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Gender representation in contemporary Spanish teen films (2009-2014)

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Abstract
Introduction. The present study issues from the many reports about the high levels of Gender Inequality in our society and about the high influence of the audio-visual narrative in its configuration. We verified if contemporary Spanish teen films reproduce that unequal gender image. **Methodology.** We studied the protagonists of the most viewed Spanish movies released between 2009-2014 with a cast over 50% of adolescents, analysing the number of male and female characters and the reproduction of eight gender stereotypes. **Results**. The results confirmed the reproduction of an unequal gender image based on plot and character stereotypes that contributes to feed the creation and persistence of a social imaginary in young viewers about how women and men are, and thus perpetuating the gender inequality.

Keywords
Gender; role; adolescents; Spanish movies; stereotypes; inequality.

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Translation by **C Álvarez Hernández and B González de Garay Domínguez**

1. Introduction

There are many reports warning about the high levels of Gender Inequality in our society, both global and national; among others the 'European Gender Equality Index' (2013), the 'Human Development Report 2014. Sustaining Human Progress: Reducing Vulnerabilities and Building Resilience', or the report 'Jóvenes y Género. El estado de la cuestión' (2014, Fundación Reina Sofía). The results give cause for concern, especially in terms of inequality gender in adolescence, the period when the imaginary and the symbolic universe are established, when people define their scale of values.

The high influence of the audio-visual narrative in configuring this imaginary construction is known, since with this kind of narrative "we structure our experience and we store it as a memory" (Aguilar, 1996: 34), when transferring values, knowledge and experiences. Many researches have proved the social influence of media messages (Igartua, 2007, 2008; Igartua, Zlobina, Páez, & Mayordomo, 2004; Igartua, Acosta & Frutos, 2009).

Therefore, we wonder what kind of cinematographic representations are feeding young people in our society, and what gender imaginary is being transmitted and legitimated by contemporary media so that teenagers, the grounds for the future society, are absorbing and assimilating.

2. Method

Based on Gender Studies and their works from the XVII century (Poulain de la Barre, Mary Wollstonecraft, Olympe de Gouges, John Money, Simone de Beauvoir, Margaret Mead, Betty Friedan) to our days (Loscertales, Vera Balanza, Rodríguez, Juan Plaza, González de Garay), we take as a special refenrence the works of authors such as Pilar Aguilar (2004, 2007, 2010), Virginia Guarinos (2008) and Trinidad Núñez (2008).

They describe the present characteristics of films in terms of gender representation: the androcentric majority –protagonists are men and stories are told from their point of view, being the man the "action role" and the woman the "symbolic objet"–; the supremacy of the heteronormative model in sexuality; the reification of female body and the interest female characters awake based on seduction or eroticism –male characters are based on their actions or makings–; the lack of communication among female characters or, if it exists, it is related to males, home or aesthetic; the initiative of male characters, their *active* roles in based of and objective against the passivity of the female characters; the reproduction of the myth of "romantic love" and "the better half"; and the maintenance of female

clichés traditionally reproduced such as, among others, the *good girl* (suffering, naïve and beautiful, who wants to find a husband more than anything and be happy together), the *angel* (with the same appearance of the *good girl* but looking for her own benefit), the *virgin* (characterized for her sexual abdication, that either make her *submissive* or a *warrior* for a greater good), the *bad girl* (normally an adolescence who seduces mature men, leading to a sexual tension and ethical considerations), or the *femme fatale* (a very seductive woman, the caprice of men, punished with illness or dead because of her ambition and low moral ways) (Virginia Guarinos, 2008).

2.1. Hypotheses

Based on the previous theoretical corpus, our study verified if contemporary Spanish teen films reproduce that unequal gender image. This was our main hypothesis (H1).

We formulate two linked sub-hypotheses: the great majority of protagonists are male instead of female characters (H1.1) and there is a reproduction of traditional gender stereotypes and clichés in the films analysed (H1.2).

2.2. Object of study and sample of the research

The object of the study is contemporary Spanish teen films. In order to select the sample of the research we established the following criteria:

- World Health Organization defines adolescence as the life period between 10 and 19 years old. However, because of the many biological and cognitive differences in that age range, the WHO divides it in three periods according to the developmental stage: early (10-13 years), middle (14-16 years) and late (17-19 years) adolescence.

Although there is no a specific film category "for teenagers", it can be argued that they can be those whose protagonists ——over 50% of the cast— are between 14 and 19 years old (middle and late adolescence). It is also in accordance with Igartua works (2008) about identification with characters.

2. The second criterion is that films (full-length) must be Spanish productions. To delimitate them we use the requirements established by the Spanish Film and Audio-visual Arts Institute to give the Nationality Certificate for Spanish films [1].

3. We establish the range of contemporary films with the Nationality Certificate for Spanish films exhibited from 2009 to 2014 at cinemas. For each year we select those films that meet the first criterion and those that were within the ten most viewed in cinemas.

2009: *Fuga de cerebros*, the 4th most viewed (hereafter called *FDC*)

2010: *Tres metros sobre el cielo*, the 1st most viewed (hereafter called *3MSC*)

2011: -- none satisfied the criterion

2012: *Promoción fantasma*, the 8th most viewed (hereafter called *PF*)

2013: -- -- none satisfied the criterion

2014: *Perdona si te llamo amor*, the 7th most viewed (hereafter called *PSTLA*)

2.3. Methodological strategies

A quantitative-qualitative methodology has been used in our research, focusing on two of the eleven orientations that Casseti and Di Chio (1999) propose when analysing an audio-visual product: the content analysis and the textual analysis. Both types of analysis have a wide range of areas. The first one, content analysis, focuses on what is transmitted – "topics, information and represented and broadcasted values" (Casseti y Di Chio, 1999: 40)–, with the main objective of "gathering as many affirmations as possible". Likewise, "it allows to analyse scientifically both meanings ("thematic analyse") and "signifiers" (analyses of procedures, conventions, formal features)" (Igartua & Humanes, 2004: 9).

Concerning textual analysis, it "shifts its attention to specific elements of the text and to the ways in which the text is constructed and, on the other hand, extends its attention to how to interpret the meaning in a global sense, to value forms of a particular enunciation speech" (Casseti y Di Chio, 1999: 521).

2.4. Procedure

Through this research methods, we defined the categories of analysis to apply to our sample considering that this election "besides being functional according to the objectives of the research and to the hypothesis to verify, it has to take into account the characteristics of the sample" (Casetti & Di Chio, 1999: 239). After that we developed a coding form that we have applied to the leading roles of our sample (the 4th films selected) in order to finally highlight the data extracted and confront them.

According to our main objective (H1), we looked for evidences in two phases, with regard to the two sub-hypotheses. Thus, in the first phase we looked for evidence about the number of male protagonists, if it was representatively higher than female's in our films sample (H 1.1). In a second phase, we analysed if plot and character stereotypes traditionally used in films were reproduced in our sample (H 1.2).

2.4.1. Analysis Phase 1

In the first phase, we applied the following analysis model (Table 1) to the sample (each film) in order to study two variables: which characters are protagonists, which ones have a supporting role, and the sex of each one.

* Variable 1: Type of character. We analysed the character, including them in the category of protagonist –a recurrent character, developed, who appears in most of the film scenes and who sustain the plot weight of the story– and supporting role –it doesn't appear in most of the film scenes, it doesn't sustain the weight of the plot and it is hardly developed as a character–.

* Variable 2: Character's sex. Each character was categorized as man –if the character has male external appearance or he consider himself as a man– or woman –if the character has a female external appearance or she consider herself as a woman–.

FILM 1: **TITLE**				
	VARIABLE 1: TYPE OF CHARACTER		VARIABLE 2: CHARACTER'S SEX	
Character 1: NAME	0. Protagonist	1. Supporting role	0. Man	1. Woman
Character 2: NAME	0. Protagonist	1. Supporting role	0. Man	1. Woman
Character 3: NAME	0. Protagonist	1. Supporting role	0. Man	1. Woman

Table 1: Analysis model PHASE 1.

2.4.2. Analysis Phase 2

Subsequently, we selected only the protagonists and, taking into consideration their sex, we applied a second coding form. In this analysis we researched the next variables:

* Variable 3: Sphere of action. By analysing the scenes where the protagonists act, we define if the character acts in public spheres (if the character is in a 60% or over scenes placed in streets, parks, bars, pubs, university or high school buildings), private spheres (if the character is in a 60% or over scenes placed in a private location, such as a family home, a classroom, a private car) or mixed spheres (if the character is in private and public spheres in a proportion between 40% and 60% of the scenes).

 * Variable 4: The role of character. Understanding that a character doesn't represent an exclusive role, we want to determine if, in general, a character is active (when the character make "something" to achieve something, being the subject of the action and its direct source, having initiative), passive

(when the character doesn't act or isn't a direct source of action and it is done under the others initiative), or aggressive (when the character acts with physical or verbal violence).

This variable was analysed in a content level, taking note of the scenes.

* Variable 5: Character objectives. We analysed if the character has defined goals, if he has at least an objective in the film (distinguishing if the plot shows it or if it is defined orally by the character, for instance: "I have to pass this exam", "she has to be my girlfriend") or if the character has no goals.

* Variable 6: Myth of "romantic love" - "better half". We took into account if the narrator (in case there is one) or a specific character mentions their beliefs in "romantic love" or the "better half", by using expressions such as "she/he is my soulmate", "without him/her I am nothing", "I have been in love with him/her all my life", "she/he is the only one".

* Variable 7: Character hypersexualization. We analysed this variable according to the key attributes used in the research *Gender bias without borders* (2015). Thus, by analysing in which scenes the character is exposed in part or full nudity, with sexually revealing clothes or there are verbal references about the physical appearance of the character or about him/her as a sexual object, we determine if the character is "objectified", evaluated according to his physical appearance and treated as a sexual object. We included the characters into two categories: hypersexualized (if the character has the above mentioned characteristics in three or more scenes) or, if not, no-hypersexualized.

*Variable 8: Use of clichés. Regarding the storyline, we look for the reproduction of some of the clichés above explained: 8.1) the "good girl-good boy", 8.2) "the angel", 8.3) "the bad girl-bad boy" (the topic of "the bad boy" is characterised for being a character physically strong with an arrogant attitude, free spirited and aggressive); 8.4) other clichés (those who either have not all the characteristics of the correspondent clichés, or have more than one cliché characteristics in his definition) or 8.5) no clichés represented.

Character n. : NAME		**Nº of scenes**	**Conclusion**
Variable 3. Sphere of action	The character acts in PUBLIC PLACES		
	The character acts in PRIVATE PLACES		
Variable 4. The role of character	The character is ACTIVE		
	The character is PASSIVE		
	The character is AGRESSIVE		
		YES/NO	
Variable 5: Character objectives	The character has defined objectives		
	The character has no defined		

	objectives	
Variable 6: Myth of "romantic love"- "better half"	The character reproduce it	
	The character doesn't reproduce it	
Variable 7: Character hypersexualization	The character is hypersexualized	
	The character is not hypersexualized	
Variable 8: Use of clichés	"The good girl"- "the good boy"	
	"The angel"	
	"The bad girl"-"the bad boy"	
	Other clichés	
	No clichés	

Table 2: Analysis model PHASE 2.

2.4.3. Inter-rater reliability

With the aim of providing information about the reliability of the variables and defined categories, "the test of the intercoder reliability (in the pilot phase of the measure tools and at the end of it) is an essential requirement in content analysis" (Igartua, 2006: 218). As Igartua mentions according to the Krippendorf works (1990), it is a guarantee that "data were obtained regardless the situation, tool or person who measures" (Igartua, 2006: 218).

Thus, after the definition of the relevant variables in the study and the criteria codes, we checked the intercoder reliability. In this step is usual "to take a sample of the 10%-20% of the units of analysis, and counting on other interjudges who analyse, independently, the same material in each variable within the codebook" (Igartua, 2006: 218). For this reason we used the Cohen's Kappa to obtain our "reliability index".

During the viewing process there was an additional interjudge who, after reading the codebook (in this case the analysis model of characters in Phase 1 and Phase 2) analysed 62 minutes of the sample (a 15% of the full sample, 415 minutes). The film randomly selected was *Tres metros sobre el cielo*, Fernando González Molina, 2010).

Afterwards, we evaluated the agreement index of the interjudges, and we obtained a high index in almost every variable. The indexes were the following:

- PHASE 1:

> Variable 1. Type of character: Kappa .85
> Variable 2. Sex of the character: Kappa 1 (100% of agreement)

- PHASE 2:

In this phase, the interjudge coder extended the sample 30 minutes to other film, randomly selected (*Fuga de cerebros*. Fernando González Molina, 2009), because there were only four protagonists in the selected sample of Phase 1. Finally in Phase 2, we analysed the agreement index in ten protagonists (the full sample has 19 protagonists).

> Variable 3. Sphere of action: Kappa .80
> Variable 4. The role of character: Kappa .80
> Variable 5. Character objectives: Kappa .61
> Variable 6. Myth of "romantic love" - "better half": Kappa .78
> Variable 7. Character hypersexualization: Kappa 1 (100% of agreement)
> Variable 8. Use of clichés: Kappa .85

Practically all the variables have a high reliability index, demonstrating that our analysis is reliable. The only exception was the index of the Variable 5, that has an index Kappa .61 and it is below the expectations (a .7 value). However, in this aspect is important to note that our interjudge viewed the first 30 minutes of the second film, and at that moment the characters probably have not the goals developed or verbalized.

2.4.4 Application of statistical methods

With the aim of qualifying the conclusions and detecting if there is a significant association between some variables without the random as explanation (H 1.2), we applied the Pearson Chi-Square (χ^2) in those cases where we had the "effective conditions" [2]. After the test, we interpreted the results and the significance level (p) in comparison with the often used in Social Science mistake α=.05, obtaining conclusions about the hypotheses. To that end, we have worked with the program IBM SPSS Statistics 22.

3. Results

According to the variables studied in the mentioned sample, the results are the following:

3.1. Hypothesis 1 results

Our first sub-hypothesis said that the number of male protagonists was going to be higher than female protagonists' in the sample. 50 of these 69 characters had a supporting role and 19 were

protagonists (Table 3). In relation with the character's sex, 27 of the total were women and 42 were men. So there is an unequal sex representation: a 39.1% of women and a 60.9% of men (Table 4).

According to the type of character and the character's sex, we noticed that there were seven women and twelve men out of a total of 19 protagonists, a fact that demonstrate a higher presence of males in leading roles at the expense of female in leading roles (Table 5). It is also noteworthy, although our investigation doesn't focus on it that between the characters in supporting roles there is a sex difference as well: twenty supporting characters are women and thirty supporting characters are men.

	Frequency	Percentage
Protagonist	19	27,5
Supporting role	50	72,5
Total	69	100,0

Table 3. Protagonists and supporting roles.

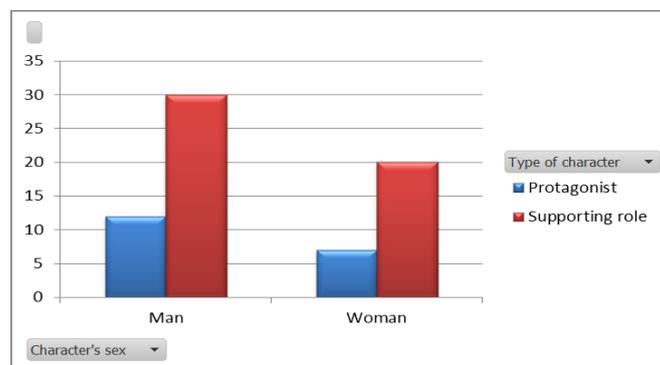|	Frequency	Percentage
Woman	27	39,1
Man	42	60,9
Total	69	100,0

Table 4. Characters according to sex.

Table 5. Relation between sex and type of character

In the first film analysed, *Fuga de cerebros* ('FDC'), there are five male protagonists (Emilio, Chuli, Ruedas, Corneto y Cabra) and only one female with a leading role (Natalia). The story is narrated by the point of view of the male crew (being they the subject of the action) while Natalia is reduced to a symbolic object: she is "the trophy of the warrior" (Aguilar, 2004), 'what' men seek ("have to conquer").

In the second film, *Tres metros sobre el cielo* ('3MSC'), there are two male protagonists ("H" y Pollo) and two female protagonists (Babi y Katina). Although in this case we have an equal proportion of sexes, both females in the leading roles act as a symbolic object, the trophy for the male protagonists, and the story is narrated by men's point of view.

In the third film analysed, *Promoción fantasma* ('PF'), there are four male protagonists (Modesto, Jorge, Dani y Pinfloy) and three women in a leading role (Tina, Mariví y Ángela), while in the fourth film analysed, *Perdona si te llamo amor* ('PSTLA'), there is one man and one women in the leading roles (Álex and Niki).

Therefore, we can conclude that in terms of leading roles there is an unequal sex representation in our sample. This fact can be related to the conclusions made by the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media (2015) and CIMA (2014), which demonstrate the overrepresentation of male characters as protagonists at the expense of female characters in the leading roles, and the evidences shown by the investigators Pilar Aguilar (2004, 2007, 2010), Virginia Guarinos (2008) and Trinidad Núñez (2008), who demonstrated the androcentric point of view of films and the audio-visual representation of men as subjects of the story.

3.2. Hypothesis 2 results

For the second sub-hypothesis (H 1.2), we studied whether clichés and gender stereotypes were present in the characters of the four films analyzed. To do so, in phase 2 we have analysed the five variables mentioned above in relation to the 19 main characters and the following results were obtained.

VARIABLE 3: SPHERE OF ACTION

Concerning the area in which the character acts, we observed a distinction between male protagonists and female protagonists (Table 6): A 42.86% of women protagonists move in private sphere, compared to just 16.67% of males. At the same time, a 58.33% of men move in public sphere, compared to 14.29% of women.

	Mixed areas	Private sphere	Public sphere	Total
Man	25,00%	16,67%	58,33%	100,00%
Woman	42,86%	42,86%	14,29%	100,00%
Total	**31,58%**	**26,32%**	**42,11%**	**100,00%**

Table 6. Percentage of characters according to their sex and sphere of action.

The data (Table 7) shows that 7 men act in public sphere, but only one woman. In mixed areas, we found three men and three women, and in private sphere only 2 of 12 men act, compared to 3 of 7 women.

These three women appearing in more than 60% of the scenes in private action frames are Babi ('3MSC'), who is in 43 scenes (of 70) in his room, a private house or inside a car -while "H" appears only in 24 of such locations, and he is with her in 18 of those 24- and Angela and Mariví ('PF'), who in their capacity as ghosts cannot leave certain Monforte school locations.

In the first film, 'FDC', all the characters, five men and Natalia, act mainly in public areas. However, it is noteworthy the amount of scenes in which they appear: the hero, Emilio, appears in 47 scenes, Chuli in 51, and Natalia only in 25.

In the second film, '3MSC', the male protagonists occupy the public sphere in more than 60% of the scenes. However, as mentioned above, Babi is confined in the domestic sphere and co-star, Katina, moves in a mixed environment, both public and private spaces. In this respect, and although it has not been quantified since it is not our main research goal, we noticed that when women appear in public sphere, they usually aren't alone, but accompanied, generally by male.

In 'PF' the character traits limit the spaces in which they appear: five are ghosts who cannot leave Monforte school. So Dani, Angela Pinfloy and Mariví are confined to a private area: the abandoned library. However, one of them, Jorge was included in the mixed sphere category since he appears the 60% of the scenes in private spaces and 40% in public ones. This fact responds to his relationship with a supporting character, Elsa, a no-ghost teenager. Regarding the human characters, which in this film are also the adults, both Modesto and Tina appear in mixed spaces. Nevertheless, once again it is remarkable the number of scenes in which each one appears: Modesto (male) take part in 41 scenes and Tina in 22.

Finally, in 'PSTLA', both characters, Niki and Alex, occupy mixed areas and in a similar proportion
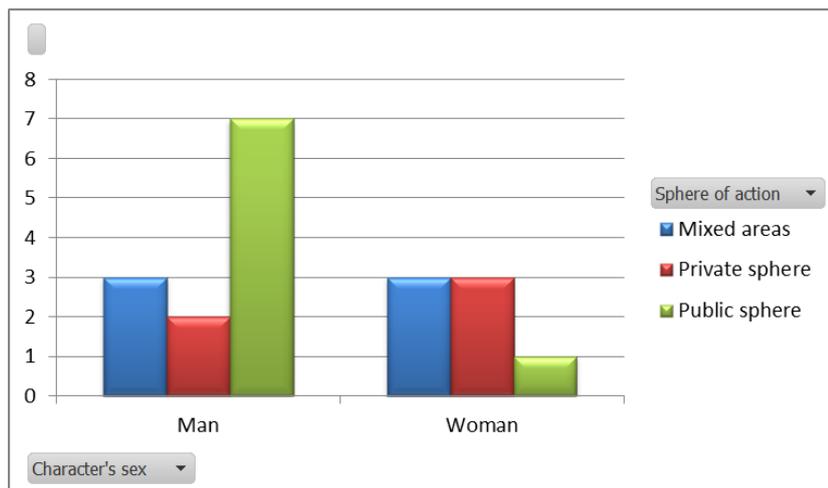

Table 7. Number of characters according to their sex and sphere of action

VARIABLE 4: THE ROLE OF CHARACTER

Concerning the variable related to the role of the character, 11 characters have an active role, seven a passive role, and one an aggressive role. The results (Tables 8.1 and 8.2) show that 71.43% of the female characters have a passive role compared to only 16.67% of the male protagonists. In other words, an 83.33% of male protagonists have an active / aggressive role (10), while this role is present only in 28.67% of women protagonists (2) (Tables 9.1 and 9.2).

	Active	Agressive	Passive	Total
Man	75,00%	8,33%	16,67%	100,00%
Woman	28,57%	0,00%	71,43%	100,00%
Total	**57,89%**	**5,26%**	**36,84%**	**100,00%**

Table 8.1. Percentage of characters according to their sex and role.
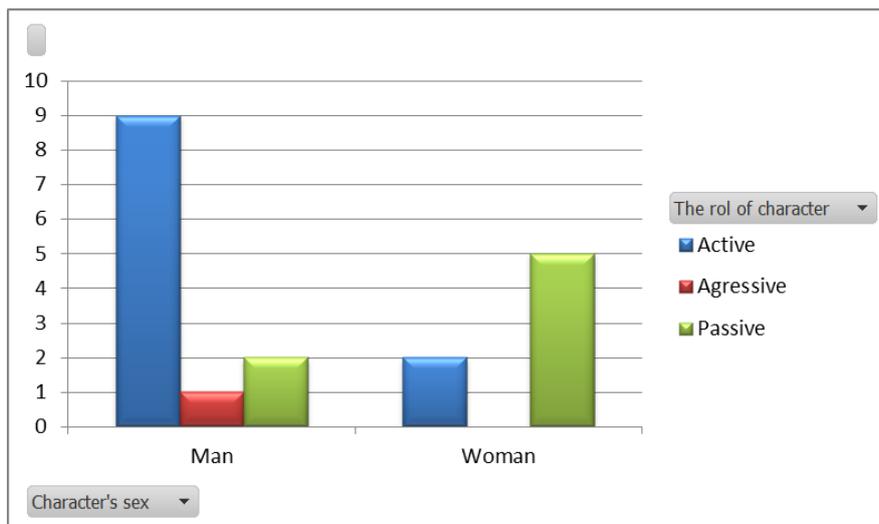
Table 8.2. Number of characters according to their sex and role.

	Active / Agressive	Passive	Total
Man	83,33%	16,67%	100,00%
Woman	28,57%	71,43%	100,00%
Total	**63,16%**	**36,84%**	**100,00%**

Table 9.1 Percentage of characters according to their sex and recoded role.
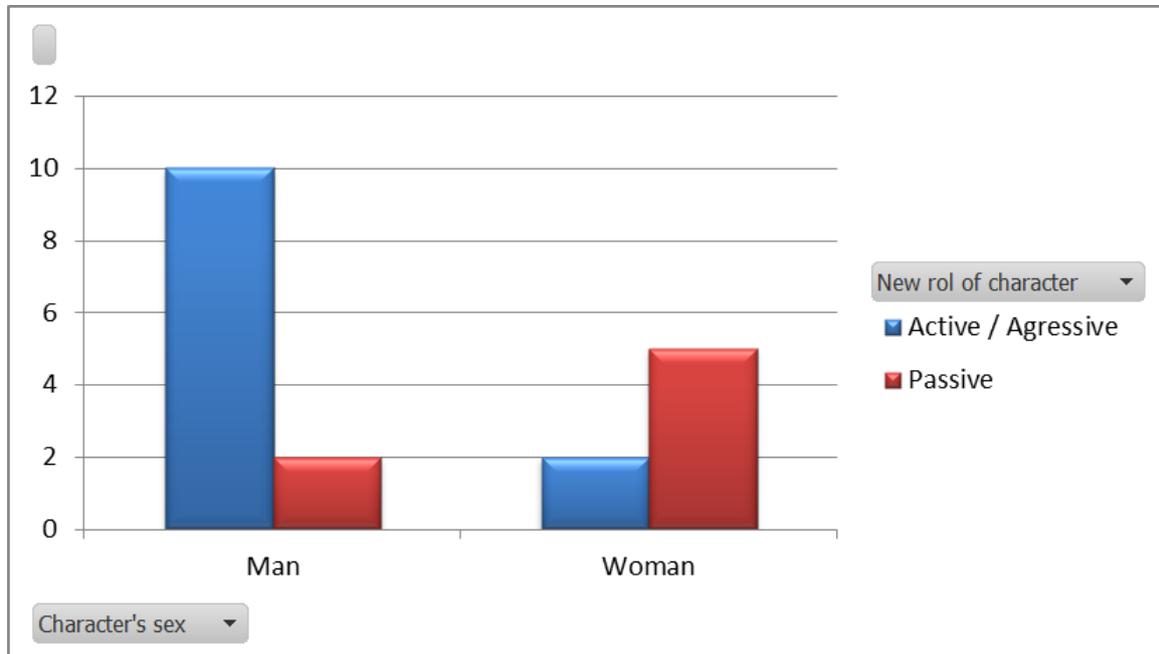
Table 9.2. Number of characters according to their sex and recoded role.

In this regard, it is remarkable that one (Katina, '3MSC') of the two female protagonists that have an active role respond to her initiative regarding her only purpose in the film, his relationship with Pollo, and the other (Niki, 'PSTLA') takes the initiative to strengthen her relationship with her "true love". That is, both protagonists defined as active aim a relationship with a man.

The other female characters are, in most situations, subjects of the initiative of others. Especially two: Natalia ('FDC'), which is objective and symbolic object of five male protagonists (the girl to be "won over" for one of them and to be found in Oxford for the rest) and the character of Babi ('3MSC'), who consent to each and every one of the requests of the male protagonist, "H", and – except when she loses her virginity and in the final scene, in which he slaps her and she cuts her relationship with him– she never acts on its own initiative, doing activities such as riding in the backside in a motorcycle race, getting a tattoo, runnig away from home several times, drinking, bathing in a pool at night, opening the door after he violently beat it, skipping class, etc. because of the requests of "H" and seeking his approval while he nods satisfied at each of these actions.

The three remaining female protagonists with passive role ('PF') turn out to be the director of a school, unable to solve the operational problems of the center, who asks for help the protagonist (male) –so she needs him–; and Angela and Mariví, two young ghosts. It is noteworthy that here the ghost condition is not the reason for their passive role, since his three male companions, also ghosts, act on their own initiative (Frame 1).

Frame 1. The passivity of female protagonists versus the male protagonists in 'PF' [3]

VARIABLE 5: CHARACTER OBJETIVES

Concerning the definition of objectives, only one of the 19 characters has defined objectives (Table 10). This unique aimless protagonist is a woman, Babi (3MSC), mentioned in the preceding paragraph and defined as passive. At no time this character expresses any intention or purpose, she is just carried along by her relationship with the male leading character, "H". It can be relate with the words of Menendez (2008) in which she contrasts how men, subject of action, act according to a goal, while the emotional dependence of women (causing rivalry between them, as it happens to Babi when she fights with Mara for "H") is highlighted.
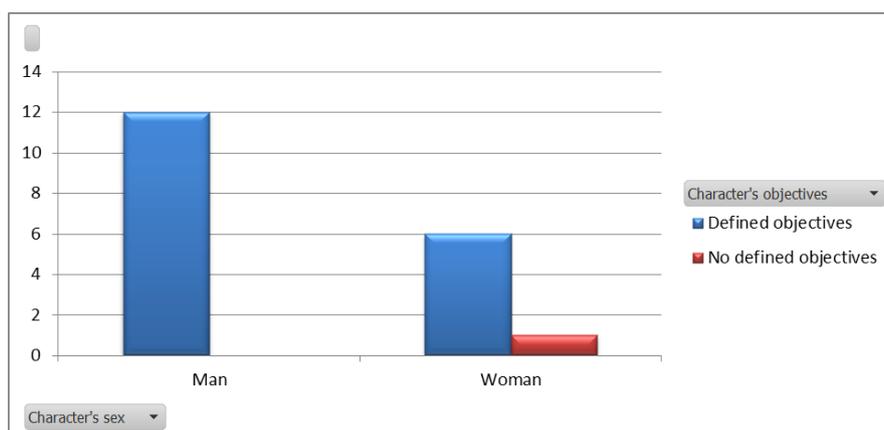

Table 10. Relation between the characters' sex and the definition of their objectives.

The other female protagonists do have defined objectives, but they do not act to achieve them, they "request" them and predominantly "hope" they happen (thus, the number of female protagonists with defined objectives does not correspond with the active characters). Their objectives are: academic succeed (Natalia, 'FDC'), a relationship with a man (Katina, '3MSC'; Mariví, 'PF', Niki, 'PSTLA'), knowledge (Angela, 'PF'), or directing a school (Tina, 'PF'). That is, the objectives of the female protagonists can be reduced to two: knowledge / study and a relationship with a man.

In contrast, the objectives of the male protagonists are: in 'FDC' Emilio wants to win the protagonist over (helped by his friends); Chuli wants to be integrated in society despite his blindness and he wants to win Voz Angelical over; Wheels seeks sex and wining Claudia over; Corneto wants to fill a jug with semen before the end of course; and Cabra helps Emilio to win the protagonist over. In '3MSC' Pollo wants to win the bike race and have a relationship with the co-star Katina, and "H" wishes to make Babi "go crazy for him," to win in various competitions (push-ups, motorcycles) and maintain its status as a leader. In 'PF' the objective of Modesto is to help students to pass the course in order to stop being ghosts and so that the school can remain open; Jorge focuses on sports and his relationship with Elsa; Dani's aim is to maintain its leading role and convince other partners of being ghosts is better; and Pinfloy's is partying. In 'PSTLA' the goal of the protagonist, Alex, is to conduct a perfume advertising campaign, remain creative director and "wait for his soul mate."

Although the narrative objective of some of the male protagonists is a relationship with a female protagonist, we note that, except one of them (Alex, 'PSTLA'), the characters see the relationship as based on the "conquest", on their action; not in a equal relationship, but in considering them as symbolic objects to get. It is also remarkable that male goals are more varied and related to hobbies or competitions. This representation can be related to what Plaza (2010) postulates about male characters attributes: "leaders, competitive, dominant, individualistic, (...) aggressive or ambitious".

VARIABLE 6: MYTH OF "ROMANTIC LOVE" - "BETTER HALF"

Regarding the analysis of whether the main characters reproduce the myth of "romantic love" or "better half", 14 characters (73.63%) did not replicate this belief, while 5 characters (26.32%) did (Tables 11.1 and 11.2). Three of these five characters are women and two are men. The figures correspond with 42.86% of the female protagonists and 16.67% of male protagonists portraying this belief.

In all cases, the characters talk about the "love of his life" or their "true love". It's remarkable that in '3MSC' the belief in "soul mates" is associated with the heroine's virginity (who says to "H" at the time of losing her virginity, the she wants him to be "the first and last", the only one), and in 'PSTLA', the narrator (off) constantly talks about the myth saying that "true love appears only once in life", and influencing in the protagonist's idea of eternal exclusivity: "since I saw you, I knew it was you, the love of my life".

It is significant that men who reproduce the myth mentioned correspond to the two tha have a passive role (Emilio, '3MSC', Alex, 'PSTLA'). However, not all the female protagonists that embody the myth are passive (Niki, 'PSTLA') or all the passive ones portray the myth (Natalia, 'FDC').
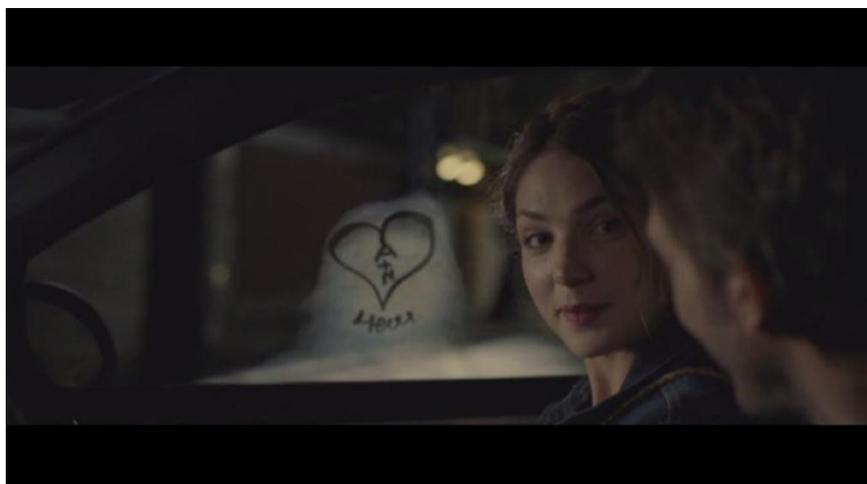
Frame 2. The reproduction of the myth of "romantic love" in 'PSTLA' [4]

Once again, female characters are the ones who "fall in love (...) and cry" fulfilling the requirements of the myth of the 'suffering passion'; that is, the "affairs of the heart" remain their issue (Institute for Women, 2007) on the selected sample.
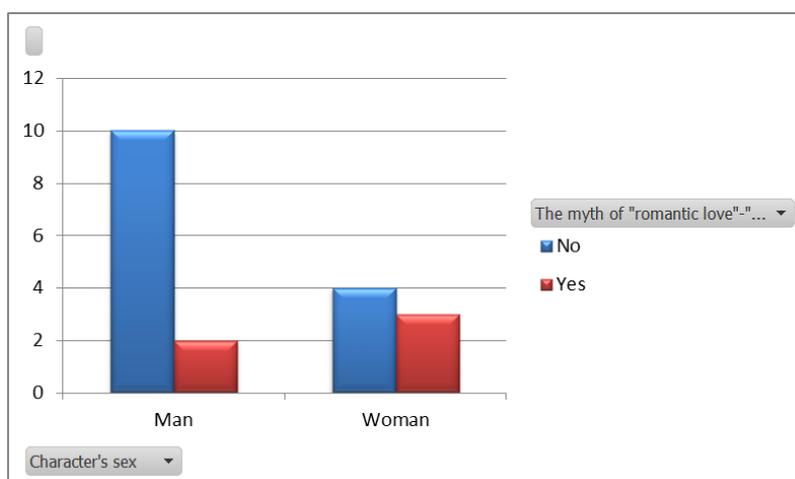

Table 11.1. Association between the character's sex and the myth of "romantic love"

	No	Yes	Total
Man	83,33%	16,67%	100,00%
Woman	57,14%	42,86%	100,00%
Total	**73,68%**	**26,32%**	**100,00%**

Table 11.2. Percentage of character according to sex and the myth of "romantic love".

VARIABLE 7: CHARACTER HYPERSEXUALIZATION

Concerning variable 7, in which we study the character hypersexualization, we note that only two of the 19 protagonists can be considered as hypersexualized according to the criteria established (Tables 12.1 and 12.2).

	No	Yes	Total
Man	91,67%	8,33%	100,00%
Woman	85,71%	14,29%	100,00%
Total	**89,47%**	**10,53%**	**100,00%**

Table 12.1. Association between character's sex and hypersexualization
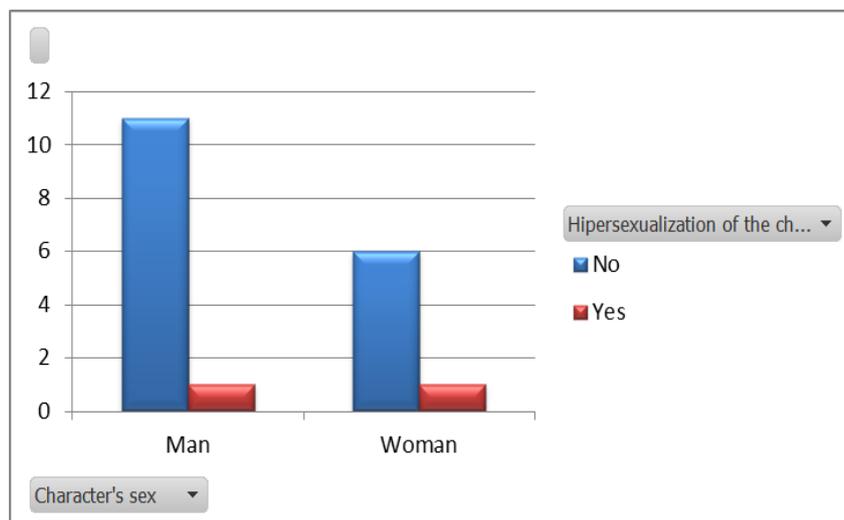

Table 12.2. Association between character's sex and hypersexualization.

One of these two protagonists is a man and the other a woman, and both belong to the same movie (3MSC). However, they differ in the degree of intensity of hypersexualization; He, "H", appears in six scenes without shirt, bare torso. However, his body is not fragmented as it does with hers, Babi, who is hypersexualized in most of the film (more than eleven scenes). In fact, the female protagonist is introduced, in the second scene of the film while the credits are appearing, through close-ups of parts of her body in underwear (Frame 3), and being abundant the scenes in which she is partially nude, in which a man (in this case, "H") alludes to his body using expressions such as "you are very sexy" (Scene 16) or "you have a great ass" (Scene 26) –or in which she dresses sensually because a man will stare at her (a fact that does not happen, for example, when she meets her friend Katina).

Frame 3: Close-up of Babi's ('3MSC') fragmented body [5]

Thus, it can be seen how the interest of the female character in this film is seduction, existing for and depending on "H", ignoring any moral, human or intellectual trait in her and being reified to be looked-at.

Despite not reaching the rate to be considered hypersexualized, it is relevant to mention the importance given to other female protagonists physical appearance, all of them beautiful, thin, and feminine in dress and manners (according to Western beauty canons).

VARIABLE 8: USE OF CLICHÉS

Regarding the use of clichés, from a total of 19 characters two of them reproduce the cliché of "the good girl / good guy", three the cliché of "the bad girl / bad boy", four "other clichés" and ten any. Considering gender (Table 13), most of the male protagonists (66.67%) did not embody any cliché, while only 28.57% of female characters did so.

Explaining the variable in detail (Table 14), we found that in the case of men, only one reproduces the cliché of "good guy" (Emilio, 'FDC') and just one woman do so with the cliché of "good girl "(Babi, '3MSC'). Both are suffering, naive, young, beautiful characters who postpone his happiness only to be with their partner.

The cliché of "bad girl" is not portrayed by any female protagonist (although its features can be found in a secondary character, Mara, the rival of Babi in his relationship with "H" and its antithesis). Nevertheless, this cliché is portrayed by two male protagonists ("H" '3MSC'; Dani, 'PF'), two arrogant, free spirited, hard-boiled men.

Frame 4. Natalia ("FDC"*)*, the "good girl" cliché [6].

Regarding "other clichés", none of the male protagonist (0%) fit in this category, while more than half of women protagonists (57.14%) did. These four women are a miscellany of the definition of the cliché of "the good girl" with others. For example, we found Natalia ('FDC', Frame 4) and Angela ('PF'), which although young, naive, kind and tender, they don't seek or expect their "prince" because they are portrayed as pure and their only goal is the knowledge; for instance, Niki ('PSTLA'), is portrayed as a naive, good girl, who waits for someone to make her happy, but mixed with features of a "Lolita" since she is a teenager that causes sexual tensions in a mature man; and in the case of Mariví ('PF') she is also a "good girl" who is waiting to meet again her partner, Chema, to be happy, but she also has features of the "punished femme fatale" (she is pregnant for, as her mate states, "being a slut")

In this regard, clichés are frequently used for the features of female leading roles, reducing and perpetuating stereotypical images of women.

Table 13. Percentage of characters according to sex and chichés.

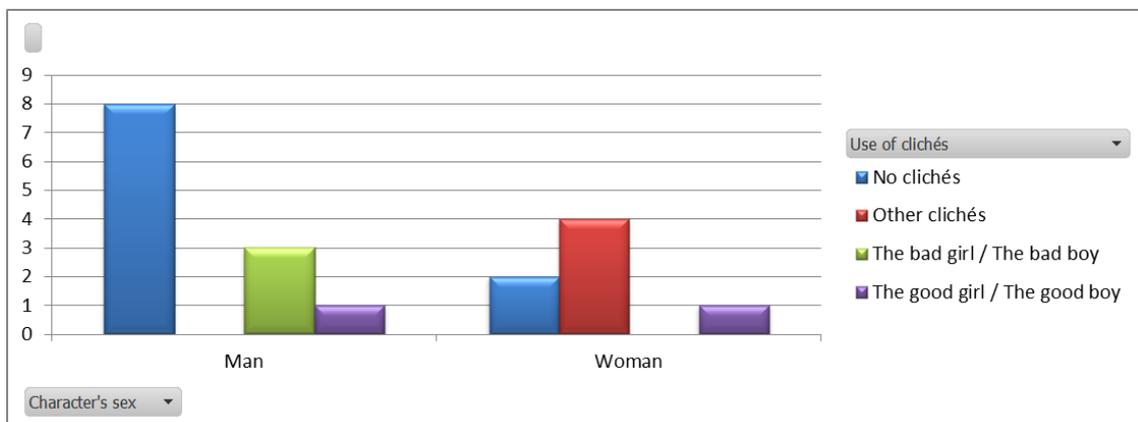|	No clichés	Other clichés	The bad girl / The bad boy	The good girl / The good boy	Total
Man	66,67%	0,00%	25,00%	8,33%	100,00%
Woman	28,57%	57,14%	0,00%	14,29%	100,00%
Total	**52,63%**	**21,05%**	**15,79%**	**10,53%**	**100,00%**

Table 14. Association between character's sex and clichés.

3.3. Statistical method

After using the Chi-squared test for measuring the correlation between each of the variables of 'phase 2' and the variable 'sex' of the protagonists, aroused invalid conclusions for all cases [7]-tables of contingency except one, so we have removed all references to the data obtained from the application of that statistic.

The case were the results of Chi-squared test were reliable is in the variable 'role'; the relationship between sex of the character and if it was active, passive or aggressive. In this case, categorizing the active and aggressive category as a single one (both of which are "non-passive") and relating to the sex of the characters, we have achieved significant results: the Fisher's exact test shows a probability of $p =. 029 < \alpha$. So that, there is a significant relationship between 'sex' and 'role' of the character, resulting representative and generalizable the relationship between female characters and passivity and male characters and activity (Tables 15 and 16).

Sex * Recoded Role

		Recoded role		Total
		Active/Aggressive	Passive	
Sex	Woman	2	5	7
	Man	10	2	12
Total		12	7	19

Table 15. Association between sex of the character and role.

Chi-Square Test

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5,698[a]	1	,017		
Continuity Correction[b]	3,587	1	,058		
Fisher's Exact Test				,045	,029
N of Valid Cases	19				

a. 3 cells (75,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2,58.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Table 16. Association between sex of the character and role. Results.

3.4. Other observations

It is noteworthy that the film with more viewers between 2009 and 2014 of the analysed ones, 'Tres metros sobre el cielo' (3MSC), is the one in which every one of the stereotypes mentioned appear.

It is also noteworthy, although it is not the subject of this study, the hypersexualization, in some cases extreme, of the secondary female roles and the comments made about them.

It is also remarkable a feature that is absent in male leading roles but present in female protagonists of two of the four films analyzed: the importance of the virginity of the woman and her first sexual experience. Thus, in '3MSC' the protagonist, Babi, verbalizes his fear to sleep with the male protagonist, and describes him as the "first and last" to have sex with. Her friend Katina when saying "I demand the details of the first time you let someone fuck you" expresses this unequal relationship. It can be again related to the thesis of the reproduction of the traditional heteronormative model of sexual duality and the 'rule' of vaginal intercourse (Gonzalez de Garay). Likewise, 'PSTLA' begins with several female characters, including the protagonist, talking about "the first time" as something special. Such conversations are not present in the male characters, if they do talk about sex is from the perspective of conquest and victory, "in two dinners I'll fuck her," say two of them in 'FDC' regarding his relationship with two female supporting characters. In 'PF' boys prepare a meeting between Modesto and Tina, "giving him a hand" with achieving to have sex with her, pointing (while making gestures imitating an intercourse) that "what babes want is to be a little bit beaten". Thus, in three of the four films analyzed, they (men) "fuck" and they (woman) "are fucked". Men are the subject of action and women are who receive the action.

Only one of the nineteen protagonists is gay (which furthermore is revealed at the end of the film). We relate this with the statement of Guarinos (2008) on the incorporation of the figure of the male homosexual instead of women. It is also noteworthy that in one of the scenes of 'PF' one of the male characters 'gets in' the body of a girl and makes her kiss another girl sensually in order to show the other male characters how good and satisfactory is to be a ghost (which enable to live similar situations). In this scene the double burden mentioned by Irene Pelayo (2009) is observed: lesbian sexuality to heterosexual male viewer's eyes (and in this case, also male characters observers of the scene) is provided with double sexual symbolism.

4. Discussion and conclusions

Considering the results obtained in the present research, we conclude that contemporary Spanish teen films reproduce an unequal gender image based on plot and character stereotypes that contributes to feed the creation and continuation of a social imaginary in young viewers about how women and men are, and thus perpetuating the gender inequality.

A significant relationship between passive role and female role has been observed: if there is a female protagonist, it will most likely have a passive role, won't act or be a direct source of action but will move at the initiative of other characters, mostly males. The research shows also a clear tendency to hold women to private spheres of action, mostly the rooms but also the family home or private cars (which, by the way, they do not drive). Moreover, there is a tendency for female characters not to appear alone in public places.

Regarding the hypersexualization of the characters, although there is a balance in the objectification of the characters in relation to sex in the movies studied, it is important to mention that, comparing the degree of sexualisation, it is greater and more explicit in female characters than male ones, including full nudity or partition of body parts in close-ups against naked male torsos. It is also remarkable, although it has not been specifically quantified in this study, how the female characters have been given a physical appearance that meets the canons of Western beauty, with features such as femininity in dress and manners or thinness and beauty. This feeds the idea, already mentioned, of the treatment of women as 'symbolic object' observed. It perpetuates the idea of thinness and beauty "as signs of prestige and social success for women (...)" (Plaza, 2010) as well. Thus, there is an insistence in avoiding any moral, human or intellectual trait of female characters in the films in pursuit of their physical appearance.

The myths of "romantic love" and "soulmate" are still present in the movies, in this case with similar rates in male characters and female characters. San Pedro (2005) links the consequences of its reproduction to gender violence, due to the role model of how and when feelings should be taken and due to "pathetic, full of suffering, personal sacrifices and privation loves (...), limitations on freedom, some slight and pressures..." that cross audio-visual narratives and materialize in reality.

In line with the words of San Pedro, we mention the high reproduction of that belief showed in the female protagonists of the films analysed: nearly half of them. This observation is related to Charo Altable (1998) studies, which state "many women still seek justification for their reality giving love

as the backbone of their existence, devoting more time, more imaginary and real space to it. Men devote more time and space to be recognized and considered by society and peers". Her words are also a summary of what was observed in the films analyzed: the objectives of females, if any, in over half the cases are to have a relationship with a man, while males expand and diversify their objectives with personal goals, wining competitions of all kinds, or career goals.

Regarding the clichés, it is remarkable its high use in the definition of female leading roles, acquiring the traits of "the good girl": good, pure, innocent, young, kind, and waiting for her prince charming.

Specifically, it is mentionable that the most viewed film of the study, with more than 1,300,000 viewers, *Tres metros sobre el cielo*, is the one that meets each and every one of the stereotypes mentioned: she is Babi, a pure "good girl", caste, beautiful and sweet, aimless, bounded to private and family spaces and sensual for male protagonist; He is "H", a rebellious, active, guard-conqueror, with initiative and leadership traits and owner of public spaces.

However, our study has mentionable limits: 19 characters are not a large sample, so it does not allow, through a statistical study, generalize our findings beyond. Still, this was not our intention; our intention was to observe the gender representation in contemporary Spanish teen films between 2009 and 2014.

This study aims to be at least one step for further research on gender representation in teen movies. In the process, we noted other relevant research lines to analyze in prospective studies. For example, extending the analysis to male stereotypes, the study of reification and the definition based on clichés in the female supporting roles, and a thorough analysis of female characters in public spheres: when they appear, what for, and with who.

To conclude we would like to stress the importance of how a character is defined in audio-visual narrative, especially film products and those intended to and starring teens. Their behaviours and beliefs, at an age when setting their personality, absorb stereotypical audio-visual models for men and women, and sexist messages received have consequences in shaping his personality and, in future societies. It is not the intention thereby to inadvertently say that media, films in this case, are the perpetrators of gender inequality, since other factors such as education and the critical responsibility come into play.

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6. Notes

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[2] Validity conditions: a) no expected frequency less than 1; b) no more than 20% of expected frequencies should be less or equal than 5 (Martín & Luna del Castillo, 2004: 335).

[3] Screenshot from *Promoción Fantasma* (27:28)

[4] Screenshot from *Perdona si te llamo amor* (55:18)

[5] Screenshot from *A tres metros sobre el cielo*

[6] Screenshot from *Fuga de cerebros* (07:00)

[7] Reference about 'validity conditions'.

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