on five semi-structured interviews conducted in the Narail district, as well as personal communications, I aimed to trace different temporal dimensions of what Lathi Khela was and what Lathi Khela is, and thus, the paradox of its continuity. The interview questions were loosely structured around four thematic blocks: the history, narrative, performance, and future of Lathi Khela, also leaving room for intuition and improvisation during the interview process. Using a semi-structured, 'demonstrative' interview style that I invented during this process, my informants showed me, move by move, specific choreographies they considered meaningful to their community, as we had seen in the live performance the night before. The "interview responses can be seen as a form of 'talking in action'" (Hillyard, 2010) in which the conversation through action occurs in both directions: the informants demonstrated and explained the movement and I questioned while simultaneously talking and recording the action with a camera, which further helped me keep track the timings and to take notes.

> Lathi Khela was introduced to me through the physical experience of dancing capoeira in Trondheim while pursuing my master's degree. That feeling, which was somewhere between martial arts and dance—the play between the two—made me curious to find out if there was any tradition of martial arts dance in my home state in India, West Bengal. The internet became the only means to connect to these different regions. The only links I found on the internet were the Raibenshe[2] *and Bratachari movements. Further internet searches led me to a Bangladeshi Facebook group and thus, I was added to the Dance Artists of Bangladesh group.*
>
> *I wrote a long post sharing my interest in researching this art form which led me to contact Lubna Marium, my informant and initial point of contact. Until then, the Lathi Khela was an art completely*

1 The autoethnographic responses were derived from my conversation, during the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2021, with a social anthropologist and scholar of dance studies, Dr. Urmimala Sarkar. She asked me about my fieldwork related to Lathi Khela and I intuitively responded by navigating through the following questions: What is Lathi Khela? How did you come to know about Lathi Khela? What did you read before going to do the fieldwork? What did you understand based on what you had read? What did you see in Bangladesh? What did you do? These questions were used to refresh my memories of the fieldwork I did in 2017 in Bangladesh.

2 Translated as 'royal bamboo'.

unknown to me. We took the conversation to Facebook messenger; I provided a reference to the Bengali book, Ostro Chorcha, and Lubna Marium's unpublished article on the 2008 revitalisation project called The Restructuring of Tradition as primary resources. Lathi Khela is a living tradition, with a past that evolved over centuries and now lives in different forms in different districts of Bangladesh but which has not yet been investigated. The fieldwork I undertook had already begun, even before I got there. Moving around in Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, Kabila Bhai, a renowned practitioner of Lathi Khela became my interlocutor and also taught me the techniques involved in the 'play of sticks.'

Lathi Khela as a living tradition: a symbol of gender and culture

Lathi Khela or 'stick play,' is a traditional indigenous form of martial arts practice known by various names including *lathi-bardi, sardar-khela*, and *nurdi-khela* in Bangladesh. It currently constitutes a battle game with music involving the use of bamboo sticks. The Lathi Khela is an intergenerational, inherited, and transmitted form of Indigenous cultural knowledge of the martial defence skills used by *lathiyals*[3] mostly from marginal and subaltern communities. That is, landless labourers, carpenters, pallbearers, masons, etc. Various historical sources[4] indicate that the Lathi Khela of medieval Bengal was a highly skilled art because most feudal lords employed groups of its practitioners to defend their fiefdoms. However, due to declining patronage and for other sociopolitical and economic reasons[5], there was a marked decline in its practice during the British era. Lathi Khela returned to the spotlight through the *Bratachari Movement*[6] spearheaded by an Indian civil servant, Gurusaday Dutta.

The *Lathi* and women

As stated by Rahat (17 July 2017)
when I interviewed him,
"Ei Lathi tar onek Mulyo Ache" (this *lathi*
has a lot of value to it).

Each house used to be equipped with at least one strong and well-used bamboo stick (*lathi*) and one able-bodied man (*lathiyal*) who used the lathi especially for the purpose of settling domestic disputes (*jhogra*) on disputed land belonging to one of them. The lathi thus, became a symbol of prestige (*ijjat*), a morally defined paternal line (Kotalová, 1993). At the other end of the spectrum, it is considered common in Bangladesh that "a woman must be given in marriage at least once" (Blanchet, 1986); and, in addition, she must marry 'on time' since marriage is an important aspect of male honour and family prestige (Kotalová, 1993). The symbol of prestige is thus, repeated both in culture and gender.

Because of its martial aesthetic, Lathi Khela was inevitably associated with the characteristics of endurance, strength, and power most often related to ideals that only a man should 'naturally' possess: "the strongest, the one who takes risks and endures pain to assert his manhood" (Bank, 2012). Hence, power is inevitably associated with masculinity in this context. Discourse of the ideals of masculinity has been widely present where Lathi Khela developed in Bengal, Asia. The practice survived or was sustained after this movement and continues to be popularly performed, albeit with little or no patronage. My contact person was Lubna Marium,

3 The translation of *lathiyal* is 'one who wields sticks'.

4 Raja Pratapaditya of Jessore (17th century) is said to have had 52,000 *dhali* (shield-bearing warriors) under his patronage according to S.C. Mitra in the *History of Jessore and Khulna* (in Bengali, vol. II).

5 British administrative reports during the colonial era also mention Lathi Khela as a local form of sport. A draconian law, the Dramatic Performance Act (DPA) of 1876 restricting the performing arts and a law banning arms together led to a decline in the practice during British rule.

6 The objective of this movement was linked to the revivalist movement of the 20th century as a postcolonial discourse "that implied the reorganisation of specific folk traditions to replenish the nationalist ideology" (Adhikary, 2015, p.670).

a dance researcher and academic as well as the artistic director and founder of the *Shadhona Cultural Circle*.[7] She presented me with two primary resources. One was a historically significant book called *Ostro Chorcha*[i] and the other was an unpublished article[8] she had written about Lathi Khela within Bangladeshi society. The article constituted a detailed understanding of the 2008 revitalisation project of Lathi Khela called *Cholo Lathi Kheli*.[9] directed by Shadhona.

Given that Lathi Khela still continues to generate enthusiasm in rural Bangladesh, in 2008 this project was implemented by Shadhona in partnership with the National Authority for the Arts[10], to renew this ancient art, first by documenting the various styles of its practice followed by an infusion of pedagogical knowledge regarding its teaching, entailing both its analysis and the elaboration of a teaching methodology[ii] The inclusion of women for learning and performance, as I understand it[11], began in 2008 during the revitalisation project, when Lubna Marium offered a cash prize to any group of Lathi Khela practitioners who could form a women's team in less than a year.

This standardisation of a pedagogical system and aestheticisation of forms was necessary to initiate a process of making Lathi Khela sustainable in this context. That said, this process is not isolated and must be placed in the context of post-colonial cultures. The themes of revival and preservation of tradition through standardisation, patronage, and training are central to state policies for the arts. Indeed, the practices of recovery and preservation of traditional forms of art and performance gave rise to the imagined idea of the nation, as an experience of colonialism. The construction of an 'authentic' national culture has historically seen traditional practices as a way to resist colonial models of performative practice and the hegemony of western aesthetics. This is a widely researched phenomenon in postcolonial histories of theatre, dance, and artistic practices (Bharucha R., 1989).

Lathi Khela in the world of martial arts discourse

Martial arts research has become "powerfully associated with specifically Asian traditions and practices" (Farrer and Whalen-Bridge, 2011). In Asia, countries such as China, Japan, and India have "evidenced a long-standing and lively intellectual engagement with traditional martial arts" have also contributed towards a "martial arts discourse"[12] (Farrer and Whalen-Bridge, 2011). This kind of viewpoint is most often a western view of Asian cultures and traditions, tracing back to ancient and pre-modern practices, which can sometimes be exoticised. However, Bangladesh as a country seems not to be 'seen' in the field of martial arts discourse. Thus, a similar or alternative form[13] of martial arts dance, the Lathi Khela, has not received any recognition and has not been part of the broader discourse of martial arts[14], despite its popular practice and presence in Bangladesh. Nonetheless, a gap in

7 A centre for the advancement of South Asian dance and music, a local cultural organisation in Bangladesh.

8 The article, called Restructuring traditions: *an experiment in introduction of performance pedagogy in an indigenous performing art of Bangladesh*, considered it valuable to preserve the traditional knowledge, accumulated information, vision, and philosophy of life acquired by the local population in each place.

9 The literal translation is 'let's play Lathi'.

10 The national authority for the arts in Bangladesh is called the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA) and the project was funded by the Robi Telecommunication Company, one of the most well-known telecommunication providers in Bangladesh. The BSA has a countrywide infrastructure which will allow the project to permeate the benefits to most groups of lathiyals.

11 Personal communication with Lubna Marium.

12 For distinctions between martial arts practice and martial arts discourse, see Farrer and Whalen-Bridge, 2011.

13 The reason I say similar is because Lathi Khela is also a 'fight and dance game' in today's context, albeit with the use of sticks. Not to mention that the vocabulary used to describe the art form also drastically differs from that used with other martial arts.

14 Martial arts discourse and not martial arts studies, because "the boundaries between scholarly, journalistic, and private efforts in martial arts studies have become increasingly blurred" (Jones, 2002).

deep ethnographic research on Bangladeshi martial arts dance forms does not undermine the fact that such arts are present. Indeed, the martial arts framework allows us to understand how the body, performativity, and performance intersect in Lathi Khela.

Lathi Khela today

There are marked differences in the performance of Lathi Khela and there is no concept of a 'typical Lathi Khela performance' because it varies across districts in terms of performance aesthetics, repertoire, movement compositions, costumes, sociocultural context, and gender play. In fact, from an ethnochoreological perspective, the performance is the dance in itself (Bakka and Karoblis, 2010). For the fieldwork, I considered the following districts: Manikganj, Kishoreganj, and Netrokona (figure 1), where the performances could perhaps help me understand the distinctiveness of the Lathi Khela that is performed in the Narail district of Bangladesh. Manikganj maintains several dance-based narrative performances accompanied by music in which the men dress up as women with skirts and masks to play different characters[15]. I observed the Lathi Khela of Kishoreganj during a circumcision ceremony, where its performance was considered auspicious as the initiators of the program. The repertoire leaned towards a 'battle game' or 'stick dance' with humour as the central element during the commitment between the artists and the audience.

The Lathi Khela performance was very different[16] in Netrokona, even though it is only 25 kilometres from Kishoreganj. Nonetheless, music was a common element in all districts and a necessary accompaniment for the performances[17].

Figure 1 Lathi Khela practitioners from different districts in rural Bangladesh; top left: Manikganj group; top right: Netrokona group; bottom: Kishoreganj group. Photographed by the author.

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Locating my nomadic subjectivity

During my stay in Dhaka, my safety was the most important thing for Lubna Marium, my contact person for fieldwork (even though she resided in

15 Characters that include animals, elderly couples, and young women.

16 Lubna Marium had already shared a movement phrase with me that is unique to this district and its performances. The phrase, a high turn, is called *matiya polot* and is also seen in Manipuri dance in India and Bangladesh.

17 The Lathi Khela music-dance relationship in each district has potential as the object of further research but is not the focus of this present article.

her own house). This was understandable from her perspective as a host of a female researcher from India. I was advised not to take any public transportation unless it was with a person whom Lubna already knew, and when I was not present at the residence, I was advised to inform her of my whereabouts. Moreover, she believed that Dhaka is not the safest place to move around in freely. I realised this later when I was subjected to a kind of disconcerting stare by a few men on the streets in broad daylight, even when I was wearing a full-length dress that covered me, and especially when I did not wear an onna[18]*. At the same time, Kabila Bhai, one of my respondents, told me about his apprehension when he heard that a woman from bidesh or 'a foreign land' was coming for research purposes. He said that he had the stereotypical image of a foreign woman dressed in a 'modern way' in his mind, and I, with my modest clothing, had helped to allay his apprehension.*

Contemporary philosopher and feminist theorist Rosi Braidotti suggested that nomadic subjectivity is one that is "in flux, never opposed to a dominant hierarchy yet is intrinsically other, always in the process of becoming, and perpetually engaged in dynamic power relations both creative and restrictive." The notion of gender performativity places the female subject "in a highly regulated and historically determined framework" (Bala 2013). Therefore, the process of 'becoming' a female researcher is rooted in negotiating the middle ground between the space of having a female body and the way it is perceived.

Lathi Khela in Narail

Entering Narail, I experienced many flashbacks of my previous field visits and a redoubled curiosity about the only district where women are included in the practice of Lathi Khela. I do not know where the curiosity stemmed from. Perhaps the prospect of gender inclusivity in a predominantly male practice? Or my previous ways of occupying an unusual, unfeminine space compared to other women, one in which I still had to fit into the feminine ideal of men? Or was it the desire to know how women could be included in such a practice? I wondered if it was it so simple? Who decides that they practice it and what happens to them after their marriage?

The last destination of the investigation, the furthest from Dhaka and the closest to the border of West Bengal (India), was Narail.[iii] The distinctiveness of the Lathi Khela there was multidimensional: (1) it embodied and articulated knowledge; (2) because of its multigenerational practitioners; (3) its creative choreography; and finally (4) the inclusion of women in this male dominated profession (see figure 2). In the following sections I will unpack some of the social, political, aesthetic, and performative shifts that occur when Lathi Khela is experienced, enacted, and reinvented to create a national identity.

Figure 2 The Narail Lathi Khela group, photographed by the author

THE PARADOX OF GENDER AS A FEMALE RESEARCHER

In all the districts I had so far visited, women, including me, were positioned in a certain way. Mostly in their domestic households or accompanied by their male counterparts as audience members. In the Netrokona district, women were still not allowed to come out from behind the purdah, the curtain

18 In Bengali this is a piece of cloth used to cover a woman's upper body.

> *that demarcated the boundary between the living space and the kitchen. Men did not enter this kitchen space either. I remember that when I entered this space, the women asked me so many questions; I told them about my grandmother, and we burst into laughter—although never too loud and always in a reserved way.*
>
> *One of these women, the leader's wife, momentarily entered the room looking down, avoiding eye contact, and served me lunch, along with the men of the household, on their bed. I was the only woman, surrounded by five men eating with me. At that moment I felt genderless, an honorary male, which gave me an uneasy feeling of power to enter both these spaces. I could have a conversation with the men and dine with them. This was a space where no woman of the household was allowed to eat (Giurchescu, 1999). Had I been a male researcher, would I have been able to enter these two spaces? How do they perceive me now? Am I still an outsider, wearing a long dress that covers me and an Onna to cover my breasts?*

This anecdotal memory steers a discussion about how, as a female researcher, I negotiated my presence in the field while being the outsider allowed me to move among men and access spaces that are normally off-limits to men and women, respectively. In the following section I briefly describe the Lathi Khela performance in Narail and investigate the act of including women in this predominantly male practice. On the one hand this paradox[19] is one of invention within tradition, and on the other, it is of the performativity of gender and culture. By performativity I mean "in the sense of being [a] lived interaction and process and not a stable identity, so the subject is performative in the sense of being neither merely a natural body nor merely a social construction, but as the object of a gradual, compelling formation of acts" (Bala 2013).

19 I conceptualise paradoxes as statements that are essentially self-contradictory. Women in the Lathi Khela negotiate these paradoxes from one pole to the next within the ongoing hierarchical structures and forms of power that constitute and build off of each other in complex ways.

The gendered 'field' of *Lathi Khela*

This section aims to trace the process of performativity through a sociocultural analysis of the gender paradox and how it is realised through bodies, society, and nations.

> *On 16 July 2017, I remember seeing the performance in a maath, a space similar to an open field. The routine began, as I recall, with 12 players comprising girls, boys, men, and women whose ages ranged from 5 to 45 years forming a circle and then moving in pairs. Their sticks were continuously changing, and the rhythms altered according to the composition.*

Each stick had its own associated choreography. The initial performances constituted a choreography with the sticks, the personal corporeal connection with the sticks and the space. The subsequent choreographies were based on attack and defence strategies but were always accompanied by the beat of the drum. The last part of the performance was unchoreographed and was more 'dangerous,' as mentioned by Ustad Bachhu Mia, the leader of the Narail group.

As the audience exercised "discernment, evaluation, and appreciation" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1999), the event moved toward the spectacular. It was a confrontational swordplay performance of female players against male players. The attacker/defender had to be extremely cautious and skilful to take and block the strikes. One small mistake could cause serious injury. The girls participate in most of the choreographies, while in some, only Tania performed with five other boys. Tania was the performer that Ustad Bachhu Mia considered the most skilled female *Lathiyal* because she participates in all the choreographies. However, the gender configuration changes with each choreography and over time.

The world in which Lathi Khela developed in rural Bangladesh, especially in Narail, had previously been a system of internalised structures, a habitus that framed the way Lathi Khela was transmitted through multi-generational practitioners. A world in which practitioners are inclined to "act and

react in specific situations in a manner that is not always calculated" (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 5). As also described in figure 3, Lathi Khela as a habitus is related to people and their predisposition to action. In the rural households of Bangladesh, the habitus is perhaps in the internalisation of these structures of power and history and is nothing more than a "practice unifying and practice-generating principle" (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 101)

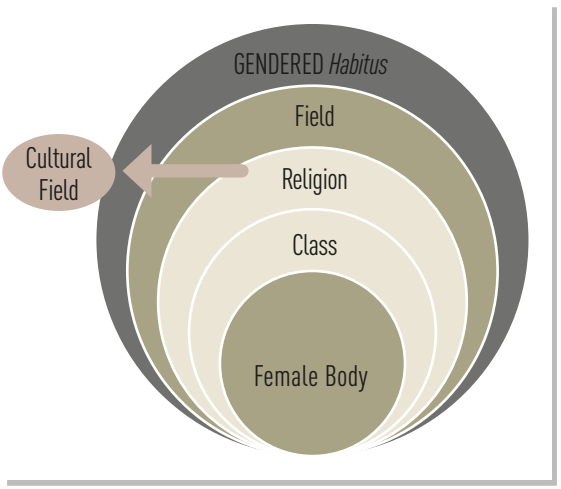

Figure 3 Schematic representation of the female body in the field of cultural reproduction as conceptualised by Pierre Bourdieu

The social world surrounding Lathi Khela is assimilated into a field where these structured power relationships have taken shape, making negotiation of the female body visible. The field constitutes agents that negotiate power within these settings. Furthermore, agents who are male practitioners acquire a certain social position within the social structure in which they are located, while the *shomaj*, or society, of Bangladesh places women in separate spheres. Women are considered to earn economic and cultural benefits by staying at home, while men obtain the same advantages by being outdoors.

Gender relations are, therefore, present in "perception, thought, and action" (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 8), through the habitus of culture and religion and the gender habitus thus constructed is "socially differentiated from the opposite gender" (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 23–4). Hence, the female habitus is constructed in cultural opposition to the male habitus. In fact, Bourdieu (2001) argued that habitus ensures consistency in practice over time, such that gender dispositions often appear relatively stable. As with class, habitus ensures an inherent complacency that shapes "gender aspirations according to concrete indices of the accessible and the inaccessible, of what is and what is not 'for us'" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 64). Therefore, the habitus assumes a relative consistency in what is considered masculine or feminine (Huppatz, 2012).

TRACING PRESTIGE

Two statements, taken from my interviews with Narail practitioners Rahat and Ustad Bachhu Mia, respectively (17 July 2017), highlight the reasons for including women:

"Ekhon to digital jug. Notun dekhte chaye dorshok" (This is the digital age. The public wants to see something new.) and *"Khelar maan ta bere jaye"* (The value of the performance increases). Thus, they saw it as an intervention born from a complex interweaving of the relationships of the female body with kinship patterns across the nation. Figure 4 traces how prestige is seen across multiple levels of the female body, kinship patterns, and the nation.

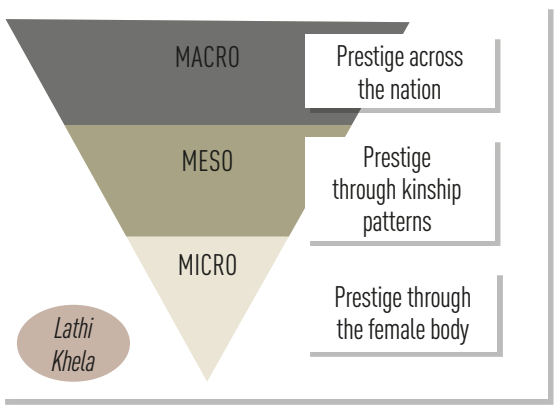

Figure 4 Schematic representation tracing the prestige obtained in Lathi Khela through the female body at multiple levels.

In the female body

The image of womanhood is a series of 'contested' images[iv] which reveal an important distinction in the social stratification of being a woman in Bangladesh. *The Body in Asia* by Bryan S. Turner and Zheng Yangwen contextualises Pierre Bourdieu's sociology of the body by understanding the habitus[20] with respect to the relationship between "practice, discipline, habitus, and self" (Turner and Yangwen, 2009). Whether as a "docile daughter, a compliant wife, [or] a dependent mother" (Chaudhary 1980), a woman's role is decided through the socioreligious construction of gender in the culture she lives in, which is further defined by said culture. The subordination of women and their dependence on men is also pervasive in the patriarchal ideology of the prevailing *purdah* system in Bangladesh, which literally means curtain or veil. Purdah reinforces division in the embodiment of roles in society in different ways in public and private spaces. Doreen Massey teaches us "the intricacy and profundity of the connection of space and place with gender and the construction of gender relations" (Massey 1994 p.2). This further limits women to "secluded and stereotyped gender roles in the private, domestic arena, defining their mobility, clothing, and relationships" (Chowdhury, 2001)[21]

Similarly, women in rural Bangladesh are forced to marry, with the common consideration that "a woman must be given in marriage at least once" (Blanchet 1986). Moreover, she should also be married 'in time' given that marriage is an important aspect of male honour and family prestige (Kotalová, 1993). Especially in rural society, this is a traditional norm. The Bangladeshi marriage system is patrilocal meaning that a girl may be married off as early as 10 years of age in an arrangement made by her family—mainly the father—in which the subordination is further reinforced whereby the "wife owes a duty not to rebel against her own relatives or her husband" (Chaudhury and Nilufer, 1980, p. 9).

It is important to understand how the female body is situated in the ecosystem of the Lathi Khela, within a constant flow of gender-generating processes driven by the ideology of religion. Bangladesh's social and gendered milieu requires women to constantly negotiate their position in the gender hierarchy. It is in this inconsistency in the perception of the female body at different levels that the performativity of gender lies. As shown in figure 4, Bourdieu's analysis in the field of cultural production is the significant capital, contributed through gender. The habitus in which Lathi Khela developed does not imply genderless practitioners. "We do not evaluate each other as abstract, genderless beings, but as men and women" (D.L. Miller, 2014). Each practitioner is an individual who "possesses his/her own 'individual system of dispositions that may be seen as a structural variant of all the other group or class habitus, expressing the difference between trajectories and positions inside or outside the class" (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 86). For Bourdieu, these group norms are neither prescriptive nor restrictive (Huppatz, 2012) , but are simply 'potentialities' (McNay, 2000, p. 40).

In a rural agrarian class, "women's contribution is not recognised in economic terms" (Chaudhary and Nilufer, 1980). Their participation in the agricultural labour market remains insignificant, representing 1.07% of female agricultural workers compared to 23% of male workers in 2008 (Hossain, 2015, p. 1). Among this invisible participation of women, the purdah system also remains visible, further positing the meta-invisibility of women in rural Bangladeshi society. Because of the unseen but quite evident intersections, the construction of intersectionality "challenges us to look at the different social positioning of

20 Habitus is specific to cultures and refers to the way people perceive and respond to the social world as embodied or practiced in different cultures. If culture determines the habitus in which the body is situated, what happens when culture and religion intersect in the construction of gender? Of note, Bangladesh is 88% Islam, and one of the seven countries where the population of men exceeds that of women; how does that affect the habitus?

21 Power relations "not only confirm the importance of kinship and residence patterns in the maintenance of the dance custom but also addresses the issue of social class" (Buckland, 2012).

women (and men) and to reflect on the different ways in which they participate in the reproduction of these relations" (Lutz, Vivar and Supik 2011, p. 8). The performance of women in the Lathi Khela, therefore, becomes paradoxical in nature. Social and cultural relationships are challenged, altered, and reversed in and through their performances, while these relationships still reproduce the prevailing hierarchical social and gender associations in the society to which they belong.

Through kinship patterns

The manufactured continuity of transmission through revitalisation and local patronage of embodied cultural capital[22] has further provided practitioners with a legitimacy over this art form in Bangladesh and a derived competence in their field to claim the value it brought to the nation. Muhammad Lutfar Rahman started the practice of Lathi Khela in the Narail district as part of the first generation of practitioners of this art. He started learning Lathi Khela in 1951 and continued until 1969, before joining the East Pakistan Army. Now, he is almost 70 years old and says "I cannot, anymore, but I watch"[23] Girls, through the religious norms of purdah and subordination to male chiefs, were still included in the Lathi Khela when Ustad Bachhu Mia, the leader of the group, when they chose to do so, and the girls' guardians were not opposed to putting them in a relationally larger power structure. Rahat, the director of the group added in my interview on 17 July 2017, "*Amader team ta nijeder bhetore... Shobai chilo amader nijeder log…amra bhaiera, chachato bon, mamato bon.*" (Our team is within us…Everyone is part of our own people… our brothers, cousins…).

This dance capital is employed to maintain the prestige accumulated by the very existence of female gender capital, through their gendered habitus. Symbolic capital is "the prestige or recognition which various capitals acquire by virtue of being recognised and 'known' as legitimate" (Lawler, 1999, p. 6); symbolic capital is therefore powerful. Thus, the multifaceted negotiation of the power related to this symbol of prestige and with respect to the gender dispositions of women in terms of the female body, kinship, and nation, can be seen as the main factor contributing to the continuity of the Lathi Khela tradition in Narail. Hence, compared to other popular but moribund performances of Lathi Khela in other parts of Bangladesh, it appears to continue receiving local patronage and support.

On the one hand, the importance of women's empowerment through this gender capital in Lathi Khela is an asset, but on the other, it becomes a liability. Gender capital therefore operates in contention with gender representations, shaping the female practitioner as valuable in the continued practice of Lathi Khela. A woman's status is reflected in the authority and power she holds within the family, and/or prestige she commands from the other members of the family and the community. When I asked Ustad Bachhu Mia about society's reception towards the decision to include women (17 July 2017), he said: *"Meye ra to shob pare, ta Lathi Khela o parbe? Tai na?"* (Women these days can do everything, so they can do Lathi Khela too, right?).

Ustad Bachhu Mia is a man of high reputation in his locality and for his previous accolades in Lathi Khela he has become a 'harbinger of value' to the practice. He is a person admired by the community and so the power of decision-making rests with him as 'the man of the people.' However, the choice of women who participate in this art, the agency they have to make their own decisions, and the reality of this situation of empowerment becomes paradoxical. If one day, Ustad Bachhu Mia decided that no women should be included, it is probable that women would stop performing the Lathi Khela because of the prevailing internalised structures. As stated by Kotalová (1993), "In agrarian Bangladesh, a person is always viewed as

22 This dance capital is an amalgamation of other economic, social, and cultural capitals (Bourdieu, 1993); I wanted to explore the cultural capital embodied and constructed through the practice of this symbolic capital.

23 In an interview with Mohammad Lutfar Rehman (2017) conducted by the author.

enmeshed in a complex network of family (*poribar*[24], *ghor*[25], *bari*[26]) and the consensual moral community (*shomaj*). Connectedness with others possesses an intrinsic value, [...]."

When I asked the girls if their inclusion in the dance was considered objectionable by society, they replied: "It was *Chacha* [their uncle] who invited us, so nobody had a problem." Clearly not all the girls in the Narail village were included and were not all related to the leader through a family connection. Some girls were allowed to participate because they belonged to the same family structure and the practice and transmission of Lathi Khela had been under the control of the *nijera*, or 'their own people' (Kotalová, 1993). During that phase, familiarity drives how the female gender is perceived. Once the girls are married, they become unknown as they then stay away from the nijera. Rahat says that when a girl from the *para* (neighbourhood) marries, she is considered under the guardianship of her husband, so she is no longer allowed to play Lathi Khela. Therefore, gender capital is used as a channel to acquire symbolic attributes such as honour and prestige.

Within the cultural field of Lathi Khela, another force of symbolic power arises from those already present in the field: *ijjat*, a term used to denote different meanings such as honour, esteem, and more succinctly, prestige in Bangladesh. The "degree of accumulated prestige, celebrity, consecration or honour" (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 7) that a person possesses within a social space, generally a cultural field, is the reputation of a participant in Lathi Khela among other male practitioners. The evidence of such power relations not only posits "the importance of kinship and residence patterns in the maintenance of the dance custom but also addresses the issue of social class" (Buckland, 2001).

24 'For family' in Bengali.

25 For home' in Bengali.

26 'For society' in Bengali.

Within the nation

Ideology about the female body appears to have inconsistently percolated down to the female practitioners involved in Lathi Khela in Narail. Ustad Bachhu Mia's decision, in 2007, to introduce something new by introducing women into the repertoire of the already existing tradition of Lathi Khela, made this group the only one to take such an initiative in all of Bangladesh. In 2018, Narail's Lathi Khela group was selected to perform at the Nation Stadium in honour of the Prime Minister of Bangladesh. On this occasion, *Aprotiroddho or Joy Jatraye Bangladesh* (The Invincible and Victorious Journey of Bangladesh) was performed to mark the country's progress over the past 10 years. Indeed, the inclusion of women in the current iteration of Lathi Khela in Narail greatly contributed to the cultural capital of Lathi Khela in Bangladesh. In this situation, the female gender was perceived as a conduit, advantage, asset, and as "gender capital" (Huppatz, 2012) that led to appropriation of the art form and production of a controlled and controllable aesthetic of femininity.

Thus, women's gendered bodies seem to work to the advantage of Lathi Khela in gaining the status and prestige of representing the heritage and progress of Bangladesh at occasions like those mentioned above. The dual purpose of presenting the nation as both traditional and modern, as rooted in heritage and yet looking forward to progress is also a feature of post-colonial states in the sense that they tend to desire modernity while clinging onto tradition. Thus, bodies are integral parts of the social construction of gender (Bridges, 2009). Narail's Lathi Khela team believes that—as also pointed out by Rahat—Bangladesh has progressed so much in 10 years that today women can be seen on *somaantale*, or on equal terms with men. Bangladesh sees the progress of women through the *oitijjo* (Bangladeshi heritage) in which women "have been largely visualised and projected as the careers/reproducers of culture and ideologies" (Munsi and Burridge, 2011, p. 139). A heritage that the government has no means of preserving but that has been "presented as euphoric spectacles of governmental creativity" (Chandralekha, 1980).

Women remain subservient to the prevailing hierarchical structures prevalent in social spaces, thus experiencing a significant decrease in gender capital. As Puentes (2009, p. 94) stated, "Gender capital is also defined, employed and evaluated within a patriarchal gender order that values a hierarchical relationship between masculinities and femininities, regardless of contextual distinctions. Thus, domination, subordination, marginalisation, and complicity remain paramount in discussions of gender capital." Despite the limited possibilities for true material social change at the macro level, the social and cultural sanction to train, perform, fight, and display strength and skill and indeed, to be present in public spaces, allows women to challenge the dominant and rehearsed gendered notions of vulnerability and physical frailty assigned to them. Indeed, Judith Butler introduced us to the question of gender performativity that allows women to re-constitute themselves through "a set of repeated acts" (Butler, 1990 p.43) in performance.

CONCLUSIONS

The pandemic and the advent of the Intangible Cultural Heritage-Paedia in Bangladesh

As Lubna Marium (2021) pointed out:

> To Bangladesh's credit, our constitution provides sufficient mechanisms for the preservation of culture. Article 23 states that "the State shall adopt measures to conserve the people's cultural traditions and heritage", while Article 23A says that "the State shall take steps to protect and develop the unique local culture and tradition of the tribes, minor races, ethnic sects, and communities". Additionally, Bangladesh is a party to the "UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of 2003", signed by our State in 2009. The convention encourages Member States to safeguard ICH practices with the aim of empowering communities. The convention also provides guidelines for integrating ICH safeguarding processes with the 'action and delivery' efforts to achieve [the] Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of 2030.
>
> The truth though, is that in spite of the infrastructure for safeguarding communities being in place, Bangladesh is far away from the practical implementation of the tenets of the ICH convention. Truly, there are many slips between the cup and the lip, especially if the hand which holds the cup is both unaware and unwilling.

In her recent article, *Empowering Communities through Culture*, Marium discusses the Bangladesh Cultural Policy of 2006 and the reality in which it is applied in the field. The 2008 Lathi Khela revitalisation project also speaks to this same paradox, the need for intervention because of a significant gap in the "stated intent and actual implementation" (Kabeer 1999) of safeguarding Indigenous cultural traditions and heritages in Bangladesh. Similarly, the 2011 National Women's Development Policy has primarily targeted women in the form of birth control and achieving population control goals. Last year, in 2020, the pandemic paved the way for an inventory of different cultural practices initiated by the *Shadhona Cultural Circle*.

As a member of that group, I became part of the ICH-paedia Consortium Workshop in Bangladesh to create an inventory of the Lathi Khela in 2020. As stated by Lubna Marium (2021):

> As a first step, Shadhona has started training young academics about 'ICH Inventorying' and inspiring them to come up with 'ICH Safeguarding' strategies based on the 'Four Goal Approach' of (a) documenting ICH and living traditions in Bangladesh; (b) recognising and celebrating ICH with festivals and commemorations; (c) supporting and encouraging the passing on of knowledge and skills; and, (d) exploring the potential of ICH as a resource for community development and achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. The second step is the formation of a coalition of community-based organisations who will collectively undertake this task.

> Secondly, On June 14, 2020, an informal, multi-organisation consortium, led by Shadhona—A Center for Advancement of Southasian Culture, a UNESCO ICH Committee accredited NGO, was formed with the intention of creating a community-led, digital and online ICH-paedia for Bangladesh, for inventorying all Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) practices of Bangladesh with the support of young students and academics. This consortium was named, 'Consortium for ICH-paedia, Bangladesh (CIB).'

On the one hand, Lathi Khela, with its multiple names and existences as a cultural form, remains a type of Indigenous knowledge in decline in terms of its professionalisation and prospects for training and practice in the marginalised communities of Bangladesh through a "structured space with its own laws of functioning" (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 6) economy. On the other hand, it continues to survive through interventions that, in the Narail district, include women. In the current context this practice has already been passed down through four generations. While the introduction of novelties in the Lathi Khela tradition orients it towards innovation, it has also presented itself as simultaneously resisting and continuing the same tradition. The innovation of including women in the predominantly male profession of Lathi Khela has been met with resistance to the continuity of its transmission because of its inclusion in a gendered environment.

This resistance, caused by advances in women's inclusion, permeates the controversial image of women in Bangladesh. Hence, a fluctuation in gender capital is filtered through the voluntary and involuntary involvement of women in these structured spaces. Narail's Lathi Khela was selected to represent the cultural progress of the nation of Bangladesh, in 2018. Nonetheless, some may accuse the nation of exploiting women in the name of progress. However, it should not be taken for granted that progress has not translated to the micro level in Bangladesh, especially when it comes to women. Lathi Khela has acquired prestige for the representation of women, for a nation where these women continue to be a symbol of prestige and through the kinship patterns surrounding it, including women in *shomaj*—Bangladeshi society.

Tania does not question whether a girl should be married or not, but through her presence in Lathi Khela, she believes that future players, both men and women, will find their right to decide whether to continue participating in the tradition even after they get married: the choice to continue a tradition that witnessed the building of a nation, the nation of Bengal. Rahat argues that, at this point, Tania's family does not see sufficient reason to continue the form of Lathi Khela that includes women. They do not see her establishing herself as an independent practitioner with the Lathi Khela as her main source of income. "But until when can we sustain it?" He questions me instead. "We have been sustaining this form by paying from our own pockets" and that is perhaps why Lathi Khela has remained an alternative profession. Translating what Rahat tells me, "We would not have continued this form up until now just because of money, but [rather] *Bhalo lage bole* i.e., because we love it, and that is why we continue to practice it, without any return." As Chandralekha (1980) indicates: "Almost all of them still retain their dances and martial art traditions, but only as formal rituals without being able to transform them into real action to change their condition of life".

These observations also hold true for the rural context of Bangladesh, given its shared cultural and political history with India. The Lathi Khela tradition continues without support or financial recognition from the government. As a result, practitioners do not see themselves earning a living through this art form, despite their sustained emotional attachment to it. Amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Lathi Khela continues to struggle between the breath of tradition in its being and the contemporaneity of its existence. Thus, in a country like Bangladesh, with a history of state sponsored Islamistion and the absence of women in policy making, Lathi Khela has

become a collective and popular means of resistance to an oppressive unity. It continues to project itself in confrontation and in defence. On this note, I will quote Rahat's interview (17 July 2017): "Lathi has always been about fighting, and we are still fighting for what we deserve".

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Notes

i This manual is believed to have pioneered weapons training and was written during the Bengal revolutionary period of the 1700s–1800s. According to Jadavpur Press 2016, this volume brings together Pulin Behari Das' lifelong research and practice: unpublished manuscripts on training with "long pole, knife and dagger, archery, and hands-free self-defence". This society was a "training ground for raising a revolutionary force". At first, the students were trained with lathis and wooden swords. His vast illustrated manual recounting the use of weapons is unique in the history of armed martial practice in India. Das was largely responsible for the development and spread of an indigenous and synthesised tradition of armed martial practice. This collection is testimony to that almost forgotten history (JU Press, 2016). The book is an acknowledgment of the Lathi Khela for its historical importance as a 'martial arts tradition' that was a product of colonial rule, but it is not an exploration of the importance of the indigenous knowledge system in the current context and how it survives today as current practice.

ii The objectives of the project were (1) to empower various groups of lathiyals with the benefits of the "pedagogical content knowledge" formulated during the project, thus enabling them to reorganise and strengthen their performance and revitalise an age-old art form; and (2) to generate interest among the new generation to learn Lathi Khela skills, thereby ensuring continuity of the tradition.

iii Bangladesh is divided into divisions: 8 divisions (*bibhag*) and 64 districts (*jela, zila, and zela*), and *upazila* (subdistricts) and villages. The *Birsarto Noor Mohammad Lathial dol* are based in Narail District of Bangladesh in the Khulna Division, Gram-bogura.

iv According to Sara C. White, in *Arguing with the Crocodile*, "the female gender has always been a 'contested image' in the public discourse of Bangladesh, ever since its independence in 1971". White refers to three controversial images that can be conjured up in readers' minds: "When you think of women in Bangladesh, it is that of (1) women pleading, hands outstretched, desperate in the wake of the latest disaster; (2) sari-shrouded women clinging to the shadows or hunched mutely over laborious work; (3) women working and demonstrating, in groups or defiantly alone" (White S., 2010, p.10).

Acknowledgments:

Dedicated to Dadin (1946–2022).

To y/our fearless and graceful grandmothers
and their knowledge that we carry in our bodies.

This manuscript is a tribute to all the *Lathiyals* and their families from all the districts of Bangladesh who strive to continue their passion for *Lathi Khela*. To the Choreomundus Masters' Program in dance knowledge, practice, and heritage for the research funding and scholarship support. My main support system, Lubna Marium in Bangladesh, as well as the research team comprising Bonna Apu, Biju Bhai, Kabila Bhai, Joynal Bhai, and finally, Karim Da, my mediator. To Professor Urmimala Sarkar for her constant support as a mentor, guide, and good friend. She taught me to question and think creatively and encouraged me to revisit this research during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. To Professor André Grau, who still breathes among us. To Gargi, for her profound guidance during the pandemic. The Ashoka University family, who brought me to Choreomundus. Lastly, to my best friend Sourabh, for inspiring me, always encouraging me, and helping me believe in myself; my parents, who have always encouraged me; and my gurus for trusting me with their knowledge of dance.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Sumedha is an interdisciplinary dance artist, scholar, researcher, educator, dance filmmaker, and primary caregiver based in India. She holds a full scholarship for her master's degree in dance knowledge, practice, and heritage from the Erasmus Mundus program at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU). Her research and teaching interests lie at the intersection of dance and cinema, performance, gender, and tradition. She has a graduate degree in liberal arts management from Ashoka University in India and is the founder of an evolving creative research lab, *Duet with Camera*, dedicated to sustaining the growing area of interdisciplinary practice, experimentation, and collaboration in dance and cinema.

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Macha Caporal: bridging gaps, embodying resistance

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ABSTRACT
The following article explores the practice and performance of a group (or 'block') of *Macha Caporal* dancers. These women appropriate the costumes, movements, and name of the male character (*Macho Caporal*) in the Bolivian *Caporales* dance. Given the demarcated gender structure established in *Caporales*—represented by the *Macho Caporal* and *Cholita* (female character) couple—the appearance of the new role of the Macha Caporal in the dance has led to social questioning about the performances and identities of women who dance as *Machas Caporales*. Based on ethnographic research undertaken from a gender perspective in 2018 in the city of La Paz (Bolivia), this current article analyses how the performance of Macha Caporal dancers reveals these women's non-conformity with the discriminatory gender norms present in their wider social contexts. Through the accounts of these women and their descriptions of the circumstances in which they practice and perform the Caporales, we revealed the conditions in which they dance. This made visible the dynamics of inequality and violence present in the environment of the folkloric *entradas* (dance parades) in the city of La Paz. Finally, this study examined how the organisation of women into independent blocks and their style of movement could be understood as acts of resistance and political action in a setting characterised by chauvinism and inequality.

Keywords: dance, performance, gender, agency, political action, Bolivia

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SUMMARY

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INTRODUCTION

> It caught my attention to see a group of women rehearsing in the men's troop of the *Caporales Centralistas*. [A] period in which they were the first is a fact that was very difficult to conceive for critical eyes that considered women only [to be suitable] for certain roles in carnival dances and so, not a challenge the physical strength required to be a caporal. (Muñoz, as cited in Godinez, 2014, p. 80).

This statement summarises the clear relationship between women who dance and gender expectations in the Bolivian context. It highlights aspects that I consider essential to understand the practice of the *Machas Caporal* in the context of the urban folkloric dances of La Paz (Bolivia): strict separation of the roles and skills associated with men and women in this dance, what society expects of women, and the consequences of crossing the line between the masculine and feminine world.

A *Macha Caporal*[1] is a female character from the Bolivian Caporales dance who appropriates the costumes, name, and movements of the masculine role in the dance. From its birth in the late 1970s to the present, the Machas have been provoking diverse and contradictory reactions both in the public and private spheres. I maintain that the reason for this uproar lies in the visual and performative proposal of the Macha character who, when dancing, crosses a series of clearly established gender borders present in the Caporales dance and in the context of the city of La Paz. The shock of seeing a woman dance 'powerfully' in the male costume reveals how gender and culture intersect in this context and how they can become taught when we move our bodies in a given time and space.

In 2012, the anthropologist Susan Reed described the unequivocal relationship between dance, gender, and culture, thus: "Dance is an important means

1 The term *Macha* or *Machas* will be used as an abbreviation hereon in.

by which cultural ideologies of gender difference are reproduced." (p. 88). Similarly, in 1993,the anthropologist Ted Polhemus explained how, through dance, people express and materialise the division of cultural reality into two cultures: the feminine and the masculine. Indeed, for both these authors, people express what it means to be a man or a woman in a certain society or group through the practice of dance.

Since 1980, anthropological studies have turned their attention to dances as places of study to understand human thought and action. Various studies have explored how dances are a reflection of their sociocultural environments, while simultaneously impacting and being impacted by social, political, and economic aspects of the society or group within which they develop (Thomas, 1993; Foster, 1998). Therefore, as Cynthia Novack suggested, dances possess both a productive and a reproductive quality and can "simultaneously reflect and resist cultural values" (1995, as cited in Reed, 2012, p. 94).

Thus, this makes it necessary to look at dances as spaces or structures from which gender relations and roles are negotiated and challenged. Dances, historically, have not only been used to reproduce or reinforce the norms and ideas of the dominant system in which they are immersed, but also simultaneously developed as spheres of human action with the political potential for resistance and change. This dimension of dances becomes important when studying the action of women, subjects who have historically been relegated from the public sphere and who, to this day, in various parts of the world, do not live with equal rights. It is precisely in this context that dance—an activity traditionally associated with 'femininity'—has served as a platform to make the presence and agency of women visible. As sociologist Helen Thomas pointed out, throughout history "dance has been one of the few places where women can legitimately perform in public" (1993, as cited in Reed, 2012, p. 88).

Through this present study, I considered the Macha Caporal dance as a performance that—without having explicitly been formulated by women in this way—reveals political acts. The political nature of performance, according to Anita Singh (2021), lies in its potential to become an effective means of achieving social change. In the case of the Machas, this change is linked to transformation of the roles and stereotypes associated with women based on the construction of new ways of dancing. According to Sarah Ahmed (2017, p. 3), feminism is now happening in places historically marked as non-political. In this way, dance contexts and the act of dancing publicly can be understood as unusual—apparently 'non-political'—places and actions through which women can resist and question gender roles.

This article is based on ethnographic research conducted in La Paz between June and August 2018, with an independent group of women that refer to themselves as the *Machas Yuriña*.[2] This group comprises six Bolivian women aged between 29 and 32 who dance in the Macha Caporal role. Based on the analysis of my observations and field interviews with these women, as well as dialogue with authors from the field of gender studies and experts in the anthropology of dance and performance studies, I explored how, by performing the Macha Caporal role and their particular way of 'staging' the body, women challenge and subvert norms and expectations about the appropriate behaviour of women in this context.

LA *MACHA CAPORAL*: A GENDER PERFORMANCE

For the purposes of this work, I will refer to the *Macha Caporal* to talk about the role or character and to *Machas* or *Machas Caporal* to talk about the range of performances in the sense of acts and forms of dancing presented by the group of women

2 For reasons of confidentiality, the real names of all my collaborators have been replaced by fictitious names.

involved in this research. A fundamental aspect of the performances of these women is their appropriation of elements of the masculine role of the dance. The women who dance Macha Caporal borrow the costumes, accessories, movements, and *Macho Caporal* name. However, they also use accessories and construct their visual presentation in a similar way to the traditional feminine role in the dance, that of the *Cholita*. The syncretic nature of their characters, which assumes aspects of both the feminine and masculine roles of the dance, makes the Macha Caporal a fascinating phenomenon to study from a gender perspective.

Women who dance necessarily assumes a role and negotiate their identities on the dance floor. La Macha Caporal is a role that has had multiple interpretations because of the nature of its 'gender betweenness.' Since the first decade of the 21st century, many authors have interpreted the performances of these women in various ways. On the one hand, for the researcher Javiera Benavente, the Macha Caporal provides women with "an alternative to stage their own conceptions of gender" (2017, p. 70). On the other hand, the sociologist Mauricio Sánchez proposes that, through a performance that emulates the male, the Machas "authorise sexist attitudes" (2006, p. 333) because they reproduce a social order that points to masculinity as symbol of power.

Thus, according to these interpretations, the Macha Caporal dance appears as a performance that has the potential to reaffirm a system of hegemonic power by boasting its masculinity or, on the contrary, to question it by staging other forms of the dance that women can occupy. The common vein in both these interpretations is recognition of the Macha Caporal as a phenomenon linked to gender, with both their hypotheses incorporating the notion of empowerment—albeit with different nuances—of women through the performance of this character.

According to Judith Butler (2015, p. 32), the gender performativity of these women lies in the type of representation they use, which may or may not correspond with the obligatory (socially determined) norms that require us to become one gender or another, with this fact confirming that the reproduction of gender is always a negotiation of power. Therefore, observing the dance of the Machas as gender performances implies that we must analyse how the actions of these women—from the preparation for the performance to the act of dancing—can be understood as exercises that construct their gender identity. In other words, these acts give a sense of who they are in relation to the cultural parameters of their environment that indicates the 'correct' way to act and perform dances as women.

Dance is, above all, relevant to the study of gender because of its closeness to the body. According to the anthropologist Judith L. Hanna (1987, p. 3), dance is a physical behaviour because it implies organisation of the body in time and space, but it is also, at the same time, a cultural and social behaviour. In this sense, dances can be understood as ways of embodying and organising (in terms of movement) the ways of living and thinking about the world of a particular social group. Dances can reflect patterns and systems of social organisation, which suggests that how we dance can also embody ideas and norms associated with gender. However, as Butler (1988, p. 521) stated, the body is also an embodiment of possibilities. Thus, within these possibilities, dance is a means of publicly moving and exposing the body in a way that is different from social expectations.

Thus, Susan L. Foster (1998) proposed dance and the choreographic act—organisation of bodies in space—as a methodology to study how gender identities are built and constituted through actions and movements. The way in which people are grouped while dancing, the staging in space, and the appropriation, deployment, and repetition of bodily skills such as strength, agility, and stamina are "embodied forms of action and mobility" (Sliwinska, 2021, p. 4) that women deploy to change the narrative of what is expected them on the dance floor.

The reordering of gender that the Machas stage from their bodies and within the different performance spaces gives their dance a political character. Hence, it is precisely through the specific ways in which they dance that their performance breaks the gender dichotomy present in dance and produces new imaginaries about femininity and the role of women in the community of Caporales in La Paz.

DANCE: A BODY MOVING 'BETWEEN' GENRES

Most authors, as well as the community of Macha dancers, attribute the origin of the Macha Caporal to the performance of Lidia Estrada in the *Entrada del Señor del Gran Poder* in 1976[3]. She appeared at this entrada dressed in a man's costume and dancing in the Machos dance block, a fact that would be historically recorded as the birth of the Macha Caporal within Caporales dance history.

Thus, the Macha Caporal appeared as a third character in a dance that had historically included only the Macho Caporal and Cholita as its characters. Consequently, to understand the performances of the Machas, we must also understand the gender structure framing their appearance—that of a couple: a man and a woman. The historian Fernando Cajías (as cited in Gómez, Mendiola, and Pinto, 2010) pointed out the representation of youthful sexuality as a factor that has made the Caporales dance exceedingly popular. According to Sánchez, the dance shows "good manly men and good womanly women" (2006, p. V). Indeed, the ideal—heterosexual—couple in this dance establishes a clear representation of gender, in which each character presents a series of characteristics that are socially identified as desirable and admirable in men and women.

Macho Caporal dancers wear wide trousers, a shirt with raised shoulder pads, boots, and a hat. When dancing, they emphasise their male charisma and strength. They advance taking long steps while marking the rhythm with their footsteps. When they jump, they lift both feet off the ground; when they kick, they do so with force, raising their legs extremely high. Their performance showcases mesmerising precision, joy, and confidence. In contrast, the Cholita dances with short, closed steps, emphasising the movement of her hips and hands. This move is enhanced by her short miniskirt that swings from side to side exposing her underwear. She wears a low-cut blouse and a small, puffed hat. At the entradas she is flirtatious and walks around smiling while she dances in high heels for long hours.

Although these descriptions are a generalisation of what can be observed at a folkloric entrada, the characters also reproduce a series of visual and movement elements that denote a strong representation of masculinity and femininity. As Reed (2012, p. 89) argues, "the movement lexicons of men and women often demonstrate the ideals of gender difference in action." Thus, the men's dance projects strength, power, and seduction, while the women's dance exhibits beauty and sensuality. Indeed, the divergences between the visual proposal and movement of each character produces a feeling of asymmetry between the Macho and the Cholita. This asymmetry is confirmed by the account by Israel Solórzano (founder of a fraternity in La Paz) who believes that the Caporal occupies a position of power with the woman being inferior and defined only as complementary to the man. As he stated, "Who is the Caporal? The foreman and the boss. And the Cholita is his wife, nothing more."

It is within this binary and polarised structure that the Machas Caporal have broken through with their determination and desire to dance differently. They occupy a new female role in dance in that, without necessarily questioning their own gender identity, they decided to take the dance of the Macho as inspiration for their own Caporal dance. Their par-

3 In La Paz, an *entrada* is an urban parade made up of fraternities and musical ensembles that perform Bolivian music and dances.

ticipation in the dance implies a break with the marked gender structure by blurring various borders between the Machos and Cholitas. First, it achieves this through a wardrobe that reflects a syncretism between 'femininity' and 'masculinity.' As Claudia tells us, from the waist down–trousers and boots–the costume is masculine, while the upper part is feminine: "Now you have the corset, which was not used before, a blouse with cleavage, you fix your hair, and you put on make-up."

Second, the break is produced through the performance of movements from the Machos repertoire, which includes kicks, jumps, and runs, among other movements traditionally associated with the male role. These types of actions and movements, which are part of the Machas repertoire, are described by women as more challenging, fun, and complicated. In this way, the performance of these women involves qualities and ways of moving that break with the 'body schemes' associated with women in the La Paz context. For example, the Machas cover more space when dancing, maintain a posture with their feet farther apart, and extend their limbs when moving. In general, they make greater use of force to display movements and displacements that involve the use of their whole body.

Third, they break with the standard gender structure by breaking the gender division typical of these dance groups. In Caporal fraternities, dancers are often grouped into separate blocks by gender. However, Machas break through this divide by infiltrating the men's group to dance side by side with the men, proving that they can do the same thing as them. This aspect takes on another dimension when, starting in the first decade of the 21st century, some Machas chose to dance alone, in their own groups, and as a new dance character, a fact that gave the Macha persona both autonomy and independence.

The changes, in terms of participation, movement, and the visual proposal of the Macha Caporal, implies a displacement of the habitus towards other ways of acting and dancing the Caporales as women and, at a general level, within the folkloric urban environment. By habitus, I understand the "history embodied" (Gutiérrez, 2005, p. 68) by these women. A history that, in many cases is marked by women's self-perception of their own body as 'fragile' or 'weaker' compared to that of a man, as insufficient in relation to the 'ideal' body for the dance (Cholita), or a background marked by a personal experience of gender violence present in their living and dancing environment.

In an interview with Sánchez (2006), Lidia Estrada commented that she decided to dance for the first time as a man because she did not like the dress skirt [of the Cholita]. This is the same reason given by the Machas Yuriña, who openly expressed their refusal to dance wearing a *pollerita* (miniskirt). Thus, for these women, choosing the Macha Caporal was a decision that involved—partially—their refusal to dance as Cholitas. As Jackeline explained, she preferred to dance in the Macha role because the audience recognises them for how they dance, while as Cholitas, "They don't even see your face, they see you below [the waist]." In the experience of women, this rejection is justified by the generalised experience of insecurity and sexual harassment both on public roads and around the entradas. Talía said that her rejection of the miniskirt had to do with the bullying she experienced when wearing a skirt at school and in public streets. However, Jessica recalled that the first time she danced as a Cholita at an entrada everyone was looking at her under her skirt, stating that "[she] felt harassed."

The accounts of these women show that in their decision to dance as Machas, there was a conscious desire to dance comfortably and to protect themselves from situations of sexual harassment. As a result, these women claim to experience freedom when dancing as Machas. As Jackeline commented, as a Macha, "you move as you please." Similarly, Nancy explained that what she appreciated most about being a Macha was "That they see us dance, perform a [dance] step, express ourselves, with that freedom of not thinking that a pervert is going to come and grope us."

Another factor that motivated women to dance as Machas was a desire to dance in a non-traditional way, which implied challenging 'the ordinary' and what is expected of women. The Machas Yuriña express a special admiration for the masculine dance role, which is associated with movements and actions that are more 'challenging' or 'out of the ordinary' for women. This idea was reflected in Talía's comments, for whom a Macha is "A woman who wants to show that she can be different from the others, that she can get away from the ordinary, let's say, from the polleras, the skirts. A woman who can also show that she has strength, that she has the same value as a man."

All these reasons led women to embody a character that, through their dance, fights against the limitations and stereotypes imposed on them in an environment marked by sexist attitudes. They challenge the feminine stereotype embodied in the Cholita and resist being valued solely for their bodies or attributes such as sensuality and beauty. In this search, they developed a hybrid performance—with elements of both characters—that can be understood as a form of agency because it expresses the embodiment of the desire (Martin, 1985, as cited in Kowal, Siegmund, and Martin, 2017) of these women to dance 'differently', with freedom, comfort, and safety.

THE FOLKLORIC ENTRADAS: A SPACE FOR EXPERIENCE, ACTION, AND NEGOTIATION

Understanding the performances and experiences of these women requires understanding the context in which they dance and in which they are inserted as women. Based on Richard Schechner's definition (2013, p. 30), in which he postulates that performances only exist in actions, interactions, and relationships, I propose that the performances of the Machas can be seen not only as dance acts, but also as the set of relationships and interactions that women develop with the different actors and spaces involved in practicing the dance.

The field of action and practice of the women of the Machas Yuriña is located in a sociocultural context in which "discrimination against women, male bias, and cultural sexism still prevail in political and social institutions, in the public space, and in the family." (United Nations Development Program [UNDP], 2002, p. 29). During our conversations, the two words most often used by women to define Bolivian society were sexist and conservative. By sexist attitudes, we understand a system of gender relations that exaggerates the differences between men and women based on their so-called natural qualities and that determines what behaviour is acceptable for each sex (Fisher, 1993, p. 3).

The interviews I conducted with the Machas Yuriña revealed a widespread perception of gender roles as oppressive, especially for women. Women are expected to marry, have children, and start a family. Once married or engaged, they are expected to stop dancing because a 'woman's main role is in the home'. These ideas were also reflected in many of these women's personal stories. In a personal interview, Jessica mentioned that several Machas had stopped dancing because they had got pregnant. According to these women, social and family expectations about the role of women in La Paz is a determining factor in the abandonment of the dance.

They also described the jealousy of their partners as evidence of male sexism applied to their engagement in the dance. According to Jessica, once a woman has a male partner: "They expect you to change, to stop dancing and just be with them. But they [themselves] don't intend to stop dancing [the Caporal]." Nancy told me how she was unable to dance when she was with her ex-partner because he was extremely jealous and forbade her from doing so. These testimonies not only demonstrate gender inequality in terms of participation in dance, but also gender violence crystallised in attitudes and gestures of overprotection and control towards women by their partners.

However, most of these women allowed themselves to dance in this role despite not necessarily having the approval of their families or the financial

means. Not all of the group had stable jobs, some studied and worked at the same time, and two of the women were single mothers. All of them, with a huge amount of financial effort and investment of time, organised themselves to pay their dues,[4] rehearse, and dance. But the obstacles were not only present in their private or family spheres, but they also laid within the sphere of where they practiced the dance, in the spaces and relationships spanning the dance. The 'stage' of the Machas is the folkloric entradas, central events within the schedule of organised events that make up the corpus of folkloric festivals in Bolivia. The entrada is an urban parade that brings together hundreds of dancers who dance for devotion and fun according to the Catholic religious calendar.

Within the framework of this current research, I analysed entradas as a reflection of their sociocultural environment. They are spaces in which gender inequalities, behaviours of sexual violence, and sexist attitudes are all present. However, at the same time, they are also spaces where multiple identities and inclinations can be negotiated. They can even become spaces of visibility and recognition for women.

The relationships and forms of interaction that women develop with various actors—dancers, organisers, founders, and spectators, among others—throughout an entrada are key to understanding how gender discourses infiltrate the dance field and how they influence or condition the way women engage in the dance. Given the proximity of the Macha to the Macho Caporal as well as its 'hybrid' nature in appropriating elements of the man's dance, these dancers are exposed to various reactions—both positive and negative—from spectators. According to Jessica: "For the Macha, perhaps because you're the equivalent to the men, [...] men and women, girls and boys, everybody comes, and they tell you 'congratulations: you're dancing well'."

4 To participate in a folkloric entrada, each dancer must pay a fee known as the band fee.

In Jessica's example, Machas are applauded because of their ability to 'match the man,' an act considered an achievement. However, there are also negative experiences, as Nancy told me: "We went to dance [...] and I had to walk about four blocks to get to where they were. As I was walking, a man passed by with his wife and told her: 'These are the ones who're full of themselves, these are the women who want to be equal to the men.' But using a tone of revulsion.".

In their accounts, their similarity to men is perceived as negative and is associated with the widespread stereotype of the Machas Caporal as tomboys. These terms are expressed to define a woman who behaves like a man or looks like a man in her way of dressing or body style. This perception has led to the spread of prejudices about the sexual orientation of the Machas, who are often classified as lesbians, which itself is not well received in the conservative and Catholic context of La Paz.

Another central bond in the women's experiences was the one they developed with other dancers while performing. According to Jessica, there is considerable support from male dancers for the Machas Caporal. However, testimonials like Claudia's also point out the level of competition present between Machas and Machos at the entradas: "The Machos are the ones that look at you with a side-eye. In other words, because they supposedly think we're imitating them [...]. It must be [that they think] like, 'oh, these girls are wanting to do what we're doing. And look, we jump two meters, and they jump one meter'. I think there is [competition], but within the Caporales circle."

Claudia's comment reveals that, in addition to a sense of competition, there is also a sexist bias on the part of men towards the women who 'try to dance like them'. Sexist attitudes also materialise in dance spaces in the form of harassment on the street. This is one of the risks most normalised by women at the entradas. Many of the Machas' testimonies described their exposure to verbal and

physical harassment from men during their route in an entrada performance. During Chijini's entrada, I recorded the following experience in my field notes: "We continue, there are more and more people, and the path becomes narrower. The number of drunk people increases, and they become more disrespectful. They cross your path, they brush against you, they look at you, they say things to you."

This risk is also latent at the end of the entrada, when the women face the dilemma of how to safely return to their homes. As Jessica recounted: "You know, we are places far [from home], better to be with someone you know [...]. I always try to look for old friends [...] who will take care of us in the sense that we can't leave [the entrada] alone, so we can accompany each other to a certain place and then leave."

However, these experiences are not exclusive to the Machas Caporal. They respond to the more general situation of women in the areas surrounding entradas and folk festivals where, with the justification of alcohol consumption and the crowds, violence against women goes unnoticed. In fact, alcohol consumption represents another key element to explore the inequalities between men and women in the context of the folkloric entradas. Alcohol is a crucial factor for the creation and maintenance of social ties at the entradas. Although some of the women insist that drinking is not required at the entrada, the coexistence of alcohol consumption still has an almost mandatory quality (Cowan, 1990, as cited in Lazar, 2008).

From my observations at entradas, I found that women tended to occupy the role of receiving alcohol rather than buying and offering it. Such invitations could come from male or female spectators in recognition of their performances; however, they also came from fellow dancers, organisers, and the founders of groups or fraternities. These interactions placed a kind of obligation onto the act of drinking because they formed part of the transaction ritual that would lead to invitations to future events. In this respect, Talía recounted the following: "Now, sometimes, when they see you dance, as I say, they come from other fraternities, [or are] *ex-pasantes*,[5] and they tell you [...]: 'I am the founder of this or that fraternity, and I invite you [involving the invitation of alcohol] to join us'. Meaning that in a year or at the next entrada, you look for them and dance with them."

The women agree to drink alcohol at the entradas as part of the celebration, but also as a negotiation strategy to get invitations. A sign of women's agency in this negotiation is the development of certain strategies to control their alcohol consumption. At an event in La Paz, Jessica shared some of her secrets with me: "You drink a little and throw the rest on the ground. Under the table or a chair, so that no one notices." The other strategy consisted of being the one in charge of pouring the alcohol; then one can have control over the amount that is poured and serve others instead of drinking themselves.

Regarding the consumption of alcohol at the entradas, women seemed to have the same right to drink as men. However, in practice, there are external factors that condition them. As Sian Lazar (2008, p. 148) states, in Bolivia, drinking and getting drunk is the exclusive choice of men and women, although women are expected to be more self-controlled than men. The women of the Machas Yuriña enjoyed drinking alcohol in the company of their peers, but they could not drink excessively because this could have put them in a situation of vulnerability and danger within a festive environment. However, on many occasions, receiving alcohol becomes a necessary practice to fit in with the community and to survive as an independent female group.

The women's experiences revealed that the entradas were spaces in which ideas and hegemonic

5 The *pasante* is the person who takes charge of the fraternity during the management of a folk festival. They may cover expenses such as the costumes or payment of the group's band entrance fee, among other tasks.

behaviours related to gender were inscribed. These ideas become effective through the actions and interactions of the Machas with other actors who, in turn, have the power to recognise or reject their performances. In each performance, the women must negotiate with feelings such as fear, their sense of safety, and the desire for recognition to earn a place in the Caporales community. In this task, they highlight their agency to develop self-care strategies and ensure their participation in the dance. As pointed out by Randy Martin, the body as a subject in a social environment both responds to and is a transformative element of that environment (1985, as cited in Kowal et al., 2017). In this sense, women not only resist the unequal conditions of participation present at entradas, but also transform them through a series of attitudes and specific modes of action that we will explore below.

PERFORMANCE AS A POLITICAL ACT: WE ARE THE *MACHAS YURIÑA*

Thinking about dance as a political action implies considering the questions made legible by dance (Kowal et al., 2017), questions about political issues such as expression and display of the female body in public spaces. The performances of the Machas Yuriña are incarnations of other ways of being and acting—as women with the capacity to question prevailing social norms around gender. Women achieve this based on the complex relationships they build with power systems while practicing and performing (Taylor, 2016, p. 6). As previously explored, the Machas face a series of obstacles (economic and family, etc.)—inside and outside the entradas—and social expectations that permeate and limit their participation in the Caporal. When they dance, they seek to resist and overcome the conditions that restrict their dancing while also challenging dominant attitudes and beliefs about the roles and 'appropriate' behaviour of women in their environment.

Within my research, I was able to identify three key aspects of the performances of the Machas Yuriña that can be understood as forms of resistance and political action: their mode of independent association, their participation as 'figures', and their style of movement. These three elements, which were characteristic of this group of women, are not free of complexities or contradictions; however, they are modes of action that reflect decisions about where, how, and with whom to dance, and show the determination and agency of these women.

In the field of urban folkloric dances, there are two possible means of association. The first—the most traditional—is to belong to a fraternity. Fraternities are associations of people who gather around religious worship and the practice of dances in honour of a particular religious virgin or saint. According to the anthropologist Laura Fléty (2015, p. 72), these associations are organised based on a vertical hierarchy with a formal distribution of roles and statutes and may comprise a steering committee and dancers.

To enter a fraternity, a dancer must go through an admissions process and make an annual financial contribution. In turn, all dancers must pay a fee for the accompaniment of the musical band each time they participate in an entrada, as well as invest in their clothing and transportation, aspects that mean that their participation in the dance may be limited by their purchasing power.

Through the experiences of the women, it is evident how the socioeconomic level, family situation, and even body image are factors that condition their admission to a fraternity. Indeed, some fraternities impose discriminatory admission criteria upon Machas, such as requiring them to be 1.70 metres tall and have a thin build. Jessica also explained that some fraternities now choose their members based on their ability to contribute financially. This fact was reinforced by Claudia's account: "Make your costume and dance in Oruro [the Bolivian city], nothing more [...], [costs] 6,000 bolivianos6 [6] for ENAF and fraternities like

6 The Bolivian currency.

that."[7] When faced with factors like these that limit the participation of women in fraternities, the need to look for other spaces to dance appeared.

Thus, the independent groups are an alternative association popular among dancers for their accessibility and inclusiveness. As an independent group of women, Machas Yuriña allowsgreater flexibility in terms of the participation and commitment of the dancers. The group does not have strict admission requirements and does not ask for financial contributions, except for the cost of the costume, whose cost and design are discussed among the members. The group's organisation—a founder/director and the dancers—and its small number of members allow for greater closeness and transparency in terms of communication, as well as greater decision-making power for women about where to dance and the costs they will cover.

However, dancing in an independent group also has its drawbacks. Unlike a fraternity, an independent block does not typically belong to a departmental or district association, which means that the group will not have access to participate in entradas of their own. As a consequence, they must be invited by a fraternity or negotiate an invitation each time they want to participate in an entrada. Either option involves a fee, which puts women at a disadvantage by having to negotiate a price and position (within the ranks of the fraternity) for each entrada. This disadvantage, which affects all independent groups, is accentuated in the case of women's blocks because negotiations sometimes take place in informal spaces and are established with male authorities or leaders. In my field notes I recorded Jessica's account of a negotiation process as follows:

> She told me how the founder of a prestigious fraternity once made a date with her in a bar. There would be two men there and she was going to be alone. So, she got scared and called Talía. But both of them continued to be suspicious and they called Guillermo [Talía's partner] to help them negotiate. Why do women feel defenceless in the act of negotiation? Why would someone meet them in a bar, with the presence of alcohol, to negotiate? It is clear that women have a lot to lose in these negotiations.

Anecdotes like these highlight the asymmetry of power present in key spaces and relationships when negotiating the participation of women in this dance. However, they also demonstrate the different mechanisms women use to deal with such situations of inequality and insecurity.

A complementary aspect to the way the women associate is their participation in the dance as 'figures'. The figures are a way of grouping within the block that is characterised by using a small number of dancers (from 3 to 7) and by their specific placement in a line or row. Jessica explained that the benefit of dancing in figures was that this form of grouping allows for more complex choreography and more difficult steps.

During the course of the entradas, figures can cover more space with their movements and can play with the spatial directions, generating crossings and shapes that attract the attention of the spectators. Visibility is the aspect that the women most appreciated about dancing as figures. As Nancy expressed: "The special thing for me is that they know us better and when we pass by they applaud us, they know who we are and, in many cases, they even recognise us by name and congratulate us." While, as Talía recounted, in a large block they would go unnoticed because: "There are several rows and sometimes they put you in the middle or at the back, where they don't see you much."

In the testimonies of Machas Yuriña, the power of applause and congratulations from the public seemed to have a huge effect on the women and their perceptions of positive feelings associated with the dance. For Nancy, it boosted her self-esteem, while for Claudia, it was the moment she looked forward to the most when dancing. For Talía it was proof that she did a good job, and for Jackeline, it was a joy. The satisfac-

7 Referring to the most prestigious or long-standing fraternity in Bolivia.

tion generated by public recognition was such that it seemed to minimise feelings about difficulties and extra efforts related to their dancing.

The third key aspect of the performance of the Machas Yuriña was their intermediate dance style. Jessica says that there are three styles in the Caporales dance: the strong, the intermediate, and the soft. The ideal style for her is intermediate, since it involves a balance between the strength of the Macho and softness of the Cholita. For the purposes of this study, the aspect that I was interested in emphasising about the style of their movements was its link with notions of gender and ideas about the masculine and feminine. Women's aesthetic perceptions of movement reflect how the normalised ideas of how they should look or move as women infiltrate their performances. As Jill Dolan (1985, p. 10) pointed out, socially constructed gender roles are inscribed in our language and in our bodies. Nonetheless, these women bet on incorporating more elaborate steps into their performances, such as changing levels, kicking, and jumping. 'Stronger' movements that are not common in the repertoire of women their age or in the female dances of the entradas and that, therefore, contradict the social expectations of their environment. As Nancy related, "The first time we did step 6, I was blown away because it was the *first time* [my emphasis] that we had jumped and kicked.".

Testimonies like this show that women, in their performances as Machas, still manage to make movements that surprise them. In this sense, the Machas Caporal develop a feeling of achievement by executing movements or sequences they thought they were incapable of performing because of their 'inhibited intentionality', one of the modalities of female oppression developed by the philosopher Iris M. Young. According to Young (1980, p. 146), the female body does not use its real capacity, referring both to the potential of its physical size and strength, or the real abilities and coordination available to it. Thus, the Machas, through their performance of masculine steps, overcome the prejudice about what they had culturally learned about what women cannot do, which suggests that this role could contribute to a type of empowerment in these women.

It is important to highlight that the appropriation of qualities such as strength and a greater use of space—characteristics of masculine performances inside and outside of dance—does not rob them of their ability to also be feminine. Women understand feminine characteristics as being flirtatious and elegant, and adorning themselves with accessories and makeup: ideas of 'femininity' that partly respond to the canons of beauty present in their environment. The performance by Machas Yuriña is a combination of attitudes, behaviours, and ways of moving and organising that demonstrate the balance between these characteristics.

Through each performance in the entradas, the dancers build their identities "using various strategies, both of reproduction and subversion" (Guaygua, 2003, p. 172). The performance of Las Machas presents a delicate balance between the concepts of reproduction and subversion. Their subversion lies in the act of appropriation of masculine costumes and steps, as well as their public display. They simultaneously reproduce the wardrobe of the Cholita in the neckline and design of their blouses, dancing both with elegance and coquetry. The true strength of the Machas Yuriña lies here, in their way of 'staging' the appropriation of the masculine without underestimating the power that exists in their femininity.

They have chosen to dance not only in the largest and most prestigious entradas, but also in the zonal entradas located in more remote and even more dangerous areas. Throughout the course of each entrada, they demonstrate their agency to simultaneously solve obstacles and dance with grace. Regardless of the weather or time of day, they advance determinedly, demonstrating their beauty and agility to dance. They look at the public confidently, smile, and take photos with the spectators. While they dance, they receive and drink the glasses of alcohol the public offers them in recognition of their performance. They dance for hours, going up and down in level, on paved or unpaved tracks, passing through lonely streets and large avenues, and dodging

cars and drunken people, in so showing their ability to endure. In the process, they negotiate payments and new invites for future events. They drink, but they control the amount of alcohol they consume; they enjoy themselves without neglecting how they will get home. Their performance is a balance between enjoyment, alertness, resilience, and self-care.

The experience and performance of Machas Yuriña gives an account of the processes women go through to negotiate and overcome the limitations and inequalities present in the field of dance. As Ida Meftahi (2016, p. 1) affirmed, all dance is conditioned by multiple social, cultural, political, economic, and ideological factors. The conditions and limitations that complicate the participation of Machas Yuriña legitimise the sexist culture present in the folkloric entradas. Faced with this, as discussed in this work, women deploy various modes of resistance and action that can be understood as a way of engaging in politics through dance.

Indeed, through their dance, these women are transforming deep beliefs they have about themselves as women. Dancing on their own terms—as Machas—implies believing in their strength and transcending the stereotype that women are only good for dancing 'prettily' or 'softly'. Through their performances, they send a powerful message about how and why they want to be recognised as women in the public sphere, turning their dance into an "alternative space of struggle" (Conquergood, 2002, p. 152) against the sexist attitudes and gender inequalities present in their environment.

CONCLUSIONS

The specific case of Machas Yuriña demonstrates how dance, as an organised and intentional movement, can embody and communicate the agency and tenacity of women to achieve notoriety in their participation in the Caporales community. Following the thought of Ahmed (2017, p. 4), who postulated that feminist acts have to do with who does what and where, the performances of these women—who appropriate force and dance independently in an environment where gender roles and expectations are oppressive and stifling—can be understood as revolutionary acts.

This present article described the different factors that complicate the participation of Machas in the folkloric entradas. Some of these factors are also common to other dancers while others are presented as restrictions related to gender and the way women dance. Throughout this work I have shown that money, time, and a lack of support from families are obstacles to engagement in this dance. It was also shown that the risk of sexual harassment threatens the safety and experiences of women during the entradas.

However, this panorama was not intended to show women as passive agents in an unequal and sexist context. On the contrary, it seeks to highlight the different mechanisms, decisions, and actions that women use within their independent groups. Their mode of association, role as figures, style of movement, and their performance throughout entradas are evidence of their agency to conquer a practice that allows them to dance with freedom, pleasure, and visibility in a competitive environment.

The commitment and passion of women to the dance in the La Paz context speaks of a very deep desire for recognition. Indeed, Butler highlighted how "the Hegelian tradition links desire with recognition: it affirms that desire is always a desire for recognition and that any of us may constitute ourselves as a viable social being solely through the experience of recognition" (2006, p. 14). Dancing as a Macha Caporal seems to generate, above all, the visibility and recognition that women crave, perhaps because it is a way of validating themselves in an environment that makes them invisible.

It is key to reiterate that this benefit is accessible to them through a singular type of performance. Not the simple emulation of men, but the construction of a role that appropriates 'masculinity'—understood as

strength and defiance—while incorporating 'femininity'—understood as beauty and elegance. It is in the syncretism of these visual elements and movement qualities that women subvert gender expectations and turn their aesthetic proposal into political action. It is from their particular choice of movements, postures, appearances, and behaviours(Meftahi, 2016, p. 4) as dancers in the folkloric entradas that the Machas shake up the sensibilities of the spectators, and as Singh (2021, p. 24) suggests, raise provocative questions that might help us think about gender roles and stereotypes in a different way.

The Bolivia Gender Human Development Report states the need to ask about "the ideas and quality of women's own practices, from which the processes [...] of change are triggered" (UNDP, 2002, p. 30). The phenomenon of the Caporal Machas can be understood as a practice that reflects a change in the mentality of women in pursuit of the development of their full potential and access to equal rights. That demonstrates, as stated by the dancer and researcher Ann Cooper Albrigth (2013, p. 5), that there is a connection between how we think about the world and how we move within it.

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Dancing in the street as feminist empowerment: the choreographic discourse of the BellyWarda and L'Armée des Roses collectives

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ABSTRACT
The reaffirmation of female bodies in public spaces is a constant in feminist social movements. Indeed, the role of the female body in public spaces and conveying a social message is vindicated by artists from all disciplines, whether by occupying the streets in protest of unequal women's rights and equality or sexual harassment and rape, or in other social demonstrations. In the field of dance, some companies perform expressly in public spaces with the precise aim of conquering these arenas as a stage to make female bodies visible, highlighting their diversity and demanding more equality and freedom. In this article, we use collective interviews with two French companies committed to promoting feminism in the streets *BellyWarda* (FatChanceBellyDance©) and L'Armée des Roses (performing the cancan), to analyse the choreographic discourse related to this concept. The study examined the appropriation of public spaces, interactions with the public at large and their reception of these performances, social links between dancers, and the transmission of feminist values. Observation of these dances and the interview outcomes was addressed from the perspectives of the sociology of emotions, phenomenology of urban spaces, and women's studies. The context of the COVID-19 pandemic prevented an analysis of the public reception of these street actions, but the ongoing situation in France in which dance was considered a 'non-essential cultural asset' during the second lockdown (when this research took place), was discussed.

Keywords: feminism, dance, public space, empowerment, sense of place, sisterhood

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SUMMARY

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THE PLACE OF WOMEN IN THE CONTEXT OF MOVEMENT

The equation of women's right to be artistically present in public spaces, especially in cities, is an issue that has been defended by feminists for decades. The pairing of women and culture is also a key demand because of the discrimination and gender violence present in these fields. If we focus on the field of dance, putting the female body at its centre, and we place it in an urban public space, we can observe the presence of different powerful challenges that, in some cases, can result in the development of a militant and committed following. These disciples aim to simultaneously make visible and disseminate female choreographic art with all its technical demands and aesthetic requirements, alongside the recognition of women's bodies in public spaces—a concept that is still foreign to them even today and which they can appropriate during choreographic performances.[1]

Henri Lefebvre pointed out that, for women throughout history, cities have been both a place of struggle and the stakes of the struggle itself (Lefebvre, 1968). They are not only the stage for feminist positions, but also the purpose of these demands: in other words, the tenant that urban spaces belong to half the population—which itself has the same right to live in safety, work, represent themselves, exist, and show their art. Leslie Kern claims that her everyday urban experiences are gendered, with her gender identity determining how she moves through the city. "My gender is broader than my body, but my body is the place of my lived experience, it is where my identity, my history and the spaces I have inhabited intersect, where everything mixes and stays written on my skin" (Kern, 2021). Among many others, the #MeToo movement stresses that rape culture reminds women of what is expected of them: that they must limit their freedom to walk, work, have fun, and occupy spaces in cities. In other words, "the message is clear: the city, in reality, is not for you" (Kern, 2021).

1 As in the case of the 'The rapist is you' protests that sprang from public demonstrations in Chile.

Since its creation in the 1980s in San Francisco, FatChanceBellydance (FCBD© Style) has claimed to be a feminist dance, evolving from the fusion of belly dance with influences from flamenco and traditional Indian dances, and reconstructing an orientalist imaginary in which tribes[2] of women act both outdoors and on stage, claiming the sorority and visibility of all their bodies. In France, several tribes practice this discipline, which is based on partial improvisation through a shared language between the dancers. The BellyWarda tribe in Toulouse has made its willingness to act—especially in public spaces in order to claim the place of women—particularly explicit.

Another French dance group in the public space with a clearly feminist will is L'Armée des Roses, which recreates the original cancan, which is, in particular, linked to the context of the Paris Commune (Lissagaray, 2021). In this case, the dancers have decided to take the dance from the Pigaille cabarets to interpret the cancan in the streets of Montmartre, with an aesthetic and a message as it had been understood at its beginning, to promote the original feminist, subversive, and revolutionary values: women, unaccompanied, at popular dances, attracting attention with their acrobatics and displaying their bodies, despite the fact that all three of these acts were prohibited.

For this study, qualitative and semi-structured collective interviews were conducted with the BellyWarda and L'Armée des Roses collectives with the aim of understanding the staging of the feminist claim of female bodies in the public space through dance and to understand the distinctive characteristics of social interaction with the public and among the dancers in this type of semi-improvised artistic performance.

The BellyWarda[3] company, led by its artistic director, Caroline Achouri, has existed in Toulouse since 2009. In turn, FatChanceBellyDance©, created by Caroleena Nericcio,[4] elaborates a semi-improvisational choreographic language that allows dancers to communicate movements among themselves through subtle gestures and in non-hierarchical formations in which each member leads the tribe in turns. Nericcio evolved the belly dance associated with cabarets and the male gaze towards feminism in the 1980s in her San Francisco studio, and with it sought to achieve the goal of dancing among women.

The BellyWarda are one of the French tribes that perform the most shows on the street and, beyond performing on festive or sporadic one-off occasions—such as in flash mobs—they have created a joint project with the Afro-Brazilian batucada company Sardinhas da Mata, for the feminist appropriation of urban spaces. The collaboration materialised in the *Place aux femmes* show in the Arnaud Bernard square in Toulouse in September 2019.

The L'Armée des Roses[5] collective was born from the meeting of Andrée Gine and Antoinette Marchal, who left a semi-professional French cancan company to dance in the street, particularly in the Parisian neighbourhood of Montmartre. They do not claim to be a show production company, but rather, to have the artistic and educational vocation of making the historical context of the origins of the dance known.

> Women must reappropriate their history. When they tell me that the cancan is the Moulin Rouge and that the dancers are flirtatious, I'm outraged. We know the names of the dancers from the second half of the 19th century and know what they did, but after La Goulue or Jane Avril, we no longer know them. I think it's essential to put them in the centre, alongside the histori-

2 Currently, belly dance and its fusion evolutions are the matter of full debate in cultural studies. Among other things, the word tribe and the very name of the discipline are being questioned. In the case of FCBD©, the style was previously referred to as American tribal style.

3 http://www.carolineachouri.com/tbelly/bellywarda.html

4 https://fcbd.com/

5 https://www.larmeedesroses.com/

> cal dimension, which involves activities such as recreating the costumes. We don't want to go on stage, there are already great professionals doing that: we want to broaden the public [mind], make them discover history and, if they like it, invite them to go to cabarets (Andrée Gine, Paris, 2021).

With the turn of the 20th century, the cancan left the popular dances from which it was created to go on stage, became completely choreographed, and was renamed the French cancan. This was when the subversive message of the dancers was lost; their individuality also dissolved into a professional collective of uniform bodies in terms of their morphology and costumes (Maruta, 2014). L'Armée des Roses, which is committed to spreading original values through conferences and street art activities, have recently started a collaboration with the burlesque artist Mamzelle Viviane.

> What I really like about L'Armée des Roses is that its cancan is committed and full of values. It seems fantastic to me that the history of the cancan is being talked about again, [as well as] how the dance was polished and the soul that they are now claiming had been lost. When the cancan was born during the Paris Commune, women played a crucial role in society, but then [after] they [society] wanted them to go back into the home, which represented a regression. Later, the Moulin Rouge changed the image of the cancan to make it something acceptable and commercial. They simplified it, turned it into a luxury, and gave it an aesthetic that the laundresses and prostitutes who danced it at the beginning did not have (Mamzelle Viviane, Paris, 2021).

From the street dances of these groups, we will analyse the conjunction of demands for the prominence of women in dance and in public spaces. We start from the hypothesis that a relevant combination of emotions is mobilised through the performances of the companies, and that these act in multiple ways. Firstly, the emotions of the dancers when dancing in the street, in an environment where there is no 'spectator pact' like that in theatres and where their experience as women reappears because of the daily situations of violence, harassment, insecurity, and discomfort that they face. The dancers have expectations of the improvised public, the appropriated space, and each other as a community.

Secondly, the public perceives public spaces differently because their function is varying from being that of a pedestrian passageway to one of an artistic stage; they can become infused with the emotion of the dancers in an unprecedented context and can perceive the transmission of the feminist values the dancers intend to communicate. Thirdly, even though France prohibited any kind of street performance during the COVID-19 pandemic, the aspirations of the dancers, who recognise the importance of culture, particularly that of outdoor dance, as promoting social ties, remained intact.[6]

THE EMOTIONS OF DANCE IN PUBLIC SPACES

The social construction of emotions is still an important debate, especially regarding the universality of the so-called primary emotions (anger, fear, sadness, and happiness), although its link with the body is evident (Scribano, 2013). Turner affirmed that the activation, experience, and expression of emotions are connected to the human body, although it is also true that emotions are channelled by culture and structural contexts. The so-called secondary emotions, which are combinations of the primary ones, would show the complexity of the construction, which vary from one person to another, and include shame, guilt, or fear—experienced by these

6 The government of Emmanuel Macron decided to ban cultural events during the entire first and second confinement during the COVID-19 pandemic. The cultural sector demanded the application of social distancing measures in exchange for maintaining activities and a debate swept through the sector that questioned the categorisation of live culture as a 'non-essential service' and as a necessity and right of citizens (Bernard, 2021).

women when performing in the street—as well as wonder and respect—experienced by the audiences at the shows. Turner also stated that, like language, the way emotions are expressed is also dictated by culture; even though there are only a hundred or so human emotions, their manifestation through facial expressions, body gestures, or speech is culturally diverse (Turner, 2009).

In symbolic interactionism, emotional dynamics are at the centre of the interaction process, whereby individuals seek to confirm themselves, particularly in conflict situations (Turner and Stets, 2005). Cooley determined that individuals experience positive emotions, such as pride, when their identity is accepted, and negative emotions, such as shame, anguish, anger, or guilt, when it is not. In this line, Scheff (1988) recognised that pride and shame were the gyroscopes of human action. When someone is treated with deference, the individual evaluates themselves positively, experiences pride, and mutual respect is created with the person who honoured them, thereby resulting in a social bond and solidarity. Shame, which arises when a negative assessment is received, is a painful emotion because it attacks one's integrity and value, which is why individuals use defence mechanisms. Pride and shame are two powerful emotions that artists frequently feel when in front of their audiences while, all too often, fear is another emotion experienced by women in public spaces.

Turner (2005) developed a theory that described the existence of mechanisms by which emotions would arise under two basic conditions: firstly, when positive or negative sanctions are received, and secondly, when expectations are responded to positively or negatively. When positive approval is received or expectations are met, the individual feels satisfied or happy. If the individual had doubts about the result of their actions, they would experience pride. Expectations are part of every artistic achievement, and in the particular case of street dance, uncertainty increases due to a lack of knowledge regarding the space and potentially sporadic public.

For Turner, as in psychoanalytic theories, negative emotions alter emotional dynamics. Shame would comprise the primary emotions of sadness, anger towards oneself, and fear of negative consequences or failure to meet expectations. Guilt would be similar, but with an important difference: although it is also part of sadness, individuals feel more fear of the consequences of violating the 'moral order' and rage against themselves for having done so. Moral order is a concept widely applied to the place of women in society: what spaces in the city are suitable for them, how they should appear in public, and what interactions are acceptable. Kern (2021) exposed the limits women apply, due to patriarchal dynamics, when circulating through urban spaces. These designate a precise place for them and "finally make them understand that the city is not for them."

In dramaturgical theories about emotions, this is based on the fact that society works like a play on a stage. Thus, Goffman (1959) explained that, in their dramatic presentation to the public, individuals use a cultural script of ideologies, values, and norms, supported by staging elements such as costumes, space, or objects. Presenting oneself is one more way to strategically manipulate situations, with the goal of avoiding embarrassment. In the case of street dance companies, we will see that the staging based on the choreographies and costumes responded to the objective of showing choreographic expertise but, in the cases studied, they also showed their identity as women, a female collective and feminist discourse claiming the city through positive emotions.

Regarding the emotions of the dancers, Collins speaks of the rituals of interaction when individuals were there, co-present and engaging in common activities. Co-presence implies a focus of attention and synchronisation of body language that increases the level of collective effervescence and positive emotional energy. At the same time, when positive emotional energy increases, effervescence and attention also increase. These processes, which

feed back into themselves, cause the level of collective solidarity to increase. The interplay of co-present dancers occurs during an interaction as strong and essential as that of choreographed movements, which have a direct appeal to the female body, particularly those body parts that have been censored by the patriarchy (the belly, legs, and torso, etc.). Based on rehearsing, each person in the group of dancers ends up appropriating certain movements, signatures that become symbols of their individuality within the group, and which refer to previous personal experiences or their personality and that reinforce the links between them. The communication between dancers during the choreographic execution is also a reason strong social bonds are built (Muntanyola Saura, 2016).

The experience of dancing in public results in a very meaningful collective emotional charge. It is both a challenge in a space that women still have to appropriate and in which they must overcome fear, and a moment that transmits a certain pride in the female body to the public; these are all socially constructed emotions that are easily intelligible through choreographic discourse.

THE CHALLENGES OF DANCING IN THE STREET

Although the objective of this article was not to explore how the sense of a place is built through dance, it is important to point out some phenomenological theories that can help us understand how seeing dance in a public space provides viewers with a new framework with which to relate to space.

Atkinson and Duffy (2019) studied how dance generates the sensuality of a place: by observing bodies in motion in space, we can become aware of a certain corporeality in a grey, functional, inert space, and a kind of sense of place is created. Without neglecting other senses, the sight of bodies dancing awakens the viewer's emotions. When we respond positively to the movements of others it is because of the way their bodies occupy a particular space. For this reason, the choice of places in which to dance is so important and the attitude of the dancers generates emotions in the spectators: while the show lasts, pavements become an artistic place where a corporeal embodiment of meaning takes place.

Not only do spectators perceive the public space differently when they happen to attend a dance performance, but it is also relevant to ask oneself about the appropriation of the space by the dancers during the performance. Casey (1993) talked about the 'sentient body' and the way our own bodies, when they are in or move about in a place, are related to the way we experience space and make sense of it. Throughout the history of dance, choreography has communicated the way the body moves in space and the way the body makes space visible. The public's response is also affective: depending on their own experience, they could empathise with the movements, find them simply pleasant, think about applying them themselves or, well, simply admire their virtuosity.

Atkinson and Duffy recall that dance and music have the ability to 'speak' to us more directly than words and that observing a body in a specific space makes us aware of all the lived relationships that belong to that place. Likewise, seeing the effort of a human body provokes affection in the spectator, whether they perceive the effort of the body or, in a graceful performance, they see the control the dancers have over their bodies; this affection towards the body is distributed in space. The viewer perceives the intention of the body and the degree of effort involved that emerges in the visual environment and is therefore able to introduce a corporeality and affection towards the space.

When executing their performances in the street, the BellyWarda and L'Armée des Roses affirm that the main challenge is how they are received. Although the dancers work on their technique for weeks, study the costumes and anticipate the route, the surprise factor of pedestrians is the greatest difficulty and, at the same time, often provides them with the

most recurring sense of satisfaction when dancing in the street.

The BellyWarda FCBD style is a semi-improvisation discipline in which the 'leader' transmits the movements to be followed through gestural codes to the rest of the dancers—who are strategically placed—with a very precise language that often seems like a prepared choreography. The leader then changes position, at which point another dancer begins to direct the movements of the company. Given the constant improvisation and subtlety of the key movements, the dancers must constantly concentrate. The BellyWarda affirm that they prefer to dance in the street rather than in theatres because of the contact it allows them to have with the public, whom they cannot see when they perform in the dark of an auditorium.

> The interaction with the public in the street is real. When we dance spontaneously and without charging, the public did not come for us. They were passing by, and the challenge is that the passers-by who see us dance [decide to] stay. It is a public that does not lie. If they are not interested, they leave, and if there is something that really excites them in what we do, they stay. Sometimes they even wait for us to ask questions (Caroline Achouri, 2021).

According to Casey (2020), emotion can be peripheral, in a sense that within the limits of individual feeling, far from being strictly subjective and fleeting, [emotions] can be overcome to communicate with others and operate as a type of diffusion of one's own experience towards the rest of society. The BellyWarda experience the emotion of the dance, geared towards female pride and sorority, on different levels. First, it passes from the individual emotion, materialised in the chain of the leader's semi-improvised movements and signals to the other dancers, who, by decoding them, can experience the same emotion as the leader. The dancers dance, first of all, among themselves, and additionally, they dance for an audience, even though that is not their main motivation—as established by the discipline itself, and interaction with the spectators, which is practically non-existent. The emotion is transmitted to the public simply in the act of observing.

Paradoxically, because of the fact they are dancing in the street, the direct reaction of the public—through their facial expressions—is one of the main stimuli, without this interfering with the execution of the choreography or the satisfaction of expectations. If the reaction is negative, with grimaces, for example, "we don't care, we continue dancing," explained Saliah Dahrmani. "It is not only the public who don't lie," explains Caroline Massieux, "we dancers don't either. We have fun with each other. It's what makes the public be with us in an authentic way. Street dance is the best school [of dance]."

If, in the FCBD format, semi-improvisation is the usual procedure, when dancing in the street, this methodology is reinforced in an unrepeatable performance while listening to the external environment. The BellyWarda emphasise that a lot of prior work goes into preparing the technique and the movement strategies of the tribe, and that the performance in the street allows them to "let go of all that. We can get into the spirit of dance with less calculation and more spontaneity, and that allows us to enjoy it more," said Fréderique Joucla.

> There is something very immediate in the street that we don't find on stage. We directly see the reaction of the public and we can readjust ourselves based on this as well. If, for example, we dance in the street for people who look the other way, nothing happens, we change direction to find another, more receptive public. Thanks to the FCBD format, we can readjust everything: the directions, the itinerary. There is an improvisation in the improvisation, not only in the choreographic style, but in the contact with the public. We never know who we will have as an audience. They might be drug pushers from Arnaud Bernard square, for example. As a director, I was worried about the

> performance in this square and the surprise is that they loved it and very respectfully asked us for autographs and selfies. I was afraid of aggressive or insulting reactions, but that didn't happen. And it's an audience that we would never find in a theatre (Achouri, 2021).

According to Achouri, the discipline itself was created to dance in the street. This is not the case with the performances of L'Armée des Roses, given that the cancan was never danced in the street and, from among the popular dances, it entered directly into cabarets. Therefore, their performative improvisation is done in a less codified way. As Andrée Gine explained, each one simply decides what step comes next and they adapt according to the characteristics of the space: monitoring the dirtiness of the floor, presence of glass or dangerous objects, and orography and paving, which is particularly complicated when wearing vintage boots.

> What I like about improvisation is that in a choreography we are thinking about what step is next, and you can read it on the face of the dancer, it generates pressure. Freedom is greater in improvisation and allows us, above all, to interact. Sometimes we have a 'soft' audience, and we don't know whether to take a slightly daring step or play a joke. Other times, on the other hand, you think if you can play even more with the public, because they are receptive. I have more interaction with the public the way we dance now (Andrée Gine, 2021).

The general reception of the public, despite the surprise factor and the occupation of public space, is generally incredibly positive and, therefore, meets the expectations of the dancers. The massive effect of the tribe of women dancing in coordination causes a 'hypnotic' effect (Massieux, 2021) and produces "a lot of joy, the sensation of traveling through music and dance" in the viewer (Dahrmani, 2021). The exotic aesthetics of FCBD dance emphasises this imaginary, constructed from Asian, Andalusian, and Hindu folklore. The performance of the of charge, is rewarded on some occasions with voluntary economic contributions by the public. The dancers are proud of the success of the reception and explain the satisfaction when positive evaluations come, especially ones from other women:

> Women of a certain age have told us that they wanted to learn to dance. It is particularly important that they project themselves, that they feel capable, despite what they may think about their body or their age. I was very moved (Dahrmani, 2021).

L'Armée des Roses also takes advantage of the good reception from the public to introduce its educational mission. Dressed as the cancan dancers of the 19th century, Andrée Gine and Antoinette Marchal invite the public to go to cabarets to "reverse prejudices." "People think that burlesque style is just a striptease. Literally, yes, it is, but not only that. We always have some contact with the public who then discover the story, which is much more revolutionary than it seems," explained Andrée Gine.

Mamzelle Viviane explained that, even in French cancan cabaret formats, it is a dance that particularly needs the audience's interaction, which is why she challenges them by making a shouting entrance. "The public can't be just a spectator; they're an actor whether they like it or not, and they must clap and stamp their feet. It's practiced in an exchange, the public is part of the game and, naturally, they like it, because it touches something intrinsic, a soul, a body, a story. There's a recognisable rhythm and it's pure joy."

Andrée Gine and Antoinette Marchal explained that they have never experienced a single attack on the street and that, on the other hand, they had had bad experiences when they performed with a dance company at private and company parties. Mamzelle Viviane explained that this happens less in burlesque in the theatre because of the incarnation of a character that "is not submissive, but [is] untouchable, unlike revue dancers, whom a part of the public does consider an object." L'Armée des Roses affirmed that attacks never take place in the

street, because it is an open space where the public itself is subjected to the gaze of the other passers-by. Mamzelle Viviane affirmed that "when we are artists in the street it's different from when we are women in the street. When we are women in the street, we demand to be able to exist without [experiencing] aggression. When we are street artists, they leave us alone because we have the strength to value art." Historically, a woman alone in the street has been questioned, she has not been able to afford the luxury of being invisible—unlike flâneurs (Elkin, 2016)—nor of attracting attention and dominating the space, given that this has been considered a transgression of the respectable feminine role. Therein lies the irony and, at the same time, the proud triumph of the dancers who do achieve visibility and respect.

The pedagogical mission of L'Armée des Roses, who are fascinated by the Paris Commune, is reinforced by their period costumes, something that distinguishes them from the famous image of the French cancan of the Moulin Rouge. Putting on skirts, boots, and bows is part of an artistic ritual that emotionally links them with the values they attribute to this revolutionary historical period.

> Personally, it's like I feel the story when we put on the suit. And most of the comments that they make to us are usually from older people to tell us 'thank you, because you transmit the cancan as it was born, as we want to see it.' These are often grandmothers, and I find it very nice, it is a small victory. After dancing, we talk a lot with people, we like to explain the history and there is an educational part. They don't come because we are pretty dancers, because, after the cancan, we are often all red! Above all, we show that, after all, we are human, and we sweat, and we just want to go for a drink (Antoinette Marchal, 2021).

For the BellyWarda, the transmission of the history of the dance is not part of their goals, but even so, viewers often ask them about the origins of this style:

> They see belly dance in the technique, but they see the costumes, which could be Hindu or Romani. And we explain to them that they are a bit of all these cultures at the same time, and that it is, rather, a representation of femininity, in a more universal way. As a director, I am also interested in not only showing different cultures, but also, different women. We are not photocopies, we are not the same age, nor the same morphology. And, regarding the costumes, on the street we each adopt the colours we want, while on stage we look for more harmony. This freedom shows the different faces of women (Achouri, 2021).

DANCERS IN PUBLIC SQUARES

The feeling of appropriation of the city was common between the two dance groups: being able to occupy the space, being visible, and sharing the street in a playful and respectful way. The dancers explained that, by dancing, they can show themselves without being disturbed, claiming the presence of their bodies, enhanced with attractive costumes. The fact that the performance is collective is what allows them to appropriate the space and attract the attention of pedestrians, with respect, in a show of community pride. The BellyWarda explain that the time when the show starts is when they most experience a collective force, especially at their entrance and the beginning of the choreography, while for L'Armée des Roses, who are a duo, it is a challenge to achieve the same goal. Both in the cancan and in FCBD, the dancers arrive with screams and to the noise of zills (finger cymbals).

The BellyWarda speak of a feeling of "adrenaline" and "joy," and Massieux explained how collective action generates emotions of self-improvement and empowerment: "You trust the dance, and the adrenaline forces you to improve yourself and give your best and enjoy the moment. As a woman, being able to be all together gives you a lot of strength. There is a feminine unit, there are a lot of us, and we all ac-

cept each other." Sorority, empathy and respect for all bodies is an aspect that materialises in the fact of dancing collectively in public spaces. "We form a pineapple; we make a single body. This happens more on the street than in theatres. The collective energy is felt in a more powerful way because we are not alone," said Joucla. "And our defects don't matter to us. What matters is that I'm dancing, and I accept my body as it is. The wardrobe does a lot, but it is above all due to the fact that we are all together, the public perceives it," added Dahrmani. Achouri explained that the troupe unit allows an empowerment that transcends the moment of the performance, to provide self-confidence:

> The fact of being together gives us a feeling of strength that we don't have when we're alone. We keep this collective feeling in ourselves. We won't let them touch us or interrupt us, we've imposed respect, and this helps us in our daily lives. The public also feels this feeling, they often tell us that we look like an army. When we arrive showing our bellies, they could insult us, but no one has ever dared to attack or disqualify us. The tribe of women commands respect (Achouri, 2021).

The BellyWarda explained that the specific FCBD wardrobe is of great help. Defined in every detail, it mixes aesthetics from India, Central Asia, the Middle East, and the Maghreb, but the only thing it has in common with belly dance is that it leaves the belly exposed and that matte cotton fabrics and aged silver jewellery are preferred. The dancers wear wide sirwals with very wide superimposed skirts and this creates a visual effect of increasing the volume of the lower part of the body. The torso is covered with an Indian choli and a hand-decorated top, revealing the belly and part of the back. The use of turbans and flowers on the head also increases the volume of the upper part. The fact of wearing many artisan jewels intensifies the sound of the movements. The ensemble aims to attract attention, evoke a certain exoticism, and amplify the volume of moving body parts: the hips, waist, and torso, historically associated with the female body (Lhortolat, 2014).

The attraction of the clothing, together with the fact that the choreography is executed collectively based on the movements set by a changing leader, provokes an emotion in the dancers that transcends them: "I remember the Toulouse Carnival of 2019, which impressed me a lot. We arrived at the Rue de Metz, and it was as if we had taken possession of it. We wore luminous garlands and made slow movements. It was a very powerful feeling, much more physical than in the theatre" (Massieux, 2021).

This feeling of appropriation of the space was one shared with L'Armée des Roses, who, despite executing their movements in a duet or solo, explained that beyond provoking the surprise of the public, the change of scenery from the cabaret to the street enabled the pedagogical possibility of the values of the cancan and could even bring about a change in the spectators:

> As a woman, it's as if you've reappropriated the space, you've dominated the street. In the exchange with the public, when I explain what I'm doing there, the history of the cancan, if I'm in the street instead of a cabaret, it's, on the one hand, the creation of a new public, but also to say that I have the right to be there. If you're a man in the audience and you've been looking at me, you haven't whistled at me or put your hand on my ass; I might have moved it to dance, but you understood perfectly that it wasn't an invitation. If it's not so complicated to do it with me, do it with other women, let them take their place. There is a very powerful feeling of dominating the street. We don't necessarily want to dominate men, we just want to claim our place and our space (Andrée Gine, 2021).

Antoinette Marchal extended this right to all women artists to claim their presence on the street, but particularly those who work directly using their bodies, such as dancers or musicians unlike, for example, graffiti artists, who—because they work in the dark and clandestinely—occupy the space without conflict but also without providing the body in movement. The fact that dancers are exposed to daylight com-

plicates the situation, because the occupation of female bodies in the street is still not normal and the public does not decode the artistic pact: "When I danced alone in the street, in Strasbourg, people thought I was selling beer for Oktoberfest," she said.

CONVEYING FEMINIST VALUES

Kern (2021) talked about the 'city of friendship' between women as a revolutionary option: friendship relationships from the perspective of care relationships, without associated productivity and different from the heteropatriarchal family. In its origins, the FCBD had already moved away from interaction with the male audience of belly dance to concentrate on the 'tribe of women' who dance among themselves and for themselves. The cancan, for its part, was born from the desire to scandalise and protest against the control [the patriarchy] wanted to submit the bodies of women to in public dances.

Indeed, the creator of FCBD, Caroleena Nericcio, even included in their name the objective that this evolution of belly dance was not intended to be danced to please the public. "Fat chance you'll get anything but a belly dance show from me" is the expression that aims to educate the public that belly dances are to be appreciated artistically, without any connotation of erotic satisfaction. Nericcio barred men from entering her San Francisco studio and the tribes of women who formed as dancers learned to adopt a collective posture and attitude, capable of communicating within the group through gestures or glances. The interpretation with respect to the public is self-sufficient, proud, and coordinated, given that, in addition, there are no solos.

The BellyWarda fully agree with this idea: "Personally, I gave up belly dance because of its 'Barbie' look. I didn't feel comfortable. The FCBD broke away from this aspect and reinforced the feminine part, but with strength, and for me this was fundamental. The idea of seduction, of having to like it, is vacated" (Joucla, 2021). Achouri added that a feeling of sorority is created by suggesting that women dance together and for themselves: "In FCBD, the male gaze is something that they keep [to themselves], their gaze is ignored. In fact, we feel prouder when women compliment us after dancing. According to the BellyWarda, the diversity of their bodies also transmits a feeling of closeness and pride to the public with respect to the soloist dancers of belly dance.

However, proximity to the public is an aspect that can lead to complications, which the dancers overcome by developing their own techniques so that interruptions do not affect the semi-improvisation show. "In the Carnival,[7] Karima was the immune system of the group. When a drunk wanted to join the group, she had the ability to quickly kick them out. It's at times like these we feel like we're a living organism" (Joucla).

Achouri highlighted the feminist origins of the dance through the feminism assumed by Caroleena Nericcio. The codes to which it appeals are still present: the FCBD continues to be a meeting space for every type of woman, which fosters complicity and sisterhood among them. "There are not so many spaces in society in which we can be among ourselves, in a safe place. For this reason, I don't admit men to the company," she said. The dancers explained that they knew men who practiced FCBD, but that they preferred that only women dance in their group. "It is our moment, our way of dancing, our unity, and our cohesion." The translation of this unity is shown choreographically in how the company enters public squares or the street and in the synchronisation of their movements. "We don't arrive discreetly, we make noise, and we are a crowd. We say to the spectator: 'Look at us, but we

7 The BellyWarda made it clear that the 2019 Toulouse Carnival was the only event with interruptions by the public, unlike the spontaneous shows they had previously put on in the streets. The festive and nocturnal atmosphere of popular culture (Gisbert and Rius-Ulldemolins, 2019) is still an area of gender violence which, on the other hand, did not occur in the sporadic daytime performances.

don't dance for you. We dance for ourselves,' and this is our strength," emphasised Achouri, who also detailed that she wants to transmit the diversity of bodies and cultures present in their group.

> Personally, as a woman of a certain age, it's a space for affirmation and the possibility of expressing myself, of expressing my femininity, which I can't find anywhere else, it's one of the few dances that allows it in this way. The spirit of FCBD allows all women, regardless of their age or [body] morphology, to appear triumphantly in public. Without an explicit hierarchy, without submitting to patriarchal codes. Whether we are experts or beginners, old, ugly, thin, or fat, all femininities can express themselves equally (Erwane Morette, 2021).

Thus, despite the fact that the FCBD also occurs on stage, for Achouri, "the demand to be able to be free in public spaces passes directly through the dance." The relevance of this protest as an essential part of this collective dance between women has a complementary impact in the form of the strong social bonds between the participants. "I've been dancing for 50 years, but it hasn't been that long since I've been doing FCBD. I could leave the other dances, but not this one. The sorority, the strength of the group, the assertion of women, I've only [ever] found it in FCBD," affirmed Morette. Sonia Bennour added: "I've done many styles of dance, but I've only seen this transfer of positive energy in this style. It's not easy to find this cohesion and it's a dance with many challenges, especially when you have to be a leader." Massieux emphasises that it is a dance that teaches you to connect with others and that you have to be present for them, it is a moment of friendship. Marie Castellano, a circus artist, explained that what attracted her to FCBD was seeing the connection between women when they dance in a circle, communicating with gestures unknown to the public: "It shows great strength, the girls work together, and it seems that we share a secret."

On the contrary, the cancan of L'Armée des Roses has a different dynamic. If the FCBD leaves behind the solos of belly dance to show a feminine unit, the cancan, in its origins, was a purely individual, improvisational dance, which gradually became iconic steps and which, when it jumped to cabarets, became collective. For Andrée Gine, "the cancan is a strong dance for women. It refers to Louise Michel, who revolutionised the world and to whom I pay tribute. For me, the cancan was feminist, because the dancers went against what was prohibited. They could not dance alone, in 1831 it was formally prohibited, and they were arrested because it was considered a provocation." The Parisians of the time decided to raise their skirts above the ankle to shock the mentality of the time, a gesture that was later accepted and integrated.

> We don't know if the women who danced were politicised, but when Rigolboche created a step to mock the army, a military step that raises the leg, it was in the context of revolution. She also invented the guitar step, which mimics masturbation. The public came with a mixture of fascination and disgust, and this motivated the creation of the Moulin Rouge. They recovered a women's dance [that had been created] for men to control [women]. It's visible in the aesthetic, which has been completely reappropriated (Andrée Gine, 2021).

If, in its origins, the cancan was scandalous and rebellious, after only a few decades it became part of the imaginary of the cabarets of the *belle époque*, deprived of its revolutionary discourse. Mamzelle Viviane explained that "we dancers at the Moulin Rouge don't learn all that. We work like little soldiers; we are executors who know the names of all the steps [but] without any sense."

L'Armée des Roses also recounted the anecdote that La Goulue once arrived at a dance, unauthorised, and with a small billy goat to show that a male had accompanied her. With the advent of socialist theories in the middle of the 19th century, the steps of the cancan made fun of the church (the 'cathedral' move), the army (the smack on the ass or mimicking carrying a weapon), and the law that prohibited women from drinking alcohol (the 'corkscrew' move). "We often wonder what fight the cancan would have chosen

if it had been created today," commented Andrée Gine, who, with Antoinette Marchal, created the 'grandstand' and the 'victory' steps.[8]

Andrée Gine explained that she came to the cancan looking for a feminist dance and that when she danced in a company, the feminist message was completely diluted. The meeting with Antoinette Marchal, who claims that L'Armée des Roses allows individuality within a group, dates back to this period. Mamzelle Viviane also spread feminist values in her cabaret shows and began to collaborate with L'Armée des Roses to reclaim the original message of the cancan, forgotten in many Parisian establishments. "The cancan in cabaret is not a dance that is highly appreciated by dancers, because it is rough on the body. But when you take it from the feminist angle, things change. Perhaps I'm not the dancer with the best technique, but I know that I am good at what I do, because I embody a character, I carry the Paris of an era, the *gouaille* [insolent and mocking attitude], the connection between joy and partying, and that's what they like, and that generosity is what's also found in L'Armée des Roses." As dance teachers, L'Armée des Roses set out to democratise the cancan for all women and all bodies. They claim that technique is not as important as being able to enjoy yourself with one's own body, supported by a dance historically dedicated to the objective of transmitting a form of freedom.

DANCE AS A 'NON-ESSENTIAL' ASSET DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis in France, and from the time of the second lockdown in autumn 2020, dance as a show and as a means of learning was prohibited by ministerial measures. Just as bookshops or record shops obtained the status of 'essential services,' dance and the other performing arts, at the time of writing, were banned. The interviews with the BellyWarda and L'Armée des Roses showed their indignation, while asserting the need for dance as a vehicle for positive emotions.[9] "Dance is essential because it does us all good. We need to evacuate all that [emotion], dance, improve our technique, and share it," explained Massieux. "The public needs it. Especially in this sad period, we have to be able to give a little joy. It allows you to escape and even to travel. If I had to dance with a mask, I would do it," added Dahrmani. "There's a lot of talk about health and no one is saying it's not important, but mental health is often left aside. Dance and culture in general are greatly beneficial. You miss meeting, dancing, and feeling emotional together, the emotions are still there," concluded Morette. L'Armée des Roses also exposed the difficulty for all dancers to keep their bodies in shape with gymnasiums closed and the curfew at 6:00 p.m.:

> This confinement puts the question of the body, which has been lacking training, on the table. In the first confinement, with teleworking, I could train via Zoom; now, working away from home, but with gyms [closed] and a six o'clock curfew, it's hard to train. And, symbolically, in the cancan, if we have to dance masked, it doesn't work. It's paradoxical, because it would seem that the public space is the best place in which we could dance, but we don't see how to do it if we can't have contact with the public (Andrée Gine, 2021).

Antoinette Marchal, confined to Strasbourg, explained her feeling of anger regarding a situation that was particularly detrimental to live culture: "We have to win back the space and, [even] if we only have the street, we will fight. We will have demonstrations, we will act while protesting, I will go out with the skirts, and I will dance the cancan."

8 These steps in the cancan are described on the L'Armée des Roses website: https://www.larmeedesroses.com/post/les-dessous-du-cancan https://en.larmeedesroses.com/blank

9 The #cultureessentiel movement organised flash mobs with the song Danser encore by HK et les Saltimbanquis and theatre occupations in France (https://www.youtube .com/watch?v=Gq9qFvoMKaYandab_channel=PiafEdit).

CONCLUSIONS

The shows in the street by the BellyWarda and L'Armée des Roses have an important social dimension that complements that of pure artistic performance. The external context of a cultural site, in which the viewer assumes a codified receptive behaviour, is an essential challenge for these dancers, who also perform semi-improvised dances. Uncertainty about the reception and occupation of public spaces reinforces the links between them.

The choreographic practice of the FCBD and the cancan as groups of women reinforce their self-confidence, feeling of sisterhood, pride of their feminine identities, and visibility of the diversity of their body types. The technical demand, choreographies impregnated with historical values, and need for non-verbal communication, together with the fact that they share the experience of dancing with other women in the street, reaffirms the social bond of the group and creates a safe place of tolerance and mutual help among them.

The appropriation of public spaces through feminist dances also generates pride in the dancers, who are aware that they are challenging an anomalous situation in cities where the presence of female bodies has not yet been normalised. Meeting with the public in a differential geographical framework—because of the exceptionality of the artistic use of these spaces—supposes an increase in the artists' expectations, who normally have a positive reception. The dancers take advantage of this context to convey the feminist messages typical of their dance styles: sisterhood, the unity of a group of women, and the diversity of bodies in the FCBD and the right to freedom, party, and to one's own body in the case of the cancan.

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Special Issue

Culture and gender: career paths, policies, and cultural management

Presentation of the second monograph. Culture and gender: career paths, policies, and cultural management

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This monograph, from the Debats journal, *Revista de cultura, poder y sociedad* (Debats: The Journal of Culture, Power, and Society), entitled 'Culture and gender: career paths, policies, and cultural management', presents the second of two special issues dedicated to culture and gender in contemporary society. Specifically, this second monograph presents six works of investigation on gender inequalities in the field of culture. Three focused on the music sector, with the other three being more conceptually based, focussing on the incorporation of a gender and intersectional perspective into policy making and on the daily management of cultural facilities, institutions, and companies, as well as in creative and care work.

Despite the numerous claims made about the presence of women in the world of art and culture in recent years and the interest of international organisations (such as UNESCO, the Council of the European Union, and the European Commission) in reducing the gender inequalities present in the sector, starting 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic experienced all over the world has called the progress made in recent years into question. Thus, the report *Gender & creativity: progress on the brink of the precipice* by Bridget Conor (2021), a preview of the third edition of UNESCO's world report *Re|thinking cultural policies*, described the possible regressive effect of the pandemic on gender equality in the sector unless adequate responses were implemented.

Hence, even though the data were still scarce and partial, the aforementioned UNESCO report, which was published in February 2022, confirmed these fears. Both reports highlighted the importance of integrating the gender perspective to overcome the inequalities that occur in certain cultural professions; the world of music is not only one of the sectors with the most barriers to entry, but also to professional progression, recognition, and the visibility of works and productions authored by women and LGTBI+ people.

The most recent report also highlighted gender diversity and intersectionality as emerging areas of intervention, which contribute both to fostering gender equality and promoting more diverse and inclusive cultural and creative sectors. In this sense, the articles presented in this monograph delve, on the one hand, into the inequalities that occur in the professional trajectories of female musicians and, on the other hand, into the use that the gender perspective and an intersectional prism adds to the policies and measures aimed at women in the cultural sector, in accordance with cultural rights and the objective of leaving no one behind.

This monograph also aimed to address the still limited and partial data available on gender discrimination in the cultural and creative sector, and to contribute to the design of well-founded cultural policies (Shaheed, 2021). This is crucial, not only to achieve a vital creative economy and to support the millions of women, men, and LGTBI+ people who are part of this complex and dynamic ecosystem, but also to protect our societies and democracies in general (Villarroya Planas, 2022). Thus, the monograph presented below contains six articles that describe, on the one hand, research on gender issues in music scenes in the Balkans and Spain and, on the other hand, three analytical proposals on good practices in cultural fields as well as the situation of the artistic profession in terms of creation and care.

Three articles in relation to the musical field are presented. Firstly, the article by Iva Nenie and Tatjana Nikolic, entitled 'Female labour and leadership in music: contexts, constraints, future(s)', explores the Serbian music art scene and female participation in terms of creation, performance, and artistic work. The authors offer a case study analysis based on the local context of the Serbian music market and the dynamics required of female music artists to combat gender stereotypes and develop their professional artistic careers. There is a special emphasis on female leadership practices and the different roles that women assume within the art scene.

Secondly, the article by Angels Bronsoms and Paula Guerra, entitled 'Shatter silence, raise hell, and run riot: Music and gender in Spain 2018–2021', focused on gender inequalities in the Spanish music industry and was based on research carried out in two stages: before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The two authors of this article analyse issues related to the artistic profession, prestige and recognition of productions made by women within an artistic scene marked by inequality and gender stereotypes, and the difficulties in reconciling work and professional life in the development of their respective artistic careers.

Thirdly, the article by Miguel Ángel G. Escribano, Dafne Muntanyola, and Juan Ignacio Gallego, entitled 'Gender inequalities in the music industry in Spain: A mixed methodology study', explains the use of a mixed qualitative and quantitative methodology as a necessary tool to research the situation of female workers in the music industry in Spain, given that there are no official records to clarify the basic structures ordering the production relationships that affect everyday life.

Next, the article 'Incorporating an intersectional perspective into local cultural facilities: identification of priority areas', by Jordi Baltà, Gigi Guizzo, and Àngel Mestres, reflects on and provides an initial approximation of the intersectional perspective with the aim of transferring these ideas to the practice of local cultural facilities (civic centres and athenaeums, etc.). The article aimed to bring this perspective closer to the reality of local cultural management and identifies the main conceptual and operational challenges. The work concludes with the identification of aspects of the management of local cultural facilities whose incorporation into intersectionality should be prioritised.

Subsequently, based on a diagnosis of gender inequalities in the field of art and culture in the city of Barcelona and original research focused on a qualitative methodology, the article 'Culture and gender perspectives in the city of Barcelona' by Anna Villarroya and Marta Casals-Balaguer, analysed different cases of innovative experiences of incorporating the gender perspective into cultural fields located in different neighbourhoods of the city.

Finally, in the last article in this monograph, 'Opposed devotions? Creation and care in the cultural precariat', Juan Pecourt Gracia and Sandra Obiol-Francés explored the theme of cultural precariousness based on an analysis of the gender perspective in creative and care work. The authors emphasise the role that creative work, as opposed to care work, plays as a visible and socially recognised part of artistic practice.

Finally, to bring this second monograph of the two special issues dedicated to culture and gender in contemporary society and published in the journal to a conclusion, we would like to thank everyone involved and who have collaborated in its preparation, especially the authors of these articles and their reviewers.

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Female labour and leadership in music
Contexts, constraints, future(s)

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ABSTRACT

Here we explore the contemporary practices of female participation in the music scenes in Serbia, and to an extent, in the Balkans. This research identified and described the possibilities, gendered constraints, and acts of transgressions that together weave a complex dynamic of female participation in popular music, in relation to the changing field of dominant gender ideologies in Serbia and the surrounding region. This work provides a critical analysis of gender issues in music-making and performing and of the topic of gendered labour in music, by relying on multiple case studies grounded in local contexts. We consider the mores and demands of the music market and everyday culture, their link to personal experiences, and the reach of the social institutions regarding music. Either as role models or cherished leaders, female musicians employ different tactics to fight stereotypes, strengthen communities, and ensure female participation. This work maps the strategies and tools they have been putting in place in order to sustain their audience, income, and presence to the best possible extent. Bearing in mind the imperative of transforming a standard way of working, communicating with audiences, and maintaining earning potential, this text singles out practices that could be recognised as (female) leadership in contemporary circumstances. We also consider a wider spectrum of roles that female musicians and music professionals have taken on or were awarded within their professional circles, local scenes, communities, or wider society.

Keywords: women in music, gender stereotypes, gender equality, cultural management, cultural policy, independent music scene

SUMMARY

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INTRODUCTION

Since the late 1980s, ethnomusicology and other social sciences that study music practices have considered a wide range of gender issues, from reintroducing neglected or overlooked female music figures, traditions, and works within a framework of feminist scholarship (Koskoff, 1987; Herndon and Ziegler, 1990) to analysing gender identifications, negotiations over identity, and gender-related attributes of music as expressed or shaped through music (Moisala, 1999; Doubleday, 2008), and most recently, in terms of music labour and music activism performed by women (Troka, 2002; Hofman, 2015). As Beverley Diamond and Pirkko Moisala note in their introduction to the seminal volume *Music and gender* (2000), the main approaches to relationships between gender and music either reveal how styles and genres are engrained with gendered concepts, or how the discourse and practice of music contain deeply embedded but less visible gendered expectations and norms, or even exclusions, that will require careful detangling and deconstruction by scholars to reveal the 'true' working of gender regimes in given social and cultural contexts (Diamond and Moisala, 2000, pp. 5–6).

In addition to the already mentioned trends of gendered music scholarship, observable in its finest hour of late postmodernism at the turn of the century, a widely accepted classification of feminist music scholarship by Ellen Koskoff points to the three main 'waves' of knowledge. Starting with the first wave of 'women-centric' scholarship related to collecting, describing, and representing female music activities, we move to a wider, gender-oriented second wave during which the broader issue of gender relations emerged, as articulated through music. Finally, the last wave was shaped by seeking more profound correlations between music and wider society, with a strong influence of postmodern theoretical nods of feminist theory, LGBTQ and cultural studies, psychoanalysis, and semiotics, among other similar factors (Koskoff, 2000: x). The main theoretical concepts used to study gender and womanhood in music so far are gendered music practices, identity/identification in terms of

construction and negotiation, gender roles through music, overcoming stereotypes and gender-induced obstacles, and female musical agency.

The concept of female music leadership could be one of the orientations that could now help build a stronger cross-disciplinary exchange. It could also help shed new light on female music-making and music-maintaining practices as they relate to the pressing issues and social changes of the present moment. This topic, which could permit a new theoretical paradigm—one that transcends set fields of study and will not remain confined to a specific type of agency—remains poorly researched. So far, research into the gendered aspects of music leadership has relied on a hub of pedagogy, music education research, community music study, ethnomusicology, and youth and leadership studies. However, this loose network is characterised by different research foci and disciplinary paradigms, and so more intense interdisciplinary dialogue is yet to be seen. In this sense, Downing (2010, p. 74) discussed how female agency is specifically instituted in Balinese *gamelan* ensembles comprising girls, in which gendered expectations collide with newly forged ways of bodily movement during playing (*gaya*) and directive musical communication. Similarly, Wells (2011) considered female concertmasters and conductors within the Western music tradition in Australia, by focusing on musicianship versus leadership, the difference between community and professional orchestras from a gendered point of view, and furthermore, specifically building professional positions from female perspectives.

Obviously, the growing and diversified body of research agrees on a stance that the understanding of culturalised female music leadership is important both in relation to overcoming gender constraints and in reaching better social cohesion in different settings. However, disparate research problems, theoretical and methodological frameworks, and starting premises call for a more integrated approach to the very concept of music leadership. Thus, the powerful figures, models of influence, and non-patriarchal, transgressive, and changing practices of guidance and authority could be compared and transferred back to its actors and communities. Perhaps this way of administering leadership—in a shared way, against the grain, through a specific type of labour, and in relation to the affective culture—is worth the research investment as a model contrasting the individualised competitive patterns of leadership based on the supposed gender binaries that the globalised neoliberal appropriation of feminism often promote.

The qualitative methodology used in this research included direct and participant observation, both immediately and online, in a form of a multisite ethnography. We conducted individual and group interviews and performed media content analysis throughout the autumn of 2020 and the winter and spring 2021. Prospective and active female musicians and music professionals working in diverse genres/styles, from different generations, and with differing levels of experience were targeted in the local and regional music scene in Serbia as a part of a wider scientific project entitled *Female Leadership in Music* (2020–2022). More than 80 female musicians, organisers, and decision makers were interviewed in the first year of this research. However, 21 of them were considered in much more depth for the purposes of this current article. The interviews we performed were semi-structured and covered three main topics: (1) *mapping the cultural field the musician was a part of;* (2) *understanding the role of gender within the respective setting; and* (3) *understanding the concept of leadership on these women's own terms*. The questions were divided into various groups of introductory, direct, interpreting, and probing inquiry.

To date, our research collaborators have included diverse figures considered as leaders both by our research team and by their respective communities of origin or affiliation. These women have been visible, present, active, and relevant to a particular genre, scene, organisation, or community, and/or were the frontwomen of their respective bands or ensembles. In addition, some of our interlocutors

were young women still in the process of receiving their music education or at the beginning of their career. We specifically asked the latter about their role models, expectations, and any early obstacles they had come across. Finally, our wider research strategy adhered to the values of feminist scholarship, with an intention to "equalize the relationship between researchers and the research subjects" (Jenkins, Narayanaswamy and Sweetman, 2019, p. 418). Thus, the researchers were put in a supporting and mediating role which stressed the power of the interlocutor to highlight certain issues within the proposed framework and to take on an active role as a collaborator within the process.

FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN THE REGIONAL MUSIC SCENE OF THE BALKANS

The position of female musicians in Serbian and Balkan popular music scenes is characterised by an asymmetry—namely, the dominant concept of women participating in music is often related to singing and usually to highly sexualised images of femininity. In contrast, the visibility and positioning of women within subcultural scenes that do not conform to the stereotypical imagery of female music-making is confined to specific communities of musicians and fans, making it harder for the general public to approach the full variety of female musicianship, both in in historical and contemporary contexts.

The strong interest among women in gaining musical skills and knowledge is visible through the fact that among higher education institutions in Yugoslavia, music academies saw the sharpest rise in female students among all other art academies (Tomšič, 1981: 116). In parallel, highly acclaimed public female musicians like the accordion player Radojka Živković—who transgressed boundaries by entering the 'male' realm of professional folk music making on the state radio while still maintaining an aura of modesty and indisputable professionalism—helped to gradually increase the participation of women in music scenes outside the conventional role of *kafana* singers with supposedly 'low moral standards'. The first subcultural, all-female bands, like the punk group *Boye* from Novi Sad, were created during late socialism. Their description of cooperation within the band from a 1991 interview is probably the earliest published description depicting shared leadership and collaboration on equal terms between women in Serbia in a pop music setting:

> We do [things] in [a] nice, female way, by discussing everything. The band is what matters, and the different generational experience is also required. Vesna has the fervour, Tanja has the thing of her generation, and that is all good (Ambrozić, 1991).

'Micro-music scenes', as Slobin defines them (Slobin, 1993), in the contemporary Serbian and wider Balkan context translate to small-scale semi- or fully independent music networks of genre-oriented (e.g., jazz, metal, rock, ethno, or Americana) or fusion (e.g., world, experimental, or alternative pop) music that operate at the fringe of the neoliberal music market. They are largely dominated by the music culture of pop folk, characterised by the struggle to survive in hard economic circumstances and uneven support by the media and industry. In addition, these subcultural scenes are a part of a shared regional culture that, after the dissolution of socialist Yugoslavia, entered a new phase of "reconstruction and recontextualisation in ex-Yugoslav cultural spaces'" around 1999 (Baker, 2006). They are also reaching towards a transnational music context via contemporary digital culture, perhaps best illustrated by the metal music scene and female bands. For example, the all-female metal group Nemesis is a part of the small but dedicated Serbian heavy metal scene and the group's members also frequently perform at regional music festivals. However, the band also aspires to play to international metal music community, as shown by the fact that their latest album, The War is On, recently reached Japanese audiences via the Osaka-based label *Jackhammer Music* (2021).

The intensity of female participation in public music culture has been well documented by historical and ethnographic accounts, as well as in popular biographies and the press. However, in a cunning discursive gesture, the plethora of historical and current female figures related to music have been relegated to the slot of being singular or unique with in their chosen positions. Indeed, this logic of 'exclusion by exceptionality' still pervades contemporary public knowledge of female musicianship in the region (Nenić, 2019). For example, female Serbian players of folk music instruments were dubbed as rare and strange, although their historical and contemporary presence is enduring and indisputable, and in many instances, is jointly seen both by the community and specialists as exceptional (ibid.).

Contemporary female singers and players belonging to the neotraditional music and world music scene actively seek to overcome these difficulties by simultaneously occupying more than one professional identity. On the one hand, they juggle between the 'proper' ways of presenting heritage and femininity and, on the other, transgress the canon and conventional gender behaviours. Neotraditional singer Svetlana Spajić has achieved this by dedicating her own a capella female vocal ensemble *Pjevačka družina Svetlane Spajić* to the precise interpretation of old, traditional Serbian and Balkan songs. In turn, her collaborations with the artists from Serbia and abroad have included conceptual artist Marina Abramović, the American vocal ensemble *Kitka*, which is devoted to the female folk music legacy of Eastern Europe, Bulgarian performer Yanka Rupkina, Greek traditional folk singer Domna Samiou, and many others.

In addition to her field research of village folk music and the stylistically highly accurate performance of ancient ways of singing, Spajić has also ventured into novel areas of music, in one instance by creating a traditional song devoted to the American scholar Milman Parry, in the style of *ojkanje*[1] two-part singing. She also learned some similar singing styles, techniques, and songs from outside of Serbia, such as Central Asian throat (overtone) singing. Her creation and performance of the aforementioned song with *Kitka* served a twofold role, as a gesture of friendship towards that particular group—whose members Spajić has also been training to sing—but also as a rare instance of approaching the distant 'other' through carefully crafted Serbian neotraditional song. Thus, Spajić came to occupy the role of an intercultural music leader.

Other female musicians have invented similar strategies of simultaneously staying true to their roots and bringing novelty into the canon. This juggling of roles is especially visible in the case of players whose instrument is still publicly depicted as chiefly belonging to men. Indeed, the symbolic aligning of instruments with gender and the prevailing idea of male exclusivity within instrumental music performance is persistent across different cultures (cf. Doubleday, 2008). In this sense, through our research we have learned that this symbolic stronghold has led some of Serbian female instrumentalists to even contemplate the creation of instruments without the usual visual symbols, or with a slightly altered contour, size, and colour, in order to symbolically and materially detach them from the reign of male supremacy.

Regarding the jazz scene of the region, it is informative to point out that all three national big bands from Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia, the only institutionally supported public orchestras in this genre, are male-only. These three big bands have more than 50 musicians but none of them are women (Jovićević, 2021). The same author describes how there are around 10 important jazz festivals in the region and none of them has previously programmed female instrumentalists in any significant numbers, especially not from the local scene. As this author's

1 For description of the 'ojkanje' or 'groktanje' singing technique, see Ranković, 2019.

research indicates, of the 4% of female performers at those festivals in recent years, only 1% were local female artists (Jovićević, 2021).

Our current and previous enquiry has shown that when female musicians finally receive invitations to perform, this is often as a suggestion or with a nudge, or the motivation for the invite had been external in a form of a subsidy, additional grant, program, or manifesto encouraging female participation in orchestras, festivals, or labels, thus making them tokenism practices. They are presented as part of the spectacular, as for a special occasion and context; not as being mainstream and normalised but as an exception and an attraction (a group interview with five young female instrumentalists, 7 February 2021). Additionally, they are being forced to accept these arrangements if they ever want to be present on the stage and sustain their audience, income, and visibility. They are pressured to show understanding, compassion, and submission and to happily accept reckless underrepresentation or misrepresentation as a gift and an honour (Nenić, 2013; interview with an experienced jazz musician, composer and educator, 12 April 2021).

This situation is not unique to the female musicians in the Balkans because it is part of a wider structural set of obstacles also found elsewhere that, regardless of their cultural background, forces female artists to negotiate their private and professional roles and accept institutionalised gender biases as the status quo. As Stalp (2015) observed in her research on the practice of female artists in two regions in the USA (pp. 41–43), there is a shared experience of hardship in "becoming and being considered artists" and, in general, of not being able to avoid gendered expectations (p. 51).

FEMALE LEADERSHIP IN MUSIC

Our theoretical model relies on the concepts of cultural and cross-cultural leadership being fluent, transformative, and transformational, as well as being shaped by the values and expectations of the context of everyday culture. When considering how leadership in music functions, we depart from the viewpoint of qualitative research in which the emic ideas of what makes someone a leader often get entangled with in-group views, personal values, and the different contingent insights into the very idea of what it means to lead. In other words, we want to overhaul the postmodern stance expressed by Starratt (1993) in which leaders are invited to "attempt a more balanced assessment of the modern world and to adopt a more hopeful stance toward the future" (p. 123), from the culturally and individually framed habitus of the contemporary, interconnected, and heavily troubled world of post-industrial capitalism.

Thus, the model can be claimed to be grounded, reflective, futuristic, and normative, with the latter being part of knowledge mobilisation and joint efforts by both an engaged scholarship and the researched subjects. Furthermore, the notion of transactional leadership—whereby the focus is on the exchange between the leader and followers and its theoretical outcome—and of transformational leadership—where the leader is also expected to be inspirational and supportive and to express both directive and participative behaviour, with a higher and more natural commitment of other social actors (Bass, Riggio, 2008)—seems to be an important launching pad for understanding how female leadership in music functions.

As Caust pointed out, "The position of women as leaders in arts is a continually contested environment… And the journey getting there can be challenging, particularly if the aspiration is to work in creative/artistic leadership roles or be a leader of a major arts institution/organisation" (Caust, 2020, pp. 55–56). The literature shows that next to the direction and effect of political decisions, influential individuals, alongside informal networks within the music industry as a key space for influencing decision making and policy creation, also have an important impact on the development of cultural policies in the field of music. Homan added, "The

role of self-appointed champions and their more informal music industry networks were crucial to changing government attitudes and policy" (Homan, 2013, p. 112). In 2017, Pierce wrote about the "strong international appetites" for a cultural leadership expertise caused by "the atmosphere of crises", both economic and political. In this context, three different categories of cultural leadership are recognised, even though they sometimes overlap and are not mutually exclusive: entrepreneurial, generous ("prioritizing the needs of the cultural form or sector, extending efforts beyond individual or organisational interest"), and public (pp. 13–14).

Edelman (2017) claimed that "the pursuit and engagement of the artistic process predisposes [performing artists] to intuitive understanding of the practices, theories, and concepts of leadership" (p. 25). Certainly, there are notable female musicians that are bestowed with a star status and who are seen as leaders and prominent figures by a broader public. In pop-rock music, performers like singer-songwriter Slađana Milošević (1955) or the guitarist and singer Ana Stanić (1975) have reached stardom and defied the stereotypes of female participation in rock culture. Similar examples are also present in the younger generation of performers: in neotraditional/world music scene, performers like the *frula* player and multi-instrumentalist Neda Nikolić (1998) or the trumpet player Danijela Veselinović (1993) are seen as virtuosos and key figures of the 'new wave' of folk music transformation. This is because they successfully perform and lead in different projects and create collaborative work both in traditional and genre-defying music.

This mode of highly appraised leadership in public spheres equates with stardom in public discourses. Nonetheless, female music stars in independent music scenes often perform many tasks related to intergroup and cultural leadership that remain invisible to the public eye, while simultaneously carrying out several roles and tasks typical of leaders. Both Nikolić and Veselinović lead instrumental ensembles: Nikolić organised ad hoc orchestras (with mostly male participants) for her concerts during the first and second year of COVID-19, and Veselinović is a leader and only female member of the famous and successful brass orchestra named after her. Also, these young musicians are the first not only to make decisions, but also to introduce novelty into the musical repertoire and style, perform managerial tasks, negotiate financial issues, and set the behavioural limits for certain situations. Thus, they are both taking the full and sole responsibility in leadership roles conventionally understood are being 'strong'.

On the contrary, there is a different distribution of roles and responsibilities in all-female music collectives whose members are not necessarily stars or outstanding performers outside the collaborative context. The recently created Serbian-based Romani, all-female hip-hop/fusion music group *Pretty Loud*,[2] exemplifies such multi-layered functioning in regard to leadership. Although its members are equal in terms of deciding upon and offering creative output, some girls take on several tasks at once (writing lyrics, singing, and being informal spokespersons in public situations), and so they function as informal leaders. However, it is interesting to note that during the focus groups we organised as part of this research, the more 'prominent' members of *Pretty Loud* were quick to highlight the qualities of its more shy or quiet members or the best qualities of members that performed 'only' one task (e.g., dancing or rapping).

On another level, the critique the *Pretty Loud* collective expresses through its music is aimed both at the arranged marriages of minors in the Serbian Romani community and at racist stereotypes that portray Roma people as lazy, uneducated, and poor by choice (group interview with three young female Romani artists, 13 April 2021). This public expres-

2 The group was created and continues to be supported by the Gypsy Roma Urban Balkan Beats (GRUBB) foundation; its members are girls and young women from the cities of Belgrade and Niš (http://grubbmusic.com/).

sion of a critical stance puts the whole group in the position of collective and shared leadership. The group won recognition with the *Bring the Noize* award from the Feminist Culture *Center BeFem* for the advocating for the rights of Romani people (2020). In addition, its growing personal and online fandom sees the group's artivism and goals as both contributing to improving the inner workings of the Roma community in Serbia and as presenting a different, active, and engaged role for Romani women (and overall Romani culture) to a wider public in Serbia.

Gender dynamics are particularly relevant in genres such as jazz where the performance is not completely predetermined (as is the case, for example, in classical music) but rather, is subject to the agreements, discussions, implicit relationships, and dynamics among the band members (interview with an experienced jazz musician, composer, and educator, 12 April 2021). However, young female jazz players have been able to transform the structural injury of being put aside into an advantage. Being aware that they lacked a female role model in jazz (apart from jazz singing), some of them sought to actively present themselves to younger girls as successful and inspiring musicians. One of our research collaborators chose to bring young students to her primary music school class by visiting local elementary schools to show them her instrument (trumpet) and talk with and play for them. Although her initial aim was simply to increase the number of children (of any gender) attending trumpet music classes, the number of girls that wanted to attend her lessons was outstanding (interview with a young female trumpet musician and educator, 10 March 2021).

What was notable throughout our field research was that many of the female musicians in leadership positions in bands had formed their own bands because they had not been invited to join those of others (despite their talent, education, potential, and hard work ethic) or had been treated poorly in other arrangements. We could call this 'leadership out of necessity.'

> I have had my own bands since I was 20. There were rare occasions that I was actually invited by others. If I had waited to be invited, I would not have had any career. I played well enough to be invited to fill some spaces, but I was not called in but instead, avoided. That is why I made space for myself on my own (interview with an experienced jazz musician, composer, and educator, 12 April 2021).

Exceptional female musicians that can be thought of as leaders are often engaged in multiple different activities, bands, genres, styles, and platforms and multitask these activities and their career on a daily basis. At the same time, they sometimes negatively describe this 'multipotentiality', are critical towards their "lack of focus and clear path" (a group interview with five young female instrumentalists, 7 February 2021), and are dissatisfied with their spectrum of different talent and their relevance to the community around them. High quality is somehow tied to the idea of focus, consistency, and sometimes isolation, which excludes multipotentialists. This is especially true of women who experience different expectations from society (Medina-Vicent, 2019) and who often face challenges in balancing those expectations with genius and leadership roles as they are traditionally seen.

In many instances, female leaders in music are supposed be overqualified and to agree to additional investment and recognisable devotion in order to achieve legitimacy and acceptance.

> I prepared in three days what they have practiced for three months. After that, I was a regular replacement... I was their girl for everything. I knew the whole repertoire for the three different instruments and was still never placed in a permanent position in that ensemble (interview with an experienced jazz musician, composer, and educator, 12 April 2021).

In one of her past projects in a female-only ensemble, one of our participants had introduced a childcare budget and service for all fellow musicians with small children (at the expense of other possible

benefits for the project participants). Nonetheless, one of the project partners (also a female colleague) criticised this intervention—which was definitely a position of solidarity and feminist leadership—by invoking a common patriarchal trope, why do they even have children if they want to play music? At the same time, women without children constantly face criticism and are marked, in a negative tone, as being selfish and career-oriented (Nikolić, 2016; Medina-Vicent, 2019). In other words, whether choosing motherhood or deciding not to have children, women and the art they produce are 'always already' measured against the rite of passage of motherhood, with a prevailing, almost universal stance that there is an "inherent incongruity between these two roles'' (Stalp, 2015, p. 47).

While our research collaborators gave differing answers to the question of whether they had had female role models working in the same genre to look up to, most of them had not had a chance to easily learn about their female predecessors or other contemporary female musicians from the same socio-musical field. This fact contributes to the logic of exceptionalism that serves as a cunning discursive device which, on the one hand elevates 'exceptional' women, but on the other, cuts them out of music work in their chosen genre. It prevents them from assuming leading positions because they are transformed into an 'addition' or exception to the rule. Almost all the interviewees expressed regret at not being able to learn earlier about similar—whether average or outstanding—female musicians performing in the same genre or mastering the same instrument. Hence, female leadership in music is intricately connected to educational work and to being a role model.

> In my project we engaged male mentors. They had a professional approach and no bias, but my participants did not believe in themselves and thought they could not achieve what they were asked to. Because they did not see other female mentors in front of them, they doubted they could ever make it (interview with an experienced jazz musician, composer, and educator, 12 April 2021).

Providing educational support (to other women) was one of the activities some of our interviewees mentioned as enjoying and being the most proud of. They also recognised that the lack of female professors and role models in 'male-dominated genres' in Serbian music education institutions and organisations was one of key obstacles to wider female participation in those genres (group interview with six teenage alumni of *Girls Rock Camp* in Serbia, 25 January 2021; group interview with five female music students, 1 February 2021; group interview with five young female instrumentalists, 7 February 2021).

WOMEN AND MUSICAL LABOUR

Hofman said that "there is a need to include labour and its practices in the debate about female professional musicians as one of the crucial aspects in the construction of their femininities" (Hofman, 2015, pp. 19–20). Even though the wider public is unaware of the factors that comprise music labour, female musicians are very cognisant of its preconditions and realities. Private and professional domains are obviously intertwined but future female musicians are still instructed to invest all their available time into their artistic and musical advancement and career.

> When you are attending music high school and then the music academy, the schedule of classes is so screwed that you are actually in school from morning to dark, plus practicing at home… Private individual and group classes on weekends… Life prepares you from a very early age that you will not be able to separate your 8 hours of work, sleep, and leisure (group interview with five female music students, 1 February 2021).

These women have witnessed a lack of understanding from the people around them, who simplify their work to being that of only 'Friday and Saturday evenings', in other words, to their performances

only, while the plethora of background work they engage in remains invisible and undervalued. At the same time, young female artists also describe concealment of the work behind the big talents they experience, from their older and more successful colleagues, tantamount to a mystification of their talent and the results achieved (a group interview with five young female instrumentalists, 7 February 2021).

The biggest part of this background work includes the creative process, but also encompasses practicing and learning, communication with colleagues and co-creators, decision making, rehearsals, and organising.

> Organisation… That is one big word. This is all labour that is completely invisible and it may seem that it produces no results (interview with an experienced jazz musician, composer, and educator, 12 April 2021).

Many successful female musicians and those who can be perceived as leaders are not only musicians, but multipotentialists and multitaskers, and are very often their own managers—or at least they significantly participate in their own management and promotion duties. Their profile is close to one of self-employment and entrepreneurship, an ever favourite model category for cultural policies leaning towards neoliberalism in Europe (Santos Ortega, Muñoz Rodríguez, 2019). Nevertheless, considering the small markets in the Balkans and the specificities of its alternative music scenes that this current research is focused on, their profiles still do not resemble entrepreneurship in the full sense of the word.

The mobility of Serbian female musicians is dictated by the relatively scarce resources provided by the state, demands of an international music industry that often exotifies musicians from the Balkans, and requirement that female artists should juggle their professional and personal matters on their own. Moreover, they are told not complain publicly about these difficulties or depict their dual burden of unpaid domestic and highly challenging professional work as anything other than compatible and easy to 'combine.' It is indicative that within the local world music scene, musicians that travel the world are either young female instrumentalists who have not yet started a family or are mature artists that have, after many years of effort, entered the transnational networks. In this latter context, 'Balkanism' as an external and discursively ambiguous framing of Balkan societies and their cultures (Todorova, 1997), is taken and reproduced as a positive value.

Furthermore, young female artists often doubt their skills in managerial, organisational, and promotional work (Nikolić, 2020). In this sense, relevant topics are also their working conditions, low-income, and the insecurity and precarity of working in the performing arts, music, or creative industries in Balkan societies. For instance, Barada and Primorac (2014) outlined the over-presence of under-paid labour and self-exploitation among young women in the visual sector in Croatia stating, "although it is shown that unpaid, under-paid and self-exploitative labour is the only way of entering the labour market, young women [at the beginning of their career] still define it as a choice" (p. 160). In Croatia, 55% of female artists receive a monthly income lower than the Croatian average, and 83% receive insufficient income from their professional engagement for what they described as their realistic basic needs for living, while still using their own money to produce their work (Banić, Gojić, 2018, pp. 50–52).

According to our research participants, working in music differs from other, more common professions because of its image of being easy and fun[3], thereby devouring one's whole identity and everyday life with the non-standardised working hours and unhealthy lifestyle it often demands, exposure to the public, requests to be at the disposal of different

3 In turn, some interviewees had also been mistakenly treated as sexual workers and had received inappropriate proposals and comments. Hofman claims that the social position of female singers is determined by a professional history marked by "moral devaluation, by poor quality, and dishonest service work" (2015, p. 19).

stakeholders—including their fandom, while always being in a good mood—and finally, through a creative process with its own characteristics that is not easy to control or navigate (a group interview with five young female instrumentalists, 7 February 2021).

Our interviewees, whose musical activity was a hobby, sometimes shared a fear that their main passion and purpose would be contaminated should music become their full-time job. They understood labour and work as something that was less valuable than a hobby, passion, purpose, activism, or identity. Indeed, following Stokes, Hofman (2015) wrote exactly how "the value of affective technologies through musical exchange [is] more desirable when not paid and that it should not fall under the commodity [or in this case, job] logic" (p. 19). Young female musicians connect work and labour with the idea of significant effort, discomfort, and even humiliation and subordination, while to them, enjoying creative processes, rehearsals, performances, and collaboration as a part of their music activity represented independence, freedom, equality, and authenticity.

This is in line with Barada and Primorac's conclusion stating that "creative workers are in a constant conflict both with external and internal control mechanisms that limit their autonomy and that also contribute to self-exploitation" (2014, p. 160). Some of our younger research collaborators combined intense practice and performance schedules with teaching at music schools (often as a substitute teacher or in a temporary position), with the latter being their more stable source of income. Although there was often a clear preference towards making a living through music performance, their teaching positions in government-funded public schools had been subtly 'offered' to them as a safer and more viable middle-class alternative to the more insecure positions of performers, both in terms of salary and because of the vaguer working schedule of music.

According to some of our interviewees, performing music is too exhausting and inconvenient to become a profession or job for women who plan to have their own family. This attitude is often seen within the families of girls interested in becoming musicians, their educators, and mainstream journalists who, more often than not, confront successful female musicians with questions regarding their balance between their music career and family duties (Nikolić, 2016; Medina-Vicent, 2019). The participants who did plan to have children talked about 'balancing' between the often precarious and unstable gig economy and more stable jobs such as teaching positions in the public school system and hoping to find enough time for rehearsals and public performances 'during the weekends.' However, as noted by Barada and Primorac, "after a few years of this kind of intensive work, female creative workers feel the consequences in [terms of] their quality of life, which results in dissatisfaction with the career choice. The work-life balance becomes a central issue of the public professional project" (Barada, Primorac, 2014, p. 160). This is one of the reasons why some young female musicians do not choose music as their career choice but rather, maintain it as a hobby. Another reason is the sexism, both hostile and benevolent (Todorović, 2013), offline and online (Hanash Martinez, 2020), ever present in the music industry of this region (Nikolić, 2016; Nikolić, 2017).

Ljubičić (2014, p. 139) showed that "although the legal and institutional framework for the protection of (young) women from discrimination [in post-Yugoslav societies] exists, female victims of gender-based discrimination, discrimination based on pregnancy and maternity status, and women who are sexually harassed, do not sufficiently use the mechanisms of institutional protection". Banić and Gojić confirmed that over one third of female artists in the Croatian city of Rijeka were exposed to mobbing in work situations "while ethics commissions, professional associations, and trade unions failed to be efficient allies" (2018, p. 45). Most of the respondents in that research had experienced discrimination based on their gender or gender identification, such as "sexist remarks, insults, disparagement, segregation, being paid less than

their male counterparts, subordination to their male colleagues, exclusion from (collective) decision making, exposure to (public) criticism, and inability to get jobs" (pp. 58–59).

Recently, all musicians, and especially female musicians in Serbia experienced a significant crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of disruption to their income, plans, and collaboration arrangements, which all contributed to reducing their psychological, mental, and emotional states. Some of them shared with us details of tour agreements for 2020 that had failed and that "no one mentions anymore", invitations for top festivals that had to be postponed, work invested in managing and organising logistics over a year and a half that had gone to waste, and the depression that had arisen from these circumstances (interview with an experienced jazz musician, composer, and educator, 12 April 2021).

CONCLUSIONS

The questions of participation, accessibility, diversity, and inclusion are among the most important of contemporary cultural policy. Indeed, leadership has been a core issue in arts and cultural management discourses and theories for decades. Moreover, the working conditions of artists and wider society's understanding of artistic production as work concerns its practitioners on a daily basis and critically influences their life and existence. We wanted to examine how these three fields intertwine the topics of female leadership and labour in music, and what the responsibilities, reach, potential, and limitations of cultural policies are to intervene.

In a rights-based approach to cultural policies, attention should be paid to the rights of every person, of all genders, to access and participate in cultural life implemented through a spectrum of cultural policy instruments. Progress has been visible in areas such as physical accessibility, but European cultural policies are still struggling to develop mechanisms of active participation in policy design and evaluation that recognise obstacles preventing effective participation and which equally consider every disadvantaged group (Balta Portoles, Dragićević Šešić, 2017, p. 170). Of note, it is female artists who predominantly support cultural participation and empowerment of other marginalised groups such as migrants (Nikolić, 2019).

Our interviews with local female musicians showed that some of them believe in the responsibility, role, and impact of policies to increase even their own self-esteem, ambition, and mindset changes. As they see it, policies, systemic change, and encouragement by institutions and organisations in a top-to-bottom approach could gradually improve and compensate for the lack of self-efficacy they witness alongside other female musicians (a group interview with five young female instrumentalists, 7 February 2021).

Female musicians in Serbia rely mainly on their own, scarce resources: they work in precarious positions, surrounded by hostile and benevolent sexism, and with a poor understanding in their environment. To a significant extent, they are multipotentialists and multitaskers, but the size and structure of the music market within the indie culture and alternative scene this current article focused on, prevents them from becoming true entrepreneurs, primarily because of low income it entails.

Professional work in popular music is perceived as being unhealthy and incompatible with the traditional ideas of motherhood and family life, but at the same time it is seen as being enriching, a result of passion, and as giving a sense of purpose to life. Many crucial activities performed in the background in the build up to live performances remain invisible, are simplified by wider society and are mystified or concealed by more experienced female colleagues.

The basic models of female musical leadership may be intragroup, community, and mainstream public (as related to certain music scenes and spaces), or

intercultural. Some of the female musicians who participated in this work found themselves in leadership positions 'out of necessity,' as a strategy to overcome the barriers and exclusion caused by gender stereotypes, prejudice, misogyny, and patriarchy. Others engaged in collective, 'generous' and transformative leadership and served as role models to younger generations by organising special projects and programs to support future female music professionals, campaigning, and investing additional effort into developing a specific genre, community, scene, or society in general.

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Dr. Nenić is an ethnomusicologist and cultural studies scholar. Her research interests concern art and popular culture in the early 21st century, ideology and affective cultural practices, and gendered mechanisms of knowledge production. Her book *Gusle players and other female traditional instrumentalists in Serbia: identification by sound* (CLIO, Belgrade, 2019) received the *Anđelka Milić* award from the Section for Feminist Research and Critical Studies of Masculinity (SEFEM) for a scholarly work contributing to critical gender studies.

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Tatjana is a cultural manager, feminist, and activist behind a series of programmes supporting and advocating for gender equality in the cultural sector. Additionally, she is a researcher and PhD candidate whose PhD thesis is on gender and age equality within the cultural policy of Serbia. Her previous book *The Gender Relations in the Alternative Music Scene of Serbia and the Region* was published in 2016.

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Shatter silence, raise hell, and run riot: music and gender in Spain, 2018–2021[1]

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ABSTRACT
Gender issues in relation to contemporary music and within the artistic scene are a research topic of growing interest. This study focuses on the strategies adopted by women to resist gender inequalities in the music industry in the light of both cultural policies that continue to discriminate against them as well as the conditions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The data considered here were drawn from 40 radio interviews broadcast during the 2018–2019 season on the *Radio Nacional de España, Radio 4*; a second round of interviews was conducted in the spring of 2021 in the post-COVID-19 context, either by mail or phone. The interviews were organised into three analytical categories designed to provide details on subjects such as profession, prestige, and recognition of women's musical creations or productions, and how their representation was portrayed by the media and/or public. The results provided some findings relevant to the opportunities and careers women could access. Although the arts and culture are often viewed as 'women's worlds,' many sectors are permeated by cumulative disadvantages including gender stereotypes, difficulties in reconciling work and family life, objectification, and sexual harassment. The findings obtained in this current work are in line with these women's own responses, such as the following *"The more I fight, the more I feel alive!", "What if women had the power?", and "No more twenty feet from stardom"*.

Keywords: gender, inequalities, music and artistic production, Spain; COVID-19

SUMMARY

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CONDEMNED BY HISTORY

This article focuses on gender inequalities in the contemporary music industry in Spain, a country marked by strong gender inequalities and by patriarchal domination in its different social institutions including in schools, the labour market, family, and religion, among others (León, 2011). By the end of the 1970s and at the beginning of the 1980s, a process of modernisation (Bronsoms, 2007) had started with the fall of Franco's dictatorial regime (Guerra and Ripollès, 2021), which meant that artistic and cultural productions began to gain popularity among youth cultures (Guerra, 2020a). Nevertheless, ever since the beginning of this process of modernisation in Spain, gender inequalities have not only persisted but have become increasingly evident. They worsened even further with the post-2008 financial crisis (Alcañiz et al., 2015) and, more recently, with the COVID-19 pandemic (Guerra et al., 2021; Howard et. al, 2021).

Gender inequalities have been widely addressed from different perspectives in academic fields (Frith and McRobbie, 1979; McRobbie, 1991) encompassing the sociology of work, music studies, and gender studies. More recently, authors such as Sarah Raine and Catherine Strong (2019) in Australia, Paula Guerra (Guerra et al., 2018) in Portugal, Pauwke Berkers and Julian Schaap (2018) in the Netherlands, and Angela McRobbie (1991) in the United Kingdom have focused on topics such as the reproduction of gender inequalities in and through music or even in music as a form of resistance and existence — that is, as a way to denounce structural gender inequalities (Guerra, 2020b, 2021). Thus, the present research focused on understanding the persistence of discrimination practices, economic inequalities, and reduced career and leadership opportunities for female professionals in the Spanish music industry. This article was based on the content analysis of data from 40 semi-structured interviews with women in the music industry (Bardin, 2010).

HOW WOMEN CONTINUE TO FEEL GENDER INEQUALITIES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Sam de Boise's (2017) research focused on gender inequalities in music scenes and the music industry in Sweden, a country prominent for its gender equality policies and preservation and encouragement of artistic and cultural productions. However, based on our case study (George and Bennett, 2005), it must be underlined that the political situation is Spain is different to Sweden because the former has a weaker economy and lacks political and social awareness of gender inequalities (de Boise, 2017). This, in turn, materialises as the gender disparity in opportunities, with women having unstable and more precarious artistic careers, earning lower salaries, and facing difficulties in rising to positions of power and leadership compared to men.

We intend to highlight and address these key points in the context of our analysis of the discourse of our interviewees. However, before we go any further, as pointed out by Reddy et al. (2020), there are many diverse interpretations of the word 'inequality' (Atkinson, 2015; Tilly, 1998). Indeed, it is a complex, multifaceted concept that occurs in different local, regional, and global contexts (Christiansen and Jensen, 2019). However, in Spain this concept of 'inequality' or 'gender inequalities' is inherent to a social and historical system of stratification grounded in key elements such as musical production/creation, careers, and representations. These elements form our analytical axes in this work, never forgetting that their manifestations vary according to local and regional historical contexts and the political and economic systems of each country (Córdoba and Ortiz, 2021).

Raine and Strong (2019) claim that since 2010, an unprecedented amount of attention has been directed towards gender issues within the music industry. Historically, studies such as those conducted by the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in the 1970s and 1980s, in which women were framed in secondary roles (as girlfriends, groupies, or sexual conquests), are almost endemic to the music industry. The criticisms directed toward the CCCS (McRobbie and Garber, 1997) triggered a desire to 'find' hidden women and thus, end their invisibility, which itself implied a rethinking of a set of concepts and methodologies (Guerra et al., 2018). However, these criticisms were made in relation to Anglo-Saxon countries, necessarily leaving out Southern European countries such as Spain and Portugal. A paradigmatic example is the research of Sarah Thornton (1995), which focused on the peripheral roles that were reserved for women, thereby preventing them from rising in the subcultural hierarchy. From an even more recent perspective, and close to the reality of the do-it-yourself (DIY) ethos from the punk subculture, Griffin (2012) noted that although only a few bands include women, there is also another relevant factor: men monopolise the organisation of concerts. These positions determine a type of discourse that is established in these scenes, leading these women to 'disappear' when the past becomes history (Strong, 2011). Nonetheless, we are still facing Anglo-centric realities.

From the viewpoint of the historical evolution of the music industry, Bennett and Guerra (2019) mentioned that women are unable to control the language and symbols used to reproduce power structures. Since the early days of the production and dissemination of music, sexist attitudes, the frequent absence of women in these spaces, in the media, on posters and on billboards, and denial of the use of technologies (Clawson, 1999) have all led to their current invisibility within the music industry. Focusing on the Spanish case, some reports have noted that women earn lower amounts in royalties and are less frequently aired on radio (Martinez, 2021). In fact, in Spain, the first study on gender inequalities and the roles played by women in the Spanish music industry was conducted by the Asociación de *Mujeres de la Industria de la Música* (Women in the Music Industry Association or *Asociación MIM*). In fact, we already mentioned a 2020 study that showed

that women in this industry have lower salaries (at around 70% of the national average),[2] a higher percentage of temporary unemployment, with only 27.09% holding leadership positions (Skillset, 2010), even though, paradoxically, they have higher educational qualifications than many of their male peers. Additionally, their study revealed that 79% of women had been working for 15 years or less within the music industry which they claim indicates "that, in general terms, and as also occurred historically in the labour world, women have entered [the industry] late" (*Asociación MIM*, 2020, p. 28). These inequalities also extend to the television and film industry.

As we can see from this report, the gender inequalities at the heart of the cultural industry in Spain have been little explored. In the academic, political, social and cultural contexts, some perspectives that have been emphasised are post-feminist approaches (McRobbie, 2009), focused on the relationship between women artists and the media. At the same time, some studies have highlighted the learning of instruments by women as a way to face the inequalities of the industry, given that women tend to be relegated to genres such as pop and in the role of vocalists (Bayton, 1998; Guerra et al., 2021; Wych, 2012). Either way, these contributions show that gender is a social construction that is successively created and recreated through multiple social interactions that mark everyday life (West and Zimmerman, 1987). In terms of gender inequalities, there are several forms of 'doing gender' (Dashper and Finkel, 2020) and in this context, women are assessed by their femininity and performance capacity and not so much by their musical abilities.

MEANINGS AND METHODS

Here we started from a case study (George and Bennett, 2005) based on women in the Spanish music industry. In this sense, our main objective was to understand how women remain sexualised and stigmatised and how these aspects vary according to their age (Bronsoms, 2021). Based on this assumption, and with the intention of engaging in a multidimensional analysis, we used the contributions of Ragin (2008) and adopted a qualitative approach based on 40 semi-structured interviews featured on the weekly section *Where are women in music?*[3] broadcast live on Catalan public radio, *Radio 4*, between September 2018 and June 2019, with each section lasting 25 minutes. The interviews had a temporal dimension and were organised with a longitudinal perspective and were simplified with axes such as personal context, visibility, and obstacles encountered (such as sexism and reconciliation of family life).

The bulk of the 40 interviews[4] were with writers, photographers, journalists, cultural managers, directors, and programmers, excluding non-active professionals and genres such as opera. The same logic was adopted for the triage of music-making artists (Howard et al., 2021), by sorting the wide range of roles into musical genres (jazz, pop, soul, flamenco, fusion, punk, rap, rock'n'roll, and rhythm and blues [R&B]) and sub-genres (singers, trumpet players, bass players, guitar players, drummers, composers, violinists, DJs, and pianists). The ages of the participants ranged between 26 and 58 years and the sample covered different sexual orientations, ethnicities, social origins, and the rural/urban milieux. Finally, all the women were residents of and were professionally active in Spain and were recruited either by directly contacting them using a snowball sampling technique or by *Radio*

2 In 2017, the average annual Spanish salary was €26,391.84 while these women had an annual salary of €20,607.85 (*Asociación de Mujeres de la Industria de la Música*, 2020, p. 24).

3 Interviews can be accessed at *Radio Nacional de España, Radio 4* (RNE). Section conducted by A. Bronsoms '¿On son les dones en la música?' At the daily magazine *Amics i coneguts*. Season 2018–2019.

4 These interviews were originally conducted for a chapter in a doctoral thesis on the subject of gender exclusion in the 1980s to show how this discrimination has been perpetuated until the present day.

4 (RNE). The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the precariousness and reduced the opportunities available to this collective (Fisher and Ryan, 2021) and so the interviewees were contacted again by phone or email in April 2021, when we centred our questions on their viewpoints on their working conditions and future, with the authors transcribing these conversations verbatim.[5]

BEING A WOMAN IN A MAN'S WORLD AND SHE SAID 'BOOM'[6]

According to Ridgeway and Correll (2004), gender is marked by a system of several levels and, in turn, by numerous inequalities such as those based on ethnicity and race, all of which subsequently translate into employment opportunities. We should also bear in mind that gender is much more than a mere attribute; it involves cultural aspects, social interactions, and identities. As previously mentioned, the COVID-19 pandemic brought structural inequalities to the fore, exposing a set of situations that could no longer be ignored by governments. Fisher and Ryan (2021) stated that, globally, women and people belonging to minority gender groups earn less, save less, hold less-secure and less-stable jobs, and are found in greater numbers in informal work sectors. The arrival of the pandemic made these social groups an easy target in terms of economic, social, and health vulnerabilities. The authors further state that economic downturns can be thought of as 'he-cessions' and recoveries as 'she-coveries' (Fisher and Ryan, 2021, p. 238), because women are seen as the key players in the recovery of industries—that is, as the most resilient workers (Alini, 2020). This situation can easily be associated with the music industry given that, despite the forms of exclusion and segregation with which women have been targeted, historically, these same women continue to play a leading role in the industry. In fact, according to the *Asociación MIM* (2020), half the women in the sector are self-employed and work on a freelance basis, which reveals a search for alternative ways out, as well as a certain relevant entrepreneurial capacity.

In this sense, one of our interviewees, Tori Sparks, a 38-year-old flamenco fusion guitarist and producer said that the problems of gender parity and the situation of women in the world of music and culture in general had already existed before COVID-19:

> So, it is like a disease of the system, that society thinks that women should automatically take on the unpaid work of taking care of the house and the family […] as a musician, when I have been on radio interviews, how many times have I been asked what I would do if I had children and what I would do if I got married one day? They never ask a man about those kinds of things, because no one assumes that having a child means that a man cannot continue his career.

Sparks' opinion is shared by music journalist Anabel Vélez (aged 46 years), who stated that, "Women are constantly vindicating and demonstrating, something that does not happen to men." Indeed, both Tori and Anabel's discourses highlighted this epistemic resistance faced by women in the music industry. Drawing on the contributions of Catherine Strong and Fabian Cannizo (2019), women in the music industry—especially at the career level—face a number of constraints experienced from the perspective of their participation in informal and formal networks and reconciling their personal lives with work schedules. Music remains one of the

5 The article fully complied with the guidelines included in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000/C364/01), especially with regard to Article 8 'Protection of Personal Data', including any information, private or professional, concerning an identified or identifiable natural person (Article 2(a) of EU Directive 95/46/EC). The guidelines contained in the General Data Protection Regulation No. 2016/679 have also been respected. The collection, processing, management and exploitation of data is similarly based on the guidelines provided by the Codes of Ethics of the International Sociological Association and the American Anthropological Association. The real names of the interviewees were used because their express consent was obtained.

6 Short excerpt taken from the song "She said 'Boom"' by the band *The Fifth Column,* 1990.

most interesting areas to pursue a career, especially for young musicians, despite its precariousness (Everts and Haynes, 2021). Not only do industry and economic factors play a fundamental role, but so do the media—namely newspapers, specialised magazines, blogs, and of course, social networks—as a current source of artistic promotion.

At the same time, and as we have already mentioned, some musical genres are the target of greater inequalities to the detriment of others. Examples of this are heavy metal (Berkers and Schaap, 2018), folk, and jazz. For instance, the number of women studying jazz is high, but the number playing it professionally is low. This lack of access to spaces and festivals, means of communication, and dissemination is related mainly to the deficiency of power logics. Although there is a certain amount of conditioning in the attainment of positions of power, management, and artistic programming by women, it is also assumed to be extremely difficult to break away from this imposition because of the shortage of reference models. As the president of *Mujeres en la Industria Musical*, Carmen Zapata, a 58-year-old cultural manager and programmer, clarified,

> I guess that if the reference are female programmers, cultural managers or women working in the music industry, one of the things I see—in my immediate environment—is that women in my age group [between 50 and 60 years] are changing; they are reinventing themselves because they see that this industry will not have a place for them after COVID.

As Michele Paule and Hannah Yelin (2021) state, there is still a gender imbalance in the field of decision-making. The prevalence of this discourse can be understood within a discursive positioning, largely influenced by the media. Nonetheless, a series of high-profile projects such as Sheryl Sandberg's Ban Bossy (2014) in the United States and Edwina Dunn's (2017) *The Female Lead* in the United Kingdom mobilise role models—including celebrities and women from professional fields—in popular campaigns that aim to stimulate girls' leadership ambitions. However, the same does not happen in Spain. The very concept of leadership (Campo, 2020) is also deeply unequal and segregating in the sense that traditional individualistic, authoritarian, and masculine connotations are often imposed upon women (Molero, 2009). For them to reach these levels of leadership, they eventually have to produce visions of role models that, in turn, tend to be simplistic and reductionist. Even in the exercise of leadership positions, parameters and limits are still established for female success (McRobbie, 2013), an aspect that was further aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

There is a social weight—which is especially marked within leadership positions in the arts and culture industry—that women should invest in their academic and professional training on a permanent basis. In this sense, the opportunities offered to men with only a bachelor's degree are not equal to those offered to women with a master's or a doctorate degree. During her interview, Clara Peya, a 35-year-old prolific and transgressive pianist, claimed that the only way to counteract inequality is through the empowerment of women and she criticised and counteracted the patriarchal system guiding artistic careers (Green, 2001; Ramos, 2003). In fact, Clara even mentioned the importance of a quota system so that women can claim a space without having to adopt behavioural standards.

> The music business, as a world, is already something perverse. I think the artistic world should be more evolved than [it currently is]—inhabited by men, made by men, white men. Where are the people of different races? I am in favour of quotas. I speak of opportunities, of women who do not have opportunities.

However, now focusing on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, we still do not know how this fight for gender equality in the music sector will be affected. Academic studies state that the pandemic has demonstrated the precariousness and insecurity of careers, in other words, it has exacerbated these trends. The views of our interviewee Fawda Trabelsi a 53-year-old cultural programmer, on

the pandemic demonstrated the irregularity and temporality of the working conditions that already existed in artistic and cultural activities. While artists (singers or instrumentalists) could resort to the digital universe as a tool to divulge their previous work, sound technicians, roadies, managers, and producers did not have the same possibilities. Which brings us to the initial point that, even in gender as a category, there are inequalities.

> We made a lot of effort to program events, when we were allowed to, so that some artists could perform and receive economic benefits, minimising the importance of my part—that is to say, not charging at all. But when I think about it, I feel unhappy and very sad, and ask myself, 'who would do something like this for me?'

Fawda tells us that, due to the pandemic, most jobs were cancelled without financial compensation.

> My situation was even more affected due to job insecurity—without a contract, without being registered as self-employed. Consequently, this lack of regularisation (involuntary) does not allow me to access any type of regional or state aid. I just don't exist.

The same view was expressed by Myriam Swanson, a 40-year-old singer, composer, producer, and performer who highlighted that the precariousness of careers in the music industry comes, to some extent, from the privatisation of the music world. Being a woman and gaining access to jobs in the music world is very difficult (Muñoz, 2018). This further complicates the precariousness because there is obviously no reconciliation with family needs. The more precarious the field of music is, the more the inequalities multiply. Moreover, according to Myriam,

> The privatisation model imposed by the town councils is not the most correct one because they do all the culture programming outdoors and there are no other initiatives in other spaces. Another factor contributing to precariousness lies in the fact that in Barcelona there are only four universities for the study of music, which is vastly disproportionate to the number of professionals dedicated to music. Added to this, the difficulty in making a living from live performances, because it is extremely difficult to be featured on a festival showbill and rely solely on performances in bars, further contributes to this precariousness. There is then, subliminally, a constant need for readaptation and reinvention.

Through the excerpts presented in this section, we can obtain a glimpse of the ways in which women frame their music activities: in a precarious context that often forces them to adopt a praxis such as DIY or entrepreneurship (Bennett and Guerra, 2019). The closure of venues because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the more recent reduction of audiences at shows, along with the scarcity of support and resources, makes the careers of these female musicians appear even more uncertain.

THE MORE I FIGHT, THE MORE I FEEL ALIVE![7]

Following on from the previous section, here we propose an approach to the discourses of our interviewees with a special focus on the recognition they feel—or do not feel—regarding their artistic production. It is perhaps at this point that the media take on a major role since, to a certain extent, they are responsible for the invisibility of women. Cathy Claret, a 58-year-old pop, bass and flute player, and producer also tells us that, as a woman, she always has to work twice as hard because her fee is always lower than that of a man in the same position.

> I feel like my talent is wasted. The press doesn't want to know anything about me. The institutions don't want me. How come the Japanese adore me, and over here—where I live—they don't? I don't know if it's machismo, a lack of interest, but the more I fight, the more I feel alive.

7 Expression transposed from the narrative of our interviewee Cathy Claret.

For Marie Buscatto (2018), although the formal and informal barriers of the 'art worlds' (Becker, 1982) have been diluted, access to work in the arts still remains an arduous task for women. In other words, recognition of artistic work by women at the core of the contemporary art world is still a challenge, not only because of the pertaining gender issues, but also because of the musical genres that are adopted, in the sense that women tend to be over-represented in the media for musical genres considered feminine, such as pop. Since there is an association between musical genres and gender, it is immediately obvious that the same will happen with instruments. This devaluation was previously mentioned by Cathy Claret, who maintained that her talent was wasted, and is in line with several academic studies that have essentially focused on this point. In Claret's case, she is recognised for her mix between flamenco and French music, but the same is also true for other styles such as electronic music or hip hop (Faure, 2004; Reitsamer, 2011).

On this point, Guerra et al. (2018) suggested that some musical genres, such as rock, tend to reflect a restricted social position of women and, even though they have already conquered a space for action—albeit a localised one—most women artists participate in traditional and stereotypical images. An example is Lady Gaga's 2009 interview,[8] in which she talks about the double standards for men and women artists. Following the affirmation of the existence of this double standard of representativity in the media and in industry, which clearly distinguishes men and women, we drew a parallel with the previous section, focusing on modes of resistance. One of the main movements to revolt against this lack of recognition of female artists was the riot grrrl movement, associated with the punk movement, which proposed a different way of conceptualising female voices. As discussed by Guerra et al. (2020, p. 21), this was related to alternatives to the 'conventional norms of femininity'. More recently, the riot grrrl movement has generalised to various artistic practices, such as 'netactivism' or 'artivism' (Guerra et al., 2020b), as well as to other musical genres such as funk. Activist and punk feminist Maritxu Alonso (31 years old) remarked that her main concern was to make women confer visibility to other women so that the latent invisibility of female discourses and productions could be counteracted.

> The main thing is to refute this ignorance in the speeches in which the existence of women was denied in the scenes of the 80s and 90s and how in the books there is no interest in portraying their stories. I spent my adolescence in a small, isolated area of Cantabria. Punk, with its political message and creativity, penetrated me and came to me through tapes. Punk is a way to be yourself and find your space in the world. It is a form of expression that overflows. Punk is still a space from which you can say what you think, criticise the system, criticise yourself, and change the world.

Women in music continue to have supporting roles. Alonso even states that the existence of countless women who think about music, who write and produce it but do not step on stage, even in punk—a bastion against the system which has declared itself anti-machismo as a genre—has continued to perpetuate these stereotypes. An especially important step is to make visible the women who, at a historic stage, pioneered and changed these roles. For example, in the Spanish case, we can highlight Begoña Astarriága, the bassist of the band Vulpes, a Basque punk group that made a difference by, among other things, being the target of an indictment by the Spanish Public Ministry in 1983, after a performance on a TV show.

Regarding the role of the media in diminishing and perpetuating these gender inequalities in the music industry, from early on, the media has been seen as a provocative place in relation to political, economic, and cultural power. However, this logic of contestation has not been recurrent in Spanish society—on the contrary, it has contributed to an

8 Lady Gaga's interview excerpt. 'Double standards and feminism.' Retrieved from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=habpdmFST0o

under-representation of women artists and their work, resulting in the persistence of gender stereotypes, many of them rooted in the ideas of an oppressive political regime. When we talk about stereotypes, we do not just refer to physical characteristics, but also to other elements, such as artistic abilities (Buscatto, 2018). Women who perform outside the universe of pop have numerous difficulties in being dubbed 'universal' artists, 'references,' or 'world renowned.' Indeed, the successive and systematic hearing of these representations can make these artists the first people to devalue their own work (Buscatto, 2007). The labelling made and attributed to the work of the women we interviewed is in fact in line with the previous section, in the sense that it limits professional opportunities and progress within their artistic careers, as we can see in the case of Susana Sheiman, a 48-year-old composer and jazz singer.

> In my case, I am classified to sing a specific style because of my age, I no longer have access to modern music. Masculinity in jazz is a norm. I just saw the documentary *Twenty Feet from Stardom* which shows women in the role of showgirls in these bands. The film shows a woman who recorded a song and is not credited for her work.

Still on the invisibility of women in the media, Andrea Motis, a 26-year-old trumpet and jazz singer provided a clear picture of the jazz scene in which women account for only 13% of performers.

> Invisibility? There are many women who study jazz but there are very few playing. Festival headliners reflect this despite how numerous they are in schools.

It is important to note that the media play a key role in disseminating content that categorises women artists according to their aesthetic image and their bodies. The deep stigmatisation and pressure to which women (and their bodies) are subjected is in line with the data referred to in the *Asociación MIM* (2020) report, since they reveal that women can only position themselves within the music industry for an average period of 15 years, after which most are considered too old and aesthetically unappealing in the eyes of the industry and of male audiences. In fact, Tim Wray (2003) states that artistic products, for the most part, fit into the logic of pleasing heterosexual men. Indeed, Susan Sheiman highlighted that in the specific case of jazz,

> For women, the subject of image is terrible [and creates] unfair pressure. For men, on the contrary, is not even questioned. Instead, women with extraordinary voices end up dedicating themselves to dubbing or advertising because their physical appearance does not match the norm.

This excerpt from Susana Sheiman is interlinked with the opinion of another interviewee, Tesa, a 39-year-old rap singer, in the sense that she argues that all population segments—including, for instance, rural women—should be featured. In other words, Tesa views herself as an artist who aims, through her artistic expression, to promote protest messages. For example, we can highlight her song *Dones* from 2018, created in partnership with other female artists (Andrae, JazzWoman, and Eryfukksia) who were all guided by the same ideologies. In this sense, Tesa stated the following:

> I believe in equality; I like people and I have always expressed this with a message of protest. I like to give visibility to rural people, to demystify [the idea] that people from small villages are illiterate. On the subject of country women, I have to vindicate them as brave and as fighters. All over the world we see examples of a sorority of women united against adversity and making a living. We must not underestimate this culture. I am very proud of my status as a woman from a rural area. Referents? I surround myself with many women and collaborate with them and I'm very lucky. I claim women's place on stage. What would happen if women had the power? Everything would be better.

Despite the existence of these negative views regarding women's visibility (or lack of it) in the artistic environment, there are few studies that show us how these women are discriminated against. If we previously spoke about the difficulty of access to leadership

positions by women in the music industry, *Músiques Sensibles Festival*[9] director Cristina Torres, a 47-year-old manager, producer, director, and coordinator of concerts, festivals, and events, confirmed this and told us a little about her personal experience.

> The Músiques Sensibles Festival [which she organises] is organically equal with the programming, 50% represented by women on the bill. As a woman, surely, I have suffered gender discrimination. The typical questions are: where is your boss? Have you done this all alone? I was not aware of the prejudices; they were a kind of weird situations [where you] either start laughing or [they] make you cry. I speak of prejudices also among young people.

Moreover, other interviewees also mentioned that the pandemic could potentially be a propitious moment for the cultural sector to change, in the sense that there would be a change in assumptions, motivated partly by the growing presence of women in social networks. Georgia Taglietti, a 56-year-old communication and digital director at Sonar Festival,[10] remarked the following,

> The COVID-19 pandemic has meant an important labour paradigm shift for the world of culture. A before and after that raises important questions about the intangible. We need to reflect about the cultural assets as an intrinsic feeling that must be protected, in addition to an economic sector. Job prospects are what will determine sanitary conditions. The future depends on each one of us, on how we want to rebuild, remodel, project, and evolve.

In the case of Georgia, it should be noted that she fits one of the profiles outlined by the *Asociación MIM* (2020) report, because she occupies a position of direction and management of a major event—the Sonar Festival. In fact, most of our interviewees belonged to the upper-middle class. We are talking about women who have had music lessons and access to a specialised education. In fact, these conditions, which have guided the careers of our interviewees, also denote unequal issues, because if we were talking about women artists from other backgrounds, we would probably be facing other perspectives and other difficulties.

The media, along with social networks, are currently regarded as the gatekeepers of the contemporary artistic and cultural scenes and as decisive in ensuring the success, or otherwise, of an artist. However, social media have also become a space for masculinity in the sense that they have adopted gendered language that builds narratives and ideals about women artists. The fact that women artists themselves lead their careers and make artistic decisions—a policy that is encouraged and preserved in Sweden, for example—is viewed as strange in Spain. In this sense, Gigi McFarlane, a 33-year-old soul singer, guitarist, and songwriter acknowledged that the road had not been easy for her, particularly regarding gender discrimination; however, she said, "Being a woman has made things easier for me." A male artist in the same situation is seen as an innovative, capable artist and an example to follow. When we refer to a woman, she is labelled as incapable. Those are unfortunate examples that we acknowledge exist in countries with weaker economies and the absence of social awareness of gender equality. Within the scope of our interviews, one reference was constant: the fact that enormous importance is given to the work and support of other women—finding hidden women and ending their invisibility.

Thus, *Wom's Collective*[11] (five women pop–soul composers aged 25–35 years) was created by Judit Neddermann, a 30-year-old singer and composer, to emphasise the power of women.

9 This is a festival that combines culture and music with social responsibility and citizenship as well as innovation. It aims to put culture and music at the service of society because they are seen as elements that promote development. More information can be found at: http://www.musiquessensibles.com/el-cicle.

10 A festival of music, creativity, and technology. It is one of the largest Spanish electronic music festivals and will arrive in Portugal in 2022. More information can be found at: https://blitz.pt/principal/update/2021-05-28-Festival-Sonar-vem-para-Portugal-f177fc90

11 A women's collective created for women aiming to fight for women's rights within the music industry.

> We are able to talk about women from different backgrounds such as the song about the new mother, or the woman who is empowered by other women and the song about the friendship between two women.

The designers and photographers for Judit Neddermann's album, as well as her manager, were women who believe that the music industry, in its traditional form, is obsolete, and that there is a pressing need for it to update and reinvent itself—perhaps driven by the pandemic—by going digital. Simultaneously, the productions of these women can also be seen as forms of resistance (Guerra, 2020b, 2021), mainly through the use or reappropriation of certain musical genres that are deeply male chauvinist, as previously mentioned. This is the case of the women's collective *Las Migas*, whose goal is female empowerment through flamenco. As its singer, Marta Robles, aged 45 years, said

> We are aware that we empower women with this flamenco fusion but at the same time we cannot ignore that the world of flamenco is still very macho, even if as music it is passionate. In any case, people like to see two female guitarists on stage: singer and violin. It is true that we are also very active on social networks and manage ourselves. Regarding sexism, I think we are handling it very well. Media has a lot of respect for what we do, and it is highly valued that we are women and are our own bosses—no man directs us. I continue to see a much more masculine than feminine presence in everything, not only in music, but in all places—let's say sports, music, or theatre. In other words, that's what I see as a spectator, and it never ceases to amaze me.

Regarding the issue of musical gender, the position that women and men occupy within a band or in a group for a given musical genre is also evidence of gender inequalities (Berkers and Schaap, 2018). This is all the more evident when we focus on musical genres such as flamenco, where women tend to be represented as submissive. We perceive that the majority of our interviewees were influenced by flamenco, a traditional and deeply masculinised Spanish genre, and artists such as Mariola Membrives, a 43-year-old singer, actress, and songwriter, give it a new twist by talking about gender equality, feminism, and social change.

> Flamenco—and in general everything—lacks themes of inclusion. There are women who are undisputed creators of flamenco, pillars, but it is true that socially there is a lack of awareness of those who consider themselves feminist and make it difficult for us. For example, when a woman gives her opinion in a group of men, they seem to not listen and realise that those little details are necessary.

Rusó Sala, a 39-year-old Mediterranean author and songwriter, whose concept of song writing has Mediterranean, Sephardic, Andalusian, and South American roots, declared,

> I work on a variety of projects such as, for example, one about motherhood, combining poetry with details for images, always with my commitment to women and making them visible.

NO MORE TWENTY FEET FROM STARDOM:[12] FINAL REMARKS

In Spain, a country marked by the presence of a dictatorship (Guerra, 2020a), it is possible to identify a historical component, but also one of ethnicity and race, related to the social construction of gender inequalities that today are so visible in various sectors of activity. Despite being historical and social conditions, gender inequalities have received increasing attention not only in academic fields, but also in the political, economic, and cultural fields. In several countries, such as Sweden, we see that societies have moved towards a logic of equality, but in Spain there is still a long way to go. It has become evident through this research that women still remain invisible in many fields of the music industry.

12 Expression used by Susana Sheiman, one of our interviewees, in the course of the fieldwork and which conveys a strong meaning.

As we have seen, official data clearly enunciates the main axes where gender inequalities are felt. This is shown not only by these statistical studies, but by academic works such as those by Berkers and Schaap (2018) and Raine and Strong (2019). Drawing on the discourses of our interviewees, it was possible to conclude that women in the music industry earn lower salaries compared with men, save less, have less-secure and less-stable jobs, and are found in greater numbers in informal work sectors. In addition, they tend to have shorter careers than men because of the media and social constraints imposed upon them for reasons related to their aesthetics. In addition, they also have more difficulties reaching leadership positions, despite being better educated than men. At the same time, it is interesting to note that two of the interviewees whose discourses we present in this article assumed positions of leadership (at the *Asociación MIM* and the Sonar Festival) and that, despite this, they recognise this inequality, as well as the limitations placed upon women.

Although these issues have been unravelled by the COVID-19 pandemic, it became possible to prove, once again, that despite all these obstacles and constraints, these women artists continue to find ways to resist (Fisher and Ryan, 2021), whether through freelance work or through multidisciplinarity, and thus not becoming dependent on the music industry to survive. Most of our interviewees mentioned that women had been reinventing themselves, precisely because they recognised that the industry, despite wanting them, did not have a place for them. The same applies to the case of the media, given that if we think of musical genres such as pop, the female figure assumes a prominent position, but most women artists, producers, programmers, and managers, among others, remain distant in the mainstream media—an aspect that, as the interviewees told us, largely contributes to their remaining invisible and marginal to an industry that increasingly seems to be male dominated.

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Gender inequalities in the music industry in Spain: A mixed methodology study

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ABSTRACT

In today's music industry, many female workers live experiences of injustice and inequality that, whether perceived or not, are caused by and simultaneously affect both the system of music production relationships and daily their lives. These experiences are already evident from the state of ignorance associated with the absence of databases and records of economic activities by disaggregated by sex in this industry. This article attempts to answer a question: how can we investigate the possible experiences of gender injustices and inequalities when there are no official records to shed light on the basic structures that order the relationships of production affecting daily life? This is even more true now that there is ample evidence of the historical inequality of women compared to men in most labour fields. Therefore, the mixed methodology we used here responds to the injustice and epistemic ignorance underlying the present structure of labour relations and family reconciliation. This approach allowed us to undertake an exploratory and descriptive analysis of the situation of women in the music industry from this initial premise. The aim of this work arose from the need to present and justify the use and procedures of a mixed qualitative and quantitative methodology as a necessary tool to research the situation of female workers in the music industry in Spain.

Keywords: epistemic injustice, gender inequality, music industry, methodologies

SUMMARY

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INTRODUCTION

This article stems from trying to answer a simple question: what is the situation of female workers in the music industry (MI) in Spain? Under the umbrella of the Asociación Mujeres de la Industria Musical (Association of Women of the Music Industry, or MIM) and the Carlos III University of Madrid, in 2019, we began to develop research that would answer this question. On the one hand, we suspect this situation will have now worsened following the global COVID-19 pandemic that affected every economic sector of society, especially those circumscribed around the cultural leisure industry. On the other hand, all social injustice correlates with what we can call epistemic injustice (Fricker, 2007; Medina, 2013), which encompasses ignorance and the inability to name and attribute meaning to experiences of inequality and injustice that are experienced, thus preventing recognition of the possible relationships of domination that are present (Young, [1990] 2000).

The main problem we were forced to face was the inexistence of official records and databases that could show us the structural context of women, distribution of their positions in the MI, salaries, and other sociological variables. In other words, there is a lack of information about them from sources that can describe the population structure. How can problems of inequality and injustice be recognised

when there are no sources to draw upon to understand the material and fundamental forms of the relationships of production and social reproduction?

Thus, lack of knowledge and ignorance became the main problem, forcing us to rethink this research, in both epistemological and methodological terms. Thus, we moved towards an exploratory and descriptive analysis of the world and population under investigation. We also performed a qualitative analysis of the experiences reported by female agents in the industry. The objective of this article was to present how we responded, through mixed-method techniques, to the discovery of this other question underlying the inequality relationships that affect women in the world of work. Starting from the initial hypothesis that women, as with other industries and the labour market in general, find themselves in a situation of inequality that is as historical as it is present. We believe that this makes them less likely to reach certain employment and socio-economic positions than men, even despite having better qualifications.

LIMITING THE QUESTION OF INEQUALITY

The situation of women within the different cultural industries has been the subject of debate for some time now, to the point of leading UNESCO, in 2019, to urge the United States to adopt a series of measures. On the one hand, methods to support the work and presence of women in all cultural industry activities related to the creation and production of cultural goods and services. Furthermore, for the development of a legal and legislative framework in accordance with the need for greater gender equality. On the other hand, appeals were made to develop monitoring systems to evaluate the levels of representation, participation, and access of women to the different sectors and structures of the cultural industry with the aim of ensuring that the "National and international laws on human rights and fundamental freedoms are implemented and promote gender equality and artistic freedom" (Unesco, 2019).

This institutional initiative, which could be broadly framed within policies of recognition and redistribution (Fraser, 1990), stems from the different studies that have been conducted in recent decades on the situation of injustice experienced by women in terms of their emancipation and individual development on an equal footing with men. Thus, we find research that tells us about the existence of the social phenomenon known as the 'glass ceiling.' This is a metaphorical term that appeared for the first time in 1986 in *The Wall Street Journal* and which describes the difficulties that qualified women encounter in advancing professionally in the same way as men (Sarrió et al., 2002; Cotter et al., 2001; Faniko et al., 2017). This is a statistical reality that, when plotted, shows the employment trajectories of men and women in any given sector and which takes the form of 'scissors.' Globally across all sectors, women outperform men in terms of training, but when they reach mid-career levels, men follow an upward trajectory, while women, at ages associated with childbearing, stagnate or nearly disappear from the graphic.

These differences in job promotion behaviours have also been called a 'leaky pipeline,' because some of these women move from full-time to part-time work or leave the labour market altogether for varying amounts of time, or even indefinitely (Jiménez and Fernández, 2016; Vázquez-Cupeiro, 2015; Clark Blickenstaff, 2005). The concept of the 'sticky floor' also appears because women who continue full-time do not change their job, and so they do not assume positions of greater responsibility and seem to renounce promotion strategies (Fernández et al., 2015; Gómez Escarda et al., 2016; Yap and Konrad, 2009). Finally, it is worth mentioning 'horizontal segregation' (Bezunartea-Valencia et al., 2014), as a practice whereby women are relegated to certain jobs because they are considered to be more apt or appropriate to perform a certain function due to their gender (Barberá et al., 2011; Ibáñez, 2017).

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In Spain, the fight against direct discrimination such as, for example, the dismissal or non-hiring of pregnant women, parity in paternity leave and equal pay, etc. is now a matter of public knowledge and is a reality in most public institutions as well as in private companies. However, despite this, as Torns et al. (2002) showed, there is still a long way to go to understand the existence of the phenomena of injustice and inequality referred to above. Even more so, if possible, in the cultural industries and MI in particular.

Within this cultural sector, today we can find important reference work such as the one presented by the European Expert Network on Culture and Audiovisual (EENCA) in 2019[1] . In their report, the EENCA compiled data from several previous studies that establish a clear picture of imbalance in the music sector at a global level. This study mentions pay gap statistics in the United Kingdom, whose government, by law, collects data from companies with more than 250 employees and which, in 2019, established that there was an average 29% pay gap across the three major record labels (Universal, Sony, and Warner)[2]. Likewise, UK Music, the representative body of the British MI, presented its quantitative report on the diversity of the workforce in the British MI. However, this work merely provided percentages of ethnicity and gender within the MI (UK Music, 2018).

Also in 2018, the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative published another paper on inclusivity in the recording studio. It looked at the gender and ethnicity of artists, songwriters, and producers on 600 songs from 2012 to 2017. The headline of the study in this regard was clear "women are missing in music industry creative roles" with 22.4% female artists, 12.3% female composers, and 2% female producers (Smith, Choueiti, and Pieper, 2018) working on the songs analysed. In 2015, the Women in Music Association of Canada, under the title A profile of Women Working in Ontario's Music Industry (Women in Music & Nordcity, 2015), presented a survey of men and women that helped present a profile of women working in the MI in the Ontario region, most of whom were engaged in marketing and promotion, event production, and management roles, with a significant under-representation in music production and business development roles. Regarding management positions, the survey showed that only 23% were held by women and in 48% of the companies surveyed women were not included in the executive positions.

In Spain, the debate on the issue of gender inequality in this area has increased in recent years, especially as the result of campaigns by women through different pressure groups and associations (Marinas 2019). At the level of civil society, the organisations

1 *Gender gaps in the Cultural and Creative Sectors (with the exception of the audio-visual sector)*. The European Expert Network On Culture and Audiovisual was established in 2015 as a consortium between the consultancy Panteia and the SMIT (Studies in Media, Innovation, and Technology) programme at the Vrije University of Brussels; it is funded by the European Commission.

2 Further details on these figures can be found in the following news item: https://www.musicbusinessworldwide.com/revealed-what-major-labels-are-paying-women-compared-to-men-in-the-uk/, (musicbussinessworldwide, 2019). In addition, the report generated by Warner Music on the wage gap: https://www.wmg.com/sites/g/files/g2000004716/f/201904/WARNER%20MUSIC%20UK_GPG_REPORT_2019.pdf can also be consulted (Warner Music Group, 2019).

that promoted this work were the MIM, Asociación Clásicas y Modernas (Classical and Modern Association), Asociación Mujeres en la Música (Women in Music Association), Asociación de Mujeres Creadoras de Música en España (Association of Women Music Creators in Spain), and the Fundación de la Sociedad General de Autores y Editores (Foundation of the General Society of Authors and Publishers, or SGAE Foundation). This was accompanied by research on the situation of women in symphony orchestras (Soler, 2017; Noya and Setuain, 2010), or the study Dónde están las mujeres en la música sinfónica? (Where are women in symphony music?) by the Classical and Modern Association (2019) and promoted by the same alongside the Women in Music Association, Association of Women Music Creators in Spain and SGAE Foundation. In addition, in 2010, the musicologist Pilar Ramos presented an interesting problematisation in her article *Luces y sombras en los estudios sobre las mujeres y la música* (Lights and shadows in studies of women and music; Ramos, 2010). Another study from 2017 by the Women and Music Collective examined the percentage of women artists at music festivals in Spain. It is also worth highlighting the debate on sexist attitudes in the media (Diagonalperiodico.net, 2013; Rockdelux.com, 2013), addressed by Rodríguez, G. S. (2008) and Gonem, F. R. (2012), among others. Or in the case of internet communication media, by Ureta, A. (2005).

THE UNDERLYING PROBLEMS AND A NEW EPISTEMOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE ISSUE

Despite the aforementioned work, little academic research in Spain has dealt with the situation of women in the MI in particular, with the majority of works of reference produced in the international sphere showing us the ongoing material structure of inequalities in the industry in question. While at the national level, we only find statistics such as those produced by the Ministry of Culture and Sport. Their Yearbook of Cultural Statistics (Spanish Ministry of Culture and Sport, 2019a) stated that in 2018, women occupied 45.5% of all cultural jobs. In turn, the Survey of Cultural Habits and Practices 2018/2019 (Spanish Ministry of Culture and Sport, 2019b) reported that 69.5% of women usually listened to music every day compared to 71.6% of men. Of note, the aforementioned surveys, Spanish National Classification of Economic Activities (CNAE), and organisations such as the National Statistics Institute (INE) offer data on what could be called the MI. In other words, its agents, their activities, management positions, and a record of their working conditions disaggregated by gender. However, this is, by no means, a qualitative perspective of the experience of inequality and its implications in daily life, in daily agency, or the expectations of these workers.

Thus, we observe that, in addition to the aforementioned phenomena of inequality and injustice that affect women, there is another underlying problem that has not yet been considered that also affects the academic research that is and could be conducted. In Spain, there is, first of all, a notable difficulty in recognising and understanding the material and objective situation of women in the MI, which stems from the way in which public and private institutions collect, organise, and record information on the socio-economic sector of the MI. Secondly, few studies have explored the qualitative aspects of experience, such as the knowledge, expectations, decisions, and imaginaries present in the everyday agency and life stories of women workers in the MI, as well as the structural situation of inequality in which they find themselves immersed. We hypothesise that this gives rise to a situation of epistemic and symbolic injustice (Fricker, 2007) in that it makes it difficult to recognise the objective forms of inequality and discrimination experienced in the MI.

To date, the measures proposed by UNESCO in 2019 have not been complied with in Spain. This framework reflects the sense of injustice and rejects the premise of political neutrality of any state. Indeed, this situation reproduces forms of epistemic

ignorance (Medina, 2013) about how historical social and cultural structures have harmed women's freedom and equality with respect to men in terms of recognition and redistribution (Fraser and Honneth, 2006; Hess and Ostrom, 2007). This has limited their access to the most relevant social positions and roles in society (Mackinon, 1987; Kymlicka, 1995).

Neither state nor civil society institutions have records of the gender distributions of the sociological variables of labour relations in the MI. This fact, in the first instance, seriously impairs our knowledge of and ability to recognise and intervene in historical and present gender inequality relations and possible reconciliation measures (Radcliffe Richards, 1980; Carrasco et al., 2003; Treas, 2008; Ajenjo and García, 2014; Moreno, 2015). In other words, these data are fundamental to understanding discrimination in the working world, given that to avoid the problems of epistemic and symbolic injustice towards women, we must be able to understand the cultural factors constructing the sexual division of labour inside and outside working hours. Without such records, uncovering the subjective experiences of the individuals, and even research participants themselves, is quite difficult.

Professional practices and discourses are not fixed but rather, change and transform, through social interactions, according to the time and place. Therefore, if recognition of care work comes into play in the reconciliation between personal and work life, in the MI we must explore the recognition of women as professionals capable of holding positions of authority as experts in their respective fields (Del Val et al., 2014). This is also the result of what the anthropologist Victoria Sau already pointed out, that "the signs of identity and culture are given by exclusively male categories, as if women woke up from a dream in each generation and found that, while they slept, men had done everything" (Sau, 1993. p. 13) while women had not.

All this shows us the crucial importance of understanding the social and epistemic structure of society in order to understand the narratives, categories, and experiences that are articulated. This is provided that not only a relationship of inequality is reproduced, but its main mechanism is also embedded in inherited ignorance or knowledge about what it means to be a woman—her capacities, and the possibilities of her agency—as well as what is ignored about these experiences of inequality. In this way, both knowledge and ignorance appear as the greatest resource for the exercise of domination, given that "ignorance and opacity act in collusion or competition with knowledge in activating currents of energy, desire, products, meanings, and people" (Sedgwick, 1998, p.14). Cultural patterns are those that set the guidelines for professional recognition (Sau, 1993; Bryson, 1996).

A mixed methodology as a response to the problematic lack of knowledge

Contextualising the issue, the main problem we encountered when investigating the situation of women working within the framework of the MI, was (and still is) the lack of a census in Spain on workers and specifically, those in the MI, as well as a clear definition of the structure of the latter. Thus, this is the basis of studies and research on the experiences of the injustices and inequalities, which also seem to be present in other industries. However, the previously mentioned works pay more attention to the sociological structure of the industry, while the data on music consumption by women as well as their presence in the MI quantitatively reflect a situation in which they occupy fewer managerial positions. These data also highlight the structural variables of social class, educational level, gender, origin, and age. While the latter are still crucial in the constitution of an egalitarian framework in the industry, they do not reflect the lived experience of female workers in the MI.

The challenge we faced was therefore twofold: first, to carry out an exploratory investigation and analysis of the structure of the industry and the range of people populating it. This was so that

our incursion into this world would be done with a minimum level of rigour. Second, we wanted to simultaneously compile and analyse testimonies about experiences within this structure. Therefore, developing a combined methodology between quantitative and qualitative techniques seemed to be the most optimal protocol, given our position and objectives, as well as the dense nature of the problems addressed (Mendizábal, 2018). A survey was required to address the underlying missing structural data, including in relation to the gender distribution of the sociological variables present in studies already published in regard to the main issues and phenomena of gender inequality. However, as addressed from the new theoretical framework, qualitative research was also essential to collect the testimonies and experiences lived and recognised within the MI structure we explored.

In addition, and as also argued by Greene (2008), in relation to the theoretical framework we presented, a mixed methodology (MM) was best able to combine the four domains that underpinned our method: philosophy, techniques, practical guidelines for research design, and socio-political commitments. Because of its flexibility and pragmatism—a constitutive foundation of its inherent methodological pluralism (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004)—MM allowed us to design a research framework appropriate to the question we were addressing. In turn, this allowed us to better capture and understand the different experiences and ways of seeing, hearing, and understanding the social world. Thus, the dialogue both between the different steps of the research (design, approach to the object, data collection, analysis, and combination of techniques) and the different voices that may be present in the research could be optimised (Mendizábal, 2018; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007)[3].

As stated by Mendizabal, MM is not a novelty today[4]. Since the paradigmatic work compiled by Tashakkori and Teddlie, (2003), in the wake of this methodology a multitude of recent research and investigation has followed. This guides the approach researchers trace when tackling a complex research object or phenomenon from a non-linear and eclectic perspective. We can summarise the steps and virtues of this method in the following points. First, it allows researchers to approach, collect, and measure the same phenomenon simultaneously and independently; this results in complementarity between methods, which allows not only the contrast of results but also for gaps, paradoxes, and even contradictions or unexplainable aspects of each approach to be covered. Thus, each method allowed us to improve the design and further development of the technique as we proceeded. For example, an in-depth interview allowed us to improve the elaboration of a survey, and vice versa (Pole, 2009; Mendizábal, 2018). This not only broadened the scope and breadth of the research, but also expanded it, opening it up to a wider range of research and applications in the socio-political, economic, and historical contexts (Morse, 2003).

3 Continuing with Mendizábal (2018, p. 8), "the central premise is that the use of the qualitative and quantitative approach, in combination, provides a better understanding of the research problems, than a monomethod approach".

4 In this respect it is important to cite the pioneering work of Yin, R.K. (1984). *Case study research: Design and methods.* Beverly Hills, Ca. Sage. As well as that of Greene, J.C., Caracelli, V.J., and Graham, W.F. (1989). Toward a conceptual framework for mixed-method evaluation designs. *Educational evaluation and policy analysis , 11* (3), 255–274. In Spain we can also cite the pioneering works of Verd, J., and Lozares, C. (2016). Introducción a la investigación cualitativa: fases, métodos y técnicas. [Introduction to Qualitative Research: Phases, Methods, and Techniques.] Madrid, La Muralla. As well as by Verd, J.M.; Lopez Roldan, P. (2008). La ciencia teórica y metodológica de los diseños multimétodo [The Theoretical and Methodological Science of Multi-Method Designs], *Empiria, Revista de Metodología de Ciencias Sociales*, 16: 13–42; Bolibar, MM; Joel-Lozares, C. (2013). Aplicaciones de los métodos mixtos al análisis de las redes personales de la población inmigrada [Applications of mixed methods to the analysis of the personal networks of the immigrant population.] *Empiria, Revista de Metodología de Ciencias sociales* 26.

THE RESEARCH DESIGN

As we have explained, the initial difficulty to overcome was that our research participants were defined as a 'hidden population', or what we could call 'hard to reach' (Aldana and Quintero, 2008; Castro and Yañez, 2012; Baltar and Gorjup, 2012), meaning that drawing a sample of this group through simple random sampling techniques or any other probability sampling technique was difficult. Given this framework, the second problem was that it also seemed unfair to approach the exploration of the internal structure of the MI without also considering the understanding and agency of the individuals within it. We therefore had to gain objective knowledge of the experience and problems recognised by its agents, as well as the inequalities that the structure of production and reproduction relationships within the MI could offer us.

Objectification of the experience and structure had to be addressed in a combined way, so as not to fall into empiricist objectivism (Bourdieu et al., 2002) or risk the subjectivism already denounced by Mead (Carolina Agoff and Cristina Herrera, 2019). We therefore developed an initial framework of the structure of the MI based on data compiled by the MIM Association (from information provided by its partners) about some of the main associations in the sector[5]. The method consisted of identifying companies and workers through the MIM. In a second instance we contacted the companies and contacts obtained from this initial list, asking them in turn, for new contacts within the sector. Thanks to this, we were able to access more than 90 companies in Spain and 1,547 workers whose activity formed part of the MI. We also came into contact with self-employed, freelance, and other types of MI activities. Although the companies belonging to these associations and their workers did not represent the industry as a whole, they did provide an initial snapshot of the gender distribution of the work roles, which we used to identify the relationships set out in table 1:

Table 1 Data provided by Aie Organo Conjunto de Recaudación de Artistas y Productores C.B. (Aie Joint Organisation for the Collection of Artists and Producers, or AGEDI), AEDEM, APM, and ARTE and compiled by MIM (table elaborated by the authors).

	Women	Men	Total
Chair	96	163	259
Management	18	20	38
Operatives	642	608	1250
Total	756	791	1547

A broader view would use a snowball sampling technique to consider the music sector itself, as well as the status of its partners and contacts, to give us an idea of both the study population and that of the MI. Here we refer to activities involving the circulation of both recorded and live music. This includes the activities of companies, people, or institutions such as creators and artists, associations, companies related to legal representation, digital distributors or aggregators, music publishers, companies involved in marketing and promotion, representation and management, and live music or venues, as well as management entities, recording studios, music festivals, phonographic labels, and record shops or e-commerce. In addition, we must also consider activities not directly linked to the MI but with clear synergies with it such as educational institutions, television, film or advertising producers, video game producers, or the media.

These are all activities that, in general, were circumscribed in a distribution of hierarchical functional positions which revealed a prior gender inequality. While there is near gender parity of male and female employees in the MI (see the totals shown in table 1), there was still a male majority, with the gap also

5 The Asociación de Promotores Musicales (Association of Music Promoters, or APM), Asociación de Productores Musicales de España (Association of Music Producers of Spain, or PROMUSICAE), Asociación de Representantes Técnicos del Espectáculo (Association of Technical Perfoprmance Representatives, or ARTE), and Asociación Española de Editores de Música (Spanish Association of Music Publishers, or AEDEM).

widening in favour of men in managerial positions (chairs and management) and towards women in operational positions. This led us to hypothesise that it was more than plausible that we were seeing evidence for the glass ceiling, leaky pipe, sticky floor, and horizontal segregation phenomena. But the question remained, what dynamics, processes, and characteristics described or made this distribution possible? More importantly, how was this unequal distribution and its possible characteristics experienced, understood, and recognised? Going even further: how did it affect the life expectations and social imaginaries (Pintos, 1995; Taylor, 2006; Castoriadis, 2007) present in the daily lives and constitutive of the social order of individuals in this industry?

Once this first phase of this work was over, we proceeded to structurally design (Ibañez, 1992, Verd and Lozares, 2016) discussion groups to show the discursive productions of MI the workers. In other words, to expound the expectations, experiences, and imaginaries present according to the sociologically relevant axes of their contractual situation (stable–temporary), age, educational level, and family burdens. In a subsequent step, these groups helped us to design a survey that would make this foray into the hidden population of women in the MI both a descriptive analysis and a small generalisation of our initial objective: to uncover the situation of female workers in the MI. Thus, we attempted to elaborate the focus groups through the already defined network, according to the structural variables of age, contract type, education level, and maternity status—variables collected in the studies mentioned in our research framework. Thus, we were able to build four research groups with the following distributions:

G1: women with an indefinite contract, young adults (20–40 years), 50% with a university level education, 50% mothers.

G2: women with a temporary contract or self-employed, young adults (20–40 years), 50% with a primary or secondary level education, 50% mothers.

G3: women with an indefinite contract, older adults (40–60 years), 50% with a university level education, 50% mothers.

G4: women with a temporary contract or self-employed, older adults (40–60 years), 50% with a primary or secondary level education, 50% mothers.

These groups were distributed among the cities of Barcelona, Madrid, Valencia, and Bilbao and comprised 37 MI workers and employees in record companies, management companies, journalists, and technicians as well as artists, with 6, 12, 15, and 4 people in each group and city, respectively. Thus, we achieved a high degree of homogeneity by age, education level, and employment status but found a number of drawbacks that could have been indicative either of an intrinsic characteristic of the MI or, on the contrary, a characteristic of our population. The most precarious contractual situation (most temporary) was found in the Valencia group; in terms of family responsibilities, there were few maternities, with the ratio being three to one. Lastly, the Bilbao discussion group only included four participants because two individuals did not come, although a balanced composition was still achieved, and the conversation was fluid. In turn, in Valencia, our expectations were exceeded because of the enthusiasm of the participants who came with last-minute companions from the industry. This was not a problem, beyond lengthening the discussion transcript.

The conversation structure was semi-open-ended, and we developed a script in advance (divided into five questions in different topic areas for subsequent generalisation) that could help encourage discussion among the participants in relation to the issues at hand, their expectations, and work and personal experiences. The first question, "for you, what are the advantages and disadvantages of being a woman in the music industry?," was about the subjective perception and assessment of women in the MI. From here, the aim was to elaborate a

discussion that would shed light on the functional positions they occupied, the roles played, and the distribution of these roles by areas. These data were particularly useful to discover the phenomenon of horizontal segregation and possible feminisation (and masculinisation) of certain functional positions and social roles.

The second question, "which occupational, social, and cultural factors, in a broad sense, do you think have the most obvious impact on your career?", addressed the perceptions and imaginaries of possible career determinants. The aim of this question was to discover the presence and importance placed by these women on classic structural variables related to their career paths and careers. These included training, years of experience, access to social capital and networking (mentors and personal contacts), work culture, family burdens, forms of employment (precariousness, temporary nature, and salaries, etc.), as well as their perception of inequality within these factors.

The third question, "Do you receive the same professional recognition as your male colleagues both from the same sector and from the public?," revolved around their perception of the professional recognition of women as MI workers in society. Again, the question related to the functional positions and roles they played but aimed not only to get the participants to talk about their perception of the recognition of their work through awards and their presence in programming or as media figures, but also to see if they referenced other female MI workers who could be protagonists. In other words, here we wanted to clarify whether these women used other women as role models in their imaginary, or on the contrary, if they used men as models and referents to follow in their professional careers.

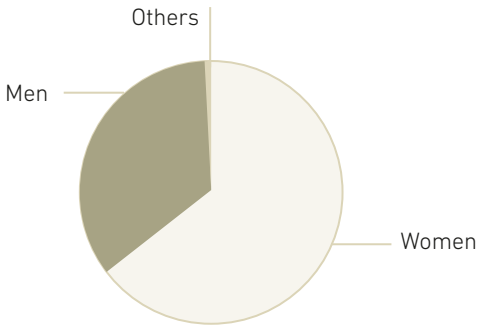
In the fourth question, "how does your work affect your daily life? How do you organise your time according to your working hours, your responsibilities and the demands of your job?," we sought to explore the issue of the work–life balance. We aimed to examine the tensions between productive, reproductive, and non-work or leisure time experienced by these women, paying special attention to the distribution of working hours and negotiation and dynamics of the organisation of each 'vital time' according to the work structures indicated. We were also interested in what these women had or had not given up in order to maintain their professional careers. Thus, this emphasised what might be termed their 'work culture' awareness, especially in comparison with male colleagues.

The aim of the fifth question, "if you had total freedom to choose your job and working conditions, what would you change?," was to investigate the participants' awareness and recognition of the inequality and discrimination experienced in the aforementioned aspects in terms of positions and roles, working conditions, work–life balance, and expectations of change, etc. With this, our aim was to discover how they constructed the identity of 'working woman' in terms of vocational and work and family life, as well as in relation (not necessarily in opposition) to the perception of the male category (the 'working man'). Lastly, if it did not come up spontaneously in the conversation, we asked about their perception and experience of discrimination in the MI thus, "have you encountered discrimination at work because you are a woman?"

Once the focus groups had been conducted (which we simultaneously recorded and then transcribed), we proceeded to prepare a survey that could be launched online through the Survey Monkey platform to the network of contacts and companies we had already established. Continuing with the snowball technique (Baltar and Gorjup, 2012; Verd and Olivé, 1999), we asked the users of the different associations we had contacted to also ask their contacts in the industry to complete the survey. It should be noted that the survey was sent to both men and women in order to avoid any gender bias and to establish a level of comparison. However, our ultimate goal was to come close to a statistically relevant definition of the hidden and varying

population of female and male MI workers, as well as to define the social and sociological contours and their work experiences within the MI.

As shown in figure 1, in total we obtained a sample of 320 (n = 320) responses from the surveyed population, which, as shown by our initial research, would have consisted of at least 1,547 people (N = 1,547), of which the majority were male rather than female workers. It should also be noted that the survey was voluntary, and so the answers came from people who really had an interest in answering questions about the initial topic the survey was presented with: A study to uncover the socio-labour situation of workers in the MI. Likewise, this work was exploratory, and so we were also able to see the number of people who declared their gender identity as being outside the binary framework[6] In addition, several studies have shown the existence of what we could call hermeneutic injustice and testimonial injustice (Fricker, 2007), that is, the difficulty experienced by women to express situations and experiences of inequality and even of violence and thus, become aware of these contexts and choose to abandon them. This is because of their condition of dependence and their social position, as well as their fears or insecurities of being treated more unjustly by their social circle, thereby causing them to enter into a spiral of silence. Considering the above, we can assume that the experiences described to us and collected here in this work were, at least, situations experienced by a minimum number of women who dared to talk about these negative experiences in their work environment (Roco et al., 2013; Hirigoyen, 1999, 2001; Escudero, 2005).



Response options	Responses	
Women	64,06%	205
Men	35,31%	113
Others	0,63%	2
TOTAL		320

Sample distribution: *n* = 320. Source: Prepared by the authors

Starting from the premise that any opinion gathered through an interview, or a questionnaire is born from the way in which the opinion was asked (Bourdieu, 1973), we elaborated a battery of questions—which were all filtered through and influenced by the opinions and recommendations of the MIM Association. We hoped these questions would allow us to take a snapshot of the social structure of a possible unequal relationship between men and women in the MI. In order to elaborate the survey, we wanted to answer a series of questions central to the experiences of inequality and injustice within our framework (glass ceiling, leaky pipe, sticky floor, and horizontal segregation), all based on the experiences discussed in our focus groups.

The first block of questions consisted of addressing the labour structure of the MI and discovering the distribution of job positions and functional roles according to sex. We wanted to understand whether the

6 At the risk of this research being interpreted as a study that falls back on the binary gender framework, it should be said that this work was conceived as an exploratory study on the issue of women's inequality. The work was also sponsored by a women's association and was not built upon the foundations of the binary framework or that of possible inequalities and injustices among the LGTBIQ+ collective. This question is undoubtedly relevant, but time and budget constraints prevented us from expanding the possible agents and case studies in this present study. We thus recognise that from this perspective, there is not only much more to investigate, but also the need to do so.

most determining positions, those in which decisions are made about what is produced or distributed, were evenly distributed by gender. In other words, this first block described the actual or objective status of women MI workers. To do this we asked about their identity as male/female/non-binary and ethnicity, etc.[7]. Next, we asked about marital status, whether these MI workers had any dependent children or were responsible for any other form of care (family or non-dependent). We also asked about formal and non-formal education and training variables, variables relevant to their professional path—years worked in total (career path), and how many years spent in the MI—in particular, how many years spent in the same job (professional path), and of these, how many in paid work.

In line with these questions, we were also interested in the 'quality' of the position held in the MI, in other words, whether they were self-employed, freelancers, employees, or partners in companies, etc., as well as the type of contractual relationship, if any. Following on from the salary question, we asked not only about their gross annual income, but also whether their work in the MI was their main source of income. In this respect, it was undoubtedly necessary to ask about the participant's type of working day, and in order to ascertain the possibility of horizontal segregation, we asked about the functions and roles they performed (managerial, executive, operational, or common functions), as well as the positions (trades) occupied[8]. To further narrow down this structural situation, we asked about the type of company they worked for[9].

However, we also had to uncover the cost and conditions under which the participants had accessed their jobs, as well as their future career expectations, always considering the socio-family issue and work–life balance conditions: a key factor in understanding the existence of the inequality phenomena that constituted our framework. To do this, we elaborated a second set of questions that addressed issues such as what training the surveyees had when they had started paid work in the MI and the availability the job required of them, both for travelling and moving to other places, as well as in terms of dedication. That is to say: if their work had required them to dedicate more time to it than they had formally agreed upon in their contract.

We reasoned that if the variables of availability and dedication, together with access conditions objectively indicated the conditions of work performance, they could also tell us about the structural situation of what we could call the 'work culture.' However, to further qualify this question—which is key, above all, to understanding the condition of epistemic injustice—we had to understand whether they recognised themselves as being part of an unequal structure, i.e., the subjective status achieved through lived experience. For this purpose, we prepared a third block of questions aimed at finding out whether the participants had encountered any sort of barrier to accessing their job, whether it be because of issues of training or cultural, social, or epistemic capital (lack of knowledge to take advantage of opportunities, information on offers, etc.), or age, sex, sexual orientation, or maternity or paternity. The

7 It should be noted that for this section, we decided to ask about categories that would rely on the cultural aspect of possible differences between identities rather than on the biological aspects or the biological premises behind such differences, which could have generated disputes or biases in the answers. Thus, 'ethnicity' did not share any of the racial phenotyping burden of some approaches, and 'non-binary' did not allow for all people who, regardless of their biological sex, identify outside the cisgender paradigm.

8 The positions cited were: legal representation; administration; agent/manager; author, composer, arranger, lyricist; music publisher; record label executive; performer (music, singer, or backing vocalist); logistics and management; live music (venue or festival management); operator, set-up and transport; music journalism; audiovisual production; promotion, marketing, public relations; studio and live sound recording, engineering technician; and other.

9 The companies cited were: music association; law firm, legal representation and copyright; digital distributor or aggregator; music publisher; marketing and promotion or advertising company; event representation and/or management company; live music company or venue; management entity; recording studio; music festival; educational institution; television, film, or advertising production company; video game production company; media; phonographic label; soloist or band; record shop; e-commerce; and other.

participants were also asked whether, in order to keep their job or develop their career, they had had to give something up (see table 1, Q33); and lastly, they were asked specifically about their work climate to examine whether they had experienced exploitation, segregation, harassment, or even violence (see table 1, Q34).

Table 1.

Q33	**Indicate which of these statements is most like your experience. To achieve my goals and keep my current job position in the music industry, I have had to give up...**
A	Training and specialisation (in this or other fields of work).
B	A part of or a large part of my previous social life (friends and family etc.).
C	Being a parent.
D	Having a relationship.
E	Travelling, or another types of leisure activity.
F	Living in the town I had wanted to.
G	I have not had to give anything up.
H	Other more advantageous jobs (better paid, better hours, or more senior positions, etc.).
I	Other (please specify).
Q34	**Of the following statements, indicate which are characteristics of your current work environment:**
A	Assignment, in general, of demeaning tasks.
B	Assignment of specific tasks (not previously required in the job description) because of my sexual, racial, ethnic, or religious orientation.
C	An excessive individual workload assigned indiscriminately compared to other colleagues at work because of my/their personal characteristics (gender, age, ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation).
D	I have been the subject of rumour-mongering.
E	I have suffered sexual harassment from colleagues or superiors (comments, excessive approaches, and even unwanted contact).
F	I have suffered sexual assault of any kind at the hand of my colleagues or superiors.
G	I have suffered offensive negative judgements by my colleagues or superiors because of my physical appearance (insults, put-downs, sexist criticism, or other forms of personal ridicule).
H	I have suffered negative offensive judgments from my colleagues or superiors because of my personal condition, abilities, or the work I do (insults, humilia-tion, sexist criticism, or other forms of personal ridicule at work).
I	I receive positive judgments from my colleagues or superiors for my work and professional disposition (congratulations, promotions, or incentives, etc.).
J	I have received positive judgments from my colleagues or superiors for my physical appearance (compliments or exaltations of my physical and sexual attrib-utes).
K	I have received a reduced workload because of my religious, ethnic, or sexual identity.

L	I have been indiscriminately denied access to the resources, materials, and means necessary to carry out my work.
M	My colleagues and superiors have cold-shouldered me (left me isolated or on the fringes of the group) in my workplace.
N	I have suffered from the appropriation of my ideas or merits by colleagues and superiors.
O	None of the above answers apply to me.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Overall, the results we obtained especially highlighted the glass ceiling that defines the work experience of women. Only 14% of independent companies we examined were run by women. Furthermore, the survey of companies from four different associations (APM, ARTE, AEDEM, and PROMUSICAE) indicated that 37% of the presidency positions were held by women compared to 63% by men. In the case of the three major record labels, men held all three presidencies. The average profile of the women we encountered in the MI was that of a young adult (aged 30–40 years), who was not a mother (74%), with a high education level and knowledge of languages, who worked in full-time employment (47% of the cases), had worked 15 years or less (56%), and lived mainly in Madrid or Barcelona (78% of the cases), with job profiles related to marketing and public relations (25% of those surveyed) being over-represented. However, other profiles related to administration, coordination, and management, both in live music venues and festivals were also represented (37%). In addition, a clear vocational component was observed among the respondents. All this also led us to believe that horizontal segregation was a fully objective fact, especially with the under-representation of women in executive profiles (2.1%), performance and composition (7.8%), editing positions (2.1%), and as recording technicians (2.6%).

In addition, the MI had a precarious structure: the average salary for women in the industry was around €16,800/year and there was also a high level of seasonality, with few cases of long-term career trajectories within the MI or in the same jobs. Added to this were demands on the participants' time, with them dedicating more time than a standard working day to their work. In their opinion, this had prevented them not only from developing a stable career, but also from reconciling their work and family lives. This precariousness and lack of professionalisation was evident in the discussion groups and showed us a relationship structure that affected all the women, but more so among the younger ones. This not only affected issues such as motherhood, but also the recognition of women as professionals that are as valid as their male counterparts. The MI was painted as a precarious, unequal, and unfair labour market in every aspect, including in terms of wages, job stability, and career paths, etc.

Maternity was among the factors that had negatively affected professional careers, in both surveys and in the individual cases. The reconciliation of work with social and family life was perceived as a large obstacle given their working conditions and requirements of the jobs they held. Up to 14% of the participants thought this way about maternity, while 16% insisted upon the incompatibility of having a personal life and their working conditions. We observed the unequal sharing of household tasks and care roles both in the survey and interview results: more than half of the mothers said that they had had no help with care tasks. This reproduced gender roles that generated a sexual division of labour that affected work expectations and was undoubtedly the determining factor for the so-called sticky floor factor. The women we interviewed and surveyed had continued to work full time without changing their jobs and so they had not taken on positions of greater responsibility and seemed

to renounce promotion strategies. Interestingly, they themselves recognised that experience (years in the sector, leading to a better reputation and knowledge of the work culture) and adaptive strategies to gain authority enabled successful career paths.

Another factor they considered a negative was age: either being too young or too old for the work required of them by the MI. Without a doubt, the perception of what the MI required of them as women was a determining factor in understanding the working culture of the sector, which the focus groups considered to have male chauvinist culture. Firstly, because it values men and women differently according to stereotypical attributes. The dominant image in their imaginary was that of an experienced middle-aged man, which clashes with that of the often-younger woman who had had to enter the sector later[10]. Moreover, this lack of appreciation in relation to decision-making was accompanied by less visibility, given that these professions are usually based on informal contacts and women have more difficulty entering networking dynamics, receive fewer calls, and are less often among the names of those responsible for recruitment and promotion in different sectors.

Secondly, these attitudes forced women who remained in the MI to strategically adopt male language and practices, in other words, as stated by one interviewee, "you had to demonstrate your masculinity all the time." In addition to this, there was a lack of female role models within the sector to guide other ways of interacting and doing things, as one of the participants from Barcelona told us:

> I remember when I was little, there was absolutely no one at the jams, at the concerts, of course, and as a woman who sang and played a wind instrument I had no role models, and I remember everything as a mental thing, right? I mean, obviously, I wouldn't tell you anything very specific, but I think there's a burden [so] that we women artists have to work very hard. Well, and if you work at it, you overcome mental obstacles[11]

On the other hand, there were also comments, in the form of jokes, value judgements, or questions about the female condition, which appeared to be associated with this masculinised environment and which caused exclusion. Above all, it seemed to undermine the confidence that female professionals had in their work and ability to participate in meetings and be listened to by their colleagues. Moreover, the focus groups even included mentions of the possibility of women becoming pregnant, a clear indication of the interference of gender roles in professional recognition. This shows us that the work culture is articulated, as we can see, around the question of recognition in two distinct but mutually reinforcing ways.

Firstly, the difficulty experienced in being recognised as full professionals equal to men, even when they reached certain positions. This became a problem of legitimacy and authority for women as full agents in the MI: "Men are treated as professionals and women are treated as women," said one of the participants in the Bilbao group. Secondly, there was a lack of recognition of the difficulties women faced in pursuing a career on equal terms as men, despite the fact that their initial training was often superior to that of their male counterparts. This was particularly noticeable when they heard comments from colleagues in their work meetings suggesting that the position they had achieved was because of their good fortune or good economic position. This was also perceptible when the reason for their musical tastes was explained to them in relation to gender, as one of the participants of the Valencia group explained as follows.

> It is assumed that you are on borrowed time, that your tastes are borrowed, that you have not formed

10 In fact, more than 33% of the respondents said that they had been working in the industry for 5 years or less, and more than 25% had been in the industry for between 5 and 10 years.

11 Translated from the original: "Jo recordo de petita, és que no hi havia absolutament ningú a les jams, als concerts, clar, i una dona que cantés, i que toqués un instrument de vent, no tenia cap referent i jo recordo tot una cosa mental, no? O sigui, evidentment, així específic no et diria algo, però crec que hi ha una càrrega que tenim les dones artistes que hem de treballar-nos-ho molt. Buenu, i si t'ho vas treballant, vas superant obstacles mentals."

> your own opinion on things. It's very hard to be taken seriously, it's very hard for [your] opinion about a record, a concert, etc., to be worth the same as a guy's, when you might even have much more personal musical culture [than him].

According to the participants, this is a social fact that is rooted in a cultural problem in the construction of expectations. As we stated above, there is a gender division in knowledge. Men are often associated with rationality, technology, and 'hard' music genres (heavy metal and punk, etc.) while women are not seen as people with musical identities, tastes, and criteria. Inequality is materialised, as we have shown through the survey presented in this article, in the distribution of functional and professional positions in the industry. In this context, women tend to develop certain occupations in a certain working arrangement that can be categorised as a distribution of occupational gender roles.

CONCLUSIONS

Our research corroborated the relationship of injustice with regard to the increasing demands for recognition of (and redress for) the situations of injustice and inequality female workers increasingly feel they are experiencing in the MI. This was materialised in their knowledge of the relationships, interactions, and effects of how this is articulated in the MI that they shared with us. Knowledge of one's own situation and recognition of one's own experience is undoubtedly the epistemic basis for tackling inequalities and injustices. Thus, we corroborated the presence of phenomena of injustice such as the so-called sticky floor and glass ceiling problems—as well as the strong influence of factors such as motherhood, salary, education, starting position, and spousal support in domestic and care work—on the development of women's careers.

One of the main problems we faced with this study laid in the difficulty of extrapolating our data to the population of the MI world in general, given the lack of a census or registration of MI workers. This problem is still an ongoing reality, and we strongly suspect that the population comprising this universe is exponentially larger than the one we identified and sampled in this current research. In this sense, although it is a legitimate argument that private initiatives must correct this male chauvinist labour and material culture, we certainly advocate that the first barrier to full equality should be broken down by administrations by developing a legal and legislative framework capable of recognising the structural situation of the labour market and the material inequality experienced by women in the MI.

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Incorporating an intersectional perspective into local community cultural facilities: identifying priority areas

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ABSTRACT
The integration of an intersectional perspective in the analysis and response to inequality and discrimination has become frequent in recent years because of the need to develop more complex approaches in these areas. This article aimed to present some initial reflections and approaches to the transfer of this perspective to the practice of local cultural facilities (e.g., community centres). To this end, we provide a definition of the intersectional perspective and its implications and apply it to the practice of local cultural management, including the identification of a range of conceptual and practical challenges. The work concludes by distinguishing a set of priority areas for the mainstreaming of intersectionality as part of the management of local cultural facilities: baseline analysis, training, consultation and participation spaces, programming, mediation, and evaluation and learning processes. Despite the complexity involved in implementing these tasks, we suggest that intersectionality should be understood as a progressive learning process that may take advantage of existing initiatives and knowledge in areas including cultural rights, gender, and diversity management.

Keywords: intersectionality, diversity, cultural management, cultural rights, cultural facilities

SUMMARY

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INTRODUCTION

The incorporation of an intersectional perspective into the analysis of existing inequalities and discrimination in society, and the response made to these by public policies has received increasing attention in recent years. This is often a response to the finding that the current models for dealing with diversity are incomplete and require more complex approaches.

Intersectionality offers this perspective of greater complexity, but its very nature entails difficulties when implementing it. This is coupled with the fact that, as we will explain throughout the article, the intersectional perspective requires us perform an exercise in interpreting the specific contexts in which it must be applied. Thus, it does not offer universal answers, but rather, an 'analytical sensitivity' or a way of thinking about similarities and differences, and their relationship with power (Rodó-Zárate, 2021, p. 28), which must be adapted to different realities in terms of the people with whom one interacts, relationships established, and forms of power that are manifested.

In this sense, the intersectional perspective calls for an effort in terms of critical and methodological reflection on the part of those responsible for applying it. This applies both in relation to the gaze towards the outside and to the action itself, which can contribute to ignoring, reproducing, or reinforcing forms of discrimination. This responsibility is greater in the case of services and facilities that fulfil public functions. The aforementioned need for contextualisation also makes it necessary, based on a framework of sensitivity and common action, to think about the specific implications of intersectionality in concrete areas of public action, such as cultural management and policies.

Until now, there have been few specific reflections regarding the incorporation of an intersectional perspective into local cultural management. Thus, this article aimed to make such a contribution, emphasising the role of local cultural facilities, and especially so-called multi-purpose cultural centres. In other words, facilities that, as in the case of civic centres, athenaeums, youth centres, and other similar centres, are characterised by combining cultural, socio-educational, and civic functions, while also being versatile with respect to the activities they host (exhibitions, courses, workshops, small-format shows, meetings, and debates, etc.). They may host activities with groups and external entities, and work with proximity—that is to say, paying attention to the nearest population (at the level of the neighbourhood, district, or municipality, as the case may be)—to establish solid relationships (in relation to this, consult Miralles and Saboya, 2000; Martínez Illa, 2010; and Trànsit Projectes, 2020, among others).

At the European level, similarities have been observed between facilities such as *centros cívicos* (civic centres), *casas de cultura* (cultural centres), *maisons de quartier* (neighbourhood houses), community centres, *soziokulturelle Zentren* (socio -cultural centres), or *chitalishtes* (community centres), among others, which the Budapest Observatory for Cultural Policies grouped under the definition of "multifunctional institutions of local culture" (Budapest Observatory, 2003; Interarts Foundation, 2005). Therefore, the observations offered in this article could be partially applicable to other territories. At the same time, while considering the importance of the contextualisation and situated analysis necessary for any reflection upon intersectionality, we must admit that these contributions might be especially applicable in civic centres and other similar cultural facilities in the context of Catalonia.

Thus, this current article aims to make a contribution applicable to the management of local cultural facilities and analysis of the practices employed in their management. The combination of these perspectives, we believe, makes it possible to fill a gap that has existed up until now, especially with regard to understanding intersectionality, a framework that has been consolidated mainly at the theoretical level, as well as exploring the specific implications of these perspectives in the field of cultural management. It is, in any case, an initial approximation that, as explained above, must be expanded upon in later work based on the specific implementation of new approximations.

Aspects such as the relationship with the population or the surrounding community and the vocation to simultaneously contribute to the enrichment of cultural life, promote citizen participation from an inclusive perspective, and encourage learning and social cohesion processes, mean that these facilities may be important scenarios regarding the incorporation of an intersectional perspective. So far, there have already been significant experiences in civic centres, libraries, and other local cultural facilities regarding the incorporation of the gender perspective (consult, among others, Alexanian Meacci and the Sagrada Familia Civic Centre, 2019), attention to the diversity of origins, or inclusion of people with functional diversity.

In short, and in the same way that occurs in the provision of other public services and goods, these segmented approaches may be insufficient when facing a reality in which forms of inequality and discrimination intersect, as some analyses have already pointed out (Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, 2021). Some centres have already incorporated measures with an intersectional perspective. For example, the Civic Centre of the Sagrada Familia in Barcelona does so in areas such as communication by trying to generate new and diverse referents arising from the usual gender roles (Alexanian Meacci and the Civic Centre of the Sagrada Familia, 2019). In the same way, this current article aims to make an initial contribution with a view to a more complex future examination of the diversity of audiences, typical of the intersectional perspective.

In order to do so, we will begin by situating the concept, we will go on to identify the main implications

that intersectionality may have for local cultural management and the challenges it entails, and we will then close the article by identifying aspects of the management of local cultural facilities in which intersectionality must be incorporated as a priority.

INTERSECTIONALITY AND PROXIMITY

What is the intersectional gaze?

Intersectional reflection originated at the end of the 1980s in the USA and was based on verification that neither feminism (which mainly adopted a *white* perspective) nor black activism (which adopted an androcentric point of view) reflected the specific experience of oppression and discrimination suffered by groups such as black women. Hence, in this sense, these standpoints did not sufficiently reflect the internal heterogeneity of the social groups they wanted to represent: "Thus, it was not about adding (following an additive logic), but about understanding that the intersection of the axes of gender and race produces specific realities" (Coll-Planas and Solà-Morales, 2019, p. 17).

Within this framework, intersectionality has been developed through numerous theoretical and practical contributions, which have led to a rich tradition rather than a coherent, rigid, or immutable theory: thus, intersectionality can be interpreted as "a toolbox to understand social inequalities and discrimination in a complex way" (Rodó-Zárate, 2021, p. 19). The notion of a 'toolbox' serves to remind us that, ultimately, intersectionality has the vocation of influencing reality in a practical way and of transforming it. This practical or applied character is combined with and, in some way, calls for the 'analytical sensitivity' to which we have previously referred: it is not, therefore, only a question of reflection—although critical reflection is inherent to intersectionality—but one of a reflection that aspires to influence action. At the same time, until now there have been more academic contributions around intersectionality on a theoretical level than on a practical one (Coll-Planas and Solà Morales, 2019), a challenge that articles with an applied vocation like this one are trying to start addressing.

Intersectionality emphasises that the different dimensions of or successes regarding discrimination are inseparable and interrelated (Rodó-Zárate, 2021): the way in which gender discrimination is experienced is determined, among other things, by a person's position in terms of their origin, insofar as the fact of having lived a certain migratory itinerary or being an autochthonous person in a territory implies a specific gender experience, and vice versa. The interrelationships derived from the different axes of discrimination that may be relevant in a certain environment means that any intersectional analysis must be sensitive to specific individual realities and supposes that this is a very contextual or situated exercise that will differ depending on the characteristics of the environment, its demographic reality, and relevant expressions of inequality and discrimination.

In this sense, although it is possible to make a list of the axes that should generally be considered in an intersectional perspective (sex/gender; origin/migration; racialisation; sexual orientation and gender identity; religion/beliefs; age/cycles of life; functional diversity/disability, etc.; see Coll-Planas and Solà-Morales, 2019), it is also common to focus that attention on one axis or another, and the relative weight given to them will depend on social circumstances and specific institutions. In certain countries and moments, aspects such as ideology or language can be important factors of discrimination while, in the same territory, contexts such as school, home, or public spaces can generate different ways of perceiving discrimination. Once again, the analytical sensitivity of the intersectional perspective must help determine which aspects are significant in each context and guide the action in a more pertinent way.

What are its advantages and applications?

Within the framework of the European project Igualdads Conectadas (Connected Equalities; 2018–2019), which aimed to advance the implementation of intersectionality in local non-discrimination policies, the sociologist Gerard Coll-Planas and

the political scientist Roser Solà-Morales developed a guide that includes, among other things, the advantages of incorporating an intersectional perspective in municipal work. This guide could also be applicable or adaptable in local cultural policies and in the activities of local cultural facilities.[1] Thus, the intersectional perspective:

- "Shows us the limits of political practices that separate reality and do not allow us to address the intersections between axes of inequality.
- Allows us to go beyond the logic of policies directed at 'general citizens' or at specific groups, which is not effective in explaining the nuances and complexity of the lives of real people.
- Gives us tools to deal more effectively, efficiently, and with complexity with the inequalities that occur in our environment.
- Helps us to recognise the range of realities and needs of the citizens in our municipality.
- Alerts us to how biases and exclusions are also generated based on public policies, depending on factors such as the definition of the people targeted by a given policy or its participation mechanisms." (2019, p. 6).

Based on the practice of local cultural facilities, these reflections warn of the risk both of addressing a general public and of defining generic audiences according to isolated sociodemographic characteristics ('the immigrant population' or 'people with functional diversity', for example). They lead to adopting a more complex and sensitive view of the diversity in the environment and raise awareness that the facilities themselves can also—in the way they define their relationships with the people and communities around them and how these individuals interact within them—reinforce or weaken inequalities and discriminations (Stevenson, 2019). Likewise, we can see a useful resource in the intersectional perspective that, beyond critical reflection, can contribute to improving the practices of facilities, as we mentioned previously, in areas such as equitable inclusion, work with communities, and enrichment of the cultural and civic activities conducted in said buildings, especially from the perspective of diversity.

The same guide recalled that the American jurist and philosopher Kimberlé Crenshaw, who in 1989 coined the concept of intersectionality, differentiates two aspects of this term thus: 'structural intersectionality', which explains how the intersection of axes of inequality distributes power between social groups, and 'political intersectionality,' which demonstrates how intersectional inequalities are reproduced or are fought through political action, both in public institutions and in through activism (Coll-Planas and Solà-Morales, 2019). The analysis of this second aspect from the perspective of the practice of local cultural facilities appears to be most interesting. Thus, it is about critically reviewing one's own practices, in order to "ask ourselves who are we leaving out, to what extent are we recognising the heterogeneity of groups, or what identities are we helping to reinforce" (ibid, p. 20).

Likewise, it is important to understand that "(...) in practice, all policies have intersectional effects", even if they do not aim to do so or do not make them explicit, because "they have an impact on a citizenry that is always crossed by all the axes of inequality. The objective would be for policies to be consciously intersectional (assuming inclusions and exclusions and establishing priorities, etc.) and that they aim to combat these inequalities, which occur as a result of crossing axes" (ibid, p. 19). Thus, what does consciously incorporating intersectionality into the practice of a cultural facility entail? The following sections try to delve into this issue.

1 In addition to providing valid recommendations for other institutions and entities, the Igualdads Conectadas project involved a diagnosis of the incorporation of intersectionality in various services of the Terrassa City Council, as well as training, debate, and accompanying measures to advance both municipal services and civil society entities in this regard.

INTERSECTIONALITY IN CULTURAL LIFE AND CULTURAL POLICIES

Some recent contributions

In recent years, there have been multiple reflections upon the gender dimension in cultural life and the need to incorporate a gender perspective in cultural management practices and cultural policies. It is mainly within this framework that, more recently, some contributions have also appeared that, above all, from institutional and policy design spheres, raise the need to make the gender perspective more complex, incorporating an intersectional perspective into it.

The *Towards Gender Equality in the Cultural and Creative Sectors report*, published in 2021 by a working group comprising of representatives of EU member states, incorporated several references to the need to integrate an intersectional perspective when promoting gender equality in cultural policies, paying special attention to the labour market, professionalisation, and organisations in the cultural sector. On the one hand, it detects forms of intersectional discrimination specific to cultural spheres, such as those suffered by actresses of advanced age or actresses of colour when trying to obtain roles in theatre, television, or cinema, resulting from the existence of stereotypes and racism that limit the professional opportunities of these groups.

On the other hand, and regarding the recommendations, the report raises several points. Firstly, the need to incorporate intersectionality into the fight against sexual harassment, sexism, and gender violence, given that the combination of different forms of discrimination means that some people may be more vulnerable than others. Secondly, the advisability of collecting disaggregated data based on different variables in order to better analyse situations of multiple discrimination and address them. Thirdly, the importance of incorporating an intersectional perspective when trying to guarantee equality in the programming of cultural activities. Finally, the need to implement all the recommendations included in the report with an intersectional perspective in order to "identify people with multiple marginalisations, who face the most systematic barriers" (WTO Working Group of Member States' Experts, 2021, p. 117; authors' translation).

It is also significant that the conclusions of the report suggested that the intersectional dimension of cultural policies should be addressed in a subsequent publication in order to analyse in more detail the discrimination suffered by racialised people, those with functional diversity, or with certain gender identities.

In addition, a report on culture and gender prepared in parallel by representatives of civil society entities at the European level also remarked that "debates around gender balance and equality must be analysed through the perspective of intersectionality, as an analytical record sufficiently adequate to fully understand the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination affecting women" (Christensen-Redzepovic, 2020, p. 74; authors' translation).

At the local level, it is interesting to note that the Cultural Rights Plan approved by the Barcelona City Council in 2021 plans to deploy a measure related to the promotion of a "feminist culture: the right to a diverse and equitable culture" in the near future, which aims to advance the right to equal participation and diverse representation of cultural identities from a feminist perspective, applying the gender perspective in all areas of the city's cultural policies. Within this framework, it also plans to apply the intersectional perspective "to take into account other axes of inequality (class, origin, race, etc.), in addition to gender" (Barcelona City Council, 2021, p. 34). The proposed lines of action, that would have to be specified in a subsequent government measure, included that of broadening the indicators of cultural uses and public management with a gender perspective, training municipal and public cultural facility personnel, incorporating the gender perspective into the educational activities of municipal cultural programmes and facilities, and

giving impetus and support to the story with a feminist perspective, among other things, by giving visibility to intersectionality. One of the ways these proposals should have an impact is on the activities of local cultural facilities such as civic centres—both those directly managed by the municipal administration and those whose management is outsourced to companies or non-profit entities.

Fitting intersectionality into some discourses in politics and local cultural management

Beyond the incorporation of intersectionality into cultural policies for gender equality, which, as we have seen, has been the predominant perspective in recent years, what does an intersectional perspective contribute to the conceptualisation and practice of local cultural facilities?

In the first place, we can relate the comprehensive fight against discrimination that intersectionality provides, with the commitment to the equality of all people and their ability to exercise human rights, including the right to participate in cultural life, which is the typical purpose of public initiatives. In this sense, civic centres and other local cultural facilities (libraries, for example) are committed to being accessible, inclusive, and non-discriminatory spaces that must ensure they can accommodate all people. In this sense, it should be remembered that the commitment to cultural rights also entails analysis and awareness of the obstacles that may exist for certain people to access and participate in cultural life (CGLU, 2015).

Beyond the factors that have traditionally been identified as obstacles to participation in cultural life and access to public facilities (the price of activities, distance to them, physical accessibility, lack of information, lack of cultural habits, or absence of companions with whom to participate in an activity, for example), the intersectional perspective can help us make a more detailed and complex analysis of this reality to identify the underlying causes and define actions to reverse them. Thus, it is about complementing the growing commitment to gender equality or non-discrimination based on origin— already assumed in many institutional and operational practices—with a broader understanding of the commitment to equality through a holistic analysis of the set of factors that generate inequalities and that can hinder the exercise of rights (UNESCO, 2014). An intersectional gaze can facilitate what the philosopher Remedios Zafra has described as awareness of the multiple fragilities that exist and recognition of shared vulnerability as the basis for a renewed social bond (de Montfort, 2021).

As the Autonomous University of Barcelona researchers Nicolás Barbieri and Yunailis Salazar have stated, working towards equality implies going beyond the segregated recognition of diversity to promote spaces and moments for sharing differences. This requires simultaneously overcoming the tendency to work from a place of homogeneity and to "carry out specific interventions based on the different needs, with the aim of reducing inequalities in the exercise of cultural rights" (2019, p. 97–98). In other words, we must be able to interpret the complexity of the environment and vectors of difference and inequality that affect it and, from there, deploy interventions that combine diversified attention with the generation of meeting spaces and—in accordance with the postulates of these cultural rights—recognise the capacity of each person to be able to determine what personal characteristics define them.

Thus, the intersectional perspective can and should be linked to an ambitious interpretation of cultural rights and their implications for local cultural policies and management. In this sense, and given that, as several of the aforementioned references have shown (UCLG, 2015; Barbieri and Salazar, 2019; Barcelona City Council, 2021), cultural rights already have a relative corpus in terms of their practical application, a scenario is drawn in which intersectionality could be incorporated into already existing discourses, transforming and enriching them according to their own logic.

In the same way, there may be a fit between the intersectional perspective and another of the vital

discourses related to the conception of local cultural policies and management in recent decades—the recognition of and attention to diversity. In this sense, some of the contributions that have claimed the incorporation of intersectionality into cultural management practices have done so from an affirmation of their commitment to diversity (La Diversa, 2018).

The Ciudades Interculturales (Intercultural Cities) programme, is an initiative of the Council of Europe that seeks to promote incorporation of an intercultural perspective into the set of public policies applied by cities on the continent. It recognises intersectionality as an emerging approach required to strengthen the objectives of the programme in terms of equality, diversity, and citizen interaction. Thus, it states that "the challenge for the future debate and practice of intercultural integration is how to develop a more explicit and clear narrative about the relationship between the management of cultural diversity and inclusion, and guarantee equality throughout the range of diversities" (Council of Europe, 2017, p. 23; authors' translation).

It could be considered that some of the approaches traditionally promoted by this programme, which have mainly addressed the diversity derived from migratory processes and their interaction in urban environments, could constitute a basis for developing intersectional models for addressing diversity and urban inequalities. Ciudades Interculturales has had an impact, for example, on the creation of inclusive public spaces, which favour interaction between people of diverse origins and their participation in the co-creation and co-management of policies. The programme also promotes intercultural skills for the general population and in particular, for people responsible for defining and managing public programmes and the fight against myths and stereotypes in relation to immigrants (through, among others, so-called anti-rumour networks).

In this sense, the incorporation of intersectionality in local cultural facilities could translate into similar practices. These would seek to incorporate as diverse a range of voices as possible when defining and managing the activities carried out—thereby reviewing governance models. They would also promote narratives linked to the overlapping axes of inequality and discrimination, especially trying to highlight the most hidden realities and combating the stereotypes that surround them.

Thus, it can be observed how some of the current discourses regarding gender equality, cultural rights, or diversity come together with the added value of intersectionality helping us to approach these objectives. This verification can serve to show that some points of the intersectional perspective fit with approaches that are already visible in certain practices of local cultural policies and management. However, we must not forget that we are facing a paradigm that entails a critical and in-depth review of the ways of doing things, both in terms of the internal structuring of organisations and public services, as well as in terms of the design and management of these programmes. In this sense, the following section will analyse some of the main challenges we can imagine will emerge during this process.

CHALLENGES AND POSSIBLE MEASURES

Despite the interest that the intersectional perspective generates in some areas (and its potential to contribute to more solid action in relation to the fight against discrimination, cultural rights, and diversity), incorporating it into practice is not an easy process. This section analyses some of the most visible challenges in this regard, ranging from the more general and conceptual to the more specific and operational. This initial identification is important in order to subsequently be able to define work priorities.

A different way of relating to citizens

"Intersectionality is a challenge because it proposes a perspective that questions two common dynamics in public policies: addressing the 'citizens in general'

or specific social groups that share the same axis of inequality" (Coll-Planas and Solà Morales, 2019, p. 5). By verifying the limitations of these models, which, by simplifying reality, "generate biases and exclusions" (ibidem), intersectionality aims to offer a more complex response, a fact that also requires us to transform the perspective of public services towards citizens. In a certain way, it requires combining a specialised perspective (understanding the specific problems of the young population, but also of women, people of colour, etc.) and another holistic or interrelated viewpoint that is aware that no sectoral perspective is enough; rather, different areas of knowledge and institutional approaches must be combined (Gall, 2014)—a fact that opposes the logic of specialisation upon which administrations are normally organised.

From the perspective of local cultural facilities, this means going beyond both proposals designed for the general public, which will inevitably leave many people out. This is because existing inequalities and discrimination in the social sphere will make some people feel less challenged or that they have insufficient resources, of any kind, to participate. This also applies to programmes aimed at specific groups (youth, the elderly, people with functional diversity, etc.), if their internal diversity is not simultaneously considered or integrated transversally into the design and implementation of projects and in the governance and management of centres.

Another challenge that may arise from this is resistance to change, including the perception that, by committing to intersectionality, the progress previously achieved in dealing with certain situations and dimensions of diversity may be lost (Coll-Planas and Solà-Morales, 2019). Given this idea, it could be advisable to offer a progressive transition towards intersectionality that builds on already existing initiatives in terms of diversity of gender or origin, wherever they already exist. It would also be useful to understand intersectionality as an added value, rather than being just a paradigm shift. The theoretical approaches to the issue highlight the differences with respect to the current models. However, in practice, it may be useful to start from the already existing structures and understand this transition more as a new step on the path towards equality and the fight against discrimination, rather than a break with it.

El riesgo de desatención de las vulnerabilidades en el contexto post-COVID

> *(...) [The] evidence indicates that periods of recession or austerity affect women disproportionately. For example, in the United Kingdom, after the 2008 financial crisis, the consequent cutbacks in television caused 5,000 women to leave the industry, compared to 300 men. An urgent concern at this time is that the COVID-19 pandemic will lead to a new and long period of social and financial crisis that will result in similar consequences. (...) Moments of crisis can increase the vulnerability of already marginalised groups (...) (Conor, 2021, p. 20).*

These observations—which were extracted from a report recently published by UNESCO—relate to the gender dimension and, more generally, the risk that public attention to the most vulnerable groups will recede in the post-crisis context. In addition, there have also been similar alerts in other settings regarding the situation of people with functional diversity and the risk of suffering setbacks in the resources and attention devoted to their access to cultural activities (see, for example, Miller, 2020).

In this sense, the incorporation of an intersectional perspective requires understanding that institutional responses to the crisis must address the set of existing inequalities and discriminations, rather than providing generic responses that address social, economic, and cultural needs from a standardised perspective. In other words, the fact that the current situation requires responses to more demands from more people should not mean that the responses are the same for everyone, thereby neglecting both the full range of cases and different degrees of need that currently exist.

Initiatives such as the Plan de Derechos Culturales de Barcelona (Barcelona Cultural Rights Plan) are already moving in this direction insofar as they include a gender perspective, other reflections on diversity and inequalities, and the commitment to work from an intersectional point of view. However, it will be important to transfer this same reflection to cultural facilities and provide them with the corresponding resources.

The need to adapt responses to contexts

As we have already explained, intersectionality requires the adoption of an analytical sensitivity that must be adapted to specific realities in a contextual or *situated* exercise. It offers some general guidelines but does not give closed answers, rather it asks institutions and entities responsible for interventions to determine the appropriate procedures to translate these guidelines into practice. Thus, it is, in a way, a *flexible toolbox*, pushing us to stay open to new possibilities.

From the perspective of cultural management, this implies increasing the ability to interpret the context and dialogue with citizens. It requires especially malleable programmes that dedicate time and resources to diagnosis and the incorporation of participatory elements. It also calls for special attention to be paid to the nature of processes relating to the environment, providing critical reflections that allow for the detection of discriminatory elements embedded in the practice itself. This will be in terms of the communication channels used (who is left out if we use digital tools, for example, or the implications of using one language or another), in the spaces and times in which activities are implemented, and in the formats and types of activities offered (workshops, debates, screenings, shows, etc.), etc. Inevitably, acquiring this sensitivity and critical capacity should also imply the implementation of adequate personnel training processes to address, among other things, the less visible forms of inequality and discrimination and the way in which the different axes of discrimination overlap, which combine to generate situations that are difficult to detect.

An aspect related to this, and also one that is difficult to resolve, involves addressing what the feminist activist and doctor in Geography María Rodó-Zárate has called the "relationality between sites" (2021, p. 68). This concept implies understanding that intersectional dynamics and discriminations are determined both by the place in which they occur (public spaces, home, school, cultural centres. etc.), which generates specific problems, as well as by relationships between the production, reproduction, and power of other sites, which also influence the dynamics of discrimination.

Thus, a cultural facility is simultaneously a space where certain relationships of equality or inequality are established and an environment affected by the dynamics of equality and inequality present in the neighbourhood, municipality, country, and globally. As the same author explains, "you cannot understand the precarious situation of domestic workers in Barcelona if you do not understand the situation in the transnational field, the global care chains (...), or the specific situation in, for example, Bolivia" (ibidem, p. 68–69). The same could be said in terms of understanding the dynamics of cultural participation in cities if issues such as patterns of education, socialisation, and access to cultural institutions in the countries of origin of the population residing there are not addressed.

Indeed, the complexity of these reflections can lead to paralysis (Coll-Planas and Solà-Morales, 2019). However, once again, it seems more useful to understand the incorporation of intersectionality as a learning process. It also seems helpful to promote greater dialogue between services and a diverse range of facilities (educational, health, economic, social, and cultural, among others), in order to develop more multifaceted perspectives when interpreting the context and influencing it. From the point of view of local cultural facilities, another necessary measure is promotion of the work of mediation, that is to say, interventions that can facilitate the connection between the centre and its surroundings and favour access to and participation in it.

Not assimilating people with problems

"Situations or social groups that are not the problem are often problematised and strategies are built that imply blaming the victim: 'Is being a migrant a problem or is the problem the immigration law and the fortress of Europe?' For example, in the case of young people who have committed an offence, not only is their behaviour determined to be a problem, but it is assigned to the person with the problem" (Coll-Planas, Solà-Morales, and García-Romeral, 2021, p. 20).

Intersectionality means recognising the overlapping of several dimensions in a person's identity so that none of them becomes the only defining element or only one that can generate inequality or discrimination. This also implies understanding that no group defined according to gender, origin, belief, or class is homogeneous given that each of the people who are part of it also has many other characteristics at the same time. The multiplicity of circumstances that emerge, and the critical look at reality and the ways in which power and oppression can generate situations of inequality and discrimination, means that social problems must be analysed through overlapping perspectives, and should avoid simplifying them based on unique analysis criteria.

In this sense, the appeal that Coll-Planas, Solà-Morales, and García-Romeral make to not assimilate people with problems means that, for example, we must address the structural aspects that can hinder access or participation in cultural activities. This might be a lack of time or economic resources resulting from socioeconomic contexts, distance from institutional spaces (which may be a product of the nature of the education and socialisation processes and image transmitted by facilities), and communication channels used, etc. It could also refer to the way in which the activities on offer in these facilities has traditionally been configured, in other words, what dimensions of diversity are represented in them and how this contributes to generating certain imaginaries and hiding certain axes or dimensions of social life, etc.

This approach implies strongly emphasising the ways the centre relates to and addresses certain problems or themes (cultural rights or diversity, for example). It also requires devoting less attention at the beginning to defining audiences based on their external characteristics. However, it should not be understood as a call to pay less attention to people. Quite the contrary: addressing problems such as those mentioned above should imply a dialogue with those affected, in a broad sense (i.e., audiences, in-house and contracted personnel, collaborating entities, and other agents in the environment, etc.), that allow individual experiences to be recognised in a pluralistic way. Thus, it seems convenient to move towards models of active listening and participation within cultural facilities, which, in addition to serving to enrich the definition of the activities and the mission, conception, and governance of the centres, can also contribute to the processes of personal learning, favouring a better understanding of the different aspects related to discrimination and intersectionality.

Lack of data

> *(...) [A] significant number of personal characteristics that are included in the different human rights regulations applicable to the Spanish State as specially protected categories against discrimination, are not collected in any case as data related to the personal characteristics of those who we live in the Spanish territory (...) (Castilla, 2020, p. 11; authors' translation).*

In this recent report, legal expert Karlos Castilla warned that, because statistical data on people's race, beliefs, or ethnic origin are never collected in Spain, it is difficult for administrations to develop intersectional approaches in an adequate and exhaustive manner. The analysis, based on a survey of numerous public services, points out that the absence of this data is officially justified to avoid discriminatory situations, a fact that, according to the author, is equivalent to "[recognising] expressly (...) racism, homophobia, xenophobia, and religious, political, and ideological intolerance embedded in public institutions and, without a doubt, also within

large sectors of society" in the Spanish State (ibid, p. 14–15; authors' translation), a fact that contrasts with the recommendations of the EU and with the models in force in other European countries.

These reflections refer to data processing by the public administration as a whole in that they do not necessarily imply that it is desirable for cultural facilities to manage data on their users broken down according to multiple dimensions. Thus, both for legal reasons and because of operational capacity, and eventual usefulness, it seems impractical to propose it in these terms. In any case, improving the availability and use of data is an important issue from the perspective of local cultural management which, among other things, should make it possible to better identify and understand the obstacles to participation in cultural life encountered by certain segments of the population, and to help develop policies and programmes that address these issues (UCLG, 2015).

The approach to inequalities, in fact, has been a central issue in different methodological approaches to cultural participation promoted in recent years (Domènech and Partal, 2020; Barcelona Institute of Culture, 2020). In this sense, and remembering that cultural facilities manage data related, among others, to the gender or age of the people enrolled in their activities, different significant questions do arise in relation to the availability of data and its use: How can we determine whether a facility offers equal access to people with diverse characteristics? How, if at all, can we evaluate the improvements made in promoting equality and combating discrimination? Would data collection need to be improved to recognise more diversity (more options in terms of gender identity, for example) and to cover more variables within the framework allowed by law? Do we have the necessary resources and capacities to manage and exploit existing data? Are there viable mechanisms for sharing data with other public services?

Having analysed the motivations and challenges for the incorporation of an intersectional perspective, the following section will formulate some proposals for moving forward in practice in this area.

PRIORITY AREAS FOR INTERSECTIONAL WORK IN LOCAL CULTURAL FACILITIES

As we pointed out at the beginning of this article, we aimed to make an initial contribution to a process of reflection and learning that should be continued and, above all, enriched on the basis of the specific practices of each facility. Based on the reflections of the previous sections, this last segment suggests some priority areas that should be advanced in terms of incorporation of the intersectional perspective into local cultural facilities. These proposals should be interpreted in the light of the aforementioned idea that mainstreaming intersectionality should be a progressive learning process, which, wherever possible, should draw on existing initiatives and knowledge in areas such as gender or diversity of backgrounds. It is also evident that the specific degree and speed of development of these proposals will be conditioned by aspects such as political priorities, given that in a large number of cases these facilities are publicly owned, and the financial, human, and technical resources are already available.

Given the need to critically reflect upon these facilities, their environment, and how they interrelate, the first essential step is to diagnose the context in order to, among other things, assess whether factors such as the diversity of the staff working in them and their practices may contribute to reinforcing patterns of discrimination, as different studies have previously pointed out (Jancovich, 2017; O'Brien, 2019). We must also address existing experiences in the promotion of equality and fight against discrimination (in terms of the access and development of audiences and programming of activities, etc.), analyse user-related data (who participates and who does not, etc.), recognise the most significant elements of inequality and discrimination in the centre's area of influence, address the facility's main areas of work (programming, hosting entities and activities, and communication,

etc.), identify possible collaborations, and formulate proposals for improvement. It seems appropriate that this diagnosis be participatory and involve different figures directly or indirectly related to the life of the facility (staff, users, administrative managers, collaborating people or entities or residents, and surrounding centres, etc.). In this sense, Coll-Planas and Solà-Morales (2019) raised several questions related to the diagnosis of public institutions which can be transferred, duly adapted, to the characteristics of cultural facilities.

Secondly, we will need to provide training measures that combine an understanding of intersectionality, in conceptual terms, with the contribution of specific tools and exchange of experiences with other facilities and services that work in relation to intersectionality and the axes that affect it. It may be particularly appropriate to hold continuous training sessions with agents in the area around the facility in order to encourage a shared recognition of the challenges, an exchange of experiences, and definition of joint proposals. Issues that should be addressed include detecting and addressing low profile forms of discrimination and developing diversity sensitivity skills.

The need to approach the facility as an element that can alternatively reinforce or contribute to combating discrimination, and the interpretation of intersectionality as a learning process that will require periodic review, means that a third area of impact must be the mechanisms for consultation, participation, and governance of the facility. Thus, as mentioned in the initial diagnosis, it would be advisable to make multi-stakeholder participation a transversal element of how the centre is interpreted. It is good to remember that this participation must be accompanied by adequate transparency mechanisms and guarantees that the consultation processes will lead to some type of result, to the extent that it is pertinent in each case. As the cultural researcher Sergio Ramos Cebrián (2021) has stated, the true incorporation of proximity and cultural rights must entail a review of organisational models.

It will also be important to incorporate entities or representatives of groups that can contribute several voices into these processes, while avoiding interpreting them as sole spokespersons for the areas they represent, given their internal diversity. Understanding participation as a transversal element entails proposing the use of participatory mechanisms at different levels (regarding general aspects of the centre, its projects, or specific areas, etc.), and that both the composition of these participatory entities as well as their practices (aspects such as ensuring that meeting times or locations do not hinder the participation of certain people, for example) can be reviewed periodically to ensure sufficient diversity and dynamism.

A fourth area of impact will be the facility's programming. Here, taking an intersectional approach should imply, on the one hand, an effort towards diversity in the programming of activities—which is sensitive to the plurality of realities and forms of identification present in the environment. On the other hand, it also seems appropriate to understand these facilities as meeting spaces, which allow different people to recognise each other in their plurality and to be able to dialogue and participate together with others in processes of learning, creation, and production. The presence of content related to diversity and the fight against discrimination should also be reinforced with the facility's educational offer, as an expression of its commitment in this regard, and with the understanding that the intersectional approach must go much further.

Overall, this intersectional approach in programming can mean that, rather than favouring programmes that focus on one-off exhibitions and that facilitate less participation by the public, continuous activities with a process-type character (workshops, courses, development of creative projects, hosting of entities, etc.) are promoted. In any case, both in terms of the dimensions of diversity that will be displayed in the programming and the formats of the activities, it may be appropriate to seek a complementary balance with the proposals made in other facilities in the same

territory (other civic centres in the same district, for example) that can specialise in different and complementary fields. The resources and structure of individual facilities can make it difficult for them to meet all the needs of their environment, but centres can foster inclusion if they show that they understand the needs of the community surrounding them and establish collaborations with other similar facilities.

To favour the ability of facilities to understand their purpose as a meeting space, the fifth key area of intervention implies the importance of mediation channels with their environment and collaborations with other entities. In this sense, as we have already explained, the need to interpret the context in a complex way, have the capacity to detect forms of inequality and discrimination that are not immediately visible, and to advance towards more accessible and inclusive facilities, means that it is advisable to increase the resources allocated both to work outside the facility (to detect cases and attract audiences) and to collaborate with educational, social, health, and other agents who can provide new perspectives.

Finally, as also explained above, it is important to address the availability and management of data and, more generally, favour evaluation processes and continuous learning by different centres. As far as possible, the collection of data disaggregated into dimensions that are meaningful and feasible (gender, age, nationality, etc.) is desirable. This will be especially necessary to guarantee that the existing data is used in practice to favour the facility's learning, detect deficiencies regarding the inclusion of diverse backgrounds, and to promote equality and define new activities that contribute to this process.

On the basis of these contributions, we hope that this current paper adds to this necessary and enriching process and serves to strengthen the role of local cultural facilities as spaces to promote participation in cultural life and contribute to a more diverse and plural society committed to the fight against discrimination.

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Culture and gender perspectives in the city of Barcelona

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ABSTRACT
In recent years, many countries and local governments have paid special attention to the circumstances and needs of women as creators and producers of diverse artistic expressions. The inclusion of gender equality in the political agenda has emerged, in many cities, at the hand of feminist movements and the activism of professionals in the cultural sector. This article aims to explore the role of Barcelona as a laboratory city for good practices in the field of culture and gender. After a previous diagnosis of gender inequalities in the field of arts and culture in the city of Barcelona, this original research used a qualitative methodology. This was based on a series of semi-structured interviews with leading professionals in the sector of culture and gender. We also analysed different cases of innovative experiences in the cultural field located in different neighbourhoods of the city. The article concludes that, although the feminist movements and cultural sector of Barcelona have worked to put gender equality on the political-institutional agenda, there is still a long way to go in implementing programmatic activities able to transform our society.

Keywords: culture, gender, inequalities, local cultural policies

SUMMARY

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INTRODUCTION

Culture is a mechanism through which society shapes its visions of reality, which it can help transform while also reinforcing specific imaginaries (MacNeill et al., 2018). Likewise, it is a fundamental instrument in the fight for equality and the transformation of societies (O'Brien et al., 2017). From this point of view, it is an ideal tool for dismantling the different patriarchal dominations and discriminations based on gender that take place in our societies. In this sense, artistic and cultural practices can offer experiences of empowerment and the creation of constructive and non-coercive meanings that can contribute to achieving, among other human rights, gender equality. The latter is understood as the equality of rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality therefore implies that the interests, needs, and priorities of both sexes are considered, recognising the diversity of different groups of women and men (UN Women, 2021). From this perspective, the consideration of gender, referring to the set of social, cultural, political, psychological, legal, and economic characteristics that each society assigns to people in a differentiated way based on their sex (UN Women, 2021), is also a prerequisite for a wide range of cultural expressions. Disregarding the creative potential of both women and LGTBI groups drastically reduces the diversity of cultural goods and services (Villarroya, 2016; Joseph, 2018). The opportunity to actively participate in the full variety of artistic creation, contribute to the creation and enhancement of cultural expressions, participate in the identification and protection of cultural heritage, and familiarisation with the range of creations, expressions, and heritage must be guaranteed to everyone (Romainville, 2015), including women and minority groups.

To this we must add the increasingly important role of cities in the social, political, economic (Culture Action Europe and Agenda 21 for Culture, the World Organisation of United Cities and Local Governments, 2016), and cultural landscapes (Yudice, 2002). Since the 1990s, many cities have used culture as a vehicle for economic growth as well as a tool for integration and inclusion (Canclini and Moneta, 1999). In this sense, the city of Barcelona has not remained on the side lines, with culture playing a central role in the construction of the so-called Barcelona model (Rius-Ulldemolins and Gisbert, 2018). Framed in a strongly culturally decentralised state, Barcelona City Council has assumed a leading role in the maintenance and financing of the main Catalan cultural institutions (Villarroya, 2012) and in promoting the emergence and consolidation of private initiatives throughout the city.

The relevance of Barcelona as a cultural capital was initially recognised through the Municipal Charter (Law 22/1998, of December 30) and later consolidated by an agreement signed between the Spanish Ministries of Culture, Economy, and Finance and Barcelona City Council (Law 1/2006, of 13 March). The city's cultural role has also materialised in its leading role in the implementation of Culture 21: Actions and the activities of the Committee for Culture of the World Organisation of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG). In line with the Agenda 21 for Culture (UCLG, 2004), in 2018, the person in charge of the cultural affairs of the Barcelona City Council affirmed that "personal autonomy, equality, and diversity are three clear political parameters in the construction of the cultural policy of any city, and also of Barcelona" (Subirats, 2018, p. 11).

Despite the general perception that culture and the arts provide an open space for people of all genders, evidence shows that gender inequalities are also reflected in the domain of culture (Pujar, 2016). In this sense, the Culture 21: Actions document (UCLG, 2015), which currently guides cultural public policies in local governments and aligned with the Agenda 21 for Culture, includes gender equality when referring to cultural rights. Specifically, it mentions the need for cultural policies to include expanded opportunities for the participation of women in cultural life and to adopt measures against all gender discrimination among their objectives. Likewise, in the field of cultural governance, cultural programmes and institutions that receive public support are urged to develop a gender perspective. In other words, making the concerns and experiences of women, as well as men, an integral element of the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programmes so that both sexes benefit equally, in so preventing the perpetuation of inequality (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 1997). Finally, in relation to equality and social inclusion, the Culture 21: Actions document urges local governments to allocate a part of their cultural budget and public resources to the active promotion of women's participation in cultural activities and organisations, especially in higher profile and management levels. They must value, promote, and increase the visibility and prestige of cultural activities in which there is usually a greater involvement of women.

UNESCO also compels governments to incorporate the perspective of gender parity at the international level (UNESCO, 2014; Joseph, 2015, 2018) in all cultural policies and measures, enabling the participation of women in cultural life as creators and producers, as well as in their condition as citizens and consumers. Otherwise, the diversity of cultural expressions will appear as an unattainable challenge (Joseph, 2018). From another perspective, social cohesion within a community can be more easily achieved if all groups within it participate in cultural life. In this sense, the 2005 UNESCO convention on the protection and promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (UNESCO, 2005) emphasises the importance of culture for social cohesion and, in particular, its potential to improve the status and role of women in society (Preamble). Consequently, the functioning of a democratic community necessarily involves the right to participate in cultural life.

Gender inequalities in the cultural sector take multiple forms, manifesting themselves in the entry to certain professions and industries, professional progression, recognition through prizes, access to resources, and also in the visibility of cultural works (Villarroya, 2019). All this must be added to the problems that have historically characterised the cultural sector (and continue to do so today), the precariousness of the artistic labour market, enormous difficulties in developing professional careers (Barrios and Villarroya, 2021), and a structural fragility that has led to a systemic crisis in the cultural world (Rubio-Arostegui and Rius-Ulldemolins, 2016).

Despite the aforementioned international claims, gender equality has never been a central issue on the agenda of the authorities responsible for culture in the city of Barcelona. In the first 30 years of democracy in Spain, Barcelona City Council's cultural policies were led by the Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya (Catalan Socialist Party) that, in 1996, created the Institute of Culture as the main body responsible for cultural affairs in the city. Socialist governments, with a social democratic orientation in the 1980s and more socio-liberal direction from 1990 to 2010 (Rius-Ulldemolins and Gisbert, 2018, p. 108) gave way, in 2011, to Convergència i Unió (Convergence and Union, or CiU), a conservative nationalist party. However, the party's tenure leading the city did not last long, with the Barcelona en Comú (Barcelona in Common, or BeC) party—a citizen platform launched in June 2014—winning the municipal elections. BeC has been in power since then and has governed in a minority, except in the period between 2016 and the end of 2017, when it governed in coalition with the Catalan Socialist Party. Its political agenda includes the defence of social justice and community rights, promotion of participatory democracy, introduction of mechanisms to combat corruption, and development of a new tourism model for Barcelona.

In cultural matters, the so-called new policy proclaims itself as an alternative cultural policy proposal aimed at promoting a common culture far from the economic and tourist instrumentalisation of culture (Rius-Ulldemolins and Gisbert, 2018). This new proposal explores and rethinks the cultural sector through a community culture that integrates feminism, social economy, urbanism, and ecology. Despite the feminist discourse of the last legislature (2015–2019), gender equality has rarely been explicitly included among the objectives of cultural policies. Thus, from March to July 2019, the constitution of the Culture and Gender working group within the Cultura Viva (Live Culture) programme of the Barcelona Institute of Culture, was commissioned to prepare a set of initiatives aimed at achieving parity and to incorporate the gender perspective into projects and facilities in the city of Barcelona. Beyond that, most of the measures taken within the cultural sphere originated in the Barcelona City Council's Department of Feminisms and LGTBI Affairs, as well as in the private sector.

Although this resistance to the implementation of gender mainstreaming has been little explored in the field of cultural policies, its analysis in other political fields has shown how efforts towards gender equality are often the object of strong resistance in existing institutional contexts (Cavaghan, 2017). These analyses have shown how the bias towards masculine interests and the assumptions regarding gender differences between men and women present in all public policies have reinforced the advantages of men (Hawkesworth, 1994). Thus, when policies designed to change gender relationships are incorporated into a pre-existing governance regime, their impact may be hindered or transformed in ways that make them less powerful (Jansson, 2019). This resistance has also sometimes been attributed to managers of institutions who often express positive attitudes towards gender equality and diversity as principles but resist the implementation of real actions aimed at changing the gender order (Wahl and Holgersson, 2003). Beyond these factors endogenous to institutional change, recent research points to the

idea that institutions and politics are not isolated from society and can be influenced by the agency of different actors, such as cultural elites or large recipients of aid (Jancovich, 2017). It is possible that some of these (external) agents influence and even change the institutions and direction of policies. Feminist and cultural movements may be one of these social actors contributing to achieving changes in cultural policies. In fact, they have played a leading role in promoting knowledge and awareness of gender disparities in cultural fields as well as in the inclusion of gender equality in the political agenda of many governments.

In this context, this article aims to explore how the feminist agenda has been introduced into the cultural reality of the city of Barcelona based on analysis of a set of innovative experiences in the cultural field in several of its different neighbourhoods. Thus, in the following sections we will refer, firstly, to the current situation of the cultural sector in the city from a gender perspective. Next, we will present the methodology used as well as the main data sources. After this, the third section presents results of the analysis of a set of initiatives that incorporate the gender perspective in the field of culture. These were promoted by feminist movements, the cultural sector (such as cultural managers, networks of museums with a gender perspective, and cultural institutions), and the civil society of Barcelona. Finally, the main conclusions of the study are presented in the last section.

GENDER INEQUALITIES IN THE CULTURAL SECTOR OF THE CITY

A very important weakness that can be seen in the field of art and local culture in Barcelona is the absence of cultural statistics at the local level disaggregated by sex. This information would allow for regular and systematic data collection regarding the gender equality situation in the sector and therefore, would facilitate awareness and a prospective view of this issue. Although some relevant studies have been developed (Cabó and Sánchez, 2018)[1], these are still insufficient to give us a real and compared diagnosis of the situation of gender inequality in the cultural sector of the city of Barcelona.

The study by Cabó and Sánchez (2017) shows how the type of activities most often undertaken by women in the cultural sector tend to be production (audiovisual or scenic) or teaching (workshop or trainer), with more than 60% participation in each of these fields. The former is usually linked to the organisation and supervision of events and does not usually have much visibility in cultural spaces. In turn, the latter is most often conducted in small-format and local spaces and, therefore, tends to have a modest scope in terms of resources and recognition. In solo performance tasks, only 35.06% (2017) of women were solo performers at festivals, while in large auditoriums this number exceeded 40%. The authorship of women ranged from 1.25% (2017) in musical performances to 32% in interpretations in performing arts centres. In the area of programming, two extreme situations should also be highlighted: on the one hand, is the high level of feminisation of activities in libraries and civic centres, where the total number of activities is very high, but with a modest budget and projection; on the other hand is the masculinisation of activities carried out in spaces more linked to high culture (such as museums, large auditoriums, or theatres). In 2017, the average percentage of women in each area of programming ranged from 23% in the case of large auditoriums to 59% in the case of libraries (Cabó and Sánchez, 2018).

In this same line, the study by Villarroya (2017) showed how women were less represented in cultural professions (44%, in 2014) and in decision-making positions (43% in the Department of Culture of the Catalan government). While women

1 Some reports that the Observatori Cultural de Gènere (Cultural Gender Observatory) has been carrying out on a regular basis could also be considered.

more frequently had part-time and temporary contracts and carried out management and administration tasks, men tended to engage in more technical and creative activities. The analysis by sectors also showed a low representation of women artists exhibiting their work in art galleries (37.5% in 2013) and in the audiovisual sector (40.6% in 2012) compared to their global representation in the cultural market (44%). At the opposite extreme, women comprised the majority of the personnel employed in the autonomous administrations (62.4%, Department of Culture) and local administration (64.4%), as well as in traditionally feminised sectors such as record keeping (58.5%), collections (59.4%), and in art galleries (57.3%).

However, in the specific medium of exhibitions, the study by Baygual, Brugat, and Cabré (2016) on 10 art centres in Barcelona over the 2011–2015 period showed how only the Miró Foundation treated women artists on equal terms as male artists. In this sense, the large number of solo exhibitions by men in centres such as the Fundación Catalunya-La Pedrera, La Virreina, or the Fundación Vila Casas shows that male artists are still the repository of artistic prestige, to a much greater extent than their female counterparts. Similarly, the 0% sample of women recorded in centres as different as the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya and Caixafòrum shows how the incorporation of women artists does not depend on the artistic periods exhibited. Likewise, the study by Cabó and Sánchez (2018) revealed how decision-making spaces are far from being equal, although here too the participation of women varies depending on the type of cultural infrastructure. Thus, while the management of the city's large cultural spaces such as museums is usually placed in the hands of men (71%), that of local facilities usually falls to women, with 76% being directors of civic centres and 82% of libraries. In turn, the presence of women in the management structures of the Institut de cultura de Barcelona (Institute of Culture of Barcelonaor ICUB) was reduced to barely 30%.

Therefore, based on all the above, we can deduce that there is a lack of representation of women in the most institutionalised cultural life of the city. This simultaneously coexists with a key role for women in cultural activity, often from the viewpoint of the culture of proximity, with less public and private support and little social power (Villarroya, 2017). Contrary to the scenario presented so far, women obtained more recognition than men throughout 2017 (57% and 43%, respectively), although the distribution by gender varied depending on the theme, territorial scope, media visibility, if it was about distinctions or prizes, and the economic endowment. Thus, for example, women received special recognition in gender-themed awards (sexist violence and women's participation, etc.), receiving 83% of the awards (Cabó and Sánchez, 2018). Although women are slowly beginning to be recognised in terms of prizes, accolades with the greatest financial endowments and media visibility were still usually awarded to men. Indeed, the average remuneration of the prizes obtained by women was 34% lower than that of men, a difference that was accentuated by up to 52% in case of prizes without a gender theme (Cabó and Sánchez, 2018). Finally, Cabó and Sánchez (2018) highlighted how, for the first time in recent years, in 2017, women received more distinctions than men (60% and 40%, respectively). However, it should be noted that certain awards such as the Gold Medal for cultural, scientific, civic, or sports merit have not been awarded to any women for years.

With a broader territorial scope, the study by Cabré and Alvarado (2015) analysed a sample of 70 literary prizes from the territory of the Catalan Countries dedicated to rewarding different genders for a period of 15 years, from 2000 to 2014. The study yielded very unequal results for women, ranging from 4.8% of women winning drama awards to 36.4% in the case of children's and youth fiction. In the field of cultural participation, some data included in the Survey of Cultural Participation and Cultural Needs in Barcelona (ICUB, 2020)

showed, however, a certain equality between men and women. This balance manifested itself both in legitimised cultural activities (such as going to the theatre or concerts, etc.) and in community, popular, religious, or public space culture. A more detailed analysis of the data, however, shows that women participated more than men in social organisations, collectives, and movements, while men participated more in sports clubs or excursion centres. In this way, the apparent balance between the sexes was tempered by the different gender roles that exist in our societies.

To all of the above, it is worth adding the crucial role of feminist movements and activism in the cultural sector in the city of Barcelona that, in recent years, has persistently documented the lack of effective equality between men and women in the cultural sector and the need for urgent intervention (Baygual, Brugat, and Cabré, 2016; Bou, Cabré, and Porté, 2014; Cabré, 2017; Cabré and Alvarado, 2015). Despite the few institutional initiatives aimed at introducing the gender perspective into the city's cultural policies, its feminist movements and the sector itself have been promoters of good practices in the field of culture and gender in Barcelona city.

GENERAL METHODOLOGY AND FIELD WORK CONDUCTED

For the analysis of this article, a qualitative methodology was used based on semi-structured interviews with experts and leaders in the field of gender perspectives in the cultural field of the city of Barcelona. The interview guidelines divided the questions into two large blocks. The first focused on a description of Barcelona's cultural policies from a feminist perspective and the second directly related to the results presented in this article and on the qualitative evaluation of these cultural policies in the city. They emphasised the description of experiences and initiatives carried out in the city by the public administration, civil society agents, and the third cultural sector. In addition, at the beginning of each interview, we collected the general data of the interviewees, who were mainly professionals in fields related to the object of this study. The interviews were conducted electronically[2] between May and September 2020.

The sample was selected from among the members of the Culture and Gender working group within the Cultura Viva Program launched by the ICUB and other references in the field of study investigated, always with the purpose of obtaining a sample that, despite not being representative of the sector, was critical and diverse. Specifically, the interviewees were Mireia Mora (cultural communicator at La Tremenda), M. Àngels Cabré (director of the Observatori Cultural de Gènere, the Gender Cultural Observatory), Anna Cabó (founder and director of La Groc Solutions, a consultancy on gender and diversity issues), Karo Moret (a doctor in history from Pompeu Fabra University and researcher on African heritage and its diasporas in the Caribbean), Eulàlia Espinàs (manager of the Ateneu Barcelonès), Marta Vergonyós (a visual artist and filmmaker and director of the Centre de Cultura de Dones Francesca Bonnemaison (Bonnemaison Centre for French Women's Culture), later re-invented as La Bonne, Marina Marcian (a cultural technician and PhD student in social movements and cultural diversity at the University of Barcelona), and Ione Hermosa (a cultural technician and manager of La Central del Circ, the Circus Central, up until 2021).

Based on the exploratory field work carried out for this research, and as a result of the interviews we conducted, 24 proposals for good practice experiences emerged in the field of gender perspectives within the cultural sector of the city of Barcelona (table 1).

2 They were mainly carried out through video calls or by email, because of the pandemic situation generated by COVID-19.

Table 1 Proposals for good practices in the field of gender and culture in the city of Barcelona.

Project type	Projects proposed as good practice experiences
Civic centre and library	Centre Cívic Sagrada Família (Sagrada Família Civic Centre) and El Sortidor Civic Centre in Poble Sec.
Centre of culture and creation	El Graner, La Bonne, and L'Ateneu de 9 Barris.
Women's collective	Dones Visuals (Visual Women), Projecte Minerva (Minerva Project), Union of Home Workers and Caregivers (Sindillar), Ca la Dona, and the Wikidones Project.
Festival	Festival Escena Poblenou, International Women's Film Festival of Barcelona, and Festival of Visible Lesbian Cultures.
Artistic production	Wanafrica Ediciones with the 'African-meninas' collection, La Raposa's programming, No es país para negras (It's no country for black women) play, artistic projects by Nus Cooperativa, and the parity agenda of the Teatre Nacional de Catalunya.
Museum	Museu de Pedralbes and Photographic Archive of Barcelona City Council.
Working group	The Grup Dones i Cultura (Women and Culture Group), 'Culture and Gender' working group of the Barcelona City Council's Live Culture Program, and Report on cultural programming 16/17, written in a feminist key.
Training	'Afro-feminism' training course by Karo Moret at the Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona (Centre for Contemporary Culture of Barcelona, or CCCB), and Talleres Fil a l'agulla (needlework workshops).
Management and cultural communication	La Tremenda
Award and recognition	Young Creators Award
Largescale celebrations	The Poble Sec Festival

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Of these 24 examples, the 10 presented in table 2 were selected for the purpose of this current work. Their selection responded to three criteria:

(i) The plurality of the audiovisual, theatrical, museum, etc. artistic and cultural sectors involved.

(ii) The diversity in the typology of the projects, with the presence of both production and exhibition units.

(iii) Their ownership (public or private).

Table 2 Examples of good practices in the field of gender and culture in the city of Barcelona

Institution	Cultural sector	Typology	Ownership
1. Sagrada Família Civic Centre and Sagrada Família Library - Josep M. Ainaud de Lasarte	Multidisciplinary (proximity centre) and heritage sector (library)	Civic centre and library	Public
2. Francesca Bonnemaison Cultural Centre for Women	Multidisciplinary (audiovisual, scenic, and musical arts, etc.)	Culture centre	Private
3. El Graner, centre for the creation of dance and live arts	Performing arts (dance and live arts)	Creation centre	Public
4. *No es país para negras* production	Performing arts (theatre)	Theatre production	Private for profit
5. Barcelona International Women's Film Festival	Audiovisual sector (cinema)	Audiovisual festival	Private
6. Poble Sec Feminista	Social action	Largescale celebration	Public
7. Ca la Dona	Multidisciplinary (heritage and social action, etc.)	Feminist action space	Private
8. Afrofeminisms at the Contemporary Culture of Barcelona	Heritage sector (museums and training)	Museum	Public
9. Minerva Project	Multidisciplinary	Collective of creators	Public
10. La Tremenda	Communication	Management and cultural communication	Cooperative – private non-profit

Source: Prepared by the authors.

GOOD PRACTICES IN THE FIELD OF GENDER AND CULTURE IN THE CITY OF BARCELONA

Characterisation of the projects

Following the example of the mapping of experiences presented in the Cultura per la Inclusió Social a Barcelona, Mapatge d'experiències 1.0 (Culture for Social Inclusion in Barcelona, Experience mapping 1.0 document; Baltà and Grimaldi, 2011), the characterisation of each of the selected projects is presented below. For each of them, it includes the title of the project, institution or entity that manages it, a brief description of its context, the feminist objectives it pursues, and the main activities conducted within the framework of gender perspectives.

The Sagrada Família Civic Centre is a publicly owned municipal facility located in the Sagrada Família neighbourhood, whose main focus of work is gender equality. Since 2013, it has specialised in gender issues with the dual objective of offering citizens a cultural offer in this field and of implementing good professional practices in the promotion

of equality in its internal management. Its main activities aimed at citizens are concentrated in its cultural agenda (exhibitions, film cycles, shows, and concerts, etc.), holding workshops, as well as supporting the creation of projects specialised in gender and equality (Ajuntament de Barcelona, n.d.-a). In the field of internal management, it promotes periodic training within its team with the aim of ensuring the promotion of the gender perspective in all its initiatives and forms. One of the most relevant results was the preparation of the Guide for the Incorporation of the Gender Perspective into the Work of the Sagrada Família Civic Centre (Alexanian and Tejón, 2017).

In turn, the Sagrada Família - Josep M. Ainaud de Lasarte Library, located in the same building as the Civic Centre and also publicly owned, houses a special collection on feminism, LGTBI themes, and queer theory, in addition to offering reference public library services for the neighbourhood (Ajuntament de Barcelona, n.d.-b).

The Francesca Bonnemaison Cultural Centre for Women and later, La Bonne, is a "space for meeting, exchange, and creation of feminist cultural projects" (La Bonne, n.d.), focused on specialties in the audiovisual and performance fields. This centre also conducts research and thinking activities on feminist movements and anti-racism. The centre has its origins in the Institut de Cultura Popular (Institute of Popular Culture), founded in 1909 together with the Biblioteca Popular de la Dona (Women's Popular Library, the first public library for women in all of Europe) by the pedagogue Francesca Bonnemaison. After years of petitions and work to recover the legacy of Francesca Bonnemaison, in 2003, the Barcelona Provincial Council formally approved the agreement to transfer the space to the association promoting the Centre for Women's Culture. A year later, the space was formally inaugurated and with it, the aforementioned centre was born. However, in 2012, the Women's Cultural Centre suffered the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis with severe cuts to its budget and decided to reaffirm its desire to continue the work of Francesca Bonnemaison by starting a new phase of its work with a new name: La Bonne.

The objectives of this new stage focused on its consolidation as a space for meeting, exchange, and creation for women and feminists aimed at the whole of society, aiming to win the loyalty of the heterogeneous Bonne Community from an intersectional, anti-racist, and decolonial praxis, implementation of a circular logic in the promotion of women's culture (training → production → dissemination → archiving), and to become a meeting point for women from the world of culture and different feminisms in Barcelona. La Bonne also created the Wikidones Project, an initiative to generate content with a gender and feminist perspective, on Wikipedia. It also promotes the Young Creators Award[3], in collaboration with the Department of Feminisms and LGTBI of the Barcelona City Council, aimed at promoting audiovisual creation by women residing in the city of Barcelona. Furthermore, La Bonne promotes the Visible Lesbian Cultures Festival[4], which seeks to promote the city's lesbian cultural production.

El Graner is a publicly owned creation centre dedicated to dance and live arts, managed by the Mercat de les Flors (Flower Market) with the collaboration of the Associació de Professionals de la Dansa de Catalunya (Association of Dance Professionals of Catalonia, or APDC) and the Associació de Companyies Professionals de Dansa de Catalunya (Association of Professional Dance Companies of Catalonia, or ACPDC). The centre is part of the Creation Factories programme managed by the Barcelona City Council and works to support artistic creation within the field of dance and body languages, through experimentation, rehearsal, creation, and training, and in turn, to establish links with diverse audiences,

3 For more information see: https://labonne.org/projectes/premijovescreadores/

4 For more information see: https://labonne.org/projectes/visibles/

all based on a "horizontal and feminist management model that investigates new sustainable and inclusive governance models" (El Graner, n.d.). In 2019, El Graner's team participated in the presentation of the Guia de bones pràctiques per a una programació cultural paritària a Barcelona (Guide to best practices to achieve parity in the Barcelona cultural program; Soley-Beltran, 2019), included as part of the Barcelona City Council Plan for Gender Justice (2016–2020), which aimed to eradicate gender inequalities in the city.

The theatrical production *No es país para negras* (It's no country for black women) is a work co-written and starring the playwright and actress Silvia Albert Sopalet, with the collaboration of Laura Freijo and Carolina Torres Topaga (with the latter also directing), produced by Maripaz Correa. The production is a comic–dramatic monologue about the history of black Spanish women, which premiered in Barcelona in 2014, within the XV Mostra de Creadores Escèniques, Novembre Vaca (15th Exhibition of Scenic Creators in the Novembre Vaca festival), and since then it has been performed on multiple stages throughout Spain. Throughout all the programmed seasons (and those that continue to be programmed), at the end of the work there is always a space for discussion between the creator and the public. These interactions are moderated, in each case, by a leader from the African diaspora from the city in which the representation takes place, and the public is invited to comment on issues related to racism and African descendants (No es país para negras, n.d.). In addition, in 2020, the company of *No es país para negras* premiered a new play entitled *Blackface y otras vergüenzas* (Blackface and other shames).

The Mostra Internacional de Films de Dones de Barcelona (The International Women's Film Show of Barcelona) is a film festival born in 1993, created and directed by Drac Màgic Cultura Audiovisual (Magic Dragon Audiovisual Culture), with the aim of making audiovisual culture made by women visible. Parallel to the international exhibition held every year, usually at the beginning of June, they have also created an archive of films containing more than 2,500 works made by women, as well as an online archive with all the information on the works the festival has programmed over the years (Mostra Internacional de Films de Dones de Barcelona, n.d.). La Mostra is part of and the co-founder of TRAMA, a coordinator of film, video, and multimedia samples and festivals created by women from Spain. In addition, it offers to distribute some of the works presented at the festival and works to give value to cinema made by women.

In 2015, different entities from the Poble Sec neighbourhood formed the Poble Sec Feminist working group to develop an action protocol[5] against sexist attacks and harassment within the framework of the neighbourhood festival held every year in the second half of July. Th protocol aimed to guarantee a space of security and respect within this festive space and presented a proposal for action against any sexist attacks that might occur during these festive days. The protocol stresses the importance of carrying out activities to raise awareness beforehand, through talks, graphic and audiovisual material, and workshops, etc. with neighbourhood organisations and groups. At the same time, their intent to promote the representation of non-hegemonic genders and sexualities in the following years was also expressed.

Ca la Dona is a self-defined space for 'feminist action,' a meeting place for women, lesbians, and transgender people and a reference point for feminist movements which has been active since 1987 and has been located in the old quarter of Barcelona since 2012. Reflection and debate activities, the production of feminist thought, exchange of political experiences, and a whole series of socio-cultural activities are carried out in this space. One of their outstanding projects is the Ca la Dona Documentation Centre, a documentary collection and library that collects, preserves and disseminates a multitude of works (books, magazines,

5 Available here: http://labase.info/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/PROTOCOL-AGRESSIONS-FM15-1.pdf

films, writings, and posters, etc.) related to the feminist movement. In turn, Ca la Dona has a space for information on legal rights and resources and FemArt, an art exhibition made by women mainly from Spain and Latin America (Ca la Dona, n.d.).

In addition, the Afrofeminisms: Roots, Experiences, Resistance course was taught at the Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona (Centre for Contemporary Culture of Barcelona, or CCCB) throughout June 2018 by the Afro-Cuban historian, researcher, and professor, Karo Moret Miranda, a doctor in history from Pompeu Fabra University and editor of one of the Wanafrica Editions collections. The training given by Moret Miranda consisted of five sessions in which, "through history, religion, art, and the experiences of women", wanted to help participants understand "what social, cultural, political, and economic agents have influenced Afro-descendant history and the construction of a feminist Afro-consciousness," as well as allowing them to study "feminist movements in their complexity and plurality" and "the representation of what it is to be Afro-descendant and the response of the most contemporary artistic activism" (CCCB, n.d.). The course was part of the programming of the Institut d'Humanitats de Barcelona (Humanities Institute of Barcelona), which has been active since 1994.

The Minerva Project is a meeting and promotion project between the artistic creators linked to the Gràcia neighbourhood of Barcelona. It was born in 2011 as a result of the constitution of a working group comprising women from the Consell de Dones de Gràcia (Women's Council of Gràcia) and other women to debate culture and gender and make the artistic works created by women visible. In 2014, they created the virtual platform in the form of a catalogue to publicise the female creators of multiple artistic disciplines who are residents of or linked in some way to the Gràcia neighbourhood of Barcelona. It currently has the support of the Feminisms and LGTBI Directorate of Barcelona City Council and the collaboration of the Trama SCCL cooperative. Its main purpose is to promote cultural creation by women with a gender perspective, establish networks, and promote female talent in the district.

La Tremenda is a cooperative, created in 2017, dedicated to communication and the cultural and social press, also with a gender perspective. Led by Mireia Mora, Bàrbara Branco, Núria Olivé, and Laia Soler, their office is located inside the La Bonne Centre for Women's Culture where they implement different types of work related to communication and press strategies, content creation, management advertising, and events, as well as providing training and advice. Among other activities, La Tremenda coordinated the Cultural Feminisation: Presentation of the Guide to Good Practices for Equal Cultural Programming in Barcelona event and the subsequent Gender and Culture working group promoted by the Council of Feminisms and LGTBI of the Barcelona City Council and ICUB.

Cultural projects as good practices: diverse, intersectional, and with a gender perspective

Based on these experiences of good practices with a gender perspective in the cultural sector carried out in the city of Barcelona between 2015 and 2018, a range of initiatives (from programming, training, and documentation to artistic residencies, for example) in different fields of culture (visual arts, audiovisual, and theatre, etc.) were implemented by several types of organisations (from civic centres, theatres, and creation centres to cultural communication companies) and with different management and ownership models. Although the 10 experiences presented here do not claim to be representative of the sector as a whole, they do seek to exemplify different initiatives from a range of sectors and cultural agents.

From among all this diversity, the main role of La Bonne as the promoter of different projects with a strong presence and roots in the city stands out. These range from training to the maintenance of a documentation centre, consultancies, the prize for creators, festival of lesbian cultures, or artistic resi-

dences, for example. Its purpose of disseminating feminist projects places La Bonne as a crucial agent for the revitalisation of feminist cultural experiences in the city. The remaining initiatives analysed ranged from the presence of projects with a strong component of proximity to the territory, such as the Sagrada Família Civic Centre and Sagrada Família-Josep M. Ainaud de Lasarte Library, protocols against sexist attacks by the Poble Sec festival or the Minerva Project, which were linked to the Gràcia neighbourhood, and programmes with greater international projection, such as the International Women's Film Festival of Barcelona.

It should also be noted that intersectionality has been on the agenda of many of these initiatives for some time. Most of them recognise that the gender category is not the only one that structures society and that, therefore, it also intersects with other axes, such as origin, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, functional diversity, and social class. Despite this, there is still a long way to go. One of the interviewees remarked that the Barcelona context is "reluctant to identify other oppressions and other groups with different priorities" and that the transformations that have occurred up until now and that have generated an impact have been "because non-white artists and academics have organised and have offered our own products that we have managed privately, without institutional support" (interviewee 5[6]).

In the specific case of Afrofeminism, initiatives related to training stand out, such as the Afrofeminisms: Roots, experiences, resistance course offered in the CCCB in 2018 and taught by the Afro-Cuban historian Karo Moret Miranda, or the theatre production *No es país para negras* by Silvia Albert Sopale. In addition, to address the discrimination suffered by women in the creative process, which is aggravated by ethnicity, this theatrical production makes the creation and contributions made by women visible from an intersectional perspective.

Each and every one of these initiatives makes it possible to address different gender gaps that manifest themselves in the cultural sector of the city. Thus, through cultural activity programming, workshops, the use of spaces, and dissemination of activities with a gender perspective, the aim is to provide citizens with a diverse and high-quality cultural offering. One of the interviewees stated that "forcing parity in public institutions and programming should be an obligation and would promote an infinitely healthier cultural ecosystem" (interviewee 6). The use of non-sexist and transformative communication is also a common denominator in all the initiatives we analysed. The existence of La Tremenda, as a cooperative dedicated both to communication and cultural and social press with a gender perspective, is evidence of the key role of communication as a tool for the transmission of messages, meanings and values, whether through words or images.

Likewise, training, documentation, and research on feminist movements, gender inequalities in the cultural sector, and the creative role of women and other discriminated groups are initiatives that allow us to overcome the androcentric perspective that dominates many of the activities in the city (Perpinyà i Morera, 2020). In this sense, another of the interviewees remarked that "it is necessary to do a lot of training and give support to the current movements and people working in civil society" (interviewee 3). However, in some of the cases analysed, the awards were used as a key instrument to recognise the work and careers of female artists and cultural professionals (Cabré and Alvarado, 2015). For their part, festivals and exhibitions give visibility to the work of the least represented artists and groups while simultaneously expanding the diversity of cultural expressions in the city.

In addition to promoting a gender perspective in decision-making, the adoption of the gender perspective in the internal management of some of

6 In order to preserve the anonymity of the interviewees when using direct quotes, their numerical identification, which did not correspond to the order in which they appeared in the methodology section, was used.

the institutions considered in this work (such as the Sagrada Família Civic Centre) allows the exercise of professional practices to promote gender equality in the daily functioning of teams. In this sense, one of the interviewees had the following reflection: "on the one hand, [we have] the need to transform existing cultural institutions; on the other, to support existing initiatives on the margin, created by women and feminists" (interviewee 2). A key issue in this area is promoting the reconciliation of family, personal, and work life, both for people who participate in the activities and for those who are part of the centre's team.

Finally, some of the initiatives analysed were aimed at preventing and addressing sexism and violence against women. This ranged from the provision, dissemination, and use of a protocol for the prevention and action against sexual assaults and harassment in the Poble Sec neighbourhood street festival, to the provision of a protocol for use in the centre itself and internal and external training on sexist violence.

CONCLUSIONS

Barcelona as a 'cultural city', a driving force for progress in terms of the economy, social advancement, and tourism, did not include the transformative power of gender equality in its configuration. This limited the enjoyment of cultural rights by all citizens, social cohesion, and the richness of the diversity of cultural expressions. Despite all the gender inequalities affecting women and minority groups, our analysis in this present article showed the merely testimonial nature of the intervention of the local authorities responsible for culture in the city of Barcelona. Despite the feminist discourse of the current governing party in the city (BeC), implementation of these principles in the field of cultural policies has been practically non-existent. Failure to recognise this potential consequently leads to the constriction of cultural rights for women and other minority groups, undermining the strengthening of a public agenda that seeks equality in cultural terms for all its citizens.

Nonetheless, this study highlighted the fundamental role of feminist movements and various initiatives arising from the cultural field, some of them with a long and recognised trajectory and others more recent. These have made it possible to address gender gaps in access to resources and programming, underlining unequal power relationships within institutions as well as traditional gender norms that reinforce these gaps and power imbalances. The initiatives included in this work, which have been highlighted by the cultural sector itself, show the key role of the cultural agents present in the territory, beyond the existence of a road map in the political sphere or the inclusion of gender equality as an objective in the city's cultural policies.

The relevance that the city itself has assumed, as a 'cultural city' and based on the 'Barcelona model', has not sufficiently attenuated gender inequalities, nor has it, to date, contemplated a sustainable public policy base to transform the cultural situation of inequality. In this sense, the current situation must be urgently transformed into a collective city project that can mitigate, in depth and in a sustainable way, what is currently happening in the field of art and culture. In order to build more democratic societies, we must also guarantee the cultural rights of every group discriminated against or directly separated from cultural fields.

On the one hand, the creation of social, economic, and cultural projects in the city that consider the gender perspective and make evident, for example, the place of women and LGTBI collectives, are a possible way of helping attenuate these inequalities. On the other hand, specifically in the professional field of culture in the city of Barcelona, beyond the few existing studies and little available data, gender inequality is more than present, even in various cultural sectors. This inequality is not only manifested in the ability to access cultural fields, development of artistic professions, recognition of work or career trajectories, or in prize awards, but also in the lower representation of women in decision-making positions compared to men (Villarroya, 2019). For instance, 7 out of 10 management positions in the city's large cultural facilities are held by men.

Likewise, the recognition of projects considered as good practices in the field of gender and culture in Barcelona makes it possible to continue delving into transversal policies and lines of action in search of the consolidation of models oriented towards equality in the city. From this point of view, the territory (and its citizens) is constituted as a space of individual creation and as the place in which it is possible to develop initiatives aimed at preventing and raising awareness of sexism and gender violence. In the same way, our analysis of good practices has highlighted how gender, as a social construct, must necessarily be articulated alongside other dimensions (such as ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, functional diversity, or social class) that enable the recognition of feminist cultural experiences in the city. Although intersectionality is present in several of the experiences analysed, which are still active projects, the transformations achieved in the city have still been moderate.

By way of conclusion, we would like to point out the need to work on gender discrimination from different spaces (cultural activity programming, use and appropriation of spaces, communication, and resources, etc.) and spheres (public, private, and third sector) with the aim of providing a diverse cultural offering. Only in this way will it also be possible to consolidate a more just and egalitarian cultural ecosystem in the city.

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Opposed devotions? Creation and care in the cultural precariat

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ABSTRACT
In this article we will address the specific logic of cultural precariousness, focusing on gender factors that place working women in positions of structural weakness—a complex and multidimensional phenomenon. In our analysis, we focused on the relationship between creative labour and care work as differentiated social spaces. We understand 'care work' as the management of people's well-being, essential for the sustainability of life and the reproduction of the workforce. On the other hand, 'creative labour' is the most visible dimension of artistic activity and implies the production of works that achieve a social value and are recognised as artistic. The latter includes, especially as a result of the recent precariousness processes at play, an important component of 'free labour,' individual background work aimed at providing adequate conditions for creation and which nowadays focuses on the construction and maintenance of social networks and e-reputation. In short, while creative labour constitutes the visible and socially recognised part of artistic practice, free labour and care work form the hidden part. Although these aspects do not receive social recognition, they largely determine individual achievements, beyond the romantic conceptions of the 'genius artist' strictly focused on the creative sphere. In our article we reflect on the relationship between both these types of work, construction of their constitutive logics—which are generally incompatible with each other—and identify their main contradictions.

Keywords: creative labour, care work, free labour, gender, precarity

SUMMARY

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INTRODUCTION

Over the last 10 years, the percentage weight of women in cultural employment has grown by just over four points, from 38.4% in 2011 to 42.9% in 2020. Even so, the presence of women is still significantly lower than that of men in this sector. This situation is comparable to that presented by the overall employment data, with women representing 45.5% of the labour force[1] . These figures measure the growing but still secondary presence of women in Spanish cultural employment compared to that of men and take on greater significance when complemented by the increasingly numerous analyses conducted on the situation of women in different sectors comprising complex creative work. In addition to this lower presence, they also show the sexual segregation of work, both vertically and horizontally.

Both in Spain and in other Western countries, women have lower salaries, more dropouts, and are frequently subjected to de-legitimisation of their creative capacity by assigning them functions related to organisational and communication tasks with less social prestige (Pratt, 2002; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2015; Cubells, 2010; Conor et al., 2015; Jones and Pringle, 2015; Harvey and Shepherd, 2017; Bennett, 2018; Bridges, 2018; Pérez-Ibáñez and López, 2019; Anllo vento, 2020; Cuenca Suárez, 2020; MIM, 2020; Ramón-Borja et al., 2020). This situation cannot be separated from the general precariousness experienced by the sector, just like employment in general, in recent decades. Precariousness has become an undeniable and daily reality that affects all the conditions in which paid work is carried out globally (Bourdieu, 1999; Standing, 2013) and this situation has been broadened and

1 Cultural employment data referring to the second quarter. Source: CULTURABase, Ministry of Culture and Sports, retrieved 12/03/2021: http://estadisticas.mecd.gob.es/CulturaDynPx/culturabase/index.htm?type=pcaxis&path=/t1/p1e/a2018/&file=pcaxis.

deepened as a consequence of the political and business management of the Great Recession. Furthermore, the effect of the measures taken to contain the spread of COVID-19, which have eroded the basic foundations of the world of culture, remain to be seen, especially in sectors in which a direct relationship with the public is essential.

In recent decades, paid work has completely colonised our lives and new technologies have sharpened the demand, in terms of capital, for the constant attention of workers: they must always be connected and in constant transformation, adapting to the 'needs' of the market. Here, we verified how this trend, which was pointed out years ago by Sennett (2000, 2006), is becoming more acute with the succession of economic crises. Thus, ever more groups of people now inhabit an insecure and unstable labour reality. In this context, creative work presents specific contours and consequences that complicate the purpose of describing (and above all, measuring) its precariousness. This is especially true when many of the characteristics that have come to define precarious jobs (instability, uncertainty, long hours, and lack of protection) form an indisputable part of what it means to engage in creative work, to be an 'artist,' in our collective imagination. This clearly has undeniable implications of a structural nature. Despite identifying creative work as the greatest exponent of freedom and diversity, according to Gill (2014), reality shows that it is based on unequal relationships by gender, social class, and ethnicity/race.

In this article we wanted to focus on the proven gender inequality present in the creative sector and reflect upon a question that has been asked on other occasions but that we believe should be raised again given the generalised nature and deepening of job insecurity now seen in western society. We questioned the relationship between creative work and care work, and whether these tasks can be understood as distinct social spaces.

This text is divided into three parts, followed by conclusions. In the first place, we point out the social conditions that define the existence of a cultural precariat. Second, we delve into the specific considerations of this cultural precariat, with the historical construction of the status of being an artist. Third, we address the logic of care work and the construction of the ideal of femininity upon these two social spaces. Finally, reflection on the relationship, in a situation of precariousness, between artistic logic and that of care enabled us to identify points of collision between the two logics.

THE SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE CULTURAL PRECARIAT

Various studies published in recent years (Tasset et al., 2013; O'Brien et al. 2016; Barbican, 2018) have shown the existence of a specific labour market in the field of creative professions, which is conditioned by precariousness processes. The idea of the precariousness of the creative sectors, and their differentiated character with respect to other professional fields, is not new; it is part of a debate with a long history (Abbing 2002). However, the specific characteristics of these forms of precariousness have recently transformed and have gained greater visibility. This first occurred with the financial crisis of 2008, which dismantled the most utopian vision of the 'creative classes', and later, with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic crisis. Although these events may give the impression of being one-off crises in the creative professions, they are in fact the result of intensification of deeper structural processes (Comunian and England, 2020). Moreover, these inequalities are articulated on different axes, with one of the most relevant being gender. Indeed, precariousness is inscribed in the conditions of artistic work, but especially so in the conditions of female artistic work.

From a general perspective, and covering the different creative sectors, Caves (2002) identified two fundamental principles that determine the differentiated structure of these spaces. On the one hand, is the principle of 'no one knows,' that is, of the permanent uncertainty regarding the demand for and success of creative work. The ways in which these artistic risks

are faced determines the working conditions and internal dynamics established in cultural fields. On the other hand, is the principle of 'art for art's sake,' which indicates the orientation of creative workers towards originality, experimentation, and the search for innovative solutions, etc. This principle has shaped the various cultural fields since the process of their autonomation was implemented throughout the 20th century.

Unlike other professions, the passion and pleasure that these jobs provide impose a very peculiar tension between autonomy and exploitation, which Helsmondhalgh (2011) called "a complicated version of freedom." Historically, these principles have given rise to bohemian communities that lived with a certain amount of isolation from the rest of society. These communities were characterised by differentiated value systems and codes of conduct, which rebelled against the normality of dominant society. Furthermore, this rebellion was often associated with the rejection of economic benefits, understood as part of a bourgeois lifestyle (Heinich, 2005).

However, in many cases, this 'chosen' poverty becomes an 'imposed' poverty. The motivations of applicants to enter the artistic fields are not usually economic, rather, they are associated with other interests of an aesthetic, social, or self-knowledge type (Menger, 2006). Applicants to enter the artistic or literary field, generally with a high amount of cultural capital, and with ambitious life and professional projects, encounter two major obstacles. On the one hand, they find that this economic resignation is not sustainable over time. Although the logic of artistic fields is based on the accumulation of cultural and symbolic capital, economic capital is still important, not only to survive, but even to promote one's own professional career. This generates significant inequality between those who can and cannot resist the absence of economic income for prolonged periods (Bain and McLean, 2020). On the other hand, many applicants do not find the level of recognition they expect within artistic communities. If artistic ethics assumes, to a certain extent, material poverty because it is part of the artist's mythology, it accepts the lack of recognition with greater difficulty, at least among groups of equals; recognition and visibility is an essential objective of creative professionals (Bourdieu, 1995). The absence of recognition, either in the majority circles or in the most specialised groups, can generate individual tensions and a certain shared awareness of the exclusion and rejection of existing cultural institutions and hierarchies.

The secession of artistic stars

A basic structural condition of cultural fields, which supports the persistence of the cultural precariat, is the distinction between two clearly differentiated and hierarchical groups, which Caves (2002) called List A and List B: a minority that acquires visibility and social recognition—the 'stars' of E. Morin (1972)—and an invisible majority, with little social recognition, which Bourdieu (1995) called the 'intellectual proletariat.' Often, minor differences in talent mean huge differences in symbolic recognition and access to economic resources (Gladwell, 2000). Indeed, differentiated recognition and resources have considerable implications for the life trajectories of artists. The elite concentrates much of its recognition and public attention in a dynamic similar to 'winner takes all' (Quemin, 2013). However, those at the base have great difficulty in gaining visibility and recognition (and therefore, economic resources).

These artists, who remain at subsistence levels (Tasset, 2013), will make very significant efforts and large sacrifices to try to access those privileged positions, which are only reached by a minority. In addition, this process of polarisation between a recognised minority and an unrecognised majority has intensified with the digital revolution and new forms of visibility. These are excluded groups, a precariat in the sense assigned by Standing (2013), but they have some distinctive characteristics, and unlike other groups, extremely high levels of cultural resources.

In the workplace, creative work is presented as a boundaryless career (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996). This means that creative workers move between dif-

ferent employers and work on different projects; they also need to obtain the validation of different social networks, both professional and public. Different studies of the cultural world have shown that this world is complicated for creative workers, who share common traits such as: the tendency to hold several jobs at the same time, generalised self-employment and freelance work, discontinuous jobs and very few forms of protection, uncertainty of their professional trajectories, unequal distribution of benefits, youth of the workers in the sector, and constant increase of these types of workers in Western societies. The working conditions of the creative professions fit perfectly with the 'culture of capitalism' described by Richard Sennett (2006), in which permanent fragmentation and constant change are promoted.

Creative professionals must become a company, learn to manage their relationship with the public, and acquire new skills and abilities to adapt to new market demands.[2] This hyper-capitalist culture of flexibility and permanent production is manifested in the professional trajectories themselves: the transition from a series of more or less predictable achievements, based on long-term contracts, to a constant chain of specific pieces, which Charles Handy (1989) called a "job trajectory portfolio." In the portfolio lifestyle, workers do not commit to any individual or organisation, they make specific agreements related to specific projects. This chain of projects also occurs in a vital context where work, life, and leisure converge towards the same type of existential experience (Deuze, 2007). In its most celebratory vision, this process gives rise to the appearance of a dynamic and entrepreneurial 'creative class' (Florida, 2002), and in its most critical conception, to a cultural precariat (Standing, 2013) which remains at the limits of basic subsistence.

2 Intensification of the difficulties of the creative professions, expansion of endless hours, irregular remuneration, multiplication of tasks, and difficulties in maintaining basic levels of subsistence, have been investigated by various authors from qualitative perspectives, focusing on how they affect individual well-being (see, for example, Louden, 2013 and Deresiewscz, 2021).

According to Miège (1989), creative work is underpaid due to the excess of applicants wanting to work in artistic fields, which produces a vast pool of non-professional cultural workers and the constant mobility of creative professionals from one field to another. This excess of applicants is an explanatory element of the difficult working conditions in the cultural or creative industries, even when the offer of cultural work increases. As Zafra (2017) pointed out, the attraction of many young people to creative work can lead to forms of 'self-exploitation'—masked as the 'enthusiasm' they show for their work. In this paradigm, workers push themselves to the limit to build themselves a reputation that will give them enough autonomy to implement high-quality cultural productions (Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2011, McRobbie, 2002; Neff, 2012).

Other researchers such as Banks (2007), insist that creative workers seek, above all, intrinsic benefits and not fame, fortune, or quick money. The moral systems of trust, honesty, obligation, and justice have not been entirely lost in the cultural world, and in addition, many artists continue to aspire to have a social influence by materialising their aesthetic goals. Somehow, cultural production is still associated with the struggle for human emancipation. Many initiatives are associated with goals that emphasise the need not to be driven by career success, but to consider other aspects such as making contributions to the community, providing love and affection to family and friends, and showing solidarity with others, even strangers (Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2011). These objectives, and especially those that affect women, such as goals that interfere with motherhood, collide head-on with the dynamics of cultural fields (Dent, 2020) and tend to alienate creative workers in precarious conditions.

Digitisation and the expansion of free labour

Recently, the structures of cultural fields, conditions of creative work, and internal hierarchies of the profession have been drastically altered by the digitisation process. These modifications have especially affected creative groups located in the middle and lower strata,

who have seen how it is increasingly difficult to maintain visibility and, therefore, creative recognition (Rius-Ulldemolins and Pecourt, 2022). Digitisation has further increased the distance between the visible creative minorities (who obtain attention and social recognition) and the invisible creative majorities, who remain eternally anonymous, do not obtain social recognition and, therefore, cannot live from their creative work. Thus, for example, while in the 1980s, 20% of the content generated 80% of the income, currently, 1% of the content generates 80% of the profits (Taplin, 2017). These invisible majorities, in addition to their creative work, are also obliged to expend a huge amount of effort on developing complementary social networks to build their visibility and reputation (Marwick, 2013).

In digital environments, before institutions and companies take notice of their creations, artists must first build a reputation, which often works by developing an online standing. This is because it involves working in the sphere of social networks and platforms, and thus, artists obtain more institutional recognition, which in turn, implies access to the established cultural circuits (museums, galleries, publishing houses, and record companies, etc.). This obligation to be on social networks can equate a new form of exploitation because the user must 'give their data away' to the platform. In this sense, Tiziana Terranova (2004) talked about 'free work' on the internet, which she considers a fundamental, although invisible, way of creating value in our current form of capitalism. Free work is simultaneously voluntary and obligatory, enjoyed and suffered, and includes tasks such as designing web pages, participating in mailing lists, Twitter accounts, Facebook, and Instagram, etc.

Creative professionals are required to participate in this free work to build their reputation. In this sense, Mark Andrejevic (2009), in his response to the celebratory culture of active audiences, claimed that creative work and exploitation coexist and influence each other in the context of the emerging online economy. Andrejevic criticises the 'participation=democratisation' equation and underlines the control regimes and economic imperatives that condition participation in digital environments. He believes that these technologies gain their popularity by offering creative control in exchange for indirect work based on community building and forms of socialisation. These networks are controlled by the big tech platforms, which make huge profits from the unrecognised free work undertaken by creators. All this suggests a type of subjection similar to what women have historically suffered. Artists spend a lot of time on building relationships, on emotive work, which on the one hand is autonomous, but on the other, is subject to exploitation.

CREATIVE WORK AND THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF CARE

In *The Fisherwoman's Daughter*, a text from 1988, The writer Ursula K. Le Guin (1989) poses a dilemma that is repeatedly imposed upon women writers, and only women writers: "books or children." Le Guin exposes, from a critical position, how the artistic (literary in this case) impulse has historically been constructed as a need to which to one must respond, leaving aside everyday tasks, which includes, of course, care. The artistic work occupies a central place and male writers must dedicate themselves absolutely, almost heroically, to it. Furthermore, women who want to be considered as writers must give up either motherhood or creation.

It is true that, as Gill (2014) pointed out, the secondary position that women still occupy with respect to creative work cannot be explained solely by their greater responsibility in terms of care work. This is because women without children (or other people they must care for) are also doing poorly. We believe, however, that focusing on the social construction of care work and creative work as distinct social spaces—with different people responsible for these tasks, but above all with similar demands put on these people—contributes significantly to a better understanding of this same secondary position of women in the field of creation (and, with it, the secondary position of men in care). Thus, we approach the notion of care based on two fundamental elements: (a) on the one

hand, the conception of care and the time it requires; (b) on the other hand, who does the caring and how the best care is exercised.

Care work and time

Care, the need to care and to be cared for, is an inseparable part of our daily lives because it ensures human continuity. However, despite this daily centrality and the increasing academic interest in care, there is no consensus on either its definition or its measurement. This is partly because of the magnitude and complexity of the tasks it involves (Folbre, 2011) and its marginality among academic interests in the social sciences (Carrasco et al., 2011). Following Durán (2018, p. 126) we can consider care as "the daily management of one's own and others' well-being; containing activities of direct transformation of the environment, but also surveillance activities that mainly require availability and are incompatible with other simultaneous activities." This definition includes work, resources, and relationships (Daly, 2021) and must also include the dual dimensions of material (corporal) and immaterial (relative to affections) care (Pérez Orozco, 2006). These are mainly conducted in the private sphere and at home, although some tasks are transferred to the market and become paid work. Nonetheless, what they have in common is that women usually complete them.

The number of tasks we could classify as care work is immense and cataloguing them would require a huge number of hours[3]. In addition, they are not equally distributed by sex[4], social class, origin, or the form of family coexistence. Moreover, we must also consider the lack of public investment in Spain—which is strongly familial (Saraceno, 1995; Naldini, 2003)—in terms of family (and care) policies. This situation was aggravated by the Great Recession of 2008 and the austerity policies implemented that led to a greater incidence of care in the private sphere. In turn, this caused women to return to the private domain, further weakening their position in the labour market (Gálvez, 2013; Gálvez and Rodríguez, 2016). Indeed, we are still yet to see the consequences of the ongoing crisis generated by COVID-19, although there are signs of a worsening of the position of women in the labour market, precisely because of the accumulation of care needs.

In short, the assumption of the majority of care work and its overlap with increasingly precarious paid work has led women to use their time intensively in order to make both jobs compatible—the 'double working day' (Balbo, 1979) or 'endless working day' (Durán, 1988)—which worsens their health, eats up their personal time, and makes it difficult for them to build a professional career under the same conditions as men. In addition, this situation has no prospect of change, at least not immediately, given that the state, market, and men do not seem to move at the same pace as women, creating increasingly deepening care gaps and unequal relationships (Ahlberg et al., 2008; Crompton et al., 2005; Crompton, 2006; Lewis, 2001; Scott, 2006, Obiol, 2014).

Care work: who cares and how they care

In addition to the activities and relationships arising from attending to people's well-being needs, care also includes regulatory frameworks to define who is responsible for these tasks and the spaces in which they are conducted (Daly and Lewis, 2000, p. 285). In this sense, we have witnessed the construction of these frameworks for centuries; they not only decide who provides care but also how people should be cared for. The foundations of some of these frameworks include the notion of motherhood, leading to the emergence of an ideal of femininity (and masculinity) which has presented in different forms throughout history (Badinter, 1991).

3 According to calculations by Durán (2018. p. 121), the annual time devoted to care, understood in an extended way, represents a total of 28,143,097 full-time jobs in the service sector.

4 While women devote a daily average of 4 hours and 36 minutes to the home and family, men spend a mean 2 hours and 37 minutes on these tasks (Time Use Survey, 2009–2010, INE).

Almost parallel to the cultural construction of bohemia as a representation of artistic work and as an inherently masculine space, care—especially that of children—was constructed as a feminine space. This long and complex process is closely related to the development of the capitalist economy and involved separation of private and public spaces and the exclusive attribution of their responsibility to women and men, respectively. This process began in the 18th century on the basis of Enlightenment values according to which women possessed intrinsic aptitudes that made them more suitable for the care and education of children, a private responsibility that was, nevertheless, presented through the effects that it could have in the public sphere as the result of its civilizing function (Bolufer, 1995, 2012). Thus, the nursing mother was the symbol of the new maternity (Bolufer, 2010): devoted exclusively and self-sacrificingly to the care of children.

This discourse became hegemonic in Western society during the 19th and 20th centuries along with the advance of the industrialisation process. It formed the basis of the capitalist economy, playing an especially important role in the design of the welfare state based on the model of men as the breadwinners and women as the main caregivers in families (Lewis, 1992). In short, as Nash (2010) had already pointed out at the beginning of the 20th century, the cultural representation of sexual differences was fundamental in the construction and consolidation of a collective imagination with respective archetypes of femininity and masculinity, in which women occupied a subordinate and dependent place compared to men.

This model was largely based on medical and scientific discourse that, backed by the apparent neutrality of its position, defended the ideals of the bourgeois family with motherhood as the only way for women to fulfil themselves, as their natural destiny and only legitimate aspiration (Bolufer, 2013). It is still possible to find examples of this discourse even in the 21st century. Women are still expected to respond selflessly and in a self-sacrificing way to the care needs of their families, especially their children. In addition, underpinning gender inequality in the supposedly different nature of men and women defused this critique and thus, strengthened the inequality itself (Nash, 2010). Although there was resistance and negotiations, marked above all by the social class of women (Bolufer, 1995, 2010; Aguado, 1998), there is no doubt that these values still occupy a relevant place in the social imaginary regarding maternity and care provision.

Furthermore, we must point out the specificities of the Spanish case in which, despite its late and weak industrialisation process (Babiano, 1993), establishment of the model of exclusivity of spaces and functions by sex/gender is still evident. Moreover, based on its most traditional values, family was considered the safeguard of the essence of Spanish society that Francoism had sought to build as a counterpoint to the alleged immorality of the Second Republic. The latter had taken shape in the absence of a maternal figure at home because women were working outside their households and, therefore, were neglecting their main function: educating future Spaniards in the ideology of the regime. In contrast, this model encouraged the myth of the 'perfect married woman' or 'angel of the home' whereby women's destiny was motherhood and bringing up children (Nash, 1996; Iglesias de Ussel and Meil, 2001).

The social transformations that took place from the 1970s onwards, at different speeds depending on the country and social group, included important changes in the role of women in the public sphere and, necessarily, also in the private sphere. The generalisation and deepening of the individualisation process, especially in the case of women (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2003), and their greater presence (and permanence) in paid work and in public spaces, went hand in hand with changes in couple and family relationships. However, care, with motherhood and child-rearing as its most important aspects, continues to be seen as a fundamental responsibility of women. Thus, the normative framework that had been built on maternity took on new contours but presented the same content: to propose that the individual

fulfilment of mothers be in satisfying the needs of others, in this case, their children.

In relation to this, Hays (1998) coined the concept of 'intensive motherhood' as a set of ideas and beliefs, an ideology, which revolves around the general assumption that a 'good mother' should put the well-being of her children before her own or other types of interests. These beliefs posit that mothers should dedicate their bodies and souls to the task of caring, investing large amounts of time, effort, and money into this task. It says that mothers have to be emotionally and physically available for their children, always, whether or not they have a paid job or plan to have a career. An idea that, as usual, was conceived from a very clear structural position not only of gender, but also of class, ethnicity, and family format. Despite the difficulties, this influences how all women exercise motherhood, even though it differs in its costs. The most vulnerable women feel the most painful effects on their living conditions and those of their children (Gillies, 2005; Elliot et al., 2015; Obiol et al., 2016).

Having a child continues to be a fundamental turning point that often entails a traditionalisation, although not of discourses but rather, of the practices of care and sharing of this care between men and women (González and Jurado, 2015). Thus, we would no longer be dealing with a model of separation and exclusivity of spheres according to sex, but rather with the dual presence of women in the public and private spheres, while men continue with their sole presence in the public sphere (Carrasco and Recio, 2014). But, despite recent changes, the collective imagination upon which this division of work and spaces is still based supposes, in the case of a large part of the women in our society, the preference of the well-being of others over one's own. In view of this, we get the heart of creative work, especially work in precarious conditions, in which these care needs are an element that must be considered. This is because of their contradiction with both the times and dynamics of their multiple trades and with the construction of an extremely specific subjectivity and its implications in terms of time and dedication.

CARE WORK AND CREATIVE WORK, IN PRECARIOUSNESS

The social construction of what it means (and claims) to dedicate oneself to creative work and what it means (and claims) to care are based on similar, if not identical, parameters: selfless, almost devotional dedication. This differentiation in devotional obligation is related to the historical location of men in the sphere of production and creative work, and of women in the domain of reproduction, and therefore their inscription to the domestic space. While, throughout the 20th century, artistic revolutions were often posed as subversions against the economic system and moral order, they still maintained the unequal relationships between the sexes and the differentiated distribution of social obligations and rewards remained unaltered.

Both the bohemian ideal and the maternity ideal are presented as vital commitments that do not allow any distractions because this would mean a reduction in the results obtained: either one takes poor care of oneself—with both individual and collective consequences (Elliot et al. al, 2015)—or they are not a good artist. Hence, we return once again to the dilemma posed by Le Guin: "books or children;" in other words, creative work or care work. However, it is a dilemma that, at least for now, only seems to concern women. The cultural norm that frames motherhood in Western society requires, as we have pointed out, women to relegate their own desires and needs before those of their children from a place of self-sacrifice, even ignoring their individual identity. This can be seen in the absolute conviction with which Marina Abramović affirms that having children would have been a disaster for her work[5]. Or as Soledad Sevilla puts it: her colleagues took her as an amateur artist because she was a mother and had to share time that 'should have been dedicated

5 Marina Abramović says having children would have been "a disaster for my work", Nicole Puglise, The Guardian, retrieved 26/07/2016: https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2016/jul/26/marina-abramovic-abortions-children-disaster-work.

completely to art' with motherhood.[6] Thus, the transition from the social space of reproduction (domestic life) to the social space of production (creative expression) becomes a socially suspicious or even illegitimate movement.

The ways in which creative work takes place do not help in finding a balance between paid work and care work. In other words, the alternation of periods without work with others of intense workloads, without schedules—referred to as bulimic periods Pratt (2002)—or irregular and short-term work patterns, marked by especially short units of time in weeks or days (Gill, 2014). These professional schedules require, among other things, long waits, rehearsals with a lot of people, performances at night, 12-hour days for audiovisual recordings, and study hours, etc.[7] In short, the dynamics of creative work in general are difficult to match up with the timetable required for care, which can be especially rigid and absorbing in certain circumstances, for example with small children, or in the case of caring for people with serious illnesses or disabilities. The plastic artist Myrel Chernick puts it clearly in a collective text on creation and motherhood (Bee et al., 2020, p. 272–273):

> "Always the same. There is never time for anything: time to be with my children, for art, to earn a living, to see the shows that interest me, to be part of an artistic community. And often I feel isolated and exhausted. […] Although I continue to dedicate myself to artistic work (at a slow pace, of course) and exhibiting it, I have little time left to establish contacts, attend openings, call and see people, organise visits to workshops, all the things required to continue being visitable and considered for an exhibition".

Moreover, the precariousness of the sector also contributes to this contradiction. Considering workers in a one-dimensional way, focusing solely on employment relationships, makes it difficult to leave room for care: both in terms of the care provided and the time spent providing care. It must be remembered that, despite the myth of the solitary creative genius, creative work is social work. As Collins (1998) showed in the case of philosophical communities, creative networks play a fundamental role in valuing the work of creators. In modern times, artistic and bohemian communities, with their institutions and the participants involved, have played an essential role in the promotion and validation of artistic trajectories—and subsequent professionalisation. The effort required to build and maintain these social networks (traditionally achieved by living a bohemian lifestyle) further reduces time for family obligations and parenting. Nowadays, the centrality of digital platforms in building social networks and individual reputations has further amplified the amount of free work that must be done by artists to boost their careers (Marwick, 2013). This accumulation of free work, associated with the construction and maintenance of social networks, collides head-on with that of providing free care work.

In the case of women, this duality in terms of the objects of their attention, demand for exclusivity imposed by creative work (and its associated lifestyle), and the inescapable responsibilities of care (which are mostly assigned to women), has important consequences. Firstly, in the secondary position that women often occupy in creative work. Despite the fact that women are present in relevant places in the creative sphere and that they are socially represented as a non-traditional and highly individualised sector, the truth is that, according to Banks and Milestone (2011), this appearance masks traditional forms of relevant gender discrimination and inequality. We continue to find an association between masculinity and creativity that serves to marginalise women from the most prestigious positions in the cultural industries (Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2015). On

6 Soledad Sevilla: "They saw me as an 'amateur' because I was a mother", EL PAÍS Weekly: Interviews, EL PAÍS, retrieved from: https://elpais.com/eps/2021-04-17/soledad-sevilla-otros-artistas-me-veian-como-una-amateur-porque-era-una-madre-rodeada-de-ninos.html

7 *Eq'iliquà*, 51_11/20, Matrius, retrieved from: https://issuu.com/aapv-equiliqua/docs/eq__51_-_per_web

the other hand, the success of women in certain professional sectors, and specifically, in certain cultural spheres, often implies a certain symbolic devaluation of the work they perform (Bourdieu, 2000). Although the presence of women is greater in the artistic and humanistic fields (compared to technological ones), on the whole, they continue to occupy low and intermediate positions in those sectors. Job insecurity and non-professional obligations often prevent them from participating in power struggles or from accessing specific forms of promotion within cultural fields.

One of the consequences of this subordinate position of women in creative spaces is found in their abandonment, be it of motherhoodd[8] (and care) or of creative work. In this last option, the 'devalued' position of women in creative work environments cannot be ignored, because if they are undervalued at work and this contrasts with the high value placed on their labour in private-domestic spaces, it facilitates their flight to more comforting places (Percival, 2020; Dent, 2020). When considering this abandonment, we must also take the weight of social class into account. The variables of gender and social class outline the positions occupied in the creative work/care work (motherhood) dichotomy—albeit masked with the appearance of being a personal choice. Therefore, there is little guarantee these factors will become an element of collective and political critique. This is especially true if we consider the cultural sector as the ultimate exponent of freedom, self-realisation, and individuality, in which it is a privilege to be able to work (Gill, 2014; Conor et al., 2015).

CONCLUSIONS

In this article, we presented an initial conceptual approach to the complex articulation between creative work and care work and how this reality affects women located in the intermediate and low positions of the cultural field. Care is traditionally an invisible form of work assumed by women which involves remarkably diverse tasks and whose undertaking implies neglecting other occupations, especially those in professional fields. However, these tasks are essential to make the remaining jobs (especially those that are professionally recognised) possible. The difficulty of making the two social spaces compatible occurs in all labour sectors, but acquires unique dimensions in creative fields, precisely because of the vocational nature attributed to this reconciliation. The historical construction of creative work demands total, almost devotional, dedication and takes place in a social environment (commonly associated with the idea of a bohemian lifestyle) alien to the logic and needs of providing care. This structural reality makes it difficult for many women to access creative work, especially professionally recognised creative work. Thus, there is a collision between opposing devotions and obligations that seems to have no solution.

As Caves (2002) pointed out, the labour structure of creative fields is characterised by an extreme hierarchy between a minority that accumulates most of the visibility and recognition, and a majority that encounters great difficulty even to subsist. This is the distinction between List A and List B of the cultural field. The competition between the agents involved to access List A, and therefore achieve creative recognition, is extraordinarily strong, and so small differences in talent can have cardinal implications. In addition, the fight for recognition implies performing a whole series of free and invisible jobs, intricately linked to the generation of social networks and construction of individual reputations, which are hidden behind artistic or literary achievements.

In recent decades, the digitisation of the cultural field has further increased the demands for the free labour that hides the creative process. In this context, the obligations of care pose an almost insurmountable difficulty for those (women) who

8 Data from the Spanish music industry indicates that there is a low maternity rate of 26% compared to the 29% paternity rate of their male counterparts (MIM, 2020).

aspire to be part of the elite of the cultural field, not only in terms of time but also in terms of the esteem in which they are held as artists. It could be said that the social construction of the artist is fully inscribed into the process of the individualisation of modernity, with the consequent rupture of the networks of collective solidarity essential for dealing with care work. Within the neoliberal logic of individualisation, some women manage to reach the cultural summit, but these individual examples do not eliminate the deep inequalities that are present. These disparities tend to penalise, to a greater extent, women who assume non-professional obligations associated with caring for others and the maintenance of community structures, which are essential for the functioning of social life.

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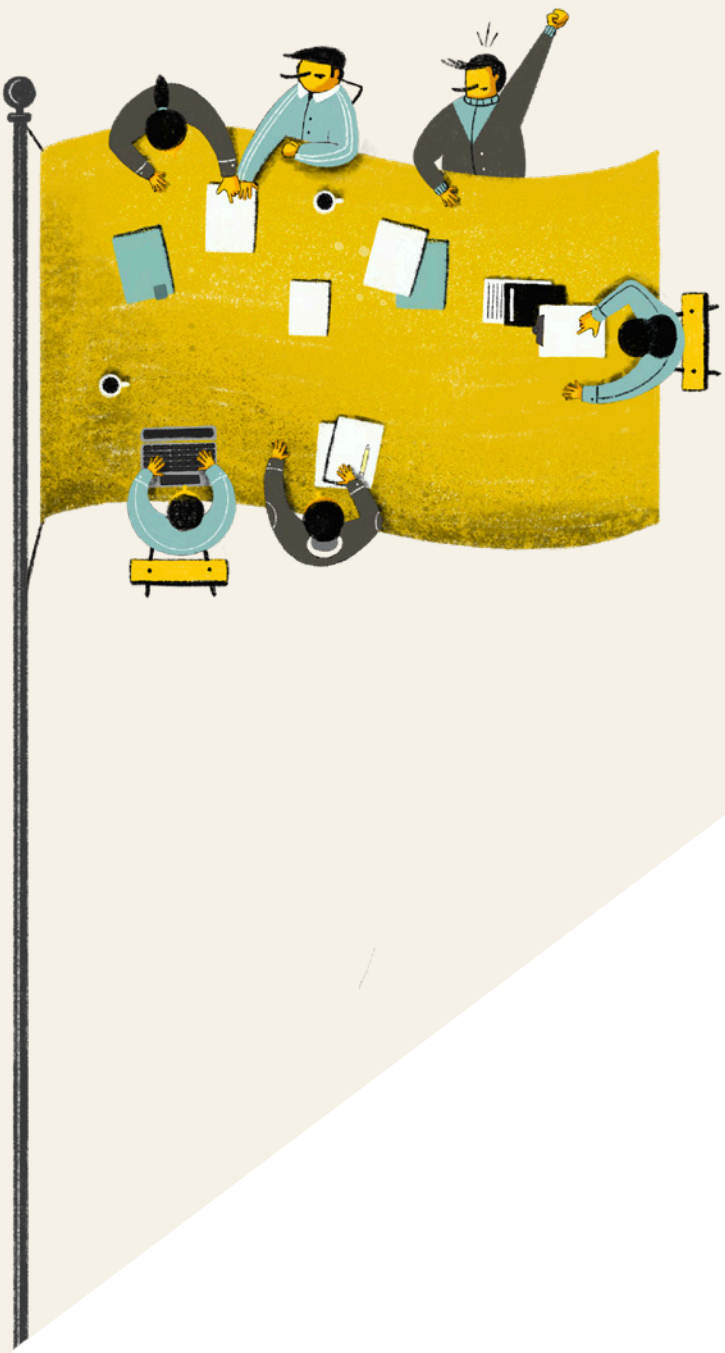

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Restructuring of the electoral competition in the Autonomous Community of Valencia (2011–2019)

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ABSTRACT
Electoral competition in the Valencian Autonomous Community has long been articulated through the left–right and national identity divides. Although voter identities have generally remained stable over time, some shifts between 2011 and 2019 indeed seemed to be connected to the breakthrough of new political parties. The aim of this article was to show the electoral spaces occupied by new and mainstream political parties in the Valencian region through the last three regional electoral cycles. This, in turn, allowed us to trace the evolution of the main political areas dominated by each party, as well as to highlight spaces in which the electoral competition was more demanding. This Valencian case study shows the limitations of theories of party competition based on exclusive control of the electoral space by some political parties.

Keywords: electoral spaces, electoral competition, national identity, left–right divide, political parties, Valencian Autonomous Community

SUMMARY

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INTRODUCTION

The structure of partisan competition is usually configured based on the different cleavages that channel political conflict in Western societies, from the political and partisan identities that derive from them, as well as from other more contingent elements such as government action, economic status, or political leadership (Harrop and Miller, 1987; Evans, 2004; Dalton, 2014). Competition also starts from a certain dependency on diffusion routes, given that the structure of the existing party systems strongly conditions access to financing from the state or media (Katz and Mair, 1995; Blyth and Katz, 2005; Katz and Mair, 2018).

Electoral competition theories, whether they operate on economistic assumptions and focus on centripetal competition (Downs, 1957; Enelow and Hinich, 1984), or on thematic elements and centre on directional patterns (Rabinowitz and Macdonald, 1989), have tended to be traditionally thought about as one-dimensional models. However, the growing complexity of Western societies, with the emergence of new cleavages and conflicts, has made integration of the multidimensionality of partisan competition necessary (Inglehart, 1977; Kitschelt, 1994; Dalton, 2014; Dalton and Welzel, 2013). This is even more true when considering competition in multilevel political systems in which the territorial dimension is highly relevant (Elias, Szocsik, and Zuber, 2015).

One way to illustrate the changes in the structure of partisan competition in multidimensional systems is based on the evolution of the positions occupied by party voters in the main electoral spaces. On the one hand, the relevance of the divisions is shown because the voters are not distributed exclusively along one dimension (e.g., left–right), but rather, they can be found in various electoral spaces configured by their interaction. On the other hand, changes in the positions occupied by voters should be considered the result of partisan strategies throughout the previous legislature. The most successful parties will see their dominance extend in the most populated electoral spaces or they will 'conquer' new areas of influence. The less successful ones will see their areas of domain reduced and may lose support in the most populated spaces.

In Spain, changes in the structure of partisan competition have been studied, above all, for the left–right dimension (Molas and Bartomeus, 2001; Bartomeus, 2003; Medina, 2015). In the Catalan and Valencian case, the structure of the competition has also been analysed based on the two main axes of conflict: the left–right and national identity (Molas and Bartomeus, 1998 and 1999; Martín Cubas, 2007). The results of these publications have confirmed, especially for the Catalan case, that despite the relative stability of the left–right positioning and national identity of voters, important transformations have taken place in the electoral spaces occupied by parties, seen in the form of the intense changes in the partisan offering and party positions from 2012 onwards (Bartomeus and Medina, 2011; Medina, 2014; Bartomeus, 2015).

The purpose of this current research article was to show that, despite the relative stability of the ideological identities of the Valencian people, the emergence of new parties has led to particularly important changes in the electoral spaces that they occupy and, in addition, has substantially increased the complexity of the competition between them. To this end, the following sections show, firstly, the main stages of evolution of the party system in the Autonomous Community of Valencia. Secondly, we show the distribution of the population in the different electoral spaces configured both from the left–right and national identity axes, between 2011 and 2019. The third section shows the weight of the different parties within these electoral spaces during the same period. In the fourth section, we consider the main areas of dominance and axes of competition between these parties. Finally, the text ends with some brief conclusions.

THE MAIN STAGES OF PARTY SYSTEM EVOLUTION IN THE AUTONOMOUS COMMUNITY OF VALENCIA

Since the first autonomous elections were held in the Valencian Community in 1983, a dozen elections have already accumulated that have been slowly configuring a local party system with certain singularities with respect to the Spanish party system (Martín Cubas, 2007; Oñate, 2013). Based on the electoral evolution and competition and cooperation patterns of the parties (figure 1), three major stages of party system evolution can be defined (Franch, 1998; Oñate, 2013; Roig, 2019).

The first extended from the 1983 to 1991 elections and was characterised by an almost undisputed predominance of the Partit Socialista del País Valencià (Socialist Party of the Valencian Country, or PSPV). Various socialist governments followed one another during this period and were always chaired by Joan Lerma. Support for the socialists during these years oscillated between 51.8% and 40% of voters. In 1987, the socialists remained only a few seats away from the majority and supported the Grupo Parlamentario de Esquerra Unida del País Valencià (Parliamentary Group of the United Left of the Valencian Country, or EUPV). The main opposition party was the Alianza Popular (People's Alliance, or AP) which was re-founded as the Partido Popular (People's Party, or PP), whose support ranged from 32.1% in 1983 to 23.6% of the vote.

The presence of some minor forces stands out from these years, such as the conservative Valencianism represented by Unió Valenciana (Valencian Union, or UV) and the Centro Democrático y Social (Democratic and Social Centre, or CDS). The fragmentation of the space of the right and the electoral strength of these smaller parties prevented the AP/PP from becoming an alternative government during this period. On the left, the socialists competed with the EUPV, which would eventually form a coalition with the progressive Valencianism of the Unitat del Poble Valencià (Valencia Town Unit, or UPV; Bernardo and López, 1991; Franch, 1998).

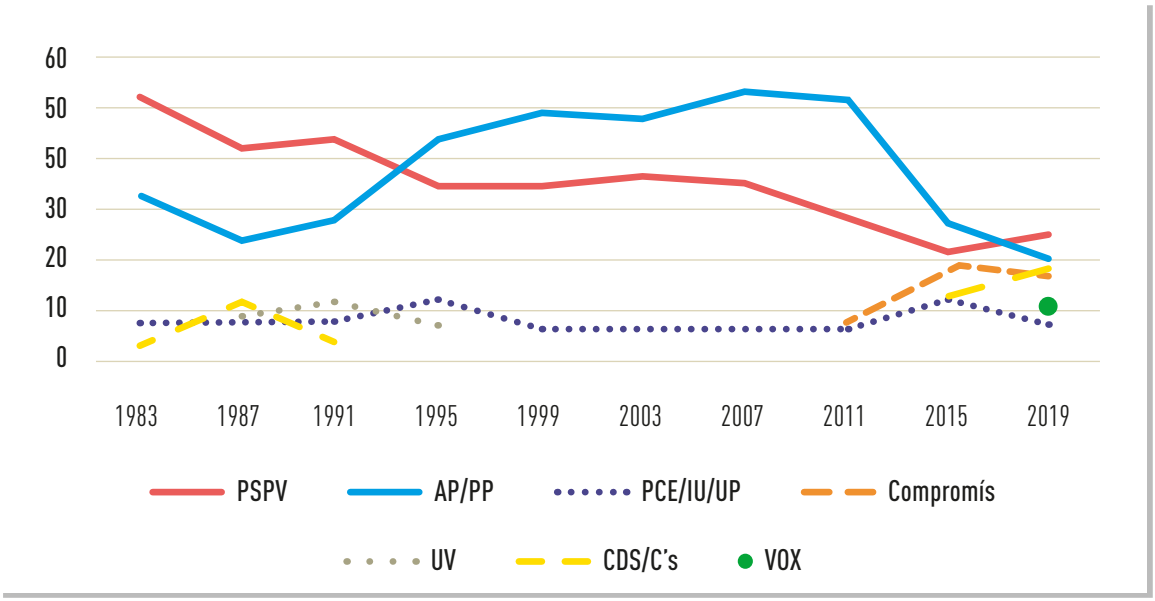
In 1995, the PP fell three seats short of an absolute majority by winning 43% of the vote, while the PSPV vote remained at 34%. These elections were also the first in which the sum of support for the right, comprising the Partit Popular de la Comunitat Valenciana (People's Party of the Valencian Community, or PPCV) and Unió Valenciana (Valencian Union, or UV), exceeded that of the set of left-wing alternatives embodied by the PSPV and EUPV, thereby breaking, for the first time, the traditional majority character of the left in the Valencian Community. After these elections, the PP formed a coalition government with the UV that would not be

repeated in successive elections. The minority nature of the support for the PP and the need for coalition governments led these elections to become considered a transitory period preceding the second great electoral stage in the Autonomous Community of Valencia (Franch, 1998; Franch and Martín Cubas, 2000).

This second stage of party system evolution in the Autonomous Community of Valencia began in the regional elections of 1999 and lasted until 2011. This period was characterised by absolute majorities led by various presidents (E. Zaplana, F. Camps, J. L. Olivas, and A. Fabra). Support for the PP during these years was between 50.7% of the vote in 2011 and 47.9% in 2003. The PSPV became the first opposition party, with support ranging between 36.5% in 2003 and 28.3% in 2011. During this period, a significant amount of the right-wing vote concentrated in the PP, which led to the disappearance of minor parties such as the CDS or UV. The EUPV continued as a minor force to the left of the socialists until progressive Valencianism, represented by the Coalició Compromís (the Compromise Coalition, or simply Compromís), entered the Corts Valencianes [the main legislative body of the Generalitat Valenciana—different self-governing institutions that politically organise the autonomous community of Valencia—and therefore, of the Valencian Community] after 2011 (Oñate, 2013; Roig, 2019).

The third stage began in 2015, with erosion of support for the PP and PSPV and the rise of new parties such as Podem (We can), Ciudadanos (Citizens, or Cs), Vox (Latin for 'voice'), and the Valencian supporters of Compromís. After the stages of dominance of the PPCV and PSPV, fragmentation dominated the party system of the Autonomous Community of Valencia, leading to the emergence of a moderately pluralistic party system. During these years, the PP and PSPV continued to be the main parties in terms of votes, but the growth of the minority parties decanted their parliamentary majorities to the left. Hence, coalition governments led by the Socialist politician, Ximo Puig, were formed in 2015 and 2019 with the presence and/or support of other forces such as Compromís and Podem. In 2019, fragmentation and polarisation of the system increased even more with the entry of Vox (Abellán and Pardo, 2018; Roig, 2019).

Figure 1 **Evolution of the electoral support of the main political parties (1983–2019).**



SOURCE: own elaboration based on Argos data (www.argos.gva.es)

CHANGES IN THE ELECTORAL SPACES OF THE AUTONOMOUS COMMUNITY OF VALENCIA (2011–2019)

When analysing the vote totals for each of the periods studied, we observed that the dual identity and ideology of the centre clearly dominated the Valencian electorate distribution in the year 2011. The centre ideology achieved a total value of 37.8% while the dual identity reached a total of 63.7% (table 1, top part), representing 942,004 and 1,587,877 votes, respectively (table 1, lower part). These values, with their variations, showed a general coherence with the trajectory examined in other studies regarding previous elections (Martín Cubas, 2007) in which the dual identity and ideology of the centre predominated with 56.3% and 44.1% of the vote, respectively.

We can also observe how, in 2015, Valencian society again situated itself mostly in the same positions with, on this occasion, values of 60.4% and 41%, respectively (table 2, top part) or, in other words, 1,020,739 and 1,502,891 votes, respectively (table 2, lower part). By 2019, the electorate of the Valencian Autonomous Community was more concentrated in the dual space of the identity axis, while it was significantly dispersed along the ideological one. Thus, the values revealed that 65% of the electorate (1,752,425 votes) had a dual identity affinity, and this group was distributed as 34.5% in favour of the centre and 32.9% to the left in terms of ideological variables, which was equivalent to 930,110 and 886,992 votes, respectively.

In terms of the distribution of the Valencian electorate along the identity sentiment axes and ideological self-positioning in the year 2011 (table 1), we saw the dual centre become the dominant group, with 24.1% of the vote, comprising a total of 599,921

Table 1 **Electoral spaces in the Autonomous Community of Valencia 2011 regional elections.**

ACV, 11	F.L	L.	C.	R.	F.R.	DK/NR	Total
Spa.	0.4	5.0	6.4	1.7	0.4	1.8	15.8
Spa. > Val.	0.4	2.5	4.3	2.6	0.4	1.4	11.6
Dual	2.5	17.5	24.1	9.3	2.2	8.2	63.7
Val. > Spa.	0.9	1.7	2.9	1.3	0.3	0.4	7.6
Val.	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.1			1.3
Total	**4.4**	**27.3**	**37.8**	**15.1**	**3.3**	**12.2**	**100**

ACV, 11	F.L	L.	C.	R.	F.R.	DK/NR	Total
Spa.	10,211	125,090	158,277	43,399	10,211	45,951	393,140
Spa. > Val.	10,211	61,269	107,220	63,821	10,211	35,740	288,473
Dual	61,269	436,538	599,921	232,310	53,610	204,229	1,587,877
Val. > Spa.	22,976	43,399	71,480	33,187		9,966	181,008
Val.	5,106	12,764	5,106	2,553		–	25,529
Total	**109,773**	**679,060**	**942,004**	**375,270**	**74,033**	**295,886**	**2,476,026**

SOURCE: CENTRE FOR SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH (CIS) 2892
Abbreviations: ACV, Autonomous Community of Valencia; F.L, far left; L., left; C., centre; R., right; F.R., far right; DK/NR, don't know/no response.

votes, followed by the dual left, which achieved 17.5% or 436,538 votes, and, more distantly, by the dual right, which held 9.3%, with 232,310 votes. In the background, a concentration of values of interest could be discerned in the coordinates of the centre, both in terms of Spanish values and with inclinations towards 'Spanishness,' which accumulated 6.4% and 4.3% of the vote, respectively, or 158,277 and 107,220 votes. Thus, we find the centre of gravity essentially comprising the left, centre, and dual right, among which the former two aforementioned options clearly dominated. The main domain spaces located also revealed certain similarities with the concentration around the centre and left that had been perceived in the year 2007 (Martín Cubas, 2007).

In 2015, the dual centre remained the predominant box in the system, with 24.7% of the vote, the equivalent to a total of 615,600 votes, followed again by the dual left, with 18% of the vote, which translated into 447,231 votes (table 2). On this occasion, the dual right moved away from the positions of greatest influence, with its figures dropping to 6.2% or 155,215 votes, while both the centre and Spanish left grew to 9.7% (242,031 votes) and 8.2% (205,200 votes), respectively. Thus, we see that the data reflected in the preceding table reveals a centre of gravity comprising the area delimiting the centre and the dual left. Indeed, its influence could connect with a second bloc made up of the centre and the Spanish left. Hence, the localised dominant spaces coincided, in essence, with those distinguished in the 2011 elections, despite the fact that changes observed were also in line with a displacement of domains favourable to the left and to Spanishness.

Table 2 **Electoral spaces in the Autonomous Community of Valencia 2015 regional elections.**

ACV, 15	F.L.	L.	C.	R.	F.R.	DK/NR	Total
Spa.	0.8	8.2	9.7	2.0	0.1	1.2	22.1
Spa. > Val.	0.6	2.5	3.9	1.3	0.1	1.4	9.8
Dual	3.7	18.0	24.7	6.2	0.8	6.9	60.4
Val. > Spa.	1.3	2.0	1.9	0.2	0.2	0.3	5.9
Val.	0.3	0.4	0.7		0.1	0.2	1.8
Total	**6.8**	**31.2**	**41.0**	**9.7**	**1.4**	**9.9**	**100**

ACV, 15	F.L.	L.	C.	R.	F.R.	DK/NR	Total
Spa.	21,046	205,200	242,031	49,985	2,631	28,938	549,831
Spa. > Val.	15,785	63,138	97,339	31,569	2,631	34,842	245,304
Dual	92,077	447,231	615,600	155,215	21,046	171,721	1,502,891
Val. > Spa.	31,569	49,985	47,354	5,262		7,466	141,635
Val.	7,892	10,523	18,415	-		5,682	42,513
Total	**168,369**	**776,077**	**1,020,739**	**242,031**	**26,308**	**248,649**	**2,482,174**

SOURCE: CIS 3088

In 2019, the figures gave the greatest weight to the centreand dual left, while we also saw a relaxation of the preference for identity affinities closer to the country. This was despite the relatively low-intensity validity this continued to maintain, with values of 6.6% (178,530 votes) and 6.5% (175,551 votes) for the Spanish left and centre, respectively (table 3). These figures indicate that the centre of gravity of the period studied was located in the block that included the centre and dual left. The domain spaces identified here were also similar to those glimpsed through studying the 2015 elections, given that they continued to be linked to the centre and dual left. In the same way, we also saw other differences, such as the loss of the pre-eminence of the Spanish left and Spanish centre.

Table 3 **Electoral spaces in the Autonomous Community of Valencia 2019 regional elections.**

ACV, 19	F.L.	L.	C.	R.	F.R.	DK/NR	Total
Esp.	1.0	6.6	6.5	2.5	0.6	4.3	21.6
Esp. > Val.	0.6	2.1	2.1	0.6	0.1	1.3	6.6
Dual	5.1	21.6	23.9	6.4	3.1	4.9	65.0
Val. > Esp.	0.3	2.3	1.8	0.3		0.2	5.0
Val.	0.8	0.3	0.2	0.2		0.2	1.8
Total	**7.9**	**32.9**	**34.5**	**10.0**	**3.8**	**11.0**	**100**

ACV, 19	F.L.	L.	C.	R.	F.R.	DK/NR	Total
Esp.	27,719	178,630	175,551	67,756	15,399	117,034	582,089
Esp. > Val.	15,339	55,437	55,437	15,339	3,080	33,878	178,630
Dual	138,593	582,089	643,685	172,471	83,156	132,433	1,752,425
Val. > Esp.	9,240	61,597	49,277	9,240		6,160	135,513
Val.	21,559	9,240	6,160	6,160		6,160	49,277
Total	**212,509**	**886,992**	**930,110**	**271,025**	**101,635**	**295,664**	**2,697,934**

SOURCE: CIS 3253

Considering how the distribution of the Valencian electorate evolved from 2011 to 2019, some noteworthy changes were observed. In this sense, the total figures for the axis that measured the feeling of identity revealed an increase of 5.8% for the feeling of being Spanish, along with a 5% drop among voters in relation to their Spanishness. These percentages translated into votes by 572,749 and 109,845 people, respectively (table 4). In terms of ideology, it is also worth noting the increase in the preponderance of the left, which at the end of the period analysed had accumulated an additional 5.6% of electoral support, with 110,915 votes, while support for the right had fallen by 5.1%, with them losing 104,245 votes (table 4).

The study of this progression in the intersection of the two studied variables left the spaces that bring together

dual right-wing voters in decline, with them losing 3.1% (159,839 votes) in their support, with centre and right-wing voters being more inclined towards Spanishness, seen as falls of 2.2% (51,783 votes) and 2% (48,422 votes), respectively (table 4). On the contrary, the dual left was the great beneficiary in the new distribution, winning 4.1% support more in 2019 compared to 2011, which was equivalent to 145,551 votes (table 4). This value was followed by 2.6% of the voters who favoured the dual far left, equivalent to a total of 77,324 votes (table 4). In conclusion, the movements we studied revealed the existence of a block that had benefited throughout the period, which was concentrated in the area outlined by the union between the dual left and far left, with another area of the losing parties located in the zone of dual leftist voters with inclinations towards both Spanishness and Valencianism.

Table 4 **Variations in the electoral spaces between 2011 and 2019**

	F.L.	L.	C.	R.	F.R.	DK/NR	Total
Spa.	0.6	1.6	0.1	0.8	0.2	2.5	5.8
Spa. > Val.	0.2	−0.4	−2.2	−2.0	−0.3	−0.1	−5.0
Dual	2.6	4.1	−0.2	−3.1	0.9	−3.3	1.3
Val. > Spa.	−0.6	0.6	−1.1	−1.0	−0.3	−0.2	−2.6
Val.	0.6	−0.2	0.0	0.1		0.2	−0.5
Total	**3.5**	**5.6**	**−3.3**	**−5.1**	**0.5**	**-1.2**	**–**

SOURCE: CIS 2892 and 3253

TRANSFORMATION OF THE PARTY ELECTORAL SPACES (2011–2019)

The different political parties concentrate most of their electoral support in specific areas called 'electoral territories' (Molas and Bartomeus, 2001). Hereinafter, we will describe the presence and number of voters for each of the most relevant parties in the Valencian electoral competition in the 2011–2019 period in terms of the two reference axes examined in this present study.

Regarding the figures available for the vote in favour of the PP in 2011, there was a general dominance of this force in the dual centre and right, which achieved 10.1% and 8.7% of the vote, respectively (table 5). Similarly, a substantial mass of the PP party's gravitational core of support came from the centre and right—both pro-Spanish and Spanish-leaning voters. In addition, the 1.3% of the electorate voting for the dual far right was also incorporated into the domain of the PP.

A general weakening of the core of the organisation was perceived in the 2015 elections: its supporters were still located in areas similar to those from 2011, but they enjoyed lesser degrees of support. Thus, we see, for example, how for the most prominent spaces of the PP block, located in the centre and dual right, the percentages were 4.4% and 3.9%, respectively. Similarly, the party vote declined among far right and Spanish identity voters given that the PP lost its vigour among voters with Spanish leanings.

A downward trend in support for the party was confirmed in the 2019 elections, whose domain areas obtained lower turnout percentages than in 2015, except for the dual centre (4.5%) and Spanish right (2.3%). In this line, some of its spaces came to evaporate, such as in the case of those corresponding to voters with centrist and right-wing Spanish leanings. This movement fostered a division of the party's core support into two blocks that were essentially differentiated by identity sentiments: on the one hand, dual voters of the centre, right, and also eventually the far right, and on the other hand, the centrist and right Spanish vote.

Analysis of the progression of support for the PSPV in the different electoral spaces (table 6) showed that in 2011, it had a particularly strong area of influence on both the dual left (9.3%) and, to a lesser extent, the Spanish left (2.4%) with inclinations towards this same identity (1.6%). To these values we should also add the dual centre, which, with 2% of the vote, was also included in the area of socialist control.

In 2015, the PSPV maintained its areas of dominance defined around spaces that were essentially similar to its domains from the previous regional elections. However, there was a perceivable decrease in the attractiveness of their gravitational centre. Thus, the figures that corresponded to the dual left region plummeted to 4.1% because votes for the Spanish left also fell to 0.5%. Despite this, it retained its strength in the dual centre (2%) and even slightly grew on the Spanish left (2.7%).

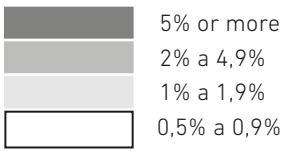
In the last elections, the results showed a rebound in the numbers in the main categories of the PSPV's centre of gravity. Along these lines, the party accumulated the highest percentages of the period under study in the dual left and centre, at 13.2% and 3%, respectively.

Table 5 **Evolution of the electoral spaces of the Partido Popular (PP) in the 2011, 2015, and 2019 regional elections.**

PP'11	F.L.	L.	C.	R.	F.R.	DK/NR
Spa.		0.3	2.3	1.5		0.2
Spa. > Val.			1.8	2.4		0.3
Dual		0.6	10.1	8.7	2	2.0
Val. > Spa.	0.2	0.2	1.6	0.7		
Val.	0.1			0.1		

PP'15	F.L.	L.	C.	R.	F.R.	DK/NR
Spa.			2.0	1.0	0.3	0.5
Spa. > Val.			0.5	1.1	0.1	
Dual			4.4	3.9	1.3	0.4
Val. > Spa.			0.3			
Val.						

PP'19	F.L.	L.	C.	R.	F.R.	DK/NR
Spa.			0.7	2.3	0.3	0.5
Spa. > Val.			0.1	0.1	0.1	
Dual			4.5	3.1	1.3	0.6
Val. > Spa.			0.3	0.1		
Val.						



SOURCE: CIS 2892, 3088, and 3253. Percentages of overall sample.

Table 6 **Evolution of the electoral spaces of the Partit Socialista del País Valencià (PSPV) in the 2011, 2015, and 2019 regional elections.**

PSPV'11	F.L.	L.	C.	R.	F.R.	DK/NR
Spa.	0.1	2.4	0.5	0.1		
Spa. > Val.	0.4	1.6	0.5	0.1		0.1
Dual	0.7	9.3	2.0		0,4	0.4
Val. > Spa.	0.1	0.9		0.1		
Val.	0.1		0.1			0.1

PSPV'15	F.L.	L.	C.	R.	F.R.	DK/NR
Spa.	0.4	2.7	1.0	0.2		0.1
Spa. > Val.		0.5	0.2			0.2
Dual	0.6	4.1	2.0	0.1		0.5
Val. > Spa.	0.2	0	0.5			
Val.	0.1		0.2			

PSPV'19	F.L.	L.	C.	R.	F.R.	DK/NR
Spa.		4.0	0.6			0.3
Spa. > Val.		1.1	0.5			0.5
Dual	2.1	13.2	3.0	0.1		0.8
Val. > Spa.	0.2		0.6			
Val.	0.1		0.2			

5% or more
2% a 4,9%
1% a 1,9%
0,5% a 0,9%

SOURCE: CIS 2892, 3088, and 3253. Percentages of the overall sample.

Table 7 **Evolution of the electoral spaces of the Unión Progreso y Democracia (UPyD) and Ciudadanos (Cs) parties in the 2011, 2015, and 2019 regional elections.**

UPyD'11	F.L.	L.	C.	R.	F.R.
Spa.		0.2			
Spa. > Val.		0.2	0.4		
Dual		0.4	0.4	0.1	
Val. > Spa.					
Val.					

Cs'15	F.L.	L.	C.	R.	F.R.
Spa.		0.2	1.7		
Spa. > Val.	0.3	0.1	0.5	0.1	
Dual		1.2	3.6	0.7	
Val. > Spa.					
Val.					

Cs'19	F.L.	L.	C.	R.	F.R.
Spa.		4.5	0.6		
Spa. > Val.		0.2	2.1	0.1	
Dual		0.6	5.8	1.4	
Val. > Spa.					
Val.					

5% or more
2% a 4,9%
1% a 1,9%
0,5% a 0,9%

SOURCE: CIS 2892, 3088, and 3253. Percentages of the overall sample.

Thus, reinforcement of the zone of socialist control could be seen in the Spanish left (4%) given that it managed to retake ground from the centre (3%) and dual far left (2.1%).

Regarding the Unión, Progreso y Democracia (UPyD) party, it could clearly be seen that the extraordinarily little support it enjoyed in the 2011 elections came mainly from the centre and dual left. In 2015, the UPyD lost all its representation both in the national elections and in the Valencian regional elections, in a fall that some experts have attributed, to a large extent, to the transfer of their electoral support to the Cs party. After failing again in the 2016 elections, UPyD entered into a dynamic that ended with them not running in 2019, while also deciding to ask for the vote for the candidacy of the Cs. Thus, as a potentially competing force in the spaces that the UPyD occupied at the time, the study of the 2015 and 2019 elections in this section of this current work concentrates on the data from the Cs.

Based on approaches similar to those of the UPyD, the Cs burst into the 2015 elections, strongly dominating key spaces of its ousted predecessor such as the one that fundamentally comprises the dual centre (3.6%). Along with this, the force of the Cs also managed to extend the centre of gravity enjoyed by UPyD to the left (1.2%) and to the dual right (0.7%). In 2019, the Cs consecrated their positive electoral proclivity within the Valencian political arena. The party improved its results, increasing its share in the dual centre to 5.8%. Likewise, it became a widely preferred option among the Spanish left (4.5%), improved its numbers among the electoral mass of the centre with Spanish leanings (2.1%), and strengthened its position among the dual right (1.4%).

In turn, in the 2011 elections, the Coalició Compromís had little support among Valencian society, which was mainly divided between the centre (0.9%) and dual left (1.4%). In addition, Compromís attracted voters from the far left with Valencianist leanings (0.5%) and, interestingly, both from the Spanish (0.7%) and Valencianist (0.4%) left. In 2015, the party increased its electoral significance and its dominance as a bloc began to become clearer. It dominated the area that integrated the left (6%) and dual centre (2.7%) and extended the area between the dual far left and that of voters with Valencian leanings (0.8%). Compromís also managed to seduce some sectors of the Spanish centre, from which it received 0.5% of the vote.

In the last electoral period we studied, we were able to discern a return of the Coalició Compromís towards lower percentage vote values. However, they continued to be generally circumscribed to the spaces comprising the gravitational centre making up the centre, left, and dual far left. As novelties of interest, we should mention the addition of the Valencian far left area into the key competitive bloc of Compromís, as well as the loss of some support it previously had from the Spanish left and centre and from the far left with Valencian leanings.

The journey of the EUPV in this study began with substantial figures, with the main centre of electoral attraction being around the left (1.6%) and dual far left (0.8%). However, in 2015, the party lost all its representation in Les Corts Valencianes when faced with the powerful emergence of Podem Comunitat Valenciana, which managed to form a parliamentary group with 13 parliament members. Thus, considering that the latter competed for remarkably similar electoral spaces to those of the EUPV, we will now examine Podem, the organisation represented by the colour purple, in our analysis of the aforementioned electoral period (table 9). In view of the Valencian regional election results from 2019, this shift continued, given that both parties formed a coalition under the name Unides Podem-EUPV (United We Can-EUPV).

That said, we saw that, in 2015, Podem became strong in the electoral spaces that had previously corresponded to the EUPV, winning 2.9% of the dual

Table 8 **Evolution of the electoral spaces of the Coalició Compromís (Comp.) in the Valencian regional elections.**

Comp'11	F.L.	L.	C.	R.	F.R.	DK/NR
Spa.		0.7				
Spa. > Val.		0.1	0.2			
Dual	0.3	1.4	0.9		0.1	0.3
Val. > Spa.	0.5		0.1	0.2		
Val.		0.4				0.3

Comp'15	F.L.	L.	C.	R.	F.R.	DK/NR
Spa.	0.1	0.6	0.5			
Spa. > Val.	0.2	0.4	0.1			
Dual	1.2	6.0	2.7	0.1		0.8
Val. > Spa.	0.8	1	0.4			0.1
Val.	0.2					0.1

Comp'19	F.L.	L.	C.	R.	F.R.	DK/NR
Spa.	0.1	0.3	0.1			0.1
Spa. > Val.	0.1	0.1	0.1			
Dual	1.9	2.2	2.3	0.2		0.1
Val. > Spa.	0.1	1	0.2			
Val.	0.7					

5% or more
2% a 4,9%
1% a 1,9%
0,5% a 0,9%

SOURCE: CIS 2892, 3088, and 3253. Percentages of the overall sample.

Table 9 **Evolution of the electoral spaces of the Esquerra Unida del País Valencià (EUPV), Podem, and Unidas Podemos (UP) parties in the Valencian regional elections.**

EUPV'11	F.L.	L.	C.	R.	F.R.
Spa.	0.2	0.3	0.3		
Spa. > Val.			0.1		
Dual	0.8	1.6	0.4		0.1
Val. > Spa.					
Val.		0.1			

Podem'15	F.L.	L.	C.	R.	F.R.	DK/NR
Spa.	0.2	1.2	0.4			
Spa. > Val.	0.1	0.5	0.2			
Dual	0.5	2.9	1.2	0.1		0.2
Val. > Spa.	0.2	0	0.1			
Val.	0.1	0.1				

UP'19	F.L.	L.	C.	R.	F.R.
Spa.	0.7	0.7	0.2		
Spa. > Val.	0.3	0.2	0.1		
Dual	0.7	1.7	0.3		
Val. > Spa.	0.1		0.1		
Val.	0.1	0.2			

5% or more
2% a 4,9%
1% a 1,9%
0,5% a 0,9%

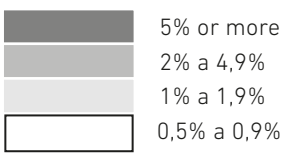
SOURCE: CIS 2892, 3088, and 3253. Percentages of the overall sample.

left and 0.5% of both the Spanish and Valencian far left vote. Along with this, the party also managed to broaden the confines of its centre of gravity towards the dual centre (1.2%) and Spanish left (1.2%). In 2019, Unides Podem-EUPV relocated its zone of control back to the space occupied by the electorate of the left (1.7%) and dual far left (0.7%), thereby losing its support from the dual centre. Even so, it still came out stronger in the field of the far Spanish left, winning 0.7% of the vote from this category.

In 2019, Vox obtained 10 deputies in the Autonomous Community of Valencia elections, thereby consecrating an unprecedented conquest in this region. These results were fed by sections of the electorate concentrated in the centre (1%) and on the dual right (0.7%). Along with the above, it is also worth mentioning the success of Vox in these elections among voters from the Spanish centre, where they won 0.5% of support in this space.

Table 10 **The Vox electoral spaces in the Valencian regional elections.**

VOX'19	E.I.	I.	C.	D.	E.D.	NS/NC
Esp.			0.5	0.2		0.2
Esp. > Val.			0.1	0.2		0.1
Dual			1.0	0.7		0.1
Val. > Esp.						
Val.						



SOURCE: CIS 3253. Percentages of the overall sample.

COMPETITION BETWEEN PARTIES FOR ELECTORAL SPACES

In the previous section, we separately analysed the areas of electoral penetration of each of the parties. In this section, we show the main areas of predominance of each party, as well as the eventual overlaps and competition spaces between them. This will give us a good indication of the complex evolution of the axes of electoral competition in the Autonomous Community of Valencia. The right side of tables 11, 12, and 13 shows the party or parties that predominated in each political space. As in the tables from the previous section, the colour intensity is linked to the strength of the support these parties had. The numbers on the lower right-hand side of the boxes indicate how many parties obtained more than 0.5% of the census vote and therefore, were able to penetrate this electoral space. The figures to the left of tables 11, 12, and 13 show the approximate main axes of competition between the parties in the Valencian region.

In the 2011 elections (table 11), the PP showed its notable predominance in the spaces of the centre and right, ranging from the most Spanish positions to that of moderate Valencianism. It is also noteworthy that in its main domain areas, the PP had practically no relevant competitors. In turn, the PP had competitors in the dual centre, one of the main voter pools in the Valencian region, but this competition did not threaten their predominance in this space. For its part, the predominance of the PSPV extended throughout the left from positions

of Spanishness to moderate Valencianism, although its most dominant position was on the dual left. The socialists did not have any notable competition in this space either, with the exception of the dual left, which also constituted one of the main fishing grounds for votes in the Autonomous Community of Valencia. On the far left, the EUPV competed with the PSPV to capture dual voters, while Compromís controlled moderate Valencianist voters. In both cases, these electoral spaces were not very densely populated (see table 1).

The two main areas of electoral competition in 2011 were the spaces of the dual centre and left, where, despite the respective predominance of the PP and PSPV, various parties still managed to penetrate (table 11). In the dual centre, the PP competed with the PSPV and Compromís. On the dual left, the PSPV competed with all the other parties (including the PP!). In addition to these electoral spaces, the competition between the Spanish left and centre in these elections also stood out. On the Spanish left, the dominance of the PSPV was notable, but Compromís also seemed to find an important hunting ground for votes on the left. In the centre, the dominance of the PP had to face socialist competition. The last relevant electoral competition space (although at a notable distance from the previous ones) was the one marking the fight between the EUPV and the PSPV for control of voters from the dual far left.

The results in 2011 were aligned, to a large extent, with the competitive tendencies present in the Valencian electoral arena during the 1995–2007 period. In this sense, the competitive relevance of the centre remained—bearing in mind that up to four forces had competed for this space in the 2007 elections—while it was still dominated by the PP. In addition, the predominance of some locatable spaces between the left and far left ideologies continued, and the PSPV had a certain amount of dominance in this area despite fighting with other forces such as the EUPV and the Valencian Nationalist Bloc (Martín Cubas, 2007).

Table 11 **The main areas of predominance and competition in the 2011 Valencian regional elections.**

2011	Far Left	Left	Centre	Right	Far Right
Spa.	–	PSPV 2	PP 2	PP 1	–
Spa. > Val.	–	PSPV 1	PP 2	PP 1	–
Dual	PSPV/ EUPV 2	PSPV 4	PP 3	PP 1	PP 1
Val. > Spa.	Comp. 1	PSPV 1	PP 1	PP 1	–
Val.	–	–	–	–	–

2011	F.L	L	C.	R.	F.R
Spa.					
Spa. > Val.		PSPV		PP	
Dual		EUPV			
Val. > Spa.		Compromís			
Val.					

SOURCE: CIS 2892

In 2015, the partisan competition map changed substantially (table 12). The space of electoral predominance of the PP shrank substantially in these elections, although it continued to be the main beneficiary of the support coming from the Spanish centre and the space from the Spanish right to the dual right. The PP had hardly any competition in its area of dominance, but its strength of support had decreased compared to 2015. The most important loss for the PP occured in the control of the dual centre, the main source of votes in the Autonomous Community of Valencia, which had passed into the hands of Cs. In these elections, the space predominated by the Cs was in the dual centre, although it also extended to the Spanish centre and left. In these spaces, it mainly competed with the PP and PSPV and so the strength of its support was more limited.

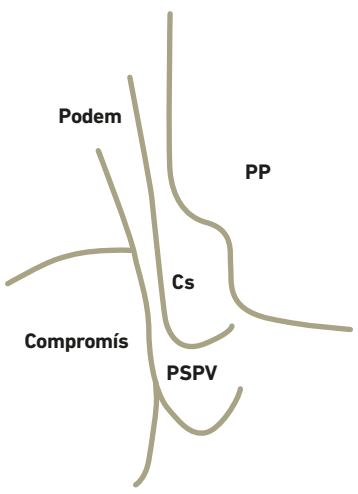
For its part, the PSPV lost a good part of its control over left-wing spaces in 2015. On the Spanish left, its dominance was disputed by other parties such as the Cs, Podem, and Compromís. The only undisputed space it controlled in these elections was that of the moderate Valencian centre, but the weight of this space was small. The PSPV's main loss in these elections was that of the dual left, the second main source of votes in the Autonomous Community of Valencia, which passed into the hands of Compromís. The advance of Valencianists in these elections was very notable since they came to control practically the entire space of the dual and moderate Valencianist left. However, control of the dual left by Compromís did not prevent the other two left-wing parties and, eventually, also the Cs, from penetrating the space.

As also occurred in previous elections, the most crowded electoral areas in the 2015 elections were also the most populated (table 12). Thus, the five political forces with representation, from the PP to Podem, all managed to penetrate the dual centre (with greater or lesser force). In addition, everyone except the PP also managed to penetrate the dual left. In addition, the Spanishness of the left and centre were spaces of strong competition between parties. Thus, all the parties except the PP managed to infiltrate the space of left wing Spanishness. Furthermore, all the

Table 12 **The main areas of predominance and competition in the 2015 elections.**

2015	Far Left	Left	Centre	Right	Far Right
Spa.	–	PSPV/ Cs 4	PP 4	PP 1	–
Spa. > Val.	–	PSPV/ Podem/ Comp. 3	PP/Cs 2	PP 1	–
Dual	Comp. 3	Comp. 4	Cs 5	PP 2	PP 1
Val. > Spa.	Comp. 1	Comp. 1	PSPV 1	–	–
Val.	–	–	–	–	–

2015	F.L	L	C.	R.	F.R
Spa.					
Spa. > Val.					
Dual					
Val. > Spa.					
Val.					



SOURCE: CIS 3088

parties except Podem managed to access the space of central Spanishness. As already mentioned in the previous section, it is interesting that Compromís also managed to retain a certain level of penetration in these positions. Finally, we should also mention the space from the dual far left to the moderate Spanish left in which the competition centred on the three left-wing parties (Podem, PSPV, and Compromís).

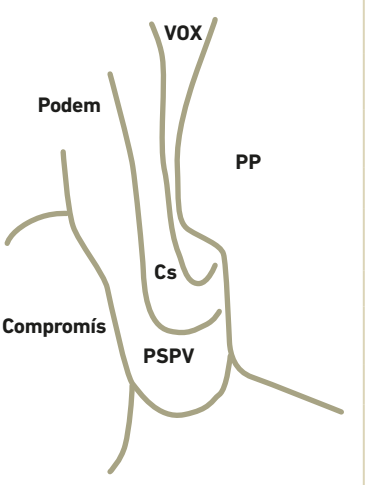
The competition map in the 2019 elections (table 13) reflects the increase in fragmentation as well as the new composition of the electoral territories of the parties. On the right, the PP showed a notable predominance in the spaces of the Spanish and dual right. The domain of the PP in these territories was almost exclusive, with the exception of the dual right in which Cs and Vox also managed to break through electorally speaking. Furthermore, the PP competed with other parties for space in the centre, especially for the dual and Spanish centres. As in 2015, the dual centre and moderate Spanishness were still in the hands of the Cs, although many parties managed to reach into these spaces, which limited the Cs' capacity for growth.

Additionally, the Cs managed to maintain their shared dominance in the spaces of the Spanish left and centre, although they shared the left with the PSPV and the right with the socialists, PP, and Vox. In 2019, the PSPV regained its dominance in the spaces of the dual left and of Spanishness, although a notable number of competitors ranging from Compromís to the Cs also penetrated these areas. Moreover, the Socialists extended their reach to the dual far left and dual and Spanish centres. The only electoral stronghold controlled by Podem was the space of the far Spanish left. However, its area of electoral penetration also extended to the area of the dual left, which represented its main electoral base. Finally, Compromís continued to dominate the space of the moderate Valencian left, in the absence of any competitors. Moreover, the Valencianists extended their area of electoral permeation to the far left and dual left. Unlike in previous elections, Compromís no longer had a significant presence among the Spanish left in 2019. For its part, Vox did not obtain control in any electoral area. It competed with other parties for the dominance of the

Table 13 **The main areas of predominance and competition in the 2019 elections.**

2019	Far Left	Left	Centre	Right	Far Right
Spa.	UP 1	PSPV/ Cs 3	PP/ PSPV/ Cs/VOX 4	PP 1	–
Spa. > Val.	–	PSPV 1	Cs 2	–	–
Dual	Comp./ PSPV 3	PSPV 4	Cs 5	PP 3	PP 1
Val. > Spa.	–	Comp. 1	PSPV 1	–	–
Val.	Comp. 1	–	–	–	–

2019	F.L	L	C.	R.	F.R
Spa.					
Spa. > Val.					
Dual					
Val. > Spa.					
Val.					



SOURCE: CIS 3253

centre, but its main source of votes was in the dual centre and right.

As was also the case in 2015, increased fragmentation meant that there was no clear separation of the territories controlled by the different parties. Nonetheless, the main areas of competition continued to be in the most populated electoral positions and reproduced, in broad strokes, the competition lines of past electoral calls. Firstly, in the dual right and centre, in which all the right-wing parties and, eventually, the socialists competed. Secondly, in the far left and dual left, in which the left-wing parties and, eventually, Ciudadanos competed. Moreover, the competition was very notable in spaces of the Spanish centre and left, which followed the same pattern as the dual centre spaces.

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this article was to show that, despite the relative stability of the ideological identities of Valencians, the changes in partisan competition produced by the successful appearance of new parties has led to very notable changes in the electoral spaces occupied by each one of them and has complicated past electoral competition strategies.

The 2011–2019 period was characterised by a slight shift to the left and an increase in positions linked to Spanishness. The main result of the combination of both processes was the loss of voters who identified with the more moderate Spanish right and centre or with the dual right. On the other hand, the electorate identified with the left and dual far left, as well as with the more Spanish left and centre. Changes in the political identity of the electorate certainly helped to facilitate the emergence of new parties. Overall, it is highly likely that the discourses and strategies of the parties, as well as that of other actors (for example, social movements and the media) also contributed to redefining the political identity of some voters, which surely gave the process a remarkable level of endogeneity.

In this sense, this current work showed the existence of intense partisan competition for control of some key electoral spaces during the period of interest. Given the number of voters, the most prominent spaces were the dual centre and left. However, the difficulty in maintaining predominance in these spaces was very notable, hence the alternation between parties including the PSPV, PP, Cs, and Compromís. To a large extent, this was due to the fact that practically all the Valencian parties were able to penetrate, with greater or lesser force, one or even both of these spaces, as was the case for the PSPV, Cs, and Compromís.

The struggle for control was also notable (especially after 2015) in other spaces such as the far left and dual right. Unlike the dual centre and left, in these areas the competition was limited to the different contenders of each ideological block: on the left, the PSPV, Compromís, and Podem made their mark while on the right, the PP, Cs, and in 2019, Vox were important contenders. The third group of spaces in which the electoral competition in the Autonomous Community of Valencia was resolved was in the Spanish left and centre. These spaces were especially crowded: no party managed to maintain dominance in them between elections and, at one time or another, they all achieved a presence in one or both of these two areas.

The efforts of the parties to maintain their presence and relevance in some of these spaces did not exclude the possibility of identifying areas of certain electoral predominance (eventually, even with a certain level of exclusivity) that were more or less stable throughout this period. The PP is a good example of this: although its area of dominance in the centre was eroded, it still retained its predominance in a large part of the dualist and Spanish right. At the other end of the political spectrum, Compromís was able to maintain its dominance in the space of the Valencianist left, while Podem did something similar in the Spanish far left. In the case of PSPV and the Cs, their areas of predominance tended to be more geographically concentrated on the left and dual centre (with the difficulties already mentioned in

the previous paragraph).

Finally, the complex rivalry between the Valencian parties can serve to highlight some of the insufficiencies of the academic literature dedicated to electoral competition. To date, the main theories tend to assume the existence of electoral 'reserves' controlled by each party, with competition tending to take place at the boundaries of these catchment areas. In this sense, the partisan struggle has traditionally been understood as the effort to select voters located on the margins of each control area. However, the Valencian case seems to suggest that electoral competition can also take place without (or with limited) exclusive boundaries for each party and with large areas for which dominance is precarious and in constant alternation. Undoubtedly, this must translate into discursive strategies and capturing votes, but also into making cooperation between parties that compete for large segments of voters more difficult. Nonetheless, all these aspects undoubtedly exceed the purpose of this current text and should therefore form the basis of future research.

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Protest cycles in post-transitional Spain (2011–2017): a comparison between the Indignados Movement and the Catalan independence process

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ABSTRACT
This article aimed to determine how the structure of political opportunities in Spain has changed in connection to the cycles of protest associated with the 15-M anti-austerity movement and Catalan independence process between 2011 and 2017. To do this, we compared both episodes of conflict based on an analytical model developed through theories of the political process. In addition, we used evidence from the analysis of statistical records, barometers of public opinion, newspapers, and research carried out by other authors. This article discusses the similarities and differences between both episodes in relation to the different variables making up the structure of political opportunities. We end by identifying the impacts of both episodes on these structures as well as the state responses when trying to manage the challenges launched by them. Finally, the institutionalisation dynamics followed by both movements were compared and we also examined their conclusions in two different outputs: transformation of the party system in the case of the Spanish 15-M movement and repression and imprisonment of the pro-independence leaders in the Catalan one. To conclude, it is made clear that the chances of social co-mobilisation success increase when political opportunities are broadened, when the existence of allies is proven, and when the opponents' weakness are made evident. However, we also expound how, when faced with intensified protests, government forces and the state apparatus may respond with reform or repression, or with a complex combination of both.

Keywords: structure of political opportunities, democratisation, nationalism, social movements

SUMMARY

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Spain has seen an increase in non-conventional political mobilisation within the framework of an economic, political, and territorial triple crisis (Ubasart, 2020). This generated citizen disaffection with respect to institutions, political values, and the consensus that articulated the transitional political culture (Bonet-Martí and Ubasart-González, 2021). In turn, this was based on pride in the transition to democracy and the 1978 constitution, the sense of compatibility between Spanish national identity and the process of European integration, and a positive or optimistic vision of Spain (Muñoz, 2008, p. 179). To all this we must add the temporal coincidence of two particularly intense episodes of protest: the 15 May anti-austerity movement (15-M or the indignados movement) and the Catalan independence process. Although both episodes have been addressed in the literature in a differentiated way, the former, as an anti-austerity social movement (della Porta, 2015) and the latter as a process of political secession (Guinjoan and Rodon, 2016), in this article we propose their comparison in the context of their interaction with the changes produced within the framework of political opportunity structures (POSs). To this end, we use the protest cycle model elaborated by Tarrow (1992) and the revision of the theories of the political process initiated by Eisinger (1973), Jenkins and Perrow (1977), Tilly (1978), Skocpol (1979), and Kistchelt (1986), developed in greater depth in the studies by Tarrow (1989) and Kriesi (1992, 1996).

Our research on protest cycles began with della Porta and Tarrow (1986), who observed that the protest dynamic tends to concentrate in time and space following a cyclical alternation, triggered by an initial moment of innovation which activates the propensity to take part. This is followed by a second phase of ascent, in which new stakeholders are incorporated and compete with the initial ones until they reach the top. Finally, there is a period of decline in the mobilisation, which may be because of an increase in the costs derived from the spiral of tactical radicalisation; of state repression; the exhaustion of mobilising capacity, or the fact of that protesters consider their demands to have been met. Protest cycles are therefore considered as "aggregates of partly autonomous and partly independent episodes of collective action in which new forms of action emerge and evolve. This sector of the social movement grows and changes in position, and new political opportunities develop, in part as a result of the actions, themes, and departures of movements earlier in the cycle." (Tarrow, 1992, p. 65).

Political process theory (PPT) differs from previous theories by placing the configuration of the state at the centre of the explanatory process, so that the degree of success or failure of the mobilisation varies depending on the opportunities and restrictions present in the political context. According to Almeida (2020), PPT has become one of the most influential proposals for explaining the dynamics of social movements, although other authors such as Gamson and Meyer (1996) have pointed out the deficits of its explanatory potential when trying to cover too broad a set of environmental dimensions.

According to the PPT, "the birth of a social movement, its initial objectives, recruitment of its human forces, organisation (material resources and communication media), form and means of action, discourse, [and] construction of collective identity are determined by structures, contexts, institutions, and political elites" (Ibarra, 2005, p. 119). In this sense, the general objective of this current work was to analyse the interaction between the political system and protest episodes, and the central explanatory element of this interaction are POSs, to the extent that they are "the set of dimensions or factors of the institutional and political framework that provide incentives or facilitating conditions for the development of a collective response action aimed at influencing policies and/or the democratic configuration" (Gomà, Gonzàlez et al., 2018, p. 31–32).

Although the concept of POSs was used for the first time by Eisenger (1973), Tarrow (1997) contributed the most to its operationalisation by identifying its three dimensions: the degree of openness of political access, the degree of stability of political preferences, and the strategic availability of potential allies; to which he later added the political conflict between elites (Tarrow, 1989). These dimensions were synthesised by McAdam (1996) as the degree of openness of the political system, stability of the alignments between elites, presence or absence of allies between elites, and capacity of the state and its propensity towards repression. Based on these four constitutive dimensions, Kriesi pointed out three general properties in relation to the political system: the "formal institutional structure, informal procedures and strategies in force regarding the challengers, and the configuration of power relevant to the confrontation with them" (Kriesi, 1992, p. 117).

There are different applications of the POSs in Spain, among which the following stand out: those of Adell (2003) for its analysis of the evolution of collective protest during the period of 1975–1996, Sánchez Estellés (2011) for its study of the anti-war movement, Huete (2002) for its analysis of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), especially those led by Ibarra et al. (2002) and Martí et al. (2018) which aimed to study the incidence of social movements in the creation of public policies. Likewise, in the Catalan case, it is worth noting the work of della Porta et al. (2019) regarding the radicalisation of protest movements and their link with the closure of political opportunities. However, no academic literature comparatively addresses the pro-independence process of 15-M based on the theory of the political process. In this

sense, our objective was to understand how POSs have changed in Spain in relation to the protest cycles associated with the 15-M movement and the Catalan independence process. To do this, we proposed the following specific objectives: highlight and identify the characteristics of protest cycles; compare emerging recurring processes and mechanisms; analyse their impact on the variables and factors comprising POSs; and uncover to what extent these have contributed to modifying their initial configuration.

METHODOLOGY

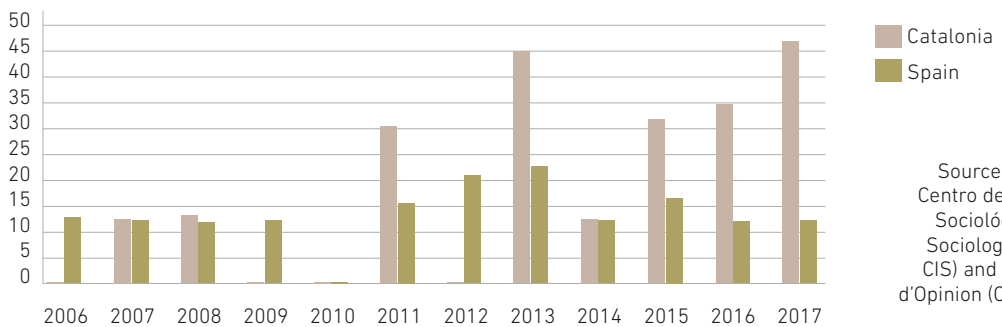
The methodological design of this work was based on the comparative analysis of two episodes of contention—the movement of the *indignados* (the 'outraged') and the pro-independence process—that share the same temporal and sociopolitical context but present different intensities and territorial variations. Both episodes can be conceived as forms of contentious politics (CP), as long as they meet the criteria set out by McAdam et al. (2005): "the episodic, public, and collective interaction between claimants and their objects when: (a) at least one government is one of the claimants, and (b) the claims, if satisfied, would affect at least one of the claimants."

This work was based on a comparative analysis in order to identify variables that have favoured social and political opportunity, their relationship with institutional politics, the margins that have opened to non-institutional political action, as well as alliances and divisions established with political elites and the responses of the political system to the actions and claims of the challengers. Specifically, we identified the following variables: access to institutions, orientation at the governmental level, conflict between elites, changes in political alignments, the system of alliances and conflicts, and the variation in the degree of repression, which demonstrates the capacity of the state to manage conflict in both episodes. The analysis of these variables allowed us to identify both the changes in the POSs and the impacts of CP on the political system.

ANALYSIS OF PROTEST CYCLES

To analyse the dynamics of protest cycles, we used different indicators. According to Tilly and Wood (2010), demonstrations constitute one of the main repertoires of contemporary cosmopolitan protest insofar as they are configured as an expression of worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment (WUNC). In this sense, we used an analysis performed by the Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (Centre for Sociological Research or CIS) of a series of people who declared having attended a demonstration in the 12 months prior as an indicator for Spain. In turn, for Catalonia we used an analysis from the Centre d'Estudis d'Opinion (Center of Opinion Studies or CEO) as well as the number of reported and prohibited demonstrations included in the national statistical records.

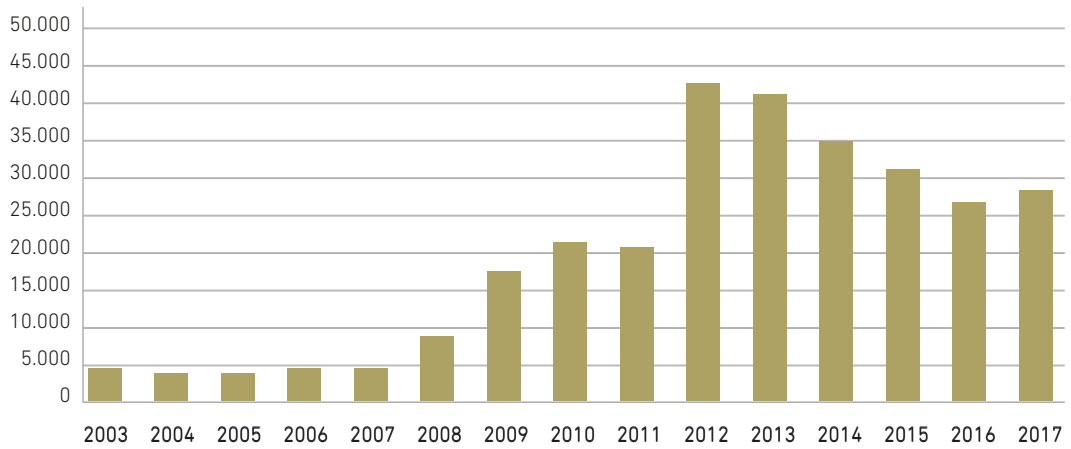
Figure 1 **Demonstration attendance in the 12 months prior.**



Source: series from the Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (Centre for Sociological Research or CIS) and Centre d'Estudis d'Opinion (Center of Opinion Studies or CEO).

As shown in figure 1, since 2011, there has been a rise in protests both in Catalonia and Spain, as reflected in the increase in the percentage of people who said they had attended a demonstration. This coincided with the emergence of the *indignados* movement and reached its peak in 2013 followed by a downward trend that ended by adopting values similar to those from before the beginning of the cycle. This evolution contrasts with the Catalan cycle in which the tendency was similar to the Spanish case in the initial phase. However, in 2016, there was an upturn in the mobilisation that reached its climax in 2017, coinciding with the referendum on 1 October. It is also evident how, from 2011, the percentage of protest attendees doubled that of the whole of Spain, even tripling it in 2017. However, it should also be noted that this data did not discriminate the orientation of the demonstrations and so, in the Catalan case, the effect of the anti-independence demonstrations held in 2017 must also be considered.

Figure 2 **Demonstrations reported.**

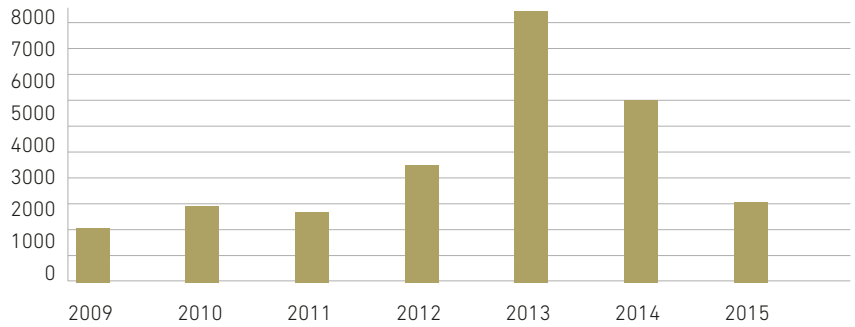


Source: *Anuario Estadístico del Ministerio de Interior* (the Statistical Yearbook of the Ministry of the Interior).

According to the indicator of the demonstrations communicated to the Ministry of the Interior[1] (figure 2) there was a trend similar to that shown in figure 1. Starting in 2008, coinciding with the eruption of the crisis, an increase in the mobilising cycle began that reached its peak in 2012 (doubling the size of the demonstrations from the previous year). This was followed by the subsequent start of a downturn, although it still maintained values much higher than those from the start of the cycle. However, this frequency indicator did not inform us about the actual participation in these demonstrations. Nonetheless, it is relevant to understand the spirals of competition and tactical radicalisation that articulate protest cycles, given that an increase in the number of actors involved leads to an increase in the frequency of demonstration calls.

1 The data from these series do not include the demonstrations called in Catalonia and the Basque Country from 2011 because these are both regional powers. Although, under other conditions, this absence would be problematic, this disaggregation was useful for the purposes of our research in order to differentiate the evolution of the cycle in both territories.

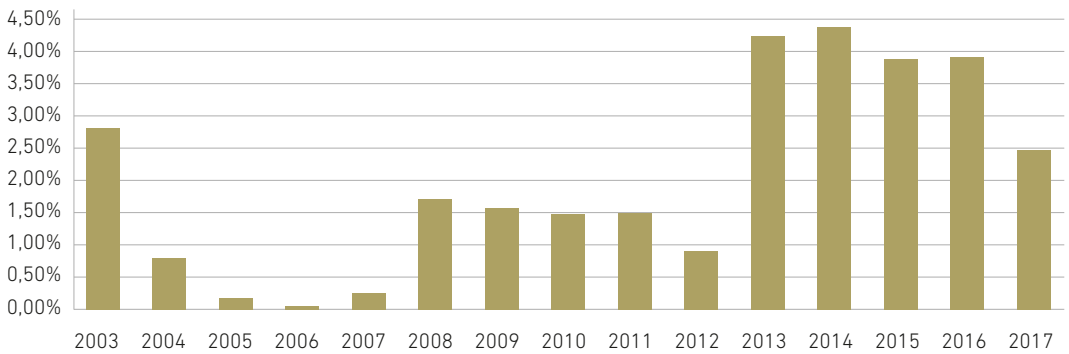
Figure 3 **Manifestations reported in Catalonia.**



Source: 2016 report on security in Catalonia.

In the Catalan case (figure 3), a similar trend to the previous figure was evident, reaching its climax in 2013, followed by a trend of decline. However, the Department of the Interior has not made the data for the 2016–2017 period public, and so we cannot verify whether a rebound in frequency similar to that shown in figure 1 was repeated.

Figure 3 **Banned demonstrations out of the total number of demonstrations held.**



Source: *Anuario Estadístico del Ministerio de Interior* (the Statistical Yearbook of the Ministry of the Interior).

If we look at the ratio between prohibited and reported demonstrations (figure 4), there is evidence of initial growth in the ratio in the 2008–2011 period coinciding with the crisis, followed by a substantial increase during the 2013–2014 biennium that, as Camps Calvet and Vergés (2015) pointed out, may indicate an increase in the capacity of the state's repressive management in the downward phase of the protest cycle.

COMPARISON BETWEEN MOVEMENTS

Comparison of the two dynamics shows the similarities and differences between them both in relation to the POSs (table 3). To achieve this, we first explored the patterns governing the form of mobilisation (table 1) and then explored the character of both these movements which had been progressively imprinting the shaping of this cycle (table 2).

Table 1 **Comparative chronology.**

15-M		Independence process	
PHASE I: Taking public squares	05/15/2011 **'Real Democracy Now' demonstration** which began with the occupation of public squares. 27/05/2011 **Failed eviction of the Plaza Cataluña** (120 wounded). 15/06/2011 **'Stop Parliament' mobilisation** (Barcelona) against governmental spending cuts. In 2014, 20 people were tried in National Court for this act. 15/08/2011 **Eviction from the Plaza del Sol.**	PHASE I: 'Right to decide' citizen initiative	18/02/2006 **'We are a nation, and we have the right to decide' demonstration** against the public spending cuts defined in the Statute, organised by the Right to Decide Platform (RDP). 13/09/2009 **Citizen consultation in Arenys de Munt** that started the different waves of citizen consultations; 812,934 votes in favour of independence. 10/06/2010 **'We are a nation, we decide' demonstration** against the Constitutional Court ruling, organised by Òmnium Cultural.
PHASE II: Citizen tides	15/10/2011 **Global demonstration** called in 951 cities in 82 countries. 25/09/2012 **'Surround Congress' demonstration** (34 arrested and 64 injured). 14/11/2012 **General European Strike** against austerity policies. 23/03/2013 **'Citizen surge' against the devastated markets.**	PHASE II: Institutional cooptation	11/09/2012 **September 11 'Catalonia, new state of Europe' demonstration** organised by the Catalan National Assembly. 25/09/2012 **Catalan elections:** Convergència i Unió (Convergence and Union, or CiU), Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (Republican Left of Catalonia, or ERC), and Candidatura d'Unitat Popular (Popular Unity Candidacy, or CUP reached a total of 1,741,088 votes (47.87%). 09/11/2014 **Participatory process on the political future of Catalonia:** 1,897,274 votes in favour of independence.
PHASE III: Institutionalisation of the movement	14/01/2014 **The 'Manifiesto Mover Ficha' (Make a Move Manifesto):** to turn indignation into political change. 22/03/2014 **The 'Dignity' marches.** 01/04/2014 **European Parliament Elections.** 24/05/2015 **Municipal Elections.**	PHASE III: Challenge to the State by the autonomous political power	27/09/2015 **Catalan Elections:** Junts pel Sí (Together for Yes) party and the CUP total was 1,966,508 votes (47.8%). 01/10/2017 **Independence Referendum.** 2,044,038 votes in favour of independence. 03/10/2017 **Anti-repression work stoppage.** 27/10/2017 **Declaration of independence and temporary suspension of self-government** (via article 155 CE of the Spanish Constitution).

Source: Elaborated by the authors based on hemerographic data.

According to table 1, we can establish three phases: a first one running from May 2011 up until the eviction of the Plaza del Sol, with its epicentre in the occupation of public squares that were converted into a WUNC demonstration of the movement. In this first phase, the seizure of public squares and demand for 'real democracy' functioned as repertoires of innovation, imitating those developed in Tahrir Square in Cairo and Syntagma Square in Athens, and later replicated in Zuccotti Park by Occupy Wall Street (Bonet-Martí, 2015a).

The second phase began with a global demonstration on 15 October 2011 and the creation of the *mareas ciudadanas* (citizen surges). This phase was marked by the transfer of protest dynamics to neighbourhoods and demonstrations in defence of public services, as well as the rise of the Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca (platform for those [negatively] affected by mortgages or PAH). In this phase, the CP was reinforced by incorporation of the main trade unions—the Comisiones Obreras (Workers' Commissions or CCOO) and the Unión General de Trabajadores (General Union of Workers or UGT)—which had not been very present during the first phase, and culminated in the General European Strike of 2012. The citizen surge of 2013 and citizen consultation on public health held between 5 and 10 May 2013 also converged in these demonstrations. This second phase was marked by the new political cycle that configured access to the right to power, which would motivate measures such as 'Surround Congress' in 2012, that called for a constituent process and an audit of the public debt to be opened. Likewise, there was a shift in the discursive framework of the challengers: the emphasis started to be placed more on social democracy than on the democratic regeneration that had galvanised the first phase.

Finally, in 2014, the decline phase was articulated, coinciding with the beginning of its institutionalisation process. This crystallised in the European elections in which Podemos burst onto the scene as a new political formation and in the municipal elections of 2015, in which different citizen platforms won the mayoralties of different Spanish cities.

We can also establish three phases, in relation to the pro-independence process, albeit over a longer period of time. The first began with the Plataforma por el Derecho a Decidir (Right to Decide Platform or RDP) demonstration in 2006. This mobilisation was discursively framed within the demand for the right to decide upon independence, but also by the organisation of citizen demonstrations by entities that were autonomous from the political parties. In this phase, the mobilising initiative was sponsored by citizen organisations, firstly by the RDP and, from the July 2010 demonstration onwards, by Òmnium Cultural, which in this period adopted a marked political vocation in favour of the demand for a referendum on self-determination. The public debate from this period concentrated both on the question of the constitutionality of the 2006 statute and on the successive waves of citizen consultations for independence. Therefore, three key elements were articulated in this phase: emergence of the discursive framework around the right to decide, massive demonstrations called by various organisations, and use of consultation as an element of democratic innovation.

The second phase began with the 11 September 2012 demonstration and extended up until the participatory process on 9 November 2014. This phase corresponded to the partial co-optation of the process by Catalan institutions and elites. The mobilising initiative remained within the entities, but leadership of the process was shared with the Catalan executive, which initiated a sovereigntist paradigm shift by publicly committing itself to organise a consultation on the political future of Catalonia. In this second phase, Òmnium and the recently created Assemblea Nacional Catalana (Catalan National Assembly, or ANC) continued to function as a motor for citizen demonstrations, but also as a pressure group demanding that a binding referendum be held.

Finally, a third phase can be seen that began in the 2015 elections and corresponded to the phase of defiance of the state, culminating in the call for the unilateral referendum for independence on 1 October 2017. The institutionalisation/governmentalisation of

the movement took place in this third phase, with hybridisation between entities and political parties through the Junts pel Sí (Together for Yes) candidacy and the assumption of a clearly confrontational dynamic of political struggle between the Catalan executive led by Carles Puigdemont and the Spanish government. The discursive framework of the right to decide was progressively replaced by that of independence during this phase. Likewise, the repressive response of the state culminated in a progressive judicialisation of the conflict and in the temporary suspension of self-government via article 155 of the Spanish Constitution, as well as imprisonment of the main pro-independence leaders. From 27 October 2017, we can consider that the process entered a fourth phase, marked by the mobilising anti-repression dynamics, a demand for amnesty, constitution of a negotiating table, and a pardon decreed by the Spanish government in June 2021. The latter requires a separate in-depth analysis, which is why we limited our analysis to the period of 2011–2017 to exclude it. Table 2 compiles an initial comparison between both these episodes.

Table 2 Comparison between the 15-M and independence process movements.

	15-M	Independence process
Time dimension	2011–2014	2006-2017
Spatial dimension	Main Spanish cities.	Whole territory of Catalonia.
Objectives of the claim	End bipartisanship. Democratisation of society.	The 'right to decide.' Independence of Catalonia.
Dimensions	Social Democracy	Territorial Democracy
Outputs	Creation of the Podemos political party and municipal citizen platforms. Transformation of the party system. Citizen Safety Law and Penal Code Reform.	Increased support for independence. Transformation of the nationalist centre-right into an independentist movement. Imprisonment of the pro-independence leaders. Chronification of the territorial conflict.
Simultaneous global events	Arab Spring. Anti-austerity protests (Greece and Occupy Wall Street, etc.).	Scottish independence referendum in 2014.

Source: Prepared by the authors

Likewise, we must point out the effect that global historical events of the time had. In the case of 15-M, it is worth noting the imitating and reinforcing the effect of the Arab Spring and anti-austerity protests, which opened a window of opportunity (Romanos, 2016) or, in the same way, the effect that the Scottish referendum had on the Catalan independence process (Castelló et al., 2016).

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STAKEHOLDERS

The application of the POSs analysis model for the two movements (table 3), including a detailed visualisation of the system of alliances each movement articulated with institutional political actors (figure 5) and the type of relationships that predominated in each case (figure 6), completes the panorama of the political relationships that make it possible to understand how the closing of this protest cycle occurred.

Table 3 **Structure of political opportunities.**

Dimensions	15-M	Independence process
Institutional access	Only at the local level at the end of the third phase.	Access to Catalan institutions.
Centrality of power	Central power oriented.	Oriented towards autonomous political power.
Conflict between elites	Weakness of the Partido So-cialista Obrero Es-pañol (Span-ish Socialist Workers Party, or PSOE) government in dealing with the beginning of the protests.	Conflict between elites according to their level of government (autonomous versus central).
Change of political alignments/ elections	General Election 2012 (PSOE–PP alternation). European elections 2014 (49.05% bipartisanship).	Catalan elections 2012 (institutional coop-tation). Catalan elections 2015 (institutionalisation).
Alliance system	Sindicatos, IU, partidos nacionalistas de izquierdas (desarrollado en la Figura 5)	Partidos políticos nacionalistas/inde-pendentistas (desarrollado en la Figura 5)
Conflict system	Bipartisanship. Economic powers.	Spanish government. Judicial power.
Degree of repression	Eviction of the Plaza Catalunya and Plaza del Sol. Repression of the Dignity Marches and Surround Congress actions. Trial of detainees from the Stop Parliament mobilisation.	Suppression 1–0. Initiation of a sedition crime offence. Imprisonment of pro-independence leaders.

Source: Prepared by the authors.

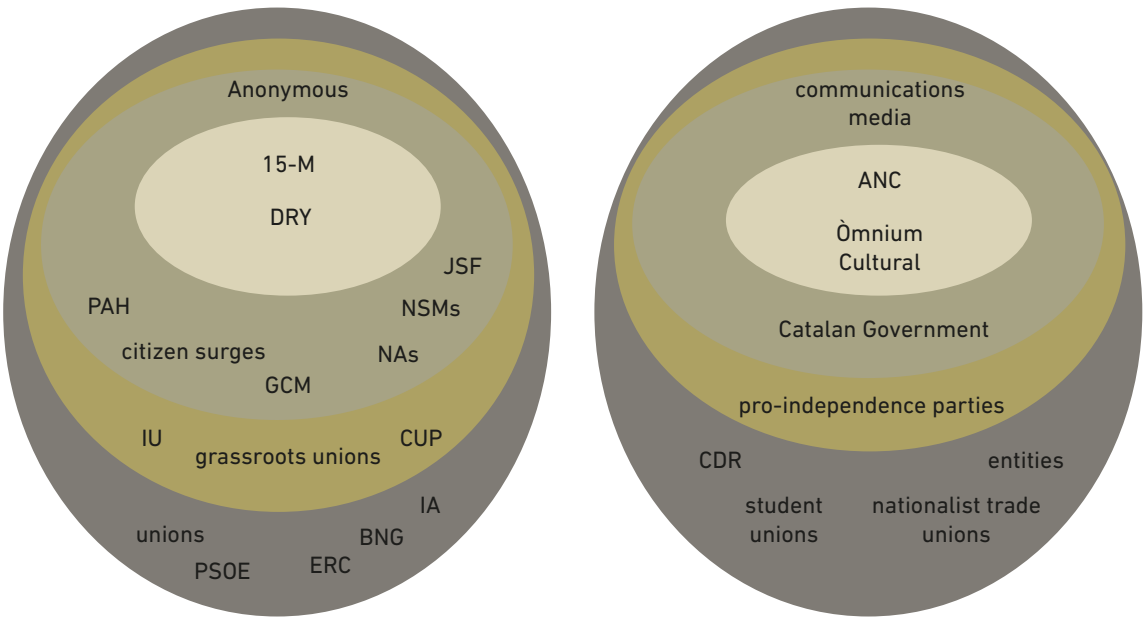
Table 3 shows the differences in the POSs. In relation to institutional access, the 15-M movement only managed to access the institution in the municipal elections of 2015, while the Catalan process achieved this goal in 2012 through partial cooptation. This institutional access was associated with the orientation of the movements. While 15-M directed its demands towards the central executive (that maintained a strategy of exclusion), the pro-independence process did so in relation to the autonomous executive (which showed itself to be permeable to the assumption of its claim agenda).

In relation to the processes of conflict/misalignment between elites, in the case of 15-M, this was reflected in the weakness of the PSOE executive because of the imposition of austerity policies, which resulted in its inability to manage the protest in its initial phases. In turn, in the independence process, this misalignment of elites became evident with the initial cooptation and conversion of the ruling nationalist centre-right into an independentist movement. However, at the national level, the independence movement failed to establish a solid system of alliances; it had only

gathered the support of Unido Podemos and the Basque and Galician nationalist groups, while the rest of the main parties were aligned with the Spanish government, as reflected in the Senate's vote on Article 155.

Figure 5 represents the systems of alliances between 15-M and the Catalan independence process represented in concentric circles according to the analysis model by Bonet-Martí (2015b) for 15-M. Because the systems of alliances evolved over time, we focused on

Table 3 **The 15-M alliance system (2011–2013) and pro-independence process (2012–2017).**



Source: Prepared by the authors.

the 2011–2013 period for 15-M and the 2015–2017 period for the independence process. The central circle in each diagram shows the stakeholders who acted as the drivers of each episode. In the case of 15-M, we identified the plazas and Democracia Real Ya (real democracy now, or DRY) movements, while in the case of the independence process, we identified the ANC and Òmnium Cultural.

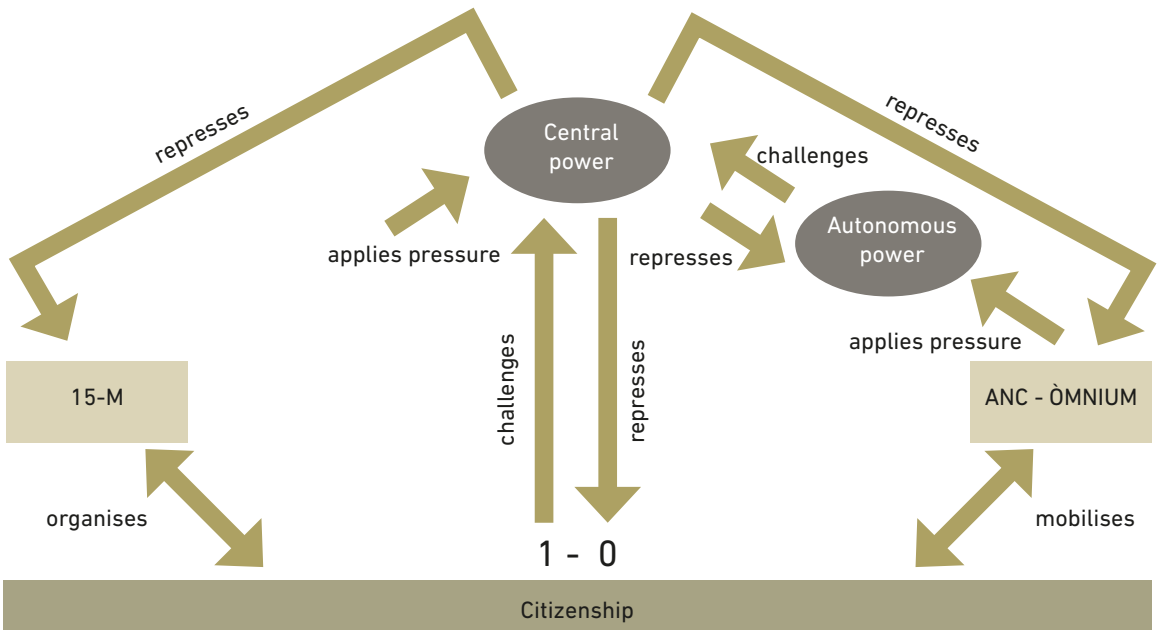
In the adjacent circle, we find the Catalan government from the institutionalisation phase onwards, while in the case of 15-M we find the organisations and movements most directly involved in the organisation of the public squares protests and their subsequent transfer to neighbourhood and sectoral protests: the PAH, Juventud sin Futuro (Youth without a Future, or JSF), neighbourhood associations (NAs), grassroots Christian movements, new social movements (NSMs), citizen surges in defence of public services, and the hacktivist group Anonymous. In the third circle from the decision-making centre, in the case of the independence process, we can find the pro-independence parties—Esquerra Republicana (Republican Left), Convergencia Democrática (Democratic Convergence) re-founded as the Partido Demócrata Europeo Catalán (Catalan European Democratic Party, or PDeCAT), and the electoral coalition Junts pel Sí that incorporated the aforementioned groups and the Candidatura d'Unitat Popular (Popular Unity Candidacy, or CUP)—and especially the Catalan media system represented by the media of the Catalan Audiovisual Media Corporation (TV3 and Catalunya Radio) and some private

communication groups. In the case of 15-M were the grassroots unions such as the Confederación General del Trabajo (General Confederation of Labour, or CGT) and Confederazione dei Comitati di Base (Confederation of Grassroots Committees, or COBAS), Izquierda Unida (United Left), and the CUP.

Finally, in the last sphere of alliance, but without decision-making capacity regarding the mobilising dynamics of the phase currently being analysed, in the case of the independence process it is worth mentioning the Referendum defence committees—later called Committees for the Defence of the Republic—created just prior to 1 October and which acquired a greater role in the fourth anti-repressive phase, independentist student unions, and nationalist minority unions. While in the case of 15-M, in a more remote position and in contradictory senses, we can find the majority unions (UGT and CCOO) and the leftist parties: the PSOE, Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (Republican Left of Catalonia, or ERC), Abertzale Left, Galician Nationalist Bloc, and Coalició Compromís (the Compromise Coalition).

In relation to the conflict system, in the case of 15-M this was marked, on the one hand, by opposition to the bipartisanship represented by the two main parties, the Partido Popular (Popular Party or PP) and PSOE, and to economic powers and financial capital. On the other hand, in relation to the process, the conflict system was in opposition to the Spanish executive, Constitutional Court, and, as of 2017, also the judiciary, after the latter held trials for disobedience and embezzlement for holding the 9-N consultation and for those derived from holding the referendum on 1 October. Finally, in relation to the degree of repression, it is evident how both movements led to a change in anti-repressive strategies. While as a result of 15-M, there was evidence of an increase in the repressive dynamics that culminated in the approval of Organic Law 4/15, of 30 March on the Protection of Citizen Safety, popularly known as the Gag Law, as well as reform of the Penal Code. The repressive dynamics of the process were concentrated especially in the political elites after the consultation on 1 November, and especially after the referendum on 1 October, and it would not be until 2018 and especially, 2019 that it would begin to spread to all citizens as a result of protests against the sentence.

Figure 6 **System of relationships between stakeholders**



Source: Prepared by the authors.

Figure 6 identifies the relationships between the different actors comprising 15-M and the independence process. As represented, the central actors in the process did not put pressure directly on the state but rather, on Catalan political powers so that they would challenge the state. They simultaneously mobilised citizens by connecting various enclaves of action to facilitate their participation in pro-independence demonstrations. These then turned into WUNC demonstrations through the performativity of the demonstration activities: the demonstrations of 11 September were meticulously organised by the convening entities to develop a form of patriotic performance (Dowling, 2020) that aimed to strengthen the nation-building process (García, 2016). This dynamic of citizen mobilisation culminated in their involvement in the challenge represented by the referendum of 1 October, which would lead to episodes of police repression. Likewise, it is worth noting how the two repertoires of mobilisation (demonstration and consultation) ended up coming together in the case of the referendum on 1 October.

15-M emerged as an expression and instrument of citizen organisation with the goal of demanding the end of social spending cuts and austerity policies by the state, as well as petitioning for greater citizen participation. Nonetheless, challenges to the state were concentrated in the WUNC demonstrations as occupation of public squares and later, through actions such as Surround Congress or the Dignity Marches. Unlike the pro-independence model, which exhibited marked protest ritualisation, the 15-M mobilisations were dominated by spontaneity, the dynamics of self-organisation, and use of techno-politics as an extension of the conversation in public squares and as a device for coordinating their protests (Monterde, 2015).

The state had differing responses to the two movements. In the indignados movement they opted for a dynamic of police containment which later translated into legislative reforms against the guarantee of individual rights. In turn, in the case of the independence process, the initial repression was administrative—through judicial warnings—and only in 2017, did this become a police and judicial matter with the imprisonment of the leaders of the independence process and prosecutions of citizens who organised the referendum via police intervention.

IMPACTS ON POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURES

Both 15-M and the independence process emerged in a context marked by the crisis in legitimacy of the transitional political culture, as shown by the breakdown of the consensus on the social and territorial model (Bonet-Martí and Ubasart-González, 2021). While there was agreement that the origin of the rupture of the consensus on the social model lay in the imposition of austerity policies and social cuts in response to the economic crisis of 2008–2014, there was greater debate about where to place the origin of the territorial crisis: in the 31/2010 ruling declaring certain articles of the Catalan Statute as unconstitutional, in the beginning of the statutory process in 2006 (Vilaregut, 2011), or even in the unrest generated by the centralising shift developed during the second Aznar government. In any case, these two trends converged from 2011 to 2017 and are at the root of the episodes of contention examined in this current study insofar as they involved an accumulation of grievances that acted as catalytic mechanisms.

On the one hand, it should be noted that the rise in support for the Catalan demand for independence was driven by elements of national identity but also by pragmatic–instrumental reasons (Muñoz and Tormos, 2015) that allowed the movement to penetrate beyond its traditional enclaves. Two phenomena have contributed to this: the discursive frameworks activated by redefining the demand for independence in a democratising key, and the role played by the Catalan media, especially from the second phase of the pro-independence process onwards. In fact, instead of serving as a means of moderation for political claims, institutionalisation of the Catalan process operated as a radicalisation

mechanism by transforming the initial citizen claim into an institutional challenge (Bonet-Martí and Ubasart-González, 2021).

It is also evident how alignment of part of the Catalan elite with the pro-independence process expanded the sphere of opportunities for collective action by amplifying the echo of the demand, especially through the use of the media. The cohesion of elites at the state level, in this case using the state media to amplify their position in defence of territorial integrity, entailed an institutional polarisation that led to the current chronification of the conflict (Bonet-Martí and Ubasart-González, 2021). In relation to the repressive dimension, as Camps Calvet and Di Nella (2020) pointed out, the capacity to manage the social conflict derived from 15-M was developed by increasing police operators. In particular, this was achieved by modifying the Criminal Code and Law 4/2015 on citizen safety, which gave the State greater scope to punish behaviours associated with protest as crimes against public order. They also used administrative offences, involving the use of new criminal offences (crimes against state institutions) and the use of a single jurisdiction to the detriment of judges of ordinary jurisdiction (as opposed to one appointed to hear a specific issue), through the intervention of the Audiencia Nacional in the case of the Stop Parliament trial. On the other hand, the repressive strategy in relation to the independence process implied an aggravation of criminal offenses (the crime of sedition) and imprisonment of the leaders of the independence movement after the referendum on 1 October 2017.

Finally, in relation to the impacts of these events on the political system, we can distinguish, following Kriesi (1992), between procedural impacts, the capacity of movements to open channels of participation, substantive impacts, the political changes achieved by the movement, and structural impacts as those that affected the configuration of the system.

Table 4 **Comparison of impacts**

	15-M	Proceso independentista
Procedural impacts	Promotion of citizen participation and social innovation.	Creation of an informal structure of coordination between entities and the government to hold the 1 October referendum.
Substantive impacts	Democratic regeneration policies (transparency, ethical codes, and anti-corruption measures, etc.).	Policies for the creation of so-called state structures suspended by the Constitutional Court.
Structural impacts	Transformation of the party system. Transformation of the repressive strategy. Creating new opportunities for new expressions of protest.	Political polarisation around the territorial divide. Transformation of the repressive strategy.

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Table 4 shows the impacts both these mobilisations have had on the configuration of the political system. In relation to the procedural impacts, it is evident that although 15-M did not manage to institutionalise an access route to the political system, its demands did contribute to strengthening new channels of communication between the institution and citizenry through a deepening of citizen participation and the promotion of social innovation (Pradel and García, 2018). While in relation to the independence process, the procedural impact was produced informally, through the creation of a coordination structure between entities and part of the Catalan executive, informally called 'the general staff of the process', which was responsible for organising the referendum on 1 October (Casas, Pruna, Martínez et al., 2019).

In relation to substantive impacts, it is worth noting the concern on the part of administrations to establish legal reforms aimed at curbing revolving doors (Law 3/2015) and increasing transparency (Law 19/2013) and the accountability of political parties (Organic Law 3/2015). Meanwhile, in relation to the pro-independence process, the most important substantive impacts were related to the creation of the self-styled 'state structures': the Catalan treasury, project to create a Catalan social protection agency, and plans to control strategic infrastructures suspended by the Constitutional Court.

What we can anticipate for the moment is that both 15-M and the pro-independence process will operate as two key vectors of collective mobilisation framing a political cycle whose resolution is still in dispute; we still do not know whether it will lead to a democratising or a de-democratising process. We can also anticipate that at stake in the resulting EOP of the period is the strengthening or weakening of the state's real capacity to manage the diverse set of demands and dynamics that are active today (including the rise of the extreme right). In this regard, our research indicates that the complex combination of legal reforms, resorting to judicialisation of the protest, and use of police repression are, together, more the response of a weak structure. However, neither the type of state that offers it nor its character is very evident, because these aspects have been masked by a dynamic of intensified demand for more democracy, both by the mobilisations of 15-M and by the independence process in Catalonia. If the response of the Spanish State was indeed that of a weak state (as we affirm in light of our current analysis), then a process of de-democratisation has probably been promoted from 2017 onwards, because "in weak states, de-democratisation takes place even more frequently than in medium and strong states (...)" (Tilly, 2007, p. 207). However, on the contrary, if what has been exposed is a low level of development of its democratic culture (and this is the reason for the repressive and judicial response) then, even if the current state is strong in terms of its organisational and institutional capacity, it will also be less democratic culturally.

The most significant structural impact of 15-M was the transformation of the party system, marking the end of the two-party dynamics after the 2015 European elections. It is also worth mentioning the transformation of the repressive strategy and creation of new opportunities for protest that would later be seized by the feminist movement in the mass mobilisations of 8 March and 25 March 2018 and 2019, demonstrations in defence of the pension system in 2018, and mobilisations against climate change by the Fridays for Future movement. While, in the Catalan case, the structural impacts were concentrated, above all, in the transformation of the repressive strategy through the use of certain types of criminal offences (sedition) which would lead to a new stage in the independence process, marked by an anti-repressive dynamic and protests against the sentencing of the pro-independence leaders.

CONCLUSIONS

As has become evident in the course of this article, both movements contributed to the crisis of transitional consensus. On the one hand, by challenging

both the modernising narrative inherited from the transition and the territorial integration project—which led to the radicalisation of Catalan nationalism in the form of independence—and as a reaction to the resurgence of an exclusionary Spanish nationalism represented by the entry of the extreme right into institutions. Likewise, on the side of 15-M, it has also made visible the authoritarian enclaves still present in the judicial system, as reflected in the repressive dynamics represented by the approval of Organic Law 4/2015, of 30 March, on the protection of citizen safety and the reform of the criminal code in 2015. In turn, the pro-independence movement has made visible the judicial persecution of the Catalan elites sponsoring the process, followed by police repression against participants in the referendum of 1 October and in subsequent mobilisations against the conviction of pro-independence leaders. In conclusion, the main premise of the POSs model is evident: the chances of success of calling for protest and social mobilisation increase when political opportunities are expanded, when allies are demonstrated, and when opponents' weaknesses are highlighted. However, its other complementary premise was also affirmed: in the face of intensified protest, government forces and the state apparatus have a range of response choices, varying from reform when faced with pressure from demonstrations, repression of demonstrations, or a complex simultaneous combination of both these options.

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Author guidelines for *Debats. Journal on Culture, Power and Society*

Author guidelines

Authors submitting papers for publication to *Debats. Journal on Culture, Power and Society* should first verify that their submission complies with the following requirements:

Different types of work will be accepted:

- **Articles** must be original, complete, and fully-developed theoretical or empirical works.
- **Viewpoint articles** should take the form of an essay, in which an innovative view is put forward dealing with a debate in the field of study of the journal, or providing analysis of a current social or cultural phenomenon.
- **Reviews:** book reviews.
- **Profiles:** interviews or comments on an intellectual figure of special relevance.

Work should be submitted in *OpenOffice Writer* (.odt) or *Microsoft Word* (.doc) through the magazine's website. No other means of submission will be accepted, nor will correspondence be maintained regarding originals submitted outside the portal or in any other format.

Non-textual elements (tables, charts, maps, graphs, and illustrations, etc.) contained in the work will be inserted in the corresponding place in the text. In addition, editable graphs in *OpenOffice Calc* (.ods) or *Microsoft Excel* (.xls) format and maps, illustrations or images in .jpg or .tiff formats at 300 DPI should be sent separately as a supplementary file. All the elements must be numbered and titled, specifying the font at the foot of the illustration or graph, and an explicit reference to it must be made in the body text.

Any work submitted must be unpublished and cannot be submitted for consideration to other journals while undergoing the review process at *Debats. Journal on Culture, Power and Society*. In exceptional cases, the Editorial Board may decide to publish and/or translate a previously published text for reasons of scientific interest and/or to circulate particularly noteworthy contributions.

Monographic issues

Debats may publish monographic issues. This section is also open to proposals from the scientific community. The acceptance of a monographic issue is subject to the presentation of a suitable project which fits the objectives and topics of the monographic issue as well as a detailed list of the expected contributions or a method(s) to enable the call for manuscripts. In the event that the proposed monographic issue is accepted by the Editorial Board, the director of the monographic issue will be responsible for requesting or calling for and receiving the original works. Once received, the articles will be submitted to the journal for review. The review process will be undertaken by experts in the field following a double-blind review method. All works sent to *Debats. Journal on Culture, Power and Society* will be reviewed according to the strictest possible scientific quality criteria. For more detailed information on the process of coordination and peer review of a monographic issue, those interested should contact the Editorial Board of *Debats*.

Languages

Debats. Journal on Culture, Power and Society is published in its paper-print version and its digital version in Valencian–Catalan and Castilian Spanish.

The submitted work must be written in Valencian–Catalan, Castilian Spanish or English. Should an article receive a positive review by anonymous reviewers and be approved by the Editorial Board, *Debats. Journal on Culture, Power and Society* will undertake the Valencian–Catalan or Castilian Spanish translation.

The monographic issues will also be translated into English and a print issue containing this monographic content will be published yearly.

Format and extension of the journal

The articles and papers proposed for publication in *Debats* must be accompanied by a cover letter specifying the following information:

- Title, in Valencian–Catalan or Castilian Spanish, and in English.
- Name of the author(s).
- Institutional affiliation(s): the authors' university or centre, department, unit or research institute, city, and country.
- An e-mail address. All correspondence will be sent to this e-mail address. Should the submitted article(s) have multiple authors, the corresponding author should be specified.
- A short biographical note (60 words maximum) specifying the highest qualifications awarded (and by which university) of the contributing authors, and their current position and main lines of research. *Debats. Journal on Culture, Power and Society* may publish this biographical note to complement the information related to the corresponding article.
- The Open Researcher and Contributor Identification (ORCID) code(s). Should the authors lack this ID, *Debats. Journal on Culture, Power and Society* recommends they register at http: //orcid.org/ to obtain their ORCID code.
- Acknowledgments. If acknowledgments are included in the submitted work, these must be placed after the abstract and must not exceed 250 words.

The main text of the article will be preceded by a summary of 250 words maximum (which clearly and concisely state the objectives, methodology, main results, and conclusions of the work) along with a maximum of 6 keywords (which are not used in the title and which must be internationally accepted terms fot the scientific disciplines in question and/or expressions which are commonly used in bibliometric classifications). If the text is written in Valencian–Catalan or Castilian Spanish, the abstract and the keywords must also be included in English. If the original text is written in English, the Editorial Team will translate the title, abstract, and key words into Valencian–Catalan and Castilian Spanish if the author does not provide this translation.

Submitted articles must be anonymised: all citations, acknowledgments, references, and other allusions that may directly or indirectly allow author identification must be redacted (under an anonymity label). The Editorial Team at *Debats. Journal on Culture, Power and Society* will ensure that all texts fulfil this requisite. If the article is accepted for publication, *Debats* will request a non-anonymised version of the manuscript, should it differ from the one sent previously.

Except in exceptional cases, articles should be between 6,000 and 8,000 words long, including footnotes but excluding the title, abstracts, keywords, graphics, tables, and bibliography.

Viewpoint articles are texts approximately 3,000 words long each, including footnotes and excluding the title, abstracts, keywords, graphs, tables and bibliography. One of the texts should introduce the contribution which is subject to debate, and must be written by the author themselves or by the coordinator of the debate.

Book reviews shall not exceed 3,000 words and the following information must be specified at the beginning: the author, title, place of publication, publisher, year of publication, and number of pages. It should also include the name and surnames, institutional affiliation, and the e-mail address of the author of the review.

Interviews or Profiles must not exceed 3,000 words, and at the beginning must specify the place and date of the interview and the name and surnames of the interviewee or profile subject, as well as their institutional affiliation(s). It must also include the full name, institutional affiliation, and email address of the author of the interview or profile.

Text formatting should be as follows:

- Font type and size: Times New Roman 12.
- Text with justification and spacing of 1.5, except footnotes.
- Footnotes must be consecutively numbered at the bottom of the page, not at the end of the text. We recommend minimising the use of footnotes, and they should be explanatory and not contain bibliographic citation(s).
- The pages must be numbered at the foot, starting with number 1 on the Abstract page (the cover sheet with the author information should not be numbered).
- Do not indent the beginning of paragraphs.
- Define all abbreviations at their first use in the body text.

Do not number the text headings and use the following format for each heading level:

- **BOLD, UPPERCASE LETTERING, SPACED ABOVE AND BELOW.**
- *Italic, spaced above and below.*
- *Italic, spaced above and below.* The text begins after a space.

Text body citations/references are based on the APA (American Psychological Association) guidelines.

- Citations/References will appear in the text and footnotes with a purely bibliographic purpose must be avoided.
- Citations/References must appear in parentheses, including the surname of the author and year; for example, (Bourdieu, 2002).
- When the year of publication of two works by the same author coincide, distinguish them with lower case letters after the year; for example, (Bourdieu, 1989a).
- If there are two authors, their surnames should be joined by 'and': (Lapierre and Roueff, 2013); when there are more than two authors, the surname of the first author should be followed by 'et al.' (Bennet et al., 2005), although in the final bibliographic references must include all the authors.
- If there are two ore more references inside the same parenthesis, separate them with a semicolon: (Castells, 2009; Sassen, 1999; Knorr and Preda, 2004).
- Verbatim quotations must be enclosed in double quotation marks and followed by the corresponding reference in parentheses, which must also include the cited pages, thus: (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 76–79); should a quotation exceed four lines of prose, it should be transcribed separately from the main text on a new line, without quotation marks, and using a 1.27 cm indentation and a 10 pt font size.

The complete list of bibliographic references is placed at the end of the text, under the heading 'References' and written according to the following guidelines:

- Only works cited in the text should be included, and all cited works must be referenced in the final list.
- Place all references with a DOI (Digital Object Identifier) at the end.
- The citation list must be listed in alphabetical order according to the first author's last name. Where there are several references by the same author, arrange them chronologically according to the year of publication. Additionally, use the following order for citations by the same author: first, the author's individual work; second, work compiled by the author; and third, work by the author in conjunction with other co-authors.
- Use 1.27 cm hanging indents for all references.

Adopt the following format, based on the APA (American Psychological Association) guidelines, for the different citation/reference document types in complete bibliographic references:

- **Books**
  - One author: Anderson, B. (1991). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. London: Verso.

- **Two to five authors:** Rainie, L., and Wellman, B. (2012). *Networked: The New Social Operating System*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- **More than six authors:** Follow the first six authors by 'et al.' in the reference.

- **Journal article:**
  - **One author:** Hirsch, P. M. (1972). Processing fads and fashions: An organization-set analysis of cultural industry systems. *American Journal of Sociology*, *77*(4), 639-659.
  - **Two authors:** Bielby, W. T. and Bielby, D. D. (1999). Organizational mediation of project-based labor markets: Talent agencies and the careers of screenwriters. *American Sociological Review*, *64*(1), 64-85.
  - **Three to seven authors:** Dyson, E., Gilder, G., Keyworth, G., and Toffler, A. (1996). Cyberspace and the American dream: A magna carta for the knowledge age. *Information Society*, *12*(3), 295-308.
- **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.

  Pamphlets, monographs, manuals, and similar material are considered as books.
- **Internet references:**
  - **Online documents:** Raymond, E. S. (1999). *Homesteading the noosphere*. Accessed on the 15th of April 2017 at http://www.catb.org/~esr/writings/homesteading/homesteading/

    Generalitat Valenciana (2017). Presència de la Comunitat Valenciana en FITUR 2017. Accessed on the 15th of April 2017 at http://www.turisme.gva.es/opencms/opencms/turisme/va/contents/home/noticia /noticia_1484316939000.html
  - **Online journal articles:** Ros, M. (2017). La «no-wash protest» i les vagues de fam de les presoneres republicanes d'Armagh (nord d'Irlanda). Una qüestió de gènere. *Papers*, *102*(2), 373-393. Accessed on the 15th of April 2017 at http://papers.uab.cat/article/view/v102-n2-ros/2342-pdf-es
  - **Online newspapers articles. With author:** Samuelson, R. J. (11st April 2017). Are living standards truly stagnant? *The Washington Post*. Accessed on the 15th of April 2017 at https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/are-living-standards-truly-stagnant/2017/04/11/10a1313a-1ec7-11e7-ad74-3a742a6e93a7_story.html?utm_term=.89f90fff5ec4. **Without author:** *La Veu del País Valencià* (11 st April 2017). Els valencians són els ciutadans de l'Estat que més dies de treball necessiten per a pagar el deute públic. Accessed on the 15th of April 2017 at http://www.diarilaveu.com/noticia/72769/valencians-pagar-treball-deutepublic

Authors of original work must to adapt their bibliography to follow the APA guidelines. Texts that do not conform to these guidelines will be returned to the authors so that they can make the necessary changes.

Selection and publication criteria

Debats. Journal on Culture, Power and Society publishes academic papers of rigorous theoretical and empirical research in the fields of social sciences and the humanities in general. However, some monographs may incorporate some contributions from other disciplines related to the theme of culture, power, and society, such as history, political science, and cultural studies.

Peer-review will be undertaken by expert academics and will follow the double-blind method for the articles in the monographic section entitled *Quadern* and in the miscellaneous research articles entitled *Articles*. All of the work in these sections sent to *Debats. Journal on Culture, Power and Society* will be evaluated according to the strictest scientific quality criteria.

Formatting and presentation errors, non-compliance with the journal's standards, or spelling and syntactic errors may lead to rejection of the work prior to review. On reception of a text meeting all the formal requirements, receipt will be acknowledged and the review process will begin.

In a first phase, the Editorial Team will carry out a general review of the quality and appropriateness of the scope of the work and may directly, without external review, reject works that are of an ostensibly low quality or that make no contribution to the scope of the journal. In this initial review, the Editorial Team may require assistance, if deemed necessary, from the members of the Editorial Board or the Scientific Board. The proposals put forward for discussion may be accepted after passing this preliminary review phase without the need for external peer-review.

The articles that pass this first review stage will be sent to two external reviewers who specialise in the corresponding research field or topic. In the event that the evaluations are discrepant, or for any other reason deemed necessary, the Editorial Team may send the text to a third reviewer.

According to the reviewers' reports, the Editorial Team may make one of the following decisions, which will be communicated to the author:

- Accepted for publication in its current version (or with slight modifications).
- Accepted for publication subject to revision. In this case, publication of the manuscript will be subject to the author making all the changes requested by the Editorial Team and the reviewers. The deadline for making said changes will be one month, and a short report should be attached upon resubmission explaining the changes made and how they fit the requirements of the Editorial Team. The proposed changes may include the conversion of a proposed article into a research note / bibliographic note, or vice versa.
- Non-publishable, but with the option of rewriting and resubmitting the work. In this case, the re-submission of a new version will not imply any guarantee of publication and the review process will restart from the beginning.
- Rejected as non-publishable.

In the event that a paper is accepted for publication, the author must revise the galley proofs within a maximum period of two weeks.

Debats. Journal on Culture, Power and Society annually publishes a list of all the anonymous reviewers as well as the statistics for article acceptance, acceptance upon revision, and rejection and the average length of time between receipt of an article and communication to the author of the final decision.

Publishing ethics, good practices, and detection of plagiarism and/or scientific misconduct

Debats. Journal on Culture, Power and Society is committed to complying with good practices and ethics in publication. These are understood as:

- Authorship: in the event of multiple authorship, the participation of all the authors must be acknowledged, all authors must agree upon the submission of the article, and the lead author must ensure that all authors approve the revisions and the final version.
- Publication practices: the author(s) must make known any previous publication of the article, including translations, or simultaneous submissions to other journals.
- Conflict(s) of interest: authors must declare financial support for the research and any commercial, financial, or personal relationship that may affect the results and conclusions of the work. In these cases, a statement should be included in the article stating such circumstances.
- Review process: the Editorial Board must ensure that the published research papers have been reviewed by at least two specialists in the field, and that the review process is fair and impartial. Therefore, it must ensure confidentiality of the review at all times and the absence of reviewer conflicts of interest. The Editorial Board shall base its decisions on the reasoned reports prepared by the reviewers.

The journal will implement at least two mechanisms to detect plagiarism and/or scientific malpractice. Plagiarism is understood as:

- Presenting others' work as your own
- Adopting words or ideas from other authors without due recognition
- Absence of quotation marks in a literal quotation
- Providing incorrect information regarding the true source of a citation
- Paraphrasing a source without mentioning it
- Abuse of paraphrasing, even if the source is mentioned

The practices constituting scientific malpractice are as follows:

- Fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism or omission of data
- Publication duplication and self-plagiarism
- Claiming individual authorship of collectively-authored work
- Conflicts of authorship

Debats. Journal on Culture, Power and Society may make scientific malpractices public should they be discovered. In these cases, the Editorial Board reserves the right to withdraw those previously published articles when, subsequent to its publication, a lack of reliability due to involuntary errors or to fraud or the aforementioned scientific malpractices is determined. The objective of such a withdrawal is to correct any previously published scientific production, ensuring integrity of the remaining works. The conflict of duplicity, caused by the simultaneous publication of an article in two journals, will be resolved by determining the date of receipt of the work at each journal. If only a part of the article contains an error, it can be corrected subsequently by means of an editorial note or admission of errata. In the event of conflict, the journal will ask the author or authors for explanations and relevant evidence for clarification, and will make a final decision based thereon.

The journal will publish a communication in its printed and electronic versions regarding the withdrawal of a particular text, stating the reasons for taking this measure, in order to distinguish malpractice from involuntary error. Likewise, the journal will notify the withdrawal to the officials of the institution to which the author(s) of the article belong(s). As a preliminary step to the final withdrawal of an article, the journal may publish a communication of irregularity, providing the necessary information in the same terms as in the case of withdrawal. The communication of irregularity will be maintained for the minimum time required, and will conclude with its withdrawal or with the formal retraction of the article.

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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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