

Revista **CENTRA** de Ciencias Sociales

CENTRA Journal of Social Sciences

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2023 · vol. 2 · no. 1

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CENTRA Journal of Social Sciences

2023 | vol. 2 | No. 1

ISSN: 2951-6641 (paper); 2951-8156 (online)

DL: SE 974-2022

<https://centracs.es/revista>

Seville, June 2023

Published by

Fundación Pública Andaluza Centro de

Estudios Andaluces (CENTRA)

Consejería de la Presidencia, Interior, Diálogo Social
y Simplificación Administrativa, Junta de Andalucía

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Information on CENTRA's scientific publications in social sciences

The **Andalusian Studies Center Public Foundation** -CENTRA-, attached to the Consejería de la Presidencia, Interior, Diálogo Social y Simplificación Administrativa of the Junta de Andalucía, is a scientific and cultural institution that already has a history of more than twenty years, and which has as its foundational objectives the promotion of scientific research and the generation of knowledge about the social, economic and cultural reality of Andalusia.

In accordance with these purposes and its nature, **CENTRA** has created ex novo in 2021 a line of scientific publications in the field of social sciences, in accordance with the universalist canons of scientific communication, made up of three book collections (Actualidad, Biblioteca de Investigación y Enfoques) and the CENTRA Journal of Social Sciences.

The **ACTUALIDAD** collection addresses issues of relevance and interest in the contemporary Andalusian social and political reality linked to the broader context of Spanish society, the European Union and, in short, global dynamics. It is characterized by a determined orientation to present empirical evidence of the phenomena considered, linking the data provided to its theoretical and explanatory analysis.

Even though it is a collection linked to the scientific community and research in the social sciences, it is also conceived under the broadest idea of dissemination for an audience that is not an expert in the topics covered. The collection, which has been published without interruption since 2005, is now structured according to a selection process for original manuscripts in accordance with universalist criteria of scientific quality and anonymous evaluation by academic peers external to CENTRA. It is available in digital format and is accessible by free download from the website of the Center for Andalusian Studies.

The newly created **BIBLIOTECA DE INVESTIGACIÓN** collection is made up of monographic research papers from different areas of knowledge in the social sciences. It therefore has the objective of publishing the results of exhaustive investigations in accordance with the standardized criteria of communication. In this way, this collection also allows those doctoral theses in the field of social sciences that meet these criteria to be published in it and that they are presented in a format compatible with editorial standards and the established length.

The **ENFOQUES** collection, also created ex novo, is aimed at bringing together under the same volume the academic results of seminars, scientific conferences, etc., that are the consequence of some academic initiative for research or debate whose result implies a collective work directed by an editor. or editors. This group nature does not imply any reduction in the commitment to the quality and scientific nature of the collection, since the generation and validation of scientific knowledge is a joint and community process that, as the frontiers of the social sciences have advanced, is becoming more and more necessary. However, this collective nature of the works published here does require scrupulous work by the editor or editors who coordinate the initiative, supervise the work of the different contributions, evaluate their substantive results, and integrate them into the unitary whole that the publication implies. final published manuscript.

Finally, and likewise newly created, the CENTRA Journal of Social Sciences is a semi-annual scientific publication for all areas of this field of scientific knowledge that is published in Spanish and English in electronic format, freely accessible and downloadable, and in Spanish in paper support. The journal has a miscellaneous nature for the social sciences as a whole that does not exclude the possibility of publishing debate sections and specific numbers of a monographic nature that, in any case, will be governed by the same canons of universalism and anonymous evaluation of scientific communication. than the rest of the texts presented. The journal is open to unpublished texts, written with the utmost scientific rigor, coming from the broad scientific community, both nationally and internationally.

In order to provide content to all this new initiative of scientific publications, and scrupulously guarantee the principles of scientific communication, there is an interdisciplinary Editorial Board made up of prestigious professors from universities and national and international research organizations.

ARTICLES
ARTÍCULOS

ARTICLES/ARTÍCULOS

New Indicators on Integration of Global Value Chains in Employment and the Economy of Andalusia¹

Nuevos indicadores de integración de las cadenas de valor globales en el empleo y la economía andaluza

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Received/Recibido: 12/6/2022

Accepted/Aceptado: 12/9/2022



ABSTRACT:

This study proposes two new indicators for monitoring the integration of Andalusia in global value chains based on the OECD methodology, the Eurostat Inter-country Input-Output Tables (FIGARO) and the Input-Output Tables for Andalusia published by the Institute of Statistics and Cartography of Andalusia (IECA). The results clearly indicate that, in terms of both employment and value added in Andalusian exports, the region of Andalusia benefits most from trade with the European Union, with the exception of trade with the rest of Spain, Greece and Malta. In Andalusia, R&D exports and agricultural products retain the highest proportion of value added, while energy products retain the least.

KEYWORDS: Multi-regional Input-Output (MRIO) model; Global chain values; Extended Input-Output tables; Economy of Andalusia; FIGARO inter-country tables

HOW TO QUOTE: Rueda Cantuche, José Manuel and Valderas-Jaramillo, Juan Manuel (2023). Nuevos indicadores de integración de las cadenas de valor globales en el empleo y la economía andaluza. *Revista Centra de Ciencias Sociales*, 2(1), 11-43. <https://doi.org/10.54790/rccs.28>

La versión original en castellano puede leerse en <https://doi.org/10.54790/rccs.28>

RESUMEN

Este trabajo propone dos nuevos indicadores para monitorizar la integración de Andalucía en las cadenas de valor globales basadas en la metodología de la OCDE: las tablas input-output multipaís de Eurostat (FIGARO) y las tablas input-output de Andalucía publicadas por el IECA. Los resultados indican claramente que, tanto en términos de empleo como de valor añadido incorporado en las exportaciones andaluzas, es el comercio con los países de la Unión Europea el que más beneficia a la región andaluza, a excepción del comercio con el resto de España, Grecia y Malta. Las exportaciones de I+D y de productos agrarios son las que mayor proporción de valor añadido retienen en Andalucía, siendo los productos energéticos los que menos.

PALABRAS CLAVE: modelos input-output multirregionales (MRIO); cadenas de valor globales; tablas input-output extendidas; economía andaluza; tablas multipaís FIGARO.

1. Globalisation and Value Chains: 2021–2022 Industry CRECE Plan

Production processes in recent decades have been characterised by increasing globalisation and greater interdependence on a global scale for both economic and technological reasons (Baldwin, 2019; Ponte, Gereffi and Raj-Reichert, 2019). This greater interconnection of production processes globally has integrated markets, companies and products in such a way that virtually all outputs require increasingly more intermediate inputs from abroad. As a result, the volume and complexity of the exchanges of goods and services increases on a global scale.

When integrating various economies, it is necessary to know the extent to which each territory is related, integrated or participates in the different value chains or, in other words, the degree of participation in generating value added during the production process and the impacts of production activity in social and territorial terms.

The classic indicators based on gross imports and exports are insufficient for this purpose since they do not include net inputs in terms of value added or employment, nor do they account for more than the direct effect without singling out the indirect effects on other upstream supplying industries in Andalusia.

As will become clear in the second and third sections of this study, the Input-Output analysis and proliferation of multi-regional tables (Tukker and Dietzenbacher, 2013; European Commission, 2019) are vital for analysing these key elements and making decisions related to economic policy that enable improvements in productivity and the derived profits retained in the region, as well as in the production process.

In this line, the Regional Government of Andalusia published the 2021–2022 Industry CRECE Plan of Action² for a new industrial policy in Andalusia in August 2021. This Plan describes a series of actions focused on industrial policy, whereby

the aim is for companies in Andalusia to emerge stronger from the health crisis as a result of COVID-19 and for the existing industrial value chains to be strengthened and expanded. For this reason, greater impact is sought in social and territorial cohesion by increasing industrial productivity and generating value added that has an impact on the territory, as well as improving other aspects that are more linked to the adaptation of industrial employment, the use of natural resources and knowledge in Andalusia, and the development of the region's industrial goods and services markets.

This Plan establishes a monitoring process that uses a set of short-term and structural indicators. The former measure the evolution of the industrial sector in the short term, in addition to other aspects related to the development and implementation of action plans. In contrast, the structural indicators aim to reflect the mid- and long-term evolution of the productive structure of the economy of Andalusia. These include indicators of growth of the value chain that are "aimed at measuring the evolution of each of the value chains of industrial goods and services developed in Andalusia in relation to their economic contribution, employment impact and territorial distribution" (Regional Government of Andalusia, 2021). These indicators must be based on the latest data that are available on an Andalusian, Spanish and European level. Likewise, the structural indicators proposed in the Plan aim to overachieve the 2030 convergence objective in relation to the Spanish national average, as well as growth in industrial value chains.

In this sense, the Plan identified thirty-two value chains of industrial products and goods produced in Andalusia. Thus, one of the most interesting aspects of this Plan will be the analysis of how the value chains developed in Andalusia respond to the so-called industrial ecosystems that are based on the recommendations of the EC Communication "A new Industrial Strategy for Europe", published on 10 March 2020 and updated on 5 May 2021, in which the European Union suggests analysing these industrial ecosystems thoroughly, together with the key players, such as academic and research institutions, suppliers, SMEs and big companies.

"These ecosystems encompass all those parties that operate in a value chain: from the smallest start-ups to the biggest companies, from the academic world to researchers, and from service providers to suppliers" (Regional Government of Andalusia, 2021).

This Plan also expresses the need to know the situation of these value chains and detect their problems, requirements and future challenges, taking into account various aspects, such as the geographical context (regional, national or international) and the social, economic and environmental impacts. It therefore advocates a specific data collection system for both quantitative and qualitative information, including variables such as: number of companies; number of employees and their contribution to industrial gross value added (GVA) per product unit; level of internationalisation in exports; and technology level. In qualitative terms, the Plan proposes measuring the degree of development, degree of dependence and development in R&D, as well as human capital requirements.

The Plan also proposes the detailed study of the various stages or links in global value chains,

“from the extraction and/or supply of raw materials, the transformation of the raw materials involved, the necessary development of R&D and product concept, the materials for manufacture or transformation, components, assembly, manufacture or transformation, distribution and commercialisation, application or use, operation and maintenance services, to management at the end of the useful life”.

For this purpose, the main actors currently involved in each link in the chain would first be identified and, in doing so, the available resources of human capital, business fabric, natural resources and raw materials, available industrial land, advanced engineering services, innovation and knowledge, domestic/foreign market, and so on, would also be determined. Subsequently, a comparative analysis with other Spanish and/or European regions that may be taken as reference would identify the main limitations of the value chains. Finally, the growth requirements of the corresponding value chains would be evaluated, with a view to increasing the possibilities of integration in global value chains (Spanish, European and/or international).

Having introduced the Industry CRECE Plan by the Regional Government of Andalusia, the following section will propose a series of indicators for monitoring regional value chains and, in doing so, will be able to complement the set of structural indicators proposed in that Plan. For this purpose, section three will explain the data and methodology required for calculation before a commentary is provided on the results obtained for Andalusia in section four. The last section of the study will then end with some final conclusions and future recommendations.

2. Indicators for Global Value Chains

2.1. Measuring Bilateral Trade in terms of Value Added

The Industry CRECE Plan recognises that

“industry is a key sector of activity for the region to achieve balanced and sustainable economic growth, as its contribution to the economy does not just come down to wealth and the employment created by the sector itself, but rather has an important carry-over effect in the entire value chain of the economy” (Regional Government of Andalusia, 2021).

However, the list of indicators proposed by this Plan lacks indicators that capture said spill-over effects in those sectors that participate in the value chains and that appropriately evaluate the integration of Andalusian sectors in global value chains. Thus, this article proposes two new indicators based on the recommendations by the OECD for value chain indicators³ with an innovative methodology that combines the Eurostat Inter-country Input-Output Tables

(FIGARO database) with specific information about Regional Accounts and trade statistics provided by the Institute of Statistics and Cartography of Andalusia (IECA).

Generally speaking, as a region or country produces and exports industrial goods that are to be used as inputs for other production processes in other geographical areas, value is added to the average cost of the materials and services at origin. Ad infinitum, in practice this implies that the total value of the exports of a product consumed by households, the government or companies is comprised of an accumulation of contributions of value added by each company/sector involved in any link in the value chain. In this sense, knowing how much value added is retained in Andalusia (or in the different links in the chain in Andalusia) for every million euros exported, for example, of extra virgin olive oil (first indicator), is of significant importance. These figures may even vary depending on the product destination, whether that be China, another country in the European Union (EU) or the rest of Spain. Of course, the type of product should also be taken into account; in the case of electricity, for example, the contribution by Andalusia is expected to be one of the lowest given the high import level of energy products key for its production.

Following the same reasoning, it would also be relevant to know how much employment is linked to Andalusian exports, taking into account not only the employment that is directly involved in the export sector, but also in other Andalusian upstream supplying industries. This information can be estimated by product type and country of destination, thus distinguishing those products in which Andalusia would be positioned in a link that may have a high or low employment intensity in relation to other regions and countries. This would be a very useful second indicator when designing an industrial strategy specialising in value chains of high employment intensity.

As Grossman and Rossi-Hansberg (2008) highlighted, the use of export and import statistics as an indicator of the economic growth capacity of an economy is now restricted to those times in which trade flows mainly comprised final goods. In other words, most of the value added accrued in the exports of that goods remained in the country itself or the exporting region given that the links of the production processes were not as globalised then as they are now. Thus, every time an intermediate product is exported and imported in each link in a value chain, there is value-added trade between countries or regions.

Exports are, therefore, no longer a suitable indicator for understanding the consequences of trade in a world with global value chains where countries are increasingly integrated. For this reason, knowing both the origin of the value added of the exported products and their final destination (Johnson and Noguera, 2012) is essential. In other words, from the perspective of an exporting country, the volume of exports is less important than the value added that is associated with such exports.

2.2. Methodology

The Spanish National Accounts and trade statistics do not provide the necessary detailed data to construct the new proposed indicators as they only report data on bilateral flows of goods and services without distinguishing the origin and/or destination.

However, the most relevant development of global Inter-country Input-Output Tables (Tukker y Dietzenbacher, 2013) has paved the way for extensive literature that proposes various methods for breaking down a country's exports into the various contributions made by other sectors and countries that contributed throughout all the links in the value chain of a determined product (Arto et al., 2015; Dietzenbacher et al., 2013; Foster-McGregor & Stehrer, 2013; Johnson & Noguera, 2012; Koopman et al., 2014; Los et al., 2016; A. J. Nagengast & Stehrer, 2014, 2016; Timmer et al., 2014).

This study will follow the methodology proposed by Arto et al. (2019) using the global Eurostat Inter-country Input-Output Tables (FIGARO) and specific data on trade flows in Andalusia with the rest of Spain, the European Union and the rest of the world, as well as the main macro-economic aggregates of the Annual Regional Accounts of Andalusia and the Input-Output Tables for Andalusia in the year 2016. The reason for choosing this year is that there are sufficient basic data in all the geographical areas. In any case, the intention of this study is to show the ability of these new indicators to explain the degree of Andalusia's integration in the global value chains. It could be extrapolated to any other period or time series if considered appropriate by the IECA.

Arto et al. (2019) establishes the formulas to calculate the breakdown of the exports according to whether they have content from Andalusia (domestic) or from outside this region (foreign). More information about the mathematical equations that underpins the methodology may be found in this article.

In brief, this study will distinguish the domestic content (value added and employment) of the Andalusian exports, distinguishing the countries of destination and sectors that participate in the links in the respective value chains. As an example, these indicators will enable details to be measured such as the generated value added in the farming sector associated with exports by the Andalusian agri-foodstuffs industry which exports its products to the United States.

Likewise, this study will include the economic impact beyond Andalusia associated with these agri-foodstuff exports, but via imports of products from other countries, such as fertilisers from Germany, for example. This indicator shows the degree of dependence or level of vertical integration in the value chain of Andalusian exports.

The approach by Arto et al. (2019) presents a comparative advantage in relation to other breakdown methods in that it is possible to disaggregate, in great detail, the content into production factors (value added and employment) of the exports and

respond to very specific questions such as, for example, how many jobs in Mexican heavy machinery plants are later used in Chinese factories to produce metal tools, which will then be exported to Russia to subsequently produce coal which is exported to the Basque Country. There, the Basque electricity sector will use it to produce electricity, which will be used by the Andalusian chemical sector to produce fertilisers that are eventually used in the production of Andalusian extra virgin olive oil, before it is finally exported and consumed by households in the United States. Effectively, the consumption of extra virgin olive oil by American households has accumulated value added from Mexico (heavy machinery), China (tools), Russia (coal), rest of Spain (electricity) and Andalusia (fertilisers and extra virgin olive oil).

Annex I includes further information about how this extension of the FIGARO tables has been done to include the self-governing region of Andalusia.

3. Data

The Eurostat FIGARO database for the year 2016 and Input-Output Table for Andalusia published by the IECA for the year 2016 (IECA, 2020) were the starting points for producing the Inter-country Input-Output Table with Andalusia separated from the rest of Spain.

The Input-Output Table for Andalusia is a product-by-product table, in which the production processes of the economic activities of an economy are typically described, including the trade transactions of goods and services, both made in Andalusia and from the rest of Spain and the rest of the world. There is a disaggregation of 81 products. In addition, the final demand includes the consumption expenditure of households, consumption expenditure of the government and non-profit institutions, investment and exports with the rest of Spain and the rest of the world. On the other hand, the value added is divided into various concepts such as wages and salaries, other net taxes on products and the gross operating surplus and mixed income. The IECA also publishes data related to employment.

The global FIGARO Inter-country Input-Output Tables are also product-by-product for the year 2016, distinguishing between 45 countries; that is, the 27 EU Member States, plus the 18 most relevant trade partners for the EU (see Annex 2) and one area that contains the rest of the world (aggregated). The methodology for producing these tables can be found in European Commission (2019). There is a disaggregation of products in the classification A*64, with similar components to the Input-Output Table for Andalusia both for final demand (excluding exports by definition) and for value added.

To integrate the Input-Output Table for Andalusia in the FIGARO tables, the dimensions of both tables first needed to be standardised, particularly in terms of products, components of final demand and value added. The main peculiarity in this

regard is that the combination of the 81 products in the table for Andalusia and the 64 products in the FIGARO table produce a table with a maximum disaggregation of 61 products, which is presented in Annex 3. In terms of components of final demand and value added, the data from the Input-Output Table for Andalusia has been adjusted to the existing dimensions of the FIGARO tables.

Following standardisation, the Input-Output Table for Andalusia was integrated in the 2016 FIGARO tables by estimating the necessary components from all the data available in the Input-Output Framework for Andalusia in 2016 (mainly the origin of the imports and the destination of the regional exports). The missing elements were estimated using aggregates for Andalusia that are broken down according to the available data in the 2016 FIGARO tables (data on the rest of Spain and the rest of the world). Finally, these results needed to be adapted to adjust the part of the table that corresponds to the rest of Spain, observing quality and valuation criteria that ensure plausible values as a result of this process, as well as the correct valuation of the flows and the ensuing estimation of unavailable values. Thus, the elements corresponding to Spain in the FIGARO tables were broken down into two new geographical areas: Andalusia and the rest of Spain (RE), which, together with the remaining countries, make up the extended Inter-country Input-Output Table that enables the estimation of the results that will be commented on in the next section.

It should be emphasised that the process of integrating Andalusia in the FIGARO tables scrupulously respects the official data available provided by the IECA. In other words, there was no loss of data as such, with the exception of the standardisation in terms of products that reduced the available data on 81 products for Andalusia, to 61 products. The resulting values of this aggregation, however, are fully consistent with the official statistics for Andalusia. Undoubtedly, the disaggregation of the public values of the official Andalusian statistics and their integration in the 2016 FIGARO tables are based on hypotheses that, as stated, make the most efficient use possible of the existing data both in 2016 FIGARO and in the Input-Output Framework for Andalusia. Furthermore, there was no loss of data here, but rather an extension of a model and an extension of the data based on that hypothesis that, again, respects the baseline data for Andalusia. Undoubtedly, the availability of more detailed data would enable these hypotheses to be relaxed to a certain extent and would enable the model to be extended in a more realistic way using the additional data available.

4. Results

4.1. General Aspects

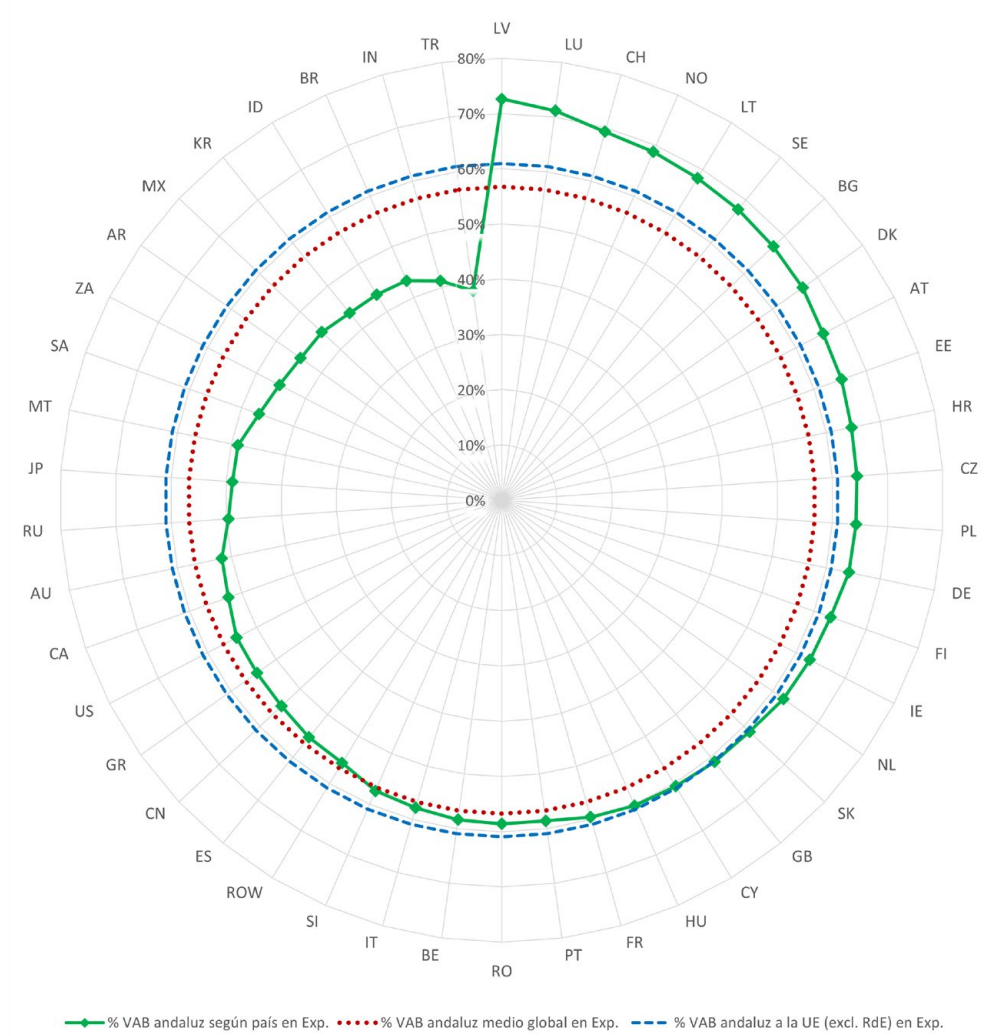
In Andalusia, unlike in the EU and in the rest of Spain, the strength of the industrial sector does not exceed 10% of its gross domestic product according to the 2021–2022 Industry CRECE Plan (Regional Government of Andalusia, 2021). Even more serious is the decreasing evolution in the last decade. In this sense, the strength of Andalusia in economic and/or industrial activities continues to be proportionally less than what it should be in terms of population and geographical extension.

According to this Plan, the strongest sectors in terms of value added in the manufacturing industry are the metal and chemical industries, which in turn have special relevance at a national level in terms of employment. In recent years, the agri-foodstuffs industry, non-metallic mineral products and the aerospace industry notably increased their participation in the GDP of Andalusia.

4.2. Value Added and Employment in Andalusian Exports

From the results obtained, it can be deduced that Andalusian trade with the European Union (EU) is that which fundamentally retains a greater percentage of value added in relation to the total export volume. It should be highlighted that current values are being worked with at all times. The percentage of value added of exports to the EU that remains in the economy of Andalusia, excluding exports to the rest of Spain, is 60.9% (dashed line in Figure 1). These percentage decreases to 57.6% (dotted line in Figure 1) if all the Andalusian exports to the rest of the EU (that is, including the rest of Spain) are included. Lastly, if we consider the total of the Andalusian exports, that is, to the rest of Spain, EU and the rest of the world, the percentage of value added that remains in the economy of Andalusia decreases to 56.7% (see Table 1 of Annex 4). Likewise, for the total economy of Andalusia, 19.5% of its value added is linked to its exports.

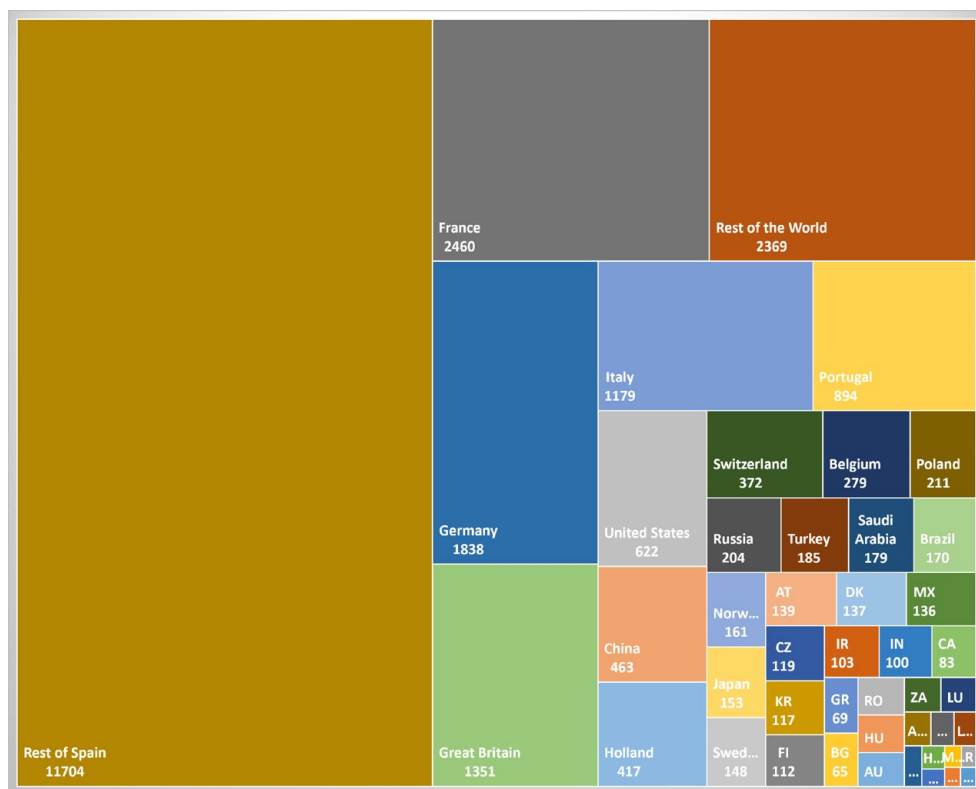
Figure 1
% of Andalusian value added in exports



Source: Own research.

Figure 2

Andalusian value added in exports by country of destination (millions of euros)

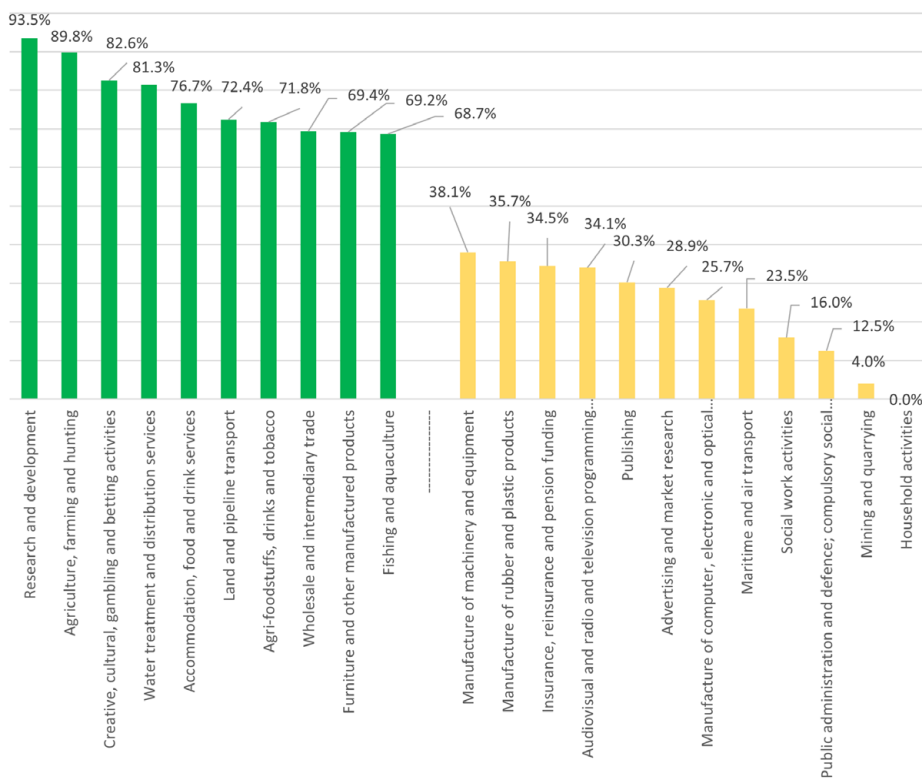


Source: Own research.

Figure 1 (continuous line with markers) shows how Andalusian exports to Latvia and Luxembourg are those that retain a higher proportion of Andalusian value added, with more than 70%, followed by Lithuania, Sweden, Bulgaria and Denmark, with more than two-thirds in all cases. Similarly, although the proportion of retained Andalusian value added is greater for these countries, it is important to highlight that these countries are not the main destinations of Andalusian exports, as seen in Figure 2. The percentage of retained Andalusian value added in exports to the rest of Spain is only 55.3%, while in Italy it would be 57.8%; in France, 59.6%, in Poland, 64.3%; and in Germany, 64.2%. Broadly speaking, the percentage of retained value added by Andalusian exports exceeds the overall average value of the Andalusian exports, with the exception of Malta, Greece and the rest of Spain, which have a lower percentage. Finally, as regards those countries that do not belong to the EU, Switzerland (69.3%), Norway (68.7%) and the Great Britain (61.0%) are the countries with which Andalusia retains a higher percentage of value added in its exports.

Figure 3 shows the results by product, irrespective of the country of destination. For the sake of greater clarity, given the significant number of products, only the 10 best and 10 worst categories are shown. Table 2 of Annex 4 includes the complete table with all the values used to produce Figure 3. The main finding is that R&D activities retain the highest proportion of Andalusian value added in their exports (more than 90%), followed by agriculture, farming and hunting. Cultural and entertainment activities and water collection and distribution also stand out with more than 80%, followed by agri-foodstuffs, drinks and tobacco, restaurant and accommodation services, and land transport, with more than 70%. Within industrial activities, the exports with a greater proportion of Andalusian value added that stand out are as follows: agri-foodstuffs, drinks and tobacco (71.8%); manufacture of furniture and other manufacturing industries (69.2%); and manufacture of other non-metallic mineral products such as glass, stone and ceramic (66.6%).

Figure 3
Andalusian value added in the exports by products

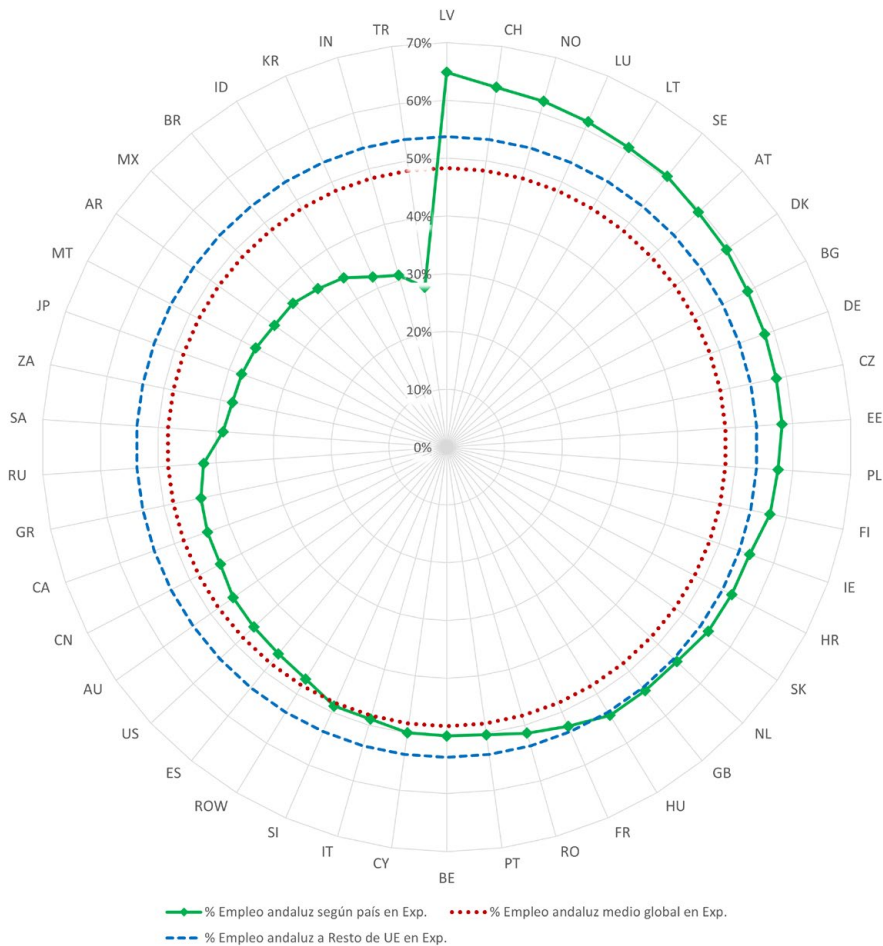


Source: Own research.

In contrast, mining activities (including natural gas) have the lowest component of Andalusian value added in exports (4.0%), while others, such as maritime transport (23.5%) and in industry, the manufacture of computer and electronic products (25.7%), the manufacture of rubber and plastic products (35.7%) and the manufacture of other machinery and equipment (38.1%), can also be highlighted.

In terms of employment, 20% of the total Andalusian employment is occupied in activities that are directly or indirectly linked to Andalusian exports. The guidelines for countries of destination are similar to value added as seen in Figure 4. Of all the employment required for Andalusian exports to the EU (excluding exports to the rest of Spain), only 53.7% are jobs located in Andalusia (dashed line in Figure 4). When

Figure 4
% of Andalusian employment supported by exports



Source: Own research.

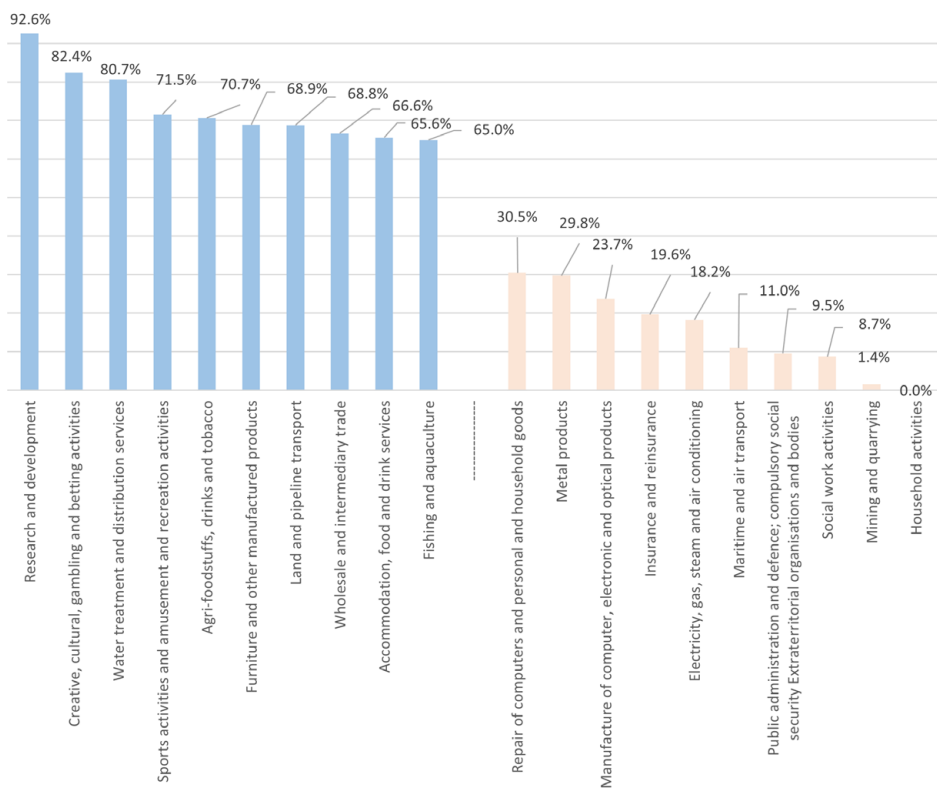
including the total Andalusian exports, that is, to the rest of Spain, EU and the rest of the world (dotted line in Figure 4), the percentage falls below 50%, to 48.3%. The values that provide the basis for Figure 4 are found in Table 3, Annex 4.

Once again, trade with the EU implies a higher percentage of jobs located in Andalusia, with trade with Latvia, Luxembourg, Lithuania and Sweden standing out with more than 60% (continuous line with markers in Figure 4). Also of relevance, although with lower percentages, are the results of the main destinations for Andalusian exports, such as Germany (58.4%), Poland (57.4%), France (52.7%), Italy (48.9%) and the rest of Spain (46.2%).

Finally, Figure 5 shows the aggregated results of employment by product for all the destinations, representing the 10 products with the most employment located in Andalusia and the 10 with the least. As occurs with the value added, R&D export activities use a higher proportion of Andalusian employment in their value chain, with nearly 93%. This is followed by cultural and entertainment activities and water collection and distribution, with more than 80%. Next, with more than 70%, is agri-foodstuffs, drinks and tobacco, as well as sports and recreation activities. Within the industry as a whole, the exports with a greater proportion of Andalusian employment that stand out in the value chain are as follows: agri-foodstuffs, drinks and tobacco (70.7%); manufacture of furniture and other manufacturing industries (68.9%); and manufacture of other non-metallic mineral products such as glass, stone and ceramic (62.0%). The comparison of both indicators is interesting for agriculture, farming and hunting where, in terms of employment, the percentage of Andalusian jobs is only 63.6% while the percentage of Andalusian value added is nearly 90%.

Again, mining activities are those that have a lower component of Andalusian employment in exports (1.4%). Here, we can also highlight maritime transport (11.0%) and in industry, the manufacture of computer and electronic products (23.7%), metal products (29.8%) and the textile industry (34.6%).

Figure 5
Andalusian employment supported by exports by products



Source: Own research.

5. Conclusions

The availability of an Inter-country Input-Output table extended to a specific region such as Andalusia is crucial for monitoring and analysing value chains and, in a strategic manner, for making decisions that enable Andalusia to benefit from its participation in these value chains through economic policy measures such as those described in the 2021–2022 Industry CRECE Plan.

The spread of Inter-country Input-Output Tables on a global scale, supported by different international organisms such as the OECD (ICIO-OECD) and the European Commission (Eurostat-FIGARO), are a unique opportunity to develop indicators that monitor regional value chains, as is the case of the methodology proposed in this study for Andalusia.

Likewise, the advantages of having a global Inter-country Input-Output Table extended to a region are not limited to the economic and social aspect, but also include the environmental dimension, enabling the impacts of economic activity to be studied in terms of emissions, water impact of production and/or ecological footprints in general.

This study proposes a methodology for producing an extended Inter-country Input-Output Table with Andalusia on a regular basis and, therefore, will enable value chains to be monitored with the indicators proposed in this article, which could be integrated in the set of structural indicators from the 2021–2022 Industry CRECE Plan. Furthermore, the data that the IECA would have to draw up the Input-Output Framework for Andalusia would be a great additional added value that was not available to the authors of this study. For example:

- The exports by product and their distribution by countries of destination.
- The matrix of imports at the same level of disaggregation of products and countries of origin, as well as any kind of data that distinguish between imports for intermediate or final use.
- A range of statistical information for estimating the flows with the rest of Spain (freight transport surveys, etc.).

For example, we have seen that Andalusian trade with the European Union (EU) is that which fundamentally retains a higher percentage of value added in relation to the total volume of exports, reaching 60.9% excluding the rest of Spain. Likewise, for the total economy of Andalusia, 19.5% of its value added is linked to its exports, with the sectors of R&D activity and agriculture, farming and hunting retaining the highest value added in relation to the exported volume. In contrast, mining activities (including natural gas) are those that have a lower component of Andalusian value added in exports, followed by maritime transport.

In terms of employment, 20% of the total Andalusian employment is occupied in activities that are directly or indirectly associated with Andalusian exports. In contrast, of all the employment required for Andalusian exports to the EU (excluding the rest of Spain), only 53.7% are Andalusian jobs.

Finally, the number of indicators of value chains could be increased, including the analysis of value added and employment linked to the final demand of imported products. Ultimately, the value of importing a product by a resident in Andalusia would comprise the sum of the values added generated in Andalusia and in the rest of the world. It would also be interesting to know the proportion that remains in this region. Likewise, the analysis of these indicators over time can also offer interesting conclusions about the evolution of the integration of Andalusia in global value chains. However, this study has only focused on the analysis of value chains from the perspective of exports and leaves these other proposals for future analysis and researchers.

6. Notes

1 The views expressed are purely those of the author and may not in any circumstances be regarded as stating an official position of the European Commission.

2 <https://www.juntadeandalucia.es/organismos/transparencia/planificacion-evaluacion-estadistica/planes/detalle/225561.html>

3 See <https://oe.cd/tiva>

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Annex 1. Methodology for producing the extended FIGARO tables with Andalusia

The extended FIGARO Inter-country Input-Output Tables with Andalusia and the rest of Spain have been produced using a process similar to EUROSTAT (2021). Figure 1 shows the structure of the FIGARO Inter-country Input-Output Table for the 61 products common to the Eurostat and IECA classifications for Andalusia, both based on the Spanish National Classification of Economic Activities (CNAE, Rev. 2).

Figure 1
Schema of the FIGARO Inter-country Input-Output Tables

		Intermediate Consumption												Final demand												Total production
		Country 1			Spain			...	Country n			Country 1			Spain			...	Country n							
		Prod C01	Prod C02	...	Prod C01	Prod C02	...	Prod C01	Prod C02	...	Prod C01	Prod C02	...	Households	Government	Investment	Households	Government	Investment	Households	Government	Investment				
Country 1	Prod C01	S_{dom}^1			$S^{1,ES}$...	$S^{1,n}$			Y_{dom}^1			$Y^{1,ES}$...	$Y^{1,n}$			q^1				
	Prod C02							...										...
								
	Prod C61							...										...
Spain	Prod C01	$S^{ES,1}$			S_{dom}^{ES}			...	$S^{ES,n}$			$Y^{ES,1}$			Y_{dom}^{ES}			...	$Y^{ES,n}$			q^{ES}				
	Prod C02							...										...
								
	Prod C61							...										...
...					
Country n	Prod C01	$S^{n,1}$			$S^{n,ES}$...	S_{dom}^n			$Y^{n,1}$			$Y^{n,ES}$...	Y_{dom}^n			q^n				
	Prod C02							...										...
								
	Prod C61							...										...
Taxes net of subsidies on products		t_u^1			t_u^{ES}			...	t_u^n			t_y^1			t_y^{ES}			...	t_y^n							
Components of Value Added		E^1			E^{ES}			...	E^n									...								
Gross Value Added															
Total production		$q^{1,}$			$q^{ES,}$...	$q^{n,}$...								

In Figure 1, the sub-matrices named as S correspond to the intermediate product demand, that is, those products that are used to produce other products. The blocks on the main diagonal correspond to the i-th country's intermediate consumption of products produced in the country itself, S_{dom}^i while those elements outside of the main diagonal, $S^{i,j}$ represent the products consumed by the j-th country which are imported from the i-th country. That is, they represent the exports of the i-th country that are imported by the j-th country for their intermediate consumption. Likewise, in the block of final demand we have Y_{dom}^i e $Y^{i,j}$ representing the final domestic consumptions of the i-th country, and the products produced in the i-th country that are consumed by the final users in the j-th country.

By extending the FIGARO Inter-country Input-Output Table with Andalusia, the objective of this study is, essentially, to break down the rows and columns

corresponding to Spain, both in the part of intermediate demand, and final demand and value added, such that the elements in Spain are divided into two new regions that correspond to Andalusia and the rest of Spain, using all the data available as efficiently as possible.

Graphically, the format of the extended FIGARO Inter-country Input-Output Table would be as follows:

Figure 2
Schema of the extended FIGARO Inter-country Input-Output Tables

		Intermediate Consumption												Final demand												Total production										
		Country 1			Rest of Spain			Andalusia			Country n			Country 1			Rest of Spain			Andalusia			Country n													
		Prod C01	Prod C02	Prod C61	Prod C01	Prod C02	Prod C61	Prod C01	Prod C02	Prod C61	Prod C01	Prod C02	Prod C61	Households	Government	Investment	Households	Government	Investment	Households	Government	Investment	Households	Government	Investment											
Country 1	Prod C01	S_{dom}^I	$S^{I,RE}$	$S^{I,AN}$	...	$S^{I,n}$	Y_{dom}^I	$Y^{I,RE}$	$Y^{I,AN}$	...	$Y^{I,n}$	q^I	Prod C02	...	Prod C61	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
	Rest of Spain																									$S^{RE,I}$	S_{dom}^{RE}	$S^{RE,AN}$...	$S^{RE,n}$	$Y^{RE,I}$	Y_{dom}^{RE}	$Y^{RE,AN}$...	$Y^{RE,n}$	q^{RE}
	Andalusia																																			
Country n	$S^{n,I}$	$S^{n,RE}$	$S^{n,AN}$	...	S_{dom}^{n}	$Y^{n,I}$	$Y^{n,RE}$	$Y^{n,AN}$	...	Y_{dom}^{n}	q^n																							
Taxes net of subsidies on products												t_u^I	t_u^{RE}	t_u^{AN}	...	t_u^n	t_y^I	t_y^{RE}	t_y^{AN}	...	t_y^n															
Components of Value Added												E^I	E^{RE}	E^{AN}	...	E^n				...																
Gross Value Added				...					...																					
Total production	$q^{I,r}$	$q^{RE,r}$	$q^{AN,r}$	...	$q^{n,r}$...																										

This division, as is to be expected, maintains the values of Spain as a whole. That is, there are the following relationships between the blocks of the extended and original Input-Output Tables:

- $S^{ES,i} = S^{RE,i} + S^{AN,i}$; $Y^{ES,i} = Y^{RE,i} + Y^{AN,i}$ for the rest of countries i;
- $S^{j,ES} = S^{j,RE} + S^{j,AN}$; $Y^{j,ES} = Y^{j,RE} + Y^{j,AN}$ for the rest of countries j;
- $t_u^{ES} = t_u^{RE} + t_u^{AN}$; $t_v^{ES} = t_v^{RE} + t_v^{AN}$; $E^{ES} = E^{RE} + E^{AN}$ y $q^{ES} = q^{RE} + q^{AN}$;
- $S_{dom}^{ES} = S_{dom}^{RE} + S_{dom}^{AN} + S^{RE,AN} + S^{AN,RE}$ and $Y_{dom}^{ES} = Y_{dom}^{RE} + Y_{dom}^{AN} + Y^{RE,AN} + Y^{AN,RE}$.

The rest of the blocks of the FIGARO tables that do not include Spain remain unchanged in the extended Inter-country Input-Output Table. Therefore, all the blocks that include Andalusia and the rest of Spain in the previous table (coloured in different shades of grey) would be needed to make an estimate with the information available from the Input-Output Framework of Andalusia.

Firstly, the blocks $S^{dom,AN}$ and $Y^{dom,AN}$ are obtained directly from the intermediate and final consumptions of the Input-Output Table for Andalusia as they correspond to the consumption of goods and services produced in this region. Likewise, t^{AN} , $t^{AN,u}$, E^{AN} and q^{AN} are obtained directly from the same source. Once these are obtained, $t^{RE,u}$, $t^{RE,y}$, E^{RE} y q^{RE} are obtained from the difference of their Spanish counterparts, making use of the equations described in the third point above.

Subsequently, $S^{RE,AN}$ and $Y^{RE,AN}$ are obtained from the table of imports with the rest of Spain by products in the Input-Output Table of Andalusia.

To obtain the blocks corresponding to imports from the rest of the world, the table corresponding to the Input-Output Table for Andalusia is used. It would have been very significant to obtain this data by product, disaggregated by country of origin, which reflected a geographical distribution of the Andalusian imports closer to reality. Given this data is not publicly available, this data has been broken down proportionally to the structure of Spanish imports coming from the rest of the world given in the FIGARO tables. Consequently, if p represents the product and g , the homogeneous branch of the product-by-product Input-Output Table or, alternatively, the component corresponding to the final demand,

$$S_{p,g}^{j,AN} = MRM_{p,g}^{AN} \times \frac{S_{p,g}^{j,ES}}{\sum_j S_{p,g}^{j,ES}} \quad y \quad Y_{p,g}^{j,AN} = MRM_{p,g}^{AN} \times \frac{Y_{p,g}^{j,ES}}{\sum_j Y_{p,g}^{j,ES}}$$

for all p, g and for every country j from the rest of the world, where $MRM_{And}^{p,g}$ represents the value of the import of the rest of the world in the Input-Output Table for Andalusia.

As regards Andalusian exports to the rest of Spain, $Y^{AN,RE}$, said information is found in the final demand block of the Use Table for the Input-Output Framework of Andalusia, in the column “exports to the rest of Spain”. However, that column does not say whether the exports are destined for intermediate or final consumption, nor the sectors that purchase the goods or services. In light of the lack of available data, we have once again opted for a proportional allocation. In this instance, we have opted for Spanish national domestic consumption values to perform this allocation and therefore,

$$Y_{p,g}^{AN,RE} = XRE_p^{AN} \times \frac{Y_{dom,p,g}^{ES}}{\sum_g (S_{dom,p,g}^{ES} + Y_{dom,p,g}^{ES})}$$

where XRE_p^{AN} are the exports of the product p to the rest of Spain available in the Input-Output Framework for Andalusia. Likewise, the exports corresponding to the intermediate part are calculated according to the same criteria,

$$S_{p,g}^{AN,RE} = XRE_p^{AN} \times \frac{S_{dom,p,g}^{ES}}{\sum_g (S_{dom,p,g}^{ES} + Y_{dom,p,g}^{ES})}$$

The blocks corresponding to the Andalusian exports to the rest of the world, both intermediate and final, $S^{AN,i}$ y $Y^{AN,i}$, have been produced in the same way as the exports to the rest of Spain. In the block of final demand of the Use Table of the Input-Output Framework for Andalusia, the data is shown in the column of Andalusian exports to the rest of the world. Once again, that column does not give either the country of destination nor its use as an intermediate or final consumption, neither the foreign sector that purchases the goods or services. In this case, we have performed a proportional allocation using the structures of the Spanish exports to the rest of the world provided by the FIGARO tables. Such that,

$$Y_{p,g}^{AN,i} = XRM_p^{AN} \times \frac{Y_{p,g}^{ES,i}}{\sum_g (S_{p,g}^{ES,i} + Y_{p,g}^{ES,i})}, \text{ y } S_{p,g}^{AN,i} = XRM_p^{AN} \times \frac{S_{p,g}^{ES,i}}{\sum_g (S_{p,g}^{ES,i} + Y_{p,g}^{ES,i})}$$

where XRM_p^{AN} are the exports of the product p to the rest of the world available in the Input-Output Framework of Andalusia.

The values corresponding to the rest of Spain in the blocks $S^{RE,i}$, $Y^{RE,i}$, $S^{j,RE}$, $Y^{j,RE}$, S_{dom}^{RE} y Y_{dom}^{RE} have been obtained, respectively, from the difference between the total values for Spain available in the FIGARO Inter-country Input-Output Table and the estimated values for Andalusia, from the equations in the previous points 1), 2) and 4).

Lastly, a similar approach was followed to obtain the employment values. The Input-Output Table of the Input-Output Framework for Andalusia provides the employment for each homogeneous branch, whereby employment in the rest of Spain is obtained from the difference of the available Spanish totals in the publication of the FIGARO Inter-country Input-Output Table.

On making these estimations, the coherence of the values obtained was checked at all times. In general, the Input-Output Table for Andalusia is very coherent with respect to that for Spain, particularly for the large quantities such as gross value added and employment. At the level of coefficients, some inconsistencies were detected, resulting from the different methodologies used to produce the different tables. There is no doubt that said inconsistencies would be reduced on using more baseline data about the origin and the destination of the trade flows of Andalusia with the rest of Spain and the world.

Producing this extended Inter-country Input-Output Table is a great added value if done on a regular basis, especially if done at the same time as producing the Input-Output Framework for Andalusia and its relationships with the rest of Spain. In this study, we have opted for taking the values of the Input-Output Framework for Andalusia as given, even in those instances in which the resulting regional value is higher than the total for Spain. This has led us to assume that in these cases, the rest of Spain does not import anything more from any other country. To correct the imbalance that this causes in the table, the choice was made to allocate the difference — especially when this is not very significant — to the changes in stocks in each row and the taxes less subsidies on products in each column. If this results in significant differences, these discrepancies would be distributed throughout the extended tables using an automatic balancing method as described in European Commission (2019) or with a multi-dimensional balancing method according to the restrictions that are to be established according to the available data (Valderas-Jaramillo and Rueda-Cantuche, 2021).

Annex 2. Geographical areas and country codes used

	ISO-2 Code	Country name	ISO-2 Code	Country name
	AT	Austria	GB	Great Britain
	BE	Belgium	US	United States of America
	BG	Bulgaria	CA	Canada
	CY	Cyprus	CN	China
	CZ	Czechia	CH	Switzerland
	DE	Germany	IN	India
	DK	Denmark	JP	Japan
	EE	Estonia	KR	Republic of Korea
	ES	Spain	MX	Mexico
	FI	Finland	NO	Norway
	FR	France	RU	Russian Federation
	GR	Greece	TR	Turkey
EU member countries	HR	Croatia	AR	Argentina
	HU	Hungary	AU	Australia
	IE	Ireland	BR	Brazil
	IT	Italy	ID	Indonesia
	LT	Lithuania	SA	Saudi Arabia
	LU	Luxembourg	ZA	South Africa
	LV	Latvia		
	MT	Malta		
	NL	Netherlands		
	PL	Poland		
	PT	Portugal	Code	Geographic area
	RO	Romania	RoS	Rest of Spain
	SE	Sweden	And	Andalusia
	SI	Slovenia	ROW	Rest of the World
	SK	Slovakia		

Annex 3. Grouping of products used and correspondence with CPA

#	CPAs that groups	Literal	#	CPAs that groups	Literal
1	CPA_01	Agriculture, livestock and hunting	32	CPA_52	Storage and activities related to transport
2	CPA_02	Forestry and logging	33	CPA_53	Postal and courier activities
3	CPA_03	Fishing and aquaculture	34	CPA_55-56	Accommodation, food and beverage services
4	CPA_05-09	Extractive industries	35	CPA_58	Edition
5	CPA_10-12	Agro-food industry, beverages and tobacco	36	CPA_59-60	Cinematographic, video and television program activities, sound recording and music editing; radio and television programming and broadcasting activities
6	CPA_13-15	Textile industry, garment manufacturing, leather and footwear industry	37	CPA_61	Telecommunications
7	CPA_16	Wood and cork industry	38	CPA_62-63	Programming, consulting and other computer-related activities; Information services
8	CPA_17	Paper industry	39	CPA_64	Financial services, except insurance and pension funds
9	CPA_18	Graphic arts and reproduction of recorded media	40	CPA_65	Insurance, reinsurance and pension funds, except compulsory Social Security
10	CPA_19-20	Coking plants, refining and chemical products	41	CPA_66	Activities auxiliary to financial services and insurance
11	CPA_21	Manufacture of pharmaceutical products	42	CPA_68	Real estate activities
12	CPA_22	Manufacture of rubber and plastic products	43	CPA_69-70	Legal and accounting activities; headquarters activities; business management consulting activities
13	CPA_23	Other non-metallic mineral products	44	CPA_71	Architectural and engineering technical services; technical tests and analyzes
14	CPA_24	Metallurgy products	45	CPA_72	Investigation and development
15	CPA_25	Manufacture of metal products, except machinery and equipment	46	CPA_73	Advertising and market studies
16	CPA_26	Manufacture of computer, electronic and optical products	47	CPA_74-75	Other professional, scientific and technical and veterinary activities
17	CPA_27	Manufacture of electrical material and equipment	48	CPA_77	Rental activities
18	CPA_28	Manufacture of machinery and equipment	49	CPA_78	Activities related to employment
19	CPA_29	Manufacture of motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers	50	CPA_79	Activities of travel agencies, tour operators, reservation services and activities related to them
20	CPA_30	Other transport material	51	CPA_80-82	Other business services
21	CPA_31-32	Furniture and other manufactured products	52	CPA_84_U	Public administration and defense; compulsory social security. Extraterritorial organizations

#	CPAs that groups	Literal	#	CPAs that groups	Literal
22	CPA_33	Repair and installation of machinery and equipment	53	CPA_85	Education
23	CPA_35	Electric power, gas, steam and air conditioning	54	CPA_86	Health activities
24	CPA_36	Natural water; water treatment and distribution services	55	CPA_87-88	Social service activities
25	CPA_37-39	Wastewater collection and treatment; collection, treatment and disposal of waste; valorization; decontamination activities and other waste management services	56	CPA_90-92	Creative, artistic and entertainment activities; Libraries, archives, museums and other cultural activities; gambling and betting activities
26	CPA_41-43	Building	57	CPA_93	Sports, recreational and entertainment activities
27	CPA_45	Sale and repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	58	CPA_94	Associative activities
28	CPA_46	Wholesale trade and intermediaries of trade, except motor vehicles and motorcycles	59	CPA_95	Repair of computers, personal effects and household items
29	CPA_47	Retail trade, except motor vehicles and motorcycles	60	CPA_96	Other personal services
30	CPA_49	Land and pipeline transport	61	CPA_97-98	Activities of households as employers of domestic personnel or as producers of goods and services for their own use
31	CPA_50-51	Maritime and inland waterway transport. Air Transport			

Annex 4. Data tables

Table 1

Andalusian value added in exports according to country and % of exports

Geographic area	DVA (10 ⁶ €)	% DVA on exports
Germany	1,837.9	64.2
Saudi Arabia	178.9	46.6
Argentina	33.0	44.6
Australia	57.7	51.8
Austria	139.1	65.5
Belgium	279.4	58.4
Brazil	169.9	43.3
Bulgaria	65.5	67.3
Canada	83.2	52.6
Czechia	119.2	64.5
China	463.2	54.6
Cyprus	11.3	60.6
Croatia	19.4	64.7
Denmark	137.0	66.7
Slovakia	28.9	61.4
Slovenia	10.8	57.4
United States of America	622.2	54.1
Estonia	14.5	65.3
Finland	111.5	63.2
France	2,460.1	59.6
Great Britain	1,350.9	61.0
Greece	68.7	54.2
Netherlands	417.1	62.4
Hungary	63.8	60.3
India	99.8	41.2
Indonesia	26.2	43.6
Ireland	103.3	62.8
Italy	1,178.9	57.8
Japan	152.7	48.9
Latvia	11.2	72.6
Lithuania	27.2	68.2
Luxembourg	44.5	71.1
Malta	13.4	48.8
Mexico	136.2	44.6
Norway	160.8	68.7
Poland	211.1	64.3
Portugal	894.4	58.6
Republic of Korea	116.7	43.7
Rest of Spain	11,704.1	55.3
Rest of the World	2,369.2	55.7
Romania	64.4	58.6

Geographic area	DVA (10⁶ €)	% DVA on exports
Russian Federation	203.7	49.6
Southof Africa	46.2	45.3
Sweden	148.4	67.8
Switzerland	371.6	69.3
Turkey	184.6	38.3
EU	20,185.2	57.6
EU without rest of Spain	8,481.2	60.9
Global	27,011.8	56.7

Table 2*Andalusian value added in the exports according to product and % of exports*

CPA	DVA (10 ⁶ €)	% DVA on exports	CPA	DVA (10 ⁶ €)	% DVA on exports
CPA_01	7,238.3	89.8	CPA_52	904.3	61.5
CPA_02	83.2	57.4	CPA_53	55.1	47.0
CPA_03	69.1	68.7	CPA_55-56	284.9	76.7
CPA_05-09	252.2	4.0	CPA_58	19.3	30.3
CPA_10-12	1,746.9	71.8	CPA_59-60	19.9	34.1
CPA_13-15	362.0	64.8	CPA_61	179.3	49.4
CPA_16	97.9	54.6	CPA_62-63	196.7	52.7
CPA_17	111.6	38.3	CPA_64	436.1	48.3
CPA_18	49.1	52.6	CPA_65	44.1	34.5
CPA_19-20	1,221.9	50.5	CPA_66	80.8	42.5
CPA_21	42.3	52.5	CPA_68	795.9	66.5
CPA_22	203.6	35.7	CPA_69-70	630.0	56.1
CPA_23	314.4	66.6	CPA_71	259.9	60.1
CPA_24	790.6	56.2	CPA_72	203.1	93.5
CPA_25	425.8	48.8	CPA_73	135.8	28.9
CPA_26	88.0	25.7	CPA_74-75	163.8	60.1
CPA_27	210.6	49.3	CPA_77	210.1	39.1
CPA_28	197.7	38.1	CPA_78	160.7	47.6
CPA_29	95.0	40.0	CPA_79	27.3	67.8
CPA_30	459.6	55.2	CPA_80-82	612.4	59.2
CPA_31-32	134.6	69.2	CPA_84_U	8.2	12.5
CPA_33	311.0	65.2	CPA_85	78.1	42.9
CPA_35	816.9	61.3	CPA_86	67.0	61.1
CPA_36	195.2	81.3	CPA_87-88	0.6	16.0
CPA_37-39	540.9	55.5	CPA_90-92	73.2	82.6
CPA_41-43	363.5	66.9	CPA_93	62.2	65.7
CPA_45	79.8	40.8	CPA_94	93.1	68.2
CPA_46	2,302.2	69.4	CPA_95	27.0	39.8
CPA_47	863.5	63.7	CPA_96	31.6	56.2
CPA_49	1,447.9	72.4	CPA_97-98	0.0	0.0
CPA_50-51	36.2	23.5			

Table 3

Employment supported in Andalusia by exports according to destination and % of total employment supported

Country	Employment supported in Andalusia (10 ³ people)	% Employment over total employment supported by exports
Germany	44.1	58.4
Saudi Arabia	3.7	38.8
Argentina	0.7	36.5
Australia	1.3	45.2
Austria	3.4	59.5
Belgium	6.3	50.0
Brazil	3.5	35.3
Bulgary	1.2	58.6
Canada	1.8	43.9
Czechia	2.9	58.2
China	9.7	44.1
Cyprus	0.3	49.9
Croatia	0.5	55.5
Denmark	3.2	59.2
Slovakia	0.7	55.3
Slovenia	0.3	48.9
United States of America	13.6	45.7
Estonia	0.4	58.1
Finland	2.6	57.1
France	57.3	52.7
Great Britain	31.5	54.4
Greece	1.5	43.4
Netherlands	9.8	54.4
Hungary	1.5	54.3
India	1.9	30.9
Indonesia	0.5	34.3
Ireland	2.2	55.6
Italy	26.9	48.9
Japan	3.3	37.6
Latvia	0.3	64.8
Lithuania	0.7	60.6
Luxembourg	0.8	61.3
Malta	0.3	37.2
Mexico	2.9	36.4
Norway	3.9	62.1
Poland	5.0	57.4
Portugal	20.5	50.3
Republic of Korea	2.3	32.1
Rest of Spain	257.9	46.2
Rest of the World	51.2	47.0
Romania	1.5	51.4
Russian Federation	4.5	42.1

Country	Employment supported in Andalusia (10 ³ people)	% Employment over total employment supported by exports
South Africa	1.0	37.9
Sweden	3.6	60.4
Switzerland	9.1	62.9
Turkey	3.4	27.9
EU	486.9	49.4
EU without resto of Spain	229.0	53.7
Global	605.3	48.3

Table 4

Employment supported in Andalusia by exports and % of total employment supported

CPA	Employment supported in Andalusia (10 ³ people)	% Employment over total employment supported by exports	CPA	Employment supported in Andalusia (10 ³ people)	% Employment over total employment supported by exports
CPA_01	197.4	63.6	CPA_52	13.1	62.9
CPA_02	3.8	48.8	CPA_53	2.9	56.5
CPA_03	3.7	65.0	CPA_55-56	7.0	65.6
CPA_05-09	3.3	1.4	CPA_58	0.5	40.7
CPA_10-12	35.7	70.7	CPA_59-60	0.5	46.8
CPA_13-15	7.5	34.6	CPA_61	1.2	45.6
CPA_16	2.9	51.1	CPA_62-63	5.1	63.9
CPA_17	2.1	43.3	CPA_64	4.1	42.0
CPA_18	1.8	61.2	CPA_65	0.3	19.6
CPA_19-20	7.8	40.9	CPA_66	1.4	46.4
CPA_21	0.3	47.4	CPA_68	1.0	50.4
CPA_22	4.4	36.3	CPA_69-70	15.4	59.8
CPA_23	6.8	62.0	CPA_71	6.4	61.6
CPA_24	4.5	29.8	CPA_72	3.8	92.6
CPA_25	11.9	50.2	CPA_73	4.5	41.0
CPA_26	2.0	23.7	CPA_74-75	4.9	59.0
CPA_27	4.0	43.0	CPA_77	3.3	46.2
CPA_28	5.2	45.2	CPA_78	9.1	59.1
CPA_29	3.3	60.1	CPA_79	0.5	55.8
CPA_30	7.6	56.9	CPA_80-82	31.0	61.9
CPA_31-32	5.3	68.9	CPA_84_U	0.2	9.5
CPA_33	6.0	57.8	CPA_85	1.9	35.0
CPA_35	1.3	18.2	CPA_86	1.2	40.4
CPA_36	3.4	80.7	CPA_87-88	0.0	8.7
CPA_37-39	10.8	61.9	CPA_90-92	1.5	82.4
CPA_41-43	6.8	56.1	CPA_93	1.8	71.5
CPA_45	2.3	36.8	CPA_94	2.8	63.6
CPA_46	54.8	66.6	CPA_95	1.1	30.5
CPA_47	35.2	62.7	CPA_96	1.1	36.7
CPA_49	35.5	68.8	CPA_97-98	0.0	0.0
CPA_50-51	0.4	11.0	Total	605.3	48.3

ARTICLE/ARTÍCULO

Towards a Circular Economy in Andalusia? Comments on the Andalusian Circular Economy Law¹

¿Hacia una economía circular en Andalucía? Comentarios a la Ley 3/2023, de 30 de marzo, de Economía Circular de Andalucía

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Received/Recibido: 23/2/2023

Accepted/Aceptado: 13/4/2023



ABSTRACT

In recent years, the circular economy has taken a central position in the political and social agenda, so much so that the public powers have been showing great interest in promoting this economic model, as evidenced by the approval of a range of action plans, strategies, roadmaps and even legally binding regulations. Riding the wave of regional and national concern, Andalusian legislators have approved the Andalusian Circular Economy Law, which is designed to become the backbone of a robust legal framework that will propel the proper development of the circular economy in this region, placing it at the forefront in terms of circular economy legislation by becoming just the second autonomous community to pass a law on this issue.

KEYWORDS: circular economy; Andalusia; law; sustainability; life cycle.

HOW TO REFERENCE: Sedeño López, J. F. (2023). ¿Hacia una economía circular en Andalucía? Comentarios a la Ley 3/2023, de 30 de marzo, de Economía Circular de Andalucía. *Revista Centra de Ciencias Sociales*, 2(1), 45-62. <https://doi.org/10.54790/rccs.56>

La versión (original) en castellano puede leerse en <https://doi.org/10.54790/rccs.56>

RESUMEN

En los últimos años, la economía circular se ha situado en el centro de la agenda política y social, de manera que los poderes públicos se han venido mostrando muy interesados en la promoción de este modelo económico, como constata la aprobación de diferentes planes de acción, estrategias, hojas de ruta e incluso normas con rango de ley. Aprovechando el impulso comunitario y nacional, el legislador andaluz ha aprobado la Ley 3/2023, de 30 de marzo, de Economía Circular de Andalucía, con la que se pretende diseñar un marco jurídico adecuado para el correcto desarrollo de la economía circular en este territorio, situando a esta región a la vanguardia en materia de legislación de la economía circular, al convertirse en la segunda comunidad autónoma en contar con una ley sobre esta cuestión.

PALABRAS CLAVE: economía circular; Andalucía; ley; sostenibilidad; ciclo de vida.

1. Introduction: LECA in the Current Legislative Context

Andalusian legislators approved Law 3/2023 of 30 March on the Andalusian Circular Economy (hereinafter, LECA, from its acronym in Spanish), a regulation which aims to catapult the region to the forefront in terms of promoting and developing the circular economy. Ever since the European Parliament published the communication entitled “Closing the loop – An EU action plan for the Circular Economy” (COM/2015/614 final) in 2015, public bodies across all levels have been striving to realign their policies with an economic model in which the value of resources is maintained for as long as possible while reducing waste generation to a minimum, as highlighted by the range of different initiatives, strategies, roadmaps and proposed laws developed on an autonomous community, state and regional level.

There is no doubt that the European Union (hereinafter, the EU) has become the number one driving force of the circular economy on the international stage in recent years. Although references to the circular economy had already been made, it was the publication of this communication in 2015 that placed this model among the EU’s top priorities, as it not only attempted to define circular economy for the first time, but it was also accompanied by a package of reforms that have impacted a number of EU regulations, particularly those regarding waste management. As proof of its firm commitment, in 2020 the EU published a second Circular Economy Action Plan entitled “For a cleaner and more competitive Europe” (COM/2020/98 final), alongside a new schedule for proposed actions in order to continue advancing towards the circular model. This plan is the cornerstone of the European Green Deal, unveiled in December 2019, and one of the key ways of helping Europe fully recover after the pandemic, as emphasised by the Council of the European Union in its conclusions adopted on 21 July 2020 on the multiannual financial framework and recovery plan (Next Generation EU), which claim that the adoption of production standards and circular consumption is a decisive factor for achieving the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as part of its 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

As a consequence of this *acquis communautaire*, and especially of the reforms of a number of European directives, Spain has developed two instruments which has

allowed it to align itself with the EU's circular economy initiatives: the Spanish Circular Economy Strategy (*Estrategia española de economía circular*, hereinafter, the EEEC) and Law 7/2022 of 8 April on Waste and Contaminated Soils for a Circular Economy (*Ley 7/2022, de 8 de abril, de residuos y suelos contaminados para una economía circular*, hereinafter, the LRSC). Despite receiving criticism for its lack of innovation and merely descriptive nature (Puentes Cociña, 2018, p. 34), the EEEC marked the first time Spain's legislators tackled the circular economy, which was developed in further detail in their first Circular Economy Action Plan 2021–2023 (*I Plan de Acción de Economía Circular 2021–2023 de España*, Pascual Núñez, 2021) and the LRSC, whose entry into force was somewhat delayed when considering that the first European plan dates back to 2015. The main goal of this regulation is to transpose the changes made in European laws to Spanish legislation, with new additions regarding waste and other measures linked to limiting the placement of plastics on the market (especially single-use plastics) and to extended producer responsibility, among other issues. In terms of taxes, two noteworthy new ones were introduced in Spain: a tax on landfill waste, incineration and co-incineration, aimed at remedying the disparity between regions in terms of waste taxation; and a tax on non-reusable plastic packaging, designed to make one of the critical sectors of the Spanish economy more circular².

As stated by Ramírez Sánchez-Maroto (2022), the LRSC lays the foundations for circular economy legislation, while not preventing autonomous communities from enacting their own laws on this issue. However, the only law approved so far by an autonomous community is Law 7/2019 of 29 November on the Circular Economy of Castile-La Mancha which, containing just nine articles and four final provisions, is merely a statement of intent in that it defines the principles, objectives and lines of action without implementing binding regulations that actually foster the circular economy. Proof of this is its Article 9, which indicates that the regional administration shall promote the creation of economic incentives to reduce the wastage of food, raw materials and energy, while also incentivising efficiency and sustainability standards during the production and consumption stages, although it does not define any specific instrument for doing so. On the other hand, it urges legislators to develop their own autonomous circular economy strategy and taxation for certain types of waste, a mandate which in our opinion is made redundant by the introduction of the state tax contained in the LRSC. Indeed, the twenty-first additional provision of the state regulations lays out that autonomous communities that have their own tax at the time the law enters into force may continue to manage, settle, collect and inspect their tax, while those that do not have such a tax may not introduce one.

Catalonia, Navarre and the Balearic Islands all also have regulations that more or less indirectly touch on the circular economy (Ruiz de Apodaca Espinosa, 2019; Santamaría Arinas, 2019)— Catalan Parliamentary Law 16/2017 of 1 August on Climate Change, Regional Law 14/1018 of 18 June on Waste and Taxation, Law 8/2019 of 19 February on Waste and Contaminated Soil in the Balearic Islands and Law 10/2019 of 22 February on Climate Change and Energy Transition—which,

although they do not exclusively rule on the circular economy, they do contain provisions related to this subject, such as defining the circular economy, even though the regulations themselves are mostly focused on waste management.

Likewise, other autonomous communities have chosen to develop their own strategies and roadmaps which, although they do not have the force of law, illustrate the importance taken on by the circular economy in the political and social agenda.

2. Most Important Aspects of the Andalusian Circular Economy Law

2.1. Background: the Andalusian Circular Bioeconomy Strategy and the legislative process of the LECA

Prior to the approval of the LECA, in 2018 Andalusia introduced an Andalusian Circular Bioeconomy Strategy that aimed to encourage the transition towards an economic model based on the optimal use of biological resources (Domínguez García-Baquero et al., 2018, p. 129). Although there is an undeniable link between this strategy and the promotion of the circular model, upon further analysis of this text, the conclusion is drawn that its main goal is to progress towards the use of renewable resources and the replacement of fossil fuels, ignoring other key sectors of the Andalusian economy. Regardless, and without devaluing the Andalusian Circular Bioeconomy Strategy, the LECA is the cornerstone of the development of the circular economy in the region given that its cross-cutting nature has a greater impact on the productive sectors. Its intention, outlined in the preamble, to introduce many changes which, with the force of law, are necessary to incentivise and accelerate the transition towards a more competitive and innovative economy is clear in this regard.

The origins of the LECA trace back to the Agreement by the Regional Government of Andalusia on 30 April 2019 in which it urges the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Sustainable Development to begin the necessary action to pass the Andalusian Circular Economy Law. As a result of this mandate, on 17 November 2020 the Ministry drew up a first draft of the Draft Law which, once it had passed through all legal procedures, was forwarded at the end of 2021 to the Advisory Council and the Economic and Social Council of Andalusia, whose reports favoured the adoption of the new regulation, with the latter's indicating that the circular economy presents Andalusia with a great opportunity thanks to its potential to create employment and boost the economy (2021, p. 16). Finally, the Law was published in the Official Gazette of the Andalusian Parliament (*Boletín Oficial del Parlamento de Andalucía, BOPA*) on 3 January 2022 (no. 732), continuing the legislative procedure until all amendments were considered, although the parliamentary process came to an early end as a result of the dissolution of the parliamentary term. Following the elections, the regulation was once again

pushed through (BOPA of 7 October 2022, no. 40), fighting off all the amendments proposed by Vox. The regulation was finally published in the Official Gazette of the Regional Government of Andalusia (BOJA) on 11 April 2023.

Unlike its counterpart from Castile-La Mancha, the LECA is a broad law that contains 87 articles across seven sections, in addition to five additional provisions, eight temporary provisions, one repealing provision and two final provisions. This study will now look at the main aspects of this law.

2.2. Comments on the text of the LECA

2.2.1. General provisions

Section I of the LECA covers the general aspects of the regulation, such as its purpose, scope of application, the main definitions, the guiding principles to have inspired the regulation, its objectives and the obligation of legal and natural persons to communicate via digital means.

The concept of circular economy (Article 3, sub-section i) is of particular importance, which is defined as:

An economic system in which the value of products, materials and other resources of the economy last for as long as possible, promoting their efficient use in production and consumption, thus reducing the environmental impact of their use and reducing waste and the release of dangerous substances to a minimum in all stages of their life cycle by applying the waste hierarchy, if applicable.

It could be argued that this definition is more comprehensive than the one offered by Law 8/2018 of 8 October on Measures Tackling Climate Change and on the Transition to a New Energy Model in Andalusia, which states that the circular economy is:

An economy that promotes the efficient use of resources to reach high levels of sustainability through eco-design, prevention and minimisation of waste generation, and the reuse, repair, remanufacturing and recycling of materials and products instead of the use of virgin raw materials.

Unlike this definition provided by Law 8/2018, which is basically identical to the one contained in Catalan Parliamentary Law 16/2017 of 1 August on Climate Change (Ramírez Sánchez-Maroto, 2018, p. 10), the new, updated one is better suited to the concept put forth by the EU, in that it refers to both the products' life cycle and the release of dangerous substances—mainly polluting emissions, faced with the need to advance towards a hypocarbon economic model—concepts that were completely ignored in the earlier definition. Furthermore, it stands out that the term “economy” has been replaced with “economic system”, arguably a sound decision, as it is closer to the concept of model used by the EU's blueprints, the EEEC and the LRSC.

The rest of section I refers to general aspects that have already been touched upon, such as the need to foster the circular economy as part of the framework of the SDGs

and the 2030 Agenda, the opportunities it presents the autonomous community with and the need to encourage all three pillars of sustainable development by incorporating classic principles—like the polluter pays and the efficiency principle—in addition to other newer issues such as promoting education for sustainable development and an integrated approach to the life cycle analysis of goods and services.

2.2.2. Governance

Section II of the LECA is dedicated to governance and is divided into three chapters, one on each of the three most important aspects: administrative organisation, planning and green public procurement.

The way in which Andalusian legislators opted to tackle organisational issues was by setting up an “office”, as opposed to a General Directorate of Circular Economy as chosen by other autonomous communities, such as Castile-La Mancha (Ramírez Sánchez-Maroto, 2018, p. 15). As such, Article 7 establishes the Andalusian Office of Circular Economy (hereinafter, the Office), whose roles, detailed in the third sub-section of the provision, centre around developing, promoting, boosting, advising, investigating and transferring all things related to the circular economy. Likewise, the remaining articles outline different tasks related to combating the digital divide and access to electronic devices in their useful life period (Article 43), reusing and recycling textiles (Article 49), the circular bioeconomy (Article 51) and promoting the Circular Economy Digital Innovation Centre in Andalusia (Article 77), among others. As will be seen later, the inclusion of the digital divide in this kind of regulation is rather odd, not just because of the seeming lack of relationship between the circular economy and digitalisation—a link that arguably does exist—but rather because of the lack of justification for this decision by the legislators.

With regards planning, the mandate to devise an Andalusian Strategy for the Circular Economy is noteworthy, which aims to develop planning and coordination mechanisms, measuring and evaluation systems for its monitoring, a platform for channelling industrial symbiosis and the mechanisms for promoting education for sustainability and citizen participation. On this subject, it is worth asking whether developing a strategy is more suitable before or after the approval of a regulation with the force of law. Until now, many autonomous communities have chosen to develop strategies and roadmaps, without ruling out the option of passing laws in the near future; for example, the Community of Madrid’s Circular Economy Law, which already features the “Madrid7R Economía Circular” initiative, is currently in the process of being passed. On the other hand, Castile-La Mancha has preferred to develop a regulation with the force of law first and then a strategy. This regulation includes aspects such as the background, an analysis and the general principles, which should logically be developed prior to the law. In defence of this model, one could argue that Castile-La Mancha’s law only contains nine articles, which undoubtedly required less work to fully develop. The LECA, on the other hand,

is a comprehensive law given that it must consider the definitive content of the future strategy to determine whether or not Andalusian legislators have chosen the correct legislative channel.

Likewise, Article 9 urges local authorities to draw up, approve, implement and execute their own circular economy action plans, which must include, at least, planning in terms of waste prevention and management. In reality, this does not just entail local authorities adapting their municipal ordinances to the new requirements of the LRSC³, but, by virtue of transitory provision four, local authorities must have their own circular economy plan within either two or four years, depending on whether their population is greater than or less than 5,000, respectively.

Regardless, all this seems to point towards the effective implementation of the LECA taking quite a while to come to fruition. In this vein, additional provision two indicates that the modification of posts in order to provide the Office with its workforce will take six months from the moment the law enters into force; meanwhile, and more critically, additional provision six allows a period of up to 18 months from the entry into force of the LECA for the strategy to be drawn up. Perhaps shortening these times would have been a good idea (for example, its Castile-La Mancha counterpart assigned a period of 12 months for this process), taking into consideration the fact that the LECA's legislative process has already experienced several delays.

Section II ends with a chapter on the inclusion of circular measures in green public procurement, developing what has been dubbed “circular public procurement” (“*contratación pública circular*”, Sanz Larruga, 2022, p. 174), thus incorporating the mandate contained in Article 16 of the LRSC, which presses public authorities to acquire products that are highly durable, reusable, repairable or made with materials that are easily recyclable. In reality, circular public procurement is a new step forward in socially responsible public procurement, under which public authorities' spending must be in line with the values and principles of general interest (García Calvente, 2012). As such, clauses that should be considered during the public procurement process include the products being recorded in the Andalusian Public Life Cycle Register (which will be looked at in more depth later), the products bearing the EU Ecolabel and the supplier being recorded in the EMAS register or equivalent, among others, particularly in relation to products and services classed as key (Article 12), provisions which must be fully developed (final provisions 10 and 14). Until another type of mechanism for developing the circular economy is established, such as tax instruments—whose implementation in the autonomous community would require careful analysis to ensure that the intended circularity objectives will be met⁴—circular public procurement appears to be a suitable public policy for incentivising production and consumption standards that allow the linear model to be left behind.

2.2.3. *Implementation of the circular economy*

Section III of the law deals with the specific actions to be taken in Andalusia in order to contribute to the development of a circular economy. It is split into five chapters which in turn address the life cycle analysis, circularity in production and consumption, circularity in services and processes, the economic boost to the circular economy and strategic business investments in the circular economy.

In the first chapter, Article 13 states that the autonomous authorities shall implement and promote the performance of product life cycle analyses, which could be argued to be merely a declaration of good intentions, given that this regulation lacks binding measures to actually ensure the objective is fulfilled. On the other hand, the creation of the novel and unprecedented Andalusian Public Life Cycle Register (Article 14) is of great interest, with its mission being outlined in its name. Despite it being voluntary for natural and legal persons to join this register, sub-section 5 of Article 14 indicates that doing so may make them worthy of receiving grants. Although it is true that this scenario is just a possibility under the regulation (it is phrased as “may be included” as a criteria), the fact that the LECA aims to advance circular public procurement prompts the belief that appearing on this register may be a pre-requisite for receiving grants in the not-so-distant future. Meanwhile, alongside the financing opportunity it presents, companies opting to join this register through choice cannot be ruled out, with such a decision perhaps forming part of their social responsibility policies.

Chapter II of section III continues by detailing the sustainability principles of the products, which must not be confused with the governing principles examined earlier: while the latter apply to the regulation in its entirety, the former are related to specific aspects that must be contemplated when deciding if a good can be considered “sustainable”, which include its energy efficiency, emissions reduction, the use of recycled materials, the possibility of recycling or reusing them and the use of eco-design. However, three of the aspects that appear in the regulation are of particular interest: the functionality economy, the durability of the products and the management of unsold goods.

The functionality economy, also called the functional service economy or the performance economy, is a school of thought from which the circular economy borrows a number of principles, and which revolves around the idea that it is not owning goods that is important, but rather how they are used (Stahel, 2016); in line with this concept, as stated in the Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on “Towards more sustainable consumption: industrial product lifetimes and restoring trust through consumer information” (2014/C 67/05), companies would no longer sell products, only functions. This idea coincides with the definition given in Article 3, j) of the LECA, which conceives the functionality economy as a consumption culture based on paying for the

use of a good or service and not on owning it. This new way of understanding the economy would imply its dematerialisation, thanks to the efficient use of resources and the reduction in waste generation, even though it would require consumers and businesspeople alike to radically change their consumption and production standards. In this sense, Article 16 establishes that the Regional Government of Andalusia will promote pay-per-use systems for machinery and equipment, integrated mobility mechanisms and the setting up of companies dedicated to collective goods in cities.

With this in mind, managing unsold goods and increasing the repairability and durability of products are two actions that aim to extend their useful life. However, the two regulations that govern these actions lack any obligation, as the law states that the productive sectors will reduce, as much as possible, the amount of unsold goods, that the ministry that oversees waste management may establish specific prohibitions regarding the elimination of unsold goods, that companies dedicated to manufacturing products may voluntarily set up their own or associated system that allows them to offer alternatives and services for repairing them, and that they may extend the useful life of the product by making spare parts available to the public. The terminology used stands in stark contrast to that of state legislation: Article 127 bis of Royal Legislative Decree 1/2007 of 16 November approving the consolidated text of the General Consumer and User Protection Act and Other Complementary Laws, for example, indicates that the producer shall at all times guarantee the existence of a suitable technical service, in addition to the availability of spare parts for a minimum period of ten years following the date on which the good ceases to be manufactured. In other words, the LECA is a regulation that is full of good intentions, however whether or not it is effectively executed is in the hands of the stakeholders themselves. In this regard, it is impossible to overlook that workers and, in this case, companies must assume the costs of transitioning to the circular economy, which is probably why legislators have tried to avoid introducing any taxes that will have a negative impact on the business sector. Likewise, chapter III urges the authorities to drive forward circularity in service provision and production processes.

Similarly, chapter IV, which is dedicated to the economic boost to the circular economy, emphasises that the Regional Government of Andalusia shall develop mechanisms for promoting the circular economy (Article 23), focused on certain priority actions, including eco-design, reusing products and their components, industrial symbiosis, waste valorisation, advancing towards the functionality economy and promoting circularity in the value chains of key products (Article 24). Once again, the chapter suffers from an over-generalisation, given that it indicates no specific actions for boosting the circular economy and it repeats much of what is said in other parts of the LECA.

Chapter V of this section is much more specific, however, in that it defines the criteria to be met by company projects undertaken in Andalusia with regards material valorisation and which request their declaration as a strategic interest: they must contribute to the creation of at least 25 full-time jobs and invest a minimum of 10 million euro⁵. In terms of the concept of material valorisation activities, Article 26 refers to those listed in Appendix II of the LRSC (except for valorising material for the main purpose of its use as fuel or another form of producing energy and all prior operations). In this case, the understanding is that the concept of material valorisation activities should have been expressly included in sub-section 3.1 of Decree Law 4/2019, which indicates the project categories that are likely to be considered of strategic interest, even though sub-section i) of the same article includes energy valorisation projects for waste and biomass, which may in turn include material valorisation activities.

2.2.4. Waste management

Although advancing towards a circular economy requires actions all along a product's value chain, and especially during the initial resource extraction, design and product manufacturing stages, public authorities continue to focus on waste management. The LECA does not stray away from this, with section IV tackling this issue, which it must be said is definitely not straight forward as it falls under several different jurisdictions.

This section begins by announcing that the actions taken will revolve around the application of the waste prevention principle, based on the idea that the best kind of waste is no waste. The first chapter of general provisions also contains a series of objectives linked to the circular management of waste and municipal waste, which are more or less a direct transcription of those given in the LRSC. It is interesting to note that Article 29.5 of the LECA, which speaks of the obligation to establish a non-tax-based fee or financial contribution for managing waste, as found in Article 11.3 of the state regulations, refers to taxes, fees or, if applicable, non-tax-based financial contributions, as if the fee were not actually considered a tax⁶. In addition, given that this text merely reiterates the provisions of the LRSC, it is also of note that it makes no mention that the financial contribution established must be specific, separate and not incur a deficit, as mentioned in the aforementioned Article 11.3 of the LRSC, as it will be a real challenge for many local authorities to meet these characteristics.

Chapter II deals with the so-called voluntary extended producer responsibility systems which will be promoted by the Regional Government of Andalusia. It is also worth highlighting that the inclusion of the adjective "voluntary" is not a mistake; it is in line with the doctrine of the Spanish Supreme Court—as seen in Decisions 2648/2020, 2649/2050, 2650/2020 and 2651/2020, all of 27 July (among others)—which has established that extended producer responsibility is the sole competence of the Spanish state (Poveda, 2020), by virtue of the

provisions of Article 149.2.23 of the Spanish Constitution, which gives the state authority over primary legislation regarding environmental protection, rejecting claims that this power could be passed down to the autonomous communities so that they may establish additional protection regulations.

2.2.5. Value chains of key products

What to do with the value chains of key products is without a doubt one aspect that the LECA hones in on, namely in section V, which contains a total of 34 articles, in turn grouped into chapters which correspond to each of the critical sectors: electronic and electric devices, batteries and vehicles; plastics and packaging; textile products; food, nutrients and bioproducts; water; and construction and buildings. These sectors are generally aligned with those indicated in the EEECC, although it is surprising that the LECA does not make any reference to tourism, given its importance to Andalusia and the wide berth given to the sector to advance towards a circular model (State Company for the Management of Tourism Innovation and Technologies, SEGITTUR, n.d.). The overall goal of this section is to set out the rules that govern the recovery of raw materials considered key in each of the aforementioned sectors, to promote synergies between the affected industrial sectors, and between these and the authorities, and to raise awareness and encourage citizen collaboration in order to effectively implement a circular economy. Once again there is a lack of specificity regarding the actions that are going to be taken, with the law addressing, among other topics, the setting up of the appropriate regulatory and administrative mechanisms to establish relationships of industrial symbiosis, the streamlining of procedures and authorisations and the reduction of administrative obstacles, all without stipulating which specific measures are going to be carried out in order to reach these goals and, more importantly, the time frame for their adoption.

If a closer look is taken at each of the key products, the law begins to touch on the circularity of electronic and electric devices, batteries and vehicles, reiterating some of the obligations provided for in sectoral legislation (such as those related to the obligations of civic amenity sites to meet certain requirements). Although this point is also not particularly well-defined (for example, when it claims that civic amenity sites shall adopt measures to guarantee the security of the facilities, without specifying exactly which measures), the express acknowledgement that the Regional Government of Andalusia may establish framework agreements in collaboration with representatives from distributors and marketers in order to prevent the generation of this type of waste is welcomed. Here the regulations also refer to circular digital connectivity funds, defined in Article 3, sub-section k) as electronic devices in their service life that are supplied in order to be reused so as to eliminate the digital divide. This is explicit recognition of a new way of extending the service life of electronic products—transferring them to people with fewer resources—in an attempt to eliminate the digital divide, with the government ministries responsible for education and social affairs taking it upon themselves to define the criteria governing this transfer, an excellent measure

which combines environmental sustainability with social sustainability. With regards this type of products, Ramírez Sánchez-Maroto (2022, p. 18) considers that it should have included a clear reference to municipalities with over 200,000 inhabitants, in which so-called “urban mining”⁷ is a key activity for recovering materials in large cities, given the intensive use of electronic and electrical devices that occurs in them. Finally, there is also mention of the improvement in managing vehicle waste once it has come to the end of its service life, which fully adheres to applicable sectoral state legislation, with the latest update urging the government ministry responsible for environmental issues to collaborate with the relevant traffic authority.

Unlike the trend currently observed in most legal texts, the articles focusing on plastics and packaging are a real improvement over the LRSC; in particular, they outline a series of minimum objectives in terms of the amount in weight of packaging recycled, and the specific materials contained in it, by 2025 and 2030 (Article 45.1). On the other hand, they do contain the same objectives regarding the separate collection of single-use plastic waste (Article 45.2 of the LECA) as those given in Article 59 of the LRSC. In order to meet these objectives, the LECA advises the autonomous and local authorities to prioritise the purchase of sustainable packaging, with this being taken into consideration when entering into contracts and in the public events they support.

The LECA also has a three-pronged approach to dealing with circularity in the textile sector: compelling social enterprises to participate in separate waste collection in order to meet recycling goals; fostering research, development and innovation to drive the creation of a more circular textile industry; and developing measures, through the Andalusian Office of Circular Economy, to minimise the use of natural resources, such as by designing product certification procedures, establishing criteria, and devising administrative procedures and end-of-waste criteria for certain textiles⁸. Regarding the promotion of research, development and innovation, legislators use the terms “economic instruments and incentives”, but not in reference to the implementation of a new, specific tax that could drive the circularisation of the textile sector; instead, this refers to awards, good practice guides and information campaigns.

Chapter V of section V is dedicated to food, nutrients and bioproducts and, as evidenced by the existence of an Andalusian Circular Bioeconomy Strategy, legislators have decided to pay particular attention to this sector, even though it is somewhat surprising that the LECA contains no mention of said strategy, aside from the reference in the preamble, perhaps because it is outdated, given that it was passed prior to the EEE and LRSC. In this sub-section, the regulations surrounding the reduction of food waste are of most importance, as not only has this been set as one of the priority objectives, in line with the SDGs, but the development of a general planning instrument is provided for, with the understanding that it is to be developed in the future strategy, with the goal of reducing the wastage of products that, although they are suitable for human

consumption, do not meet the requirements for sale (size, colour, appearance, etc.)⁹. It is at this point that one of the few binding regulations appears in the text: in accordance with Article 52.4, hospitality and restaurant establishments must provide compostable packaging for customers to take home food products that they have paid for but not consumed, a great idea and, although it may result in increased costs for the sectors, the impact of this would be minimal. Regardless, this measure is not contemplated in the LRSC, which does include the controversial obligation to offer non-bottled water free of charge, so, as can be seen, the LECA is rather innovative in that it introduces extra laws in addition to those found in state legislation.

In terms of other matters, the law once again recognises the role played by social enterprises, with its lengthy Article 53 devoted to the possibility of signing agreements to donate unsold products that are fit for consumption. In connection with this issue, it underlines that local entities may choose to offer reduced fees or financial contributions for waste collection services to food distribution and hospitality companies who enter into agreements with social enterprises to set up collection systems that help reduce food waste, which basically reiterates the provisions of Article 24.6 of Royal Decree Law 2/2004 of 5 March, approving the consolidated text of the Regulatory Law of Local Public Treasuries (hereinafter, the LRHL, from its acronym in Spanish). Similarly, Article 52.3 of the LECA declares that local entities may give tax breaks and offer reduced rates to those who adopt biowaste composting systems, an option that is not explicitly stated in the LRHL, which, aside from the aforementioned Article 24.6, only contains two references to this topic: the exemption provided for in Article 21.2 of the state, autonomous communities and local entities, and the possibility of quantifying the rate under the principle of economic capacity contained in Article 24.4. Therefore, and unless state regulations are modified, the only possibility of offering a reduced tax rate such as the one indicated in Article 56.3 of the LECA would be to justify under the principle of economic capacity, which would arguably be more questionable.

Water is an essential resource for human life, one that is increasingly scarce, particularly in the Guadalquivir basin, so it comes as no surprise that the LECA spends an entire chapter discussing the issue. The objective, as stated in Article 59 of the LECA, is to abandon the linear model based on using, purifying and dumping water and advancing towards the circular management of water that allows it to be used more efficiently, thus guaranteeing that water demands are met while also attempting to find a balance between regional and sectoral development. In this regard, and alongside the aspects that autonomous and local plans must contain, the LECA addresses the development of sustainable drainage techniques, allowing them to reuse or regenerate rainwater, something of a paradox considering the severe current drought. However, it is worth noting that water resources fall under a number of different jurisdictions, a fact that complicates their management. The same occurs with taxes, as the lack of coordination between the different authorities has prevented water from being

used sustainably (Gil García, 2022). On the other hand, the different taxation models that have been established to date only seem to be concerned with raising funds, under the guise of environmental protection measures (Vaquera García, 2020). Therefore, when Article 64 of the LECA claims that it will incentivise the circular use of water through a fiscal policy, Andalusian legislators, just like those of the other autonomous communities, must exercise caution and tackle the issue in conjunction with the state so that it can guarantee that the costs associated with water infrastructures are covered, in line with the proposals of the Expert Committee tasked with drawing up the White Paper on Tax Reform (*Libro blanco sobre la reforma tributaria*, 2022).

Section V concludes with a chapter on the construction sector and buildings. Here, in order to avoid repeating points that have already been discussed, emphasis must be placed on the importance of the inclusion of circularity and eco-design criteria in public works, given that this helps reduce waste generation during all stages of construction, promotes the use of recycled resources and contains criteria linked to the efficient use of water, energy, materials and resources when preparing projects. In addition, it adds that voluntarily obtaining internationally recognised certificates may contribute towards receiving reductions in municipal fees and other tax incentives, which should inspire local authorities to include these aspects in their tax codes. As highlighted previously, these tax codes must respect the limits set by the LRHL, which in practice presents certain restrictions in terms of offering these kinds of tax incentives and the near impossibility of doing so with municipal fees.

2.2.6. Training, research, development and innovation

Section VI is comprised of five articles which, as indicated by the Advisory Board in its report on the Draft, aims to create a geographic concentration of interconnected companies and institutions acting in the field of circular economy in Andalusia. As such, the Regional Government of Andalusia undertakes to boost training, education, technological development, knowledge transfer and innovation in generating and applying new knowledge (Article 73), as well as to support public and private universities and other research centres and actors involved in undertaking research and technological innovation projects related to the circular economy in Andalusia¹⁰.

More specifically, in order to convey these actions promoting the research, innovation and development of circular practices, the Office plans to establish a Circular Economy Digital Innovation Centre (hereinafter, CIDEDEC from its acronym in Spanish) for Andalusia, through which it will foster cooperation in the sector and increase the critical mass of companies who operate in the field of the circular economy. This type of centre has already been set up in other parts of the country (CIEC Madrid, n.d.) to transfer knowledge to society and connect it to the business sectors involved. In the case of Andalusia, the

CIDEC contains the adjective “Digital” in its name, although the text of the legislation does not actually justify the link between the circular economy and digitalisation, beyond mentioning the need to unlock the potential that digitalisation has on products and incorporating digital solutions (Article 15.1, h), digital systems for managing water resources (final provision 13) and the circular digital connectivity funds mentioned earlier. Although there is a relationship between the concepts of circular economy and digitalisation (García Novoa et al., 2021), it seems that the link could have been developed a bit more clearly in the provisions of the LECA.

2.2.7. Responsibility, vigilance, inspection, control and penalty scheme

The last section of the LECA is focused on issues related to control and penalty procedures, detailing the rules and principles provided for in current legislation. It is interesting, however, to observe the classification of conduct as very serious, serious or minor, including issues such as the fraudulent use of life cycle analysis certificates, non-compliance with the obligation to report on the functioning or dimension of the works, products or services, and non-compliance with the obligation to keep and store documentation related to the life cycle, which is directly related to the circular economy, and can result in financial penalties of more than 120,000 euro and non-financial ones consisting of the partial or total sealing off or closure of the facilities, machinery or equivalent either temporarily or definitively.

3. Conclusion: Towards a Circular Economy in Andalusia?

Although the LECA should generally be viewed positively, there are certain issues that raise doubts, such as excessively generous deadlines (for creating the Andalusian Circular Economy Strategy, for example) and repeating aspects that have already been laid out in state or sectoral law, making the text unnecessarily long and difficult to read without actually providing any new legal obligations. Likewise, as indicated in the Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee, it is missing references to a need for fairness in the transition from the linear to the circular model, which could have been achieved by adding a guiding principle in section I, for example. This change in model should be inextricably linked to sustainable growth, but without ignoring the consequences that it has on employment and corporate sustainability. All of these matters should be planned with plenty of margin to allow for the most appropriate solutions to be adopted. Aside from these topics, the LECA also introduces important improvements over current legislation, particularly those regarding product life cycle analyses and the creation of a specific, voluntary register on the matter.

On the other hand, some aspects are too vague and require more in-depth explanation. In this regard, and given that the LECA refers to both legislative development (final provision ten) and the creation of an Andalusian Circular Economy Strategy, the publication of this strategy must be monitored in the hope that it is not delayed in order to verify that the desired changes are actually brought about.

In sum, Andalusian legislators have followed the example of their counterparts from Castile-La Mancha and devised a regulatory instrument with the force of law in order to drive forward the transition towards a circular economy in this autonomous community. The LECA leverages the momentum provided by institutions on an autonomous community and national level to achieve a circular economy, aligning with the strategies and roadmaps that have already been drawn up and placing Andalusia at the forefront in terms of circular economy legislation.

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Notas

1 This work was undertaken as part of the “Analysis and proposals for a fair transition to the circular economy: impact on companies and workers” project (*Análisis y propuestas para una transición justa a la Economía Circular: impacto sobre las empresas y las personas trabajadoras*, TED2021-132491B-I00), as part of the call for Strategic Projects Focused on the Green Transition and the Digital Transition (*Proyectos Estratégicos Orientados a la Transición Ecológica y a la Transición Digital*, 2021), with the lead researchers being Yolanda García Calvente and María del Mar Soto Moya.

2 For a more detailed analysis of the LRSC, please see the special issue of the *Revista Aragonesa de Administración Pública* (“Aragonese Journal of Public Administration”), number Extra-21 from 2022, which contains a systematic analysis of the LRSC.

3 By way of example, refer to the mandate provided for in Article 11.3 of the LRSC, giving local authorities three years from the date the law enters into force to establish a specific, separate tax-based or non-tax-based financial contribution that does not incur a deficit, that also enables payment based on generation and which reflects the real cost of collecting, transporting and treating waste, and all the problems it entails (Navarro García, 2022; Pagès i Galtés, 2022a, 2022b and 2022c).

4 Regarding this issue, the Expert Committee (*Comité de personas expertas*, 2022, p. 224) considers that greater inter-administrative cooperation and coordination is required to guarantee that the environmental objectives are met and to avoid undesired economic distortions.

5 The concept of business investment of strategic interest is contained in Decree-Law 4/2019 of 10 December on fostering economic initiatives through the administrative streamlining and simplifying of project processes and the declaration of a strategic interest for Andalusia, for the creation of an accelerator for projects of strategic interest, modifying Law 1/1994 of 11 January on Territorial Planning in the Autonomous Community of Andalusia, and Law 7/2002 of 17 December on Urban Planning in Andalusia, whose Article 2 states that those with special relevance and coherence with the development and economic, social and territorial planning of Andalusia, and which incorporate environmental sustainability measures shall be considered as such.

6 In accordance with Article 2.1 of Law 58/2003 of 17 December, the General Tax Law, taxes are classified as fees, special contributions and duties; in other words, all fees are taxes.

7 In the absence of a legal definition in the LECA, the author defines urban mining as activity consisting in collecting disused metal to recycle and reincorporate it as a new raw material. Refer to Moreu Carbonell (2022) for an analysis of the legal framework governing this activity.

8 In this regard, Article 5 of the LRSC sets out the requirements for waste to no longer be considered as such; however, it contains no specific criteria for textiles, with regional legislation having not yet been developed.

9 This issue is of such importance that nearby countries, including France, have specific measures to combat food waste (*Loi relative à la lutte contre le gaspillage et à l'économie circulaire*).

10 The Regional Government of Andalusia currently has a call for research projects focused on challenges affecting Andalusian society, including “Safe, clean and efficient energy” and “Action for climate, environment, efficiency in the use of resources and raw materials”, with developing the circular economy being implicitly included in these

ARTICLE/ARTÍCULO

From the Civil War to Loneliness: Vulnerability in the Lives of Older People

De la Guerra Civil a la soledad: la vulnerabilidad
en el curso vital de las personas longevas

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Received/Recibido: 28/10/2022

Accepted/Aceptado: 23/01/2023



ABSTRACT

This article addresses the social reality of people over the age 80 years old, focusing on the problems that affect their daily lives and the resources required to deal with them. Based on qualitative methodology, it uses interviews as an information-production technique and grounded theory as an analytical tool. Our results indicate that these people, who live alone, are exposed to a situation of vulnerability that is generated as a result of the deterioration of their health or physical weakness. At home, many of them have difficulty performing domestic tasks, while outside, their social activity is reduced. The family is their main source of instrumental support, but there are many cases of unmet needs, especially if they do not have the financial means to hire professional help. There are also those who live in social isolation, the magnitude of which depends on the severity of their physical limitations. All of this combines to intensify this sense of loneliness. However, vulnerability is not something that is new to them. An analysis of their lives reveals that many have already endured it, experiencing a childhood that was severely impacted by the Spanish Civil War and the post-war period. Back then they were familiar with sacrifice and suffering, problems that have reared their heads once again in their old age.

KEYWORDS: old people; living alone; vulnerability; unmet needs; qualitative methodology.

HOW TO REFERENCE: López Doblas, J. and Díaz Conde, M. P. (2023). De la Guerra Civil a la soledad: la vulnerabilidad en el curso vital de las personas longevas. *Revista Centra de Ciencias Sociales*, 2(1), 63-82. <https://doi.org/10.54790/rccs.41>

The Spanish (original) version can be read at <https://doi.org/10.54790/rccs.41>

RESUMEN

Este artículo aborda la realidad social de las personas mayores de 80 años, centrándose en los problemas que afectan a su vida cotidiana y los recursos para afrontarlos. Utiliza metodología cualitativa: la entrevista como técnica de producción de información y la *Grounded Theory* como herramienta analítica. Nuestros resultados apuntan que estas personas, viviendo solas, se exponen a una situación de vulnerabilidad generada por el deterioro de la salud o su debilidad física. En casa, muchas de ellas tienen dificultad para realizar tareas domésticas y, fuera, ven reducida su actividad social. La familia es su principal fuente de apoyo instrumental, pero abundan los casos de necesidades no cubiertas, sobre todo si no existen medios económicos para contratar ayuda profesional. También los hay de un aislamiento social cuya magnitud depende del grado de sus limitaciones físicas. Todo ello acaba agudizando el sentimiento interno de soledad. Pero la vulnerabilidad no es algo que resulte novedoso para ellas. El análisis de su curso vital revela que muchas ya la experimentaron en una infancia, como la que tuvieron, marcada por la Guerra Civil y la posguerra. En aquel entonces conocieron el sacrificio y el sufrimiento, y tal cosa vuelven a encontrar en su vejez.

PALABRAS CLAVE: personas mayores; viviendo solas; vulnerabilidad; necesidades no cubiertas; metodología cualitativa.

1. Introduction

This article focuses on elderly people who live alone. The demographic shift which greatly increased the size of the elderly population is by no means unknown, with numerous articles from the 1990s warning of the potential consequences of this change (Flaquer and Soler, 1990; Solsona and Treviño, 1990; Valero, 1995; Requena, 1999), in addition to others published in more recent years (López Doblas, 2005; Zueras and Miret, 2013; López Villanueva and Pujadas, 2018; Cámara et al., 2021). One of the most recent of these works confirms that the number of single-person households in Spain is continuing to grow and that the over-65s are particularly likely to form part of one: in 2019, 22.74% of those in this age group lived alone, more than two million people in real terms (López Doblas and Díaz Conde, 2021). In addition, the 2022–2037 *household projection* recently published by the Spanish National Statistics Institute (*Instituto Nacional de Estadística, INE*) affirms that this situation is only going to get worse. All indicators point towards the elderly being at the centre of this phenomenon.

Lots of research has also been done on the underlying reasons behind this process with the goal of helping us gain a better understanding of it, from the point of view of the social actors involved. In this vein, López Doblas (2005), for example, claimed that autonomy was increasing amongst this population, while he also underlined the social modernisation that old age is currently undergoing in Spain (López Doblas and Díaz Conde, 2013). Other studies have stressed elderly people's preference to grow old in their own home (Fernández Carro, 2016; Molina, Gallo and González, 2020), or demographic factors, such as the low birth rate which is increasingly leaving them without descendants (Reher and Requena, 2017; Padyab et al., 2019). Emphasis has also been placed on the elderly's desire to live independently from other generations, driven especially by their negative perception of moving in with family members, as well as on the instrumental and emotional support received from their children, particularly daughters, and their will to maintain financial self-sufficiency (López Doblas, 2018).

Beyond the demographic expansion of the phenomenon and the understanding of its root causes, there is a lack of sociological information about one of the most serious issues that should concern society as a whole—especially this ageing Spanish society—which is that loneliness is rife. Here, the reference is to the living conditions, needs and demands of elderly people who live alone. It is true, however, that there is a pioneering study from the beginning of the century that analyses their family ties, their social relationships, the problems that tend to affect them and how cohabitation is a possible alternative to solitary life (López Doblas, 2005). In recent years, additional studies have also emerged that aim to fill the information void regarding this subject (Gallo and Molina, 2015; San Martín and Jiménez, 2021), many of which centre around one of the most serious problems affecting this population, which is the feeling of loneliness (López Doblas and Díaz Conde, 2018; Yanguas et al., 2020; Lorente, Brotons and Sitges, 2022).

Even so, it is difficult to deny that very little is known about elderly people who live alone in Spain. To get a better idea of how many aspects pertaining to this population group that have yet to be addressed, a quick glance at the international specialised literature will suffice. One of these aspects is their health status. There are those who are in good health and are able to go about their daily life with no issues, however there are also others who have functional limitations and, therefore, require assistance. As a result, we are faced with a population group that is particularly heterogeneous in terms of health (Park et al., 2017). Research undertaken in other countries indicates that many elderly people continue to live alone despite suffering from mental illnesses of differing levels of severity (Rongve et al., 2014; Eichler et al., 2016). In Spain, a fifth of the dependent population aged 65 and over lives in single-person households (Abellán et al., 2011). The details of the most vital aspects of their lives are, however, overlooked: how they manage their everyday tasks, doctor's visits and medication, as well as their scope of their sources of support and the extent to which they are able to meet their care needs. On a statistical level, family support networks are known to be a vital resource (Fernández and Tobío, 2007), but a comprehensive study of their role is required from the point of view of those involved.

This is a topic that must be researched urgently, especially in a social context, such as the way in which it is being approached here, given the growing demand for carers and the decline in the family support on offer, both in Spain (Durán, 2018; Elizalde, 2018) and abroad (Verropoulou and Tsimbos, 2017; Pickard, 2015). This situation is particularly severe for elderly people who live alone, as international studies provide evidence of the disadvantage that this population is at when compared with those who live with another person. It is less likely that they have informal carers (Eichler et al., 2016; Spitze and Ward, 2000), and even more probable that they do not receive as much assistance, even when they really need it, in carrying out tasks such as washing themselves, cooking and leaving the house (Vlachantoni, 2019; Desai et al., 2001). Those who do not have children are more affected by this problem (Larsson and Silverstein, 2004). Generally speaking, elderly people who live alone tend to have less stable family networks and, when they get sick, they are exposed to a greater risk of being referred to the formal care sector as their main source of care (Allen et al., 2012; Betini et al., 2017), including institutionalisation (Martikainen et al., 2009;

Dramé et al., 2012; Pimouguet et al., 2015). Very few studies have touched on these aspects in Spain, which is why they should be of utmost importance.

Moreover, the elderly also often fall victim to other types of problems when they live alone. The one that has received the most attention is the feeling of loneliness. Years ago, De Jong Gierveld (1987) concluded that it affects people when they are unsatisfied with their social relationships, whether because they have fewer than they would like or because they do not provide the desired level of intimacy. A number of works claim that the transition from marriage to widowhood is a critical point at which it can materialise (Dahlberg et al., 2021; Aarten and Jylhä, 2011). Countless other articles also link loneliness among the elderly with the fact that they often live alone (Sundström et al., 2009; De Jong Gierveld, Dykstra and Schenk, 2012). It is also worth adding that the feeling of loneliness sometimes emerges alongside another problem which is equally as worrying, as is the case with social isolation, which is linked to insufficient interpersonal relationships (Havens et al., 2004) and a decrease in available support networks (Domènech et al., 2021). The topic of social isolation among the elderly has barely been touched on by Spanish sociologists.

2. Methodology and Objectives

Lonely older people. Problemas cotidianos y mejora de su calidad de vida (“Daily problems and an improved quality of life”) is a study that aims to fill in these gaps, and others, in sociological research. The project was financed as part of the 11th call for funding by the Andalusian Studies Centre Foundation. It must be mentioned that the qualitative aspect of the project was considerably impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, not just due to the delay in starting the fieldwork, but also because the information collection technique had to be altered, changing from a group discussion to individual interviews. This decision was driven by the health and social circumstances deriving from the pandemic, particularly given the impossibility of gathering people together in a group. The first interviews were performed in Granada in May 2021 once the elderly had received the vaccine, with this phase concluding in December 2022 in the town of Cortegana, Huelva province.

The decision was made that the interviews would be semi-structured. Also, in order to ensure that the fundamental questions of interest for the research were addressed in each interview, a script was prepared made up of general thematic blocks (daily life, family structure and relationships, neighbours, friendships, sources of instrumental and emotional support, physical and mental health, social isolation, the feeling of loneliness, financial situation and consequences of the pandemic). However, in no way was a fixed sequence of questions forced on the participants, nor were the interviews controlled; instead, the elderly participants themselves freely spoke about these issues and others. The interviews were held in different spaces, such as private homes, active participation centres and cafés, with the audio being recorded with the participants' consent and a guarantee of confidentiality and anonymity. As such, the names that appear in the analysis are fictional and in no case correspond to the true identity of the participants.

The interviewee selection process considered two fixed criteria: that they were over the age of 65 and lived alone. Theoretical sampling was conducted based on their gender, age, marital status and the setting in which they live. This enabled a typological profile to be designed that included a wide range of social actors. Of the 102 total interviews performed as part of the study, 46 were selected to include in this article. All of the chosen interviews correspond to participants who were born before 1940. This decision meets the main objective of this study: to describe the social reality of older people who either lived through the Spanish Civil War or were born during it, emphasising the situation of vulnerability many of them are currently experiencing as a result of health problems, isolation or loneliness. This will be tackled from the premise that the lives of these people foster understanding of the social problems they are faced with, which in turn feeds into the second objective: to analyse these people’s childhood, discovering key features that defined it and, in one way or another, have had a profound impact on their existence to this very day. The characteristics of the interviewees can be found in Table 1.

Table 1
Characteristics of the sample

No.	Gender	Age	Marital status	No.	Gender	Age	Marital status
12	Female	85	Widowed	168	Female	81	Widowed
14	Female	81	Separated	170	Female	84	Widowed
15	Female	93	Widowed	171	Female	86	Single
16	Male	80	Widowed	174	Male	83	Widowed
18	Male	89	Widowed	175	Male	82	Widowed
19	Female	84	Widowed	176	Female	85	Widowed
112	Female	86	Widowed	180	Female	85	Widowed
113	Female	85	Widowed	181	Male	90	Widowed
115	Female	99	Widowed	185	Male	81	Separated
126	Female	81	Widowed	186	Female	82	Divorced
127	Female	88	Widowed	187	Female	83	Widowed
128	Male	82	Widowed	190	Male	89	Married
129	Female	88	Widowed	191	Male	95	Widowed
131	Female	88	Widowed	192	Female	86	Widowed
136	Female	91	Widowed	193	Female	88	Widowed
137	Male	84	Widowed	194	Female	91	Widowed
140	Male	92	Widowed	195	Female	82	Divorced
143	Female	87	Widowed	196	Female	91	Widowed
144	Female	84	Widowed	197	Female	90	Divorced
146	Male	89	Widowed	198	Male	96	Widowed
153	Female	87	Widowed	199	Female	87	Widowed
155	Female	85	Widowed	1100	Male	85	Divorced
156	Female	88	Widowed	1102	Female	89	Widowed

The analysis process followed the principles of *grounded theory*. The interviews were held and transcribed verbatim by members of the research team. Later, inductive coding was performed in a way that was guided by the thematic blocks of the script. By constantly comparing the information gathered, a system of categories and sub-categories was created, enabling it to be structured. This work details a large part of this information, particularly that pertaining to the main issues affecting the elderly who live alone, such as deteriorated health, unmet needs, social isolation and the feeling of loneliness. The work also provides an interpretation of the field materials which refer to their childhood, largely impacted by the Spanish Civil War. This allows emphasis to be placed on their life experiences when studying the social problems that affect them. In the case of the analysis presented here, the common thread is the vulnerability that many of them experienced at a young age and that once again plagues them in their old age, this time for entirely different reasons. Table 2 shows the coding process that was followed.

Table 2
Analysis strategy followed

SUBCATEGORIES	THEORETICAL CATEGORIES	MAIN CATEGORIES	CENTRAL CATEGORY
Hunger Malnutrition Death by starvation	Memories of poverty		
Farmwork Cattle farming	Child labour		
Never going to school Illiteracy Learning in any way possible	Education deficit	Infancy marked by suffering and sacrifice	
Growing up without a father Situation of abandonment Family disintegration	Family deficit		
Fear Direct threats Witnesses of war	Victims of the Spanish Civil War		Vulnerability in the lives of the elderly
Severe illnesses Physical weakness Mobility problems	Social relationship deficits		
Filial support Help at home Hiring someone Self-care	Unmet needs	Risk of social isolation and feeling of loneliness in old age	
Recently widowed No children or grandchildren Perceived lack of help Lack of financial resources Prospect of living in a care home	Emotional loneliness		

3. Results

3.1. Sacrifice and Suffering During Childhood

The results obtained shine a light on how difficult life has been for many of the elderly who currently live alone. It is rather indicative that they wanted to share the misery that they remember from their childhood without having to be expressly asked about it. What most stands out is that they often refer to the *hunger* that ran rampant throughout Spain during that time, whether they suffered from it themselves to some extent or they managed to avoid it, offering a better idea of the main problem of the era. This is something that men living in rural settings, such as Pepe, mentioned with greater frequency:

Well, I can't call it bad because I never went hungry. We lived in a *cortijo* (a type of farm-house where numerous families would live), and everyone ate the same there. Yes. We never lacked food there. But then, after the war, that's when *the real hunger* came. Well, I didn't really experience hunger then either, so what can I say. But I would see people going to work and they wouldn't have any food to take with them for lunch.

[...]

I saw this with my own eyes. And people coming to the *cortijos* asking for food, lots of them! Yes.

And I've even heard of people eating potato peel.

Yes, people would eat anything, whatever they could get their hands on. And banana skin... even kids searching for things in the fields (I90: 2).

Some of the interviewees spoke of the extreme material needs they experienced during the Spanish Civil War, which was only exacerbated in the post-war years. They told of a drastic lack of food, and even though it was a fairly long time ago, memories of how hungry they were have stuck with them to this day. Sometimes they would not have any food to eat, and they would instead have to eat whatever they could find to prevent them from dying from starvation. Numerous testimonies bear witness to this, such as that of Antonio who, when comparing his own childhood to how children experience it nowadays, emphasises that times have changed and that *bad luck* seemingly stalked his generation, practically from birth:

And then... then came the post-war years. That's when then we were really hungry! Some people had money while others didn't... There was nothing, absolutely nothing to eat! So...

Did you ever starve?

Did I ever starve? I used to eat banana peel!

You used to eat banana peel?

Yes, sir. And what about potato peel? I'd wash them, peel them and eat the skin. Me. I was... Bloody hell, let me tell you, the bad luck I've had. And there I was, at nine years old, I'd have to round up the pigs, bare naked and with no shoes on, with nobody to take care of me! But nowadays, kids can just be kids. Whereas in the past, you wouldn't have anyone to look after you (I81: 3-4).

Obviously, not everyone suffered from starvation during that period. But even those who never experienced it still recall how they had to sacrifice their childhood and were put to work from a very young age. If they lived in the countryside, they generally had to help with tasks related to the fields, farms and/or cattle, working endless days that often required great physical effort. It is worth reiterating that it was the men who were interviewed who tended to point to the social vulnerability that was a constant in their childhood. This study now turns to look at what Manuel, one of the oldest interviewees, had to say, whose hands still attest to the hard farmwork that he had to perform as a young boy:

My childhood? Lots of work, but then again, we were never weak due to a lack of food. Yes, we worked like dogs; just look at my fingers.

Wow, they really show how much you worked!

That's from working and not having the strength. At ten years old, working with a yoke and a plough, while being told to hurry up. We'd tie a stone to the wood here... because we couldn't fasten them to the yoke to drive them. We went through a lot (I91: 2).

As can be seen, it was a generation that was subject not just to shortages and child labour but to all sorts of other hardships. When they reflect upon that era, the lack of education also rears its head. More specifically, they lament the opportunities they never had to receive a formal education, to the point that many of them never even step foot inside a school. This is one of the grievances of Juan, to whom this study will return later:

I never managed to go to school! I lived in the countryside, with turkeys and pigs... Then, when I was older, I worked with the yoke, and then... Finally came the cattle. We had cattle at home, and they were like slaves, so we had to assist them, and we had to... Anyway, we had to slog. And I was one of nine children!

Oh my Lord!

My mother had ten in total, but one of them died. He was younger, he was the one that came after me (I40: 19).

During the war and in the years that followed, it is clear that putting food on the table was of utmost importance, and each member of the family had a role to play, regardless of whether they were only eight, nine or ten years old. In other words, child labour prevented many elderly people from going to school: some took it upon themselves to learn to read and write, even if only *badly*, while others would remain illiterate. Here is another sacrifice that this generation had to make, as revealed by Manuel later in his interview:

I didn't go to school.

You never went to school?

No, never. A man with a walking stick taught me what little I know.

He taught me to read and write.

The basics, just my name and things like that. We didn't have time for anything else. At night we would study with an oil lamp. And we could hardly see the paper (I91: 21).

A number of the older people interviewed shared memories of an even more painful shortcoming: a lack of affection from their family. In some cases, this was because they grew up without a father and/or mother as a result of the Spanish Civil War. Pepe is one such person:

I think I was already living in a *cortijo* when I was eight years old. There were nine of us and we didn't have a father...

Why didn't you have a father?

Because they killed him during the war. I don't even remember what my father was like, imagine that! And so we grew up scattered among the *cortijos* (I90: 1).

Some lost their fathers before they had learned to walk, while others never even got to meet them, with their mother already being a widow at the time she gave birth, or shortly after. This is what happened to María, who would go on to form part of a reconstituted family:

Because I have two other siblings, although we only share a mother. My dad was killed in the war.

[...]

In '36. And they killed him... they took him away... He wasn't dead when I was born, but just a few days later he was. It was his parents, my grandparents, who came to sign my birth certificate. And so... my mother didn't get married for another 20 years.

With another...

With another man. So my siblings are just my half siblings as we share the same mother, but there's a big age gap between us. I'm 23 years older than my brother and 21-and-a-bit years older than my sister (I80: 9).

The same can be said for Carmen, whose mother became a widow while she was pregnant with her. In her case, her mother did not want to remarry, instead choosing to lead a single-parent family which she was able to provide for despite facing countless difficulties. As can be seen, this is a generation marked not only by sacrifice, but also by past suffering. Many boys and girls, without ever really knowing why, saw their lives turned upside down as a consequence of the Spanish Civil War:

My mother was from a small town... They killed my dad, who was 33 years old. I was two when they killed him and she was four months pregnant with my sister. The poor thing raised us in her town... very humbly, with whatever she could get from the large estates. We didn't have any kind of connections; we just took what we could from the estates and that was all (I12: 6).

For others, the military conflict left an indelible impression on their family make-up as a consequence of the exodus of those who feared for their lives. Their loved ones, and in some cases the interviewees themselves, were forced to hurriedly flee from their homes and their social settings in search of safety. They see it as a necessary, lesser evil, especially given what was at stake if they refused to leave. Araceli, a widow now in her nineties, recounts in great detail the ordeal that she went through:

My parents... we lived in Baena (Córdoba province) during the war, which was something normal. Baena was a disaster during that time. My dad played the piano in the church, and at that time they were coming after everyone in the church... One day a position popped up in a parish church in La Línea (de la Concepción, Cádiz province), and when we got there all the lights were on... In Baena we had to turn the lights off at night in case of bombings... Anyway, it was a complete disaster (I36: 8–9).

There are even some, such as Manuel and Araceli herself, who have recollections of being in close proximity to victims of the war during their childhood and of being saved from the brink of death:

You must have some memories of the war.

Oh yes, and plenty of them, too! Like that time they almost killed me and my father, as he was carrying me in his arms! (I36: 13).

It's been a long time and I've lived through so many trials and tribulations, because... I was very young when war broke out and... and we were constantly on the move. My parents were in hiding because they were looking for them to... well, to kill them. That's the truth of the matter, haha.

And you remember this?

Yes, of course I do. And I remember when they came after me with a shotgun and, if it wasn't for one of my aunts, they would have shot me (I91: 1).

Some of the others who were interviewed were just witnesses to the horrors of war, whether this meant seeing shoot-outs in the street, like Encarna:

I remember living in San Juan de Dios and I'd see the Moors at the top of the tower at the town hall, and we'd run and... there was a shoot-out... Anyway, I do remember certain things, yes.

Some things you can't forget.

No, no. Even things from when I was really small as well... No, I'll never forget them. I remember them like it was yesterday (I56: 1).

Others have recollections of military planes flying overhead while they played in the street with the other children, oblivious to the danger they were in. This is exactly how Pedro remembers it:

Although I was only four-and-a-half years old, I remember lots of things. Plenty of things, because of where we lived... I spent the entire war in Jaén province, and I remember that I'd be playing with the other kids and the aeroplanes would fly right over us, so close to the ground... Hahaha, I remember all of that.

But that... Pfft.

Yes. We had to throw ourselves to the ground (I46: 14–15).

This woman from Granada, who was born in 1928, has memories of some particularly horrific events. During that time Nieves lived opposite the prison, and each night she could see vehicles full of prisoners leaving the gates, accompanied by the sound of crying, leading them to their death. This is further evidence of the suffering, experienced by the interviewees and those around them, to which these elderly people were exposed during their younger years:

They would go in lorries... I remember those lorries, I've got the image engraved in my brain. They weren't like modern lorries, they were very long...

[...]

And you saw this yourself?

Yes, I remember seeing them. I was a bit older when this happened. I remember seeing a whole line of these lorries, you know? And they were waiting to take the prisoners away. At night! They would take them at night! [...] They'd pile them into the lorries. And you could hear them screaming! And you could hear the screams. My poor mother, she would scream louder than anyone else! (I5: 17–18).

3.2. Isolation and Loneliness in Old Age

The Spanish Civil War created a context of vulnerability during the childhood and, in all likelihood, the adolescence of many of these elderly people. As victims of this vulnerability, in the interviews they spoke of the sacrifice and suffering that surrounded them from a very young age and which, one way or another, had a profound impact on their existence. However, during this phase of their lives, they also see how new circumstances have appeared and how vulnerability preys on them once more. It does so by worsening their health, and the consequences that this has on their daily lives. In order to understand what they have to say, it is important to know that some of them have overcome serious illnesses like cancer, while others continue to fight them, all while living alone. This is what happened to Antonia, who is still suffering from the after-effects of the chemotherapy she has received:

I've got a problem with my throat, as now I'm asthmatic thanks to the chemo. So sometimes my voice goes. But thank God, it could be worse.

What illness do you have?

None any more! I did have cancer, lymphoma. I had it removed in 2011 and I had to go through three years of chemo. So obviously, so much chemo has left me with lots... lots of after-effects. The oncologist told me that it takes a long time to go. So I just have to put up with it (I68: 1).

Others have undergone complex operations or even had heart attacks while living alone. They usually stand by their decision to continue living independently, although they do transmit a certain concern that they may suffer a relapse. They spoke of how they learned to live with this handicap, simply put up with it, and they seem prepared to tackle any other setback that may arise with all their strength. Here is the case of Ricardo. He receives support from his only son, but he prefers to manage his *medication and medical conditions* himself, something that he has been doing of late:

So, because of the heart attacks I have to take a number of different pills: *Rami-pril*, *Cardyl 40*, *Adiro 100*, you see? And the drops, too. I have to administer them at different times throughout the day. I recently had an episode where I had blood in my urine, so I went to the care home and they probed me, because I have a blood problem—my body doesn't produce enough platelets or white blood cells, which is what caused the bleeding. So they prescribed me some pills, which they gave me at Virgen del Rocío pharmacy, as well as some injections, and they perform an

analysis every two or three months. My platelet count has already gone up and it seems to have stabilised, but, of course, when I don't have an analysis, I have a consultation, and when I don't have... So I have to follow this schedule... Hahaha. Instead of enjoying myself, I have to make sure I take my medicine and go to all my visits (I75: 3).

Even though they may not have suffered serious health problems, in reality there are plenty of elderly people whose lives are severely impacted by their physical weakness. This reduces their well-being, starting with the difficulties they have in their day-to-day lives doing the cleaning or shopping, preparing their meals and even staying on top of personal hygiene. They require instrumental support, which some receive from their family members, while others are forced to hire the services of someone to come to their home and help out for a few hours each week, as the public home care service is limited, as revealed by many of the interviewees. Among those is Juan, who has two daughters and three sons, but he does not want to move in with any of them or oblige them to care for him. At 92 years old, he is still fighting to remain in his home and retain his independence from his family:

I have my own home and, thanks to the Regional Government of Andalusia, I've got everything I need: I have telecare, a gas detector, another detector for smoke from fires... I've got it all. But I asked them to send someone to come and visit me... Now, a lady comes twice a week to clean my apartment, but I wanted... someone to perform odd jobs, so I asked for more hours... They gave me two hours, but the lady is only really here for one hour. The lady is always here around an hour, but she's really good to me. I asked them for more hours because of the loneliness and my old age, but they refused. They won't give me any more. So here we are (I40: 3).

Mobility problems and their consequences also bring with them additional vulnerability by limiting what a person can do outside the home. There are those who overcome their difficulties to move by using a walking stick or frame for support so that they can continue to go outside every day. Other people, on the other hand, are incapable of doing it on their own given their fragile state; they can only go out with the help of another person, with this seriously restricting their ability to socialise and see others face to face. These situations put them at an enormous risk of social isolation, as we have seen, particularly when they occur in urban settings. The next testimony to be examined belongs to Mercedes. She too lives alone, so the few times she ventures outside her home are when her daughter visits and decides to take her out for a walk around the neighbourhood:

I walk regularly.

And you use a walking stick?

Yes, now I do because I get tired quickly. It's like my whole body gets tired, and my body is very tired. Or maybe it's my heart or my knees, as I've had them operated on... But I've been very lucky, as I can still walk well with my knees. I had the operation a long time ago. In that regard, yes... No, I've been very lucky with my operations. I've already had four operations, so I say, "that's enough, isn't it?"

And do you go outside, Mercedes?

Yes, I go out with my daughter (I9: 8).

In this sense, not having children is a real handicap, given that it often greatly restricts the size of the older person's support network and their opportunities for socialising. In general, the most severe and prolonged cases of social isolation have been found to occur in those older people living alone who, in addition to having limited mobility, also lack family members. Emilio is one of these, and he only gets to go outside when a volunteer comes to help him on one of his (extremely rare) outings. He also receives home care but, as he explains, the short time the carers are with him is mainly spent performing household chores, meaning that they do not have enough time to do the shopping for him or take him for a walk:

If the man called Antonio comes, obviously I say to him, "hey, you have to take me out for a walk".

And that's once a week?

No, that's when he comes next time, next week!

But he only comes once a week. You go out once a week?

No, only when he wants to take me out. If he told me right now, "let's go out for a short walk", even if it's just around the block, so I say, "okay, let me put my trousers on", haha. Lately it's the volunteer who takes me out, and, logically, she can't take me out because... because she has to spend more time here than with me. Even she understands it, and she says, "I don't understand it, Antonio. I don't understand why you don't have more hours" (I85: 13).

This study highlights the fact that this is a generation that is in dire need of material support, both in the home and out. Some of them are lucky enough to have sons and daughters who live nearby, who are a source of daily help, but on the other end of the spectrum there are those who have no family members in the vicinity or, if they do have some, they are not able to provide assistance due to their work responsibilities, conflicts or any other reason. Perhaps these people are unable to contract someone to come and help them due to a lack of financial resources, so they are forced to get by on their own in their daily lives despite suffering from functional limitations, in some cases, as a result of an illness or even just their old age. It is not uncommon to encounter unmet needs in these cases. Alfredo perfectly illustrates this situation:

Let me tell you the truth: nobody comes to help me. Nobody helps me, and I don't have the money... I can't afford it.

You can't pay someone to come and clean for you?

Me? With the 600 euros I get? I wish. With my 600 euros... I can pay my monthly community fees, yes, but... I can't afford to, I just don't have enough money. Then I'd have to find a lady who'd charge ten euros an hour... Ten euros an hour, that's how much they charge! And then what happens is, if this lady comes every... twice a week? I'd have to give her 100 euros. I just can't. Can you see? (I74: 8-9).

In other words, the lack of financial resources further stresses the vulnerability of many elderly people who live alone. The risk of institutionalisation, on the other hand, is a real threat that is present as soon as their health worsens and they begin to require more help with household chores or personal care. Therefore, upon asking them, they view care homes as a future prospect in order to receive the care they need, even though this is far from their preferred option. However, it is also indicative that this feeling is shared by others who do have support from their families; when faced with the option of moving in with a son or daughter, some elderly people even consider moving into a care home when they can no longer look after themselves so as not to bother their children. Another contributing factor is the difficulty they believe they will have in receiving filial support when the time comes. This fear was shared by many of the interviewees, including Luisa, a mother of two:

I don't have any other options. I'll have to move into a care home!

You'll move into a care home?

Because they both work. Dear me, what can I say to them? There's no point saying anything as nobody knows what will happen. But my son works, his wife works... you think they'd be able to look after me? I don't know. Why bother saying anything when I don't know what will happen? And if not that, there's always a care home. But I won't say anything because who knows (I43: 8–9).

Finally, it is clear to see that a deterioration in health, social isolation and a lack of material and/or emotional support are all factors that trigger a feeling of loneliness among many elderly people who live alone. Add to this the mark usually left by widowhood, especially if it is recent and follows decades of being happily married. When several of these elements combine, the feeling of loneliness takes on an especially profound prevalence that is difficult to combat. Manuel, who was examined earlier, has been a widower for just over two years. Although he has several children, his main source of assistance comes from a home carer whom he has contracted (only one of his children lives nearby, and he does not provide him with much support). Furthermore, his social activity is limited by mobility problems. However, what most provokes a feeling of loneliness, he states, is the emptiness he sees in his home:

Loneliness? Terrible. Being alone is terrible. If you lived with someone else, even if it was the devil, you would still be together and be able to talk and do one thing or another. But on your own, who can you talk to? There's no-one to speak to. And being with someone else... even if it was someone horrible, you'd still be able to talk to them, ask them, "what are you doing? What have you got there? What hurts you?" But on your own, you've got no-one to talk to.

So how would you explain loneliness to those who haven't experienced it?

Terrible. Loneliness is terrible (I91: 13–14).

4. Discussion

On 24 February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine, triggering a war that we have been able to follow through the media. People have seen in detail how the cruelty of war and its atrocious consequences have affected the civilian population. It has left society *shell shocked* in one way or another. This conflict was happening while the fieldwork for this study was being carried out. In the context of this study, dozens of elderly people were interviewed who saw their childhoods turned upside down as a result of a similar event in a previous era: the Spanish Civil War. Many have spoken of the sacrifice and suffering that they experienced and the social vulnerability they were exposed to as they lost loved ones, struggled to find food and were forced to work from a very young age. Although the war made these people vulnerable in their childhood—and perhaps this is the message that they wanted to get across spontaneously in the interviews—many of these same people now feel vulnerable once again in their old age as a consequence of living alone.

Despite not all elderly people living in a situation of vulnerability, and not all of them experiencing poverty when they were younger, they have mostly indicated that they require a level of support in their daily lives, which they do not always receive. In fact, this study draws attention to the lack of instrumental care encountered by many older people who live alone in Spain, a circumstance that has already been documented in other countries, including the United States (Desai et al., 2001) and the United Kingdom (Vlachantoni, 2019). It affects them in their day-to-day lives, both in the home (performing household chores and/or personal care) and out (going outside for errands or socialising). Adverse family circumstances only increase the risk of this occurring, whether that is a lack of children (Larsson and Silverstein, 2004) or having family members who live far away. Although it has not been touched on here, it is impossible to deny the importance that conflicts with sons and daughters-in-law, and with daughters and sons-in-law can have on them.

In line with the observations of Park et al. (2017), this research has shown how health varies greatly from one elderly person to another. The study presented here uses an in-depth interview technique that has given access to some participants who are in a severe state of fragility, while others have given the impression of suffering from a certain level of cognitive impairment, perhaps mild dementia. This was to be expected, given that studies have informed of there being some older people living alone who suffer from dementia (Eichler et al., 2016), and that its worsening often leads to them being moved into a care home (Rongve et al., 2014). Regardless of their current health, physical or mental state, this study reveals that many older people consider institutionalisation as a future resource for covering possible care needs that they do not think can be taken on by their family. Although this is not the preferred option, it is still their number one prospect. It is likely that this is what actually occurs when the time comes, given the plethora of works that claim that living alone increases the probability of being admitted to a care home (Martikainen et al., 2009; Pimouguet et al., 2015).

In any case, the interviews underline that the family, particularly sons and daughters, continue to be the main source of support for elderly people. When distance allows, this support, mainly instrumental in nature, helps prevent the person from

being institutionalised, even in cases where the person has considerable functional limitations. This confirms the findings of previous studies on the importance of the family, as it facilitates the independence and autonomy of the elderly (López Doblas, 2005, 2018). However, the relevance of factors that make it difficult or impossible to maintain this level of support, especially their children's work obligations, have also been noted. This entails the risk of there being older people who live alone having unmet needs, particularly if they do not have the financial resources needed to contract private help. This is also suggested by Pickard (2015) and Durán (2018). In line with Allen et al. (2012) and Betini et al. (2017), it can currently be said that many older people do not rely on their family as their main source of support, but instead on the formal sector.

In addition, the research carried out here reveals that the feeling of loneliness is more prevalent among older people who live alone, something which has been upheld for years both in Spain (López Doblas, 2005; Gallo and Molina, 2015; López Doblas and Díaz Conde, 2018; Yanguas et al., 2020; San Martín and Jiménez, 2021; Lórente, Brotons and Sitges, 2022) and in other countries (Sundström et al., 2009; De Jong Gierveld, Dykstra and Schenk, 2012). Much less is known of the degree of social isolation that these people suffer, especially in Spain. Even though this issue has not been addressed in great depth in this article, the fieldwork has uncovered that it is a significant problem among the elderly who live alone, mainly as a result of their mobility limitations. One final aspect that is worth underscoring is that the COVID-19 pandemic is further deepening the issue of social isolation (and internal loneliness) in this segment of the population.

The main limitation of this work centres around the lack of quantitative information that delves further into this matter or that even corroborates the results obtained from the qualitative interviews. The next step would be to undertake surveys that address not only the feeling of loneliness among the elderly who live alone, which is already a known issue, but also additional problems that tend to affect them, such as social isolation, unmet needs and a lack of financial resources. On the other hand, the suggestion is that any further studies that are carried out, be they quantitative or qualitative, do not treat the elderly who live alone as a uniform collective; instead, they must be approached as a series of different profiles within the collective. The research presented here, for example, focused on the older population, as it is this group which suffers a greater risk of experiencing the situation of vulnerability described. Thus, importance was placed on the life experiences of these people, particularly the sacrifice and suffering that many of them endured during their childhood against a backdrop that only increased their vulnerability: the Spanish Civil War. Beyond merely discovering the degree to which each of the interviewees suffered as a result of the conflict, this study collects the testimony of the last generation to have witnessed it first hand as, in a few short years, there will be nobody left who lived through its horrors.

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ARTICLE/ARTÍCULO

How to Reconcile Work and Family Life Outside School Hours? Demands of Spanish Dual-Income Couples with Children

¿Cómo conciliar la vida familiar y laboral fuera del horario escolar? Demandas de las parejas españolas de doble ingreso con hijos

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Received/Recibido: 01/4/2022

Accepted/Aceptado: 21/2/2023



ABSTRACT

Balancing work and family life is one of the challenges faced by today's societies. Spain is characterised by a labour market with long working hours and a lack of family policies, which forces many couples to seek help from their network. This article presents the results of a qualitative study. Fifteen couples, in which both spouses work full time and live with children aged 3 to 15 years old, were asked what actions should be taken by public authorities and companies to facilitate reconciliation. Work flexibility, telework, direct financial support and greater availability of out-of-school-hours services, particularly during school holidays, are some of the most common demands. Finally, the degree of acceptance among parents of the promotion of community cooperation networks, such as time banks, to care for children is analysed. These networks could be built using pre-existing relationships both in educational centres and in neighbourhoods with the support of local authorities.

KEYWORDS: reconciliation; Mediterranean welfare model; time bank; out-of-school-hours services; family policies.

HOW TO REFERENCE: García-Faroldi, L. (2023). ¿Cómo conciliar la vida familiar y laboral fuera del horario escolar? Demandas de las parejas españolas de doble ingreso con hijos. *Revista Centra de Ciencias Sociales*, 2(1), 83-102. <https://doi.org/10.54790/rccs.21>

The Spanish (original) version can be read at <https://doi.org/10.54790/rccs.21>

RESUMEN

Conciliar la vida laboral y familiar es uno de los retos a los que se enfrentan las sociedades actuales. El caso español se caracteriza por un mercado de trabajo con largas jornadas laborales y una escasez de políticas familiares, lo que obliga a muchas parejas a buscar ayuda entre sus redes. En este trabajo se presentan los resultados de un estudio cualitativo, con entrevistas a quince parejas en que ambos cónyuges trabajan a tiempo completo y conviven con menores de 3 a 15 años, en las que se interroga por las medidas que se deben tomar para facilitar la conciliación. La flexibilidad laboral, el teletrabajo, las ayudas económicas directas y una mayor disponibilidad de servicios extraescolares, especialmente durante las vacaciones, son algunas de las demandas más mencionadas. Por último, se analiza el grado de aceptación entre los progenitores de fomentar redes de cooperación comunitarias, como los bancos de tiempo, para cuidar a menores, empleando para ello las relaciones ya existentes tanto en los centros educativos como en los vecindarios y con apoyo de las Administraciones locales.

PALABRAS CLAVE: conciliación; modelo de bienestar mediterráneo; bancos de tiempo; servicios extraescolares; políticas familiares.

1. Introduction

Reconciliation is one of the main worries for people who work and have children. According to data from the OECD (2019), among Spanish couples with children under the age of 14, the most common situation is that both parents work full time (43.8%), in 14.1% of cases, one partner works part time and the other, full time, and only 28.1% of couples have just one partner working full time¹. Balancing different areas of life is positively associated with life satisfaction in adulthood (Harr et al., 2014) and with satisfaction with family life (Miguel-Luken, 2019). Furthermore, the time that parents spend with their children affects the physical and emotional welfare and the academic performance of the latter (Martínez and de Andrés, 2011).

The conditions of the Spanish labour market, with long days and a lack of flexible working hours, make it more difficult to reconcile work and family life. Half of Spaniards indicate that they cannot adapt either their work start or end time to tend to family responsibilities (National Statistics Institute, *Instituto Nacional de Estadística*, INE, 2018). In 2022, according to data from the INE, around a quarter of people in employment between the ages of 25 and 54 work until late in the evening on more than half of the days while another quarter do so occasionally. Furthermore, public expenditure for childcare is lower than in other neighbouring countries. According to the OECD, in 2017 total public expenditure of GDP for families was 1.31% and for family cash benefits, 0.51%, both the lowest in the EU.

This predominantly empirical study addresses, firstly, the demands made to public authorities and private companies by heterosexual couples in which both partners work full time and who live with children. This topic has been touched on incidentally in previous studies; for example, when analysing the share of care and tasks between parents with young children (González and Jurado, 2015),

the preferences of the Spanish population as to whether it is the state or the family who should look after pre-school children (Valarino, Meil and Rogero-García, 2018), and the work-life reconciliation policies developed by Spanish companies (Abril et al., 2021). However, rarely has the question been posed directly to the affected parents; rather, it is more common to ask the general population. For example, the Fertility Survey by the INE (2018) questioned the incentives to increase birth rates, while the Andalusian Studies Centre (*Centro de Estudios Andaluces*, 2021) asked about the measures that must be driven by the government to facilitate reconciliation. Similar previous studies have been conducted in Galicia (Fraguela-Vale et al., 2013; Varela and Gradaílle, 2021), using a quantitative approach. However, there are few studies, particularly of a qualitative nature, on this subject in Andalusia. Furthermore, the fieldwork was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, a period which posed a significant challenge for Spanish families in terms of reconciling work and family life.

Secondly, this study explores these couples' acceptance of pioneering solutions to facilitate reconciliation, which are in line with the guidelines of the Strategic Plans for Equality recently approved by the Spanish National Government (2022–2025) and by the Regional Government of Andalusia (2022–2028) and which encourage alternative innovative policies linked to the new municipalism (Blanco, Gomá and Subirats, 2018).

2. Theoretical Framework

Spain has been grouped in the Mediterranean welfare model together with Italy, Greece and Portugal (Ferrera, 1996; Naldini, 2003)², which has three characteristic features: (i) high rates of structural unemployment and precarious jobs for young people and women, with marked regional differences; (ii) social policies that are focused more on families than on individuals and underdeveloped family policies; and (iii) a family culture with family-oriented values and great importance on intergenerational solidarity (Jurado Guerrero and Naldini, 1996). However, the recent evolution of three indicators (female employment, social policies and family values) has led some to question whether it follows this model (Arpino and Tavares, 2013; León and Migliavacca, 2013; Naldini and Jurado, 2013).

Firstly, female employment rates, particularly among younger, educated women, are similar to those in countries such as the United Kingdom and Germany, although they are still behind Scandinavian countries (León and Migliavacca, 2013). In 2021, for example, according to Eurostat data, the rate of employment of Spanish women aged between 25 and 54 years was 70.1%, while the EU average was 75.1%. The figure for Spain is higher than that for Greece (61.3%) and Italy (60.1%), however it is lower than the figure for Portugal (83.3%).

The lack of part-time work in the Spanish labour market, a trend seen in other Mediterranean countries, forces many mothers to choose between full-time work or family caregiving (García-Faroldi, 2020; Moreno Mínguez, 2010).

Furthermore, the quality of part-time employment tends to be worse (in terms of labour rights, stability and remuneration) than that of full-time employment, while the reduction of working hours in a full-time job tends to imply better working conditions (Fernández-Kranz, 2018). Domínguez-Folgueras, González and Lapuerta (2022) have revealed how salaries are negatively affected after taking parental leave or reducing working hours, with the former being more penalised than the latter³. The employment rate for Spanish mothers with children under the age of 14 (OECD, 2019) was 67.5% (the EU average was 73%), compared to 57.5% in Italy, 59.9% in Greece and 83.8% in Portugal. In terms of female employment, there is a growing divide between Spain and Portugal and Italy and Greece. In the case of Spain, the vast majority of these mothers worked full time (74.2%), with only a minority working part time (22.8%), with no information on the type of work contract for the remaining 3%.

Secondly, new policies have been developed since the start of the 21st century (Moreno and Marí-Klose, 2016). There are two significant measures in reconciling work and family life. The first, relevant due to its implications in increasing the co-responsibility of men, has been the gradual increase of paternity leave since 2017, finally equalling maternity leave in the year 2021 (16 weeks). Both forms of parental leave were replaced by “birth and childcare leave” in 2021⁴. In the rest of the Mediterranean countries, that equalisation has not occurred, with fully paid paternity leave ranging from 10 mandatory days in Italy to 20 mandatory days in Portugal. This commitment to the equalisation of leave separates Spain from the rest of the Mediterranean countries and has resulted in greater co-responsibility in physical child caregiving tasks (Romero-Balsas, 2022).

The second policy is the increase in the offer of nursery school places (both in public and public-subsidised schools) for children under the age of three. According to data from the Economic and Social Council (2016), enrolment of children aged one was 13.9% for the 2004–2005 academic year, and 27.9% for children aged two. In 2019, the figures had risen to 43.9% for the former and to 63.1% for the latter (INE). Even among children under the age of one, the rate increased from 9.7% in 2014 to 13.3% in 2019. If the enrolment of children in the 0–2 age group in Spain is compared with the rest of the Mediterranean countries, the figure in Spain is somewhat lower than that in Portugal (38.2% and 39.7%, respectively), but is higher than that in Greece (35.3%) and, especially, Italy (27.8%). Previous studies have shown the positive impact of the offer of daycare places: using them complements the reduction of working hours by mothers, while unpaid parental leave would be a strategy that replaces nursery school attendance (Romero-Balsas, Rogero-García and Meil, 2022).

Thirdly, there is an increase in egalitarian attitudes and a better balance in the division of domestic chores (Naldini and Jurado, 2013). Arpino and Tavares (2013) reveal how, in the decade of the 2000s, individualistic values and values related to gender equality grew substantially in Spain, above the other Mediterranean countries. This evolution of values has not, however, meant a drop in family

solidarity, especially if Spain is compared to other countries belonging to other welfare regimes (García-Faroldi, 2015). Greater co-responsibility between men and women is also noted in childcare and in domestic chores (Ayuso, 2019; González and Jurado, 2015). However, there are still substantial differences in the images associated with motherhood and fatherhood, as the father figure is mainly associated with the role of the breadwinner while the mother is assigned more diversified roles, particularly routine and care tasks (García-de-Diego and García-Faroldi, 2022).

The three aforementioned trends imply a shift away from the Mediterranean model, particularly Italy and Greece. Another characteristic of the Spanish labour market that affects the reconciliation of work and family life is associated with the long working hours and the lack of synchronisation with school start and end times. Split shifts with a lunch break lasting two hours or more are uncommon in the European environment and result in the working day ending later than in other countries. Split shifts are more common among men (45.6%) than women (32.6%) due to the latter searching, to a greater extent, for jobs with hours that enable childcare (*Closinggap*, 2019). Added to this is the desynchronisation of work and school calendars, with two and a half consecutive months of school holidays. In 2013 in Spain, a Subcommittee was created in the Congress of Deputies to study the Rationalisation of Work Schedules, the Reconciliation of Personal, Family and Working Life and Co-responsibility. Their report proposed that the latest end time—in general—should be 6 pm, as well as the shortening of lunch breaks. However, these proposals are yet to materialise in the legislation a decade later.

Despite long working hours, Spain is the OECD member country with the lowest percentage of children who make use of out-of-school-hours services, and the average weekly hours of the few that do make use of such services is lower. These services are defined as services that have an element of “care” and are not purely educational, spaces in which children can use the time to do schoolwork and/or participate in recreational activities⁵. In 2017, 5% of children aged between 6 and 14 years used a service of this kind, doing so for an average of 5.9 hours per week, compared to an average attendance of 28.3% in Europe, with some countries exceeding 60% (Denmark and Sweden) and with significantly higher figures in neighbouring Portugal (45.6%). These services facilitate the work-life balance of those parents who work; nevertheless, they have received little attention from the authorities (Plantenga and Remery, 2013).

All the commented features of the labour market and family policies in Spain underscore the complexity of reconciliation for parents with children, as well as the need to pay attention to the demands they make so as to be able to balance work and family life. This is precisely the objective of the first research question.

The second question posed by this study asks for these parents' opinion of an innovative care network approach that, emerging from the civil sphere with the support of public institutions, could aid in the reconciliation of work and family life⁶. These experiences are part of the community exchange system initiatives, favouring the reconstruction of community links and generating possibilities for autonomy for the civil society, promoting public welfare (Blanco, Gomá and Subirats, 2018; Subirats, 2005). Local authorities can promote such initiatives; in Catalonia and the Basque Country, for example, so-called "time banks" have been established in recent years, community social networks where services are exchanged such as childcare, although evaluations of the actual impact of these initiatives are scarce. There are also examples in Andalusia, such as the initiative by Málaga City Council. These kinds of initiatives are included in the recently approved Strategic Plan for the Equality of Women and Men in Andalusia (2022–2028), which states (p. 66 of the Spanish-language document):

Las Administraciones locales también juegan un papel decisivo en este ámbito [el reparto social de los cuidados], ya que su cercanía a los ciudadanos puede ser clave a la hora de desarrollar proyectos de cuidados innovadores, activando redes vecinales y comunitarias que promuevan la participación y la activación de nuevos servicios y recursos de proximidad para apoyar la conciliación (Local authorities also play a decisive role in this area [the social distribution of care], as their proximity to citizens can be key to developing innovative care projects, activating neighbourhood and community networks that promote participation and the activation of new community services and resources to assist the reconciliation of work and family life).

3. Methodology and Data Source

The results presented here form part of the project "Reconciling in the schoolyard: Collaboration strategies for the care of children of working Andalusian couples", funded by the Andalusian Studies Centre (PRY121/19); the main findings of this project can be consulted in García Faroldi (2023). The main aim of this project is to analyse the role of non-family childcare support networks. Previous studies have shown the important role that family plays, particularly grandparents, so that working couples in Andalusia (and Spain) can balance work and family life (Tobío, 2005; Tobío and Fernández Cordon, 2013). However, other non-family members may also play an important role, especially when family members are not available (Meil, 2011).

In line with the research questions raised in the previous section, the first general objective aims to understand the demands in order to improve the work-life balance of dual-income couples with dependent children. Three more specific objectives are derived from this general objective: (1.1) to understand the demands made to companies; (1.2) to understand the demands made to public authorities; (1.3) to analyse whether there are differences in the demands, as a result of differing circumstances in terms of work and family (age of the children). The second general objective (2) aims to understand the opinion of

parents on community initiatives such as time banks to promote reconciliation. A specific objective is to discover the main difficulties that initiatives of this kind would face (2.1).

The semi-structured script included open questions so as not to condition the kinds of measures that could be mentioned by the members of the couple, who were interviewed together for this part. They were asked two specific questions: *What measures do you think would have made the work-life balance easier when your children were younger? What measures would aid this balance today?* Subsequently, to respond to the second research question, the couples were asked for their opinion of time banks as an initiative to facilitate the work-life balance.

Following a pilot study with three couples in the researcher's circle, a specialised company contacted twelve unknown couples by telephone who met the following three criteria: 1) they work full time; 2) they live with children between the ages of 3 and 15 years (although they could have other children outside this age range); and 3) they live in Málaga province⁷. These criteria are justified because the study objective was to analyse the reconciliation issues of couples who have greater demands in terms of work (both partners work full time) and family (they have highly dependent children). Lastly, the reason for the geographic criterion was that it was an individual project lasting only a few months, which prevented the fieldwork from being extended to several provinces. Furthermore, being an individual project also limited the number of interviews that could be carried out by a single person. Despite this, with the fifteen couples studied (30 interviews) theoretical saturation was achieved, and the research questions were answered.

As regards the analysis of the interviews conducted, a thematic analysis strategy was employed. Throughout the interviews, in addition to recording the audio, notes were taken by hand of the most recurrent main ideas and narratives that emerged. After the contracted company made all the transcriptions, all the interviews were read to compare them with the notes taken. Finally, with the help of the program ATLAS.ti, the main themes and concepts covered in the interviews were identified.

The interviews (11 in-person and 4 online) were carried out between September and November 2020. The profile of the couples interviewed is diverse in terms of their age, level of studies, type of employment, and number and age of children (Table 1)⁸. As will be seen in the Results section, the measures proposed differ according to these variables. To maintain anonymity, in the verbatim transcriptions the first initial indicates whether the interviewee is male (M) or female (F), followed by their initial(s) and age.

Table 1*Characteristics of the interviewees (n=30)*

	%
Age of the couple	
30 to 40 years	36.6
41 to 50 years	63.4
Educational attainment	
Low (primary education, compulsory secondary education)	23.4
Medium (upper secondary education, incomplete university education)	40
High (university education)	36.6
Work activity	
Public sector employee	30
Private sector employee	56.7
Self-employed	13.3
Number of children aged 3–15 of each couple interviewed	
1	26.7
2	60
3	13.3
Distribution of the age of the children (total of couples interviewed)	
3–5	32.1
6–11	53.6
12–15	14.3

Source: own research.

4. Results

This section shows the measures that would have proven more useful for these couples in terms of reconciling their work and family life when their children were born and those measures that could currently be of help. The demands made to companies will be looked at first, before turning to those made to public institutions (Table 2). Lastly, the degree of acceptance that time banks, as a community initiative, could have to facilitate reconciliation is analysed.

Table 2*Demands to balance work and family schedules*

Demands made to companies	Demands made to public institutions
Flexible working hours	Direct financial support More daycare places that are also less expensive
Telework	Increased duration of parental leave
Rationalisation of working hours	Public offer of camps during school holidays
Priority to choose holidays	Introduce parental leave of absence during school holidays and in the event of illness
Flexible working hours during school holidays and in the event of illness	Expand reconciliation measures from 12 years to 14 years School meals in secondary education centres

4.1. Demands Made to Companies

As regards the measures that can be taken by companies, flexible working hours are mentioned most frequently, so that parents can balance their working hours around school start and end times. Split shifts are the subject of particular criticism due to the length of the working day.

M-J48: Split shifts shouldn't be allowed by law [...] it's impossible to achieve a work-life balance with split shifts.

M-P50: Working hours often aren't tailored to children's schedules, because of course, a child starts school at 9 in the morning... Tell me a job where you can start at 9 in the morning! And then...

F-A48: Well, I start at 9 am.

M-P50: And then tell me a job where you can leave at 1:30 pm to be able to pick them up at 2 pm.

However, some interviewees recognise that flexible working hours is not the solution in their case, such as M-P50, employed as a haulier.

M-P50: I'm going to be straight with you: my job is a real pain in the ass, because we start early and we normally end late... it's not a timetable that lets you say, "I can divide it into two shifts", in other words, when we go out delivering, for example, you go out to make your deliveries and you haven't finished until you've delivered to the last customer.

Another of the measures that was mentioned most often is the rationalisation of working hours so that they are shorter.

F-A37: Reducing the working day is important, it would be elementary, plus I don't think you can work so many hours in certain jobs, you perform better when you work fewer hours, that's for sure [...].

M-L50: With the hours they set, that we have and so on... it's complicated. No... being able to finish earlier isn't prioritised...

The reduction of the working day is particularly mentioned by younger couples with a higher level of education, as some of them have had experience working abroad or know people living in other countries.

M-JA41: We lived in England for a time, and you know what, apart from the catering industry, shopping centres usually close at 5 pm and libraries close at 5 pm.

In some cases, the interviewees mention the possibility of not attending the workplace in person some of the working week, particularly when, during term time, there is a day without school. This is particularly the case for service sector workers who can meet the public's needs online. Once again, there is awareness that not all jobs can opt for these kinds of solutions.

M-JA41: The possibility of offering a day as a one-off, as I was saying, I have to work and my son goes to school, that day is a scheduled school holiday [...] well, that day, as I said, if they're not going to give you leave, they could at least let you work from home where possible, of course, but it isn't applicable to all jobs either.

F-A37: If you're a supermarket cashier, you can't.

M-JA41: Exactly, if you work as... if you're a haulier, you're employed to stack shelves... right?

4.2. Demands Made to Public Institutions

The demand for paid parental leave, especially maternity leave, to be prolonged for several months emerges in several interviews.

F-M48: Well, ideally... like in other countries perhaps, they say that mothers in other countries can stay at home for I don't know how long, one or two years, right? And... so as not to lose out financially... there's the possibility of receiving some kind of contribution during the first years of the child's life, until the child at least starts school.

One of the reasons behind this demand is the defence of breastfeeding, which is interrupted, at least partially, on the mother returning to work.

F-C39: You breastfeed your child for 6 months, you don't breastfeed for 16 weeks with your breasts like this... I was lucky, well, lucky and unlucky, because I lost my job when I had my children [...] I was able to breastfeed them, I could be at home, I could... Obviously it affected me financially and he had to work a lot more hours.

Another of the reasons for increasing the duration of parental leave is infants' vulnerability to illness, to which they are exposed in daycare.

M-F40: Institutions and the government should encourage you to spend time with your child during the first year of their life, because a child of that age is very vulnerable.

Some mothers with more stable jobs chose to make a financial and professional sacrifice to be able to spend longer with their babies. This is the case of F-Y43, employed in the public education sector in Andalusia.

F-Y43: When I had my daughter, my first child, I was eager to spend more time with her when she was still very young and I just wish I'd had the financial help to have been able to do so, but instead, I had to request a reduction of hours, earning less money to be able to be with my daughter.

In the case of one self-employed couple, their young children were able to be looked after in the business for a few months, but they demand more public daycare places at more affordable prices.

F-L43: Well, to start, when they're younger, daycare costs a fortune [...] I had my elder son in the shop with me for a long time because he was very well behaved [...] and it was going okay, but there came a time when I couldn't cope with both the shop and my son and so I had to find daycare as a matter

of urgency, but it wasn't what I'd planned. There wasn't one at first, and then when you find one... well, half of your salary goes on daycare, and when I was able to transfer him to a public-subsidised one, there were also meals, because of the schedule, the meals were also... that is to say, in terms of help, there is more daycare that is also cheaper.

The reduction of working hours (unpaid) permitted by law is not usually considered an option due to the loss of income it entails. Furthermore, this option is frowned upon by private company workers, to the point of jeopardising a parent's own position.

M-F40: A measure that I don't consider... which the public authorities don't handle well in this case, is... for example, how they reduce my salary a lot for two hours of work. So, I say, "come on, I don't need to earn more money, I'm going to rethink... one hour or two..." they take a lot of money from me, it's not cost-effective.

F-C39: Or at least for them to give you... for example, less hours, less hours, reduced hours, but not the feeling that you're going to lose your job.

One of the fathers interviewed, a local police official, reduced his working day by two hours when his daughters were young to be able to coordinate his schedule with that of his wife. However, the experience was not a positive one, given that he was not met with a lot of understanding in his work environment.

M-J48: When I had a reduction of two hours... I arrived at around five o'clock and they gave me the first thing that came in, "of course, you've just come from..."

F-ME47: From touching yourself...

M-J48: As if I'd got back from... from holiday or from a trip to the Caribbean. In that time, well, in these two hours, while you've been here having a coffee, for example, I've been getting lunch ready for my girls, tidying the kitchen...

Many couples mention direct financial support as a necessary measure. At times, there is the complaint that the 100-euro allowance for children under the age of 3 years is only allocated to working mothers, and they claim that it should be universal.

M-F40: Yes, well, the baby allowance is great, because the truth is they start by... by giving you, I don't know, say 2,500 euros, which I think was the amount in that case, which is actually a pretty big contribution. Eh... and they should help... for example, they should help independently of the household income, whether the woman, for example, wants to be around... well, that year... they help the household with 120 euros or... because in this case they only help working mothers, it's funny, they help working mothers who are working, but they don't help those who aren't financially.

F-I38: That's it, it's something that really angered me because of course I wasn't working when I had [daughter's name] and that would have really helped me, well... as you know, some vaccines aren't funded and... and I was pissed off, I used to say, "let's see, why do they give money to people who are working, while those of us who don't work because we can't, because we haven't... we haven't had the opportunity to work, why don't we receive any help?"

A distinctive narrative is also detected in the case of the self-employed, who are unhappy with the criteria of the scales to receive aid or access school meals. This is the case of couple M-A44 and F-L43, who own a bar in the historic heart of Málaga.

M-A44: Because we're self-employed, we have less... and seeing as both of us work, we both make social security contributions... and when it comes to filing our tax returns and presenting documentation, we're both working individuals and we're supposed to be able to pay whatever the government wants.

F-L43: What's more, I don't know, in the scoring of schools and that, for example, I see it the other way around, as in you're penalised if you both work... as if it's worse, and parents who don't work receive more aid and that.

4.3. Critical Moments for Reconciling Work and Family Life

There are two moments when parents find it most difficult to care for their children: during school holidays and when they are ill, a pattern that has existed for decades (Tobío, 2005). In terms of the former, there is a call for a greater offer of school camps, adapted for younger children (under the age of 6), with longer schedules that cover lunchtime and at more affordable prices. In the absence of an appropriate offer of camps, the family network becomes essential for childcare.

F-L43: I think it would be good if there were more holiday camps that were better and more varied during Easter, half term, summer... when we parents have to work and it's a long time to leave them with their grandparents. There are currently very few, I think they're poor quality or the price is astronomical.

F-E35: I also think, for example, that summer, or rather, summer... well, children finish at the end of June, so you have July and August, for example, if you want to send your child to a camp, which isn't subsidised, nor are there free camps, and if the council does run camps, the places are limited, so what do I do with my child the entire summer? Because it's a big cost. Thank God if you have family you can rely on, they have to swallow it, but of course... you make your family... have to limit their summer because they have to stay with your children.

M-A44: Summer camps [...] don't solve anything either because the day ends at maybe 1 or 2 pm... What's on offer doesn't provide us with a solution.

Even for couples where either one or both partners are self-employed and they have certain flexibility when it comes to adapting their hours or closing their business during these periods, school holidays are too long and several strategies have to be combined. This is the case of the self-employed couple discussed previously.

M-A44: Well, we have to rely on the grandparents come what may, there's no other option. (Partner's name) can maybe get away at certain times, but... summer is... the big unknown. In fact, we close... being in the historical centre and being in a tourist area, we close for all of July, which is unthinkable, but we have to.

Another measure proposed to improve reconciliation is a regulation enabling one of the two parents to adapt their working hours or request specific leave during school holidays. In some narratives, the possibility is raised of people with children having priority when it comes to choosing holidays in the workplace.

F-M48: Today... for example... when it comes to choosing holidays... I, for example, don't have priority because I have children when choosing my holidays in periods in which the children don't have school, I can't, I have to reach an agreement with my colleagues.

M-JA41: A formula needs to be found so that those parents or at least one of them could be at home with a kind of special leave. There needs to be regulation of that kind.

Days on which children are ill make reconciliation very difficult. The interviewees demand greater flexibility at work to be able to care for them or the possibility of taking caregiving leave, without it entailing a financial cost for the family.

F-E35: That doesn't happen, them facilitating it, and I often say, "dude, employers are fathers and mothers, they have to understand, right?" Your child can get sick, they can wake up the morning after a rough night, and you've had to spend the entire night with them [...] It's complicated, it's also complicated because the state doesn't give you the option of saying, "well, count it is a sick day and the state pays your company for that day, so that the company doesn't lose out either".

F-M47: Time availability... when it comes to children's illnesses, it's a problem every time your child gets sick [...]. With justification, of course.

Several couples have children in secondary education, and their narrative differs from that of parents with younger children. These parents demand that the measures in place for children in nursery and primary education be extended to secondary education, at least while education is compulsory.

F-ME47: Yes, for example, I think it's really bad how the option of reduced hours ends when they're 12 years old. Just look at where we live! Do you think my daughters can go to school on their own? They can't because a heavy backpack with those hills... [...] I'd also give the option of school meals at secondary education centres, but that's going to be impossible.

Another measure that would facilitate the work-life balance is if these centres offered school meals, just as many primary schools do. According to data from the Spanish Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, only one in ten children who study compulsory secondary education have school meals, compared to nearly half of primary school pupils (2020–2021 academic year).

F-M47: The state secondary school that my son goes to doesn't offer meals, that's appalling.

4.4. Valuation of Time Banks as a Strategy for Reconciliation

In the interviews performed, a section was dedicated to asking about time banks. The majority of the couples had not heard about this initiative. After explaining the concept to those who were not familiar with it, the valuations were generally positive, despite not being mainly linked to a method for facilitating reconciliation, but rather to a more general exchange.

M-J48: Yes, of course, it could help if... for example, you have neighbours who are unemployed and they can be in charge of picking the children up from school or... even feeding them and reaching an agreement with the person needed.

M-R47: Very good, very good, it's what's needed, especially now that there's such little work and people aren't well off, someone to help you... as you say, who knows about computers or who knows English or another language...

One of the most positive aspects of time banks is the possibility of children taking part in activities that the parents cannot afford.

M-JA41: Well, the truth is it could be interesting... in some respects, right? It's like you say, "I can't..." or "I just can't", "I'd like my child to take... ballet classes, or to do such and such", but I can't... I can't afford to pay for an extracurricular activity. That said... in exchange for my child going to that kind of activity, I can then do another one another day so that others can take their children to learn English [...]. At the end of the day, it's a way, well, for children to be somewhere where they're going to be looked after, they're going to learn something, they're going to do something entertaining...

M-L50: Yes, the chain of favours, right? [...] I get that there are people who due to their working hours or... without a job can't aspire to certain services and well, they can help each other out.

M-P50: I think it [the initiative] is quite interesting, it's something that I'd have to look into and that, but it sounds quite good. And I understand that there may be a lot of people, well, who... either don't have the resources or don't have the time to do certain things and look, if there's something that someone can help you out with in some way, well I think it's good.

While the feedback about this initiative is generally positive, there is mistrust among some of the interviewees about leaving their children with strangers.

M-C42: Yes, leaving my children with someone I don't know and that... I don't know, I'm not... and so young, that's not for me.

M-M32: Let's see, I think it's very good [...] Well, I think for the children's sake I'd find it hard to say, "look, come to my house for two hours".

The most common drawback mentioned by the interviewees is the lack of time to be able to participate in the exchange, offering services to other people in exchange for childcare or giving classes out of school hours.

M-AJ31: Yes, I could do it if I had the time, the problem is that this year I'm going to be... I don't even think about anything else because I have to study in the morning, train in the afternoon and play at the weekend...

F-M48: But in my case, I don't think I'd be able to do much... and mostly because I can't offer time, that's my problem... I can't just ask and not give!

5. Conclusions

Throughout this empirical study, the main measures that working couples with young children propose in order to better balance their work and family responsibilities have been described, thus meeting the first objective. Spain stands out in the EU community (Eurobarometer 470, 2018) as one of the countries with a lower percentage of people satisfied with their work and personal life (66% compared to an average of 78%). Some of the measures called for include responsibility mainly of companies (specific goal 1.1), especially flexible working hours, a measure mentioned by 53% of Europeans and by 71% of Spaniards (*ibid.*). Working hours are even less flexible in Andalusia than in the rest of Spain. According to data from the INE (2018), in Andalusia only 40.5% of employees can modify the start or end time of their working day to assume childcare responsibilities (the Spanish average is 46%) and it is impossible for 54% to do so (compared to the national average of 50%), while 5% of the people surveyed did not answer the question. Recent reforms in this area (Spanish Royal Decree-Law 6/2019) cover the right of working people to request flexible working hours for reconciliation purposes.

Another of the demands companies receive most in the aftermath of the experience of the pandemic and lockdown is the possibility of telework for at least a few days, an aspect that is also contemplated in the new wording of Section 34.8 of the Spanish Workers' Statute and which is regulated in the Spanish Telework Legislation, approved in July 2021. Given the short time that has elapsed between the approval of said measures and the fieldwork conducted (one year), it has not been possible to analyse whether these reforms have improved couples' work-life reconciliation strategies; thus, future studies on this subject are required. These qualitative results are in line with the findings of recent surveys of the Andalusian population (*Centro de Estudios Andaluces* [Andalusian Studies Centre], 2021).

There is a call to public authorities (specific goal 1.2) to extend parental leave, to provide more direct financial support and, in particular, to regulate leave to care for children in the event of illness. Spain's Family Law, the draft of which was approved by the Council of Ministers in 2023, transposes the measures covered in Directive (EU) 2019/1158 and introduces a new right to absence from work for five working days a year so that working people can provide personal care or assistance to a family member, in addition to the four days of *force majeure* leave, both of which are paid. An eight-week parental leave will also be granted,

which can be taken continuously or discontinuously, until the child reaches the age of 8, and which, according to the directive, must be paid before August 2024. Lastly, in the General State Budget for 2023, the 100-euro monthly allowance for working mothers with children under the age of 3 is to be extended to people who are or have been registered under the Spanish social security system or mutual benefit scheme for 30 days or who have received a contributory benefit or allowance from the unemployment protection scheme, a measure which will also be incorporated in the future Family Law. In the coming years, an analysis should be carried out as to whether these measures, designed to facilitate reconciliation and co-responsibility in caregiving, meet their objectives.

The narratives analysed reveal some differences according to the type of occupation and the age of the children (objective 1.3). Flexible working hours, for example, is not a feasible measure in sectors such as transport, while telework is mentioned by people employed in customer services. Working in the public or private sector also entails differences, given that the reduction of hours is seen as a threat to the continuity of employment for private sector employees. Lastly, the self-employed call for a new way of assessing access to public aid and services, as they consider the current criteria to be detrimental to them. As regards the differences according to family situation, parents with children aged 12 and over ask that regulations on length and distribution of the working day be extended to include children of an older age (measure covered in the draft of Spain's Family Law) and that meals be offered in secondary schools.

In terms of the second general objective, Andalusian couples are seen to have a positive opinion about time banks as instruments for achieving a better work-life balance. Innovative measures are required to promote reconciliation and to promote actions that encourage a redistribution of care work, with co-responsibility between public and private authorities and the general public, as set out in both the Strategic Plan by the Regional Government of Andalusia (2022–2028) and the Third Strategic Plan (2022–2025) approved by the Spanish government. International experience shows that out-of-school-hours services can be implemented with the collaboration of schools and cultural and sports centres, accepting not only nursery and primary school pupils, but also secondary education students, young adolescents who, although they have more autonomy than the rest, also require care while their parents work and whose needs are often neglected by public authorities (Plantenga and Remery, 2013).

With regard to the challenges to implement such measures (specific objective 2.1.), to dispel possible misgivings around leaving children with strangers, it is worth taking advantage of pre-existing friendship and collaboration networks that are formed in settings such as school centres or neighbour associations to promote these collaboration networks to help reconcile work and family life, channelling the organisation of these initiatives through local public authorities, which can also offer free spaces to offer activities that children can participate in.

6. Funding

This study was funded by the Andalusian Studies Centre as part of the 11th call for research projects (PRY121/19).

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Notes

1 5.4% of couples are made up of partners who do not work and 8.6% are in other situations.

2 Esping-Andersen (1990) classifies these countries within the conservative or corporatist regime, however several authors have proposed differentiating a Mediterranean regime with characteristics that differentiate it from continental European regimes, represented by countries such as Germany and Austria.

3 Spanish legislation (Article 34.8 Spanish Workers' Statute) sets out that working people can request to adapt their hours and length of their working day, including remote working, in order to be able to reconcile work and family life. The reduction of hours ranges from one eighth to half of the working week until the child's twelfth birthday, with a proportional reduction of income and payment of social security contributions, with full contributions considered to have been made. On the other hand, unpaid parental leave can be requested until the child is 3 years old, with social security contributions and the ability to return to the same post for the first year.

4 The law establishes that the first 6 weeks are compulsory, while the other 10 can either be enjoyed before the child's first birthday or the right can be waived. It is a non-transferable right. A contribution of 180 days in the previous 7 years or 360 days over the course of the working life is required, which is reduced to half if aged between 21 and 26 years, with this requirement being removed for those under the age of 21. In all cases they must be registered and affiliated or in an equivalent position.

5 The OECD notes that the definitions of these services can vary between countries and therefore comparability may be limited. These services are usually public and often use school facilities, but there is a wide array of situations. Escobedo and Escapa (2014) point out the methodological problems for Spain both in terms of data collection and the definition of these services.

6 Escobedo and Escapa (2014) have analysed the role that associations of mothers and fathers play in Catalonia to offer different kinds of services, including childcare, although they detect significant differences depending on the socioeconomic status of the families.

7 There were only two cases in which the couples had a child under the age of 3, and in no case did they have children over the age of 15 years.

8 It is a qualitative sample, and finding comparable data for the general Andalusian population is complex. According to data from the LFS from the last quarter of 2020, among the employed, 17.8% were self-employed and 19% were public sector employees, with the remainder being private sector employees. On the other hand, the age of the parents coincides with the time at which they have children in Andalusia, with an under-representation of children aged between 12 and 15 years old in the sample with respect to the child population, due to their greater autonomy, which facilitates their parents' work-life balance.

ARTICLE/ARTÍCULO

Dissemination on YouTube: Strengths and Weaknesses in the Field of Sociology

Divulgar en YouTube: fortalezas y debilidades en el campo de la sociología

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Received/Recibido: 17/11/2022

Accepted/Aceptado: 11/04/2023



ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to identify strengths and weaknesses to improve the dissemination of sociology. Content from two sources of information was therefore analysed: firstly, six sociology videos hosted on the digital platform YouTube, taking into account the format and type of message or messages they disseminate, the target audience, main speakers, comments and subscriptions, as well as image, sound and editing quality. Secondly, eight semi-structured interviews were conducted online with experts with different professional profiles and fields of activity, whose specialisation and experience prove particularly effective for improving dissemination strategies in the field of sociology. The results show the importance of the communication skills of those who appear in the videos to disseminate the sociological message, as well as the lack of specialisation for the dissemination of social sciences, in general, and sociology, in particular.

KEYWORDS: YouTube; sociology; dissemination; videos; interviews.

HOW TO REFERENCE: Quesada Cubo, M. Á. and Navarro Ardoy, L. (2023). Divulgar en YouTube: fortalezas y debilidades en el campo de la sociología. *Revista Centra de Ciencias Sociales*, 2(1), 103-122. <https://doi.org/10.54790/rccs.45>

La versión (original) en castellano puede leerse en <https://doi.org/10.54790/rccs.45>

RESUMEN

El objetivo de este trabajo es identificar fortalezas y debilidades para mejorar la divulgación de la sociología. Para ello, se realiza un análisis del contenido procedente de dos fuentes de información: por un lado, seis vídeos de sociología alojados en la plataforma digital YouTube, atendiendo al formato y tipo de mensaje o mensajes que difunden, público objetivo, protagonistas, comentarios, suscripciones y calidad de las imágenes, sonido y edición; por otro lado, ocho entrevistas semiestructuradas realizadas *online* a personas expertas de diferentes perfiles profesionales y ámbitos de actuación, cuya especialización y experiencia resultan especialmente eficaces para mejorar las estrategias de divulgación en el campo de la sociología. Los resultados evidencian la importancia que tienen las habilidades de comunicación de quienes aparecen en los vídeos para difundir el mensaje sociológico y la falta de especialización para la divulgación de las ciencias sociales en general y de la sociología en particular.

PALABRAS CLAVE: YouTube; sociología; divulgación; vídeos; entrevistas.

1. Introduction

At present, the visibility of sociology remains low compared to other disciplines of pure science. Not only is this a pending task for sociology (and also for other social sciences), but even more so for a discipline in which, surprisingly, much of the communicative effort is made in specialised scientific environments and, therefore, is of a restricted nature (Navarro, 2019).

These are historic times in which there has been a generalisation of words such as “post-truth” (“*posverdad*”, Gualda and Rúas, 2019), related to the sociological concept of ideology, indicating how, culturally speaking, the notion of objective truth is in crisis. Although it is true that strict objectivity is problematic, since there are always different points of view and nuances about social facts, this does not mean to say that all explanations of reality are equally plausible or that they explain the facts to the same extent. Despite the difficulties, social sciences aim to analyse social reality, taking into account the different points of view involved. In these times of “post-truth” or the questioning of science (as seen in several denial movements related to the pandemic, the social crisis as a result of climate change, gender-based violence, social inequality, genocide, etc.), it is now more necessary than ever to establish successful practices that improve the dissemination and understanding of scientific content in general.

Videos have become one of the most important channels for disseminating and consuming all kinds of information, increasing their potential due to the ease of sharing them on the internet via social media (Gértrudix et al., 2017). As Mayer (2005) points out, they enable content to be acquired effectively by combining visual and auditory information, in a unique presentation format. Muñoz et al. (2016, p. 1) define scientific dissemination videos on the internet as popular scientific audiovisual media that focus on communicating scientific content to a large audience.

According to the Digital 2022 Global Overview Report by the agencies We Are Social and Hootsuite, of the 4.95 billion internet users in 2021 (62.5% of the world

population), 91.9% watched video content. That same year, the average daily time that the 2.56 billion YouTube users spent on the digital platform was 47 minutes. In Spain, according to the latest available data, 31.5 million people used the platform each month in 2019 (72% of the total Spanish internet users), and it was the fourth most visited website and the most visited entertainment website (Vela, 2019). YouTube is one of the biggest sites on the internet for promotion and communication which, among other services, provides access channels and free maintenance, as well as acting as a social network that connects the user group (Zaragoza and Roca, 2020). Platform users can consume different products (video clips, conferences, monologues, tutorial videos, cultural critiques, entertainment, etc.), produce content and set up communication channels (Regner, 2021; Regalado, 2019).

Looking at IAB Spain's "*Estudio Anual de Redes Sociales 2020*" (Annual Social Network Study 2020), the cross-cutting nature that is characteristic of YouTube makes it one of the most used social networks by Generation Z and Millennials in Spain; it is among the five most popular social networks and, together with WhatsApp, is the most valued by the audience, as well as being the third social network on which users spend the most time. According to Bautista et al. (2019), this platform enables and expands the limits of conception of open science and facilitates the acquisition of the ability to apply scientific reasoning.

The potential of YouTube has presented a window of opportunity for academic institutions and scientific societies to host videos to both promote their educational and academic offer and communicate research results to a large audience. Despite the importance given to these strategies for communicating and transferring knowledge, in Spain there is a significant lack of research into their use by sociology and, consequently, there is little evidence to guide the effective use of videos to transmit sociological messages and to understand how to make better use of them for effective communication (Roislien et al., 2022). Some recent studies analyse the role of sociology in the media (Navarro et al., 2022), while others reflect on transfer activities during the professional career (Fernández and Espinosa, 2021). The former reveals a tenuous link between the media presence of sociology and study results or sociological reports, and when these are cited it is due to the initiative of the professionals involved in the medium, rather than that of journalists; that sociology is visible in the media, especially on questions related to politics and sociocultural or religious factors; and that the presence of male sociologists is far greater than that of their female counterparts. The latter reveals that transfer activities are conditioned by the professional career. Trainees must concentrate on building an academic professional reputation, where it is hard to assess transfer activities in evaluations and credentials. In more advanced stages of the profession, these activities are carried out to complement academic research. Generally, participation increases with the level of experience and professional category.

The aim of this study is to identify strengths and weaknesses to improve dissemination in the field of sociology using two sources of information: the content analysis, firstly, of six sociology videos hosted on the digital platform YouTube, and secondly, of eight

semi-structured interviews conducted online with experts with different professional profiles and areas of activity. The analytical contribution involves exploring channels through which sociological content reaches the audience to address the challenges of designing more efficient communication actions and encouraging a meeting point between the scientific community and the general public. Based on these analyses, it is possible to discuss the dynamics of communication more precisely and to obtain recommendations for people interested in the public communication of science. Furthermore, the method enables it to be replicated in other contexts and other branches of knowledge.

This article is divided into five sections. In the following section, based on the existing literature, the object of study is contextualised with references to scientific dissemination in general and to the use of videos in particular in a new online setting. The third section describes the methodology and data sources used. The fourth section presents the results obtained following the analysis of the six videos (4.1) and the eight interviews (4.2). Finally, the main findings and limitations of the data used are summarised.

2. Scientific Dissemination and the New Digital Media

Scientific dissemination is the process through which knowledge, findings or results of research are communicated to the general public, with the twofold objective of raising people's awareness and improving the visibility and recognition of the academic community and research centres (Instituto de Investigación en Recursos Cinegéticos, 2020). While spreading knowledge involves communicating findings to the scientific community, dissemination aims to bring the findings closer to anyone who wants to know about them. Citing Calvo (2006), dissemination comes about when the communication of a scientific fact is no longer exclusively reserved for members of the research community or minorities who control power, culture or the economy. By means of dissemination, accumulated resources can be returned to society in its broadest sense and, at the same time, interact with it (Harp and Mayer, 1998; Burns et al., 2003). Put more simply, there is no science without communication of science (San Martín, 2015, p. 118).

Although it is a hallmark, the first stage that all dissemination activity requires is adapting the complex terms and concepts to a simple, accessible language. That is, the action must not be embellished with more jargon or words than necessary, nor with long sentences, nor devices that make it obscure or unintelligible (Simón, 2018, p. 9). If it shines, or so that it shines, let it be for its innovative content and, if possible, let it be the latter that makes it pleasing (Belenguer, 2003; Calvo, 2006; Quiñónez, 2011). Scientific dissemination requires a second adaptation process that involves deciding which format to use to share the content, as doing so in the media is not the same as in informative videos, on social networks or at educational events and science fairs.

Prior to the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus pandemic, science had never been more prolific nor more high-profile on social networks. The pandemic not only changed science, but also how we share it. In the space of months, the number of people who informed

about the pandemic rocketed on WhatsApp, blogs, Twitter and YouTube (Plaza, 2021). As noted by Miró and Gómez (2020), one of the positive outcomes of the pandemic is the opportunity to understand the importance of science developing and circulating and of its impact and understanding reaching as many people as possible.

The media have not been oblivious to this trend and, nowadays, scientific journalism occupies a prominent place (López, 2020). Something similar has happened on the academic side: the vision that was dominant a decade ago with academics disinterested in dissemination, guided by not receiving anything in return in curricular terms, has turned 180 degrees to be associated with those who do take an interest in it (Donovan, 2008; Flecha and Soler, 2014). As noted by Navarro (2019), if the dissemination of science is fashionable it is because, in the majority of the calls that finance research projects, dissemination actions to generate social impact now count, and significantly so. Flecha (2018, p. 485) is more explicit on highlighting how, in the European Research Framework Programmes, researchers have to predict the social impact right from the drafting of their projects.

The proliferation of blogs, YouTube videos and topic accounts on social media has meant that scientific knowledge can be promoted in a more accessible and engaging format to the general population (Cárdenas, 2017). Knowledge has gone from being confined in physical spaces to being open online, examined and rated by the users. It is freer, but less controlled, and therefore much more exposed to manipulation, generating “noise” and misinformation (Plaza, 2021). Today, the dissemination of science faces this duality: one needs to know how to deal with these dynamics on platforms that are saturated with information—and misinformation—and, at the same time, take advantage of the new digital culture to connect with the public through innovative narratives on social networks (Montero and Mora, 2020).

The scope of numerous research projects is focused on the creation of scientific content on YouTube and the relationship between YouTubers and their audience (Zaragoza and Roca, 2020). Castillo (2016) claims that this platform is the start of a new way of accessing and visualising audiovisual content, while Vizcaíno et al. (2020) assert that it is a disclosure platform for the communication of knowledge underpinned by the freedom to learn and teach science. Erviti and León (2014) observe that science videos occupy an important place: they are the second most popular YouTube content worldwide, only second to entertainment videos. Muñoz et al. (2016), on the other hand, identify a wide variety of genres and sub-genres within scientific dissemination videos, with production being moderately complex and the montage and narration being highly complex, which points to growing professionalism in the production of science videos on the internet. In this vein, Mena (2022) highlights the need to broaden the topics and knowledge areas in audiovisual production and include more narrative resources and gender parity. Arab and Díaz (2015) consider that, despite there being certain distrust of the YouTube platform, the message is effective for transmitting content in a comprehensible way and favouring more and better scientific dissemination.

The study by Zaragoza and Roca (2020) identifies the profile of YouTuber scientific disseminators as young males who have completed higher education, who use animations and their personal image as two more effective communication tools.

They conclude that, despite there being more channels dedicated to natural and exact sciences than human and social sciences, the topic does not determine the informative effect on the audience; rather the correct use of image and communicative methods predominates. This coincides with the point made by Navarro, Ortega and Fernández (2022), which is that the way in which sociology reaches the public is conditioned by the participants, channels and practices that exist around the different mediums.

In sum, as can be derived from the above, the use of videos hosted on digital platforms such as YouTube is an innovative strategy to disseminate science, in general, and sociology, in particular, in a new online setting. By means of images, testimonies, music, dynamic infographics with statistical data, interactive thematic atlases and word or tag clouds (Dávila, 2004; Guilló, 2019; Criado, 2020), new digital means make up a highly useful tool for communicating sociological messages and, therefore, for improving the democratic process, under the assumption that sociology must be applied in providing a practical knowledge base from which people understand the world in society (Navarro, 2019; Barbeito, 2019). As noted by Gil (2019, p. 144), scientists must be held doubly accountable for their studies; firstly, to their professional colleagues and other specialist collectives, just like other scientific researchers, and secondly, to the people themselves, as their object of study is the social reality to which they belong and in which they are involved. The fact that there are best-sellers on social issues shows the population's marked interest, which social sciences can take advantage of to connect with the general public. Thus, Cárdenas (2017) recognises that content created and promoted on social media must not be seen as a risk, but rather as an opportunity to research and build knowledge networks.

3. Data and Methodology

This exploratory and qualitative study analyses data from two information sources: first, six sociology videos hosted on the digital platform YouTube and second, eight semi-structured interviews conducted online with experts with different professional profiles and areas of activity. YouTube was used because it is a free, public platform and the second most visited website worldwide (López, 2021).

In total, eighty videos with sociological content were watched between the months of March and December 2021. Finally, as detailed in Table 1, six were selected for the analysis, identifying three typologies: 1) academic videos directed at students; 2) academic videos directed at the general public (in both cases, promoted and produced from or by academic institutions and/or scientific associations related to sociology); and 3) non-academic videos (independently promoted and produced by sociology professionals). The two videos with the highest number of views were chosen for each typology¹. As shown in Table 2, of the experts interviewed, one is from a company that specialises in communication of science, three are from public and private research companies, and another four are from universities. The interviews were conducted online in 2021 and 2022 and lasted an average of 45 minutes².

Table 1*Profile of the six YouTube sociology videos chosen*

Classification	Producer	No. views (as of 17/02/2023)	Description of the content	Duration (mins)	Date	Link and screenshot
ID: V1 | Title: <i>¿Qué es la sociología? (What is sociology?)</i>						
Academic, directed at students	Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (Pontifical Catholic University of Peru, PUCP)	714,261	Professor Manky questions the meaning of sociology based on certain prejudices of the students in his classes.	32:02	08/06/2012	 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P4N_PZ98ETc
ID: V2 | Title: <i>Sociología es... (Sociology is...)</i>						
Academic, directed at students	University of Alicante (UA)	19,657	Made for the 25th anniversary of the degree in Sociology at the University of Alicante, different testimonies of students and professors state what sociology is and mention the subjects taught.	01:29	11/01/2016	 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=343iqW41b3A
ID: V3 | Title: <i>Introducción a la sociología (Introduction to sociology)</i>						
Academic, directed at the general public	Open University of Catalonia (UOC)	131,068	Professor Estradé i Saltó questions the meaning of intellectual curiosity as a requirement for raising awareness of the social world and the emergence of sociology.	14:14	09/03/2016	 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O22HFpsizkw
ID: V4 | Title: <i>La sociología en marcha (Sociology in action)</i>						
Academic, directed at the general public	Professional Association of Political Science, Sociology, International Relations and Public Administration. Spanish Federation of Sociology.	95,741	By means of illustrations and with background music, a voice-over narrates the meaning of sociology and how it conditions and affects people's lives.	05:29	25/09/2018	 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eO5rwW8rumU
ID: V5 | Title: <i>¿Qué es la sociología? En minutos (What is sociology? In minutes)</i>						
Non-academic	En Minutos	272,108	It illustrates, accompanied by a voice-over, the meaning of sociology and briefly summarises the history and emergence of the discipline.	04:41	22/06/2020	 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h3hTGjThmuo
ID: V6 | Title: <i>¿Qué es la sociología? En menos de 5 minutos (What is sociology? In less than 5 minutes)</i>						
Non-academic	Anteojos sociológicos	122,762	Sociologist Belén Meneses describes what sociology is and presents some classic currents and authors.	04:21	26/01/2020	 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_XYVxjpcbU

Source: Own research.

Table 2
Profiles of experts interviewed

Name	Profile
Óscar Huertas Rosales	Founder of the company Laniakea Management & Communication, which specialises in the management of scientific dissemination and the organisation of events related to the communication of science.
Roberto Luciano Barbeito Iglesias	Sociologist, political scientist and lecturer at Rey Juan Carlos University. Executive secretary of the Spanish Federation of Sociology (FES, by its initials in Spanish) and the Political Sociology Research Committee.
Ángel Ramírez Troyano	Sociologist and political scientist. Research technician and scientific dissemination manager at the Spanish Institute of Advanced Social Studies (IESA-CSIC, by its initials in Spanish).
Marcos Terradillos Bernal	Director of the Master's Programme in Scientific Dissemination at University Isabel I, Spain. Member of the Atapuerca Research Team (ART), an international pioneering project in the field of scientific dissemination.
Isabel López Calderón	Lecturer on Genetics at the University of Seville. She has extensive experience researching and promoting at conferences, congresses, etc.
Ignacio López Goñi	Professor of Microbiology and director of the Science Museum at the University of Navarra. He promotes dissemination activities in all kinds of formats and to all different audiences.
José Antonio López Guerrero	Lecturer on Microbiology at the Autonomous University of Madrid and Director of the Department of Scientific Culture at the Severo Ochoa Molecular Biology Centre (UAM-CSIC). Awarded, together with Ignacio López Goñi, the CSIC-Fundación BBVA Prize for Scientific Communication (2021) in the category of researchers who contribute to the dissemination of knowledge to society.
Silvia Leal Martín	Sociologist and advisor to the European Commission. For three consecutive years, she has been recognised by Mujeres&Cia as one of the ten most influential experts in Spain for her work in the field of e-leadership and innovative energy (training, articles, interviews, conferences, etc.). Director of Technology and Innovation Programmes at the IE Business School.

Source: Own research.

4. Results

This section presents the results obtained following the analysis of the six sociology videos hosted on the digital platform YouTube (Sub-section 4.1.) and the eight interviews with experts (Sub-section 4.2.). These results enable the potential and weaknesses of the dissemination of sociology to be explored, with particular focus on the format of the video, the quality of the images and sound, the type of message or messages, the communication skills of the main speakers, and the number of likes, subscriptions and comments.

4.1. Sociology videos hosted on YouTube

4.1.1. Quality and resolution

The quality and resolution of the six videos analysed is high, except for one video which is not filmed or exported in HD and whose visual style is not sophisticated (*What is sociology?*, V1). It appears to have been filmed using non-professional cameras, like in the video *What is sociology? In less than 5 minutes* (V6).

In general, the sound intensity is appropriate, except in the video *Introduction to sociology* (V3), in which dubbing in Spanish is superimposed over the original audio

(Catalan) which, at times, makes it difficult to stay focused and follow the narrative thread. It is only in this video that general views are taken and that the characters are in motion. Two academic videos directed at students take place in classrooms (*What is sociology?*, V1, and *Sociology is...*, V2), while the academic video directed at the general public takes place in a library (*Introduction to sociology*, V3).

Five videos include references to sociologists (Marx, Durkheim, Weber and Comte are named in several, Giddens in one). All those cited are male, without taking into account, therefore, the contribution of women. Except for the video *Sociology in action* (V4), by the Professional Association of Political Science, Sociology, International Relations and Public Administration and the Spanish Federation of Sociology, the rest use the generic masculine form, without alluding to inclusive language. Except for the video *Sociology is...* (V2) by the University of Alicante directed at students, which is flatter, the rest have a narrative structure, with an introduction, climax and ending.

The content of the six videos analysed reveals the interest in using comprehensible language and being concise in order to make sociology known as a science and profession and its contribution to society. The two academic videos directed at students place the focus on teaching and on the subjects taught (*What is sociology?*, V1, by the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru and *Sociology is...*, V2, by the University of Alicante).

4.1.2. Format

Sophisticated formats predominate, with cuts and scene changes. The resources used that give sense, rhythm and meaning to the speech are mainly images, videos and text that are superimposed on the screen.

Two videos stand out in which people do not appear, that is, they are animated videos: *Sociology in action* (V4) and *What is sociology? In minutes* (V5). Ten people appear in *Sociology is...* (V2): sociology graduates, professors and students. In the four videos with main speakers, the communication and expressive skills of the speakers stand out, using their body language to transmit information. Of these, the following are of note: *What is sociology?* (V1), in which Professor Omar Manky talks about prejudices, and *What is sociology? In less than 5 minutes* (V6), in which Belén Meneses, a young sociologist, explains the meaning of sociology with references to classic authors. The videos are usually filmed with a medium shot, framing the subject from the head to the waist.

Only two of the six videos analysed, *Sociology in action* (V4) and *What is sociology? In minutes* (V5), have subtitles, and therefore the other videos do not ensure that their content is accessible to those with hearing impairments. None of the six videos are available in other languages, nor do they have foreign language subtitles.

4.1.3. Production

As per the audiovisual material and the format, the three videos with the best production and editing quality are *Sociology is...* (V2), *Sociology in action* (V4) and *What is sociology? In minutes* (V5). All the videos are hosted on YouTube channels that were created between two (*What is sociology? In minutes*, V5) and fifteen years ago (*What is sociology?*, V1), sharing space with other content related to the institution, teaching, undergraduate degrees and master's programmes, conferences, etc.

There is a range of durations depending on the style of video. The four short videos are between 1 and 5 minutes long, while the longest have the format of an online class (*What is sociology?*, V1) and documentary format (*Introduction to sociology*, V3), lasting 32 and 14 minutes, respectively.

In five videos the pace of the speech is appropriate, with silences as a reflective pause. The pauses tend to coincide with the change of speaker and scene. The video *What is sociology? In less than 5 minutes* (V6) is fast and energetic, which may be positive for a young audience, but negative for older people.

4.1.4. Social impact

The six YouTube videos analysed have a high social impact according to the number of views. The academic video *Introduction to sociology* (V3) stands out, created by the UOC in 2016 and directed at the general public, with 679,000 views. This is followed by the most recent video, from 2020, with 169,230 views: the non-academic video *What is sociology? In minutes* (V5). The rest have more than 80,000 views, except for one which has 19,100 (*Sociology is...*, V2, by the UA). The number of views is more or less proportional to the number of subscribers; for example, the video with the most views has 270,000 subscribers. There are, however, two exceptions. The video with the fourth-most views (81,288) has 842 subscribers (*Sociology in action*, V4), while the aforementioned academic video by the UA, *Sociology is...* (V2), directed at students, surprisingly, has more subscribers (21,400) than views (19,000).

To delve further into the impact of the videos, an indicator was developed based on the division of the number of views and the number of likes on YouTube to find out how many of the people who watched the video liked it. According to this indicator, the videos with the biggest impact are the two non-academic videos, made independently by sociology professionals: *What is sociology? In less than 5 minutes* (V6) and *What is sociology? In minutes* (V5), liked by 1 in every 26 and 47 people, respectively. The communication skills and the fast and energetic pace of a young girl speaking about sociology in the first video and the originality of the format in the second video, showing a hand writing the content, seem to be liked by the audience and, therefore, they are strategies that may work for communicating sociological messages. They are, by far, the two videos with the most positive comments (compliments, thanks, etc.) on the YouTube channel, emphasising, in particular, the way in which the content is transmitted. This is demonstrated by comments such as:

“If there were more professors with this skill to teach sociology, understanding it would not be so tedious. It really is a good explanation, many thanks”; “I love your energy when you communicate, you make it entertaining and enjoyable”, “Thanks for your great contribution, believe me when I say it is really appreciated because you can see that many hours of work have gone into these 5 minutes”. In the third video with the greatest impact (liked by 1 in every 76 people who have watched it), Professor Manky (main speaker) displays great expressive and communication skills. His relaxed tone of voice invites the viewers to keep paying attention. It is the academic video *What is sociology?*, directed at students and made by the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru. Continuing with this indicator, the video with the least impact is *Sociology is... (V2)* (liked by 1 in every 79 people who have watched it), made for the 25th anniversary of the degree in Sociology at the University of Alicante. This video differs from the rest in its length (it barely lasts a minute), for being the video in which most people speak (ten people, with short contributions) and is the only video which is a flat communication model that does not attract interest or hold the audience’s attention.

The comments are generally positive. The format of the video is particularly valued, either to make sociology visible and known or to encourage interest in studying a degree in Sociology.

4.2. Experts interviewed

4.2.1. *Strategies to improve dissemination*

The eight interviewees agree that dissemination involves transmitting scientific information in an accessible way to different audiences without twisting the meaning, relevance or veracity. It is the most complex level of the communication of science, as it requires the technical language to be simplified and translated to make it more accessible. It entails effectiveness and responsibility on the part of the presenter. The main objective is to increase scientific culture among the general public, making them part of scientific advances, of socialising and of making a community. The main problems are the limited professionalisation and not measuring the impact of the actions that are carried out. As Silvia Leal, Director of Technology and Innovation Programmes at the IE Business School points out, being a good scientist does not imply being a good disseminator, nor a good disseminator a good scientist. In relation to the second issue, Óscar Huertas, from Laniakea Management & Communication, comments that the impact is not measured, therefore activities may be carried out that are useless; if it does not have an impact and it goes unnoticed, it should not count. In particular, he believes that research into scientific dissemination must be reinforced, to find out what works and what does not in scientific communication.

Roberto Barbeito, lecturer in Sociology and Political Sciences at the Rey Juan Carlos University, points to bureaucratic questions and lack of recognition as bottlenecks for the involvement in dissemination actions, highlighting how academic life has become very demanding in bureaucratic and transparency

procedures (credentials, justifications, reviews, etc.) that prevent academics from having the necessary time. He adds how there is no incentive structure for dissemination, unlike in other tasks such as publishing, which is highly valued. Therefore, he points out that as there are so few professional opportunities, it is considered secondary, a drain on effort, resources and time, and those who do take part in dissemination actions do so out of vocation. Marcos Terradillos (Director of the Master's Programme in Scientific Dissemination at University Isabel I) and Silvia Leal highlight how the majority of academic dissemination activities carried out in Spain are as a result of voluntarism and are unpaid. Thus, one of the strategies to improve dissemination that is mentioned frequently in the interviews is professionalising it.

This is the golden age of dissemination; there are multiple channels and media through which society can be reached and which open up new channels of communication, much needed by the interviewees. As Roberto Barbeito points out, it is not a problem of the channel, but rather of adjusting the audiences and the content and the way of conveying these concepts.

All research has to be disseminated, but it does not have to be directly done by the person responsible or someone from the team. Óscar Huertas points out that any format is interesting provided that it is done well. He also goes on to summarise the current state of dissemination on social media, stating that there are true 'rockstars' of dissemination and that people consume their content simply because it is theirs; there is other content that is of the same or better quality but it is not consumed because it is not popular. Furthermore, to be able to dedicate yourself to this and be influential in the digital sphere, you need to be very engaged; in professor Barbeito's opinion, you only have to look at Instagrammers and YouTubers to see how they have to dedicate themselves to it entirely. Silvia Leal, on the other hand, expresses how everything adds up, and those little YouTube videos that go viral because they have a lot of ingenuity behind them; they are wonderful. She adds that important messages must be drip-fed, with the messages being heard in many places until they resonate and that is how interest is generated.

The eight interviewees agree about the need to have more incentives and resources to improve scientific dissemination strategies. Isabel López, from the University of Seville, concludes that awareness about dissemination needs to be created, and that everyone needs to be seriously involved. Roberto Barbeito (URJC), Ángel Ramírez (IESA-CSIC) and Ignacio López (University of Navarra) agree that there needs to be an objective set by public authorities, facilitating the means, curbing the dominance of visibility management on some platforms and, in turn, establishing new ways of generalised access. There is a need for greater support and recognition of research, to allow time for quality content to be published and to demand a more active way of transmitting research results or processes. As an indispensable condition, they propose changes in the evaluation and academic accreditation criteria so that dissemination and knowledge transfer actions are taken into account.

5. Conclusions and Final Thoughts

This work has offered information that was not available until now on dissemination in the field of sociology. It has made it possible to show how new knowledge is built in this field using theoretical and methodological tools. This was done using two analysis strategies with the objective of identifying factors that facilitate and hinder successful scientific dissemination of sociology. The first was the analysis of six videos hosted on the digital platform YouTube, due to it being a format that is increasingly used to disseminate science according to existing studies. The second was the analysis of eight interviews conducted online in 2021 and 2022 with key informants from private communication companies, public and private research centres and academic profiles with significant experience and recognition for their dissemination actions. The profile and justification for the selection of the videos and the profile of the interviewees is presented in Tables 1 and 2, and a link has been provided so that the reports and complete recordings of the interviews can be consulted. Table 3 of the Annex presents the dimensions, sub-dimensions and indicators designed to analyse the content of the videos. Thus, sufficient detail is provided with the possibility that the results obtained can be contrasted following the same procedure and, therefore, provide the opportunity to replicate the work in other contexts and disciplines.

Scientific dissemination has gained importance as an intermediary between the great advances in research and the public, while more tools, more receivers and, therefore, more requirements to adapt the message to the target audience have also appeared. In the area of sociology, the concern for understanding, analysing and publicly proposing solutions to social problems (Moreno, 2014) is not new, but it is current. The so-called public sociology interested in private concerns becoming matters of public interest had special visibility as a subject of disciplinary attention in 2004, as a result of the speech by Michel Burawoy as President of the American Sociological Association (Burawoy cited in Fernández, 2006). According to García (2021, p. 3), one of the concerns of Harriet Martineau (1802–1876), a first-generation sociologist, was that her ideas, and also those of others and scientific works in general, were close and accessible to the general public.

Videos are one of the tools that scientists have to carry out this task successfully. Digital platforms such as YouTube, widely used today as has been shown, are a means to access, spotlight and communicate sociological knowledge to the general public. The results obtained point in this direction if the public presence of sociology is to be improved, recommending the need to be present with quality videos, doing so continuously and in an up-to-date manner and using communication tools that respect the principles of universal accessibility. The positive effect of the main speakers' communication skills and the use of innovative narratives in disseminating sociological messages through videos has been evidenced. Thus, creating a genuinely audiovisual product must be considered a basic element of the language of communication and as such, to be expressed correctly, in the same way as other arts such as painting or writing, knowledge of norms and standards

is required, such as the importance of drafting a graphic script of the content as a starting point, creating a story (introduction, climax and ending) for communicating ideas, and using infographics when using magnitudes. Javier Sampredo, today a renowned scientific journalist, mentions how all researchers understand their object of study, but very few know how to explain it clearly to the audience, stating how disseminating involves converting a dense concept into a digestible, attractive and pleasant text (Sampedro, 2018, p. 88).

However, transferring knowledge to non-specialist audiences creates a series of challenges in the field of sociology. First, the discipline has some cognitive features that act as a barrier (Estruch, 2003; Lahire, 2006; Castillo, 2016). The complexity of some research projects and the specialised language make it difficult for people to understand. In addition to this, there is another obstacle that complicates public communication: the risks of simplification caused by the need for expressive simplicity in a short space of time that our developed society increasingly demands (Ovejero, 2012; Barbeito, 2019; Hartmut, 2019).

The sources used in this study have certain limitations. Although the YouTube videos analysed enable the identification of dynamics of interest for improving dissemination in the field of sociology, broadening the search to other highly used digital platforms such as VIMEO and Twitch would also be very interesting (IAB Spain, 2020). The spatial and temporal limitation of the search must also be noted. As it is a dynamic consumption and production site, there may be variations in the results depending on the website and the date on which the search is made. The algorithm on YouTube makes some videos stand out and be viewed more than others, whose relevance criteria are not public. Therefore, as other studies suggest, it would be interesting to monitor the protocol of analysis used to detect variations in the positions and in the results themselves and compare them—every so often—to obtain a denser results matrix (Macho and Bermúdez, 2020). Although social networks and new digital platforms occupy an increasingly greater space in the use and consumption of audiovisual media, there are still other channels for scientific dissemination, with different and varied characteristics, and with great capacity for social reach. As this study is an addition to the line of research on dissemination in the field of sociology, it is interesting to delve into the knowledge of social networks, consulting reference works in repositories and databases specialised in communication.

Within the qualitative approach, although the profiles of the people selected are varied, solvent and eloquent in their areas of work, there are others to be considered to continue examining the area of dissemination, for example, university communication offices, journalists specialised in science from different media and digital platforms (press, radio, podcasts, etc.) and those true ‘rockstars’ of dissemination mentioned by the interviewee Óscar Huertas, from Laniakea Management & Communication.

In sum, the dissemination of sociological research is a highly relevant topic for the discipline, but it has not been sufficiently addressed. It affects substantive issues, related to the problem of reflexivity, both internal and external. Like all science, sociology is in constant evolution, expanding and even self-correcting, which is one

of its great virtues. Thus, it is necessary to update the tasks, tools and the methods of disseminating. Consequently, the research whose results are presented in this article provides new suggestive, original and useful knowledge to accumulate and contrast data in a line of research in crescendo such as the one presented here. It offers the possibility of developing different roadmaps with the objective of describing the current status of dissemination in the field of sociology. This is the first step for designing improved strategies that not only allow students and the scientific community to deepen their knowledge of this discipline, but also to bring it closer to the public, making them aware of its use for understanding complex phenomena and resolving problems that affect their daily life. It is a major challenge, but it is very fascinating.

6. References

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7. Annex

Table 3

Dimensions, sub-dimensions and indicators of the content analysis of the six videos hosted on the digital platform YouTube

Dimensions	Sub-dimensions	Indicators	Source
1. Quality and resolution	Images	Resolution → High if exported in HD (High Definition) Expressive richness and aesthetic innovation (visual style) Design and use of scenery Light intensity	Own research based on Gértrudix et al. (2017) and Ferrés (2007).
	Sound	Sound intensity Pace and pauses Use of music that reinforces the text	Own research based on Gértrudix et al. (2017).
	Content	Information → No. of topics and sub-topics Relevance to the field of sociology Narrative elaboration Entertaining/animated Vocabulary Language → Inclusive (not sexist) Type of dialogue established with the users → Didactic, instructional, etc. Title	Own research based on Gértrudix et al. (2017), Freixa (2020), Ferrés (2007) and Antón and Guallar (2014).
2. Format	Characters/ Narrators	No. main speakers and co-stars Physically appearing on scene Gender of main speakers Shot of characters → Full, medium, close-up Narrative roles Communication skills Attitude/action	Own research.
	Visual content materials	Images, videos, infographics, etc.	Own research.
	Editing	Level of editing Gives sense, rhythm and meaning Subtitles (audiovisual accessibility) Subtitles in other languages	Own research based on Gértrudix et al. (2017).
	Corporate involvement	Use of corporate elements (logo, images, etc. of the institution)	Own research based on Gértrudix et al. (2017).
3. Production	Producers/ creators	Own channel for promotion The channel has more videos – If yes, whether they are specialised in sociology Academic or non-academic Level of education → Professionals or enthusiasts	Own research based on Paz and Hernández (2017).
4. Duration	Video	Duration → Short if it is less than 5 minutes	Own research based on Gértrudix et al. (2017).
	Music	Frequency of appearance	Own research.
5. Speed	Contributions by speakers	Frequency of appearance	Own research.
	Contributions	Pace and pauses	Own research.
6. Social impact	Engagement	Number of views Number of likes Number of views / Number of likes	Own research based on Llonch (2019).
	Comments	Number Type and sense (positive or negative) Reply or like	Own research based on Vizcaino et al. (2020).
	Subscriptions	Number	Own research.
7. Objective(s)	Target audience	General public, specific public (professionals or students)	Own research.
	Message(s)	Topics Effectiveness for transmitting	Own research.

Notes

1 Table 3 showing the dimensions, sub-dimensions and indicators designed for the content analysis of the six videos is included in the Annex. To consult the analysis of each, visit the following link: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1clNjF_YeNJ32fdw0gABxKfP8dG8L11xU/view

2 The complete recordings and the reports of the interviews in Spanish can be consulted at the following link: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Kb33I5dWXUcVTNDA6LQoOWiyh1HV3_L/view?usp=sharing

ARTICLE/ARTÍCULO

Separate Paths. The Breakup of Couples in Andalusia

Caminos separados. La ruptura de parejas en Andalucía

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Received/Recibido: 2/3/2023

Accepted/Aceptado: 21/4/2023



ABSTRACT

Relationship breakups have been a recurrent subject of interest, from a sociological perspective, for the scientific community. Until now, however, the focus has been on breakups with legal ties, whether separation or divorce, and it has been studied at the national level in Spain. The aim of this research is to analyse the breakup of all types of couples and the reasons behind it, focusing on Andalusia. A descriptive quantitative method is therefore used by exploiting data from the Spanish General Social Survey (SGSS, 2018). The results show that the majority of breakups in Andalusia do not come under the categories of divorce or separation, with slight differences depending on the age component. As for the motives for ending a relationship, these are linked to subjective factors, with subtle differences according to sex, and the initiative is usually taken by one of the partners.

KEYWORDS: breakup; Andalusia; descriptive; causes; reasons; divorce.

HOW TO REFERENCE: Jiménez-Cabello, J., Fuster, N. and Pérez, L. F. (2023). Caminos separados. La ruptura de parejas en Andalucía. *Revista Centra de Ciencias Sociales*, 2(1), 123-141. <https://doi.org/10.54790/rccs.57>

La versión (original) en castellano puede leerse en <https://doi.org/10.54790/rccs.57>

RESUMEN

Las rupturas de pareja han sido objeto de interés recurrente, desde una perspectiva sociológica, para la comunidad científica. Sin embargo, hasta el momento, el foco de atención se ha situado en las rupturas con vínculos legales, ya sean separación o divorcio, y se ha estudiado a nivel nacional. El objetivo de esta investigación es analizar cómo es la ruptura de todo tipo de parejas y las razones que la motivan, centrándonos en el caso andaluz. Para ello se utiliza metodología cuantitativa descriptiva mediante la explotación de datos procedentes de la Encuesta Social General Española (ESGE, 2018). Los resultados muestran que la mayor parte de las rupturas que se producen en Andalucía no se insertan en las modalidades de divorcio o separación, existiendo ligeras diferencias según el componente etario. En cuanto a las motivaciones para poner fin a una relación, estas se encuentran ligadas a factores de tipo subjetivo, apreciando sutiles diferencias según sexo, y la iniciativa suele tomarla, en general, una parte de la pareja.

PALABRAS CLAVE: ruptura; Andalucía; descriptivo; causas; razones; divorcio.

1. Introduction

In recent decades, there have been a series of social transformations that have disrupted and caused the de-standardisation of the life course (Brückner and Mayer, 2005). These changes have had a profound impact on the family and, in particular, have altered traditional couple pairing and breakup processes. In Spain, these alterations have been characterised by a succession of social changes such as greater secularisation, changes in sexual behaviour patterns, new forms of sociability, the transformation of gender roles that have established and consolidated new family forms, in which union and separation processes have become more common and standardised (González and Requena, 2008; Ayuso, 2019, 2022; Requena, 2022; García Moreno, 2022).

Relationships and breakups are a core social phenomenon, as they play a key role in the life course of individuals (Duvall, 1988; Wells and Gubar, 1966). This explains why, from a sociological perspective, the study of relationship formation processes—marriages, registered partnerships and courtships—has a long history, both internationally and in Spain (Alberdi et al., 1994). In terms of breakups, existing literature in Spain has placed emphasis on studying the dissolution of marriages as well as divorce and legal separation (Alberdi, 1979; Becerril, 1999, 2008), which are also the object of considerable analysis in the international scientific field (Spijker and Solona, 2012). However, recent cultural changes make the study of these phenomena more complex, as they cover an amalgamation of situations that are increasingly difficult to detect.

This article will focus on studying breakups in general, including both those that entail legal separation or divorce and those that do not. The interest in all kinds of breakups lies in the fact that, in the Spanish region of Andalusia, this phenomenon has not been researched; despite there being studies on the divorce/legal separation of heterosexual married couples (Jiménez-Cabello et al., 2021) and even on same-sex couples (Jiménez-Cabello, 2021), there is no empirical precedent that analyses the breakup of couples in general.

This is partly due to the lack of secondary data appropriate for such purpose. While marriages, divorces, registered partnerships and their dissolution are administrative procedures that are recorded, there are no records on courtships and breakups and, therefore, their study is more complex. Furthermore, to study the reasons behind the breakups, survey data asking directly about the matter would be required. However, the complexity increases on defining—and therefore measuring—what constitutes a couple. This is due to their evolution, with greater variability and more social acceptance of different kinds of unions (Jiménez-Cabello and Ayuso, 2022).

Indeed, the complexity involved in the analysis of breakups in general, the greater acceptance of said breakups, the lack of an in-depth analysis in Andalusia and the possibility of obtaining secondary data that enable said analysis are the reasons why the aim of this research is to analyse relationship breakup processes in Andalusia. Thus, firstly, information related to unions and separations is offered. The methodology used to subsequently present the obtained results is then outlined. Finally, the conclusions reached are described.

2. Changes in the Social Perception of Breakups, Reasons for Breakups and Consequences

Although breakups are individual occurrences, paying attention to the context in which they occur is fundamental, as this may or may not be a contributing factor. Sociological theory has outlined how, in the development of modern Western societies, couple relationships have changed. Giddens (1992) affirmed that we are witnessing a change in the social perception of couple relationships, whereby the idea of lifelong romantic love is being abandoned while the idea of confluent love, in which a relationship lasts for as long as both partners are interested in it doing so, is spreading and consolidating. Bauman (2005), on the other hand, used the term “liquid love” to refer, in the context of greater individualisation, to the fact that relationships had become less committed and tended to be more transient and superficial.

These changes are simply a reflection of how, with the passing of time, social norms have progressively become less important in favour of a more central role of the culture of individual decision-making (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2003, 2002). Increased personal freedom in relationships places more weight on individual preferences (Roussel, 1989), so that what may be expected socially is not as decisive as the needs and priorities of the individuals.

Furthermore, in relation to these needs and preferences, the possibility of a breakup implies that relationships are currently under a constant process of individual review: the partners in a relationship continually analyse their relationship (Illouz, 2020). It is precisely this constant review that can, at times, contribute to developing a relationship not being easy (Collins and Gillath, 2012)

and, due to each partner's expectations, to the relationship becoming embroiled in a conflict that may break the affectionate link (Valdez et al., 2011).

This constant re-evaluation may lead, as a direct consequence, to a breakup; the question is, however, why do relationships end? The scientific literature addressing the reasons that may lead to a couple breaking up hints at some of the more or less common reasoning. Thus, González and Espinosa (2004) identified falling out of love as the main factor. Casado et al. (2001), on the other hand, specified the importance of factors such as lack of communication, decreased intimacy, dissatisfaction (Castrillo, 2018) or issues of a financial nature. Other aspects, such as not feeling loved (Ferrand, 1996), monotony or lack of physical attraction (Hill, Rubin and Peplau, 1976), have also been highlighted in the literature.

The set of reasons behind breakups identified in the literature may be categorised in the distinction made by Becerril (1999). This author concluded that the reasons for couples breaking up are different in today's society; previously, couples broke up due to objective factors (for example, financial issues, addictions, partner violence, among others), while today, causes arise that are more subjective in nature (falling out of love or loss of communication, among others). That is, it appears to be that the current reasons are consistent with the new perspective about relationships in advanced societies, with greater social acceptance of confluent relationships and less criticism of separations. This partly explains that the breakup of couples, whether married or not, is a phenomenon that has become increasingly common over time.

As regards the consequences of breakups, the end of a relationship can, undoubtedly, have numerous implications. In this sense, it is important to point out that the effect a couple breaking up has on the individual who experiences it, whether positive or negative, will depend on other aspects, such as the importance given to the relationship, the individual's expectations of said relationship and the reasons for bringing it to an end, among others (Waller, 2008; Lewandowski and Bizzoco, 2007).

The issue with the literature on the consequences is that, generally speaking, the focus has been placed on those breakups that entail divorce. However, the breakup phenomenon is common in young people who are yet to make the decision to get married, even when in serious and stable relationships with their partners. Couple relationships during this stage can be very stable and are not only for personal motivation, but also aid in social integration. However, breakups are quite common during the courtship that is characteristic of this stage of life (Pinto, 2013; Rhoades et al., 2011).

Thus, the focus of the following section is on these processes of change in Spain and, specifically, in Andalusia, which is the framework of this research.

3. The Breakup Phenomenon in Spain and Andalusia

The sociological literature, at a national level in Spain, which delves into the understanding of breakups has traditionally focused on the study of the dissolution of legal ties, specifically, divorce. Marriage, separation and divorce have shaped a pillar of analysis, from a sociological perspective, that has become increasingly prominent and consolidated over time. Thus, there are studies dating back to the 1970s that focus on this social reality, such as those conducted by Alberdi (1979), Iglesias de Ussel (1977) and Lezcano (1979). Subsequently, different research studies were based on the 1991 socio-demographic survey, such as those by Houle et al. (1999) and Becerril (1999).

More recently, and in light of new statistics and more complete data in general, there are studies such as those by Domínguez (2011), Spijker and Solsona (2012), Solsona (2015) and Becerril (2015). In these studies, aspects such as changes in the formation and breakup of couples, comparisons with the European environment and the importance of gender and age, have been analysed and/or highlighted. More recently, the impact of changes at a legal level on marital breakdowns has also been addressed (Becerril and Jiménez-Cabello, 2019).

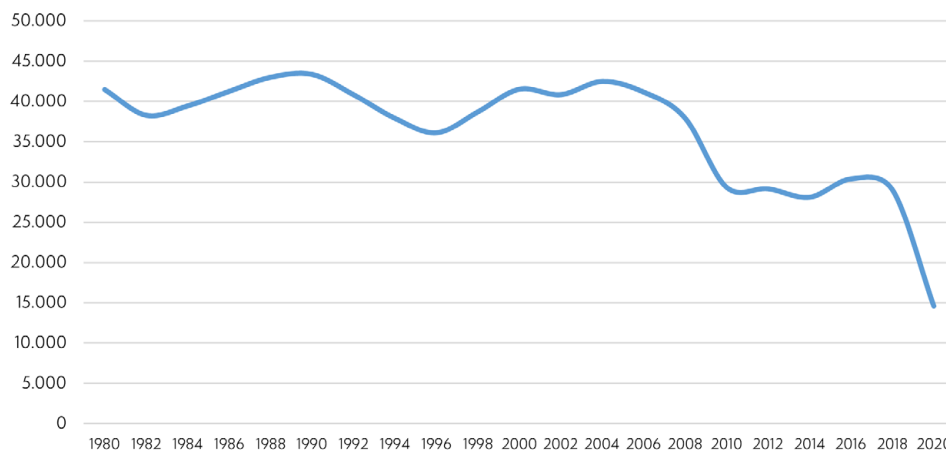
Studies to date have provided a brief snapshot of the situation in Spain, which has passed through several stages in the evolution of the social perception of breakups. Until relatively recently, a breakup was viewed as stigmatising (Jiménez-Cabello and Becerril, 2020). In this sense, the legislative changes and the social transformations brought about in society have led to a greater tolerance of divorce (Ayuso, 2020). Thus, when reference is made to a breakup, this is from the perspective of a solution and not a factor, or fact, that may cause determined negative vestiges (Jiménez-Cabello and Becerril, 2020).

However, there is also greater acceptance of the variety of types of unions. On the one hand, although marriage was the most adopted formula for formalising a couple's union, nowadays other options, such as registering a partnership, have become more prominent. Likewise, same-sex marriage has been institutionalised. In this regard, it is noteworthy that, prior to the regularisation at the national level in 2005, a number of self-governing regions in Spain implemented various protocols for the recognition of these unions, enabling them to be entered in the register as couples (Jiménez-Cabello, 2022). Among these regions was Andalusia, which is also one of the regions where most marriages of this kind have been celebrated since their regulation, according to data from the Spanish National Statistics Institute (*Instituto Nacional de Estadística, INE*).

These two interlinked realities indicate a paradigm shift that is already visualised from a sociological perspective in the forms of union. The marriage rate in Spain has changed; there is a decrease in the number of marriages and couples are also getting married at a later age (Martínez, 2009). In this regard, analysing Andalusia, it can be seen that this region is simply a reflection of the general Spanish trend; Graph 1 shows that there has been a sharp decrease in the marriage rate in the last four decades.

Graph 1

Evolution of the marriage rate in Andalusia



Source: Own research based on data from the Institute of Statistics and Cartography of Andalusia (*Instituto de Estadística y Cartografía de Andalucía, IECA, 1980–2020*).

The number of marriages in Andalusia has gradually decreased over the years, falling from 41,506 in the year 2000 to 14,623 in 2019 (vital statistics, INE), the last year available prior to the COVID-19 health crisis, while other types of unions, such as registered partnerships, have become more prominent. In this regard, it is worth highlighting that in 2021, 8,066 new partnerships were registered, while in 2020, this figure stood at 5,476. However, this decrease may well respond to the context derived from the COVID-19 health crisis. Thus, data from 2019 reflect that the figure was similar to that in 2021 with the registration of 7,651 unions of this kind (statistics on registered partnerships in Andalusia, IECA).

Logically, these figures point to the importance of analysing all kinds of separations, as if marriages are decreasing, it can be expected that divorces/legal separations will decrease over time. This is precisely the reason why it is more than necessary to focus on what happens with breakups in general, as complex situations can arise, such as the awarding of child custody, with all that this entails. In this regard, analysing the reasons, more than the actual number of breakups, is central, as on several occasions separation leads to a process of negotiation that largely depends on the reason behind ending the relationship.

For this reason, the focus is placed on analysing breakups in general, the reasons that lead to them, as well as the perception of their impact on the lives of the individuals, paying attention to basic socio-demographic variables such as sex and age. The analysis will focus on Andalusia due to the lack of studies on this subject and because, in light of the above, it can be considered to have certain dynamics comparable to the national Spanish context that have already been studied.

4. Methodology

A quantitative methodology is used. Thus, in order to respond to the described aim, the Spanish General Social Survey (SGSS; 3201; 2018) by the Spanish Centre for Sociological Research (*Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, CIS*) is used. The reason for selecting this survey is that it contains accurate information about the object of study, as well as enabling data disaggregation by self-governing region.

4.1. Population and Sample

It is a national survey (Spain), and its universe is the resident population of both sexes aged 18 and over. Two-stage stratified cluster sampling was used, with a final sample of 5,365 people. The survey was completed between 20 February 2017 and 12 June 2018.

To obtain the necessary sub-sample, the Andalusian population, cases were selected using the variable “self-governing region”. Thus, a total of 479 individuals was drawn, of which 228 are men and 251 are women. It should be pointed out that all these individuals have gone through some kind of breakup.

The questions chosen were: Q.84e “How did your last relationship end?”; Q.84g “What was the main reason behind the separation or the end of your last relationship?”; Q.84f “Who initiated the breakup process?” and Q.84h “Perception of others after the breakup”.

4.2. Procedure and Analysis

A descriptive analysis was performed on the data. This analysis provides general information, which enables social realities and possible changes that are occurring or have occurred to be understood. Likewise, the results of this kind of analysis make it possible, in general, to obtain information and knowledge about a social reality that has not been analysed (Veiga de Cabo et al., 2008). It is precisely for this reason that this kind of analysis is necessary, since it provides data on breakups in general and the reasons behind them for the first time for this region.

Lastly, its usefulness is perfectly suited to the research aim described, since the purpose is not to conduct more complex analyses such as finding statistical relationships between variables, making possible comparisons between or within groups, or developing models that enable phenomena or behaviours to be predicted.

5. Results and Discussion

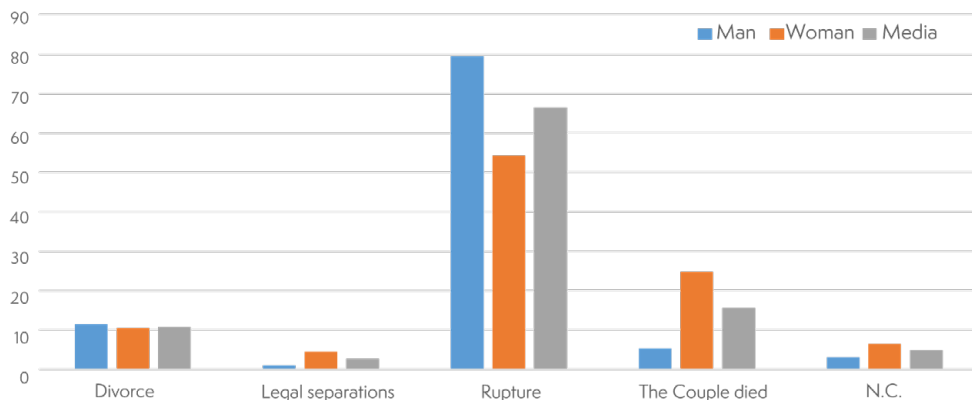
5.1. Ways in which Relationships End

When analysing breakup processes, the first aspect to take into account is to identify how Andalusians ended their last relationship. The first finding is that legal breakups (divorce and/or separations) do not amount to more than 15% of the total. This is not insignificant, as traditionally research on couple breakups has focused on these modalities, resulting in the loss of information on a significant proportion of the breakups that occur. In fact, they can be quantified; therefore, on the other side of the balance, the remaining breakups account for 66.4%.

These results for Andalusia are consistent with those obtained by Jiménez-Cabello and Ayuso (2022) for Spain. These authors found that these kinds of breakups are equally predominant at a national level. Thus, as these authors indicate, despite the robustness provided by the indicators of divorce/legal separation, if the focus were on this alone, only a minimal part of the phenomenon would be observed.

Graph 2

Way in which the last relationship ended (%)



Source: Own research based on the Spanish General Social Survey (SGSS) (CIS, 2018).

It is clear that, in general, the percentage of divorce/legal separation is a relatively low percentage in comparison to a breakup. In terms of sex (Graph 2), the breakup/separation of couples stands out with 79.3% for men and 54.2% for women, following the same pattern described. However, the percentage difference between men and women is noteworthy: said dissimilarity may well be due to another salient aspect, the divergence between men and women when the relationship ended due to the death of their partner (19.4%), with a significant

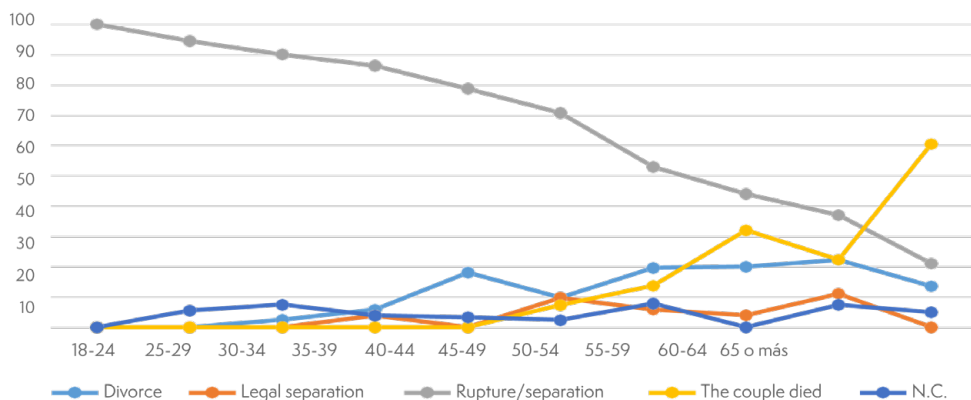
difference between men and women (5.3% compared to 24.7%), due to the longer life expectancy of the latter.

Thus, the results point to there being more couples who end a relationship without breaking a legal tie, either through divorce or separation. Analysing exclusively divorces and legal separations, as has been done generally until now, opens the door to visualising only a part of this social reality, especially considering that there are increasingly more registered partnerships and the fact that they are consolidated over time, that is to say, their duration is longer. This trend is particularly evident in Andalusia: registered partnerships have been gaining prominence, increasing from 6,082 in 2015 to 8,066 in 2021 (statistics on registered partnerships in Andalusia, IECA). Similarly, there are numerous such couples who break up and do so with children, something of which there is hardly any evidence.

On the other hand, it is interesting to observe how the age factor relates to the manner of the breakup (Graph 3). In this vein, it is to be expected that the breaking of a legal tie is more associated with ages over 35 years, taking into account that the average age at marriage, in 2022, was 35 years for men and over 36 and a half years for women, according to data from the Spanish National Statistics Institute. Thus, the data indicate that, generally speaking, those people in younger age groups are more closely linked with breakups (those that do not refer to either divorce or legal separation). On the contrary, individuals in the 45–64 age group are more frequently placed in the area of divorce or legal separation. Thus, the age variable can be seen to present itself as a factor that shows differences related to the way in which a relationship ends.

Graph 3

Way in which the last relationship ended according to age (%)



Source: Own research based on the Spanish General Social Survey (SGSS) (CIS, 2018).

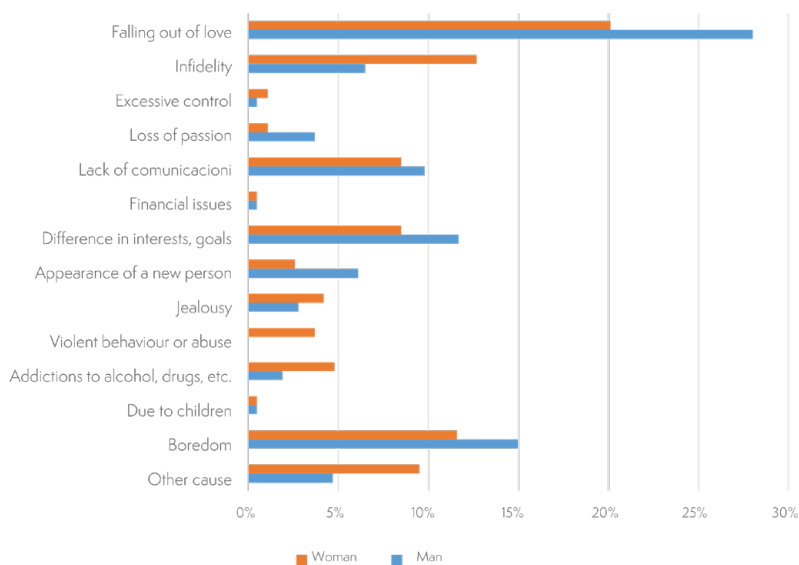
This makes sense for two main reasons: on the one hand, the aforementioned association between average age and marriage. On the other, the average duration of marriages: 16.5 years in 2021. Specifically, in the case of divorce, 16.3 years, and for separations, 20.6 (statistics on annulments, separations and divorce [ENSD]; INE, 2021). Furthermore, the majority of divorces take place after 40 years, reaching its peak in the 60–64 age group with 22%, which is also the case for separations (11%). All this indicates an interrelationship between the couple's breakup, the way in which it occurs and age. Delving deeper into this fact, it is significant that for those people aged 65 and over, the possibility of ending a relationship due to the death of their partner is very likely (60%), with there being differences between men and women (Graph 2) that may largely be explained by the differences in life expectancy according to sex.

5.2. The Breakup Process: Reasons, Decision-Making and Perception of the Consequences

Although the way in which a relationship ends is significant, the reasons that lead to the breakup are key to understanding this social reality. Thus, the classic studies on this subject, which focused on legal separations and divorce, differentiated two main typologies, as seen previously: firstly, those breakups caused by objective factors, related to children, financial issues or addictions, among others. Secondly, the so-called subjective factors, based on aspects such as incompatibility of characters or the existence of infidelity (Becerril, 1999). Thus, Graph 4 shows how aspects linked to boredom or falling out of love are central for understanding the reasons why a relationship ends.

Graph 4

Reasons for ending a relationship according to sex (%)



Source: Own research based on the Spanish General Social Survey (SGSS) (CIS, 2018).

In terms of the first reason, falling out of love is a factor for both men (28%) and women (20%), which is closely linked to previous theoretical contributions such as the work by Illouz (2020) and her interest in the end of love, Bauman's liquid love (2005) or Beck's new forms of love relationships (2001), which make reference to two relevant aspects for this research: risk and love. In terms of the second cause, differences are seen according to sex; while men cite boredom (15%), which can be related to subjective causes, for women it is infidelity (13%), a reason that is more linked to more objective grounds. It is worth highlighting that women, in reference to infidelity, are more inclined than men to consider that it marks the end of the relationship (Ayuso and Faroldi, 2014).

These differences are also seen in the third reason. For men, the difference in goals and interests (12%) occupies the same position, having already been noted in the literature as a significant cause for understanding relationship breakups (Casado et al., 2001). For their part, women indicate boredom (12%) as the third option. As can be seen, this last reason occupies an important place for both men and women, presenting itself as key and which was already highlighted in the study by González and Espinosa (2004), which addressed divorce and its causes in young people.

Lastly, it must be pointed out that reasons such as addictions to alcohol or other substances, and violent behaviour or abuse, are reasons that are given by a greater percentage of women than men.

As can be seen, there are differences in the reasons driving men and women to end a relationship. In this vein, the age variable makes it possible to discern differences and even classify the reasons for ending a relationship (Table 1)

Table 1

Reasons for ending a relationship according to age (%)

	18-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65 and over
Infidelity	17.4	13.0	10.0	5.7	6.6	16.2	2.2	11.1	0.0	3.0
Falling out of love	10.9	29.6	22.5	30.2	27.9	16.2	26.7	33.3	23.8	18.2
Boredom	30.4	9.3	22.5	18.9	6.6	13.5	8.9	5.6	9.5	3.0
Due to children	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0
Addictions to alcohol, drugs, etc.	0.0	1.9	5.0	1.9	3.3	5.4	0.0	0.0	9.5	9.1
Violent behaviour or abuse	2.2	0.0	2.5	1.9	0.0	0.0	8.9	5.6	0.0	0.0
Jealousy	0.0	9.3	2.5	1.9	6.6	0.0	0.0	5.6	0.0	6.1
Appearance of a new person	6.5	3.7	5.0	7.5	0.0	10.8	2.2	5.6	4.8	3.0
Difference in interests, goals	8.7	9.3	7.5	5.7	9.8	8.1	17.8	5.6	4.8	15.2
Financial issues	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.8	0.0
Lack of communication	6.5	11.1	5.0	3.8	18.0	10.8	8.9	11.1	9.5	3.0
Loss of passion	2.2	3.7	0.0	1.9	3.3	5.4	2.2	0.0	4.8	3.0
Excessive control	0.0	0.0	2.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.1
Other cause	10.9	3.7	7.5	9.4	6.6	5.4	11.1	5.6	4.8	6.1
D/K	2.2	1.9	2.5	5.7	0.0	2.7	4.4	5.6	4.8	0.0
N/R	2.2	3.7	5.0	1.9	11.5	5.4	6.7	5.6	19.0	18.2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

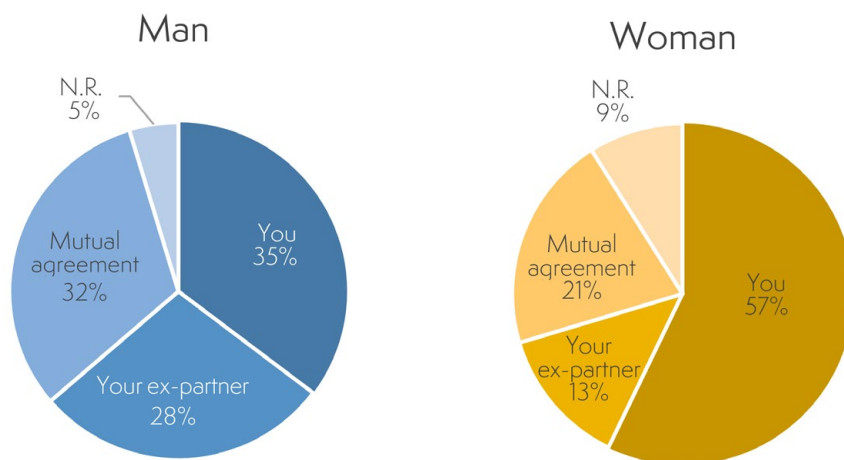
Source: Own research based on the Spanish General Social Survey (SGSS) (CIS, 2018).

In the younger age groups, factors such as falling out of love, infidelity, boredom and jealousy are essential aspects for understanding the end of a relationship. As the focus shifts to older ages, factors such as the appearance of new people or the lack of communication become more relevant, while in the older age groups, addictions or lack of shared interests appear as the main reasons leading to the breakup. These results, following Becerril's (1990) theoretical contributions, indicate that nowadays, subjective aspects, which are more emotional or communicative in nature, are truly key for understanding breakups.

Having covered the ways in which relationships end and the main reasons that lead to it, the interest lies in investigating who initiates the process, whether it is one of the partners or both. The results indicate that, both for men (35.3%) and for women (57.1%), the breakup process is most commonly initiated by one of the partners. In this vein, it is worth highlighting that it is usually the woman who does so more frequently, with a significant difference in comparison to the man (Graph 5). The results obtained are consistent with those provided by the statistics on annulments, separations and divorce [ENSD] (INE), which indicate that it is the woman who tends to initiate the breakup process. However, it could be specified that the fact of who initiates the breakup may have an elevated subjective load that would be interesting to analyse.

Graph 5

Partner who initiates the breakup process according to sex (%)



Source: Own research based on the Spanish General Social Survey (SGSS) (CIS, 2018).

In terms of age (Table 2), the same trend is observed: it is one of the partners who tends to initiate the breakup process, which is particularly evident among the 30–34 age group. Processes of mutual agreement, in which both partners take the initiative, are related to age groups that range from 40 to 54 years. This

may be related to aspects such as child custody and ownership of assets such as jointly owned properties, among others, that may result in the consequences of the breakup being more complex. Nevertheless, the data show a significant fact: there appears to be certain taboo around talking about divorce/breakups in certain population segments (generally those aged over 55 years, as the ‘No Answer’ item response percentages are significantly higher than in the rest of the age groups).

Table 2

Partner who initiates the breakup process according to age (%)

	You	Your ex-partner	Mutual agreement	N/R	Total
18–24	48.9	22.2	26.7	2.2	100
25–29	44.4	25.9	25.9	3.7	100
30–34	65.9	12.2	17.1	4.9	100
35–39	31.4	37.3	27.5	3.9	100
40–44	38.7	16.1	37.1	8.1	100
45–49	47.4	13.2	31.6	7.9	100
50–54	40.9	22.7	34.1	2.3	100
55–60	50.0	22.2	16.7	11.1	100
60–64	38.1	19.0	19.0	23.8	100
65 and over	56.3	12.5	15.6	15.6	100

Source: Own research based on the Spanish General Social Survey (SGSS) (CIS, 2018).

Lastly, in reference to the social perception of relationship breakups, this study addresses the question of whether individuals assume that the way in which others view them is altered and, if so, in what way. Thus, both men and women affirm that after the breakup, the view that is held of them remains the same, with men (28.4%) thinking more commonly than women (23.3%) that this perception has improved (Table 3).

Table 3

How do others perceive us following the breakup? (According to sex, %)

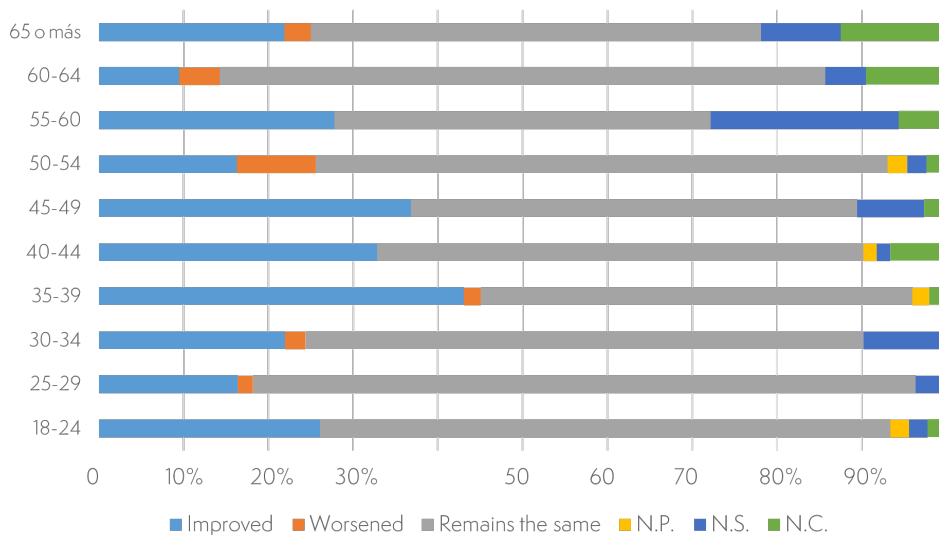
	Better perception	Worse perception	No change	N/A	D/K	N/R	Total
Male	28.4	3.3	60.9	0.9	4.7	1.9	100
Female	23.3	1.6	63.5	1.1	4.8	5.8	100

Source: Own research based on the Spanish General Social Survey (SGSS) (CIS, 2018).

The analysis according to age shows the same trend (Graph 6), with the perception of people after a breakup tending to remain the same. However, there are some insights worth mentioning. The 35–49 age group tends to believe that the perception improves, while those individuals aged 50–54 are, without question, those who believe, to the greatest extent, that it worsens. Likewise, a fact highlighted previously is noted: there appears to be certain taboo around talking about divorce/breakups when observing age groups over 55 years.

Graph 6

Perception after breakup according to age (%)



Source: Own research based on the Spanish General Social Survey (SGSS) (CIS, 2018).

These results show that there has been a transformation in reference to the social perception of the breakup, which does not appear to be a stigma. However, among older population segments, there is a certain tendency to not respond to the question, which undoubtedly opens an avenue for analysis.

6. Conclusions

The aim of this research was to analyse relationship breakup processes and the main reasons in Andalusia. Quantitative methodology was employed using data from the Spanish General Social Survey (SGSS; CIS, 2018).

Firstly, it can be concluded that the profound social transformations in recent decades, in Spain and Andalusia, have led to a greater socialisation of breakups. The main outcome of this is that breakup processes are more normalised and are not a social stigma for those who initiate them. Furthermore, this normalisation is based on emotional aspects that fluctuate in a relatively simple way (Jiménez-Cabello and Ayuso, 2022).

Secondly, divorce and legal separation have occupied the framework of analysis and research in terms of breakups, both at a Spanish national level and in the self-governing region of Andalusia. However, as the results show, in Andalusia the majority of relationship breakups happen outside this sphere: there are more breakups without a legal tie than divorces and/or separations. Undoubtedly, this is part of the result of the profound transformations in society in general, and in the institution of family in particular (Ayuso, 2019; Sánchez and Bote, 2009), which has affected the forms of union between two people. Looking at the data provided by the Institute of Statistics and Cartography of Andalusia (IECA) is enough to prove, for example, the evolution of the number of registered couples in recent years.

To understand this phenomenon, both sex and age become key aspects. Breakups are present in all population segments. If the way in which a couple starts and ends a relationship has changed, so too have the reasons. In Andalusia, aspects such as falling out of love, lack of communication and boredom are central for understanding the reason behind breakups, finding an association with that higher degree of individualism that can be observed in society (Bauman, 2003; Giddens, 1992).

Thirdly, with regard to the person who initiates the breakup, it should be noted that it is predominantly the woman who does so. This aspect is consistent with the results obtained by Jiménez-Cabello and Ayuso (2022) in their study on relationship breakups in Spain. One of the explanations of this phenomenon may lie in the fact that women, in general, believe that the perception of them either remains the same or is more positive following the breakup. Furthermore, as regards social perception, it is worth noting that this appears to be of greater significance for those people in older age groups. Despite it seeming, in general, that ending a relationship does not lead to a worsening of the perception that others have of that person, it is true that older people indicate that it may bring about a negative change, which may stall the person or stop them making the decision. This idea is reinforced with the number of people aged 55 and over who do not respond to the questions related to this topic.

What is really clear is that, in Andalusia, breakups are present across all generations, with this event being experienced with greater normalisation than in the past. The factors for breakups have also changed and today, they are mainly emotional, with all age groups having to work more on managing their emotions.

While truly interesting results have been obtained, this study certainly has some limitations, including the fact that the quantitative data enable inferences to be generalised, but they do not allow for the examination of individuals' beliefs, opinions or attitudes. Furthermore, there are no previous data that enable the analysis of the evolution of the different modalities of breakup, which would give rise to a better understanding of this event. It is precisely these limitations that open the door to future lines of research in the development of statistics that allow for temporal comparisons and comparisons of qualitative work, among others, that give rise to deepening the knowledge of the subject in Andalusia. Likewise, it would be interesting to have more current data that enable the direction of the results in an ever-changing society to be visualised.

7. Funding

This study is funded by the Spanish National Research Plan under project PID2020-115673RB-I00 and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in Andalusia financed by the European Union: Project UMA20-FEDERJA-015.

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ARTICLE/ARTÍCULO

Discourses on the End of ETA Terrorism. Analysis of its Presence in the Written Press in the Basque Country between 2011 and 2014

Los discursos ante el final del terrorismo de ETA. Análisis de su presencia en la prensa escrita del País Vasco entre los años 2011 y 2014

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Received/Recibido: 21/11/2022

Acepted/Aceptado: 02/05/2023

ABSTRACT

In relation to the end of ETA terrorism in the Basque Country, two antagonistic discourses compete for the consolidation of a social narrative. One of these discourses would assume the existence of the terrorist organisation ETA as a consequence of the secular political and social conflict between the Basque Country and the rest of Spain (identified as Model 1); the other would understand the existence of ETA as the cause of this conflict (identified as Model 2). These clashing models define two possible frames of reality (framings) which, in turn, are based on the use of certain psychological defence mechanisms known as states of denial. In this sense, this article aims to demonstrate the degree of penetration of both framings (Models 1 and 2) in the written press not ideologically related to Basque nationalism, between 2011 and 2014 (dependent variable). It also aims to explain how and by means of what mechanisms the adoption of these models can be explained (independent variable).

KEYWORDS: sociology; social problems; the Basque Country; terrorism; ETA.

HOW TO REFERENCE: Miralles Meroño, J. (2023). Los discursos ante el final del terrorismo de ETA. Análisis de su presencia en la prensa escrita del País Vasco entre los años 2011 y 2014. *Revista Centra de Ciencias Sociales*, 2(1), 143-171. <https://doi.org/10.54790/rccs.46>

The Spanish (original) version can be read at <https://doi.org/10.54790/rccs.46>

RESUMEN

En relación con el fin del terrorismo de ETA en el País Vasco, dos discursos antagónicos compiten por la consolidación de un relato social. Uno de estos discursos asumiría la existencia de la organización terrorista ETA como consecuencia del secular conflicto político y social entre el País Vasco y el resto de España (identificado como modelo 1); el otro, entendería la existencia de ETA como la causa de dicho conflicto (identificado como modelo 2). Dichos modelos en pugna definen dos encuadres posibles de la realidad (*framing*), los cuales se encuentran a su vez articulados sobre el recurso a determinados mecanismos psicológicos de defensa denominados estados de negación. En este sentido, este artículo pretende demostrar el grado de penetración de ambos encuadres (modelos 1 y 2) en la prensa escrita no ideológicamente afín al nacionalismo vasco, entre los años 2011 y 2014 (variable dependiente). Asimismo, pretende explicar cómo y mediante qué mecanismos se explica la adopción de dichos modelos (variable independiente).

PALABRAS CLAVE: sociología; problemas sociales; País Vasco; terrorismo; ETA.

1. Introduction

Following approximately fifty years of continuous terrorist activities by ETA, 864 murders (more than three hundred still unsolved), 2,500 wounded, thousands of victims and untold suffering¹, certain sectors of Spanish society insist on adopting a conclusive discourse that legitimises an ideology whose results are no less regrettable than those produced by other types of ideologies while based, however, on the same irrationality.

In the Basque case, this discourse is based on a useful equidistance between victims and perpetrators—essentially based on the equality of human suffering—and on comparing violence of different signs and contexts that have nothing to do with terrorism². Thus, through the use of these devices, the aim is to shape the “framing” of an entire society in relation to the end of ETA terrorism and its associated ideology.

To carry out this shaping, certain sectors of society resort to an arbitrary use of language (Castells, 2013, p. 212), in an area as sensitive as the problem of terrorism and its ideological link to peripheral nationalism, which—as Fernández Soldevilla and López Romo (2012, p. 31) point out—are radical in nature in their very essence; coinciding, almost twenty years later, with the opinion of Professor Mata (1993, p. 45). Furthermore, these sectors also use the powerful propagation vector of a media strongly anchored in the media model known as “polarised pluralism” (Hallin and Mancini, 2008).

Within the framework of strictly formal questions related to content, it is necessary to precisely define the socio-political environments within the Basque Country which are capable of influencing individual and collective thought. In this sense, the nationalist family, mainly represented by the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV/EAJ), has been defined here as “institutional nationalism”. Likewise, the term “Basque nationalism” is also used to define the socio-

political universe formed by the convergence of the previous constellation with the self-styled “nationalist left” (well known in Spanish political jargon as “izquierda abertzale”) which, although representing very distinct social and political sentiments, have often formed a symbiotic tandem whose coinciding aims should not be disregarded. Delving further into the above, the concept of “Basque nationalism” is understood here as that social constellation ascribed to an ideology that seeks to instrumentalise Basque cultural uniqueness for political purposes. Furthermore, as a definition of terrorism, the definition given by Pippa Norris, Montague Kern and Marion Just, “the systematic use of coercive intimidation against civilians for political goals” (Norris et al., 2003, p. 3), will be adopted, given that it includes, with surprising simplicity, all aspects of this complex phenomenon.

2. Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

This research article sets out a conceptual and theoretical framework structured around two aspects: a psychosocial dimension based on certain psychological defence mechanisms known as states of denial, in addition to a sociolinguistic aspect based on the theory of *framing*. Subsequently, the conclusions presented will support this decision.

Stanley Cohen (2005), in his work on victimised societies, sensed the importance of recourse to these defence mechanisms in situations of social violence and related suffering. In the specific case of the treatment of the Basque problem in the media, these same cognitive mechanisms are used which, in turn, are based on the use of the so-called language of social control (Cohen, 1988, pp. 393 ff.). Cohen thus highlights the use of euphemism as a means of softening realities for which verbalising is uncomfortable, through a process of linguistic sweetening that makes them more palatable, both for the sender and the receiver of the message (ibid., p. 398).

However, this language of social control is more complex than mere deception. Community patterns are sufficiently entrenched and historically resonant for lies to be truly believed and genuinely influential. In the latter sense, and as Cohen pointed out, “we must rather look in the direction of self-deception and contradictions...” (ibid., p. 183). Cohen’s assessment adds a new dimension to Castells’ view and reinforces, effectively, what the same author subsequently explains, “people tend to select information that favours the decision they feel inclined to make” (2014, p. 199) or, put another way, “people tend to believe what they want to believe” (ibid., pp. 211, 229).

Moreover, as an additional dimension integrated with the previous psychosocial approach, this research addresses a sociolinguistic dimension based on Robert M. Entman’s framing theory. (1993). The integration of the two aspects highlights the complexity of the framing paradigm referred to by Professor Sádaba when stating, “the disciplinary context that gives rise to framing theory is broad and

diffuse [...] it merges contributions from various sciences such as Psychology, Sociology and Philosophy” (2008, p. 15) which, in turn, reinforces what Entman has already stated in terms of framing as a fragmented paradigm (Sádaba, 1993, p. 51). Furthermore, according to Sádaba (2008, p.19), when referring in Spanish to the term *framing* the term “*encuadre*” is used.

2.1. On denial

Psychology has shown that denial processes are a defensive resource used on a daily basis by a large part of society (Sutherland, 2015). In that regard, Cohen’s work is one of those that convey an uncomfortable truth. His analysis focuses on what has been referred to above as denial, understood as the individual—and collective—process of denying the reality of certain events or their true impact.

People want to keep their lives ordered and, to a degree, everyone wants to stay in control. Traditionally, Western culture has assumed that the individual must be in control of everything that surrounds his or her own existence (Thompson, 1999), which results in a number of adjustment disorders in situations involving profound change in a person’s life plans. Thus, when a person goes into denial, they reject the threatening and/or uncomfortable situation or event to be accepted—even when it is obvious to others—or, on the contrary, admit the event, but deny its consequences or their magnitude (Goleman, 2015).

In this section it will be essential to refer to the work of Cohen (2005), who, together with Castells (2014) and Goleman, represent essential reading on the use of these psychological defence mechanisms and how psychology itself views them. It is also useful to quote the sociologist Erving Goffman (2006) and the “frameworks” he refers to, thus highlighting the close relationship between psychology, sociology and even linguistics, as Goleman himself acknowledges when quoting Michael Weissberg.³

Cohen identifies a full range of strategies adopted by the individual—and the group—in order to arrive at these states of denial. In turn, these strategies make use of all kinds of tools at the disposal of the human mind to convince oneself—and thus others—through “good arguments” that what is observed does not exist as such, or at least has not been correctly interpreted. In that regard, Cohen highlights mechanisms such as (Cohen, 2005, pp. 100 ff.):

- a. Virtual blindness.
- b. The refusal to know or no necessity to know.
- c. Moral indifference.
- d. Diffusion of responsibility and transfer of blame.
- e. Compliance with other loyalties.
- f. Denial of the victim.

- g. Advantageous comparison.
- h. The use of euphemistic language.

It is precisely with regards recourse to these mechanisms that the coding system will be defined and will subsequently be explained in the corresponding section.

2.2. On framing

Over recent decades, Basque nationalism has used language in order to give legitimacy to a nationalist ideology affected by ETA terrorism. This has led to the causes and consequences of terrorist violence being presented in a certain way, framing the reality of terrorism within an interpretative framework that converges with its interests. Basque nationalism is thus in the midst of a battle for the construction and consolidation of a social and political narrative that reinterprets ETA's terrorist violence in accordance with criteria favourable to nationalism itself.

In that sense, as stated above, this research is also sustained by the framing paradigm, adopting the theoretical model developed by Robert M. Entman (1993). Thus, according to the definition, "framing is selecting some aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (*ibid.*, p. 52).

Furthermore, the framing constitutes a suitable instrument for analysing the situation in which a clash of approaches occurs (Canel et al., 2013, p. 192). In that sense, it is useful in explaining why a certain framing model permeates public discourse to the detriment of others. However, before presenting the results obtained, it is necessary to properly contextualise the framing paradigm and its relationship with the media, and to present the specific case of Spain in relation to the media.

In general terms, it could be said that the process of constructing media reality follows two steps: the selection of the constituent elements of the news agenda, "agenda setting" (McCombs, 2006), in other words, the content considered to generate sufficient news interest among the public and, on the other hand, the "frame building" or "framing" of that content within the framework of the corporate ideology that serves as a reference. However, in the specific case of Spain, it is necessary to introduce some preliminary considerations.

In order to position the Spanish case within the context of Western democracies, media systems are divided into three models: "liberal" (Anglo-Saxon), "democratic corporatist" (Central and Northern Europe) and "polarised pluralism" (Mediterranean area) (Hallin and Mancini, 2008). In essence, polarised pluralism argues that political power elites have considerable influence on agenda setting and frame building, as the media themselves are ideologically aligned with the political option from which they wish to benefit.

Regarding Spain, and in the specific case of polarised pluralism, the media have, in turn, consolidated themselves as elites with political and economic power. In that sense, they interact symbiotically with political parties and other power elites, which, in turn, have adopted a position of dependence on the media for the propagation of their ideology. As a result of this interaction, a natural framing process based on the trial-and-error model does not occur socially, but rather the situation described leads to a framing conflict model, motivated by political interest in reinforcing one's own option by attacking or discrediting the opponent. In other words, a situation arises in which different framings emerge, come into conflict, and either triumph or disappear. (Canel et al., 2012, pp. 214 and 215).

3. Hypotheses and Methodology

The formal aspects that make up the structural and analytical apparatus of the research carried out will now be discussed.

3.1. Delimitation of the object of analysis

This research article will present the results obtained from an analysis of the written press between 2011 and 2014, mostly read in the Basque Country, in relation to the penetration of possible framing in the light of an end to ETA terrorism.

The data universe consists of three groups of documents. This division is based on criteria relating to the intrinsic characteristics of the documents that make up the groups:

- a. The first group is made up of a single document drawn up by the Basque Government entitled "*Propuesta de Plan de Paz y Convivencia 2013–2016. Un objetivo de encuentro social*" (Proposal for a Peace and Coexistence Plan 2013–2016. A goal of social engagement), of 11th June 2013 (hereinafter, PPC). The main feature of this document is its institutional nature. From a conceptual point of view, the discourse of this document is precisely that which is taken as a reference in relation to the model that Basque nationalism aims to instil among those who are exposed to its narrative.
- b. A second group is made up of each of the subspaces of the data universe of the written press media outlet *Deia*, whose editorial line is ideologically aligned with institutional Basque nationalism (Fernández and López, 2012, p. 132). These subspaces correspond, in turn, to each of the milestones or specific events that are considered relevant for analysis.
- c. A third group of documents is made up of each of the subspaces within the data universe related to the written press outlets not ideologically aligned with Basque nationalism, which are most widely read in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country (*El Correo*, *El Mundo* and *El País*)⁴. These subspaces correspond, in turn, to each of the milestones or specific events that are considered relevant for analysis.

3.2. Research questions, hypotheses and methodology

Having defined the theoretical and conceptual framework, in addition to the object of study, this research aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What framing models are found in the written press, mostly read in the Basque Country, with respect to the scenario related to the end of ETA terrorism?
2. What level of penetration do these framing models have in the print media?
3. Why is a certain framing adopted that reinforces the perpetrators' narrative against the victims' narrative?
4. Finally, and in connection with the previous question, by means of what mechanisms is the framing emerging from Basque nationalism adopted in the written press?

In this sense, the research questions formulated are crystallised in the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1

In the period between 2011 and 2014 (inclusive), the written press, mostly read in the Basque Country, tends to reproduce content that substantially contributes to an interpretation of the terrorism perpetrated by the terrorist organisation ETA based on the discourse arising from the ideological framework of Basque nationalism (this interpretation is defined as model 1).

Hypothesis 2

The reason for the presence of model 1 in the media can be explained, essentially and among other aspects, from a psychosocial perspective. This psychosocial perspective is characterised by substantial recourse to certain psychological defence mechanisms related to so-called states of denial.

In accordance with the above, an appropriate way of addressing the proposed research problem is a mixed methodological approach based on the following:

- Content analysis (CA): a quantitative analytical approach in line with the dimensions of the theoretical framework related to Robert M. Entman and the theory of framing.
- Critical discourse analysis (CDA): a qualitative analytical approach in line with the dimensions of the theoretical framework related to Stanley Cohen and recourse to states of denial in situations of violence and related social suffering.

3.3. Coding system

By combining the work of Entman and Cohen in relation to the end of ETA terrorism, two framing models (dependent research variable) have been established which are fighting to establish themselves socially in order to contribute to the definition of a specific social narrative regarding the definitive end to “armed actions” decreed by ETA on 20th October 2011.

By measuring the penetration of the two models, the degree to which hypothesis 1 is fulfilled will be determined. These competing framing models are as follows:

- Model 1. The theory of the secular political and social conflict with Spain as the cause of ETA terrorism.
- Model 2. ETA terrorism as an instrument for the imposition of a nationalist model.

Further defining the parameters of the study, with regard to the types of units of analysis, the “sample units”⁵ will be composed of each of the pages contained in the subspaces selected in accordance with the purpose of the research. Furthermore, the “recording units” will be represented by each of the content samples that can be classified within one or more of the categories listed below. Finally, the “context units” will be given by the inclusion of the recording units themselves in the corresponding framing which, in turn, acquires its wording according to the defined categories or indicators.

In that sense, a fundamental part of any research is the determination of an appropriate coding system that allows for the verification of the hypothesis(es) proposed in the research. This coding system is embodied in a set of categories that are essential to the coding process. It is not for nothing that Berelson (1952, p. 147) states that content analysis stands or falls as a result of its categories.

Therefore, in order to explain the reasons for the penetration of the previously defined models, the definition of a series of categories based on recourse to the so-called states of denial is implemented. The measurement of these categories contributes to the verification of research hypothesis 2 by answering the following question: by means of what mechanisms and how is the presence of models 1 and 2 expressed in relation to the end of ETA terrorism in the print media analysed? (independent research variable). These categories are the following:

- a. Conferring credibility on ETA.
- b. ETA as an important socio-political player.
- c. ETA as a terrorist organisation.

- d. Questioning the legitimacy and/or validity of actions by the Spanish state's law enforcement forces and agencies.
- e. Questioning and/or transcending the existing political and/or legal framework.
- f. Distortion of the reality regarding ETA terrorism.
- g. Equivalence between victims of ETA terrorism and other victims.
- h. Equivalence between ETA terrorism and legitimate state violence.
- i. Internationalisation of the Basque problem with the aim of promoting the existence of "conflict theory".
- j. Transfer of responsibility for solving the Basque problem to society and state institutions.
- k. Institutional assimilation and dissemination of the nationalist interpretation.
- l. Diffusion of responsibility and transfer of blame.
- m. Fantasy warfare and euphemistic language.
- n. Advantageous comparison.
- o. Moral distancing from ETA terrorism.
- p. Legitimation of ETA's existence as a perpetrator of violence.
- q. Legitimation of ETA's ideological framework.

Thus, having defined the above categories, it was necessary to create a coding tool to quantify their presence in each of the sample units for the various data subspaces. In that sense, the data matrix in Table 1 was designed as part of the analytical apparatus to carry out this coding process.

- IVC statement of 21st February 2014 (analysing the period from 17th February 2014 to 2nd March 2014).

In accordance with the above, Table 2 shows the volume of samples analysed, amounting to a total of 1,436 sample units and 41,130 recording units.

Table 2

Documentary resources analysed

	Deia		El Correo		El Mundo		El País		Basque Government Peace Plan 11-06-2013		Totals	
	Pages	Comments	Pages	Comments	Pages	Comments	Pages	Comments	Pages	Comments	Pages	Comments
Legalisation of Bildu (5th May 2011) 29-04-2011/12-05-2011	49	1,062	82	1,797	84	1,398	53	1,108			268	5,365
The Aiete Conference (17th October 2011) 10-10-2011/24-10-2011												
ETA's definitive ceasefire announcement (20th October 2011) 13-10-2011/27-10-2011	153	6,016	135	3,955	109	3,591	107	3,413			504	16,975
Legalisation of Sortu (20th June 2012) 14-06-2012/27-06-2012	44	1,024	57	1,382	50	1,338	39	1,037			190	4,781
Basque Government Peace Plan 11-06-2103									74	1,625	74	1,625
Durango former ETA prisoners press conference (4th January 2014) 29-12-2013/11-01-2014	54	2,325	57	1,868	47	1,541	39	1,580			197	7,314
IVC statement (21st February 2014) 17-02-2014/02-03-2014	58	2,118	67	1,246	43	1,051	35	655			203	5,070
Totals	358	12,545	398	10,248	333	8,919	273	7,793	74	1,625	1,436	41,130

Source: Own research.

4. Results

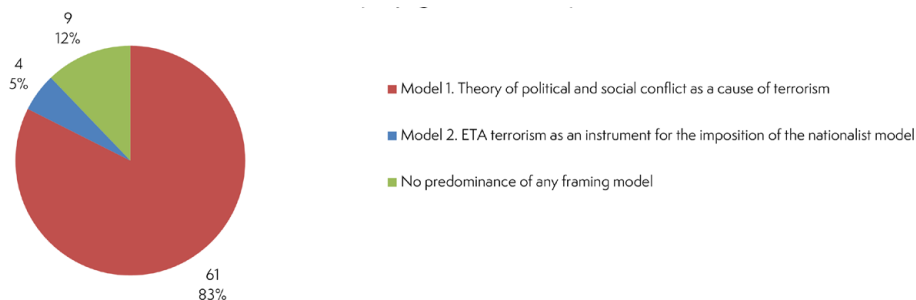
Having established the above constraints, the analysis performed can now be presented.

4.1. Comparative analysis between the PPC and Deia, and methodological implications

First, the results of the PPC analysis are given. This first analysis is directed towards checking the functionality of the analytical tools proposed, as can be seen in Graph 1.

Graph 1

Analysis of the Basque Government's Peace and Coexistence Plan (11th June 2013)



Source: Miralles (2016, p. 157).

While the analysis of the PPC confirms the functionality of the analytical tools, the institutional nature of this document invalidates its use as a point of reference in the analysis of print media. This issue will be resolved by adopting *Deia* as the point of reference for the rest of the written press analysis.

Likewise, the choice of *Deia* and its subsequent analysis—when compared with the analysis of the PPC—provides data whose convergence contributes towards consolidating the validity and reliability of the proposed analytical tools. This convergence—initially suspected—was justified by the fact that *Deia* is the written press media outlet whose editorial line most faithfully follows (Fernández and López, 2012, p. 132) the political line of institutional Basque nationalism, which, in short, is the political formation that was in government in the Basque Autonomous Community at the time of the drafting of the PPC.

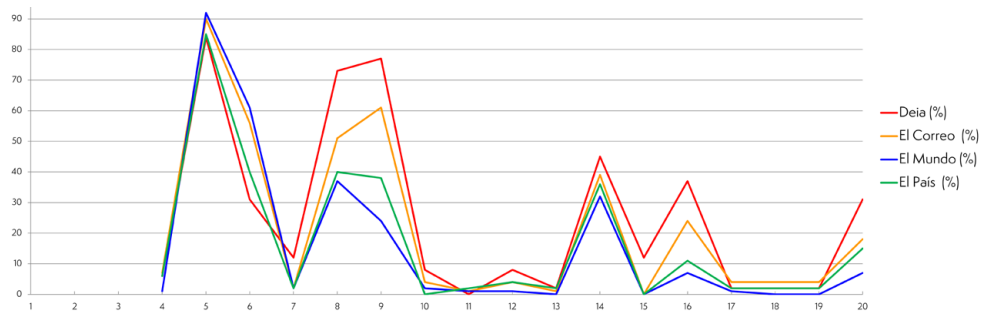
However, with regard to the reliability and validity of the research as a whole, some points must be raised. On the one hand, the reliability⁶ of the research is supported by the consistency found when comparing the results obtained in the same publication over time, in addition to the consistency of patterns in the behaviour of publications in the same period of analysis (Graphs 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7). As this is a manual analysis, the researcher's performance of the analysis involves a certain degree of subjectivity that should not be overlooked. However, this situation has been minimised through an adequate definition of categorisations and their rigorous quantification (Berelson, 1952, p. 147).

On the other hand, validity⁷ was also a cause for concern. However, the consistency shown by comparing the results of the analysis of the PPC and *Deia* was an early indication of that validity.

Further to the above, a series of comparative graphs are attached, whose consistency in patterns is revealing in terms of the robustness of the research, from the point of view of its reliability and validity.

Graph 2

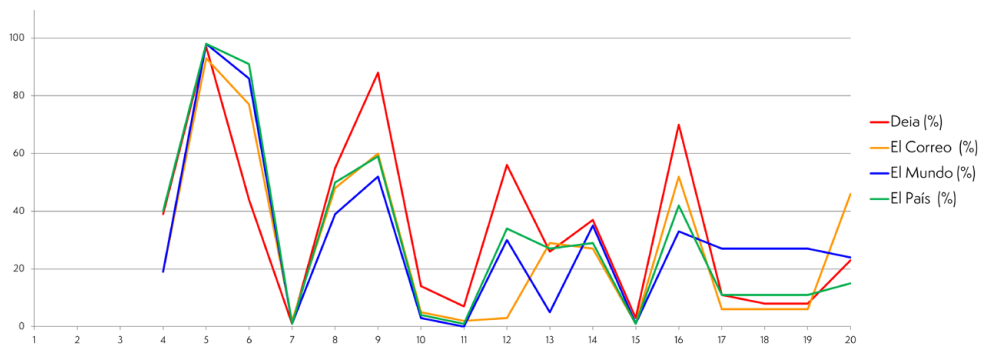
“Legalisation of Bildu” comparative analysis.



Source: Own research.

Graph 3

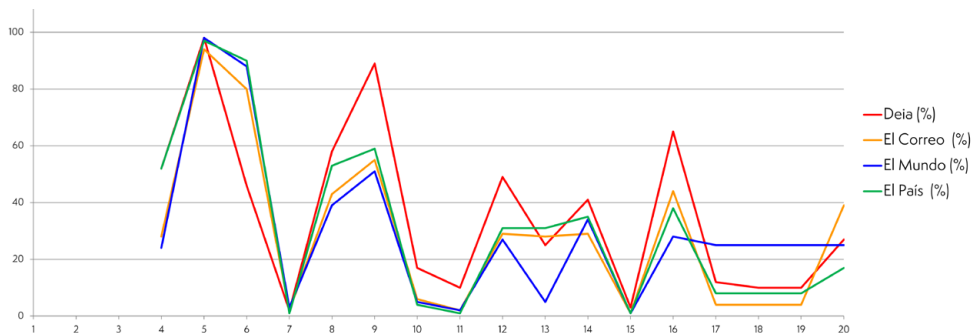
“The Aiete Conference” comparative analysis.



Source: Own research.

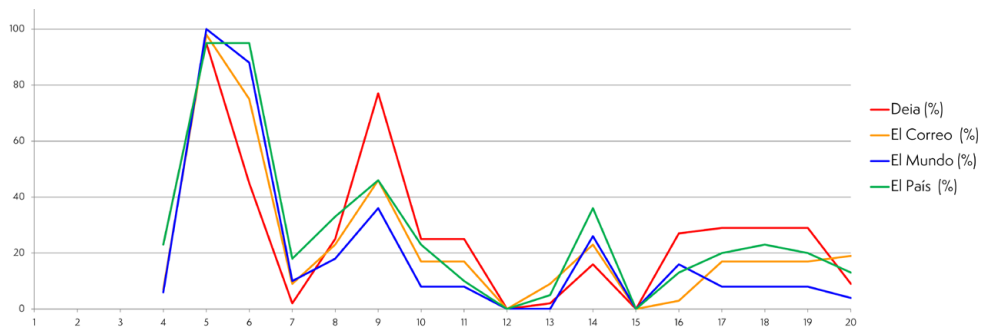
Graph 4

“ETA’s definitive ceasefire announcement” comparative analysis.



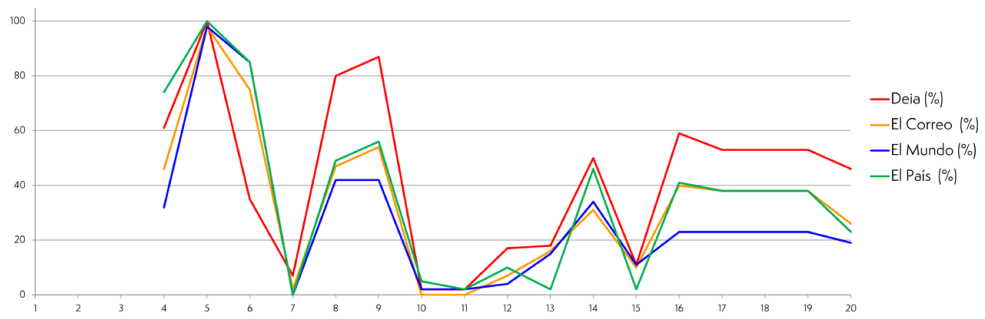
Source: Own research.

Graph 5
 “Legalisation of Sortu” comparative analysis.



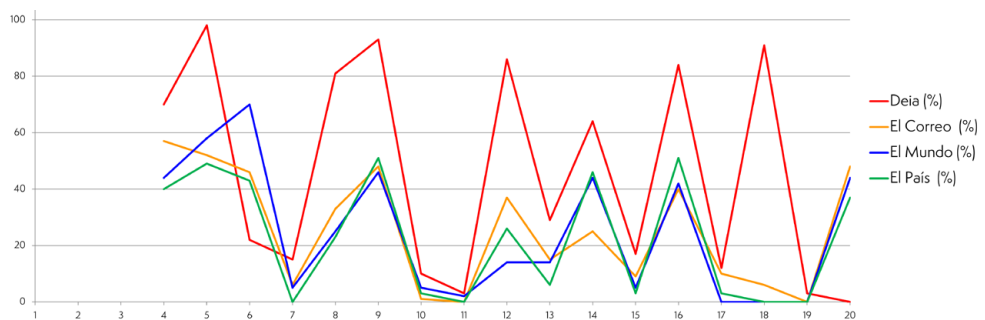
Source: Own research.

Graph 6
 “Durango former ETA prisoners press conference” comparative analysis.



Source: Own research.

Graph 7
 “IVC statement” comparative analysis.



Source: Own research.

Furthermore, it is relevant that, over a period of two years, 1,436 sample units containing 41,130 recording units were manually coded. In that respect, it is clear that such a volume of data should substantially reduce the error differential inherent in any measurement performed manually throughout the course of an analysis without the intervention of computerised systems. Due to the limitations of the length of this article, it is not possible to elaborate on this aspect of paramount importance in the field of social sciences. However, the interested reader may learn more by resorting to the triangulation proposal contained in the research inspiring this article (Miralles, 2016, p. 471).

Graph 8 and Table 3 below show the results of the analysis of *Deia* which demonstrate the consistency with the analysis of the PPC (deviations relating to events connected with Sortu and IVC will be clarified later).

Table 3

Deia. Model 1 penetration results.

Deia readers influenced by model 1

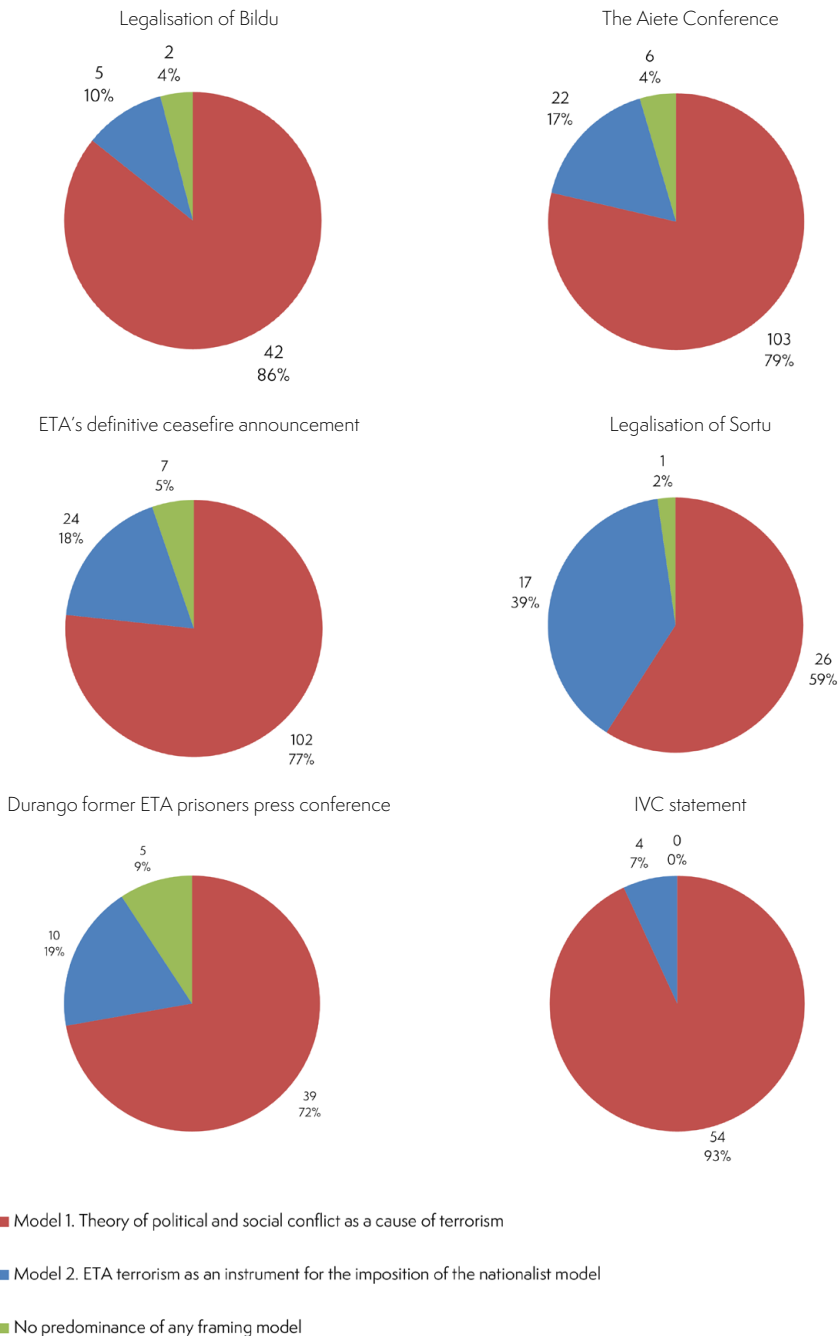
Periods analysed	Bildu	Aiete	ETA cease-fire	Sortu	Durango	IVC	Estimated mean
% Mod. 1	86	79	77	59	72	93	77.67
No. readers	76,540	70,310	68,530	52,510	64,080	82,770	69,126 ⁸

Source: Own research based on data obtained during research combined with the *Deia* audience ranking (89,000 readers, EGM [General Media Research] year 3, 2013).

Finally, and in view of the results, it can be concluded that:

- The analytical tools proposed for the research are validated and reliable, given the consistency of the results obtained.
- Furthermore, and taking into account the estimate made by *El Correo*⁹ (at the beginning of 2014), it is concluded that approximately 69,000 *Deia* readers are influenced by this media outlet's agenda of attributes in relation to the end of the ETA terrorism scenario, presenting it in accordance with the interpretative framework defined by model 1¹⁰.

Figure 8
Deia analysis



Source: Own research.

4.2. Analysis of *El Correo*, *El Mundo* and *El País*

Tables 4, 5 and 6 present the results obtained from the analysis of the penetration of model 1 in *El Correo*, *El Mundo* and *El País*, respectively.

Table 4

El Correo. Model 1 penetration results.

El Correo readers influenced by model 1

Periods analysed	Bildu	Aiete	ETA cease-fire	Sortu	Durango	IVC	Estimated mean
% Mod. 1	43	39	37	31	37	54	40.17
No. readers	181,460	164,580	156,140	130,820	156,140	227,880	169,517

Source: Own research based on data obtained during research combined with the *El Correo* audience ranking (422,000 readers, EGM year 3, 2013).

Table 5

El Mundo. Model 1 penetration results.

El Mundo readers influenced by model 1

Periods analysed	Bildu	Aiete	ETA cease-fire	Sortu	Durango	IVC	Estimated mean
% Mod. 1	26	34	34	20	17	44	29.17
No. readers	6,500	8,500	8,500	5,000	4,250	11,000	7,292

Source: Own research based on data obtained during research combined with the *El Mundo* audience ranking (25,000 readers, EGM year 3, 2013).

Table 6

El País. Model 1 penetration results.

El País readers influenced by model 1

Periods analysed	Bildu	Aiete	ETA cease-fire	Sortu	Durango	IVC	Estimated mean
% Mod. 1	34	38	36	13	33	43	32.83
No. readers	16,320	18,240	17,280	6,240	15,840	20,640	15,758

Source: Own research based on data obtained during research combined with the *El País* audience ranking (48,000 readers, EGM year 3, 2013).

Taking into account the above data, it can be concluded that approximately 69,000 *Deia* readers are influenced by the media outlet's agenda of attributes (minor level of the agenda) in relation to the end of ETA terrorism. In that sense, *Deia* is the publication with the highest level of penetration of model 1, with an arithmetic mean of 77.67% (Table 3). Likewise, after analysing the rest of the publications selected for this research, the publication with the highest degree of penetration of model 1 is *El Correo* (40.17%, according to Table 4), followed by *El País* (32.83%, according to Table 6). In last place is *El Mundo* (29.17%, according to Table 5).

Taking these results into consideration, and combining them with the population data, Table 7 is obtained, which represents a synthesis of the above. In this table the values represent the arithmetic mean penetration of model 1 in the total media analysed, together with the number of readers influenced by model 1.

Table 7

Model 1 penetration arithmetic means.

Readers influenced by model 1 (Deia, El Correo, El Mundo and El País)

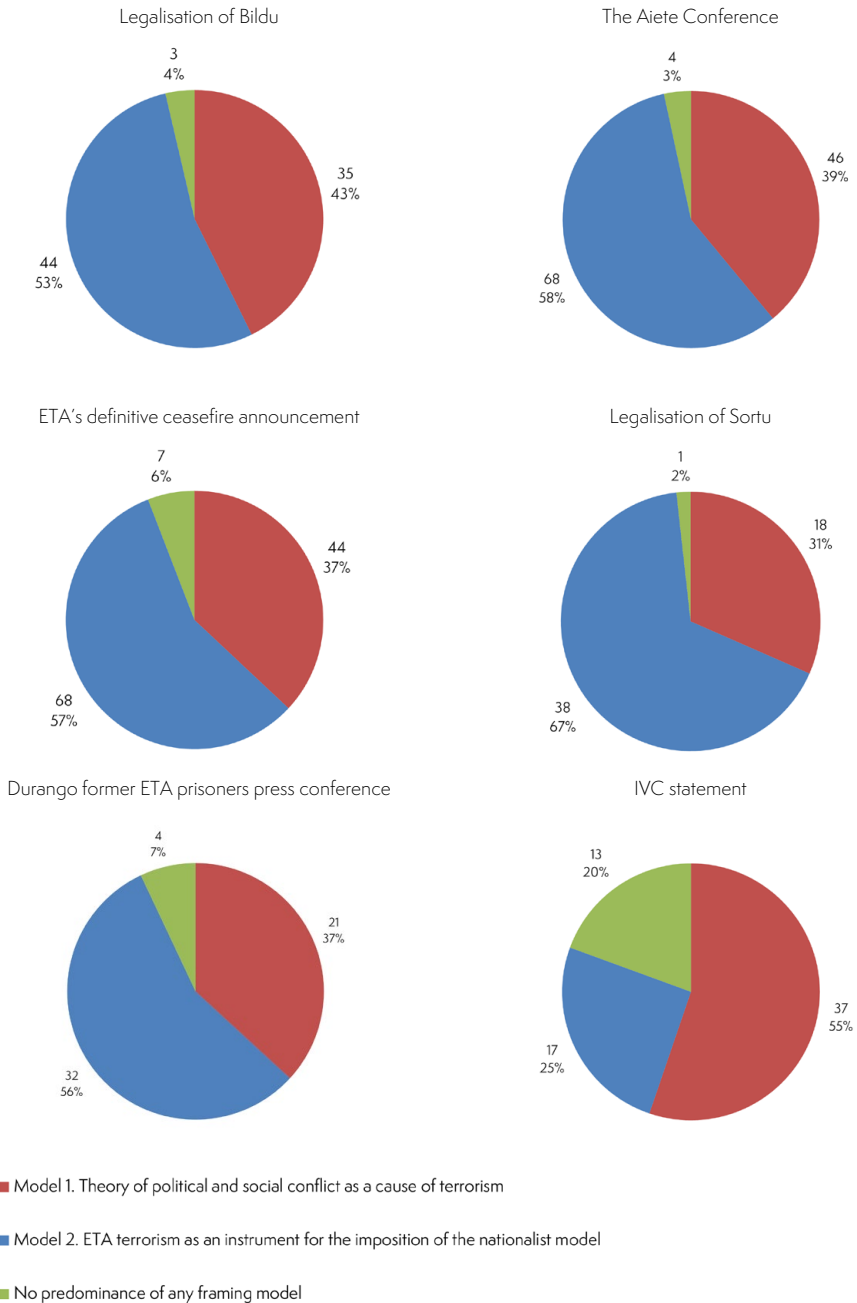
Periods analysed	Bildu	Aiete	ETA cease-fire	Sortu	Durango	IVC	Estimated mean
% Mod. 1	47.25	47.50	46	30.75	39.75	58.50	44.96
No. readers	280,820	261,630	250,450	194,570	240,310	342,290	262,556

Source: Own research based on data obtained during research combined with the Basque press audience ranking (584,000 readers, EGM year 3, 2013).

4.3. Comparative analysis of publications

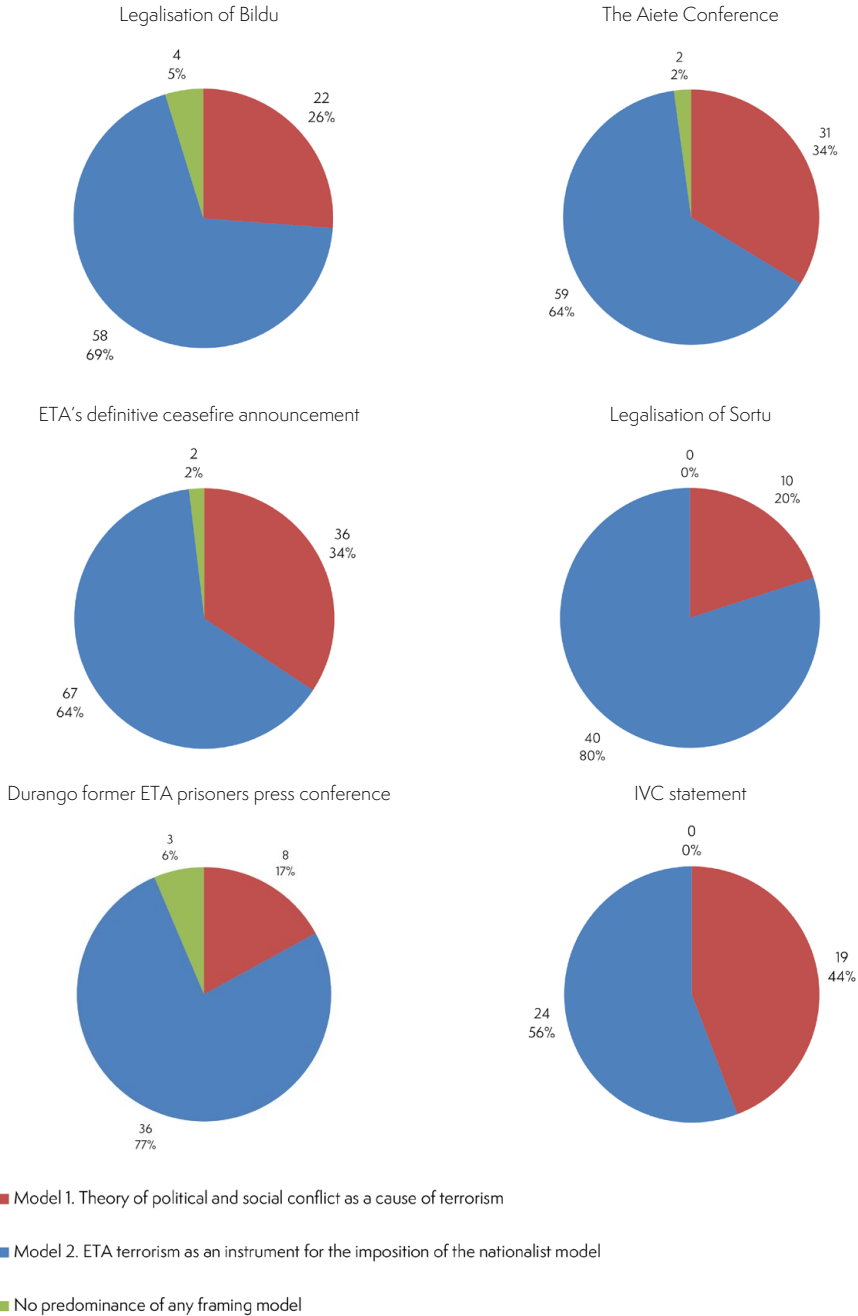
In order to facilitate greater understanding of the above data, it was considered appropriate to provide the reader with the following series of graphs comparing the various publications analysed, and their subsequent analysis:

Graph 9
El Correo analysis



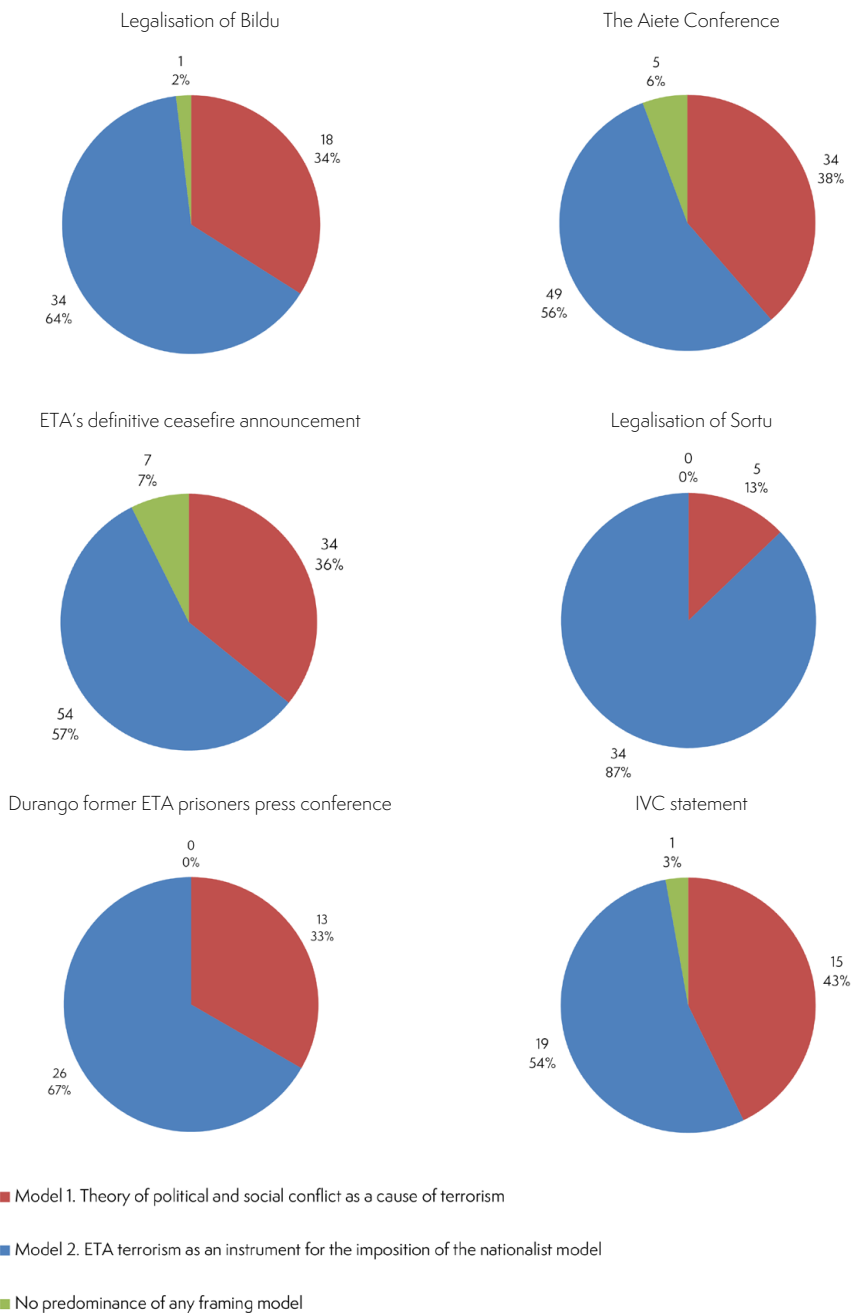
Source: Own research.

Graph 10
El Mundo analysis



Source: Own research.

Graph 11
El País analysis



Source: Own research.

A comparative study of Graphs 8, 9, 10 and 11 leads to the conclusions shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Comparative analysis between publications on penetration of model 1 (%)

Publication	Deia	El Correo	El Mundo	El País
Order of highest to lowest penetration of model 1 according to historical milestone	IVC (93)	IVC (55)	IVC (44)	IVC (43)
	Bildu (86)	Bildu (43)	ETA ceasefire (34)	Aiete (38)
	Aiete (79)	Aiete (39)	Aiete (34)	ETA ceasefire (36)
	ETA ceasefire (77)	ETA ceasefire (37)	Bildu (26)	Bildu (34)
	Durango (72)	Durango (37)	Sortu (20)	Durango (33)
	Sortu (59)	Sortu (31)	Durango (17)	Sortu (13)

Source: Own research.

The treatment given to the IVC milestone, in the publications as a whole, could reflect the ridiculous theatricality of the staging which, nevertheless, had significant backing from the Basque Government and Basque president (*lehendakari*) Urkullu himself, hence its notable presence in *Deia*, and in the rest of the publications, which could well be interpreted as an attempt to politically legitimise the Basque Government's actions.

Following on from that, the milestones with the highest penetration of model 1 correspond to Bildu, Aiete and the ETA ceasefire. The above shows the importance of these events in the agenda of objects (major level of the agenda), as well as attributes (minor level of the agenda), for the analysed media.

In *Deia*, as in *El Correo*, *El Mundo* and *El País*, a significant drop in the penetration of model 1 in the Sortu milestone can be seen. This circumstance is interpreted within the political context of the 2012 regional and local elections. In that sense, *Deia* implemented a reduction in the discourse of model 1, in what is interpreted as an attempt to capture—for the benefit of the PNV (Basque Nationalist Party)—the pro-Basque vote of the social-democratic electorate in the Basque Country. Furthermore, *El Correo*, *El Mundo* and *El País* reduced the level of penetration of the discourse of model 1, motivated by what is interpreted as an attempt to capture—for the benefit of the PSE (Socialist Party of the Basque Country)—the more progressive vote of the conservative electorate in the Basque Country. This situation is evidence of the important repercussion of the political agenda on the media's agenda of attributes in order to, in some way, minimise the social impact of Sortu's discourse in relation to the distribution of electoral quotas which, at that time, was interpreted by the rest of the political formations as a real threat to their electoral interests.

5. Conclusions

This article, which is based on constructivist assumptions in relation to the generative power of language as a constructor of realities, has focused on the period of time related to the end of ETA terrorism, with the aim of determining the penetration of the interpretative framework of Basque nationalism (model 1) in the written press mainly read in the Basque Country.

It is clear that there is significant convergence between two of the most influential theories of recent years in relation to the media, political power and, in turn, their relationship with society as a whole, *framing* theory and *agenda setting* theory.

Furthermore, and in relation to agenda setting, research in recent decades has shown the important influence of the media agenda on the public agenda, thus demonstrating the validity of Lippmann's (1922, p. 29) and Cohen's (1963, p. 13) earlier assertions regarding the role of the media in relation to their capacity to influence what the public should think.

However, it is clear that the media not only play a major role in influencing the public's agenda of objects, but also exercise a decisive influence on the agenda of attributes or minor level of the agenda. The question that must be asked is, how do the media achieve this transfer of influence to the public?

According to McCombs, the answer is through "convincing arguments", which the author identifies with framing. By means of these convincing arguments the media outlet's agenda of attributes (minor level of the agenda, in other words, how to think about something) is transferred to the public's agenda of objects (McCombs, 2006, p. 179). This is consistent with Cohen's "good arguments", and Goffman's "framing" (referred to at the beginning of the article), from a different perspective.

Based on the above premises, sufficient data has been provided to determine the degree of penetration of Basque nationalist discourse regarding the end of ETA terrorism in the non-ideologically sympathetic media. In that sense, and in connection with the theoretical principles outlined above, relevant results have been found.

On the one hand, the analyses carried out on the PPC and *Deia* have shown significant convergence of the results obtained in terms of the level of penetration of the interpretative framework of model 1 in a media outlet traditionally considered to be akin to the ideological line of institutional Basque nationalism. This evidence shows the influence of a certain political discourse on the shaping of the media agenda in question and, more specifically, on the agenda of attributes (minor level of the agenda).

The above leads to the conclusion that the discourse of institutional Basque nationalism, in relation to the end of ETA terrorism, is overwhelmingly aimed at

the deliberate promotion of the framing defined by model 1 among those exposed to specific media.

Furthermore, in studying framing theory, Entman defined four variables that, in his opinion, make it possible to evaluate the ability of a given framing to be successful in penetrating the public: a) motivations; b) power to influence; c) strategy; and, finally, d) cultural congruence (Entman, 2004, pp. 13–17 and 90–91).

In that sense, connections have been deduced that evoke theories on the influence of political and economic power elites on the media, even influencing the defining of the latter's agendas, which in turn, in certain cases, end up becoming power elites.

In the particular case of Spain, this influence has resulted in the media scenario known as polarised pluralism. These situations described in relation to the symbiosis between political power and the media seem to have a clear connection with the Entman variables, power to influence and strategy which, as has been demonstrated, are, in turn, influenced by certain psychological defence mechanisms—states of denial—in the face of situations involving social violence and related suffering.

The existence of certain pressure groups in the Basque Country linked to the ideological sphere of institutional Basque nationalism itself helps to explain the validity of two of the variables pointed out by Entman—strategy and power to influence—which, in synergy with motivations and cultural congruence, contribute to the social penetration of a given framing. Both variables are applicable to a certain political, economic and social elite in the Basque Country (which could be considered as a subset of the passive observers), relevant in terms of their capacity to contribute to the social penetration of the framing defined by model 1.

Likewise, the capacity of this pressure group helps to validate Entman's cascade activation model (2003, pp. 514–432) regarding the origin of the *frames*, and the connections of the latter with the mechanisms of power and their relationship to *agenda setting* within an environment of *polarised pluralism*. This is an environment in which the media are also considerably politicised, where there is a high level of political parallelism, and significant clientelism between politics and the media (Hallin and Mancini, 2008, p. 91).

From the point of view of a further dimension of the research carried out, it seems clear that the close link between motivations and cultural congruence with one's own states of denial has also been demonstrated. It is important to point out that these motivations and cultural congruence constitute, in the case of the Basque Country, elements shared by perpetrators and passive observers, undoubtedly contributing to the adoption of a certain type of framing by both, to the detriment of the victim's framing. Obviously, at this stage of the problem, no one wants to be a systematic violator of human rights, nor an uncaring spectator of the suffering of others (both of which are powerful motivations). Therefore, those mechanisms

for altering reality, such as lessening the feeling of guilt, distorting the reality of terrorism, transferring one’s own responsibility, etc., will have widespread social acceptance (cultural congruence) among that part of the population that cannot be categorised as a victim of violence yet refuses to be identified as a victimiser or a facilitator of victimisation (motivations).

This use of language is used in order to socially structure a certain perception of reality, and to do so by resorting to euphemism. At the same time, such language is articulated on the basis of other discursive elements bearing great symbolic weight that, within a social context affected by a profound subculture of violence (Llera, 2012, p. 314), acquire a significant cultural resonance within a certain social group. Furthermore, this cultural resonance is enhanced by recourse to the aforementioned mechanisms of self-deception or states of denial.

In addition, returning to Entman and his definition of framing(1993, p. 52), it is revealing to draw a comparison between this definition and Cohen’s conclusion regarding denial. Thus, according to Cohen, “[...] denial, in conclusion, includes cognition (not acknowledging the facts), emotion (not feeling, not being affected), morality (not acknowledging wrongdoing or responsibility) and action (not taking active steps in response to knowledge)” (2005, p. 29). In that sense, it seems clear that the relationship between framing and denial is much closer than one might initially imagine. This relationship would lead to the conclusion that denial—as defined by Cohen—could be interpreted as a particular type of frame; a “no frame needed” state of mind. In this particular state, the individual—or group—denies all framing processes, in the sense that nothing has happened in accordance with the psychological, political or moral implications of the events that have taken place.

From this point of view, the apparent weakness of the framing paradigm—as a fractured paradigm—becomes a strength, in the sense of its capacity and flexibility to integrate particular aspects of the research environments which, in turn, are inescapable in order to adequately assess the reasons for the presence of certain frames in relation to a specific situation.

Table 9
Connections between framing and denial

Definition of FRAMING (Entman)	Definition of DENIAL (Cohen)	Mental state NO FRAME NEEDED
Select some aspects of the perceived reality	Cognition (failure to acknowledge the facts)	There are no events
In order to define the problem, an interpretation of its causes	Emotions (unfeeling, unmoved)	No need to seek explanations
Moral assessment	Morality (failure to acknowledge wrongdoing or responsibility)	There is no need for any moral assessment
Recommend treatment based on the problem	Action (not taking active measures in response to knowledge)	There is no need to act

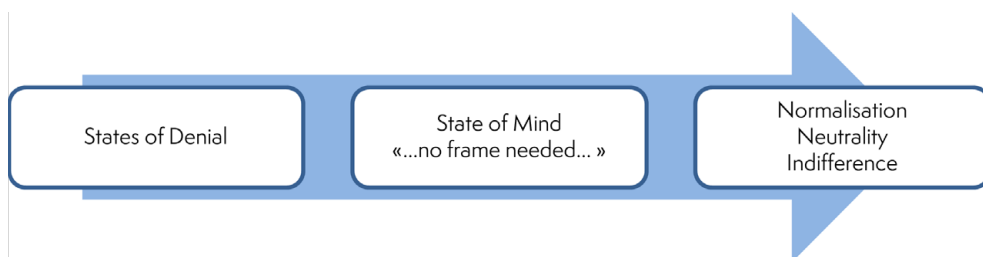
Source: Own research.

This “no frame needed” mental state would be an antecedent related to another of the processes defined by Cohen, namely normalisation (2005, pp. 71, 207 and 208). The latter concept suggests that, “events and images that are once perceived as unusual, unpleasant or even intolerable are eventually accepted as normal [...] what was once perceived as disturbing and anomalous—a sense that things were not as they should be—now becomes normal, even tolerable [...] normalisation becomes neutrality, and then, indifference”.

In short, by resorting to states of denial, a special type of frame may be reached; a state that denies any need to explain reality beyond the perceived “normality” (*no frame needed*) and which, in the end, leads to a state of normalisation, neutrality and, finally, indifference. A useful rationalisation so that the action of looking the other way is not ethically uncomfortable (Sontag, 2013, pp. 86 ff.).

Graph 12

Transition from denial to normalisation



Source: Own research.

Finally, it is clear that Basque nationalism ends up framing the events involved in the end of ETA terrorism through the use of a narrative that is undoubtedly useful for the purposes of nationalism itself. Likewise, this framing ends up fostering a whole series of social constructs which, with respect to the future, have the capacity to alter the historical narrative in relation to an issue as important as the end of ETA terrorism. In that sense, it must be concluded that, as a society, the advancement of a dangerous revisionist process is in progress which, if consolidated, could blur the devastating and objective reality of ETA terrorism and replace it with another reality that is friendlier, more equidistant and, in short, more comfortable for everyone, except for the victims.

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Notes

1 Figures obtained from the document *Estudio sobre los Derechos de las Víctimas de ETA. Su situación actual* (The rights of ETA victims. Their situation today). <https://www.defensordelpueblo.es/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/VictimasETA.pdf>

2 In that sense, for the purposes of this article, it is relevant to refer to the “*Propuesta de Plan de Paz y Convivencia 2013–2016. Un objetivo de encuentro social*” (Proposal for a Peace and Coexistence Plan 2013–2016. A goal of social engagement), 11th June 2013 (hereinafter, PPC). Subsequently, the Basque Government revised the document which was published in November 2013 at <http://www.irekia.euskadi.eus/es/debates/881?stage=conclusions>

3 In the words of Weissberg, “Semantics plays a very important role in downplaying what is really happening, and all sorts of euphemisms are used to try to hide what happens” (Goleman, 2015, p. 26).

4 *Encuesta General de Medios (EGM), 3º año móvil 2013* (Spanish General Media Research, year 3, 2013) in reference to the Basque Country.

5 In that sense, in relation to the PPC, all the pages (74) of the document have been analysed. In the case of the written press, the pages corresponding to the front page, editorials and political or opinion section articles whose contents are directly related to the purpose of the research and to the time–line milestone under analysis have been selected. Photographs and other graphic representations have not been taken into account for the analysis. Likewise, the texts at the foot of the photographs have not been taken into account.

6 In line with Krippendorff, “a reliable procedure is one that yields the same results for the same sets of phenomena, regardless of the circumstances of its application [...] reliability ensures that the analytical results represent something real” (1990, p. 192).

7 Similarly, according to Krippendorff, “to verify validity [...] the results of a procedure must fit with what is known to be ‘true’ or what is already presumed to be valid [...] validity ensures that such results represent what they purport to represent” (1990, p. 192).

8 As a result of applying the triangulation hypothesis, “The number of readers influenced in each media outlet by Model 1 will be the value resulting from applying the penetration coefficient of Model 1 in that outlet to the total number of readers exposed to that medium outlet” (Miralles, 2016, p. 472).

9 General Summary of the General Media Research, year 3, 2013, in reference to the Basque Country. <http://info.elcorreo.com/envios/marketing/tarifas-2014/tarifas-el-correo-2014.pdf>

10 In accordance with McCombs’ (2006) thesis, which points to the convergence between the media agenda and the public agenda.

REVIEWS/

RESEÑAS

REVIEW/RESEÑA

Fernando Domínguez. *Still Life. Ecologies of the Modern Imagination at the Art Museum*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2020

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El libro que tenemos entre manos, *Still Life. Ecologies of the Modern Imagination at the Art Museum*, aunque redactado en inglés y publicado en Estados Unidos, está escrito por un antropólogo madrileño, Fernando Domínguez Rubio, quien actualmente ejerce como profesor en la Universidad de California. La obra es el resultado de ocho años de trabajo de campo en el Museo de Arte Moderno de Nueva York (MoMA), así como de una carrera intelectual dedicada a la reflexión sobre los objetos (Domínguez, 2008; 2016). En este último sentido, en tanto que se preocupa por cuestiones ontológicas relativas a los procesos de materialización de los que los humanos son parte, podríamos situar al autor en ese giro postsocial dentro de las humanidades que han supuesto los nuevos materialismos (Coole y Frost, 2010; Tuin y Dolphijn, 2012). Dado que la apuesta por la heterogeneidad es común entre esta corriente, Domínguez Rubio trae consigo abordajes de la antropología, los estudios de ciencia y tecnología, la teoría feminista, o de nuevos campos dentro de los estudios de cultura material como, por ejemplo, los «Discard Studies». De igual modo, el libro engarza con discusiones más amplias dentro del mundo del arte, el diseño o la arquitectura.

De manera ligera, pero con avidez, *Still Life* nos permite pasear sin restricciones por todo el museo para conocer a fondo esa categoría que ha vehiculado buena parte de nuestra imaginación moderna, pero que, ahora, tras leer al profesor Domínguez, se siente algo extravagante: el «arte». Así, como si de un *tour* o visita guiada se tratase, conocemos a los distintos edificios, departamentos, pinceladas, salas, aprendizajes corporales, artistas, grietas, curadores, *performances*, laboratorios, juego de luces, conservadores, mugre o trabajadores de la limpieza, para descubrir que una institución como el MoMA no termina en sus muros: narrativas coloniales, condiciones higrotérmicas, almacenes, viajes transatlánticos, compendios legales o economías morales, entre otros engranajes, constituyen esa gran máquina estética que es el museo. Para inspeccionarla, para descubrir cómo funciona, el antropólogo utiliza herramientas que, según considera, habrían estado en desuso en la teoría social, confeccionando

lo que denomina un «enfoque ecológico»: una reflexión y observación rigurosa sobre todo aquello concerniente a los objetos y su materialidad, a los factores abióticos y a las prácticas mundanas u ordinarias. Mediante este particular acercamiento también trata de introducirse empírica, etnográficamente, en un debate que la crítica filosófica o estética ha retomado recientemente, pero que durante largo tiempo ha soslayado: la relación cosa-objeto. Cuando postula la discrepancia entre objeto y cosa, resuenan en Domínguez Rubio ideas como las de, entre otros, el antropólogo Tim Ingold, para quien tomar la cosa por objeto es verla como lo que es: forma completa y acabada (2012, p. 435), mientras que atender a su materialidad de manera ecológica significa acercarse a entidades como las obras de arte como una muestra de material en movimiento que solo en unas posiciones determinadas se constituye como objeto al que podemos atribuir una serie de valores o significados. La verdad que estaría tratando de negar el arte es que, en un mundo de materiales, no hay nada terminado, solo procesos de tomar-forma. Lo material es una sustancia deviniendo. O, como lo expresaría Donna Haraway, deviniendo-con, pues: «Naturalezas, culturas, sujetos y objetos no preexisten a sus configuraciones entrelazadas en el mundo» (2016/2019, p. 36).

Teniendo presentes estas premisas, echamos a andar hasta encontrarnos con un texto bien nutrido de ejemplos y montado a partir de un esquema cuatripartito.

En una primera parte, «ecologías del cuidado», el antropólogo ilumina el lugar que ocupan en el museo las tareas de reparación, restauración, conservación, mantenimiento, limpieza o enmendamiento. Esto es: la labor mimeográfica, aquellas prácticas dedicadas a producir lo mismo. Por tanto, puede que no viendo en la atención desmesurada por el gesto artístico más que un reducto de nuestro excepcionalismo humanista (Schaeffer, 2009), se posiciona más allá del interés por lo nuevo, por el genio inventivo, por la actividad neográfica. Trata, así, de desestabilizar la frontera entre lo creativo y lo reproductivo: entre arte y conservación. En realidad, según nos cuenta nuestro autor, son las labores mimeográficas las que mantienen al arte como arte, pues son ellas las que participan de la ejecutabilidad de los objetos. Cuidando de sus materiales mantienen el régimen de objetualidad a partir del cual se han configurado las categorías del dictado estético moderno: autenticidad, autoría, etc. Escanear mediante rayos X, encontrar el disolvente adecuado o utilizar bastoncillos de algodón para borrar manchas con la mayor de las delicadezas se vuelven procedimientos indispensables en el intento de separar el arte de la suciedad, lo intencional de lo inintencionado, lo legítimo de lo ilegítimo o, en última instancia, la naturaleza de la cultura. No obstante, Latour ya nos avisó de que la clave de la Constitución moderna es el ocultamiento de la tarea de traducción o mediación (Latour, 1993/2007), por lo cual, aun siendo la encargada de performar su semejanza y estabilidad, la labor mimeográfica se pretende invisible en favor de la integridad y la inmutabilidad del objeto. Por eso, Domínguez Rubio está aquí para recordarnos que borrar su presencia es obviar la fragilidad de la materialidad. Es obviar que un objeto no es algo predado, sino algo que se llega a ser. La identidad, ya sea la de un lienzo, una *performance* o la de los propios artistas, necesita ser traída una y otra vez al mundo.

En un segundo apartado, en «ecologías de contención», nos adentramos en los almacenes en los que las obras de arte yacen cuando no son expuestas. Centrada en la tríada producción-circulación-consumo, el almacenaje es para el madrileño otro de esos lugares impensados por la teoría, pero que, aquí, en el museo, funciona como una irremplazable «tecnología de contención» en clave espaciotemporal. El almacenaje es esencial a la hora de producir el tipo de tiempo del que vive el arte moderno: la eternidad. En tanto que produce una interioridad dentro del mundo que sirve para organizar nuestra relación con las cosas, almacenar museísticamente significa pausar, interrumpir, suspender, inmovilizar los procesos materiales de los objetos. Objetos que, en consecuencia, están obligados a existir de manera paradójica, a «existir en el tiempo sin ser afectados por el tiempo» (p. 157), enclaustrados en el momento exacto de su creación. De esta manera, también sirven para entendernos como situados en la historia, pues las más de las veces el régimen estético interseca con el régimen histórico. Por otro lado, en un momento en el que el consumo de masas del capitalismo avanzado, las necesidades financieras de los museos y la turistificación y espectacularización de las ciudades demandan un cada vez mayor número de exhibiciones, la eternidad ha de ponerse en movimiento, ha de tornarse global. Esto conlleva no solo mantener la semejanza del arte en el tiempo, sino también en el espacio. Por consiguiente, la lógica frenética de la economía neoliberal hace de la preservación una «tecnología espacial» crucial a la hora de determinar las marchas, las maneras y los volúmenes de los constantes intercambios entre museos a los que se ven forzados estas instituciones. Pero tanto lo eterno como lo global son formas ecológicas. De modo que, cuando se trata de encapsular el tiempo, se necesita un particular espacio, con unas condiciones específicas: «aire estético», luz tenue, sistemas de ventilación, grandes edificios, una determinada cantidad de grados centígrados, una determinada humedad relativa, regular estrictamente la cohabitación de humanos con no-humanos, etc. Cuando queremos una cápsula espacial: estrictas regulaciones burocráticas, GPS, compañías aseguradoras, logística, puertos francos, las últimas innovaciones del capitalismo de guerra o la labor mimeográfica de registradores, preparadores, transportistas, instaladores.

La tercera sección del libro es «ecologías de la imaginación», una vuelta al museo para asistir a la sala de exhibiciones, al espacio interior del arte. Es aquí donde, desde la arquitectura de sus distintos edificios hasta la sala blanca, el museo intenta proporcionar un tipo de encuentro con el arte que se pretende inmediato, transparente, neutral. En tanto que estos parecen ser los requisitos de la autenticidad —categoría central del régimen estético moderno—, la exhibición, según la entiende Domínguez Rubio, pasa por ser un acto material que pone a jugar distintas «tecnologías de la imaginación» consistentes en emplazar con precisión cuerpos y objetos, en coordinar un vacío anestésico: un lugar inodoro e insonoro, iluminado por una luz artificial y uniforme, donde el tacto se pone en suspensión. Si bien, para que esta particular forma de percibir, experimentar e imaginar el arte no fracase, es necesaria la asociación efectiva de cristales de doble vidrio, tragaluces, espacio «negativo» que estrictamente separe las obras para que sean entendidas como los productos individuales de un autor, vergüenza, el arduo trabajo del curador, la expulsión de las entidades microbianas o animales, el menú de la cafetería, una arquitectura rectangular que

permita de un solo golpe de vista entender la narrativa presentada, o «guardas estéticos» que dirijan la coreografía de cuerpos y objetos. No obstante, no basta con esto. Es necesario homogeneizar la experiencia estética, convertirla en un universal mediante la iteratividad, mediante la ausencia de variación: al igual que la obra de arte, la aprehensión que se hace de ella tiene que ser la misma siempre que uno acuda al museo.

El capítulo final, «ecologías de lo digital», suma una reflexión sobre cómo la migración de las obras de arte a lo digital es un recurso cada vez más utilizado para mantener con vida objetos frágiles como las películas, fotografías o videoinstalaciones. Sin embargo, la digitalización depende de otro nexo ecológico cuya sustentabilidad no está precisamente garantizada. La nube no es un lugar independiente del mundo: una descarga eléctrica puede desplazar a un «bit» de su posición y dar como resultado un archivo corrupto. Pero eso no es todo, el nexo ecológico digital hace que las obras de arte pasen de ser objetos estabilizados a objetos circulantes, de objetos únicos a objetos que no paran de multiplicarse, de objetos auténticos a objetos regenerados, de objetos discretos a objetos con distintas localizaciones en el tiempo, en el espacio o en regímenes de propiedad. Lo digital, por tanto, amenaza con corromper las distintas relaciones de autenticidad, autoría, originalidad o unicidad en las que se basa el arte moderno. Por su ambivalencia, el régimen de objetualidad digital es una de las peores pesadillas de la modernidad, pues sus objetos son simultáneamente pasado y presente, originales y copias, únicos y múltiples, así como privados y comunes (p. 322).

Este es el paisaje sobre el que se recorta *Still Life*. Como es típico en los escritos sobre los estudios de ciencia y tecnología, no faltan en esta obra breves excursiones narrativas o aderezos con anécdotas personales. No obstante, nuestro antropólogo muestra seriedad y compromiso cuando le toca tratar de las asimetrías que inscribe en el mundo una institución como el MoMA. La lectura ecológica de la obra de arte nos enseña que esta demanda una gran cantidad de tiempo, labor, recursos, tecnología e infraestructuras. El arte no es inocente: el cuidado constante que requieren las obras de arte conlleva numerosas implicaciones; el cuidado no es una abstracción ética, es una forma de trabajo cara e incesante que está desigualmente distribuida. Lo mismo le ocurre a la contención que, cuando se atiende a su economía política, se desvela como extremadamente costosa, determinando quién puede o no almacenar. No todo el mundo puede permitirse ser global, ni la eternidad. No todo el mundo puede permitirse generar narrativas sobre el poder, la moral, la historia, la nación o el colonialismo a partir de esos ensamblajes sociomateriales que son las salas de exhibición.

Todos estos elementos son parte de muchos de los debates contemporáneos en el seno de las ciencias sociales. Debates que este libro trae a tierra mediante un abordaje etnográfico impoluto. Hijo de su tiempo, muestra sensibilidad y preocupación hacia la crisis ambiental derivada de los límites físicos del planeta. Es por ello por lo que Domínguez Rubio termina con un alegato en favor de aceptar la materialidad, la deterioración, la fragilidad. Preservar el arte, no la modernidad. Comenzar a imaginar desde las grietas que ha dejado su paso. En España, en esta misma línea se encuentran el grupo de artistas, activistas y pensadores que componen el proyecto «Estética fósil» cuando abogan por un museo ecosocial.

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REVIEW/RESEÑA

José Carlos Mancha Castro.
*La Semana Santa de Huelva. Significaciones,
instrumentalizaciones y ritualidad.*
Huelva: Ayuntamiento de Huelva, 2021

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La obra aborda a través de un estudio de caso antropológico la Semana Santa de Huelva. Bajo un punto de vista diacrónico, el autor nos introduce de manera apasionante en las variadas y distintas significaciones e interpretaciones de la fiesta, ofreciéndonos una visión holística y novedosa de la misma. Resulta relevante señalar el carácter (g-)local del estudio, que se circunscribe a la ciudad de Huelva. Esta acción no es baladí, debido al conocimiento del autor del ritual y de los grupos sociales estudiados, puesto que pertenece a la comunidad que lo celebra, siendo un profundo conocedor de los aspectos culturales y simbólicos que lo conforman.

Con la finalidad de mostrar y poner de manifiesto la instrumentalización política, Mancha Castro polemiza sobre el monopolio de la interpretación que existe sobre la fiesta, es decir, cuestiona los imaginarios hegemónicos construidos en torno a ella, proponiendo diferentes perspectivas e interpretaciones basadas en los diversos significados que la misma produce en los participantes.

Partiendo de una base teórica y metodológica cimentada en estudios sobre la Semana Santa realizados en Andalucía, especialmente los de Isidoro Moreno sobre la Semana Santa sevillana, el autor muestra un nuevo enfoque que resulta emocionante y revelador. Autores como Salvador Rodríguez Becerra, Rafael Briones, Joaquín Rodríguez Mateos, así como las aportaciones de clásicos como Turner o Geertz, conforman la estructura teórica sobre la que Mancha construye su exposición. En lo que se refiere a la metodología empleada, es la inherente a la investigación etnográfica, reforzada por una batería importante de información que le han permitido realizar un excelente análisis cuantitativo y cualitativo de los datos. La información recopilada en las diversas técnicas de investigación utilizadas, como son las labores de archivo, entrevistas y encuestas de elaboración propias y una observación participante complementada, por ejemplo, con charlas de carácter informal, hacen que los resultados

obtenidos en el trabajo de campo sean valiosos y determinantes a la hora de apun- talar su argumentación. En este punto, cabe destacar el análisis de conglomerados realizado entre las hermandades de Huelva, seleccionando tres de ellas en función de la representatividad y de la distancia a los centroides del grupo, es decir, al «centro de gravedad» de la hermandad.

Desde una perspectiva simbólica, el libro analiza el fenómeno de la Semana Santa como fiesta popular y complejo ritual. Mancha, analiza y explica de manera brillan- te las diferentes utilizaciones a las que ha sido sometida la Semana Santa desde los poderes políticos, religiosos y cofradieros. Asumiendo que a través de la fiesta han desfilado diferentes mensajes ideológicos, algunos más perceptibles y otros más abstractos, las diferentes instrumentalizaciones que de ella se han realizado (con distintos y múltiples objetivos) le otorgaron diferentes sentidos, que son legitimados al amparo de la «tradición inventada» en el sentido teórico conferido por el histo- riador británico Eric Hobsbawm. Es decir, fenómenos como el de la Semana Santa se transforman y desarrollan de manera simultánea a las variables de las sociedades que los detentan, y la visualización y análisis de esas variables son el objeto principal de esta investigación antropológica.

El autor nos presenta la Semana Santa como un conglomerado revestido de múltiples y diferentes significaciones en las que todas y cada una de ellas no solo son válidas, sino que son necesarias e imprescindibles para poder comprender y analizar la festi- vidad en toda su amplitud. Es necesario tener presentes las distintas (re)significacio- nes que se le otorgan a la Semana Santa para comprender su magnitud.

Entendida desde una percepción religiosa folclórica, es la efeméride en la que se re- memora la pasión y muerte de Cristo y los dolores de la Virgen. Nos encontramos, quizá, ante su significación más evidente. Encontramos aquí grupos conformados por personas con relaciones muy distintas con la Iglesia y la religiosidad. Es una reli- giosidad muy sentida y poco razonada, que reúne a personas dispares en sus ideolo- gías políticas, en las relaciones que mantienen con la divinidad y con los preceptos y estamentos de jerarquía de la Iglesia.

La significación simbólico-identitaria, donde cofradías y sagradas imágenes ejercen como marcadores identificativos colectivos y personales, es otra de las significaciones predominantes dentro de la Semana Santa. La identidad se entiende como una facultad de evocación de recuerdos, vivencias, familiares ausentes, que desemboca en la apro- piación de la fiesta por parte de la comunidad, confiriéndole, o ayudando a mantener, la identidad que la cohesionan como grupo. Unos pueden pensar en sus padres o abuelos pisando ese mismo pavimento, otros, en momentos importantes de su vida, y, así, po- demos imaginar infinitos escenarios. Centralizando el estudio en la Semana Santa de la capital onubense, Mancha afirma que la Semana Santa es un símbolo de la identidad local de Huelva y de Andalucía, incidiendo en su importancia como herramienta de enculturación, de socialización y de identificación. El autor hace hincapié en que las formas culturales desarrolladas son reconocidas como propias, aunque su justificación descansa en una tradición que se reinventa continuamente, ejerciendo de mecanismo de defensa y a la vez de reafirmación de una identidad propia colectiva que pretende alejarse de los procesos de homogeneización cultural.

Igualmente, la Semana Santa genera un intenso placer para los sentidos si atendemos al sentido holístico del término, donde el disfrute sentido se manifiesta como un todo y no como una suma de las partes que lo integran. Simbólicamente, todo ello es utilizado como una forma de abordar la dialéctica entre el sentido de la vida y la muerte, y como un modo de exponer la maquinaria simbólica de adaptación de la sociedad y la cultura andaluzas al medio ambiental-temporal. A su vez, Mancha Castro contextualiza el ritual en el espacio donde se desarrolla: la ciudad de Huelva. Entendida como drama ritual de carácter urbano, el autor nos muestra la Semana Santa como una fiesta popular con evidentes tintes románticos. Los espacios públicos de la ciudad se convierten en un gran teatro urbano donde las cofradías ofrecen una proclama y unas maneras de proceder particulares frente a los asistentes. A lo largo de este capítulo, describe exhaustivamente la construcción del ritual, donde cada cofradía se convierte en la representación de un determinado grupo social y, en determinadas ocasiones, de ciertos barrios, que se ratifican como integrantes significativos de un simbólico todo urbano. Todo ello forma parte de una intención manifiesta de exteriorizar y demostrar la pertenencia a una ciudad viva y teatralizada que se transforma en un gran esqueleto simbólico, purificador, histriónico y protocolario con una significación ritual de extremada complejidad.

En el séptimo capítulo del libro se aborda el papel de la mujer en la Semana Santa. Bajo el título «Algunas significaciones de sexo-género. Rol y estatus de la mujer en la Semana Santa», Mancha desarrolla las significaciones de sexo-género, analizando desde el periodo franquista hasta el momento actual cómo ha variado y se ha desarrollado la posición de la mujer tanto dentro de las cofradías como en la Semana Santa. Las hermandades entendidas como peñas masculinas se han transformado en espacios de sociabilidad y de ritualización más abiertos y generalizados. Mancha explica que este cambio se debe fundamentalmente a los procesos democratizadores que han tenido lugar en el seno de la fiesta y a la paulatina desaparición (ojalá)-difuminación de la discriminación a la que han estado sometidas las mujeres bajo el yugo franquista. En este periodo, su rol se reducía al de actuar como personal de servicio y de ser las responsables de los actos benéficos. Pertenecer a los consejos directivos de las hermandades o a los cortejos ceremoniales, así como asistir a los cabildos, les estaba totalmente prohibido. Alegremente, el cambio jurídico suscitado en la Iglesia diocesana durante las dos últimas décadas del siglo XX supuso el final de esta deriva opresiva. Con la nueva regulación se les permitió volver a salir de nazarenas, participar en las bandas musicales y pertenecer a los cuerpos directivos. Ya en el siglo XXI comenzaron a formar cuadrillas de costaleras, espacio ritual copado tradicionalmente por los hombres en exclusividad. Para Mancha Castro, esta irrupción o, más bien, reaparición de la mujer en la Semana Santa, supuso un estímulo realmente decisivo para la fiesta y, seguramente, la transformación sociológica más importante en los últimos años.

El último capítulo del libro está dedicado a las significaciones políticas e ideológicas y a la manipulación realizada desde el ámbito cofradiero. El autor defiende que la Semana Santa ha estado —y está— fuertemente patrimonializada (instrumentalizada) por parte de los poderes políticos conservadores. Se sirve del concepto de patrimonialización asemejándolo al de instrumentalización para subrayar la utilización

de la Semana Santa por parte del conservadurismo político como medio de control ideológico, especialmente durante la Segunda República y el franquismo. También añade que ha tenido la oportunidad de constatar en su investigación, cómo por parte de numerosos cofrades conservadores y tradicionalistas se continúa usando públicamente la Semana Santa como instrumento ideológico contra partidos laicistas y de la izquierda política española, reseñando que «hasta el momento» esto no ha sucedido en la dirección contraria, es decir, las posiciones más a la izquierda del espectro político no se han atrevido a «jugar» con la Semana Santa. Mancha pone de relieve los intentos de ligar los símbolos cofradieros a actos de exaltación del militarismo y el nacionalismo español, suponiendo esto uno de los mayores peligros latentes que amenazan hoy la popularidad de la fiesta. Pero no es este el único peligro al que se enfrenta según el autor. El uso político y la manipulación ideológica que la jerarquía eclesiástica y los cofrades más conservadores ejercen sobre las hermandades de manera pública a través de los medios de comunicación hegemónicos locales, la conversión desde la política municipal de la Semana Santa en una procesión de egos, la creciente y salvaje turistificación y mercantilización o las manipulaciones políticas y personales desde el seno de las hermandades suponen algunos de los mayores peligros a los que debe hacer frente la Semana Santa en el momento actual.

José Carlos Mancha Castro, de manera magistral, capta la atención del lector (neófito o versado en el tema) invitándole a navegar entre las páginas de la obra. Nos muestra a la Semana Santa onubense como un ritual y una fiesta popular revestida de múltiples (re)significaciones, cuyo entendimiento conjunto es necesario para poder comprender de manera holística su significado.

REVIEW/RESEÑA

**José Candón-Mena y David Montero Sánchez (Eds.).
*Del Ciberactivismo a la Tecnopolítica. Movimientos
sociales en la era del escepticismo tecnológico.*
Salamanca: Comunicación Social, 2021**

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Han transcurrido poco más de dos décadas desde la aparición de experiencias de lucha significativas y relevantes en cuanto a su relación con las TIC. Las luchas indígenas de Chiapas, caracterizadas por el protagonismo y el liderazgo de las mujeres indígenas, dieron paso al movimiento de movimientos también llamado altermundista, una red transnacional de luchas articuladas en Internet y en diversos nodos locales que se hicieron visibles en las contracumbres y manifestaciones organizadas en Seattle, Bangkok, Praga o Barcelona. Casi en paralelo y cocinado en el espacio virtual, el ciberfeminismo aparece en la escena a partir de las experiencias artístico-políticas de VNS Matrix y de la coordinación de la Marcha Mundial de las Mujeres (MMM) en los cinco continentes con manifestaciones multitudinarias. Resulta imprescindible mencionar la forma innovadora que adquirió la comunicación alternativa gracias a la creación de Indymedia. «Don't hate the media, become the media» describe la naturaleza del inicio de un cambio de paradigma comunicativo introducido por los movimientos sociales de la época.

Tanto el impulso de las movilizaciones en red iniciadas a finales de 2010 en la región del Magreb como la potencia demostrada de los feminismos en movimiento en la última década han revitalizado el *know-how* tecnológico de las experiencias anteriores. Además de la creación de herramientas autónomas y de la defensa de una Internet libre —«The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House» (Lorde, 1984)—, el uso político de las plataformas digitales comerciales para coordinar las protestas y visibilizar sus demandas debe reconocerse como una innovación de los movimientos sociales de la que han aprendido tanto gobiernos y empresas como movimientos reaccionarios.

En los últimos años han proliferado las investigaciones que analizan la relación entre los movimientos sociales y las tecnologías digitales principalmente desde los campos de la comunicología, la sociología o las ciencias políticas. La obra aquí presentada

sirve de muestra, aunque nada tiene que ver con la tendencia hegemónica de la deriva cuantitativista de los estudios que habitualmente son publicados en revistas de alto impacto y que rehúyen de cualquier posicionamiento en nombre del objetivismo científico. Por el contrario, los textos reunidos en esta publicación son situados y estimulan el pensamiento crítico y reflexivo de las investigaciones comprometidas con el cambio social, además de evidenciar los cambios acaecidos y las transformaciones en curso que se están dando en el terreno de la tecnopolítica.

José Candón Mena y David Montero Sánchez, profesores de la Facultad de Comunicación de la Universidad de Sevilla, coeditan esta obra colectiva estructurada en ocho capítulos a partir de las contribuciones y diálogos abiertos por Guiomar Rovira Sancho, Alex Haché y Daniel Ó Cluanaigh, Emiliano Treré y Anne Kaun, Ígor Sádaba Rodríguez, Francisco Sierra Caballero, Javier de la Cueva, Ángel Gordo y Cris H. Grey. Ellas, también ellos, cuentan con una larga trayectoria de investigación con y desde diversos movimientos sociales, espacios colectivos y/o redes activistas de tramas ciber y tecnopolíticas.

Guiomar Rovira Sancho, en línea con otras publicaciones anteriores (Rovira Sancho, 2013, 2017, 2018), nos ofrece una lectura imprescindible —y a mi parecer poco reconocida— sobre el vínculo existente entre las luchas feministas conectadas que han tomado calles y redes de forma masiva por todo el planeta en los últimos seis años y los llamados movimientos en red que se hicieron notorios con el estallido de la Primavera Árabe. Al analizar y visibilizar los vínculos entre ambos ciclos de protesta también es posible identificar las valiosas aportaciones que los feminismos actuales ofrecen para el cambio social. De forma magistral, la autora sitúa las oleadas feministas en relación con el activismo y la comunicación al mismo tiempo que propone una genealogía de los feminismos transnacionales articulados en el periodo de transición del siglo pasado hasta el actual.

Una de las preocupaciones actuales para movimientos sociales, activistas y académicas gira en torno a las prácticas de vigilancia que vulneran la privacidad y el anonimato en el uso de las tecnologías digitales a medida que las grandes empresas han descubierto un nuevo objeto de mercantilización: nuestros datos. Dos capítulos abordan esta temática. Álex Hache y Daniel Ó Cluanaigh analizan la experiencia del Programa de Defensoras Digitales. Una apuesta política que defiende los derechos digitales de toda la ciudadanía, pero que atiende principalmente a aquellas activistas y personas defensoras de los derechos humanos que están siendo perseguidas, acosadas y violentadas debido a la huella digital de sus prácticas ciberactivistas, principalmente mujeres, personas LGTBQ+ y personas que habitan en los márgenes construidos en términos geopolíticos: el sur global. Desde otra perspectiva, Francisco Sierra Caballero defiende con argumentos sólidos el uso del anonimato —presente desde la Antigüedad— como estrategia de mediación entre la resistencia política y contrahegemónica y el poder, así como su valor simbólico en las prácticas digitales activistas desde la revolución de Chiapas hasta la experiencia de Anonymous. De esta manera, el autor desarrolla un análisis crítico sobre estos procesos en el que no esquivamos las tensiones, contradicciones y limitaciones del anonimato como estrategia política en una sociedad digitalizada donde opera y reina la hipervisibilidad.

Algunas experiencias activistas relacionadas con las tecnologías digitales, que han sido, quizá, las menos exploradas, son desarrolladas en el texto de Javier de la Cueva. Por un lado, el autor aborda las luchas por la soberanía tecnológica llevadas a cabo por el activismo bibliotecario, es decir, por grupos que crean y escriben códigos libres para constituir TIC alternativas a la hegemonía de los grandes conglomerados de Apple y Microsoft. De otro, explora ejemplos de desobediencia civil contra la propiedad intelectual a partir del análisis de dos recursos imprescindibles para el adecuado desarrollo de la ciencia contemporánea por la labor que realizan distribuyendo artículos científicos y libros: las webs SciHub.org —desarrollada por la activista Alexandra Elbakyan— y Library Genesis. Ambas propuestas están alineadas con una crítica sólida hacia los procesos de mercantilización y privatización de los recursos tecnológicos y del propio conocimiento científico.

Entre los peligros que deben atender las democracias contemporáneas destaca uno que ha adquirido notoriedad durante la expansión de la crisis sanitaria provocada por la COVID-19. La posverdad y el negacionismo son cuestiones discutidas en el texto coproducido por Ángel Gordo y Cris H. Grey como dos caras de la misma moneda: un virus que se expande ágilmente desde redes populistas con un marcado posicionamiento ideológico ultraderechista y que encuentra su expresión material y tecnopolítica en la red QAnon analizada por los autores. ¿Cuáles son sus orígenes y alcances? Pero, sobre todo, ¿cómo funciona y a qué se debe el «éxito» de la propagación de ideas delirantes mediadas por la tecnología que, sin evidencia alguna, expanden odio recíprocamente en el plano digital y en el plano físico?

Tres son los capítulos que ofrecen herramientas teórico-metodológicas para observar y analizar la tecnopolítica contemporánea identificando un tránsito, un itinerario alejado de la linealidad histórica y la causalidad positivista sobre los sentidos, los usos y las dinámicas que configuran hoy en día la politización de las tecnologías digitales para, finalmente, identificar algunas de las tendencias que se abren paso.

En primer lugar, los editores José Candón Mena y David Montero Sánchez elaboran un valioso mapa conceptual sobre las características de la tecnopolítica exponiendo con sencillez cómo, desde los orígenes del ciberactivismo hasta la actualidad, el uso político de la tecnología ha adquirido complejidad a partir de la observación de algunos elementos que dan cuenta de las transformaciones en curso. ¿Qué sujetos o agentes intervienen hoy en el campo de la tecnopolítica? ¿Cómo lo hacen? Es decir, ¿qué herramientas y acciones están siendo implementadas? ¿Cuáles son los valores que movilizan el uso político de la tecnología en el presente? ¿Desde qué miradas y lecturas se analiza el binomio tecnología-sociedad? ¿Cómo afectan estas transformaciones a la democracia? ¿Las entendemos? Y si sí, ¿cómo las transmitimos?

En segundo lugar, Ígor Sádaba Rodríguez muestra la diversidad metodológica existente para la aplicación práctica y actualizada de los análisis clásicos de los marcos de los movimientos sociales, ampliando las variables, clasificaciones y caracterizaciones para el análisis de los procesos sociotécnicos contemporáneos empíricos y comparativos. Para ello, el autor discute sobre una serie de ejemplos prácticos que incorporan los marcos tecnopolíticos como herramienta de análisis.

En tercer lugar, Emiliano Treré y Anne Kaun rompen con la hegemonía académica anglófona en la que mueven sus contribuciones con destreza al ofrecer una versión en castellano, mejorada y ampliada, del texto «Digital Media Activism» (Treré y Kaun, 2021). Defienden la necesidad de incorporar/situar la ecología de medios y el contexto histórico y cultural de las prácticas activistas como una doble perspectiva para evitar el reduccionista digitalcentrismo y favorecer la introducción de la complejidad en las investigaciones. A lo largo del capítulo, Emiliano y Anne dialogan con algunas de las conceptualizaciones que en los últimos años han ido delimitando y ampliando, de forma controvertida, los significados sobre activismo en los medios digitales. Al recuperar una serie de trabajos que periodizan estas prácticas, los autores destacan aquellos que tienen en cuenta variables ideológicas, estructurales y micropolíticas para abordar la historicidad.

Finalmente, considero que uno de los aspectos más destacables de esta obra es que consigue recoger una pequeña parte, aunque significativa, de los debates y reflexiones vivenciados a lo largo de las cuatro ediciones del Congreso Move.net sobre Movimientos Sociales y TIC. Un congreso-puente que desde 2015 conecta a personas que transitan entre el mundo académico y el universo activista para poner en común preocupaciones sobre el alcance e impacto social de la tecnología, así como para reunir experiencias y prácticas activistas y trazar proyectos que permitan seguir imaginando y dibujando un horizonte emancipador feminista.

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REVIEW/RESEÑA

Manuel Ángel Santana Turégano.
¿Homo economicus u homo sociologicus?
Introducción a la sociología para la economía,
la empresa y las finanzas.
Sevilla: Editorial Aula Magna. McGraw-Hill, 2022

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En muchas ocasiones, la enseñanza de sociología suele entrañar cierta dificultad debido a que el alumnado nunca ha visto esta materia en sus carreras académicas antes de su entrada en la Universidad. Esto se vuelve aún más complejo si se trata de grados u otros estudios donde la sociología es una asignatura que complementa la formación de otra materia o disciplina. Este último caso es a lo que hace referencia *¿Homo economicus u homo sociologicus. Introducción a la sociología para la economía, la empresa y las finanzas*. El mismo trata de inculcar conocimientos sociológicos a un alumnado que muy probablemente no haya visto nada relacionado con dichos conceptos en sus años de formación (grados de economía, finanzas, administración y dirección de empresas, y análogos).

Por tanto, este manual sobre el que tratamos es fundamentalmente didáctico y la forma en la que aborda todos los conceptos clásicos (y no tan clásicos) de la sociología van en este sentido. Así, dicha obra puede servir tanto para las personas que se inician en el mundo de la sociología como para las que ya tienen cierto bagaje en la disciplina. Y esto se debe básicamente a dos motivos. El primero es que muestra una gran cantidad de bibliografía que permite a cualquier sociólogo/a seguir profundizando en diferentes materias sociológicas. Por otro lado, sobre todo en los últimos temas, trata conceptos relativamente nuevos como las expectativas ficcionales, la financiarización u otros relacionados con la nueva sociología económica. Como habrá podido comprobar el lector, son términos nuevos que sitúan a la sociología en la vanguardia de la comprensión del sistema capitalista actual.

Una de las cuestiones que hace de este libro un ejemplo de la didáctica de la sociología es su estructura. En ella, además de exponer los conocimientos mínimos dentro

de lo que podríamos denominar una *introducción a la sociología*, añade actividades y recursos para ampliar que sin duda mejoran y enriquecen la experiencia del lector. Es más, en los últimos capítulos, a la hora de incluir materiales para profundizar y recursos para seguir aprendiendo, el autor realmente incluye información que es muy relevante incluso para las personas que ya tienen ciertos conocimientos de sociología. Ese carácter didáctico, ejemplificado en el título de cada capítulo (denominados *Temas*), también se manifiesta a la hora de diseñar recursos y actividades que pueden ser trabajadas con el alumnado de cualquier asignatura de introducción a la sociología, tanto en un modelo presencial como en un modelo virtual o telemático.

Las exposiciones teóricas que se hacen en la obra reseñada están vinculadas con las realidades más cercanas de cada estudiante. En ese sentido, esta cuestión provoca que todo conocimiento teórico al que se acerca el lector venga condimentado con ejemplos de la vida cotidiana de las personas que se están formando en el ámbito de la sociología. Además, llama la atención que, respecto a esos casos presentados, muchos de ellos están vinculados con el ámbito de lo local, nacional e internacional. Esta cuestión es importante por el hecho de que supone una diferencia con los manuales de referencia de la sociología, que a menudo se centran en cuestiones internacionales a la hora de ejemplificar los modelos teóricos que se exponen. Por ejemplo, resulta tremendamente atractivo para el estudiantado que se apliquen las teorías de Durkheim, Marx y Weber a parte de la realidad social española, y, en concreto, a la canaria. En este último caso, Canarias es utilizada como ejemplo para explicar el cambio social extremadamente rápido en una región que pasó en treinta años de ser un territorio rural a uno turístico, con sus consecuencias sociológicas. Tal y como se puede intuir, esta explicación resulta muy didáctica para el estudiantado, pues conecta conceptos abstractos como el de estructura y cambio social con territorios reales y cercanos al alumnado.

El libro de Manuel Ángel Santana Turégano está totalmente mediatizado por la *imaginación sociológica* que tan certeramente explicó Wright Mills (1985). Esta cuestión es algo común en diferentes manuales clásicos y contemporáneos de sociología, hasta tal punto que no es ninguna novedad en este sentido. Lo que sí hace de este libro diferente es que adapta todo lo relacionado con la interpretación sociológica del mundo (*ponerse las lentes de sociólogo*) a una asignatura de seis créditos europeos de docencia universitaria (150 horas uniendo clase y trabajo autónomo). Esto supone, por tanto, que cualquier profesor puede impartir perfectamente docencia de sociología utilizando este libro y planificando las clases para una asignatura que conlleva dicha cantidad de créditos sin mayor esfuerzo. Todo esto permite una organización docente en base a un manual con explicaciones llanas, accesibles, a la par que rigurosas. Claro está que será necesario, para el correcto desarrollo de cualquier asignatura, la lectura de algún texto directo de referentes sociológicos, a los que también hace referencia el autor, Manuel Ángel Santana Turégano.

El libro reseñado cumple con todos los contenidos necesarios para una correcta introducción a la sociología como disciplina desde otros campos del conocimiento (alumnado de grados de economía, finanzas y administración y dirección de empresas). Así, se habla de la sociología como ciencia social y sus aspectos metodológicos (tema 1),

los aspectos relativos a la socialización y sus agentes (tema 2), el cambio social y sus consecuencias (tema 3) y la estratificación y estructura social (tema 4), para, en los dos últimos temas (5 y 6), hablar del consumo y de la nueva sociología económica. De esta forma, cumple los mínimos conocimientos, rigurosamente explicados, que ha de tener una asignatura de sociología, además de profundizar en conocimientos sociológicos del ámbito de las finanzas y el consumo.

Durante el desarrollo de dichos temas, sí que aborda tangencialmente otros temas relacionados con la sociología y que aportan un conocimiento extra de la realidad social que rodea a los posibles lectores (estudiantes de los grados de economía, finanzas y empresa). En primer lugar, el autor reflexiona sobre el papel de la sociología en las enseñanzas medias (Educación Secundaria, Bachillerato). Así, deja entrever que en algunos centros de enseñanza secundaria se imparte la asignatura de sociología como optativa en Bachillerato, si bien no en muchos (García y Beltrán, 2022; Cairós, 2020). Sin duda, como bien defiende el autor, si se extendiera la docencia de la sociología a las enseñanzas medias, esta cuestión cambiaría mucho la percepción de la sociología como disciplina, pues el alumnado llegaría a la Universidad con unos mínimos conocimientos de la misma. Así, la analogía se podría hacer con la materia de economía, pues el alumnado cada vez está más familiarizado, al haberla tenido en algunos cursos de su formación secundaria.

En relación a lo anterior, no son pocas las voces que solicitan que se empiece a impartir sociología en las enseñanzas medias. Tal y como defiende el autor, tan importante es conocer cómo funciona la economía y tener unos mínimos conocimientos financieros como adquirir nociones básicas del funcionamiento de la sociedad. Con ello, sin duda se podría luchar contra bulos, *fake news* y argumentos falsos que se observan cada día en los medios de comunicación y las redes sociales. Además, y utilizando la terminología empleada por el autor, en las escuelas se forman estudiantes utilizando diferentes teorías relacionadas con el *homo economicus*, haciendo hincapié en que es un agente racional que busca la maximización de su función de utilidad. Tal y como refleja Santana Turégano, es necesario que los chicos y chicas tengan los conocimientos citados anteriormente, pero no vendría mal que se formaran también en torno al concepto de *homo sociologicus*. Esto supondría que comprendieran que, además de ser agentes racionales, también tenemos un componente de aparente irracionalidad (o como diría Weber, de otros tipos de racionalidad), que es la base del funcionamiento de las sociedades.

Por otro lado, el autor también ofrece unas pinceladas de la historia de la Universidad, y las consecuencias de diferentes fenómenos en el desarrollo de la misma. Esto es interesante porque al alumnado que se inicia en sus estudios le sirve para comprender cómo han cambiado la estructura de los grados y su oferta en el Estado español, centrándose en la evolución de las disciplinas relacionadas con las finanzas, la economía y la empresa. Cobra especial relevancia esta cuestión, pues se esboza que quizá el objetivo del Plan Bolonia, en gran parte, no se ha cumplido. Dicha afirmación se sustenta en que en su momento se pensó una Universidad con grupos reducidos de alumnado que permitían implementar metodologías didácticas donde el profesorado podía observar la evolución de cada uno/a de sus alumnos/as. Ese sueño que fue

el fundamento de profundas reformas en la Universidad se convirtió finalmente en pesadilla, puesto que no se han llegado a implementar ni esos descensos de ratios ni ese desarrollo de metodologías que permitirían un seguimiento adecuado (tal y como se recoge en el espíritu de Bolonia) del alumnado.

También el autor hace una profunda crítica sobre los ránquines que hay en el mundo de las universidades. Es importante lo que explica: estas clasificaciones están basadas en cuestiones que a menudo no correlacionan con una docencia de calidad. Así, tal y como ocurre, el autor realiza una dura crítica al sistema científico actual, basado únicamente en métricas que definen lo que es o no un buen investigador/a y si una universidad es de calidad o no. En ese sentido, es importante que las personas que se inician, no ya en sociología, sino en la educación universitaria, sepan que estos ránquines tienen ciertos problemas y que en sí mismos no definen lo que es una universidad de calidad o no.

Otra reflexión importante que expone a lo largo del libro Manuel Ángel Santana Turégano es la relación entre las ciencias sociales y la tecnología. Se tiende a pensar que, en sí misma, la tecnología soluciona todos los problemas metodológicos y epistemológicos de las ciencias sociales, cuando, en realidad, como muestra el autor, no suele ser así. Haciendo una comparación, se podría decir que en ocasiones se piensa que los problemas de la escuela se solucionan incluyendo tecnología (*tablets, software, etc.*), mientras que, tal y como demuestran una gran cantidad de estudios, esta cuestión no reduce el fracaso escolar ni aumenta el rendimiento por sí sola.

Volviendo a la tecnología, en sí misma no mejora la ciencia social. Es recurrente la afirmación de que en la actualidad estamos ante la era del *dato*. Claro que lo primero es definir qué es un dato y si alguna vez la ciencia social ha funcionado sin la utilización de datos (cuantitativos y cualitativos). Evidentemente, la aplicación de tecnología ha aumentado las posibilidades de análisis hasta poder, en cierta forma, modelizar y comprobar teorías cada vez más complejas. Es en esto en lo que cada vez más aparece, en ciencias sociales, el término *data science*. Como bien defiende el autor, nunca ha existido una ciencia sin datos, con lo cual ese término es redundante.

En relación a lo anterior, el autor llama especial atención sobre los *evangelizadores de datos*, esto es, que enseñan lo que muestran los datos. Como bien define Santana Turégano, por sí mismos los datos no hablan. Esta frase es muy repetida en medios de comunicación y en entornos donde se entroniza el *big data*. Es evidente que estamos en una época de manejo de grandes volúmenes de datos que hacen necesario un dominio de herramientas nuevas con las que tratarlos. Sin embargo, por sí solos los datos no nos hablan, tenemos que interpretarlos correctamente. He aquí la importancia de la sociología como ciencia que nos ayuda no solo a realizar análisis, sino a interpretarlos correctamente.

No entender los datos correctamente es un peligro en la sociedad de la información donde vivimos. Continuamente se nos bombardea con datos y más datos normalmente descontextualizados y cuyo sesgo no viene ya de las herramientas o modelos estadísticos empleados, sino que parte de más atrás. El autor se refiere así a los procesos de operacionalización de conceptos, que cada vez más son ignorados por

muchos analistas. El ejemplo que expone Santana Turégano es de especial relevancia: la medición del desempleo. Como bien explica, el número de personas desempleadas dependerá, antes que nada, de qué consideremos que es una persona desempleada. Por tanto, como bien dice el autor, antes de hacer reflexiones sobre el porcentaje de desempleo hemos de definirlo correctamente, para lo cual la sociología ocupa un papel fundamental.

Una última reflexión tiene que ver con la profundización en los últimos dos capítulos de lo que llama la *nueva sociología económica*. El conocimiento que aporta tiene especial relevancia, ya que el autor es un referente nacional en este ámbito, pues ha seguido desde hace ya bastante tiempo esta línea de investigación. La lectura de esta parte del libro, por tanto, supone profundizar en conceptos que pueden parecer novedosos hasta para personas con ciertos conocimientos sociológicos: expectativas ficticias, *homo faber*, financiarización de la vida cotidiana, etc. La explicación de estos conceptos, en todo momento, es clara y rigurosa.

En conclusión, este manual de sociología para el alumnado que estudia disciplinas como la economía, la empresa y las finanzas es una herramienta didáctica que sin duda mejora los conocimientos de dichos estudiantes al respecto. Además, con sus ejemplos y estructura, el autor realiza un ejercicio explicativo que provoca en todo momento que se abran espacios de reflexión en torno a los conocimientos aplicados.

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