



"COMING OUT" SPAIN REPORT

Marcela Jabbaz Churba (Ed.)

Gender perceptions and
conditioning in the life and
career aspirations
of young people

Ft
Free to Choose



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*Gender perceptions and
conditioning in the life
and career aspirations
of young people. the case of
valencia*

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THE YOUTH PERSPECTIVE ON WORK AND THEIR FUTURE

Marcela Jabbaz Churba

I. INTRODUCTION

This study seeks to identify gender stereotypes in the process of how young people choose their careers and subjects to study, as well as the guidance they receive to find employment. This research examines gender self-perception and the attribution of masculine or feminine characteristics to professions. The objective is not to find objective gender barriers to educational or professional opportunities, but rather to examine the perceptions of young people. It also engages with adults who provide educational and professional guidance to young people in order to understand their perspectives regarding the young people they work with and to assess if in their capacity as guidance counsellors they also transmit gender stereotypes. Their opinions are often transcendental in the decisions taken by young people in choosing careers or how to approach searching for jobs.

Another objective of this research is to find cracks and contradictions in the narratives of young people. The study revolved around the social construction of gender stereotypes and discrimination related to jobs and careers, and examined their hopes for the future, including their beliefs about equality, the value they placed on paid and unpaid work, such as domestic or social work, or forms of artistic expression (drama and arts, etc.), their conceptions of success, recognition, personal fulfilment, romantic relationships and friendships, among other issues. It also examined the role of leadership and positions of responsibility.

The purpose of the study is to identify the diverse elements that converge for young Valencians to shape their own gender, their current, traditional or fluid self-perception - with blurry or androgynous gender boundaries- and their life and career aspirations.

Given that stereotypes are changing, we have found what we refer to as *fossil stereotypes* based on traditional forms of viewing men and women. Although they rarely appear in the narratives of young people, they continue to operate darkly under a cloak of modernity. Gender discrimination becomes less overt in a society that proclaims equality; stereotypes metamorphose so as not to lose force, allowing occupational segregation to continue. We have also found new situations regarding interpersonal relationships and their conceptions of family, in which gender determinants lose force in the perceptions of young people.

This research focuses on the following questions: How do identity issues, relationships with peers, adults and role models (real people or fictional characters) generate limitations during the fundamental transitional periods of their lives? Do these aspects particularly affect the transition between secondary and higher education, and from the latter to the labour market? How do young people view different professions, abilities and opportunities? Also, what is the perspective of adults who through their institutional positions (guidance counsellors in schools or public agencies) influence their decisions and, ultimately, their career paths and futures?

II. EQUALITY POLICIES IN SPAIN

Over the past 40 years the equality between women and men in Spain has greatly improved, and in this regard the country has become a reference for many countries, particularly in the Spanish-speaking world.

During Spain's democratic transition the *destape español* ("Spanish unveiling") was a cultural backlash to the conservative Catholic ideology that considered women to lack autonomy and need male guardians to, for example, authorize them to have a bank account or a driving license.

However, the partisan structures and recently recreated democratic institutions were unprepared to make the deep changes necessary for Spanish women to enjoy the same equality as other European women. It would be women themselves, organized in associations that were independent of political parties, who would demand recognition of their rights.

First, legislation was repealed that directly discriminated against women by reducing their ability to participate in political, economic and social life.

Second, since 1988, generally following the orientations of the successive Community Action Programmes on equal opportunities, active policies began to be created through Equal Opportunity Plans for the entire Spanish state.

Law 39/1999 introduced labour reconciliation measures that favoured the presence of women in the labour market. During a five-year period, proactive measures were promoted through different administration programmes to introduce gender mainstreaming into the daily activities of the public administration and political personnel.

A genuine legislative milestone was reached in 2004 with Organic Law 1/2004 on Comprehensive Protection Measures against Gender Violence. In addition to provisions directed specifically at violence against women, it also enacts prevention measures, such as Article 6: promoting equality, which says: "*In order to guarantee the effective equality between men and women, the education administrations will ensure that all sexist or discriminatory stereotypes are eliminated from educational material and that they promote the equality of men and women*" (p.12 BOE).

On the civil level a law was enacted regarding same-sex marriages (Organic Law 13/2005) and express divorce (Organic Law 15/2005).

In 2007 another extremely important law was enacted known as the "effective equality" law (Organic Law 3/2007). This law puts emphasis on the need for men to become co-responsible for taking care of dependants and children through non-transferable paternal leaves. Another relevant aspect is that it establishes the need for electoral lists and public appointments to be more balanced between men and women, as well as making it obligatory for norms and budgets to provide a prior evaluation report regarding gender impact.

Meanwhile, the abortion law was reformed (Organic Law 2/2010). Prior to the reform a psychological evaluation of the woman requesting the procedure was required, causing delays that led to many abortions being carried out in private clinics.

In 2011, the entrance of the conservative government of the Popular Party halted the rhythm of new legislation regarding equality, but women's movements became much more active.

In opposition to an initiative to return to more restrictive legislation on abortion, women all over Spain took part in a march to Madrid, known as the "freedom train", which would lead to the dismissal of the Popular Party minister who promoted it.

Currently Spain is undergoing a period of heavy social activism. The number of feminist associations is growing thanks to younger generations and new member profiles. Associations of survivors of gender violence and men for equality are also appearing. However, there are also male associations that fight for paternity rights in divorces, promoting shared custody of children as the preferred arrangement, even when there is conflict between the parents. These associations are in confrontation with the feminist movement, which considers this kind of custody an additional institutional violence.

The areas of greatest controversy are: shared custody, prostitution, womb rental and whether or not diversity policies should be accompanied by equality policies. Where there are prospects for greater permeability, although there are also differences, is in the inclusion of men in the feminist movement.

Political and social pacts have been established on the issue of gender violence that seek to broaden the definition of this type of violence (which in Spanish law is restricted to violence that occurs between partners or ex-partners) to include new types of violence against women, in line with the Istanbul Convention.

Furthermore, the main areas where there are prospects for advances in equality are: the gender salary gap and the demand for gender mainstreaming in the public administration, including the gender perspective in all policies, plans, programmes and actions, reinforcing equality offices and also providing more and improved gender training to public employees.

III. THE YOUTH PERSPECTIVE ON WORK AND THEIR FUTURE

Marcela Jabbaz Churba

Young people were interviewed to understand how they viewed the world and, in particular, gender relations in professional fields and at work.

1. Methodology

Nine in-depth interviews were carried out. In the first part of the interview they described what they do with their free time. They were then asked to choose 10 occupations from a list of 50. Later, we discussed 4 of their choices that were relevant to the objectives of the research. They were asked to describe each of the careers that they chose, the characteristics of the people who worked in them and if there were gender differences. Immediately following, they were asked to imagine what their life would be like when they were 40: where they would live, who they would live with, what their career would be, what their life would be like. Finally, they were asked what steps they would have to take to achieve this dream and if there are people (or fictional characters, or in the sports world) who could help or accompany them on these paths.

Table 1. Criteria and cases included in the study

Criteria to include cases	Cases included in the study
1. Woman, 15-18 years old, secondary education	Woman, 17 years old, baccalaureate
2. Man, 15-18 years old, secondary education	Man, 16 years old, baccalaureate
3. Woman 19-29 years old, in the final year or graduated in vocational training, with work experience	Woman, 20 years old, final year of vocational training, working
4. Man, 19-29 years old, in the final year or graduated from vocational training, with work experience	Man, 23 years old, graduated from vocational training, with work experience
5. Woman 21-29 years old, graduated or in the final year of university, with work experience	Woman, 28 years old, final year of university, working
6. Man, 21-29 years old, graduated or in the final year of university, with work experience	Man, 22 years old, final year of university, with work experience
7. Woman, 19-29 years old who does not work or study, involved in a youth guarantee programme	Woman, 27 years old who does not work or study, involved in a youth guarantee programme
8. Man, 19-29 years old who does not work or study, involved in a youth guarantee programme	Trans man, 19 years old who does not work or study, involved in a youth guarantee programme
9. Woman or man, 19-29 years old who does not work or study, not involved in a youth guarantee programme	Man, 20 years old, who does not work or study

The following are some details regarding their self-images. At the end of the list Table 2 presents codes that we have created with the nicknames of the interviewees and their socio-demographic characteristics.

- 1) Interviewee 1, who we refer to as the “Art restorer”, is the daughter of a Gypsy mother and *Payo* (person of non-Gypsy ethnicity) father. She loves to read stories about women. She doesn’t have a defined career, but she likes restorations

of works of art and culture in general. Her father, a truck driver and amateur boxer, is for her a model of personal growth. Her family travels as tourists around the world a great deal. She believes that she has to follow her own vocation:

“These days if you say ‘artist’ they tell you: ‘there’s no work there’, but I believe that it’s a world where you can be yourself, you can be truly you”. (Art restorerM17)

- 2) Interviewee 2: “The comfortable one”, the son of two business owners, he’s an athlete, he plays basketball, his objective is not to work but to enjoy life. He wants to work in something that pays money but doesn’t require a great deal of effort, like –to his mind- teaching (“*except during exams when they have to do a lot of correcting*”) or hairstylist, which is what his cousin does.

[In basketball he likes playing the position] *The 3 spot is on the wing, which is a strong player who goes to the basket and shoots. He doesn’t bang with anybody; he is the most comfortable one on the court. And he shines, because he shoots* (The comfortable oneH16).

- 4) The “Actor”: he is very active, an artist, he needs to draw, play guitar, sculpt. He is proud of being an atheist in an Opus Dei family, but this has led to problems with his father. He completed vocational training as a flight attendant and is doing another as a costume designer. He worked briefly in the hospitality industry and telephone marketing. A couple of times he described himself as a strange person but that he connected with others in shared-interest groups.
- 5) The “Accordionist”: she left the maths programme in the university and switched to sociology, she likes the academic environment and, in general, taking care of people. She likes music: solfege and the accordion and teaches children. She has intellectual aspirations and initiative. She’s considering taking the steps to become a university professor, but at the same time earning a living in music.
- 6) “Green Arrow”: he studies physical therapy. Family is important to him and takes priority over his career. He usually feels a responsibility to help other people with their problems and that is why his idol is the Green Arrow. He has a trauma for not being around for his grandfather when he had Alzheimer’s and that is why he is drawn to healthcare.
- 7) The “Radical feminist”: she is an artist who tries to live consistently according to alternative principles. She cares about groups, both in her artistic projects as well as her daily life, where she shares a flat with friends. She was in a youth guarantee programme. She is highly questioning, a vegetarian, concerned with issues such as food sovereignty and has decided not to have children due to global overpopulation.
- 8) The “Cartoonist”: participated in a youth guarantee programme. He is a trans man, from a dysfunctional family, who is recovering his self-esteem in an NGO dedicated to social work for at-risk children and young people. He draws video game characters, but doesn’t play them.

“I go out almost every day. I go to Estación del Norte Renfe where everyone gets together [he is referring to trans people]. Since we have something in common. All of us rejects get together there” (CartoonistH19).

- 9) The “Creative cook”: is an Argentinian whose father is a deep-sea fisherman and mother is a skilled operator, separated. His father returned to Argentina after the separation. He has a brother who has followed a more “standard” educational path: secondary education and vocational training. He quit studying to work in construction, but is currently unemployed. He doesn’t want to do vocational training as a chef (he loves cooking) but he is interested in doing a short SERVEF course (Employment and Training Public Service). He currently neither works nor studies, but he sees himself as a future entrepreneur related to cooking.

Table 2. Interview codes and characteristics of the cases

Interview Code	Family situation	Sex	Age	Occupation
Art restorerM17	Mother, father, younger brother	Woman	17	Studying baccaulaureate
The comfortable oneH16	Mother, father, younger brother	Man	16	Studying baccaulaureate
ActorH23	Mother, father and 11 brothers and sisters (he is fifth oldest)	Man	23	Studying Vocational Training (VT), has had some job experience
NurseM20	Parents recently separated, older brother	Woman	20	Studying VT, teaches private classes, works in hospitality industry and is preparing to enter the university
AccordionistM28	Mother and father	Woman	28	Studying sociology in university, teaches music classes
Green ArrowH22	Mother and father, only child	Man	22	Studying physical therapy in university and is doing an internship
Radical feministM27	Mother, father, older brother and sister; and younger brother.	Woman	27	Took part in a youth guarantee programme and now works for a job training company
CartoonistH19	Mother, father and 2 older sisters	Trans man	19	Took part in a youth guarantee programme and is now studying to get a driving license
Creative cookH20SP	Argentinian family, parents separated, 1 brother	Man	20	Currently doesn’t work or study, but has worked, not interested in formal education

2. Gender stereotypes

During the interviews a series of traits were identified that the interviewees attributed as masculine or feminine. Nearly all the personal traits that the hegemonic culture attributes to men and women appeared in the different interviews. The frequency with which these stereotypical attributes appeared were not concentrated in the narratives, but added together reveal a *soft validity* that affirms the durability of masculine and feminine stereotypes.

Table 3. Personal traits described as masculine or feminine in the interviews

Masculine attributes	Feminine attributes
More closed, stricter, they think that being the boss makes them superior (Art restorerM17)	More open (Art restorerM17)
Boys are better at sports (AccordionistM28)	Less shy about acting silly with children. We're more creative, more patient. (AccordionistM28)
[A male teacher] commands more respect. (AccordionistM28)	[A female teacher] inspires more confidence (AccordionistM28)
Boys only go to the hair salon to cut their hair (NurseM20)	Women [choose to become hair stylists because they] are more about beauty and all that, and usually go more often to the hair salon, you can picture them chatting with other women there while reading the newspaper (NurseM20)
The majority of men understand boy's haircut tastes better than the majority of women (The comfortable oneH16).	[Playing basketball with girls]...if you touch her in some places, they won't call a foul on you, but it's awkward (The comfortable oneH16)
It's better for a man to cut your hair, they know how to do men's styles, they're better at it (CartoonistH19)	[In a hair salon] Women are more in touch with women and more used to them (CartoonistH19)
[Basketball] boys go to the basket better than they shoot (The comfortable oneH16)	[Basketball] girls shoot better than they drive to the basket (The comfortable oneH16)
[Basketball] boys are usually taller and stronger. They're more focused on scoring (Green ArrowH22)	[Basketball] girls usually take their time, they see what the play is, what we're trying to do and depending on the situation they do one thing or the other, they're much more calculating, calmer (Green ArrowH22)
[When they are treated by a physical therapist] men are more reserved (Green ArrowH22)	[When they are treated by a physical therapist] girls tell you what's wrong with them, where it hurts. [As a man] you have to be very careful touching them, so I use a towel (Green ArrowH22)

Masculine attributes	Feminine attributes
[In the kitchen] men are better at salty foods and they have the drive to get the job (Green ArrowH28SP)	[In the kitchen] girls are better at preparing sweet food. Girls are more delicate, more perfectionist, they look for balance, they're more subtle (Green ArrowH28SP)
[Soldiers] men are taller, faster and stronger (Green ArrowH22)	[Soldiers] women, like in sports, have a more global and strategic vision (Green ArrowH22)
[Labourer] men do it better, because of their strength and muscles (CartoonistH19)	

The stereotypes operate on different aspects:

- 1) Biological: men: height, strength, musculature. Women: beauty.
- 2) Mental: men: closed; women: open,
- 3) Attitude: Women: patience, confidence, unembarrassed, sensitive, creative, more expressive, more strategic, global vision. Men: respect, strict, sense of superiority, more reserved.
- 4) Aesthetics: women spend hours in the hair salon; men only go to cut their hair.
- 5) Taste: women: sweet. men: salty

The statements also include expressions related to the creation of alliances in “circles of men or women” like in the hair salon *someone of your own sex will understand your tastes best*. And the physical distance that is sometimes imposed, like in basketball, where *you can't touch them like you would a man*.

But they don't just attribute characteristics to femininity and masculinity; they also give careers attributes as if they were people, they are reified and come to life, as if occupations had a single personality instead of being made up of a multitude of people who carry it out using different approaches.

Table 4. Traits attributed to careers

Career/occupation	Attributes
Police	• Brave people who are ready to help, dangerous (RestorerM17)
	• Dangerous profession (The comfortable oneH16)
	• Order, they give everyone the same guarantees (ActorH23)
	• An upright person, with many rules (NurseM20)
Soldier	• Physical qualities, strength, intelligence, the ability to give orders (The comfortable oneH16)
	• They have to have a clear idea of justice and what's good, but in Spain there are many unjust laws and they have to follow them (Green ArrowH22)

Career/occupation	Attributes
Electrician and mechanic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an art to these professions. The laws of physics and mathematics will limit you, but they will guide you, everything is not random. Hard and dirty (ActorH23)
Biologist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible, intelligent, in the sense that they have a lot of knowledge, they have to like their job because they have to spend a lot of hours working, they like to discover things (RestorerM17) • Good memory (The comfortable oneH16)
Researcher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creativity, critical sense, have social capital (AccordionistM28)
Scientist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People see them as more important It's like scientists are the best, if you say you are a scientist and it's like you have respect for that person...you're risking a lot. And she said: I'm going to show them that I can do science (RestorerM17) • They're all anti-social (laughing), but I guess they're people who are a little bit more closed, like in <i>The Big Bang Theory</i>. A mathematician, physicist or a natural scientist are more closed in their field and don't see beyond them. It's partly, part of the profession (AccordionistM28)
Person in humanities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They're more socially aware, because that's really their job, to be aware of the world around them (AccordionistM27SP)
Video game creator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative profession, long hours working, patient (RestorerM17)
Pilot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ...responsibility, because they take a lot of people and their lives are in danger (RestorerM17)
Primary and secondary school teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comfortable profession that gets less recognition than it should (RestorerM17) • Patience, creativity, not well valued. (AccordionistM28)
University professor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intelligent, generally ambitious people, well respected, prestigious (AccordionistM28)
Hair stylist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They earn good money (The comfortable oneH16)
Notary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prestige. (The comfortable oneH16)
Theatre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oddballs, small world, overcome embarrassment, they say what they think (ActorH23)
Robotics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation, laboratory, everything clean and organized. Nerds, in the sense that they isolated from society (ActorH23)
Politician	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They have strong convictions due to the temptations that exist, responsibility (ActorH23) • They all lie, power hungry (Green ArrowH28) • Pettiness, they don't know what people are going through (Creative cookH20)

Career/occupation	Attributes
Child care provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patience, creativity, initiative to motivate them (AccordionistM28)
Short-order cook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Old woman, with no specific training (AccordionistM28)
Chef in quality restaurant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young man, with a lot of training (AccordionistM28)
Chef	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A person focused on what they have to do, with the ability to physically endure the work and put up with clients, patient, with knowledge and who knows how to teach (CartoonistM19) To have good skills, an open mind, be different from the rest, creativity, shake up the market, spirit of sacrifice (Creative cookH20)
Physical therapist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know how to listen to the patient, let them speak, empathy, broad technical knowledge, be concerned with others (Green ArrowH22)
Business administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They're in it for the money (Green ArrowH22)

3. Role models

When asked for their role models, various people answered that their models were their father and/or mother:

Case 1: *“My father, because I think he knows a lot. But he’s not a role model, because he doesn’t want to be one, because he has done things that he doesn’t want me to copy, but I do think he’s an admirable person. He always wants to do new things, he’s older and he says ‘my age won’t stop me...’ for example, he likes to box a lot, and turning 44 and he says that he’s going to keep fighting, boxing until he’s 45, and I think that’s cool.”* (Art restorerM17)

Case 2: *“My father’s always thinking about work, I don’t know if he does what he likes best, but it’s what he’s best at, he’s been doing it his whole life, in a very family-oriented tree pruning company, honest people. And he’s very calm. My mother on the other hand is very temperamental, in that sense they’re opposites. She’s very loving, very open, always attentive, especially with me (she laughs), but also very family-oriented, she lost her mother when she was 14, unfortunately she had liver cancer and she was the one who took charge of her family at age 14.”* (Green ArrowH22)

Other family role models also appear: brother, grandmother, in addition to the mother.

Case 3: *“My brother is a role model for me because he is in the Canaries and I wouldn’t be capable of leaving my father and mother to start a new life to study medicine. He’s in the library studying from 9 in the morning to 11 at night, I couldn’t do that. My grandmother too, she’s such a fighter, she has 6 daughters, she’s very strong and gets ahead however she can. She broke her tibia and fibula and she has a bad hip, but there she is, serving her husband, she pulls herself up, she always says: come eat and she has el perol (food) ready, she’s amazing. My mother is kind of a model for me*

because she's been with my father since she was 9 and 3 years ago they separated, and to say goodbye to a whole life.... For me that is admirable.” (NurseM20)

There are non-family role models as well, including groups of friends (which form a non-traditional family), educators working at an NGO, a rapper or a female friend.

Case 4: *“Some teachers have children, on the outside they are practically normal (laughs), it's more how they approach their job, trying to be radical, in education, in art. In general, they tend to be the opposite, to avoid being radical, radical in the sense of feminist which is going to the root of the problem. They follow their life decisions in this sense, orthodox, but the issues that led them to take those decisions are unorthodox. They got married not because they wanted a wedding, they're married so he could avoid military service. There's like a whole series of issues behind the decisions that are uncommon.” (Radical feministM27)*

Case 5: *“In Acollida (the NGO), because I started in summer and they more or less got me through, even though I'm stubborn and rude, but they got me through it. It was the teachers in general. They treated me really well, if I needed anything they were always there. Whenever I was sick they would call me, come on let's talk, before class started, they always told me: first, tell me how you are, then classes. [I've changed] my bad attitude, I was always telling people to go to hell at the drop of a hat, in my self-confidence, in trusting people.” (CartoonistH19)*

Case 6: *“The head of studies in high school was a teacher who had an impact on me, by how she taught and explained, she took you where she wanted to go, you enjoyed going to class. But not the rest of them. In classes with 30 students they didn't even notice you. There were 25 students with her and she knew every single one of us. And another social studies teacher I had in the first year of ESO [obligatory secondary education, equivalent to Grade 7], I loved how he explained things and the charisma he had with the kids. I also have a friend named Gloria who gives me good advice. But my other role model is my mother. I would like to be a fighter like she is.” (Creative cookH20)*

The following case is notable for the lack of role models.

Case 7: *“As far as my lifestyle, I've created it in my own way. I'm the only atheist in a large, religious family. I've not had, let's say, an example beyond what they dictated. It was religion and nothing else. I had to shape myself, although it's true that I sometimes had help, from friends, etcetera, it hasn't been an easy road and I really feel proud. Maybe it sounds pretentious, but I want to be my own example.” (ActorH23)*

The interviews reveal that for the majority the values upon which their role models are based are perseverance, patience, caring, support and authenticity. In the case of the radical feminist and the actor (who has no role models), they value rebelliousness.

4. Heroes

We noted the following when we asked the subjects about their heroes, whether fictional characters or famous people in sports, show business or music, among other areas:

- 1) *“Daneris from Game of Thrones, because she’s a fighter, I like her, because in a Medieval world where women weren’t so important, she’s going to be queen, I like her a lot.”* (Art restorerM17)
- 2) *“It’s a boy named Link from a video game called Legend of Zelda. He’s a character that lives in the forest, isolated. At first his life isn’t destined to be anything special, but he’s chosen by the gods to carry out a task that’s, like in all games, to destroy evil. Zelda is the princess that you find in every game. Basically there’s a curse. The spirit passes from generation to generation and is always a similar boy, with really identical conditions. The character itself is not exactly masculine, he’s almost androgynous, you can’t tell if he’s a boy or a girl. He’s a boy, because he is referred to in the masculine, but physically you can’t really tell. In fact, a lot of people do cosplays and more women dress up as that character than men, because physically they’re more similar in appearance.”* (ActorH23)
- 3) *“I have a drawing of a video game where a guy kills zombies that I love. It’s like a cult that’s kidnapped the president’s daughter, you know? And at the end there’s a church that was in an isolated village.”* (CartoonistH19)
- 4) *“Green Arrow comes to mind, it’s a new series. I like his sense of justice, I see myself in him, he takes the blame for absolutely everything, which makes no sense. Then, when I see myself reflected in him, I say, my God, I’m partly the same and I shouldn’t be, but I see myself.”* (Green ArrowH22)
- 5) *“Ruth Beitia retired when she was 37 or 39 and in the last Olympics she won the gold, as a mother, at an age at which there are usually no athletes, and she won the gold in the high jump and I think the European Championships too and I think she’s an example of overcoming, of sacrifice and love for what she does, incredible.”* (Green ArrowH22)
- 6) *“I think rappers are people who say a lot with words.”* (Creative cookH20)
- 7) *“A rapper from Alicante who is really great: Ambkor. He’s my idol and nobody can touch him. There are some songs where you say: fuck, it’s like he was there, that happened to me, and he wrote it.”* (CartoonistH19)

5. Anti-role models

We also asked about anti-role models, the people they didn’t want to be like. Parents again appeared, along with politicians:

- 1) *“An anti-role model, I hate to say, is my father. He’s a very closed person in many respects, in regards to religion. He told me: you hate your family, he isn’t capable of separating family and religion.”* (ActorH23)
- 2) *“I don’t want to be like many of my teachers. I don’t want to be like my parents, either of them, for different reasons, maybe what I least want to be is a person who thinks that the only way to find personal development is through their job, this is the model I most want to avoid.”* (Radical feministM27)
- 3) *“My dad, sometimes he’s an anti-role model because he has a closed mind, and life’s all about money, money, money.”* (CartoonistH19)

- 4) *“The four political representatives, who for some absurd reason are all men, of the political parties in Spain, I don’t identify with any of them and I don’t like them at all. They all lie, they’re power hungry and the don’t work for the population out of love for politics or for justice.”* (Green ArrowH22)
- 5) *“Any type of politician, because these days’ politicians are very petty, they don’t understand the problems that exist. A politician should be a role model for people, but they aren’t for me.”* (Creative cookH20)

6. Difficulties in self-advocacy

In the narratives we observed difficulties in dealing with gender-biased worlds, when not belonging to the majority sex. However, these difficulties are also seen as challenges.

6.1 Masculine world

The girls interviewed did not have much experience in masculine areas, however, the following comment by the Art restorer is interesting:

“Now I have [female] friends who want to study criminology and I think that’s good for them, it’s an area where there aren’t many women, they want to be police. It’s a quote, unquote man’s job, and although it’s not always that way, it’s a job with a gun, and stuff like that. But when you enter a place that’s all men, it’s like they underestimate you, because you’ve studied the same as them, you do the same as them, but because you’re surrounded by men, they’ll say: look, better if we go and she stays behind doing this. They might look down on you for being a woman. This sentence: ‘we’re men, we’re here, we’re police’. If I worked there, I’d like if there were at least one other woman, if I’m surrounded by men, if there’s another woman, like I could rely on her. Yeah, I’d feel more comfortable if there was another woman.” (Art restorerM17)

The testimony reveals the discomfort in working in masculine areas where women cannot take a stand against sexism. It also shows the need to count on the support of other women to counteract *micromachismos* (everyday male chauvinism) in the workplace.

6.2 Feminine world

But sexism was also manifested toward men in some professions, such as flight attendant or child care provider.

In the following narrative, the young man expressed pain and frustration, and an urgent need to change the norms.

“The biggest obstacle I’ve faced to find work is sexism. There are more and more male flight attendants, but I’ve been applying for jobs at companies for a long time and so far I’ve only seen women hired. And I also received what I think it totally inappropriate, and I think illegal, I received an email from a company that was hiring and in the first requirement that you found was written in all

caps: *ONLY WOMEN*. That hurt a lot, because it was an attractive company offering good conditions and all of sudden you run into that wall.” (ActorH23)
“Sometimes mistakes are made because someone above tells you that you have to do something. A lot of times, even at the risk of getting in trouble, you have to break the rules. Because sometimes the rules are wrong, and if we want to evolve into something better, we have to change the rule. For example, in this company it was women who were doing the hiring and they only chose women. And I know from some information that I received, that it wasn’t them who wanted to choose women, they had been told from above that was what they had to do.” (ActorH23)

“At first that frustration made me stubborn. I applied as often as I could to that same company that didn’t choose me and that only hired women. Because my flight attendant C.V. met all their requirements, I was the right age, the right height, they asked for people between 18 and 26 and I’m 23, a height between 170 and 180 and I’m 176; I have a high level of English.” (ActorH23)

In his narrative, they didn’t hire him because he didn’t meet a gender stereotype. Sexism that discriminates against men is also perceived, although with nuances, in other professions, as described in the following narrative referring to domestic work. Although the woman interviewed talks about discrimination against men in domestic work, she immediately says that “*men are more qualified to do other things*”, being, therefore, perceived as a labour market bias that preserves the privileged position of men.

I think that, to take care of children, you would choose a woman. Men are discriminated against, but not because they’re incapable, but just the opposite, it’s because men are more qualified to do other things, so they say: this is for women.” (NurseM20)

7. Some flaws, inconsistencies...

7.1 *The notion of time*

“My free time is full, because I’m writing a thesis” (Radical feministM27)

The above statement is typical of the questioning nature of the interviewee. She believes her vocation should continue through a period of time that she doesn’t define in any way, but it isn’t free time, it’s work time, but unpaid work dedicated to her profession. Paid work should provide subsistence.

“I would work half days and I think that’s more than enough for me. My ideal is to work little.” (Radical feministM27)

She was then asked if this approach would be valid for both men and women:

“Yes, in principle yes. Maybe there would be a difference in how I think things should be from my point of view, and if there are men who would be interested in earning less to work fewer hours, I don’t know if they would be willing to do that. I also know a lot of people who work half days and don’t know what to do with the rest of the day.” (Radical feministM27)

This answer reveals that there are also differences in lifestyles, in feeling useful “the rest of the day”, and also in monetary gain.

But, in addition to the gender issue, it was interesting to explore how from her perspective she would assume the social distribution of time when it was an activity for which she had to be available, to be on call like in the case of medicine (which she had chosen as a preferred activity). She answered:

“But one thing is to be available for family, for your friends and another thing to be available for a company, for me it’s different. Also if it’s a private company or a family company. And if it’s a public hospital, I wouldn’t know how to deal with that.” (Radical feministM27)

So, since she wanted to do half days, she was asked if she thought other people would have to work longer days:

“I think I would set a limit to weekly hours. Well, I think I would distribute it, put a limit per person, in general, I wouldn’t give 24 hours to one and 2 to another.” (Radical feministM27)

“I wouldn’t say that a person who works few hours means that they wouldn’t be available for other people. I don’t think of it as individual freedom to have time for me to go on trips, but rather to have time to do other things. I work on things with groups, I like to meet up with my friends... it’s not to have my freedom, a lot of free time during the week, it’s just that I don’t want all of my personal fulfilment, my weekly effort, to be placed in my job. I think that would be very difficult if you’re a doctor, from the people I know, if you’re a doctor you have to work long hours.” (Radical feministM27)

In the case of the actor, he distinguishes between loneliness and solitude, one is a negative term, the other positive.

“Solitude is enjoying time to yourself, and I like that a lot.” (ActorH23)

“For me solitude is very important. I enjoy having time to myself a lot. I don’t do this activity with others. It’s true that things like drawing, for instance, I have done stuff for other people, but usually I do it for my own enjoyment. In groups I’ve done theatre, it’s difficult to do alone, but it’s totally different, it’s a very different experience, it’s much better if you share it with people with the same interests.” (ActorH23)

7.2 Supposed gender affinities

Various interviewees indicated fairly arbitrary gender affinities, for example, in the hair salon, where female or male tastes could only be understood by stylists of the same sex.

“Currently I think a male stylist is seen more as cutting men’s hair. And women cut women’s hair. The majority of guys understand male hairstyle tastes better than the majority of girls.” (The comfortable oneH16)

“It’s like if a man is in the women’s hair salon it’s like seen as a little weird. In the men’s hair salon, it’s better for there to be men. If it’s unisex than I think it’s

normal. Women understand better and know more about women, you know? And men know how men's styles should be, they're better at it." (CartoonistH19)

These quotes not only correspond to the glorification of male hair stylists in the media, overshadowing or diminishing the importance of female stylists, they also reveal the existence of two blocks: a male aesthetics and a female aesthetics, although there is a great diversity of styles within each of these supposed blocks.

Another position attributes female characteristics to this profession:

"A hair stylist is usually a woman because women are more into beauty and all that stuff is usually more for women, who go to the hair salon more. Guys only go to cut their hair, but who do you imagine more there chatting with magazines? Women." (NurseM20)

In the area of artistic projects, the radical feminist told us that the men that she would include would be "feminist allies" and, they can also be the recipients of her projects, as spectators.

"In artistic practice I think more about women than men, although it can be directed at men. In my upcoming projects, they're women. But in other activist practices, it's more varied, so it depends. For example, in the project where we make fake round tables, fake academic events, it's a project that's only with women, I haven't started that one yet, but I have contacted some [female] friends, I've told [male] friends about it and in general they find it interesting." (Radical feministM27)

In any case, the vision on gender is more fluid, the men who take part in her projects have certain characteristics:

"In the groups I hang out with the men are different (she laughs), half of them have their macho moments, but they're feminist allies, so they find it interesting, they like my artistic proposals (she laughs), in that crowd. In other environments, I've also done quite a bit of cultural coordination, organizing sessions in different centres for art, performance or anarchism, they're more mixed, and I've had arguments about what I was sure were gender issues: that you don't let me speak or what I'm saying you think is dumb because I'm a woman, and, in general I've told them exactly that, and in general I've been able to get them to listen to me." (Radical feministM27)

7.3 Art as a profession or art as a revolution

Regarding art we observed two different positions. In some cases, it's seen as a profession because it can have practical applications, creating video games, for example; in others art is experienced as something that is incompatible with the market and paid work.

The first position is expressed in the following testimony:

"Being an artist includes many things. There's work, and some young people make a living from it, for example, video game creators and stuff like that. I

like museum-type artists, because when a painting is found, there are at historians who research it to find out from what period it's from. And there's work in that.” (Art restorerM17)

The position that art exists outside of market interests is expressed in the following way:

“I’m not interested in working as an artist professionally and I have no intention of making a living from it. Because that involves a whole series of things, to find a market, to have to make money from it..., it’s not the money itself, but for me it produces contradictions, because I think that art should be subversive, and subsidized subversion strikes me as contradictory.” (Radical feministM27)
“In other words, I work on what I like, I spend a lot of time in researching, in working with collectives, thinking about works of art, I spend a lot of time, I work on what I like. But I do other work for money. In that sense the world of art is different from other areas.” (Radical feministM27)

To complete our understanding of the interviewee’s perspective on art, we asked her what she understood as radical art:

“Whether or not something is radical is tied to a specific moment, for example, a work that I like a lot is Michelangelo’s study, Virgin of the Caves. It’s a graphite drawing on cardboard and it’s an impressive work. And that work, in Michelangelo’s historic moment, to show a ...well, maybe he wouldn’t have shown it, but it would have been radical to show a sketch, because the idea of art [at the time] was totally different. But now, you might like it, you could say: okay, that’s interesting or not interesting, but it’s not radical anymore, because sketches have been exhibited millions of times, that doesn’t contribute, it’s interesting for its time, but it’s not new, So I see radicalism in this way: things within all of the possibilities, break.” (Radical feministM27)

From the market point of view, and from that of a profession there are those who think about revolutionizing, perhaps not life, but the market:

“I think the same [he had been speaking about being a chef, now a designer], to stand out you have to have something different that revolutionizes the market, I’d say that’s what’s important now, difference, something new.” (Creative cookH20)

7.4 Intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts

Conflict 1: intrapersonal conflict of a young foreign woman, who needs to raise her self-esteem, and so chooses to study a career with high social value, rather than her vocation, to feel accepted.

“I know a girl who came to Spain two years ago and now she’s studying a science baccalaureate, and I think that she likes social things more, taking care of people, but she chose to study science. She also likes biology because people told her like she shouldn’t go into science because she’s new, that she was taking a big risk. And she said: now I’m going to show them that I can

do science. She's from Slovakia, and people like told her she couldn't do it, after just coming here, because she'd only done two years, 3rd and 4th years of ESO and then to go into science. She felt looked down on, of course any comment is going to bother you, but she also felt looked down on, like she just arrived, even though she became fluent in the language right away.” (Art restorerM17)

Conflict 2: two of the interviewees play basketball, they aren't teammates, but by coincidence they both play a position on the team that they don't like. In one case, the person begrudgingly accepted the position, they adapted. In the other, backed by his father, he talked to the coach about the situation, but when he couldn't change it, he quit the team.

“I tried talking to the coach. Talking to teammates, but nobody really likes that position. Nobody else thought it was unfair for me to play that position, they loved it, because nobody else wanted that position, and since it fell to me... Since it's a hobby and not that important, the important thing is to take it easy. The coach told me that it was my position because nobody else had that physical quality, but I think I'd play better in another position.” (The comfortable oneH16)

It wasn't the role that I think I deserved, I went to practice every day and didn't have a bad attitude, but in the 40 minutes of game time, I played maybe 5. I started to think I hated basketball, but I was just frustrated and said, enough is enough, I have to talk to the coach, and after the meeting, with my father too, the coach said some things that I didn't like. I quit the team in the middle of the season and joined another team.” (Green ArrowH22)

Conflict 3: this is a reflection on how they would respond in a conflictive situation that could occur in a supermarket (something unfair done to a black person) and in another conflictive situation between friends. He wouldn't get involved in the first situation, because even if it offended him as a citizen, he wouldn't want to get involved in trouble. In the second, thanks to abilities he's learned in theatre, and although it might not be politically correct or bother his friends, he always gets involved.

“Looking at internet I found the case of a girl who was walking into a supermarket and saw that they wouldn't let a man of colour in because he was carrying a backpack. Personally, this offends me. What would happen if I were that person, why would I be singled out. (...) it happens to most of us, we see an unfair situation and we think, I should do something, but we just don't know how to react. And it would be better if one day we start to act more actively. It's our duty as human beings, but really we don't have a deep connection with the person we know is being treated unfairly. Often we're focused on our own lives and we don't want problems, this is why a lot of times we don't act. We're in a comfortable situation right now, if I get involved in this problem, even if I know it's the right thing to do, I'm going to have problems, and I don't want to have problems.” (ActorH23)

The actor used theatre as a way to become less inhibited, which allows him to deal with difficult issues in his daily life.

“I do get involved with my classmates, talking, and demonstrating that something is unfair. Some people say that I’m usually politically incorrect because I say what I think, sometimes inappropriately, which is also true. But I’m not going to hold back or force someone to think the way I do, I just say what I think, but always respectfully. (...) Theatre helps to be less embarrassed and to say what you think more freely.” (ActorH23)

7.5 Harmful relationships: bullying, sexual harassment or simple arrogance

Harmful relationships between women were mentioned, associated with bullying (without expressly mentioning it).

“I take everything to heart, I’m like that. And if they make fun of a person who doesn’t take things so seriously, I still don’t think that’s okay, even if that person says it doesn’t bother them. I do care, why do you have to make that comment? And if they say it to me, it hurts my feelings, because I’m very sensitive about those things.” (Art restorerM17)

“I don’t usually like people who make other people feel inferior, like if you don’t know this...Instead of explaining it to you, they make you feel bad for not knowing it. For instance, the typical story in the movie Mean Girls, who is the typical teenage girl, she’s the villain, who makes the other one feel bad, well I don’t like that.” (Art restorerM17)

They also referred to situations of sexual harassment that young female university students have to deal with in their practical training in physical therapy:

“Being a woman, yes there are many patients who go too far with the female professionals, even in the way they act or behave. We’re talking about a professional who is taking care of your health and should be treated with a modicum of respect. And they go too far. It’s mostly middle-aged men 30 and above, and when they see a young girl, who’s in training like me, the truth is they get a little excessive, depends on the individual, but there are cases.” (Green ArrowH22)

Or the abuse and everyday male chauvinism, that a sensitive person has to put up with:

“Once me and some friends rented one of these bikes that various people can ride at the same time. We were having fun and some boys passing by said, you can tell you’re women, they said it in a mocking way, and those comments, they stay with you, because you think: we’re having a good time, why make a comment?” (Art restorerM17)

Or situations where the work of women is not respected:

“What’s happened to me a lot of times, is that maybe I prepare a session, imagine we’re going to do a session, a talk, two people are going to come to talk for two hours. And for that session we have to make a presentation where we introduce our group, we are going to introduce the people and little else. What’s happened to me is that I was supposed to prepare that task, and I did,

then a male member of the group came who didn't remember who was supposed to do it and he did it himself. Without asking, without preparing, saying anything, and that's it. I've had arguments about this, for that legitimacy, they feel comfortable saying anything.” (Radical feministM27)

8. Some curious and unexpected observations

As mentioned, for the description of the professions the interview script included a question asking if they thought there are differences if the profession was carried out by a man or a woman. And systematically, the answer was that they gave us was “it doesn't matter, there's no difference”. But as we continued the conversation prejudices and gender stereotypes began to appear. This section presents some of the gender differences pointed out by the young people, in recreational activities, like basketball, but also in certain professions, such as police, or other more general questions.

Women being made to feel invisible or receiving unequal treatment was observed in various interviews, as expressed in the following testimonies:

“In everything successful, men get the credit, we've done workshops and we asked the names of male researchers and they told us, but we asked for female researchers and they didn't know any. We always focus more on men, whether they're chefs, which is a profession that women have always done more, but now men stand out.” (NurseM20)

“I think that socially a female researcher is unimaginable (she laughs). Just like in childcare you always think of women, in research you always think of men.” (AccordionistM28)

“Today, although we've progressed a lot, men and women aren't treated equally, not anywhere. I consider myself a feminist, which doesn't mean women are better, it means men and women should be equal, and I know we've progressed a lot, but not enough.” (ActorH23)

However, other differences appeared in the narratives that were contradictory, like the characteristics attributed to women in basketball: one of the interviewees stated that in their experience women shot the best; while another said they were better at strategy, while men shot better.

Girls shoot better than they drive to the basket, so they even contribute more [having girls on the team]. When girls shoot, it's easier to score points.” (The comfortable oneH16)

“Boys are more focused on scoring and if I have to try and score by myself against three I go for it, girls are usually calmer, let's see what we're playing, what to do, and depending on the situation we do one thing or another, they're much more calculating, calmer. I'm one of those people who thinks that if I can't see a play it's better to wait a few seconds for the rest of the team and try again.” (Green ArrowH22)

Basketball is a sport usually segregated by sex. However, in both testimonies -at least initially- they indicated that girls contributed to the team, although each states exactly the opposite regarding their abilities.

In other parts of the interview they supported segregating teams by sex:

“I played against a mixed team and this puts you in a different situation, because you can’t defend like you would a guy, because if you touch them in certain places or ways, well, they won’t call a foul, but it’s awkward.” (The comfortable oneH16)

“At a certain age you have to separate them, not because girls have less skills than boys because... it’s just because of physical abilities, boys are taller and are usually stronger. You have to have a general rule, because maybe I’m 1’95 metres tall and I’m really big and even though there are really tall girls, the majority are around 1 metre 60. And apart from being tall, I’m broad, so I can hurt you with a hip check, I get hurt too when playing against other men.” (Green ArrowH22)

Size and strength would be a constant justification for segregation by sex, as in the case of the “Cartoonist” who said directly: *“I think construction work is done better by men. Due to strength and muscles, I think a man is better suited to that work”*.

Traditionally men have been chosen over women as soldiers because they are taller, stronger, faster. I imagine the strength that someone needs inside a tank, first because of the way it moves and the jolts, it has to be an intense experience, in every way, both positive and negative. I think that men are better prepared for battle and I think that for strategy, like I said in sports, I think that women have a much more complete vision, I think it could be there, that point.” (Green ArrowH22)

Even the next statement, in which the interviewee denies that there are gender-segregated professions, the strength argument is still used, although to refute it, which indicates that using biological differences to legitimize difference still exists as a mental mechanism:

“I don’t think there are professions for men and for women. It’s true that some jobs require more physical strength, but I have seen women who, if you’ll excuse the expression, could beat up some men (laughing). There is a huge amount of diversity. We can’t separate professions by gender. It’s not a question of gender, but of the individual. Because some people have more talent for some things than others.” (ActorH23)

The Actor’s argument was another constant in our field work: denying gender differences and talking about differences between individuals. In the following testimony, when asked if he’d played any female roles, he answered that he had missed out on an opportunity to do one, but he’d like to, because that opens up more opportunities; then, when asked how he would play a woman, he answered:

“It depends because there are women, and women. For example, I have a classmate who acted like the typical black club girl diva, and that’s completely different than the typical nun. So they don’t tell you to act like a woman, they tell you to act like a specific kind of woman. There is a very broad spectrum, there’s a lot of difference.” (ActorH23)

In this testimony we can observe a narrative that doesn’t want to pigeon-hole, but that uses stereotypical images of women to demonstrate diversity. Sometimes it’s difficult

to avoid expressing ideas without falling back on common conceptions that are ideologically charged. In this case a direct reference is made to the Madonna and the whore, two extreme visions of women that the popular imaginary constitute as archetypes of a “bad woman”.

Finally, another issue that appears is the dichotomy establishing roles within the public/private spaces to men/women, respectively; this is always wrapped in a questioning that does not quite eradicate the imaginary that relegates women to the domestic sphere.

“Traditionally, we have the role of caregivers more than men are. And that’s why we like being with children more, but there are all types, like everywhere.” (AccordionistM28)

Women have a self-imposed limit that often doesn’t allow them to reach the highest levels of responsibility because they have children, because they have to take care of their mother or father, or even their mother-in-law, that’s why she tells herself, if I’m the mayor I’m going to have to spend more time at work, and that means less time with my family.” (NurseM20)

8.1 Being a feminist spokesperson

Some of the people interviewed spontaneously showed support for feminism. Specifically, two cases had clearly transformative intentions in this sense: The Art Restorer and the Radical Feminist. The latter case was clearly a militant feminist who channelled her intentions through her artistic proposals. One of her projects promoted reading feminist authors through the creation of “fake academic acts” that would introduce the ideas of feminist thinkers to people, whether academics or any person.

“I don’t think it’s that people don’t look for time to read feminists, just the opposite. I think that there are really interesting things to read that require a lot of time. So, how can I contribute to spreading these ideas? Not so much trying to convince people to find time, but rather making other formats that are more accessible for a first contact. No so much to make them simpler, but just to facilitate contact. It’s for people who don’t have time, whether they are academics or not.” (Radical feministM27)

In the case of the 17-year-old girl who wanted to be an art restorer, one of the professions she chose was journalism. Her intention is to uncover what the media hides and show “things how they are”.

“I look at a lot news and they are headlined in a way so that we don’t see what it’s really about, like they want to say it in a nicer way, so that it hurts less. I think that relationships, gender violence, I see that a lot, especially on Twitter, I use that social network a lot, like they present the woman, not as the victim she really is, but they blame the victim instead of the person who did that.” (Art restorerM17)

8.2 Physical and social environment at work

The interviewees spoke about preferring to work in organized and clean physical spaces. And when they mentioned where they would like to live they included the idea

that it should express the personality of the person who lived there. In the second part of this work, we will see that in the group discussions they mentioned that the aesthetics of certain professions, such as mechanic, began to be less perceived as stereotypically masculine.

We noticed a tendency for both sexes to imagine less dirty aesthetics. Perhaps this correlates with the changes that are occurring in the industrial sector, which is evolving towards cleaner and more organized jobs.

“Wear a white coat, have some co-worker that you get along with, because why not, if you’re there all day, you have to have some relationships” (Art restorerM17, talking about a biologist’s work environment).

“[An artist] has to be patient, because not everything come out perfectly from the start. I imagine them in a studio, with their paint-stained table and their computer with its graphic tablet.” (Art restorerM17)

“I imagine working as a mechanic to be very hard and dirty (laughing). I don’t know what a mechanic does exactly because, like in everything, there are different areas. I like robotics, because it’s a mixture between mechanics and electronics. I like creating things. I like the image of a laboratory a lot more than a workshop, everything clean and in its place (laughing).” (ActorH23)

“[Kitchen work] Very hard, because you have to spend many hours in a closed space with high temperatures, with a lot of people under a lot of pressure, the food has to be perfect for the client, every detail, apart from the cooking, the general cleaning, there’s a lot of things.” (Green ArrowH22)

Regarding the differentiation of spaces, between work and home, two testimonies were significant. “Taking work home” was questioned. According to the radical feminist it was a trap, because not separating the spaces would extend the work day.

“I’m against working at home. They sell this idea that you’ll be freer, because you’re at home, but I think you end up working much longer hours, you end up being much more a slave than working in an office. In a city like Valencia, which isn’t that big, if you can work close to home, I think it’s better to separate the two spaces. I imagine myself translating in a publishing house in an office. It’s not my ideal profession, but I think it’s comfortable and enjoyable exercise. But I wouldn’t want to work as a translator full-time.” (Radical feministM27)

“I think it would be comfortable to work from home, but it would also be like never leaving work. It would be good to have a studio at home in case you’re inspired, but also to have your business, your office, to put up the things that you produce.” (Art restorerM17)

Regarding the social aspect of the workplace, their concerns centre on competitiveness:

“I suppose there would be a good environment like everywhere, but groups will form, and I suppose there will also be a lot of competition, because it’s a much smaller field, it’s difficult to become a paid researcher, there will be run-in.s” (AccordionistM28)

In a society where there are increasingly fewer jobs, competition is seen as something that is sure to exist, but that could be very negative.

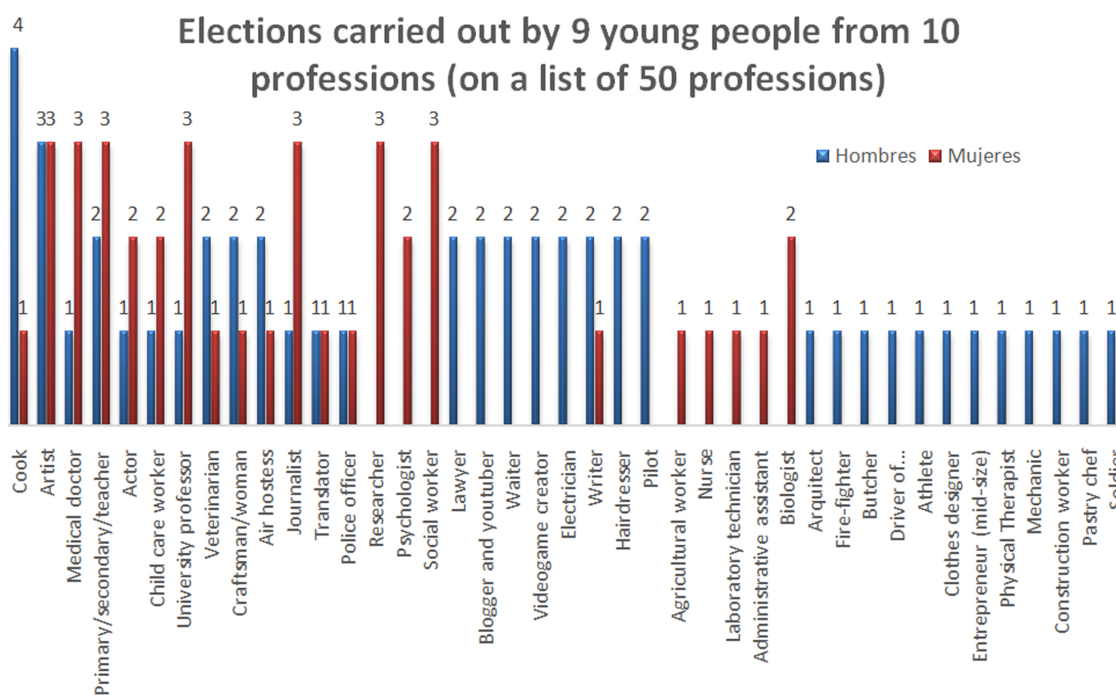
9. Interpretative analysis

9.1 Choices of the young people

Figure 1 shows the 10 professions chosen by the young interviewees from a list of 50. These are not careers they expect to work in (it would be difficult to find people whose vocation is directed at 10 professions/occupations), but rather their choices were based on professions that attracted their attention and that for some reason they liked.

The men mainly chose cooking (4 choices), artist (3), primary or secondary school teacher (2), veterinarian (2), craftsman/woman (2), air hostess (2), blogger/youtuber (2), video game creator (2), electrician (2), writer (2), hairdresser (2) and pilot (2).

The women chose artist (3), medical doctor (3), primary or secondary school teacher (3), journalist (3), researcher (3), social worker (3), actor (2), childcare worker (2), psychologist (2) and biologist (2).



9.2 Future prospects

A key aspect of the interview was how they saw themselves in the future. Throughout this part of the interview we wanted to reveal their imaginary and what, ultimately, they prioritized in their lives.

The Actor (atheist from an Opus Dei family) and the Radical Feminist were the most open about their futures, without committing to a specific idea. They, along with the Cartoonist (the trans man), were the most critical of their own family models. The possibility of “non-traditional” futures, were also shared by the Accordionist, whose parents are university professors, and saw herself travelling in Latin America, and the Art

Restorer, whose father is a truck driver (boxer) and mother a housewife (Gypsy), who saw herself living in a little flat in Copenhagen with a pet. The Radical Feminist and the Art restorer see themselves in a communal future (like their current flats which they share with friends).

The Creative Cook, Green Arrow and the Nurse, whose parents are blue collar workers, imagine themselves with more traditional families. It might be a coincidence, but two of them want to have a well formed family, although their parents are separated. These are the cases of the Nurse and the Creative Cook, both of whom admire their mothers a lot. And The Comfortable One, whose parents are university professors, also prioritizes family above other opportunities, such as working in another country if a good opportunity arises.

In the case of the Nurse, she also admires her grandmother and her brother. The Creative Cook (who doesn't work or study) has an idealized image of his grandparents who he barely knew (they are Argentinian); it is interesting for an immigrant to speak so clearly of their need to put down roots.

The Cartoonist had the most ambiguous position, as for him having children depended on whatever his girlfriend wanted.

10. Conclusions about the interviews with young people

The most significant evidence provided by this study is that none of the people interviewed thought that they were reproducing gender stereotypes. In addition, they feel like gender issues do not have a significant impact on their life choices or condition their professional careers.

They believe that personal characteristics and abilities are what allow someone to get jobs. Access to jobs is also conditioned, in their view, by social capital ("connections") that tip the balance in the selection process.

Women are more conscious than men of sexism and can provide personal accounts of their experiences with harassment and discriminations. They understand that society still has male chauvinist prejudices, but believe that they are not affected personally by them.

A superficially egalitarian discourse appeared over and over again. Politically correct attitudes have permeated youth culture in Spain. Young people try to be inclusive and highlight the virtues of women when they join teams, although their reasons for thinking there are advantages to including them are based on superficial or arbitrary arguments, such as the contradictions about how they play basketball. Or the supposedly complementary nature of men and women described by Green Arrow in cooking, where women are better at cooking sweet foods and men at salty foods.

On another note, we could say that two styles emerge among the life projects: on the one hand, life projects that follow basically traditional lines, although they adopt a modern aesthetic. On the other, are more open projects that question the traditional family and do not fit into the professional options that exist today, expressing an

Table 5. Family origin and future family imaginary.

Person	Father's education	Father's job	Mother's education	Mother's job	How they see themselves at 40
Art restorerM17	Primary school	Truck driver	Vocational training	Housewife	In Copenhagen, living with friends, a pet, a studio flat with white furniture.
The comfortable oneH16	University	Sales	Baccalaureate	Sales	Teacher in a very humble flat with family, living in my village. He would be married, with children and would share the housework.
ActorH23	PhD	Professor	Baccalaureate	Housewife	He rejects giving a fixed answer, he might leave Spain, although he loves his country, he seems himself with a significant other, but with no children, although that might change. He would do housework.
EnfermeraM20	Secondary education and electricity	Construction	Secondary education	Operator in a cheese factory	In her little house, with a son and a daughter (she wants two), her boyfriend with whom she is "already half-married" and a dog. She would work as a nurse and they would share the housework.
AcordionistM28	University	Professor	University	Professor	Working and researching in the university, but without children. Another possibility: living in Latin America.
Green ArrowH22	Primary school	Pruner	Primary school	Hotel maid	Married or in a domestic partnership, with no more than 2 children, living in the city of Valencia, not in a village.
Radical feministM27	No education	Tourism publisher	University	Librarian	To be happy, knowing more, more patient, living with friends in a flat similar to where she lives and she doesn't feel the obligation to have children.
CartoonistH19	Secondary education	Operator in the wood industry	Secondary education	Disability retirement	He can't even see himself at 25, but he would like to be in a relationship, have some dogs, if his girlfriend wanted children he'd have them. He sees himself in Spain or Bolivia
Creative cook H20SP	Secondary education	Deep sea fishing	Secondary education	Specialized operator (bread sticks)	With his bar or restaurant, with roots in his village, he would never leave. With a girlfriend and children.

entrepreneurial spirit and the desire to travel. The latter model includes options of communal living: living with friends; which in one case was the way the interviewee was currently living. Finally, in one case there are no clear definitions and the young man leaves it to his girlfriend to decide.

In 4 of the 9 cases they see their futures without children, while in 1 case the issue is ambiguous. And in 3 of the 9 cases the interviewees see themselves with domestic animals in the future.

Regarding their future careers, in some cases it is seen as an extension to what they are studying (Green Arrow, kinesiology; the Accordionist, who is studying sociology, researcher/professor, or alternatively music), or to what they are going to study (nursing). The Radical Feminist, making art (which she already does) or as a professor (she is working on a doctoral thesis). In other words, these are profiles that are “under way”.

In the case of The Comfortable One, he prefers an easy profession (hair stylist or professor) that will allow him to live well.

The Creative Cook and the Cartoonist (neither of whom work or study), see many obstacles in their paths, because they need money to realize their dreams, but they see themselves as cooks, in the first case as an entrepreneur and in the second as an employee. And then there are those who do not define their futures so clearly (Actor and Art Restorer).

Ultimately, gender prejudices and stereotypes survive if you scratch the surface, although not with the same intensity. There are also counter-discourses. We are in a period of significant transformations in the imaginaries of young people, in their self-images, in their orientation toward the job market, toward their peers and families. It is a moment of great creativity and new norms, with all the contradictions involved in long transition processes.

I. THE PERSPECTIVE OF PEOPLE PROVIDING CAREER GUIDANCE TO YOUNG PEOPLE

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The research also included adults who are in contact with young people as guidance counsellors. Information was collected through focus groups.

- 1) The focus group for education guidance counsellors was made up of 4 people: a secondary school counsellor, an educational psychologist, a municipal equality agent, and an educator from an NGO youth centre in a disadvantaged area.

- 2) The group of career guidance counsellors included 5 members: municipal employment counsellor, regional government employment counsellor, university career counsellor, a doctoral student and a counsellor working for an NGO.

I.1. EDUCATION GUIDANCE COUNSELLOR FOCUS GROUP

The guidance counsellors in the education focus group are in contact with populations from different social strata, which provides us with complementary perspectives.

1. Attitudes of young people observed by the guidance counsellors

The focus group indicated that families played a central role in the creation of gender stereotypes among young people. They transmit prejudices and expectations, and their influence lasts throughout the period in which young people have to make decisions about their future.

They also stressed the role of schools in the reproduction of gender stereotypes, particularly the text books, in which the contributions of women are ignored.

“Traditionally girls tend to gravitate toward healthcare, administrative areas and social sciences. Boys more toward international business, some toward teaching, but not preschool, but rather primary school, music or physical education.” (high school psychologist)

According to the municipal equality agent, in order to break these patterns and start to socialize in more fluid gender models, different values and attitudes have to be taught and supported, while encouraging youth participation in every area. For example, having a male and female delegate for each class should be promoted. Even if there can only be one, they should be alternated, one boy and one girl, always, from both sexes. They also pointed out the need to raise gender awareness among the teaching staff, the need to control their own gender biases.

The following narrative mentions how the name of a female scientist is excluded from a text, but was recovered on the initiative of a female teacher. It is a critical commentary, because education should not be left to good intentions.

“It is a biology and geology book about the three discontinuities of the Earth, two of which had names and one did not. And I asked her [the example is personal, so she is referring to her daughter] ‘I was trained as a biologist, do you know the name of that discontinuity?’ ‘Yes, the [female] teacher told us that

the one that doesn't have a name in the text book is Leman' 'Did you know that Leman is a woman?' 'Yes, she told us.' And because the teacher was a woman she made a point of adding that information. But, why do the other two names appear and only hers doesn't, when they are all equally as important? So, if we don't have teachers who make a point of introducing female engineers, architects, mathematicians, and all that, the girls will never see themselves reflected. In everything boys can say, 'I want to be like that guy', in everything, but for girls there's very little. And that is the seed for male chauvinism, girls are looked at with disdain, that's how it starts." (municipal equality agent)

It was pointed out that it was important to introduce changes in the physical spaces of education centres, starting from preschool. For instance, the playground, where football is centre stage, should be redesigned and made more democratic, so that it can be used more equally by boys and girls. It was mentioned that we needed to move toward schools that completely incorporate gender perspective in their physical space, in the curriculum, in the messages transmitted and to change the personal biases held by the teachers, identifying the patriarchal legacy.

In this sense, it was pointed out that each school needed to reflect on the following study:

"There was a recent Stanford study in which girls considered themselves just as brilliant as their classmates until they were five years old, and the following year they didn't, they started to see themselves as inferior to their male classmates." (municipal equality agent)

The following testimony relates the need for practical awareness raising regarding discriminatory attitudes among the teachers themselves in schools and NGOs. Because theoretical training is not enough to deconstruct deeply-rooted social practices in our culture.

"The first thing is to raise awareness. Last school year, when we gave out the diplomas at the end of the year to 15 and 16-year-old kids, it was a male teacher who handed them out and he put on a bit of a show. And he said 'señor Daniel so and so', 'señor so and so', 'señorita Sara', 'señorita so and so'. [in Spanish señor is the title used to refer to a man, while señorita is used to refer to a girl] When he finished I asked him in private: Why did you say señor and señorita?...and he said no, he didn't do that. But I was paying attention, and I said: you absolutely did say señor to every boy and in capital letters, SEÑOR. And to absolutely every girl you said señorita with a sweet face. I didn't realize, he said, and besides I did it to be funny because I know the boys love that 'Hey bro' way of talking and the girls aren't going to be offended if I call them señorita, they'll like it. And I said: yeah, but it's sexist. And he said: noo, and I said: yes, we'll talk later. So first we need to raise awareness, we don't realize that we do it, but it's not theoretical training, what we need is to experience it. He had taken equality courses and he still didn't realize he was being sexist, he has taken the online courses and knows perfectly well what inequality is. He's been teaching for more than 20 years and he wasn't aware. ...personally, I don't hold back on this issue, but somebody might think, should I say something or not, he'll be offended, no, no, and in fact, we [women], and in

the association, beside the fact that officially, supposedly, I say supposedly because we're trying, we do what we can, we're applying an equality plan to improve all this...But this issue is important to us too, not just for show, but genuinely. So we have to say it and we have to raise awareness through practice" (NGO educator)

In this long account we can see how difficult it sometimes is to reconcile our theoretical training with our day to day behaviour.

2. Role models

When talking about role models emphasis was placed on the impact of YouTube "influencers" on young people. Rappers also had influence on youth culture. These cultural productions reach millions of adolescents, starting from the 5th grade, when almost all students join these networks.

All kinds of messages circulate on the Internet, and education should work with this kind of content, learn its language, the codes. If education does not open up to current youth culture, it may become demotivating and create a gulf between the teachers and students.

"El Rubius has 23 million subscribers, he has infinite influence. There are really sexist channels and others with contradictory messages, the kind that are just silly, but are very popular, so we can't ignore them. We have to get to know them. And when I put up a slide with their idols...the teachers shrug, it's like I'm speaking another language to the teachers and it kills me. That's their language, we have to get to know it, and we have to occupy YouTube, coeducationally speaking, because that's what reaches them, direct to their brains."
(municipal equality agent)

Another area of debate focused on the power of language, the need for an egalitarian way to refer to boys and girls [in Spanish, nouns and pronouns are gendered and when referring to mixed groups, the masculine is used]. Today girls don't feel included if masculine language is used, and it makes them feel disregarded.

3. Vocation and employment

Masculinized areas are the first handicap pointed out in the group discussion on educational issues.

"I have a girl in Basic Professional Training in electricity, and the first stereotype, the first handicap that this girl had to deal with was that there were 12 boys and 1 girl, so she arrives and she looks she got, what's she doing here?"
(educational psychologist)

Girls studying for degrees traditionally attributed to boys find themselves in a hostile environment, and often that hostility is manifested subtly, with comments, being excluded from certain conversations and settings or, as pointed out in the testimony, through looks. When guiding students, the professionals respect the vocation indicated

by the girls, but they know that if they choose to study something like electro-mechanics they will probably suffer this kind of sexism.

4. Professional retraining

In the case of the NGO they employed a very elaborate strategy to deal with the issue of retraining from a gender perspective. The educator from this association pointed out that the training programmes directed at vulnerable or marginalized populations ended up being mostly used by boys. Often the strategies are not premeditated, but training more associated with boys were proposed, as well as a language and aesthetics in which boys would feel more comfortable.

“When girls drop out of school, they are quieter about it, because maybe they stay home or maybe they look for a boyfriend or they get pregnant, but, quote unquote they don’t bother anyone. But boys do bother, because they are out on the streets, robbing, getting into trouble. So the public administration, I don’t know if consciously or unconsciously, began to respond much more to boys. Not because they had more problems than girls, but because they were more visible. So the programmes that appeared were for mechanics, electricians, with an aesthetics that attracted boys, with cool instructors who treated them like buddies, and setups that appealed much more to boys. A lot of instructors were also on the streets and there were a series of strategies to hook boys.”
(NGO educator)

The same educator indicated that the girls who “basically didn’t commit crimes or cause problems” were the most overlooked and this issue continued today.

The training programmes created highly masculinized spaces: the typical mechanics workshop, where the instructor is a man, where there were female supervisors who weren’t instructors, but rather who looked after them, like the educational psychologist. Because information about the programmes was circulated by instructors on the street, the information either didn’t reach girls or they had other preoccupations, because their families wouldn’t let them study and gave them domestic tasks, or because they were pregnant and there was no flexibility for a pregnant girl to go to class.

“The complex situations of girls weren’t contemplated, but that of the boys was, because there was complexity on both sides. For example, boys didn’t want courses...., for their education they don’t want theoretical courses, they want to move, to do manual courses. And that was taken into consideration on a didactic and pedagogical level, but if a girl had to miss a class because maybe she had to take care of a sibling, speaking with the family, that was not contemplated. So suddenly this kind of programme...and I’m speaking about the past, although this problem still exists, but at least there is a reflection about change. So these programmes filled up with boys.” (NGO educator)

To avoid the educational exclusion of girls, they began thinking of other kinds of workshops. First they started with training that corresponded to gender stereotypes such as hairdressing or aesthetics. And because these boys and girls have had an education that was highly differentiated by gender, segregated training was a model that worked to attract girls, even though it reproduced gender prejudices.

So, in this first stage, the training proposals for school dropouts were directed at the wishes and realities of the boys and girls, in workshops that were highly stereotyped by gender.

In the second stage, they thought of creating a co-ed group, for example in the cooking workshop. But they also thought that it wasn't reasonable for there to only be boys in electricity. So they innovated and began to make semester-long courses in which from September to January both boys and girls would do electricity and from February to June, cooking.

They also tried to create aesthetically gender-neutral spaces:

“So now we let them have their own experience, that they experience, that's most important. Second, is that they aren't stereotyped spaces, what I mean is that the kitchen is not filled with little pink flowers and electricity workshop wasn't a mess. And a woman teaches electricity who knows a lot, so we provide references. Now it's a much more organized space, well-lit, that you can't define as aesthetically masculine or feminine. In other words, the spaces for cooking and electricity are very similar.” (NGO educator)

They spoke about the theoretical case of a boy whose dream was to do aesthetics and who would find decoration that was thought of for girls. If every detail is feminine then maybe he wouldn't like the aesthetics training so much. The same is true for a girl who wants to study mechanics, the workshop shouldn't be so rough, so dirty.

Neutral or mixed aesthetics (that include masculine and feminine details) should be on the posters and pamphlets used to publicize the activities. But in addition to aesthetics, appealing to girls in a vulnerable situation involves specific strategies, because if we go on “automatic pilot” and the information is sent to the places it's always sent to, normally it mostly reaches boys.

In some cases we even have to “go out and look for” girls. In some families the girls are made to take care of their siblings or to help in domestic chores. So a guidance counsellor won't be able to tell them about a school dropout recovery programme and they won't see a poster that's put up because they're not attending school. Girls from some families have to be sought out and we have to stop and think, where are the girls? How can I get this information to them? In this regard networks of girlfriends work well, since asking some of them can give you access to others.

“We normally call the centres for minors: hey, do you have anybody? Because we have excess demand, because this is highly sought after and it is the centres who if they want to send us someone they do. But maybe we have to call the centre and make it easy, because the girls have more obstacles.” (NGO educator)

And speaking of obstacles, they talked about the case of a Gypsy girl who was keen on studying and learning who, “misbehaved” at home (they caught her sending WhatsApp messages to a boy) and as punishment her father threatened to take her out of the training course. In these cases, when it's a *second chance school*, it becomes necessary to intervene with families. In this case the girl lives with her father who is separated from her mother. When she was 15 the girl was at risk of staying at home to

take care of all her siblings, and the NGO had various meetings with her father so that in his decision he considered the opportunities that the girl could have if she continued studying.

“We had a meeting with the girl and her father. The three of us came to an agreement and he didn’t make her drop out. And, in fact, now she’s doing basic vocational training.” (NGO guidance counsellor)

Family intervention is also important with boys, where other issues arise.

The high school psychologist deals with a different situation than the NGO. First of all because of the size of the school, today there are approximately 650 students in high schools and only one person working as a guidance counsellor. Therefore, it’s impossible to approach cases in the same way they do in the NGO.

One of the key moments of intervention is when the students have to decide on the path they are going to follow in secondary education, especially in the 4th year of ESO (obligatory secondary education), when they have to choose between social sciences, humanities, health sciences or experimental sciences. The intervention can be personalized if somebody requests it, but the initiatives to provide information are based on groups.

“Lately I’ve been adding family expectations, because you realize that when they choose...not last year, but the year before, I had a brilliant kid who said: ‘whatever you say, don’t tell me to do medicine’. ‘Is there a doctor in your family?’ ‘My father and mother are doctors.’ He ended up taking biotechnology.” (high school psychologist)

5. Empowerment and bullying

During the group discussion they discussed the important issue of empowering young people to deal with harmful relationships and they mentioned how some girls meet all the stereotypes attributed to them: *“They have to wear tight shorts, insult other girls, look at this bitch, to please her man, her boyfriend, and the boys act like kings”*.

Even bullying, sometimes based on xenophobic prejudices, such as the case of a very mature girl from Colombia who did not want to allow herself to be manipulated by a [female] classmate and ended up the victim of school bullying. A girl said to her:

“Which of these boys do you think is the best looking? And she answered: ‘I don’t like any of them’ But the other girl kept pushing: ‘But if you had to go out with one of them?’ ‘No, I think they’re ugly’. Since she said she thought they were ugly various girls came after her saying that’s an insult and she told them: ‘You asked my opinion, so I gave it’ This happens, one woman manipulating another.” (educational psychologist)

They observe that sometimes there is a lack of support among the girls, who manipulate information, and with the use of new technologies these situations are amplified.

Regarding self-image, it's better to provide support to girls with low self-esteem. Help them realize that they can do tasks in which they are the protagonists, encourage them. They also have to grapple with the difficulties that come from romantic relationships and in these cases intervention is more complex, especially in situations where jealousy is involved and they are being controlled can lead to gender violence. In such cases certain movies can be used to work on sexism and promote more equal relationships between boys and girls.

“The other day we put on the movie by La Juani to work on sexism issues, we told them they each had to watch a certain character to have a discussion. Then, they had to talk about La Juani: “she’s a slut”. It was the girls who called her a slut because you could see her thong. And we told them that you could see the boys’ underwear, and they said: oh, that’s not the same. So, like always, girls are under the microscope and have to 100% follow some model. If you were a thong, you’re a slut, but you can’t dress like a nun either because then you’re boring. Or you’re a bitch or a whore. So everything under the microscope, always bad, and the girls were the first ones to talk. In contrast, for boys everything goes, doesn’t matter if he’s a skater, if he likes sports.” (NGO guidance counsellor)

Models of beauty were also discussed and the need to counteract the stereotypes that are continually transmitted through the media.

“First off we have to tell the girls that we don’t have to be perfect, and we don’t have to fit into some standard, and that has to start with the girls. And although we are still far from that, it’s starting to happen. I think that work is starting to be done, although we still have a lot more to do, it’s starting to change. For example, there is a girl who is fat and they make fun of her a lot, but the girls don’t let them, to the point of facing down the boys if necessary, making enemies. Because they’re aware of this issue and I’m friends with this girl and I won’t allow it.” (NGO guidance counsellor)

In certain issues, such as being overweight, they have observed that the girls start to be more aware, especially based on friendship, and they support and defend each other. But they point out that regarding sexuality it's much more difficult, and in general with romantic relationships where rivalry between women is promoted by various cultural media.

“There’s a lack of sisterhood in children and adolescent TV series, in all of them, even cruelty, always with the maxim: divide and conquer. In fact, look at the news: Michelle Obama competes in wardrobe with so and so, we compete and the press always make sure of it, they always paint us as rivals, they never say we’re colleagues. They never show good examples, in adolescent magazines, about pop music or whatever, we compete with each other, compete for the boy of your dreams. Sisterhood needs to be actively worked on.” (municipal equality agent)

But the problem is also seen with the boys, who sometimes come from homes where gender violence is present, along with a great deal of pain and fear and they don't know how to interact with others differently.

“Because often the boys are used to interacting in a ‘cocky’ way, I dish out the most insults, so nobody can touch me. So, if we work together, in private: ‘Jeez, don’t you realize that...’ For example, a boy who called this girl fat, ‘don’t you realize that you’re always under stress because you go around insulting everyone?’ But this was in private, ‘don’t you realize that you need...?’ This boy happened to be a fantastic case, and he thought about it a lot, things don’t always turn out so well, but: ‘don’t you realize that you are going to get in trouble with us? To be on top you have to be under pressure, it’s difficult, it’s stressful, don’t you want to be comfortable, relaxed?’ And he told me that he wanted to talk to her and he told me: ‘help me, okay, I’ll talk to her but you call her and tell her I want to talk to her’. It’s usually not so simple, and that is achieved along the school year.” (educational psychologist)

It’s necessary to create other role models so that they can imagine a different way of relating with others. Some role models, like the football player Cristiano Ronaldo, who is also cocky, don’t help. You have to explain to them that if they didn’t get into a fight, they would have been able to stay in the training workshop, that their attitudes have consequences.

“Don’t you like cooking class? You missed out on fideuà [a dish similar to paella with noodles instead of rice], if you wouldn’t have got into a fight you would have been in the workshop.’ That’s how you give them space to build the tools they need. ‘Yeah, but I didn’t know how, because he gave me a dirty look and I get really mad.’ ‘Okay, let’s work on that. What can you do when somebody gives you a dirty look’, and then they learn the tools they need because they’ve only had models that haven’t helped them.” (NGO educator)

They were raised in a sexist environment and to hide their feelings. Therefore, they need to be given tools, to change the language, to be taught empathy, giving examples, providing role models who can be the NGO educators themselves.

“Starting with the male educators, they’re personal role models, they’re really nice, in fact, there are girls with more temper than the boys. With the little things, when you say something to a boy you’re providing an example, a model of how he could have acted in that situation. If instead of doing this you imagine if you could have resolved it some other way, but you’ll be in that situation again next week. That’s how you can guide them.” (NGO educator)

Another tool that is being used in high schools is peer tutoring, which consists in 3 and 4th year ESO or 1st year baccalaureate students tutoring first year ESO students. A mentoring programme. This mentoring helps the new students incorporate into the school, helps students get along and resolve conflicts in a positive way, *“because these days I think high school is a battlefield. A lot of students drop out because of the conflictive environment in the school.” (high school psychologist)*

6. Focus group conclusions

The group pointed out that it’s a difficult time for interpersonal relationships, the bonds that are created are weak, young people live in a much more fragmented world than past generations, because their parents are working, Sunday used to be a social

day for family and friends, today that's not always the case, people don't live where they did in past generations or family structures are much more complex and this sometimes generates loyalty issues and insecurity in young people.

Moreover, the new technologies don't favour face-to-face interaction and there is a lot of posturing in masculine camaraderie. This is a generation with fragile bonds. In television series everyone fights, the parents don't have collective spaces, because they don't have trade unions, clubs or groups.

Regarding female leadership, they pointed out two situations. Girls who imitate the male model, so, they are cocky girls, who also insult. Then there are other kinds of leaders, who gain respect and search for equality, but at these ages they may even be the ones who are marginalized: *"they're like ants, none of them stand out. Today if one becomes a leader it is more based on the male model and very hierarchical."* (municipal equality agent)

First proposal:

In one case a youtuber workshop was proposed for the teaching staff and parents, so that they would get to know how young people are socializing. *"In the workshops we talk about Arkano, the rapper, I realized he was really important, especially from 4th year of ESO. I did some research thanks to my 19 year old son, who keeps me up to date. I started to spend hours and hours watching youtubers, YouTube content. When in class I put up a slide with youtubers I say, you have five seconds to scream. Today they are their influencers, for better or worse. I call the workshop: Youtubers; influencers for coeducation as well."* (municipal equality agent)

"I tell them 'you have to have a critical perspective', so we can help them have a critical view and to distinguish the quality of the content." (municipal equality agent).

Second proposal:

"The schools also don't teach how to take turns speaking, how to speak in public in schools, here we don't work on abilities, cooperation, non-verbal language, giving a speech, everything is purely content. And I always say that groups should be mixed and I force them to take turns speaking. One minute, you have the floor. Because if you don't the girls will be relegated." (high school psychologist)

Third proposal:

"Contribute to games: new technologies, their language and motivations. To encourage reading they've invented books in WhatsApp format, maybe they're not interested in the paper, but they are interested in the WhatsApp format. They're also motivated by hip hop songs or movies. The idea is to move a bit toward their codes and language, their motivations. Not just follow their tendencies, we have to broaden their horizons. But we do have to keep them in mind." (NGO guidance counsellor)

II.2. CAREER GUIDANCE COUNSELLOR FOCUS GROUP

This group included a local development agent (LDA), an NGO guidance counsellor, a university guidance counsellor, a doctoral candidate and a guidance counsellor from the Valencian Employment and Training service (SERVEF).

1. Attitudes of young people observed by the guidance counsellors

There was agreement in the group that gender stereotypes are being reproduced among young people. But that it was much more pronounced in groups with less cultural capital.

“More girls want to be beauticians or hairstylists and many more boys want to be mechanics, it’s completely overwhelming.” (NGO guidance counsellor)

They also pointed out that some stereotypes are changing, for example, now more boys and a relatively low number of girls want to study cooking, when this would have been unthinkable just a decade earlier. And they mentioned what they called the “Master Chef effect” and the invisibility of women in the kitchen:

“Cooking was always done by women and it’s still mostly done by women, but it’s men who are most visible and celebrated. For example, Carme Ruscalleda, is the chef of all chefs in Spain, the one who has the most Michelin stars, or Maria Marte, who two years ago won the National Gastronomy Prize, but they get no publicity. We have a big problem, the worst is in hair and beauty, which are mostly feminized, when they’re successful, when they gain visibility... they’re men, have you ever heard of a famous female hair stylist at the national level?” (high school guidance counsellor)

2. Employer attitudes

Training is also conditioned by biases in job offers. In this sense, it’s difficult for women to take part in professional training courses in construction.

“They have no job prospects. And we’ve seen that in the Local Development Agency, when a company asks for somebody to work in construction, they ask for a man. And you tell them: I’m going to send you a trained woman for an interview. And they say great, go ahead and send her to us, but I’m going to choose a man. Of course they find themselves with the handicap that they can do the training but later it won’t help them find employment.” (LDA guidance counsellor: local development agent)

Discrimination in the business world is not limited to the hiring process. For example, 98% of the personnel of cleaning companies are women, however, the position of window cleaner is held by men, and it is the best paid job.

“So they come to the town hall to clean the windows and they’re men and they earn more than the women who come to clean everything else. The women can’t become window cleaners and the men don’t want to do any other type of cleaning job.” (LDA guidance counsellor)

What can be done here is to include social clauses in public employment contracts, something the SERVEF guidance counsellor pointed out is already obligatory in the Generalitat Valenciana. It is also important to develop the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

The proposals also revolved around the need to modernize business management so that women, who are sometimes at the core of operations, are taken into consideration when improving how production is organized:

“Speaking with a human resources student who works in a food product company, he told me that they had a problem and their engineers couldn’t figure out how to make the work more comfortable. And I said, ask the women, the operators who do the work. ‘I never thought of that’. And the women told the engineers what they needed for their workstations. I mention this because sometimes we have to ask women what we need. And our students, although they’re more open, graduate without any gender training and they never think of listening to the female workers.” (university guidance counsellor)

3. Professional retraining

The university guidance counsellor recounted how in a consultancy firm they designed workstations according to requests from businesses. In one case, there were three partners, young men, and she proposed:

“Should we put 8 mothers here, women? And they said: are you crazy? Because the profile was women between 45 and 55 years old with communication skills and they had to connect with other mothers to sell them ADSL for their children. But the three partners wanted young kids, students, part-time. In the end they hired women and they couldn’t believe it, the women brought in coffee and cake, if they had been men the workplace wouldn’t have been feminized and they connected. Ever since, that organization counts on women, they count on mothers. It was a very interesting experience, but at first they were like, are you crazy, we’re not going to hire 8 mothers, as if they were saying, we’re a serious company, but it worked very well.” (university guidance counsellor)

The conclusion is that it is important to promote a gender focus at the institutional level, such as the university. And that it’s necessary to carry out campaigns to raise the awareness of people in charge of hiring, because the number of women trained to work in every area is growing, but the market continues to discriminate. Moreover, today technology allows one of those giant trailers to be moved with a single hand, it’s no longer a question of physical strength. Therefore, it’s necessary to adapt mentalities to the new reality.

Among the proposals, it was mentioned that a few years ago a high school implemented a programme called “*following the trail of a profession*”, which showed examples of women in masculinized professions and vice versa. Those women or men could visit schools and talk about their work; or the students could go directly to workshops or places where these professions are carried out. Showing specific examples is very effective, allowing them to see a woman driving a trailer, running milling machines or working as electricians with their own eyes.

4. Vocation and employment

One concern was people in vulnerable situations. In the case of young university students, they will enter the labour market in the medium or long-term, either in their profession or not. But as you go down the social pyramid, people have less expectations and prospects of finding work, as can be observed in unemployment data. In the employment guidance interviews many young people expressed fears of never finding work again.

“Now we have an agreement with the association of municipalities and with the provincial council to establish a series of employment tracks for at-risk youths. The majority of unemployed people are women, and if they have no training it’s much worse, since they have little possibility of finding work. We have to work hard on social skills with most of them, in addition to establishing some kind of training. Among the skills, we have to work on their self-esteem, their attitudes and abilities: of keeping work schedules and other basic issues, that is important.” (LDA guidance counsellor)

“Now SERVEF has designed a small pilot programme that are vocational schools. It’s a type of school that had disappeared. It’s going to be directed at neighbourhoods that require priority action and others with significant poverty. Sixty-two vocational schools have already been established, for men and women, which created a first module that is educational, to provide guidance, information and a little bit about basic skills, almost minimal: be on time, come well dressed, with your hair combed and bathed.” (SERVEF guidance counsellor)

The university guidance counsellor observed that the most educated groups have a specific vulnerability. When they accept jobs that have nothing to do with their education, millennials feel less respected and poorly paid and are exposed to job precarity. That’s why that with this group she believes it is important to work on identity issues, who we are, what we can be. And to develop their entrepreneurial spirit. The message should be: “We’re all valuable, but not everyone is suited for the same thing”, because we also should not train economists just to become administrative assistants, even if they believe they have no other option, it’s an enormous waste of human capital.

5. Reconciling work and personal life

In the focus group they pointed out that when young people take professional training, some quit because they have to care of family members while looking for work. But beyond that, also because job prospects are frankly diminishing. Even if they are offered a schedule that is compatible with child rearing:

“The ones who are mothers have children they have to take care of. We provide training on a schedule that allows them to pick up their children. So you do training from 8 to 3...But even when it’s compatible, what really stops them is that they see a big obstacle in the job market and that the training doesn’t provide them any prospects.” (LDA guidance counsellor)

6. Empowerment

The focus group agreed that it was necessary to provide motivation and for young people to plan their futures with greater self-knowledge, because setting goals in accordance with their curriculum is the only way they can achieve their objectives in regard to their vocation. The importance of equal training was also stressed, so that they can better negotiate their work conditions.

“I would work on their self-knowledge, which is related to self-esteem, who am I apart from a man or woman and where am I going, because it’s where you move. Because that’s where you build your itinerary. Self-knowledge is also important for leadership, which has to do with who you are. Another thing are management abilities, but this can be studied, in contrast, leadership is persuading, it’s more complex, it’s an ability to develop. Equality training is important for young people, but also for guidance counsellors. If we want to change the world, we have to have equality training and there is a big hole in schools there, in primary education, in preschool, at all levels, and they are professions that we have feminized. But not all women have training from a gender perspective.” (LDA guidance counsellor)

7. Focus group conclusions

The proposals revolved around the need to work on self-esteem and identity, along with vocational training. The group also discussed modernizing training, including content directed at young people in the programmes, and greater contact with families, especially among vulnerable groups.

From the business side, intermediating with companies to modify rates of masculinization and feminization of certain activities was thought to be essential. Awareness raising campaigns were also important.

The focus group also centred on two other issues.

First proposal:

“Continuous training: they think that training ends when they find a job. They need to have entrepreneurial spirit and know how to generate their own work. They have to develop skills, including new ways of understanding gender relations.” (university guidance counsellor)

Second proposal:

“Clear protocols on how to act must be established. From the perspective of public employment policies there is a dichotomy: on the one hand, you come with the

intention of transforming reality, but the truth is that policies are heavily conditioned by funding and politically constrained. So we carry out routine projects, sometimes introducing small changes, because everything has to be soon and fast, because 4 years of legislature pass quickly. As a consequence, you do experimental programmes. And despite everything, the truth is that women are there, mostly as job seekers and the stereotypes are reproduced. But public authorities will need to provide solutions by adapting the guidance protocols, because they are very pigeon-holed. The protocols are personalized because you have a person in front of you, but they aren't personalized, we need to have more people trained in gender to handle this. We need to be clear on equality issues, guiding both job offers and demand.” (SERVEF guidance counsellor)

“We didn't have guidance manuals like in other European countries, we don't have our own guidance model. In the university we have a space and 45 minutes to speak to people who come to talk about their concerns. We do have as our model getting in touch with an individual's strength. The big problem for guidance or public resources is when we unite with weakness instead of strength. To not be paternalistic, we have to generate our own model that allows the individual to engage according to their abilities” (university guidance counsellor)

Ultimately there is no single model that allows us to guide young people in how they can carry out their vocation while also obtaining greater equality in the market and in professions. But it's possible that the analysis and reflections regarding gender stereotypes will allow us to develop strategies to build a future that is more open than the present, with alternative paths and greater freedom of choice to be who we want to be.

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