

Networks of Empowerment: Women in the Early Ibero-American Film Clubs (1909 to 1959)

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Thesis summary

This thesis project aims to study the international networks established among women who participated in film clubs in Ibero-America during the first half of the twentieth century. It aims to analyse national, regional, and transnational film club networks, the women mediators involved, and the international role that film clubs played in the emergence of multiple film cultures in Ibero-America, including a women's film culture.

To do so, I have chosen three case studies: 1) first documented film clubs in Barcelona, and their relationship to amateurism, being them the Club Cinematográfico de Horta (1923), Barcelona Film Club (1929) and Sessions Mirador (1929-1930), the last two having María Luz Morales as a founder and participant; 2) one private film club and the first one documented in Buenos Aires (Cine club de Buenos Aires, 1929-1932), in which Victoria Ocampo was involved; 3) and the first three film clubs documented in Ciudad de México (Cine Club Mexicano 1931-1935, Cine club de Mexico 1934-1938 and 35 mm Cinema 1938) all of them co-founded and managed by Lola Álvarez Bravo, the first of them had ties with a public Mexican university. By studying the role each of the chosen film clubs played in each context, we may understand their pivotal role in the development of multiple film cultures in Ibero-America. Therefore, we will explore the contribution of women in the development of film cultures through their participation in film clubs and propose a women's film culture based on the networks they succeeded to create.

This research proposes several decentralisations within the historiography of cinema. Firstly, it concentrates on a marginal entity for cinema studies, namely film clubs. Secondly, it emphasises initiatives originating from regions traditionally deemed peripheral within the context of Western film club history, such as Ibero-America. Finally, it places focus on agents traditionally marginalised within both cinema historiography and film club history, namely women. This proposal for decentralisation has proven its worth by demonstrating that privileged white Ibero-American women held significant positions in the emergence of Western film club culture.

To achieve the proposed objectives, I have incorporated gender and global perspectives, alongside qualitative methodological tools rooted in relational sociology, as well as quantitative methods. In applying the gender perspective, I have focused on deconstructing authorship and supporting the principle of distributed collective authorship through networks, while also advocating for the theoretical contributions of self-reflective texts such as letters, diaries, or chronicles. The global perspective has facilitated the tracing of women's networks on a transnational level, allowing for an understanding of oppression dynamics and strategies for challenging them within a broad framework.

Among the qualitative methods, the most utilized has been network construction, employing Actor-Network Theory. I have traced both human and non-human actors, such as cultural objects or spaces, that comprised the networks of the mediators to whom I have dedicated my case studies. Among the quantitative tools, I have employed Social Network Analysis with the aim of developing a methodology that can be extrapolated to other historical and marginalised.

In line with this approach, as part of the research, I have published a [dataset](#) accompanied by various [interactive visualisations](#) of the data contained within it. The objective of openly publishing the data I have compiled over the course of this research is to promote collective work and open science.

Zusammenfassung der Dissertation

Dieses Dissertationsprojekt zielt darauf ab, die internationalen Netzwerke von Frauen zu untersuchen, die in der ersten Hälfte des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts in iberamerikanischen Filmclubs aktiv waren. Ziel ist es, nationale, regionale und transnationale Filmclub-Netzwerke, die beteiligten Vermittlerinnen und die internationale Rolle der Filmclubs bei der Entstehung verschiedener Filmkulturen in Iberoamerika, einschließlich einer Frauenfilmkultur, zu analysieren.

Zu diesem Zweck habe ich drei Fallstudien ausgewählt: 1) die ersten dokumentierten Filmclubs in Barcelona und ihre Beziehung zum Amateurfilm, nämlich der Club Cinematográfico de Horta (1923), der Barcelona Film Club (1929) und die Sessions Mirador (1929-1930), wobei María Luz Morales in den letzten beiden Clubs als Gründerin und Teilnehmerin auftrat; 2) ein privater Filmclub und der erste dokumentierte Filmclub in Buenos Aires (Cine club de Buenos Aires, 1929-1932), an dem Victoria Ocampo beteiligt war; 3) und die ersten drei dokumentierten Filmclubs in Ciudad de México (Cine Club Mexicano 1931-1935, Cine club de Mexico 1934-1938 und 35 mm Cinema 1938), die alle von Lola Álvarez Bravo mitbegründet und geleitet wurden und von denen der erste mit einer öffentlichen mexikanischen Universität in Verbindung stand. Durch die Untersuchung der Rolle, die die ausgewählten Filmclubs in den jeweiligen Kontexten spielten, können wir ihre zentrale Rolle bei der Entwicklung verschiedener Filmkulturen in Iberoamerika verstehen. Daher werden wir den Beitrag von Frauen zur Entwicklung von Filmkulturen durch ihre Teilnahme an Filmclubs untersuchen und eine Frauenfilmkultur vorschlagen, die auf den Netzwerken basiert, die sie erfolgreich geschaffen haben.

Die vorliegende Untersuchung schlägt mehrere Dezentralisierungen innerhalb der Filmgeschichtsschreibung vor. Erstens konzentriert sie sich auf eine Randgruppe der Filmwissenschaft, nämlich die Filmclubs. Zweitens werden Initiativen hervorgehoben, die aus Regionen stammen, die im Kontext der westlichen Filmclubgeschichte traditionell als peripher gelten, wie z. B. Ibero-Amerika. Und schließlich liegt der Schwerpunkt auf Akteuren, die sowohl in der Filmgeschichtsschreibung als auch in der Geschichte der Filmclubs traditionell an den Rand gedrängt werden, nämlich den Frauen. Dieser Vorschlag zur Dezentralisierung hat sich bewährt, indem er gezeigt hat, dass privilegierte weiße iberamerikanische Frauen bei der Entstehung der westlichen Filmclubkultur eine bedeutende Rolle spielten.

Um die vorgeschlagenen Ziele zu erreichen, habe ich neben qualitativen, in der Beziehungssoziologie verwurzelten methodischen Instrumenten auch quantitative Methoden und eine geschlechtsspezifische und globale Perspektive einbezogen. Bei der Anwendung der Gender-Perspektive habe ich mich auf die Dekonstruktion der

Autorenschaft konzentriert und das Prinzip der verteilten kollektiven Autorenschaft durch Netzwerke unterstützt, während ich gleichzeitig für die theoretischen Beiträge von selbstreflexiven Texten wie Briefen, Tagebüchern oder Chroniken eintrat. Die globale Perspektive hat das Aufspüren von Frauennetzwerken auf transnationaler Ebene erleichtert und ein Verständnis der Unterdrückungsdynamik und der Strategien zu ihrer Überwindung in einem breiten Rahmen ermöglicht.

Unter den qualitativen Methoden wurde vor allem die Netzwerkkonstruktion unter Anwendung der Actor-Network-Theory eingesetzt. Ich habe sowohl menschliche als auch nicht-menschliche Akteure, wie kulturelle Objekte oder Räume, nachgezeichnet, die die Netzwerke der Vermittler bildeten, denen ich meine Fallstudien gewidmet habe. Unter den quantitativen Instrumenten habe ich die soziale Netzwerkanalyse mit dem Ziel eingesetzt, eine Methodik zu entwickeln, die auf andere historische und marginalisierte Fälle übertragen werden kann.

In Übereinstimmung mit diesem Ansatz habe ich im Rahmen der Forschung einen Datensatz veröffentlicht, der von verschiedenen interaktiven Visualisierungen der darin enthaltenen Daten begleitet wird. Das Ziel der Veröffentlichung der Daten, die ich im Laufe dieser Forschung zusammengetragen habe, ist die Förderung der kollektiven Arbeit und der offenen Wissenschaft. Unter den qualitativen Methoden wurde vor allem die Netzwerkkonstruktion unter Anwendung der Actor-Network-Theory eingesetzt. Ich habe sowohl menschliche als auch nicht-menschliche Akteure, wie kulturelle Objekte oder Räume, nachgezeichnet, die die Netzwerke der Vermittler bildeten, denen ich meine Fallstudien gewidmet habe. Unter den quantitativen Instrumenten habe ich die soziale Netzwerkanalyse mit dem Ziel eingesetzt, eine Methodik zu entwickeln, die auf andere historische und marginalisierte Fälle übertragen werden kann.

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Resum de la tesi

Aquest projecte de tesi té com a objectiu analitzar les xarxes internacionals establertes entre les dones que van participar dels primers cineclubs Iberoamericans durant la primera meitat del segle XX. La recerca pretén analitzar les xarxes de cineclubs nacionals, regionals i transnacionals, les dones mediadores involucrades en elles i el paper internacional que van jugar els cineclubs en l'emergència de múltiples cultures fílmiques a Iberoamèrica, inclosa una cultura fílmica de dones.

He escrit tres estudis de cas: 1) els primers cineclubs documentats a Barcelona i la seva relació amb l'amateurisme, aquests són el Club Cinematogràfic de Horta (1923), el Barcelona Film Club (1929) i les Sessions Mirador (1929-1930), els dos últims amb Maria Luz Morales com a fundadora i participant; 2) un cineclub privat i el primer documentat

a Buenos Aires (Cine club de Buenos Aires, 1929-1932), en el qual va participar Victoria Ocampo molt activament; 3) i els tres primers cineclubs documentats a Ciutat de Mèxic (Cine Club Mexicano 1931-1935, Cine club de México 1934-1938 i 35 mm Cinema 1938), tots ells co-fundats i gestionats per Lola Álvarez Bravo, i el primer d'ells vinculat a una universitat pública mexicana. En estudiar el paper que cadascun dels cineclubs seleccionats va jugar en cada context, podem comprendre el seu paper fonamental pel desenvolupament de múltiples cultures fílmiques a Iberoamèrica. Per tant, explorarem la contribució de les dones en el desenvolupament de cultures fílmiques a través de la seva participació en cineclubs i proposarem una cultura cinematogràfica de dones basada en les xarxes que van aconseguir crear.

Aquesta recerca proposa diverses descentralitzacions per a la historiografia del cinema. En primer lloc, es centra en un objecte marginal per als estudis cinematogràfics, els cineclubs. En segon lloc, hi destaca iniciatives originades en regions tradicionalment considerades perifèriques dins del context de la història del cineclubisme occidental, com Iberoamèrica. Finalment, es centra en agents tradicionalment marginats tant per la historiografia del cinema com per la historiografia del cineclubisme, les dones. Aquesta proposta de descentralització ha demostrat la seva valua en provar que les dones iberoamericanes blanques privilegiades van ocupar posicions significatives en l'emergència del cineclubisme occidental.

Per assolir els objectius proposats, he incorporat perspectives de gènere i globals, juntament amb eines metodològiques qualitatives arrelades a la sociologia relacional, així com mètodes quantitius. En aplicar la perspectiva de gènere, m'he centrat en la deconstrucció de l'autoria i en el principi d'autoria col·lectiva i distribuïda a través de les xarxes, alhora que defenso les contribucions teòriques de dones a partir de textos autorreflexius com ara cartes, diaris o cròniques. La perspectiva global ha facilitat el rastreig de les xarxes de dones a nivell transnacional, permetent comprendre les dinàmiques d'opressió i les estratègies que van fer servir aquestes per a desafiar-les dins d'un ampli context.

Entre els mètodes qualitius, el més utilitzat ha estat la construcció de xarxes, emprant la Teoria de l'Actor-Xarxa. He rastrejat tant actors humans com no humans, com ara objectes culturals o espais, que van conformar les xarxes de les mediadores a les quals he dedicat els meus estudis de cas. Entre les eines quantitatives, he emprat l'Anàlisi de Xarxes Socials amb l'objectiu de desenvolupar una metodologia que pugui ser extrapolada per a l'anàlisi d'altres objectes marginats per la historiografia.

Seguint aquesta línia, com a part de la recerca, he publicat un [conjunt de dades](#) acompanyat de diverses [visualitzacions interactives](#) de les dades contingudes en ell. L'objectiu de publicar obertament les dades que he recopilat al llarg d'aquesta recerca és promoure el treball col·lectiu i la ciència oberta.

Resumen de la tesis

Esta tesis tiene como objetivo estudiar las redes internacionales establecidas entre mujeres que participaron de los primeros cineclubes iberoamericanos durante la

primera mitad del siglo XX. La investigación tiene el objetivo de analizar las redes de cineclubes nacionales, regionales y transnacionales, las mujeres mediadoras involucradas en ellas y el papel internacional que jugaron los cineclubes en el surgimiento de múltiples culturas fílmicas en Iberoamérica, incluida una cultura fílmica de mujeres.

He investigado tres estudios de caso: 1) los primeros cineclubes documentados en Barcelona y su relación con el amateurismo, el Club Cinematográfico de Horta (1923), el Barcelona Film Club (1929) y las Sesiones Mirador (1929-1930), los dos últimos incluyen a María Luz Morales como fundadora; 2) un cineclub privado, que fue el primero documentado en Buenos Aires (el Cine club de Buenos Aires, 1929-1932), en el que participó Victoria Ocampo; 3) y los tres primeros cineclubes documentados en Ciudad de México (el Cine Club Mexicano 1931-1935, el Cine club de México 1934-1938 y 35 mm Cinema 1938), todos ellos cofundados y dirigidos por Lola Álvarez Bravo, y estando el primero de ellos vinculado a una universidad pública mexicana. Al estudiar el papel que cada uno de los cineclubes seleccionados desempeñó en su contexto, podemos comprender su papel clave en el proceso de emergencia de múltiples culturas fílmicas en Iberoamérica. Exploro también la contribución de las mujeres en el desarrollo de estas culturas fílmicas a través de su participación en cineclubes. Lo que me lleva a conceptualizar la emergencia de una cultura fílmica de mujeres basada en las redes que estas lograron crear.

Esta investigación propone varias descentralizaciones de la historiografía del cine. En primer lugar, me centro en un objeto poco atendido por los estudios fílmicos, los cineclubes. En segundo lugar, enfatizo las iniciativas originadas en regiones tradicionalmente consideradas periféricas dentro del contexto de la historia del cineclubismo occidental, como Iberoamérica. Finalmente, me focalizo en agentes tradicionalmente marginalizados tanto por la historiografía del cine como en por la historiografía del cineclubismo, las mujeres. Esta propuesta de descentralización ha demostrado su valía al probar que las mujeres iberoamericanas blancas y privilegiadas ocuparon posiciones significativas en el surgimiento del cineclubismo occidental.

Para lograr los objetivos propuestos, he incorporado la perspectiva de género y global, junto con herramientas metodológicas cualitativas arraigadas en la sociología relacional, así como métodos cuantitativos. Al aplicar la perspectiva de género, me he centrado en la deconstrucción de la autoría y en el principio de autoría colectiva distribuida a través de redes, al mismo tiempo que abogo por las contribuciones teóricas a partir de textos autorreflexivos como cartas, diarios o crónicas. La perspectiva global ha facilitado el rastreo de las redes de mujeres a nivel transnacional, permitiendo comprender las dinámicas de opresión y las estrategias de las que hicieron uso para desafiarlas dentro de un marco amplio.

Entre los métodos cualitativos, el más utilizado ha sido la construcción de redes, empleando la Teoría del Actor-Red. He rastreado tanto actores humanos como no humanos, como objetos culturales o espacios, que conformaron las redes de las mediadoras a las que he dedicado mis estudios de caso. Entre las herramientas cuantitativas, he hecho uso del Análisis de Redes Sociales con el objetivo de desarrollar una metodología que pueda ser extrapolada a otros objetos marginados por la historiografía.

Siguiendo esta línea, como parte de la investigación, he publicado un [conjunto de datos](#) acompañado de diversas [visualizaciones interactivas](#) de los datos contenidos en este. El objetivo de publicar abiertamente los datos que he recopilado a lo largo de esta investigación es promover el trabajo colectivo y la ciencia abierta.

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Part I The Research Object: Theoretical and Methodological Perspectives

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 How have I come to this point

This research is part of a larger research project framed in the ERC StG project “Social Networks of the Past: Mapping Ibero-American and Lusophone Literary Modernity (1898-1959),” (Roig-Sanz 2018, ERC-2018-STG grant agreement ID: 803860) which aims to map the international networks that Ibero-American cultural mediators successfully established in the building of artistic modernity between 1898, the loss of the Spanish empire, and 1959, the Cuban Revolution. This project has four foci: the analysis of transnational networks established by the Institut of Intellectual Cooperation (ICII); the study of translated literature in a selected corpus of Ibero-American literary and cultural journals of the time; the institutionalisation of cinema through film clubs and film criticism (the latter is being examined by another colleague) and, finally, the study of Ibero-American women’s role in the above-mentioned areas. Each of the topics comprising the project is investigated by a colleague. With them, and others from our research group (GlobalS), I share certain theoretical foundations, sometimes analytical frameworks, and a database. Through this exchange, our findings mutually intersect and enrich one another. It is crucial for me to reference this starting point, as the context within which my research project is situated has significantly shaped its trajectory. Furthermore, the discussions held with my team have frequently steered new avenues of research that I will reference throughout this thesis.

This thesis was initially intended to focus on the first Ibero-American film club movement, as part of a project dedicated to the institutionalisation of cinema through film clubs. It transpired that the first film club I began investigating, the Mexican Film Club, was one in which a photographer I was relatively unfamiliar with, Lola Álvarez Bravo, had a significant influence. By this point, I had extensively reviewed secondary literature on film clubs both in Latin America and other parts of Europe and the United States. The somewhat fleeting appearance of Lola Álvarez Bravo caught me off guard. Indeed, I had come across very few references, if any, that highlighted the participation of women in the first wave of cineclubism. In fact, Lola Álvarez Bravo's case added further intrigue to this initial surprise; while she appeared in some reports, historiography did not consistently recognise her as a pivotal figure in the film club scene. The discovery of a woman's involvement, coupled with the historiographical treatment of her presence, aroused suspicion and a desire for further investigation. It was then that I realised there was a notable absence of literature on women and film clubs in Europe, the United States, or Latin America, particularly concerning the early film club movements that persisted until the 1960s. However, the initial example I encountered served as compelling evidence that women had indeed participated in the first wave of film clubs, and not merely as audiences.

I did not wish to essentialise the concept of 'woman.' In my view, there should not be a distinct research focus solely on women and film clubs. To concentrate my research on the relationship between women and film clubs seemed, in a way, incongruent with my endeavour to deconstruct and move beyond gender roles. Nevertheless, the undeniable absence of individuals identifying as women within the historiography of early film club

movements compelled me to delve into the role of women within these initial film clubs. While I recognise that being a woman should not, in itself, be sufficient grounds to establish a research subject, and that the concept of 'woman' is multifaceted, necessitating an examination of the myriad layers that constitute individuals in their entirety, the glaring omission of names associated with women within the historiography of the first Ibero-American film clubs is both striking and lamentable. Consequently, despite the theoretical challenges posed by focusing on the relationship between women and film clubs, I deemed that the historiographical reality warranted such a focus. In this regard, I hope this research serves as a catalyst for future studies that consider actors in less essentialised terms and from more diverse backgrounds.

The women I managed to trace within this context predominantly belonged to white, privileged classes. It is essential to highlight this point from the outset to avoid misconceptions and acknowledge that, despite my intention to apply an intersectional gender perspective, the subject of study itself and the context from which this thesis is written have allowed me to only trace the paths of personal and professional lives of women from a privileged white minority in Ibero-America, who actively participated in the early Westernised ciné-clubs. This represents a significant limitation that undoubtedly influences the definition of what is understood as 'women' in this context. While I cannot conclusively state that no other women, perhaps non-white or from less affluent backgrounds, actively participated in the first wave of film clubs in Ibero-America, the available data predominantly reference these specific profiles. The reasons are multifaceted; the most influential likely relates to the dynamics of power colonisation and extractivist practices, particularly impacting the global Northern academia of which I am part and within which I operate. However, another compelling reason for this narrow focus stems from the inherent biases in film history. The fact that this research primarily seeks to explore a topic overlooked by film historiography—namely, film clubs—and a geography often marginalised in mainstream literature on Western film culture emergence, namely Ibero-America, complicates efforts to locate data on women within this narrative. Consequently, identifying non-white, less affluent women becomes an even more daunting task. Therefore, I present this thesis as an initial exploration, aiming to, over time and through collaboration among researchers, uncover less hegemonic and privileged actors within the film club history. Ultimately, this endeavour aspires to illuminate a women's film culture stemming from the involvement of those identifying as women during the emergence of the first Ibero-American film clubs.

Throughout this thesis, I employ the term 'Western' in conjunction with film club movements to denote the narrative constructed around film club activities as depicted in the history of cinema. This primarily encompasses film club movements that originated in Europe and the United States, occasionally extending to include those in other English-speaking nations such as Australia or New Zealand. I utilise the term 'Westernised film clubs' to incorporate within global cinematic historiography the film club initiatives that emerged in Latin America. The adjective 'Westernised,' as opposed to merely 'Western,' serves the purpose of emphasising the relationship between the term 'Western' and colonialism, drawing from Said's concepts (1978), while simultaneously recognising contributions from various Latin American cultures. Despite the power dynamics inherent in the process of Westernisation, it remains essential to

employ the term 'Western' to remain as true as possible to the history of film clubs, a narrative intrinsically linked to the dissemination of a concept that originated in Paris. Thus, while I acknowledge, as posited in my thesis, the existence of other initiatives informed by learnings beyond the European capital, using the term 'film club' to describe them implies a certain ideological alignment of these organisations with the broader ciné-club movement. This does not negate the consideration of other initiatives not identifying explicitly as film clubs in my research. However, such initiatives are scarcely documented. Consequently, although this research adopts an intersectional perspective, the goal of reassessing women's contributions to knowledge creation concerning cinematic phenomena within film clubs frequently necessitates the use of the somewhat expansive term 'film club' or 'ciné-club' or 'cineclub', synonyms of the same concept used in different regions.

Furthermore, by making this decision, I acknowledge that the women whose contributions I highlight predominantly belong to white backgrounds and hail from middle to upper-class social strata. My position within European academia — that is, the standpoint (Harding 2004) from which I think, the knowledge accessible to me, and the academic community with whom I engage— has significantly influenced and constrained my perspective. This research emanates from a position of semi-privilege (Southern Europe) within which I have been situated during the period dedicated to writing this thesis. Additionally, the realisation of the blind spots induced by my privileges has partly guided my inquiry. The methodology I present in the second and third sections of this thesis, both qualitative and quantitative, represents a proactive attempt to confront and address the privilege ignorance that, as a White individual (McIntosh 1989), I deem necessary to continue unveiling. Consequently, throughout the thesis, I emphasise that this serves as an initial exploration into a relatively under-researched phenomenon. Recognising the imperative for continued collaborative efforts, I advocate for open data publication. I hope that this inaugural contribution on the topic will expedite subsequent research endeavours, further illuminating women's contributions to the cinematic knowledge landscape. Furthermore, I aspire that the proposed methodology might facilitate investigations into the contributions of women from less privileged, non-white backgrounds to the broader history of global cinema.

With the limitations I have outlined, this research proposes a decentralisation of film historiography from three distinct perspectives. Firstly, the study focuses on a relatively underexplored subject in film history: film clubs. Subsequently, the geographic scope of my investigation centres on Ibero-America, a region notably overlooked in the global history of cinema of the first half of the twentieth century. This approach aims to shift the focus away from the origins of ciné-clubs rooted in France. Lastly, I endeavour to trace actors who have, until now, been marginalised not only from the history of the first film clubs but also from early 20th-century cinema history. Specifically, I refer to women, whom, as previously indicated, predominantly belong to white, privileged classes in this context. This objective of decentralisation is further complemented by a relational perspective, facilitating fluidity in defining the boundaries of the actors encountered throughout the research, whether human or non-human. Both relational perspectives and network analysis methodologies align with my decentralisation goals, contributing to the de-essentialisation of the actor, and extending to a broader conception of the 'author'. The concept "author" includes individuals recognised as

creators of artistic works, producers of intellectual texts, leaders in project conception, or figures vested with public authority. Through the lens of Actor-Network Theory, all actors, irrespective of their nature, are defined through their interrelations, rendering their boundaries flexible and establishing them as interdependent entities. Employing network analysis as a methodological approach has assisted me in conceptualising authorship as a collective endeavour and understanding knowledge emergence as a product of interactions among actors. Consequently, both human and non-human actors, such as film clubs, coalesce to shape a narrative that evolves concurrently with the network formation.

1.1.2 Description of the Research Object

This thesis project aims to study the international networks (Lemerrier 2015) established among women who participated in film clubs in Ibero-America during the first half of the twentieth century. It aims to analyse national, regional, and transnational film club networks, the women mediators involved, and the international role that film clubs played as fluid spaces (Mol and Law 1994) in the emergence of multiple film cultures in Ibero-America, including a women's film culture.

To do so, I have chosen my case studies based on the following criteria: on the one hand, I have chosen the first film clubs that emerged in multiple Ibero-American geographies, and, on the other hand, I have made sure they had women among their participants. Following these criteria, this thesis includes research on the following case studies: 1) first documented film clubs in Barcelona, and their relationship to amateurism, being them the Club Cinematográfico de Horta (1923), Barcelona Film Club (1929) and Sessions Mirador (1929-1930), the last two having María Luz Morales as a founder and participant; 2) one private film club and the first one documented in Buenos Aires (Cine club de Buenos Aires, 1929-1932), in which Victoria Ocampo was involved; 3) and the first three film clubs documented in Ciudad de México (Cine Club Mexicano 1931-1935, Cine club de Mexico 1934-1938 and 35 mm Cinema 1938) all of them co-founded and managed by Lola Álvarez Bravo, the first of them had ties with a public Mexican university. By studying the role each of the chosen film clubs played in each context, we may understand their pivotal role in the development of multiple film cultures in Ibero-America during the period of study. Therefore, we will explore the contribution of women in the development of film cultures through their participation in film clubs and propose a women's film culture based on the networks they succeeded to create.¹

The idea of multiplicity regarding said film cultures aims to contribute to current debates on early cinema and on the role of different regions in the institutionalisation of film cultures. According to Hagener (2014), the "emergence of film culture" implies "that the

¹ We could also speak of global film cultures. In this case, however, I am only addressing the multiple film cultures and women's film culture that emerged in Ibero-America at the beginning of the aforementioned period, though this does not mean that the film cultures did not reproduce or create hybrid forms in other spaces beyond Ibero-America. Nonetheless, these other spaces will not be analysed in this research endeavour.

medium was starting to be taken seriously as an aesthetic object and social force.” Having said that, the term “film culture” tends to be used in the singular, as if only one flourishing film culture had prevailed during the first decades of cinema. Thus, the transnational exchanges that shaped the multiple emerging film cultures in Ibero-America at the time should be retraced in order to decentralise our current understanding of cinema history. To do so, two main objects will be addressed: firstly, the circulation of human actors (cultural mediators) and non human ones (film prints, publications, letters or ideas) that were exchanged between film clubs, and secondly, the different types of relations and practices established between the agents involved in those fluid spaces. Film clubs are here understood as fluid spaces, instead of as organisations or formal institutions, given their unfixed boundaries.² Transnational, regional, and local relations, exchanges, and practices framed the changing and evolving contours of these fluid spaces.

Film clubs scheduled the films they projected depending on different policies: commercial interests, the organisers’ aesthetic preferences, audience preferences, relations with production companies and other film clubs, artistic interests, educational purposes, political ideologies, etc. By considering their differences and similarities, this research project pursues to better explain the specific film cultures and cinephilias of each region and how said cultures were connected. Understanding audiences will help gauge who attended these film clubs and which films they watched. Therefore, the exchanges between actors at various local, regional, and transnational levels must be studied first. Secondly, the analysis of fluid spaces will be considered applying a relational approach and through a transnational perspective in an attempt to contribute to a global history of cinema.

On the other hand, two waves of Ibero-American film club development are considered in this research: 1) the early wave of Ibero-American film clubs up until 1959, and 2) the second wave of development and consolidation from the 1960s onwards. This research will focus on the first period. However, documentation on the early wave of film clubs in Ibero-America is scattered and sparse. As such, this project is especially interested in recovering material on those first film clubs, which has been missing or has remained unpublished thus far. This project also aims at writing a story about the first cineclubism in Ibero-America in which women had a key role. Differences and similarities among these women who accomplished to participate in the first Ibero-American cineclubism will be outlined, in order to create a socio-cultural profile of them and to describe the material and non-material conditions (such as their social capital) that enabled these women’s incidence in the film field.

Although the case studies cover the period between 1923 and 1938, in the second part of the thesis I carry out a periodisation and analysis of the phenomenon of the Ibero-American film club in a broader period, which corresponds to the one mentioned in the title of the thesis (1909-1959). Nevertheless, I position the initial phase of Ibero-American film club history in the mid-1920s, which is when film clubs emerged based on the French concept. Therefore, the period that comprises the first wave of the history of film clubs in Ibero-America would be from 1924 to 1959. The earliest date in the title

² Annmarie Mol and John Law (1994) referred to “fundamental features” as strongpoints.

of the thesis refers to the first film society that emerged in Ibero-America, according to the data I gathered, which opened its doors in Mexico City (Rodríguez Álvarez 2002a, 41). I close my research in 1959 for several reasons. Firstly, I consider that in order to delve into the first wave of Ibero-American film clubism it was important to conclude the research at a time when the second wave was already expanding, which was between the mid-1950s and the early 1960s. Secondly, the 1960s mark several milestones in Western socio-cultural history, and in the history of Latin American cinema. On the one hand, the decade of the 1960s is considered to be the beginning of the so-called third cinema, in addition to the Latin American literary boom. These movements inevitably affected the cultural history of the region, and also the history of film clubs, as we will see. On a political level, 1959 represents the year of the end of the Cuban revolution, which politically marked and deeply affected the rest of the Latin American region. In addition, the 1960s marked the beginning of the second feminist wave, which in Latin America would expand in the 1970s, affecting the relationship between women and film clubs. Therefore, this film clubs' second wave, which I am not working on in this research, I believe would begin in the mid-1950s, with massive attendance at cineclubs throughout the Western world, and with a growth in attendance at cineclubs in Latin America, as we will see. Likewise, the aims of the second wave of film clubs and the ways in which they were organised, although inherited from those of the first wave, would also be slightly different.

From a theoretical and conceptual point of view, this research project takes as a point of departure a gender perspective, not because it focuses on women, but because it applies some feminist concepts and research methods. For example, the idea of networks of sisterhood and solidarity (Haraway and Susan-Leigh Star); the deconstruction of authorship and their strategies to get prestige (Hastie, Giugliana Bruno), or the collective creation of knowledge; the attention to personal relationships that I understand as important as the professional ones, and the creation of a specific category of gender for data gathering purposes (D'Ignazio and Klein). I also aim at focusing on the strategies women pursued historically to survive as women in the cultural sphere, such as the ability these women had to mediate between fields or spheres that limited their social roles. The research presented also nourishes from New Cinema History (Bowles et al. 2012), which is interested in the study of the history of cinema from the viewpoint of circulation and consumption, considering "cinema as a site of social and cultural exchange" (Maltby, Biltereyst, and Meers 2011). In this sense, cultural transfer (Espagne 2013) and cultural mediation constitute key notions to understanding the exchanges in any cultural field. In this respect, I adopt a transnational perspective that I believe it is fundamental to taking on a comparative study between local, regional (that emerges from the relationships between the various actors who constitute the local),³ and global phenomena, which in cinema studies is known as world

³ Regional and regions are not fixed, and neither are the levels of analysis that I propose. As Werner and Zimmerman note, "at the level of the region, the nation-state, or the civilization, none of these scales is absolutely univocal or generalizable" (2006, 34). The authors of *histoire croisée* (entangled history) advocate for the flexibilization of levels of analysis because historicisation is possible within each level and within each specific case. In this sense, but using another method, history can be traced through the relationships among the different actors who make up the local network, as we would understand the emergence of the social using the Actor-Network Theory (Latour 2005). That is, if the local is composed

cinema (Ďurovičová and Newman 2010), transnational cinema (Higbee and Lim 2010), or global cinema (Gunning 2016). I also believe that history can be traced through the relationships among the different actors who make up the local network, as we would understand the emergence of the social using the Actor-Network Theory (Latour 2005). That is, if the local is composed of relationships among actors, this same pattern—on a broader scale—is applicable to every level of analysis. Other notions such as cinephilia (Baecque, Frémaux, and Baecque 1995; Hagener and Valck 2008) will be used to understand audiences as communities and to assess the sociocultural positions of these audiences. The project will also refer to Bruno Latour's Actor-Network theory (2005) to assess the networks and relationships shaping the identities of the studied actors. The constant shifts in these relations and networks will provide a reference to create the categories I plan to develop in order to describe the social activities carried out by the organisations of study. As per the Actor-Network Theory, I propose creating specific categories for each case study, instead of conducting analyses using fixed categories that would stand as a general framework for the analysis of any given network.

1.1.3 Justification of the research interest

In the light of the aforementioned, I believe that there are several reasons explaining why this thesis is relevant. On the one hand, I propose a decentralisation of current literature and fill an existing gap, in the sense that the literature has not shown sufficient interest in the study of Ibero-American film clubs and their international networks, and neither on the relationship between women and film clubs. As Malte Hagener writes: "Film clubs, film societies and ciné-clubs have not been high on the agenda of film historians. While, generally speaking, production has always generated more research than distribution and exhibition, circulation has largely been left on the margins" (2007, 77). Additionally, works devoted to women and film clubs don't exist, especially in terms of Ibero-American film clubs. Film clubs in the United States and Europe have been used to generate an established narrative concerning these spaces in film studies.⁴ In contrast, Latin American film clubs, even if have been more studied have not been taken into account in the building of theoretical frameworks about film cultures. As a consequence, Latin American film clubs have been considered imitative actors situated in the periphery, from a centre-periphery perspective (Roig-Sanz and Meylaerts 2018). By taking into account Latin American film cultures, their epistemologies and conceptual frameworks (Sánchez Prado 2006) will contribute to revising certain classical dichotomies, such as the opposition between centre and periphery (Chakrabarty 2000; Roig-Sanz and Meylaerts 2018) and pre-established ideas such as the uniqueness of European artistic modernity (Sánchez Prado 2019). Women on their side have been completely forgotten by literature regarding the emergence of film cultures in Ibero-America or the rest of the western world and, as we will see in the second part of this

of relationships among actors, this same pattern—on a broader scale—is applicable to every level of analysis. We will turn back to this point in the section on theoretical perspectives.

⁴ See Malte Hagener (2007) and Christophe Gauthier (1999).

thesis, women in the cinema silent period have only recently started to be acknowledged.

The decentralisation proposed above means to review the existing research on Ibero-American film clubs—which thus far has been broadly studied to analyse avant-garde journals,⁵ provide case studies on filmmakers or film critics,⁶ explore the unfolding of artistic or political movements (whose members were attracted to cinema),⁷ and study film preservation institutions (such as *Filmotecas*, *Cinematecas* or *Cinetecas*).⁸ Nevertheless, there is a large amount of information on these film clubs that has not yet been located, examined, and assessed in its full scope in terms of the participation on women in it. For instance, in the chapter dedicated to Mexican film clubs I will reproduce an historical document unpublished until now that empirically demonstrate the implication of Lola Álvarez Bravo in the film club (35 mm Cinema) that screened *Un chien andalou* for the first time in Mexico in 1938.

On the other hand, Latin American film clubs have not been analysed in a comparative and transnational study. Besides, these fluid spaces have not been dealt with considering their international dimension, that is, in terms of their exchanges with other film clubs, either from Latin America, Europe, or the United States.⁹ As such, this project aims to draw an international network of film clubs, in order to pinpoint the exchanges among them and understand the role of each fluid space within the dynamic network.

Therefore the results of my research will also contribute to reassessing the impact of those women mediators in film studies who took part in transnational exchanges thanks, among others, to their participation in Ibero-American film clubs. All the case studies I will work on are empirical examples of the active participation of women in the Ibero-American film club movement. I consider their contributions as a proof of their engagement in the reflections that would lead to the building of the cinema theoretical knowledge. The accomplishments these women took part in are of more than enough interest to ensure the research on the similarities and differences that characterise them. Getting to know them will give us clues about the strategies these women used to make a living in the cultural field, in a period when doing so for a woman was beyond the exceptional.

The women I will examine in my case studies are exceptional not just because of their accomplishments, but also because their names have not been completely erased from the public record. Thanks to their traceability we can say that there were women who took active part in the first Ibero-American film clubs, and also we can reassure that the

⁵ See Gabriel Rodríguez (2002a) and Alberto Sánchez (2002).

⁶ See Olivier Debrouse (1994), Elizabeth Ferrer (2006), and Eduardo Serrato (2010).

⁷ See Román Gubern (1999).

⁸ For instance, the history of the Cinemateca Cubana.

⁹ As Rielle Navitski and Nicolas Poppe point out, film studies focused on Latin America during the period between the end of nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century have operated “almost exclusively through the lens of national cinema. Most scholars of transnational tendencies in Latin American cinema have focused on the present moment, with some critical interest also devoted to the continental -and tricontinental- scope of the political modernist cinema of the 1960s and 1970s” (2017, 2). There exist two recent thesis dissertations using a transnational perspective on Latin American film clubs, by Mariana Amieva (2022) and Anna Broitman (2021)

reason why we don't have more names has not to do with their passivity in the film field, but with the invisibility to which historiography has subjected them. As a consequence, we argue that very likely there are more names of other women who also took part in the film club movement but whose names didn't make up until now. In order to recover these names, I propose new methodological insights using quantitative and qualitative methods, which have not yet been used for the study of film clubs.¹⁰ The lack of papers using big data for approaching cinema is proof of the disinterest in these issues among film scholars, despite the multiple possibilities that this methodology can offer.

Traditionally, film studies have approached film clubs using qualitative methods. I also apply qualitative methods in the sense that I have also undertaken archival research, but I will also use Social Network Analysis to point at names of women who have not received enough attention by scholars until now. Therefore, this combination of methodologies opens a new research path for future projects aiming to study similar objects, whose researchers will have a model to replicate in their case studies. Furthermore, certain issues concerning the use of data-driven approaches in my field of study will come to light, such as the scarcity of data regarding the history of film clubs, the identification and accessibility of these data, the lack of data regarding women, the more suitable models to analyse this object of research, etc. Thus, a wide range of different issues related to data sources and archival research will emerge in the process of compiling the database for this research. Even when I might not deal in-depth with these ideas, several issues that have been underdiscussed among scholars will be highlighted thanks to the proposed methodology. For example, open-access policies that change for each institution, and the mismatch between national production rates and film preservation rates.

In this respect, published information about public and private archives and other material preserving institutions—*filmotecas, cinetecas, libraries, or cinematecas*, nation archives, museums, libraries and so on—can help future researchers in their respective projects. However, we still need to map, compare, and contrast film institutions' preservation policies, which are key to thinking about how to preserve and access the cultural materials of the past and of the future. Additionally, as stated above, the project will open new research paths, which may contribute to arise awareness about the relevance for institutions to make sure they equally represent all the minorities and broad diversity taking part of the culture whose heritage they are trying to preserve.

As part of the open-source policy this thesis embraces, a [dataset](#) related to the ongoing research will be released. Exacerbating the lack of research about women and film clubs, their archives are scarce and scattered. This thesis has been undertaken with a plan to publish a [dataset](#) linked to the topic and some [visualisations](#) that will be analysed in each case study. This [dataset](#) includes information on the chronology of cineclubism in Ibero-America, the members associated to some of the film clubs (when the information has been gathered), some film club screenings, and other institutions associated to these film clubs, such as journals, or preserving institutions (Cinetecas, Filmotecas, or libraries, etc.). The [dataset](#) also focuses on women who took part in the Ibero-American film field

¹⁰ Projects such as the *International Journal for Digital Art History* demonstrate the potential of big data for the study of moving images.

during the mentioned period through their potential participation in film clubs. Therefore, the [dataset](#) also contains data on the main actors of my case studies and other actors related to them in variety of ways, such as professionally or personally. The focus is on women and their support networks, but other actors who took part in the main character's ego network are also included, such as the institutions they had ties with.

Hence, on the one hand, the analysis and publication (meaning "making public") of some of the mentioned data constitute some of the contributions of my research project, which shall be key to the social impact of the ERC project to which this thesis ascribes. My dissertation will provide digitalised and open-access data on cinema and women that might not be available at this moment, partly because of the low energies dedicated to the research topic. This is especially pressing for marginalised collectives such as women, who worked in wrongly-considered peripheric regions in the history of cinema. Consequently, the contribution at this point is scientific, but it also involves a social impact. Therefore, this dissertation abides by the European and world policies' current agenda concerning the social impact that research projects should produce through social and political engagement. This is a key point, since digitalizing policies have traditionally centralised scholarly research interests on the most historically privileged heritages.

In conclusion, I believe that using network analysis (both qualitatively and quantitatively) aligns with the analytical requirements of the two focal points of this thesis. On one hand, it accentuates the cosmopolitanism inherent in early film club history, asserting Ibero-America's role in the emergence of cultural modernity. On the other hand, it aids in reconstructing the collaborative efforts undertaken by white, upper-class women in the early 20th century to garner recognition within the transnational cultural landscape of the era. In this regard, I posit that women's involvement in film clubs represented another avenue for them to occupy public space, particularly those endeavouring to carve out a niche within the nascent, yet to be institutionalised, cinema field of the 1920s and 1930s in Ibero-America. Scrutinising their specific practices and strategies for gaining social recognition allows us to articulate a 'women's film culture', nurtured around the ideals and efforts of figures I explore in this research. The publication of names of those who, from relative obscurity, followed the more prominent figures serves as an endeavour to inspire future research (refer to Chapter 4.2).

Ultimately, this work contributes to the collective endeavour of rewriting cinema history by incorporating the contributions of countless women previously rendered invisible. It simultaneously represents an initial exploration into the intersection of film club movements and women, a topic largely overlooked by film historians. I hope this serves as an inaugural step, fostering the eventual inclusion of less privileged profiles in a narrative still awaiting comprehensive documentation.

1.1.4 Specific research objectives related to specific research questions

In this section, I will list my five thesis objectives in order of relevance. Each objective is linked to one main research question.

First research objective:

1. To analyse the role that a selection of Ibero-American film clubs and the women who led them played in the emergence of Ibero-American film cultures during the first half of the twentieth century.

Regarding this leading objective, the **main research question** is: What role did women play in the emergence of Ibero-American film cultures during the first half of the twentieth century?

To do so, I will focus on the following sources and dimensions of analysis:

- a) Film club participants (founders, committees, audiences, etc.)
- b) Film club's programming
- c) Practices developed by film club participants, such as writing in journals, or organising discussions or lectures regarding a screening, among others
- d) Institutions such as artistic groups involved and female organisations related to the selected film clubs

In relation to film club participants, I will address the following **specific questions**:

a.1 Which role did women play in the selected film clubs? Who were the founders and associates in the selected film clubs? Who were the audiences of film sessions? Which were the sociocultural profiles of the audiences?

In relation to film programming in film clubs, I propose the following **specific questions**:

b.1 Was there a preference for any artistic trend or genre? By examining the circulation of movies and their agents involved, was there a preference for certain aesthetics or production countries?

In relation to practices developed by film clubs, I will answer the following **specific questions**:

c.1 Did the participants of film clubs make amateur films? Did film clubs organise filmmaking courses? Which practices did they carry out before, during, and after the screenings (such as organising discussions or presentations, writing in journals, etc.)?

Regarding the institutions and organisations related to the selected film clubs, I aim to answer the following **specific questions**:

d.1 What was the relationship among film clubs and institutions aimed at and governed by women? Which types of institutions/organisations had relationships with the selected film clubs? Where did they organise activities, meet, and screen (commercial venues or other kind of venues)? Which institutions or organisations loaned the film prints to the selected film clubs?

Second research objective:

2. To unearth the role of Ibero-American women cultural mediators¹¹ in the development of the aesthetic experiences of modernity through film clubs. On the one hand, I will contribute to reviewing European cultural history, including the role of non-European women in the construction of modernity. On the other hand, I will stress the role of women as cultural mediators in the Ibero-American and transnational cinema history through their participation in film clubs.

In relation to the second objective, my **specific questions** are the following:

2.1. How did women who took part in the first Ibero-American film clubs contribute to the Western and Westernised Cultural History? Which activities in the cultural field did they engage in? Which artistic disciplines did they work on? How did they contribute to the emergence of artistic modernity?

2.2. Who founded, organised, and participated in Ibero-American film clubs during the first half of the twentieth century? What were their cultural and socio-biographical profiles? How did they establish their international relations in terms of friendships, traveling, living, languages, and cultural practices?

Third research objective:

3. To trace the networks established between film clubs and their actors involved during the first wave of Ibero-American film clubs as fluid spaces in Ibero-America. This will allow me to firstly analyse the circulation of agents and objects (films and other exchanged objects, as per Latour) among different film clubs based in Ibero-America during the studied period¹² and subsequently complete this first analysis by comparing the studied film clubs (case studies).

My **specific question** in terms of this third objective is the following:

3.1 Which was the role played by each film club within the network of the first wave of film clubs in Ibero-America?

3.2 Which are the factors that place each fluid space (node) and mediator in its position within the built network? How were these networks built in terms of clusters (and their specificities), circulating objects and mediators (and their features), duration of activities (and periods of inactivity), and intensity of activities (depending on each node and its relations), etc.?

Fourth research objective:

4. To propose some theoretical and methodological insights to address the specificities of women and their relationship with film clubs in the so-called “peripheries” throughout the development of modernity. The proposed methodology aims to develop film theory by analysing film clubs through perspectives that have not yet received adequate consideration (decolonial studies, gender studies, new cinema history, social network analysis, transnational perspectives, critical sociology, etc.).

¹¹ Following the definition by Diana Roig-Sanz and Reine Meylaerts (2018).

¹² The previously mentioned film clubs, which I traced while doing field research and visiting archives to approach the selected case studies.

Within this framework, my **specific questions** related to this fourth objective are the following:

4.1 Which research methods can we use to address the contribution of women in film clubs and so in the emergence of film cultures in Ibero-America and in the global history of cinema? Which strategies can we follow as researchers with a gender perspective to work with the lack of data related to the objects of study, namely women and film clubs?

Finally, this research proposes a fifth objective that will only be addressed after completing the previous ones.

Fifth research objective:

5. To humbly contribute to the digitalization of a [dataset](#) related to my research object (on film clubs of the first wave and on women who took part in the first Ibero-American film clubs and the networks they managed to create) in order to promote accessibility and open access. This purpose responds to the lack of digitalization in my field as well as to the still lacking research that scholars are conducting on film clubs and women.

1.1.5 Research question and main scientific goals

This dissertation project proposes the following research question: which was the role played by women in the first Ibero-American film clubs in the emergence of multiple film cultures in Ibero-America? This research question pays special attention to the internationalisation of film clubs and the transnational networks of actors who took part in film clubs as key features defining the emergence of film cultures. In this respect, the project traces multiple international networks by following the exchanges among Ibero-American film clubs and the exchanges among women who participated in film clubs during the first half of the twentieth century.

This thesis's main objective is to study the role of women in Ibero-America's first film clubs and the role these organisations played in the emergence of multiple film cultures that would later develop and become institutionalised in Ibero-America. To this end, I will take the following steps: 1) to trace the transnational networks of Ibero-American film clubs according to their exchanges and understand their roles and capacities for internationalisation, and 2) analyse a select number of case studies on film clubs led or managed by women mediators. These women are interesting in light of i) their centrality within the cultural network, that is, their function and position within a transnational network of women of the cultural field; ii) the relevance of their activity in the construction of one or several film cultures (Navitski and Poppe 2017) in Ibero-America, taking into account their feminist practices and discourses within the artistic, social, and political field; and iii) their importance in the institutionalisation process of cinema in the first half of the twentieth century, considering their relation to other local, regional, and international institutions, such as cultural institutions, political parties, universities, production companies, cultural journals, exhibition venues, etc.

In this regard, this doctoral thesis relies on the hypothesis that the first wave of film clubs played a crucial role in the emergence of multiple film cultures in Ibero-America,

as well as at a global level, and women played a key role in this process. In addition to the working hypothesis, this project relies on the idea that the networks (shaped by exchanges and cultural transfers, as defined by Michel Espagne (2013)) established by film clubs contributed to building modernism not only in Ibero-America but also in Europe, since the multiple film cultures that emerged locally and regionally circulated transnationally, hence causing an effect at a global level.

1.1.6 Structure of this thesis

This dissertation is structured into four primary sections. Initially (Part I), I delineate the research object and its inherent interest. Subsequently, I address the objectives and research questions associated therewith. Following this, I elucidate the scientific aim of the project and its defining primary question. The aforementioned sections are positioned preceding this abstract. Thereafter, I proceed to outline the principal hypotheses, theoretical perspectives to be employed, the state of the art concerning my subject of study, and the methodologies utilised in conducting this investigation. Notably, gender and relational perspectives, specifically the Actor-Network Theory, hold paramount significance in this section, serving as the foundational frameworks for this research. Concurrently, the state of the art predominantly focuses on New Cinema History proposals and recent transnational approaches to film history. As elucidated subsequently in the concluding segment of this initial section, I incorporate quantitative methods to complement my qualitative research endeavours.

In the subsequent section (Part II), I formulate my theoretical proposition centred on women and film clubs. Initially, I provide a succinct overview of the historiography pertaining to first wave of film clubs in the Western world, subsequently narrowing the focus to the historiography of the inaugural film club movement in Ibero-America. I subsequently present a chronological delineation spanning the emergence, decline, and reemergence of Ibero-American film clubs between 1909 and 1960. This chronology is predicated upon data pertaining to Ibero-American film clubs collated from the aforementioned [dataset](#). Notably, this research endeavour represents a pioneering effort concerning film club studies. Consistent with the relational perspective adopted, I employ this data to identify interrelations between film clubs engendered by exchanges among affiliated members, encompassing the exchange of ideas, publications, or film copies, among other interactions. Concluding this section, I focus specifically on women and film clubs, subsequently proposing methodological strategies and conceptual frameworks to accentuate the contributions of women to the film club phenomenon and, by extension, the broader cinema history.

The third section (Part III) of this dissertation comprises three case studies. Each chapter within this section predominantly examines a film club—selected based on its cultural and transnational cinematic historical significance—alongside other cognate film clubs or cinematic societies facilitating its elucidation. Given the primary objective to trace women's contributions to the first Ibero-American film clubs, a significant portion of chapters devoted to my case studies delves into comprehensive investigations of the mediators who founded, organised, or actively participated in the selected film club.

Structurally, chapters within this tertiary section are organised as follows: initially, I contextualise the focal film club within its geographical and cultural milieu, delineating its members, associated practices, and pivotal institutions facilitating comprehension, including other film clubs. Subsequently, I present a concise profile of the mediator affiliated with this film club, analysing her engagement within the contemporary cinematic milieu, inclusive of her role within the film club realm. Additionally, I explore her personal and professional relationships within the film milieu, with particular emphasis on collaborations with fellow women and her perspectives and practices concerning the contemporaneous feminist movement. Concluding each chapter, I dedicate a section to analyse the visualisations of ego-networks constructed around the focal mediator, derived from her interactions within the cinema and cultural milieu.

The fourth section is bifurcated into two primary components. Initially, I undertake a comparative analysis of the profiles of the three mediators from my case studies, aiming to discern salient characteristics pertinent to the investigated context. Subsequently, I execute an analysis utilising data from my case studies, and the method proposed in section 1.5.5. I posit that these chapters within the fourth section are mutually complementary, providing avenues to facilitate subsequent research endeavours on this topic.

In the concluding remarks, I delineate the salient attributes of the proposed case studies, particularly emphasising the internationalisation of mediators and film clubs, and their consequential impact on cinema history. The ultimate comparative analysis among the case studies represents a concerted endeavour to position these film clubs, their organisational paradigms, and these women, alongside their survival strategies, as pivotal components within a broader global cinematic history.

1.2 Hypotheses

This research project proposes the following hypotheses:

1. That white privileged women played a significant role in the emergence of the first wave of Ibero-American film clubs, and that their involvement precipitated what could be termed a 'women's film culture'. Women not only exhibited substantial participation as audiences in commercial cinemas, as some scholars have demonstrated, but they also engaged in alternative exhibition circuits, such as film clubs. Furthermore, their involvement extended beyond mere audience participation; they spearheaded clubs, orchestrated screenings, procured films, advocated for screenings, and actively engaged in ensuing discussions. The forthcoming case studies aim to substantiate this participation, which has, thus far, been overlooked by film historians. Such involvement suggests that women also contributed to the genesis of film theory and historiography, emanating from the collective engagements within film clubs. The conspicuous absence of women's names in early film club reports and subsequent theoretical texts authored by film club members does not signify a dearth of female participation but rather underscores the paucity of available data and research on this matter. Frequently, this data void reflects the disparity between women's limited

engagement in public spheres and their extensive activities within private realms. One plausible approach to redress this lacuna might entail retracing support networks among women within private domains, thereby accentuating their involvement in the transnational film and cultural landscape via cultural exchanges.

2. That film clubs were a major factor for the emergence of multiple film cultures at different scales: locally, nationally, regionally (such as Rio de la Plata, Iberian Península, etc), and globally. Ibero-American film clubs helped challenging this idea of a unique French/European film culture. Instead, we may find multiple film cultures that were expressed through their social practices, the discourses they created regarding moving images, and the relations they established with institutions managing or interested in the circulation, production, exhibition, and preservation of films. For example, as I will demonstrate, not all early film clubs had the primary objective of legitimising cinema as art; rather, they had political and educational objectives. Thus, film clubs had an effect at a local level because they were (and still are) part of the social fabric. On the one hand, film clubs were (and are) engaged in their own cultural ecosystems. On the other hand, due to its popular origins, cinema became widespread in numerous social sectors. At the regional level, film clubs also participated in the emergence of film cultures, since moving images succeeded in presenting a sense of community identification. Indeed, the cultural communities created around film clubs boosted film cultures, too.¹³ At the national level, film clubs would encourage the creation of national film cultures. Around the '30s, states used cinema as a political weapon in order to create, protect, and preserve the history and memory of their nations, cultures, and traditions, often depending on their political interests. Furthermore, as mentioned above, one trend stands out in the period: some film clubs were owned by the State or had a very close relation to it. For instance, at least one of my proposed case studies (Cine club mexicano) had direct links to the governments of the country where it was based. Likewise, Latin American socialist projects used cinema as an educational tool for democratizing culture. This is also the case among some film clubs of the period that were aligned with a socialist ideology (such as the same Cine club mexicano).

Finally, at a global scale, these film cultures were not only informed by national, regional, and local relations, but they were always the result of transnational exchanges. This is the reason why the international relations that film clubs maintained (inside or outside Ibero- America), as well as their agents involved (women and men performing as cultural mediators), are relevant to my research.¹⁴ The fact of sharing movies and other material and immaterial objects, such as ideas can be conceptually analysed as cultural transfers (Espagne 2013)

¹³ The impact that film clubs had at the regional level can be understood through our definition of the regional as a scale of union for the various actors who participated in the local. The regional emerges from an amassment of relationships at the local level, thus amplifying the scale of the local. I understand that cultural communities may have come together around film clubs and created a regional network of film clubs as a consequence of many possible factors, such as film exchanges and audience participation.

¹⁴ It is also important to consider the fact that the relations film clubs had with production, distribution, and exhibition companies used to be international.

promoted by film club participants. These cultural transfers and their agents involved shaped the construction of these places' cultural identities. Indeed, cultural identities were created thanks to the exchange of local and international trends, as we see in the example of Surrealist art or Neorealist cinema in Latin America or the importance of Latin American cultural trends for Nouvelle Vague members. Those exchanges were reinforced by an increasing cosmopolitanism (P. L. Horta, Appiah, and Robbins 2017) embraced by artists and intellectuals during the first half of the twentieth century. Following Mignolo's thoughts in *The Many Faces of Cosmopolis: Border Thinking and Critical Cosmopolitanism*, Rielle Navitski draws attention to:

[...] top-down processes of globalization, which he defines as "a set of designs to manage the world," [and] to cosmopolitanism, which he characterises as "a set of projects toward planetary conviviality" that can be used to either support or critique "global designs" ranging from nineteenth-century imperialism to present-day neoliberalism. [...] In insisting on the links between cosmopolitanism, colonialism, and capitalist modernity, Mignolo provides a productive point of departure for rereading Latin American film culture and examining how the dynamics of globalization "from above" made possible new forms of social experience that held emancipatory potential, even as they intersected with global hierarchies of power and hegemonic processes of state formation (2017, 4).

3. That Ibero-American film clubs succeeded in establishing transnational networks that helped revitalize European culture, but also their local milieus (Roig-Sanz 2018). In this respect, I stand for the hypothesis that Ibero-American cultural mediators who participated in film clubs played a prominent role in the expansion and institutionalisation of cinema, as did their European counterparts. And I also give a relevant role to women. Internationalisation and transnational exchanges between them are key to understand the development of modernity. Cultural modernity was not a monolithic trend created by a group of colleagues with similar interests, living in the same place, and with similar and complementary ideas. Instead, cultural modernity involved a mix of backgrounds, sensitivities, and responses to historical, economic, and technological dispositions that merged at one point, leading to the blossoming of something new and transgressive in the history of art.

Film clubs were essential to the development of modernity, as film clubs were places for the socialization of intellectuals (but not only). In this respect, women's engagement and participation in cinema is significant and their occupation of the public sphere was modern in itself. Mediators developed multiple cultural activities and had inspiring and often semi-professional relationships inside and outside their home country. Those transnational relations encouraged film exchange and the circulation of other actors (such as ideas or human actors) among film clubs from different cities, countries, and regions. Linked to the exchange of these mediators and movies, their practices, ideas, aesthetics and/or film genres also circulated. More so, the elements that circulated from one place to another were, in their final exchange, in fact shaped by prior circulations, if we recall the notion of cultural transfer, as it has been pointed out earlier.

In short, the examination of Ibero-American film clubs and their networks can highlight, on the one hand, the role played by Ibero-America in the spread of multiple film cultures and, more specifically, the role played by women in the expansion of world cinema.¹⁵ This research will also yield significant results in terms of trends, practices, and institutions that could emerge at a global level as a result of the dialectic movement between local, national, regional, and global scales in which film clubs developed.

1.3 Theoretical Perspectives

This thesis is grounded on the following general and specific theoretical approaches: 1) an entangled and transnational history; 2) a gender approach; 3) a relational perspective based on Actor Network Theory (ANT); and 4) relevant concepts related to cultural transfer and cultural mediation such as that of cultural mediator.

To do so, I will focus on two types of actors (Latour): 1) objects and 2) cultural mediators (Roig-Sanz and Meylaerts 2018). Essentially, my goal is to trace the exchanges among film clubs and women involved in them in order to create a network. I use the term fluid spaces (Mol and Law 1994) to conceptualise the position that film clubs hold within the network, allowing me to consider several initiatives—with varying degrees of stabilization—in the network, instead of adopting a single, standard position for all film clubs. Following the principles of entangled history (*histoire croisée*) (Werner and Zimmermann 2004; 2006), this network will be understood as an assembly of features that is greater than the sum of its parts, being composed of several levels of exchange (local, regional, national, and global), with which we may analyse the network comparatively. Likewise, this perspective will also allow me to study the network's parts—namely, the actors who compose it—following the tenets of cultural transfer (Espagne and Werner 1988; Espagne 2013), which assume that objects are transformed through movement.

1.3.1 Data Feminism and Gender perspectives in Cultural History

This section does not aim at presenting an overview of all theories and approaches that have emerged in relation to gender across many disciplines. The main goal is to present the specific references that have constituted the basis of my gender approach, as well as some relevant concepts that are also outlined in the next section (chapter 2.4), in the chapter entitled “women and film clubs”.

Within this framework, the gender approach is permeated by concepts and theories that come from a diversity of fields and disciplines, from Science and Technology Studies

¹⁵ To sum up the definition, in her preface to *World cinema, transnational perspectives*, Nataša Đurovičová writes: “[...] on this account, the inherently circulatory character of world cinema needs to be pursued in studies of the ‘contact zones’ film can articulate [...]” (2010, 10).

(Donna Haraway and Susan Leigh Star) to Sociology (Silvia Federici and Sarah Ahmed), Anthropology (Laura Rita Segato), Philosophy (Rosi Braidotti and María Lugones), Biology (Elizabeth Grosz or Myra Hird), Media Studies (Miriam Hansen, Diana Anselmo or Amelie Hastie) and the Arts (Gloria Anzaldúa). The gender perspective I am applying here is nourished by all the thoughts and theories proposed by these scholars. In some cases, their concepts and reflections spread all over my research, such as in the case of intersectionality (Lugones or Anzaldúa), the relational perspective (Haraway) or data feminism (D'Ignazio and Klein). In other cases, only some ideas are applied to better understand a specific framework or phenomena (Hansen, Anselmo, Leigh Star or Hastie).

As it has been already stated, a key goal of this research is to approach the object of my study from a decentralised perspective. Focusing on women and on film clubs implies a decentralised approach to film history, but the fact of dealing with Ibero-America as a framework is also a way to decentralise film and cultural history. Laura Rita Segato's, María Lugones' and Gloria Anzaldúa's works helped me understanding the intersection between gender and race. Despite the fact that all the women I analyse in this thesis were white and privileged, two of them were aware of these issues and reflected upon the living conditions of indigenous women (Victoria Ocampo and Lola Álvarez Bravo). The third woman I am examining in this research worked arduously for the education and acculturation of women from all classes and conditions (María Luz Morales). Specially Lola Álvarez Bravo, who took pictures of indigenous women to denounce their unprivileged situations. Victoria Ocampo also reflected so much on her condition as a Latin American woman, and how she was seen and treated by others because of that condition. These reflections led her to recognise publicly her indigenous Guaraní descendants. María Luz Morales was very aware of the differences in the living conditions women from different socio-cultural *milieus* had, and how it affected their possibilities in the labour market.

Working with intersectionality made me more sensitive and aware of how inequalities affected the cultural field, for example marginalizing the work of the non-privileged, and making public and influential the work of the privileged, as was the case of the women I worked with in my case studies. Following this idea, I reflected on how the extractivism logic works today as did also in the past, and how the institutions with their practices relegate to the oblivion the work done by the non-privileged (Segato 2013; 2018). The mechanisms imposed by bureaucracy (Lugones 2007; 2014) also affect the construction of memory and so the documentation and data we can find in archives and other public (and private) sources. The lack of data this research suffers from is with no doubt related to these mechanisms of exclusion, since data from non-privileged women who attended film clubs it's been, until now, impossible to find. The methodological section of this thesis also reflects on these issues and offers an explanation for the limited and types of data that were used for this research. In this respect, I agree with Laura Rita Segato on the idea that the knowledge and cultural products emanating by the feminized and racialized bodies have less value in our capitalist system, so they can be bought or extracted easily and for a cheapest price. These extractivist process can be understood when approaching women in broad terms. Women's work is extracted by men; racialized women's work and less-privileged women's work were not only extracted by men, but also by privileged women. This reasoning prevented me from believing that

the privileged and white women from my case studies were the only authors of the knowledge emerging in a specific context. Participation of women in film clubs was blurred from public registers and their contributions were authored by men. However, some female names were still possible to find in public register, but in no way were the names of the unprivileged women traceable. The extractivist mechanism described by Segato could be applied for my case studies.

Along the same lines, the ideas proposed by María Lugones on intersectionality complemented Segato's theories. Lugones stated that the exclusion of black women from public policies aimed at "women" are due to the narrow concept of women in Western thought, that are made for white, bourgeoisie, cis and heterosexual women. The extractivist logic was therefore complemented by a mechanism of exclusion from the public domain (narrow public policies) that could explain the limited and types of I was able to find on women taking part in the first Ibero-American film clubs.

Thus, to overcome the lack of data I have been facing with, and to distribute in a fairer way the authority of the outputs of my research (being art or intellectual works), I relied on the relational perspectives that Donna Haraway and Susan Leigh-Star put forward. By applying a network perspective to film history and to the study of multiple cultures, I was able to approach all agents as conditioned and related to others, instead of approaching them as closed entities, not affected by the environment they take part of. In this sense, I understand the emergence of the first theoretical knowledge on film clubs as collective (and not individual), meaning that the authority of this knowledge should be assigned to the network where this knowledge emerged. In the same vein, following Donna Haraway, I consider the objectivity as a result of a diversity of situated knowledges (1988), and in opposition I believe one agent can only contribute with a partial and situated knowledge on any matters.

At the same time, Susan Leigh-Star's interest in the materiality of structures was key to understanding the importance of this materiality in the building of networks and the historical role women have been playing for the reproduction and survival of the structure. The concept of "boundary objects" was also very helpful to conceptualise the circulation of films in a network.¹⁶ Understanding films as boundary objects contributes to analysing the film's meaning and aesthetic value as something that depends on the network through which the film print circulates, not just on the thing-ness of the object in itself. Therefore, boundary objects have flexible infrastructure because its meanings can be adapted to the needs of the network through which it circulates. Therefore, boundary objects has become a very fruitful concept that enable a sociological approach to artistic works without dismissing the aesthetical part that is also relevant.

Because this thesis places "women" at the core of its research, there is a need to reflect upon what we mean by referring to "women". As said above, it is crucial to state that most of the women I am referring to were white and came from up and middle class backgrounds. This also explains why they survived in the intellectual and cultural fields they were part of. It is important to refer to the multiple conditioning factors that defined them, as their situation as white and high-middle class women inevitably limited

¹⁶ Malte Hagener and I wrote a chapter using this same conceptualization in the book *Global Literary Studies: Key Concepts* (Roig-Sanz and Rotger 2022).

their social role in some aspects. On the one hand, their position was very privileged compared to other women. For example, their humanity was not questioned, as would happen with slaves in Brazil only a few decades earlier (Bento 2023). As a consequence of the disparity of conditionings that affected women from different backgrounds, it is necessary to explain what I mean when I refer to women. Because of the framework I am working with, I believe it is possible to agree with Judith Butler on the performativity of gender (1990), meaning that gender isn't a given condition, but a performative one that depends upon each one's way of talking, dressing, acting, relating to others, etcetera. Butler's idea made me wonder about the performativity of gender roles for the framework I am working on. Which behaviours did the roles of women and men shape at the Ibero-American cultural fields of the first half of the twentieth century? Was it possible to think about gender in a non-binary way? Was it useful to approach the object (film clubs) from a gender perspective? In the artistic avant-garde circles there were people who didn't define themselves as women or men. But then I found myself in a dichotomy: How to rewrite film history and the history of multiple film cultures including the contribution of women, but avoiding the term itself? Silvia Federici offers interesting thoughts for thinking about our general framework: as long as the sexual division of labour in the framework I was analysing was still powerful as it was since the emergence of capitalism, the concept "women" was still a useful category for analysis. Even though, it is key to clarify I am always referring to white privileged women. Despite the fact that Federici focuses her analysis in her *Caliban and the Witch* (2004) in a very different period from the one I am working with, her work led me realise about the importance of women's strategies to legitimise their voices and their work in the cinema field they tried to be part of. One of the features that characterised most of the women I have gathered in the team's database was their fight against the roles they were imposed for being women in the societies they were born in. It means that for all of them it existed a clear description of what a woman was, a category they often referred to and described in their works. Because of the framework where they were raised, they had the idea that women had to get married and have children as their primary role in the families they were supposed to sustain. Therefore, once they got married, they shouldn't work anymore (if they did), and they would have to prioritise the responsibilities they would have acquired once they became the "angels of the house". In one way or another, most of the women I found data on fought against this enforced role. The most important part of that fight was to avoid the reproductive labour they were aimed at. The result of that rebellion was the social rejection they suffered. But, on the contrary, thanks to the very privileged environment they were part of, that rejection would boost their productivity in the artistic and cultural fields. In this sense, they could occupy social positions that were new for women, thanks to the freedom they got (literally free time among others).

As a conclusion for the dichotomy between poststructuralist ideas on the dissolution of the category of "women" in favour of more flexible categories of analysis, such as the performativity of gender roles, and the fluidity of bodies and sexualities, I consider using the term "women" is useful for approaching my context. As I have mentioned, the women I have data on defined themselves in relation to their social established roles and the social rights they legally had. The comparison among Western men and Western women is only useful as long as we use it to describe the differences and therefore the potentialities of these differences, but the comparison proves useless as long as we

measure or assess the conditions of men and women expecting equal results, or comparable results. It's needless to say that women's public roles cannot be tackled by using the same methods that we may apply to analyse the contribution of men in the same context. While the contribution of men was socially recognised and has been historically acclaimed according to the relevance of their works in the public sphere, women didn't have the same recognition and access to the public sphere. Therefore, if women's contributions were to be compared to their male counterparts using the same tools to measure them, women would always be seen as less relevant to the history of culture, as less gifted.

Thus, it's fundamental to consider differences among men's and women's experiences in order to propose a fair and ethical approach when exploring women in history.¹⁷ Even if binarism, from my point of view, is limited as a way of thinking, for the research I am conducting here I believe that it's relevant to critically describe the data I have access to in terms of comparison and also in order to approach historiography critically. Only by considering the differences between the data we can gather about men -as a universal model used by history to build universal methods of analysis- and the data we are able to gather on women and non-binary people, we can start our analysis in a fairer and more ethical way. However, the analysis must take into account the description of the object as unique and original, trying to avoid the mental structures that a comparison establishes in advance. For an example of the impact these ideas have in my research, there is the relevant role private spheres have had in my case studies.¹⁸ A key process that I will pinpoint repeatedly in all my case studies is the mediating role white privileged women played between public and private spheres, meaning that the established roles that this profile of women were supposed to accomplish in their private lives would frequently strongly affect their professional careers. White privileged women who ended up being socially influent figures in the cultural fields of their contexts often worked with their friends, and mixed private and public life. They also had a network of support integrated by many women who were crucial during their lifetime, because they shared views, because they worked together, or because they helped each other.¹⁹ These relationships must be analysed and considered for approaching these women, since it is obvious, by reading their private correspondence and following their careers and collaborations, that these relationships with other women were very relevant to

¹⁷ As Donna Haraway and Judith Butler, I believe sex -considered by some feminisms as related to biology- and gender -considered a cultural construct- cannot be dissociated from gender and are one and the same. As Joan Wallach stated, "it is gender that produces meanings for sex and sexual difference, not sex that determines the meanings of gender." (2010, 13) With Haraway and ANT scholars I consider the division among culture and nature is no longer useful for approaching human, social or biological sciences.

¹⁸ Focusing on networks of support, collaboration and solidarity among women is a way to explore the importance of care and gender awareness in my case studies.

¹⁹ I am not saying that men didn't have a network of support around them, or that they didn't mix private and public life. But, as we will see, the reflection upon their gender condition and their social established roles it's something that permeated all the work done by white privileged women in different ways. It also influenced the topics they would talk about, the type of writings, their relationships they established and the institutions they were part of, as students, as affiliated, or as founders. For example, being the only woman in the organisingcommittee of film clubs is something that need further consideration when approaching these womens' lives. In the same vein, their education was also conditioned by their gender roles, like their political commitment was often shaped by the social limitations they also experienced as women during their whole life.

them.²⁰ In the same vein, the difficulties these women faced when trying to maintain their positions in the cultural field were often shared with other women that, eventually, would make it easier for them to pursue their careers. The gender awareness was key for taking decisions in their personal domains and for arranging collaborations, selecting topics to write about in some magazines, or in their ways of writing, as I will show later all the three case studies.

1.3.1.1 Data Feminism: archives and databases

At this stage, I would like to briefly refer to the challenges of working with data and archives in relation to women. In this respect, I follow Catherine D'Ignazio and Lauren Klein (2020) to discuss issues related to accessibility and representation. Undoubtedly, the ways archives and cultural assets are organised—as well as the ways of accessing them—play relevant roles in research on women.

a) Representativity

Memory is preserved through archives. The same patriarchal policies that organise society also organise institutions and what they preserve. That is, policies of memory emerge, and they decide what will be preserved, and this is relevant to societal memory.

According to Laura Rita Segato (2013), wealth is extracted from racialized and feminized bodies. The logic of extraction makes it so that those considered the authors of what is produced and called art or philosophy will usually be men. And not only that, the patriarchal and Cartesian model's bureaucratization and protocol management is what determines the ways that memory and cultural assets are preserved—as well as the qualities defining a piece of art, or which aspects of our culture are considered assets. That is, this logic not only determines what is preserved, but how. The problem is that the models guiding how materials in an archive should be preserved are completely biased—their selection is not neutral, but political.

To clarify these models, as María Lugones (2014) notes in her conception of intersectionality, the concept of the women in western thought refers to a white, bourgeoisie, cis, and heterosexual woman. Meanwhile, the concept of Black, as a model, refers to a Black, bourgeois, cis, and heterosexual man. As Lugones notes, most women in the world would not be represented in the term "woman" or "Black" but would require an intersection of gender and ethnicity in order to be included. Specifically, one

²⁰ To tackle this issue, I have added a section on each case study in which I propose an analysis of the ego-network of each of the women I am working on, paying special attention to other women they were surrounded by. Furthermore, using the data I have gathered to build each ego-network and applying Social Network Analysis tools, I aim at proposing a list on the most relevant women for the women around whom each ego-network is build. It means that we would be able to visualize and get to know the names and profiles of the women who were key for the support network in which the main women for each case studies relied.

must say "Black woman" to include Black women in the categories established by institutions when creating public policy, for instance.

In this sense, when working with data, this has a direct impact in the available models and in the ways we train algorithms and thus classify and produce software. The fact that most data scientists are still white, university-educated people, cis, and heterosexual generates the same effect as the fact that most bureaucrats—regardless of the country in which they operate—emanate from the high and bourgeois class. Thus, most of the issues that the bureaucracy focuses on will be issues of their own concern. As we know, women data scientists are scarce; the same holds true for racialized people. Likewise, the model that these data scientists use to train their algorithms reflects the scientists themselves. Meanwhile, anything that does not fit their model, physiognomy, concerns, and way of seeing the world or solving problems will be deemed strange, or even criminalized.

Gloria Anzaldúa (2009), another highly recognised feminist, writes about border feminism (feminism from the borders), and explains these models very clearly. She showcases what the concepts we use in western societies really mean. She notes that, when she's introduced in a public event, she's always presented as a feminist, Chicana, lesbian, writer. She questions why all of these adjectives precede the word "writer," as if the fact that she is a feminist, Chicana, and lesbian has to be specified when referring to her writing. As if her writing addressed a lesbian, Chicana, feminist community alone. Meanwhile, a white woman is never introduced as a "white writer" —because when we think of a woman writer, we picture a white writer. So, anything that strays from this model then has to be labelled, specified, and, thus, minoritised. Therefore, the matter of representativity in data and archives. Certain mechanisms within the patriarchal system that has kept and preserved the documents we may find in the archive—as well as the artworks kept in libraries,—represent the interests of the patriarchal system itself. Thus, when we compile data from any archive or cultural institution, we cannot forget that the data will not be representative but will prioritise the most privileged social groups. Only dissident archives built against the canon of fashion and trends can balance out these unequal representations. Sometimes, we might use positive discrimination, a strategy to reverse inequalities, if we seek to include the gender perspective in our research.

To sum up, to speak about representativity in data we must keep in mind cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity, etc., while paying special attention to minoritised groups. When it comes to representativity, we must look back to our models. When we know who gathered the data and how, and thus the data's biases, then we can know what was left out. Yet it is also important to understand the universe we are working with. As we know, the data do not represent the totality of what exists (especially when it comes to the cultural field). We must therefore understand the entire universe of what we want to analyse. Then, of that totality, we can know what part we have data on for our analysis.

b) Accessibility and Digitalization

One of the first issues any scholar will face when working with data is the problem of digitalization. The digitalization of sources is disparate across regions, topics, cultures, ethnicities, etc. Historical magazines have not been digitized to the same degree in Spain, Mexico, Argentina or Bolivia. Digitalization levels depend on the budgets of the entities possessing the sources. Thus, when it comes to public sources or the archives of libraries and universities, digitalization levels will depend on their abilities to invest in digitalization as well as on their policies. One common problem is the lack of a digitalization budget within public institutions.

c) Data owners

Another very relevant issue in terms of data, accessibility, and representativity is who owns the data. This is important because it determines access as well as the way in which the data are stored. The procedure through which data is stored refers to how the data is standardized and cleaned. This standardization process is necessarily limiting and can lead to invisibilization. Who owns the data will determine access to it. There is a generalized trend of buying and preserving data. Institutions with enough budget to do so are the ones buying up data. And as usual, they buy the data from those who lack the funds to preserve it. In this sense, we may find a plethora of US institutions digitizing and preserving historical material from Latin America. These initiatives seem to be beneficial for the research community or for the preservation of cultural heritage. However, from an ethical perspective, I would like to highlight that this constitutes value extractivism. Materials that were once in their place of creation are now being stored in databases that one must pay to access. This is modern colonialism, or neocolonialism. Accessing materials and archives will no longer depend on how close we are to them, but on our purchasing power.

In terms of social distribution and cultural policies, storing data in a national archive versus a private institution are not the same thing, as access and preservation will differ. At the same time, who stores the data will also influence the data's prestige. More often than not, access to a national archive is free, while access to private archives can be toilsome, impossible, or require payment. Meanwhile, national archives tend to have fewer funds for the preservation of their materials, meaning that many materials might be in a state of deterioration.

A national archive allegedly represents a culture, a history of a people, etc. Thus, having a space within the archive—as a historical figure—implies that one is part of official history. As we know, this is not often the case of the histories of women, whose preservation sometimes depends on private initiatives and small, militant groups who are aware of social inequalities. When it comes to standardization, the same thing happens as in the models I referred to before—which decide what is worth keeping as a part of history and what is discarded. Certain guidelines for the standardization and systematization of data are established based on hegemonic objects. The most represented majority will determine how the data will be standardized. Whatever does not fit within this standardized model is left out. Once again, our patterns of standardization reinforce inequality and social hierarchies. For example, library databases in Spain do not include a label that would tell us whether a text's author is a

man or woman. This is a problem because, since most of the preserved books are by men, it is then assumed that all authors are men. Unless a woman writer is highly recognised or has a recognizably female name, the author is deemed a man. If a name is neutral or in a foreign language, the author is deemed a man. Even more worrisome, as we know, women's participation in public (rather than private) cultural spheres has been historically limited. One publication strategy that women took on was the use of pen names. These names were of course male, as a way to secure publication. Thus, lacking a category to determine a writer's gender can be a problem when conducting historical research. As noted, the reason why this category does not exist is because the people who decided to create data-preservation standards did not think it necessary to know whether or not a writer is a woman.

d) Who has gathered these data and how

We should keep in mind the biases that have affected the gathering of data. The person who gathers the data should be an expert in the field so that she may consider the specificities of such data. If the person in charge of gathering data lacks a gender perspective, the person will not ask about issues that specifically affect women, black women or working woman. If we, as researchers, know who gathered the data, we will at least get an idea of the data's potential biases. Thus, it is important for us to credit the persons who gathered the data. Too often, students and unsalaried people are paid to gather data per service contract, and these people might not be specialists. Normally, under these circumstances, the name of the person who gathered the data does not even appear. In this sense, there is a twofold problem of ethics and bias. We have already addressed bias, but beyond that, failing to credit the person who gathered the data is a way of invisibilizing labor.

In this sense, it would also be important for us to understand the circumstances in which the data were gathered. Evidently, if the data were gathered and worked on across a long stretch of time and then checked, that would be vastly different from data that were gathered quickly and not reviewed. It would also be good to know if the people gathering the data were hired or volunteers, as well as whether this data was gathered for a project of their own. All of these factors affect the quality of the data. This is why we must consider them and make them explicit.

e) Ethics and privacy

Before working with the data, we should know what the data's situation is—that is, whether they can be legally published and whether or not this data is sensitive. The law limits the dissemination and publication of data that might affect people's honor or privacy. From a more theoretical perspective, being ethical and responsible when working with data means that we must be self-critical and transparent. We must make the biases in our data and analyses explicit while clarifying our position of enunciation. I believe that we need to be transparent and make our standpoints explicit so that the people reading our work can understand the biases that our publications probably suffer from. This is especially important when working with data. It is almost impossible to trace the origin of data and the way they have been cleaned, standardized, stored,

processed, and more, from the product of our work alone—which is usually published in the form of an article.

As Donna Haraway states, the ever-so-valued objectivity of those who work in the hard sciences—like physics and mathematics—cannot be understood from a single perspective. Rather, this objectivity is the result of an amalgamation of partial knowledges. Donna Haraway argues that all knowledge is partial and therefore must be understood as situated (1988). This means that all knowledge is produced through a point of view, which is why it is situated: it emanates from the situation of the person producing this knowledge. The closest thing we have to this ever-sought-after objectivity is nothing more than an amalgamation of situated knowledges.

When we work with data, we must assume an ethical position that requires transparency while reviewing the data's origin and privacy. Likewise, we must make our own positions explicit: our privileges but also the biases that these privileges imply. If possible, we should attempt to overcome our biases' limitations in order to help future researchers push our research beyond our own findings. This itself is an exercise in humility and honesty.

1.3.2 Actor-Network Theory

Michel Callon, Bruno Latour, and Antoine Hennion, who followed in John Law's and Peter Lodge's footsteps, developed the Actor-Network Theory at the Centre de Sociologie de l'Innovation in the early 1980s. While I will not outline the extensive literature on ANT, the methodological principles these authors propose include several concepts that are particularly relevant to this project and can be applied to the case studies developed here. Certain texts focusing on object analysis within the cultural field—such as Emilie Gomart's and Antoine Hennion's (1999) on the musical experience—are also particularly relevant. This last trend has been associated to anthropology and ethnology, as we will observe later on.

Following the ANT approach to cultural field, our project's relational perspective will be addressed through the Actor-Network Theory. This perspective posits that the social cannot be understood as static, nor can it be analysed through fixed categories—such as class, social groups, inequality, and symbolic dimensions—as traditional sociology has done to date: as an example, we may look at Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical proposals (1979; 1992). The limitations of employing these categories through the sociological perspective are twofold: first, their use precludes the emergence of other, not-yet analysed relationships or “assemblages,” a Deleuzian and Guattarian notion (1980) used by Latour. That is, preestablished categories may serve as macro-level frameworks but obscure other possible ways of understanding and conceptualising heterogeneous assemblages that might prove more revealing, depending on the object of study. Secondly, these preestablished categories, which are understood as unique and historic causes within the development of social relations, assume that relationships are static, which would allow them to be invariably categorized under the same labels. As Bruno Latour notes, this may risk getting the *explanandum* mixed up with the *explanans* (Latour 2008, 96) to the extent that the relationship—for instance, class inequality—is

seen as an explanation for the relationship itself. Latour posits that taking class differences for granted, for example, implies that what is being explained (*explanandum*)—the relationship—is being employed as an explanation for this very phenomenon (*explanans*). Nonetheless, according to the Actor-Network Theory, the power organising groups, classes, and inequalities is the consequence of a process that needs to be analysed and historicised within each context: traced while looking local interactions, because each actor is part of a network, and categorising processes with fixed labels would fall short.

Latour's perspective counters with the idea that sociology should trace associations, while the notion of the social should be limited to tracking new associations and designing their assemblages (Latour 2005, 7). Instead of having the social be understood as a "domain of reality," or as a static structure, it is understood as "a movement, a displacement, a transformation, a translation, an enrollment" (Latour 2005, 64–65). From this perspective, there are no fixed categories that can define the social. Instead, the social is only traceable or recognizable at the movement of association, of reassembling. As such, the social is a temporary association and the result of an action and it is only visible if we follow the traces that the actors leave while they move when creating new assemblages. If we aim to address the social, we need to trace this associative action. There is no society, no social realm, and no social ties, "but there exist translations between mediators that may generate traceable associations." (Latour 2005, 108) Therefore, "any thing that does modify a state of affairs by making a difference is an actor—or, if it has no figuration yet, an actant." (Latour 2005, 71). The actors or actants that participate in the associative action (humans or not), should be treated as mediators, because they translate, distort or modify anything that go through them, they mediate the social, through them it is possible to trace the social.

To Bruno Latour, studying the social must also include non-human actors. Before Latour, objects were not yet understood as fulfilling a social function, not only due to "the definition of the social used by sociologists, but also to the very definition of actors and agencies most often chosen" (Latour 2005, 71). In other words, Latour believes that the study of associations between entities needs to consider objects, given that they constitute actors in themselves, as "any thing that does modify a state of affairs by making a difference is an actor" (Latour 2005, 71). That is, these things participate in the course of action. While objects might not be understood as the causes of an action, they may "authorise, allow, afford, encourage, permit, suggest, influence, block, render possible, forbid, and so on" (Latour 2005, 72), all of which converge in the creation of relationship networks among actors that ultimately make up the collective. Non-human actors may explain "the overarching powers of society, the huge asymmetries, the crushing exercise of power" (Latour 2005, 72).²¹ That is, they are part of the process constituting the social.

In fact, the Actor-Network Theory's principles point toward the end of the culture/nature binary, aiming to nix the idea that language and the world operate in separate spheres. Along the same lines, Gomart and Hennion (1999) subvert the idea

²¹ As we will see later on, this idea has its foundation in Michel Foucault's devices (*dispositif*) in *Surveiller et Punir: Naissance de la prison* (1993).

that music can only accomplish what we humans have attributed to it: to them, music is no mere reflection of humanity. They aim to de-totemise the object, brush off the fetishes modernity has assigned it, and turn it into something impossible to gauge that is only cognizable through human projection. Latour and Hennion (1993) would also have us stop considering objects as intangible fetishes—as art aesthetics do—and reflect upon “objects’ aims, since we cannot get rid of them like fetishes; from the sociology of art to the sociology of science: how should we accept the proliferation of mediators, to allow sociology to integrate objects, bodies, and instruments, to describe a world that is both filled with objects and humans” (Hennion and Latour 1993, 10).²² In the same text, the authors (Hennion and Latour 1993) push for being both antisociological and antifetishist, stating that we must overcome the classical dichotomy between the active and the passive, in which the object stands as the passive and the subject, as active. Indeed, Hennion and Gomart (1999) see the state of being passionate for something, like amateurs and drug addicts might be, as “making oneself passive”: to explain the agency of objects, the authors strive to conceive of modes of agency beyond the traditional. As such, they suggest the concepts “active passivity” and “passive activity.” Many years later, Hennion reflects upon this same proposal: “We wanted to extend the logic of their challenge, but by departing from the framework of action in which they were still situating themselves, in order to recognise the active role of objects and grasp other forms of agency beyond the active/passive dualism” (2016, 300).

Along these lines, the notion Hennion and Latour propose for mediator is particularly relevant when applied to objects, and is similar to Roig Sanz and Meylaerts’s (2018) definition which we will cite later on:

Objects constitute something, and above all they constitute us. The puppeteers’ puppets might surpass, surprise, and profoundly redefine the puppeteer. As such, our idea of the puppet, in which we “pull the strings,” still serves critical thinking by making its accusations more lively. Criticism understands the puppeteer’s rapport vis-a-vis the puppet as a causal relationship, like a transmission of force. Everything within the puppeteer is passed on to the puppet, creating the illusion before the public that the puppet has a life of its own—an illusion that can be a source of pleasure, but in which we must guard ourselves carefully, recalling the strings that tie the puppet to the real forces that move it and make it gesticulate. Everything is unbelievable within this illustrative, though widespread model. Why make puppets, if everything, except illusion, lies within the manipulator? Why even, “go through” the figurine? But if we view puppets as mediators, the whole explanation shifts, because then, there is no transmission of force and no mechanical causality. A mediator is neither a cause nor a consequence, not a means nor an end. It is an event subverting that which

²² “[...] que faire des objets, lorsqu’on ne peut s’en débarrasser comme fétiches; et de la sociologie de l’art à celle de la science: comment accepter la prolifération des médiateurs, pour permettre à la sociologie d’intégrer des objets, des corps, des instruments, et décrire un monde qui soit enfin à la fois rempli de choses et d’humains” (Hennion and Latour 1993, 10).

goes in and that which goes out. [...] The mediating figure's translation always modifies that which is translated (Hennion and Latour 1993, 9).²³

To ANT, objects are actors, and, like any other actor, they contribute to that with which they touch. Objects are not passive; rather, they are mediators. They mediate everything they relate to, like any other actors comprising the network of which they are a part. Our section on thing theory will turn back to this idea.

1.3.2.1 Actor-Network Theory: From Anthropology to Situated Practices

At the crux between the Actor-Network Theory and anthropology, we may find a facet of Latour's theory that has enabled me to approach my thesis's object of study in all its complexity. Considering that film clubs are defined by their practices, among other aspects, paying attention to these practices will allow me to analyse film clubs while considering the impact they had on the institutionalisation processes of the multiple film cultures that developed in Ibero-America during the first half of the twentieth century.

In Actor-Network Theory, practices may play a fundamental role, along with other devices (technical or not), such as discourses, documents, and instruments (projectors, reels, screening support, etc.). However, the *locus* in which these practices take place—namely, space and time—are also key. As such, we believe the ethnography stands as the most fitting way of approaching objects as actors in this analysis.²⁴ Bruno Latour's *We Have Never Been Modern* defines what he understands as a social phenomenon:

Yet there is an Ariadne's thread that would allow us to pass with continuity from the local to the global, from the human to the nonhuman. It is the thread of networks of practices and instruments, of documents and translations. An organisation, a market, an institution, are not supralunar objects made of a different matter from our poor local sublunar relations (Cambrosio et al. 1990). The only difference stems from the fact that they are made up of hybrids and

²³ "Les objets font quelque chose, et d'abord ils nous font. Les marionnettes du marionnettiste font quelque chose qui dépasse complètement, qui surprend, qui redéfinit profondément le marionnettiste — et pourtant l'image des marionnettes dont on "tire les ficelles" sert toujours à la pensée critique pour égayer ses dénonciations. Le rapport du marionnettiste aux marionnettes est pensé par la critique comme un rapport de causalité, comme un transport de force. Tout est dans le marionnettiste et passe dans la marionnette, créant pour le public l'illusion que la marionnette a une vie, illusion qui peut être source de plaisir, mais dont il faut se garder soigneusement, en remontant les fils qui attachent la marionnette aux forces réelles qui l'agitent et la font gesticuler. Tout est incroyable dans ce modèle explicatif, pourtant si répandu. Pourquoi faire des marionnettes, si tout est dans le manipulateur sauf l'illusion. Pourquoi "passer par" la figurine? Mais dès qu'on prend les marionnettes pour des médiateurs, toute l'explication change, parce qu'il n'y a plus de transport de force, ni de causalité mécanique. Un médiateur n'est ni cause ni conséquence, ni moyen ni fin. C'est un événement qui bouleverse ce qui rentre et ce qui sort. [...] La traduction par la figure médiatrice modifie toujours ce qui est traduit" (Hennion and Latour 1993, 9).

²⁴ As editors, Gianpaolo Baiocchi, Diana Graizbord, and Michael Rodríguez-Muñiz note that "Of course, ethnography itself is not new to ANT or science studies. To begin, even a cursory reading of early texts (Latour and Woolgar 1986; Law 1994) and more recent examples (Latour 2010a; Mol 2002) make this evidently clear," (Baiocchi, Graizbord, and Rodríguez-Muñiz 2013, 326).

have to mobilize a great number of objects for their description (Latour 1993, 121).

As such, social phenomena are understood as knots of tangled threads, coming from many, scattered places, and we have to tug on these threads in order to understand the phenomena. As such, each phenomenon emerges as a result of a unique cumulus of relationships which are produced as a result of practices that are accompanied by instruments, documents, and translations in turn. Likewise, we must note that tracing these relationships actually places us within a certain space and time (from the local to the global, and from the human to the non-human), pushing us toward the circumstances in which the action took place. Following the ANT perspective, studying these practices requires that we study all of the objects accompanying them. Meanwhile, by studying practices, we may tug on the strings of social phenomena in order to situate them and build the network that would then allow us to describe them.

In this sense, Emilie Gomart and Antoine Hennion (1999) have posited that ANT can be used to study certain aesthetic experiences, such as music, wine tasting, or drug consumption. What is interesting about their proposal is that they include the aesthetic experience within their explanation of cultural and social phenomena, in contrast to traditional, European, critical sociology and Anglo-American, empirical positivism. Instead of understanding the aesthetic experience as a Bourdieusian illusion, they give it agency: “Music does something other than what the humans gathered around it would like it to do, something other than what they have programmed. This is why they listen to it; it is not their double, nor the mirror of their vanity” (Hennion 2016, 294). This allows the experience to perform a function within the network comprised of social phenomena. And this agency is simultaneously mediated by practices. Here, these practices may be defined as the relationships that some human actors have with non-human ones, such as music, drugs, or wine. The authors describe what they believe sociology has done with art:

Nevertheless, they are somewhat limited. We want to question the way in which they avoid both the work of art itself and aesthetic experience. These are simply dismissed as stakes in a game about identity and distinction. As a result of their opposition to aesthetics –a mirror of the polar opposition between agency and structure described above– in critical sociological analysis any account of artistic experience in terms of beauty, sensation, or aesthetic feeling is considered misleading, because it presumably reflects actors’ illusions about their own beliefs. Moreover, like Durkheim’s totems [1912], art works have no effectivity of their own; they ‘do’ nothing since they are ‘nothing but’ the material production of ‘ourselves’ as a collective entity (Gomart and Hennion 1999, 228).

From the sociologists Gomart and Hennion’s point of view, beauty in art cannot be understood as a mere illusion, as Pierre Bourdieu would argue, nor as a conventional product of collective activity. On the contrary: in this text, they posit that descriptions of the aesthetic experience document the different ways in which humans and devices²⁵

²⁵ Though Gomart and Hennion use the term “device” in the Foucaultian sense, they do it optimistically, noting that “we consider ‘dispositifs’ and their constraints to be generative: they do not simply reduce

participate in that which takes place in a specific event. Furthermore, they state that artistic taste is not the product of the subject's liberty, nor of deterministic action in the structural sense that sociology, especially Bourdieusian sociology, would have us believe. Instead, they posit that in its singularity, an artistic event, such as a given concert or exhibition, "does not bring together already existing objects, subjects and social groupings –rather, this is a conjunctural event in which the relevant objects, subjects, and social groupings are co-produced [Hennion and Grenier, 1998]" (Gomart and Hennion 1999, 228). As such, the subject and her experience are actually the consequence of the subject entering a device—amateur music, for example—with this entry made possible by tactics and techniques. The subject, rather than a static thing, is what emerges from the event. "Subjectivity is not a property of human souls but of the gathering itself—provided it lasts of course." (Latour 2005, 218)

Gomart and Hennion's perspective may inform our work on film clubs, as we may approach them by analysing the sessions organised within these fluid spaces. We must also consider that, in each of these events, beyond the human, participating actors (mediators and audience), the movie theatre and devices composing the event at hand (such as chairs and drinks) also have agency. Furthermore, along with discourses, practices, and instruments, among others, the aesthetic experience also constitutes the event. As such, the event stands as the reason why certain subjectivities are configured as carriers of an aesthetic experience which, nonetheless, solely belongs to the event. The subject, object, and groupings are consequences of the event itself.

This focus is especially relevant to my research, since, most of the time, film clubs were not closed, institutionalised, or formal spaces. Instead, these fluid spaces' relevance is only measurable in terms of the activities they organised around film. As such, their importance does not lie in their fixed or closed programming, nor in their behavioural or organisational norms. Rather, each screening may be understood as a distinct event, with a host of unique actors, as well as its own agency and practices: it is in this unique grouping that they achieve their importance.

1.3.2.2 Fluid Spaces

Using the Actor-Network Theory perspective, the film clubs analysed here are understood as fluid spaces (Mol and Law 1994). The concept of fluid spaces will allow us to add further flexibility to our proposed categories. Applied to our context, this perspective implies that even though a film club may be sustained by a host of relationships among various kinds of actors, these relationships may change or disappear from one moment to another, but the film club will remain in place (Mol and Law 1994, 659). Rather than depending on a single relationship, this fluid, dynamic space is in constant transformation. In fact, ties are not always clear or well defined in these fluid spaces, which does not mean that the object (film club) will necessarily lose value: in some cases, even the actors themselves may not be well defined.

but also reveal and multiply. The generative power of 'dispositifs' depend upon their capacity to create and make use of new capacities in the persons who pass through them" (1999, 220).

For example, we may look to Cine club Mexicano, which was organised by a group of artists in Mexico City in 1931. In 1934, this film club was absorbed by the Liga de Escritores y Artistas Revolucionarios en México (the Revolutionary Writers and Artists in Mexico League, known as LEAR, 1934-1938) and went through several changes. From that moment, the film club acquired new members, while some of the former ones stayed and others left. At this moment, the film club's original goals may have shifted. Likewise, by joining a more official institution like LEAR, the relationships among collaborators changed, too. The film club's relationships to other institutions, and its degree of internationalization, also shifted. That is, while this film club's position within the film club network may have transformed in terms of audience, practices, devices, instruments, and space and time, if we consider the film club as a fluid space, we would refrain from stating that Cine club Mexicano was dissolved and recreated. Instead, we would focus on analysing its transformations in order to gauge its social functions, moment to moment. As such, Cine club Mexicano's actions, rather than the object itself, are what justify its inclusion in the film club network studied here. We understand this object of study as continuously fluid, rather than static within space and time, but also as artificial, given that it has been construed by the researcher approaching it. Indeed, what we understand as Cine club Mexicano is actually artificial and not a reality, to the extent that the researcher cannot be unfettered from the object of study. Her discourse, and the categories sustaining this discourse, is just another possible way of defining the object of study.

As such, I propose that we understand film clubs as fluid spaces defined by the relationships established among various actors. These actors cannot be equated, but are each defined by their own relationships. The actors defining these relationships are not entirely human, but also non-human, allowing us to consider the relationships among all the myriad actors who have traditionally participated in the definition of film clubs: people participating as founders, organisation members, and as part of the audience, among others; the films being screened and the devices configuring them; the institutions that provide financing, send films, receive films, and exchange films; magazines and other related cultural products; other film clubs, which are also understood as fluid spaces, etc. This list would go on if we considered the actors indirectly involved in these spaces, such as movie theatres, these spaces' legal frameworks, the government, other educational institutions, and the media.

The authors of the fluid-spaces theory have pointed toward the irreconcilable differences between spaces built by networks and the fluid space. Within the relational space, one actor's movement affects the rest. As such, the network itself is modified by each movement. In contrast, in fluid spaces, "every individual element may be superfluous" (Mol and Law 1994, 661). However, my thesis aims to reconcile both points of view by taking on analyses on various scales. As I will show in my section on transnational history, exchanges, relationships, and networks imply connectivity on various levels: local, regional, and global. As such, any analysed relationship may be compared on many levels. Likewise, the relationships between these various levels can also be compared and analysed.

Without a doubt, an individual element's transformation may affect one level and not the other. For instance, a film club participant ceasing her participation may or may not affect the film club's activities on the local level. However, her exit may have a greater

effect at the global level if she has a relationship to another actor, such as a film club participant or film critic, in another region. As such, even when the former participant's withdrawal fails to affect the film club's local practices, it might deeply affect the film club's ability to establish future international relationships. Thus, the effects of addressing multiple levels are twofold, allowing us to speak of a fluid space on the local level, while speaking of a space constructed by networks on the global level.

These layers should not be analysed hierarchically, but in terms of relativity. That is, we should not assume that the local level is inferior nor that the global level is superior. Rather, it would make more sense to think of each level as an artificial construction that has been built in order to better address the specific object of study. In some cases, it might make more sense to view a film club as part of a network, especially when tracing the exchanges among various film clubs. In other cases, when studying what defines film clubs, it might make sense to understand them as fluid spaces upon which the network may have an effect. As Mol and Law note (Mol and Law 1994, 662), fluid spaces cannot easily collapse, as they do not rely on a single, strong point to preserve their continuity: the fluid space does not rely on fixed borders. In this sense, action itself is what defines which kind of space we consider. Certain actions may require spatial movement within a grid, while other actions require a fluid space: a liquid space whose stabilization does not rely on intersections nor on actors securing its borders. Mol & Law (1994) explain this with a guerrilla-movement analogy in which there is no network to protect: rather, the actors infiltrate the spaces, or avoid them, as they move to ultimately arrive at any location. As such, we should ask ourselves whether we might consider a network of fluid spaces.

One of the ideas I posit in this project is that, when reflecting upon film clubs, we may consider a network of fluid spaces that is different from the stable-spaces network. When it comes to the space constituted by networks, the Actor-Network Theory heavily emphasises notions of stabilization among the various actors configuring these networks, believing that any actor's movement would affect the rest. In contrast, fluid spaces uphold the possibility of using relational terms to address the space composed by agents who can act independently from the rest, without affecting them. Nonetheless, there is no reason to believe they would necessarily affect the entire network.

For instance, we may look toward Malte Hagener's (2007) network of Western European film clubs. The author points toward the actors circulating among the clubs, and the exchange of films between them, as well as to the principles that marked their initiatives. In this sense, Christophe Gauthier's (1999) work also includes Parisian film clubs from the early twentieth century. As a counterpoint, we might point toward the first film clubs that burgeoned in Latin America. With some exceptions that have been widely documented, most are considered minor initiatives: One reason for this is our inability to document them, either because the archives proving their existence have been lost, or because they remain uncatalogued, which would preclude further research. Sometimes, we may find documents showing that international exchanges took place between some of these incipient film clubs and other organs. Nonetheless, conceiving of these spaces as stabilized actors within the network might not make sense, given that their relationships appear sporadic. As a consequence, many of these film clubs have been deemed unworthy of research. Clearly, the problem is that they are

being assessed using external parameters that are foreign to the circumstances in which they emerged, independently of whether this fluidity stems from idiosyncrasy or from the loss of their historic archives. As a counterpoint, deploying the fluid-space concept to understand these initiatives may help us value their historic relevance, given that their fluid specificity may contribute to our traditional understanding of film clubs.

1.3.2.3 Thing Theory

In a materialist perspective similar to ANT's when it comes to objects, my project will also consider the tenets of thing theory (Brown 2001), specifically for approaching films and analysing its circulation. Indeed, thing theory seems to have followed the principles of ANT only to take them even further.

ANT proposes that we overcome the dichotomies that have marked modernity, as Latour notes in *We Have Never Been Modern* (1993), along with the active/passive dichotomy that has traditionally been used to define the opposition between object and subject. Ultimately, ANT seeks to consider mediating objects—that is, actors with the skills needed to translate everything mediating through them, as explained above. Meanwhile, thing theory pushes the ideas in ANT by understanding the object through its materiality, beyond its condition as an object. If the thing is pure matter, then the object may be understood as a thing that carries out a specific function for humans, that is, as something useful. As such, the thing would constitute all that which is related to the entity's materiality but goes beyond its condition as an object. In this sense, thing theory strives to consider the “thingness” of objects in order to approach them in full. To perceive objects in this non-utilitarian way, we must consider their amorphousness and think of all that which escapes conceptualization, viewing them as formless, as Georges Bataille does:

Thus formless is not only an adjective having a given meaning, but a term that serves to bring things down in the world, generally requiring that each thing have its form. What it designates has no rights in any sense and gets itself squashed everywhere, like a spider or an earthworm. In fact, for academic men to be happy, the universe would have to take shape. All of philosophy has no other goal: it is a matter of giving a frock coat to what is, a mathematical frock coat. On the other hand, affirming that the universe resembles nothing and is only formless amounts to saying that the universe is something like a spider or spit (Bataille 1994, 31).²⁶

²⁶ Georges Bataille (1929) defines this completely overlooked quality of the object: the quality of that which remains formless, since it has not yet been conceptualized. “[...] informe n’est pas seulement un adjectif ayant tel sens mais un terme servant à déclasser, exigeant généralement que chaque chose ait sa forme. Ce qu’il désigne n’a ses droits dans aucun sens et se fait écraser partout comme une araignée ou un ver de terre. Il faudrait en effet, pour que les hommes académiques soient contents, que l’univers prenne forme. La philosophie entière n’a pas d’autre but: il s’agit de donner une redingote à ce qui est, une redingote mathématique. Par contre affirmer que l’univers ne ressemble a rien et n’est qu’informe revient à dire que l’univers est quelque chose comme une araignée ou un crachat.” (Bataille 1929, 382) The English translation may be found here: Allan Stoekl with Carl R. Lovitt and Donald M. Leslie Jr. *Georges*

In his foundational text, Bill Brown (2001) describes how we take this initial formlessness, this amorphousness, and subsequently turn this something into an object, an idealization, a representation, a metaphysical presence, an idol, a totem, or a fetish for humans. To approach the thing and defetishise it, as Latour and Hennion (1993) propose, we would have to consider its amorphousness to understand its totality and reality. From my perspective, this amorphousness is the same that Latour call an actant, described as an actor that has not a shape. This means that it has not been socialised yet, that is why it has no shape. The difference between Latour and Brown is that for Latour to trace and include these actants as elements that take part of the social is a must, and this is the main political objective of his theory: to open up the definition of “social” in order to leave some space to those elements that cannot be inserted in the traditional categories, such as society and nature. On the other hand, for Bill Brown, to make an object from a thing is a kind of domestication that encloses the thing in order to make it useful for human beings.

1.3.3 Cultural Transfer and Cultural Mediation

In the late 1980s, Michel Espagne and Michael Werner (1988) wrote an article on French-German intercultural relationships that proved fundamental to what we now know as cultural transfer studies. With a transnational perspective, these researchers (Espagne 2013) took on the task of studying the transmission of cultural objects from one context to the next, believing that objects are transformed and acquire new meanings through the transfer process. These works emphasise the significant roles that mediators play by enabling and participating in the mediation process. My thesis adopts this perspective but applies it to the fields of film and film club history, with the goal of identifying and granting further visibility to some of the figures that mainstream history has sidelined. To this end, I will use concepts such as cultural mediator (Meylaerts and Sanz Roig 2016; Roig-Sanz, Meylaerts, and Taylor-Batty 2016; Roig-Sanz and Meylaerts 2018), entangled history (*histoire croisée*) (Werner and Zimmermann 2004), and cultural transfer (Espagne and Werner 1988; Espagne 2013), all of which consider intercultural transfers at the transnational level.²⁷ With this approach, I aim to understand cultural mediation and transfer processes as phenomena that transgress national borders. Entangled history describes some of this perspective’s implications:

Bataille. Vision of Excess. Selected Writings, 1927-1939. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press “Formless”, p. 31.

²⁷ Espagne states that “research on transfers stems from transnational cultural historiographies. However, this cannot be boiled down to analysing the overlaps among national spaces within modern Europe” (2013, 6). [La recherche sur les transferts fait partie des historiographies culturelles transnationales. Mais elle n’est pas pour autant réduite à l’analyse des imbrications entre espaces nationaux de l’Europe moderne]. Meanwhile, in their conclusions, Meylaerts and Roig Sanz allude to the notion of the cultural mediator: “We are convinced that a transnational approach and the analysis of cultural mediators, understood here as actors shaping regional, transregional, national and transnational literatures, are a vital tool for unravelling the still unexplored implications that derive from the vast movement of people, texts, languages and translations in an interconnected world” (2018, 25).

The transnational scale provides a good illustration of this double aspect. Within a *histoire croisée* perspective, the transnational cannot simply be considered as a supplementary level of analysis to be added to the local, regional, and national levels according to a logic of a change in focus. On the contrary, it is apprehended as a level that exists in interaction with the others, producing its own logics with feedback effects upon other space-structuring logics. Far from being limited to a macroscopic reduction, the study of the transnational level reveals a network of dynamic interrelations whose components are in part defined through the links they maintain among themselves and the articulations structuring their positions (Werner and Zimmermann 2006, 43).

The assumptions of working from the transnational perspective are twofold: firstly, the transnational is understood as a mobile category that is defined in relation to other categories. This perspective is not, however, used to designate a hierarchy in which the transnational would surpass the national and precede the global. Neither is it used to suggest that the other categories are fixed: in this perspective, they are not. In fact, the entangled history perspective posits that all of these levels of analysis are the result of an historic process that requires work in order to gauge its complexity. “Whether situated—to take but a few examples—at the level of the region, the nation-state, or the civilization, none of these scales is absolutely univocal or generalizable. They are all historically constituted and situated, filled with specific content and thus are difficult to transpose to different frameworks” (Werner and Zimmermann 2006, 34). The transnational category allows us to approach the relationships established at various levels.

Secondly, to the extent that cultural phenomena may be studied beyond their circulation within national borders, we may consider that any given cultural phenomenon is not the result of a homogenous process, nor the reflection of a culture that can be encapsulated within the borders of a nation-state. Rather, all circulating cultural phenomena are the result of circulation itself. In a clear explanation of this process, Michel Espagne notes that “even when we approach the transfer between two cultural spaces, we must never consider either as homogenous or original: each is the result of prior displacements, and each has a history made of successive hybridizations” (2013, 3).²⁸ As such, cultural phenomena cannot be solely defined as functions of the places in which they appeared first. Instead, we must historicise movement and, consequently, the hybridization that composes these phenomena as a result of this circulation. This process is called cultural transfer: “Any cultural object’s passage from one context to another implies, as a consequence, the transformation of its meaning, a dynamics of semantic resignification that we cannot recognise plainly unless we consider the historic vectors of its passage” (Espagne 2013, 1).²⁹

²⁸ “Même lorsqu’on aborde un transfert entre deux espaces culturels, on ne peut en aucune manière les considérer chacun comme homogènes et originels: chacun est lui-même le résultat de déplacements antérieurs; chacun a une histoire faite d’hybridations successives” (Espagne 2013, 3).

²⁹ Tout passage d’un objet culturel d’un contexte dans un autre a pour conséquence une transformation de son sens, une dynamique de resémantisation, qu’on ne peut pleinement reconnaître qu’en tenant compte des vecteurs historiques du passage” (Espagne 2013, 1).

We may complement these cultural transfer processes, which can only be studied from the transnational perspective, with the notion of the cultural mediator, which has much to contribute as well. While the cultural phenomena that circulate are the result of cultural transfer processes, cultural mediators play a role, too. We may understand them as intellectuals whose *habitus*³⁰ boast the right conditions for mediation between two or more cultures. As Roig Sanz and Meylaerts note: “Most of the mediators analysed share a similar *habitus* and specific dispositions in terms of background, biography and social class. They belong to an intellectual elite; they come from a multilingual and culturally rich background; they have high linguistic competences and they have reached a privileged professional position” (2018, 15). Thus, given their skills, these cultural mediators can either open or close the doors between two cultural spaces, leading Roig Sanz and Meylaerts to define mediators as “Customs Officers or Smugglers” in the title of their book. Roig Sanz and Meylaerts highlight the fact that mediators in so-called peripheral cultures often espouse a double cultural identity:

The analysis of the socio-biography of the mediators in peripheral cultures also suggests that they have often been the carriers of, at least, a double cultural identity. They experienced so called *habitus*-field clashes, which illustrate the dynamic relationships between *habitus* and field and emphasise the discontinuity and plurality of intercultural trajectories and the complex relationships between identity, culture and language (2018, 16).

This is especially relevant to my research’s specific needs. However, I would like to add one more feature to our definition of mediators, which I am using to conceptualise persons who played the role of entertainer in film clubs: their ability to transmit knowledge from one culture to another. As long as the regions I research are multicultural, we must think of mediators as people with hybrid cultural identities. These identities allowed them to introduce themselves in new, different cultures and to connect deeply with them. As such, we study mediators in terms of their multiple activities (inside and outside film clubs) and their abilities to cross borders, which allowed them to disseminate their own cultures as well as those they adopted.

Both of these notions—cultural mediator and cultural transfer—allow for the decentralisation of cultural traditions. Firstly, we may overcome the idea that Europe was the centre of artistic modernity’s development while the rest of the world stood by as a merely imitative periphery, as most established art history would have us believe. Secondly, we may also go beyond the usual focus on the artist, which sidelines all the other agents pushing the artist’s recognition. In this sense, cultural transfer and its belief in the hybridization of cultural phenomena allows us to decentralise the phenomena themselves, given that we may now assume that they not only circulated in Europe, and that if they did, it was not solely through a single cultural tradition: “The historiography of cultural transfer makes the notion of the centre especially relative” (Espagne 2013, 6).³¹ This implies that, on the one hand, we do not understand the centre as fixed: instead, centrality depends on our vantage point. On the other hand, this implies that not all impactful initiatives emerged in the same place. Furthermore, both those born in

³⁰ Here, we use *habitus* in the Bourdieusian sense.

³¹ “L’historiographie des transferts culturels relativise tout particulièrement la notion de centre” (Espagne 2013, 6).

the so-called centres and those born outside of them are not exclusively a product of these centres, but the result of circulation among myriad spaces and cultures.

Furthermore, the cultural-mediator concept will allow us to unearth certain figures that have not been considered within traditional history. Their invisibility may be a consequence of the roles they played, which were more private compared to those on the frontlines of photography. Indeed, history has prioritised telling the stories of artists who transcended their time, but not the stories of those who made these artists' paths possible and worked alongside them. It may also be true that these mediators were not recognised because they did not live in the so-called centres. As such, even when their activities were relevant, perhaps no institutions of international reach noticed and publicised their work. Or perhaps history decided to erase their memory, as is often the case with women—an issue highlighted in gender studies. In this sense, our definition of the cultural mediator highlights the mediator's relevance as a "cultural actor active across linguistic, cultural and geographical borders, occupying strategic positions within large networks and being the carrier of cultural transfer" (Roig-Sanz and Meylaerts 2018, 3). Despite their little recognition, these mediators often played central roles by mediating between two cultures or cultural identities. For instance, they may have introduced a new philosophical tradition or school of thought within a specific culture, or they may have boosted international relations among cultural entities, leading to entities' recognition. The often-forgotten Mexican photographer Lola Álvarez Bravo, for instance, organised Frida Kahlo's first exhibition in Mexico, Kahlo's country of birth, and directed one of the first film clubs in Latin America (Mexico City, 1931).

Paying attention to figures like hers, in all of their complexity—that is, without limiting ourselves to the successes and failures that history has allowed to transcend (Gonne 2018)—would give way to the decentralisation we need in order for history to be more inclusive. Furthermore, the notion of the cultural mediator supports our use of a theoretical framework with a transnational perspective: "We believe that the mechanism by which mediators and institutions in peripheral cultures are no longer defined by national, territorial or linguistic limitations may provide an analytical framework for the study of cultural practices (art, music, or cinema) from a supranational, multilingual perspective" (Roig-Sanz and Meylaerts 2018, 7).

Roig Sanz and Meylaerts advocate for research to consider network studies, too, as they believe mediators are not only part of transnational-exchange networks, but also function as the nodes within them. Considering entangled history and the notion of cultural transfer, Roig Sanz and Meylaerts believe that individuals and their networks constitute the initial manifestations of any cultural transfer process (Roig-Sanz and Meylaerts 2018, 7), and that networks, as a whole, are more than the sum of all their nodes. As such, entangled history argues that relation, circulation, and interaction processes all configure the object of study. Along these lines, this principle is very similar to the Actor-Network Theory:

[it] seeks to 'follow the actors' and to reassemble (or to trace) a (micro-) network of translations, which are seen as connections that transform all actors involved in creating them; 'the network is a concept, not a thing out there. It is a tool to help describe something, not what is being described' (Latour 2005, 131). Latour

recommends treating all actors as mediators (or as translators) who ‘translate’ and ‘distort’ what they are meant to convey (Gonne 2018, 128).

This decentralised perspective that the network metaphor highlights, along with the transnational perspective, would allow us to trace the relationships between actors on any geo-spatial level: local, regional, and transnational. As such, the typical centre-periphery relationship, which has been widely studied to date, may be complemented with other relationships that remain unexplored. For instance, we may observe the relationships and exchanges between regions considered peripheral (south-to-south relationships), or between localities that have not yet been considered connected (given their lack of a mutual border), or relationships stemming from historical processes, whose effects remain unanalysed.³²

If we push our analysis even further, tracing networks on various levels would allow us to compare different scales (the relationship between the global and the local, for instance), since the elements configuring one level may hold another place on another level. That is, there is no reason why our categorization should remain fixed, while analysing a space on one level should not preclude our ability to analyse the same space on another level.³³ As entangled history proposes, we should recall that no scale relies on a preestablished definition, but is defined in terms of its relationships.

Applying the principles of multi-level layer analysis to our object of study may yield especially fruitful observations on the exchanges and relationships between layers. Here, I am referring to comparisons between the local and global levels, implying that the relationships between intermediate levels—such as the regional or the national—might provide fewer insights to my research, which of course does not mean that their analysis would be completely useless. Nonetheless, following Edward Said’s proposals, as Gramuglio (2013a) notes, might prove particularly interesting: “to read the local ‘in counterpoint,’ or ‘in networks’ with the global” (2013b, 370),³⁴ even when these networks and counterpoints (as contrasting horizons) are mere constructs created by the researcher.

1.3.4 Concluding Remarks

To recall, our comparative methodology will help us address relations that ANT would describe as constituting the social, and I am also adopting a transnational perspective based on the principles of cultural transfer. As Teresa Gramuglio notes when referring to comparative literature: “If we must find an acceptable definition for comparatism, it

³² See Ondřej Vímř’s work on the relationships between the Czech Republic and Scandinavia within the translation field. See also Ventsislav Ikoff’s (2018) doctoral thesis on Bulgarian literature in Latin America and vice-versa, as well as Karen Thornber’s chapter (2018) on the translation of African and Asian literature to the Urdu. See also Yehua Chen’s thesis on the translation and circulation of Latin American literature in China (2020).

³³ This can be tied to the complex network theory in physics. These various kinds of complex networks—or multilayer networks—allow us to analyse the different layers within the complex network. For a more technical explanation, see Kivelä et al. (2014).

³⁴ “leer lo local ‘en contrapunto’, o ‘en redes’ con lo mundial” (Gramuglio 2013b, 370).

is, above all, the idea of always attempting to think of relationships. Then, for the specific object I am proposing, these relationships would weave together on an international register (which today [...] we should start considering as transnational)” (Gramuglio 2013a, 349).³⁵ In this sense, the transnational perspective would appear compatible with the Actor-Network Theory. As Gramuglio notes, both focus on comparing the relationships between various spaces (or actors, depending on one’s perspective).

If we counter this with sociological ideas like Pierre Bourdieu’s, one could argue that Actor-Network Theory flattens the relationships among actors, potentially leading the inequalities among disparate relationships to go unnoticed. Nonetheless, the methodological principles behind ANT do not seek to flatten these relations, but to put them all on the same level in order to trace how they are configured and conceptualise them according to their own, specific features. This would require that we analyse them within their historical contexts, starting our tracing process by observing the actions and associative movements stemming from the circulation of the various actors who ultimately configure networks.

As noted in our section on cultural transfer, this thesis understands circulation as an action that constitutes the cultural phenomena. Indeed, they are forged by movement. Consumption, on the other hand, involves two features: aesthetic experience and sociability. As noted earlier in terms of Actor-Network Theory, the first is considered a subjective composition. Simultaneously, the aesthetic experience implies collectivity, being a result of the assembly movement Latour describes. As such, the experience stands as a collective act that constitutes subjectivity with collective agency, in which all of the actors involved participate. As we will see in our State of the Art, New Cinema History actually strives to delve further into this experience, which lies somewhere between the subjective and the collective. It also aims to understand this experience’s historical implications in terms of consumption and circulation.

Finally, if I go back to thing theory, I may address all actors (human or not) participating in each collective experience in their singularity. As such, going back to each of the gatherings that film clubs organised, each object—a given film, for instance—constituted a different entity at each screening, given that said entity was conditioned by the other actors making up each session’s social assembly. In the same line of argument, I consider that the processes of cultural transfer are essential in the creative processes of knowledge emergence.

1.4 State of the Art

³⁵ “Si algo puede aproximarse a una definición aceptable de comparatismo, es, antes que nada, la idea de que se trata, siempre, de pensar relaciones. Y luego, para el objeto específico que propongo, que esas relaciones se traman en un registro internacional (que hoy [...] debería empezar a pensarse como transnacional).” (Gramuglio 2013a, 349)

To date, the history of western film clubs³⁶ has been studied from the following perspectives. The first and most common is cultural history, which has mainly focused on the national. The second is the aesthetic perspective, which generally has a penchant for authorship and usually either focuses on a specific author or aesthetic school. The third and most recent is the transnational perspective. I sketch below the state of the art related to transnational approaches to film history as well as a cultural history approach and an aesthetic perspective applied to the history of western film clubs

As mentioned, my research adopts a transnational perspective to study the film club phenomenon on several scales in order to view it as a transnational exchange network.

1.4.1 Transnational Approaches to Film History

At the beginning of the 1990s, and as a consequence of globalization, new theoretical and methodological frameworks started being developed in the social sciences and humanities with the goal of creating critical tools to approach the new phenomena emerging as a result of the globalization process. The profound economic, technological, political, social, and cultural changes that ensued required new perspectives to address these changes' full complexity. Thus, the new paradigm espoused by global studies and the spatial turn was founded upon the need to overcome national frameworks—as had already been done in cultural transfer and entangled history studies—upon which many disciplines in the social sciences and humanities had based their research. From that point on, a global framework of interconnectivity and relationships emerged, and isolated phenomena could no longer be considered bound within national borders: any given study would benefit from acknowledging the global relations behind or ensuing from the phenomena being studied. Indeed, almost no phenomenon could be considered to have emerged solely from local, national, or regional conditions any longer.

The interdependence among countries and regions, given their constant international exchange, highlighted the pressing need to acknowledge other cultural realities—realities beyond the European (especially Central European) and the Anglo-American, whose own stories had already been consolidated by university departments in those very regions. This global turn marked the urgency of integrating post-colonial studies in the social sciences and humanities more broadly. The “other,” which at the time was understood as the periphery, started being conceived as playing an active role in configuring the representations emanating from the center. In some proposals, global studies have taken on the task of either dismantling conceptualizations or working on new ones to reveal the inequalities configuring certain relationships among different

³⁶ The term western film clubs should refer to those in Europe, the United States, and Latin America. Nonetheless, my secondary bibliography has unfortunately categorised Europe and the United States alone, leaving Latin America aside. Thus, I urge you to reconsider Latin America within what we understand as the history of western film clubs. As I have also stated, I use the term “Westernised” for characterising western film clubs when I want to highlight the colonizing process that affected the ways in which an initiative of projectivng films, or discussing about them has been called or understood as a “film club”, a colonizing term, if we recall to it's difussionists origins. I will explain it further in chapter 2.3.

regions that have been historically labeled as “center” or “periphery” (Chakrabarty 2000; de Sousa Santos 2016).

Given the complexity that addressing such multifaceted phenomena implies—phenomena stemming from globalization, for instance—global studies have often relied on interdisciplinarity. As Darian-Smith and McCarty note: “it is a fundamental shift in analytical perspectives that requires a thorough retooling of our modernist and disciplinary modes of analysis (Appadurai 2000; Bauman 1998)” (2017, 2).

The issues outlined above have also affected film studies, given that, as described above, the transnational perspective and the globalizing process cannot be ascribed to a single discipline, but affect all disciplines more or less equally.

1.4.1.1 World Cinema, Global Cinema

By the end of the 1980s and early 1990s, when national perspectives started being questioned, film studies also developed a penchant for the transnational perspective. At that point, as Malte Hagener notes, “Traditional national history – and this holds true for most of film history that exists – sees the nation state as the key frame of reference, a container with very few contact zones to the outside world. Movements and regulations, markets and aesthetics, production and reception are all first and foremost conceived of in terms of the national” (2014, 3). In order to overcome these national frameworks, the first reader on what would come to be called Transnational Cinema was published in 2006 (Ezra and Rowden 2006). The reader brought together many concerns on film, globalization, and technological development. For instance, the reader touched upon the fact that movies could be sent via satellite; explored Hollywood’s role in international markets and its cultural imperialism in regards to other national markets; and addressed digital cinema, production costs for smaller markets, and windows of opportunity such as video on demand, pay-per-view, and more. However, issues on cultural hybridisation and the consequences of circulation also emerged: national culture versus more-hybrid, transnational cinema; audiences seen as global citizens; first-world financing of so-called third-world countries, which could yield film without character; the generalization of racial stereotypes promoted by Hollywood cinema, which was understood as global cinema given that it circulated the most, etc. In contrast to other proposals, this first reader pushed the transnational perspective as a useful tool to approach contemporary cinema analysis. But it had not taken into account that applying this perspective to other film periods would also be possible.

Other works followed this reader, many of which are now considered key to the field of transnational cinema, such as the work by Durovicová and Newman (2010), which marked a milestone by emphasising the inequalities operating as a consequence of so-called global cinema. Above all, the transnational perspective highlights these

inequalities. One of the editors, Kathleen Newman (2010),³⁷ wrote about these perspectives:

Current scholarship on the transnational scale of cinematic circulation now takes for granted a geopolitical decentering of the discipline. Areas once considered peripheral (that is, less developed countries, the so-called Third World) are now seen as integral to the historical development of cinema. The assumption that the export of European and US cinema to the rest of the world, from the silent period onward, inspired only derivative image cultures has been replaced by a dynamic model of cinematic exchange [...] Audiences outside the United States [...] their viewing practices are understood to be active engagement, not to be passive reception. Changes in film industries and in film style are now understood not merely to be a response to national conditions and pressures, but also to have, most always, multiple, international determinants (2010, 4).

Some of the most relevant tenants of the global notion, as applied to film or media studies, could be summed up as follows: first off, the perspective of Transnational Cinemas or World Cinemas implies the existence of other cinemas (considering everything from the means of production to the audience) that have been as important as Hollywood's and Europe's in the construction of the history of film, and, secondly, this perspective posits that the history of film must be studied as a result of transnational relations. For instance, whether a group of agents working on a creative process for a certain film is bigger or smaller cannot be pushed aside when it comes to the final result. Each of these persons inevitably transfers his or her knowledge throughout the creative process, meaning that studying films while only considering the country in which the films are produced makes no sense. Furthermore, it is worth remembering that, even if a production company is located in a given country, this does not mean that all its members, nor the practices they employ, can be inscribed solely within that country. Likewise, as Newman points out, we must recall that the audiences' active roles, as well as video-on-demand and pay-per-view platforms, play a fundamental role in the circulation and establishment of cinema. From this perspective, the very nature of cinematography precludes the inscription of cinema within a single nation.

In this sense, certain academics, such as Tom Gunning (2016), have defined this perspective by making the case that cinema has been transnational from its incipience. The author proposes that early cinema espoused global aspirations from its very first initiatives. For instance, the Pathé Brothers Company offered film catalogues that emulated the encyclopedia model: its films were selected with the aim of embracing the global, with a global sensibility. Film was understood as a "medium that could express a

³⁷ In a reflection that seems particularly relevant to my research, Newman advocates for we overcoming the division between the social sciences and the humanities: "Truly interdisciplinary theoretical and historical analyses, ones erasing the divide between the humanities and the social sciences, that is, between the theorists of meaning and the theorists of society, must make explicit their assumptions regarding representation and other social practices, the mediations between text and social context, the multiple determinants of social changes, and the role of language and other sign systems in the constitution of societies, including the social divisions they instantiate internally and across societal boundaries. This will require a shift in film studies much like the one we remember Mary Louis Pratt advocated for linguistics at the University of Strathclyde 'Linguistics of Writing' [...]" (Đurovičová and Newman 2010, 8–9).

new sense of a global identity. The frequently stated ability of cinema to place the ‘world within your reach’, while neither its only impulse nor restricted to this period, provides one of the most powerful images of what cinema was called to do when it first appeared” (Gunning 2016, 11).

Along the same lines as Tom Gunning, Andrew Dudley (2009) outlines a historic framework to reflect the way the geographic flow of images has organised, presenting several phases in which this flow has organised internationally. The first phase in his framework is cosmopolitan cinema, stretching until the early 1920s—although Malte Hagener argues that this period actually reaches the end of the 1920s (2014). The next phase is national cinema, starting with the introduction of sound (1927); followed by federated cinema, after the Second World War (1945); and world and global cinema, which developed as of the 1970s. World cinema, or post-68 cinema, came with the end of the cinematic modernism of the Cahiers du Cinéma. Western festivals started gaining interest in films made outside the countries hosting the festivals—that is, film made outside Europe and the United States. Global cinema, in turn, began in 1989, with the Tiananmen Square Massacre and the fall of the Berlin Wall. To Dudley, the difference between world cinema and global cinema lies in their mechanisms of production and distribution:

World systems imply transnational operations and negotiations that encourage the spread and interchange of images, ideas, and capital across and throughout a vast but differentiated cultural geography. Global notions, however, like blockbuster films, have nothing to negotiate; they expect to saturate every place in an undifferentiated manner. ‘Google’ is an example of such a concept and global enterprise; whereas ‘animé’ today constitutes a world phenomenon, as does, by definition, ‘world music.’ The distinction may play out less visibly in film style than in altered mechanisms of production and distribution, but it operates throughout the full cinema complex (Andrew 2010, 80).

What is relevant in considering these phases is that the entire history of cinema is marked by international circulation, except for the national film period. Still, the author posits that these phases are not linear, but often coexist. Thus, if we turn to the debate on whether a transnational perspective can be adopted for contemporary cinema or adapted to other moments in the history of film, both Dudley and Gunning’s proposals would support the conception of cinema as a transnational phenomenon from its incipience. Cinema was marked by the cosmopolitan spirit up until the 1930s—owing to the philosophies of the first avant-garde—implying that film crossed national borders.

This perspective stands as the most relevant to my project: as Rielle Navitski and Nicolas Poppe propose, we could also speak of cosmopolitanism in Latin America during the first half of the twentieth century. As noted above, the cosmopolitanism in this context was tied to the relationship between Latin America and Europe. Likewise, the transnational perspective and the idea of global cinema would invite us to consider or even lead us to reveal certain relationships of power. In this sense, to Navitski and Poppe, working with cosmopolitan film cultures in Latin America implies:

[...] the unhampered movement of individuals and capital across borders, forms of prestige tied to a specifically international brand of cultural capital, and experiences of global citizenship exceeding alliances to the nation-state. Building

on these associations, and in some cases critiquing them, this volume seeks to outline how film culture—understood as the confluence of moving images, the economic and social institutions linked to their production and circulation, and the public discourses and social practices surrounding them—intersected with cosmopolitan projects in Latin America in the first half of the twentieth century (2017, 3).

In this text's definition of the term "cosmopolitan,"³⁸ the authors address the free circulation of persons and capital by keeping in mind said circulation's implications at the film-culture level. The authors also include the postcolonial perspective throughout, highlighting the consequences of certain unequal relationships. Borrowing from Walter Mignolo's conception of cosmopolitanism, alongside colonialism and present-day global capitalism, Navitski and Poppe start with the idea that the "dynamics of globalization 'from above' made possible new forms of social experience that held emancipatory potential, even as they intersected with global hierarchies of power and hegemonic processes of state formation" (2017, 4). As such, even though cosmopolitanism is considered a trap leading to unfettered, imperialist capitalism, and thus as supporting the reproduction of unequal relationships, Navitski and Poppe aim to approach the cosmopolitan-circulation phenomenon under the assumption that unequal cosmopolitanism can also lead to the development of potentially emancipatory processes.

While we may understand cosmopolitanism as an affair involving the intellectual elite—as Teresa Gramuglio (2013a, 373) points out, referring to Carlos Altamirano—the fact is that any tool or dynamic can produce traceable action. As such, cosmopolitanism can generate particularly relevant assemblies, as global-scale analysis may reveal.

To conclude this section, alluding to the magazine *Transnational Cinema* seems worthwhile. This was the first film-studies magazine amassing the transnational perspective's many focuses, as well as the concepts employed therein: world cinema, global cinema (and their relationships), transnational cinema. The magazine *Transnational Cinema* was launched in 2010 in order to house the reflections and debates of the time, as well as subsequent ones, in terms of the global turn and global film cultures. The magazine also ultimately aimed to conceptualise the meaning of transnational cinema, as agreed upon by academics in film studies. As Mette Hjort notes, even though the term was widely used at the time, there was no clear conceptualization behind it. In his chapter in the book *World Cinemas. Transnational Perspectives* (2010), Hjort notes that "it is fair to say that to date the discourse of cinematic transnationalism has been characterised less by competing theories and approaches than by a tendency to use the term 'transnational' as a largely self-evident qualifier requiring only minimal conceptual clarification" (Hjort 2009, 12).

³⁸ Kathleen Newman shows how the term "cosmopolitanism" is directly related to the spatial turn that allowed global studies to develop in the social sciences and humanities. "In general, in the humanities, however, by the last decade of the twentieth century, formulations of postmodernity gave way to formulations of cosmopolitanism, inflected by postcolonial theory, and, via the necessary globalism of the latter two projects, matters of temporality were reconnected to matters of space. This spatial turn in the humanities, that is, the inclusion of the theoretical work from the discipline of geography, has made possible, finally, to begin the theoretical articulation of decentred subjectivity and decentred capitalism" (2010, 5).

In 2019, the magazine renamed itself *Transnational Screens*, reflecting the changes in cinema consumption between the time when the magazine was founded, 2010, and the year 2019, in which “the boundaries of Film, Television and mobile media have become blurred” (De La Garza, Dougherty, and Shaw 2019, 1). This shift also explains the growing attention on audiences (with New Cinema History), on the one hand, and media studies, on the other.

1.4.2 New Cinema History

The transnational turn, alongside the growing interest in the role audiences play and the introduction of the Digital Humanities in film studies, has given way to a new body of work known as New Cinema History. The name was coined with the goal of creating a contrast between the perspectives espoused by the academics in New Cinema History (NCH) and those held by mainstream cinematographic history. The latter, as NCH scholars argue, solely focuses on the analysis of film production, authorship, and the aesthetic study of the moving image, casting aside all the other elements that configure what we call the history of film. In his introduction to the volume *Explorations in New Cinema History* (2011), Richard Maltby shows what the established history of cinema has successfully contributed: it has deciphered the aesthetic codes of various film traditions, thus outlining the similarities, stylistic habits, and dialogues established among them in order to understand which imitative or critical features define these traditions. In the same volume, Maltby (2011) provides a contrasting perspective by defining New Cinema History as follows:

Over the past 10 years, an emerging international trend in research into cinema history has shifted its focus away from the content of films to consider their circulation and consumption, and to examine the cinema as a site of social and cultural exchange. This shared effort has engaged contributors from different points on the disciplinary compass, including history, geography, cultural studies, economics, sociology and anthropology, as well as film and media studies. [...] Many of their projects have been collaborative, facilitated by computational analysis and the opportunities for quantitative research offered by databases and Geographical Information Systems, which allow for the compilation of new information about the history of cinema exhibition and reception in ways that would previously have been too labour intensive to undertake (2011, 3).

This new, sociological focus—which Maltby defines as a socio-cultural history of experience—pays special attention to audiences, proposing that we build a history upon film consumption and circulation. This ultimately provides an efficient way of decentralizing film history, which is traditionally constructed around centers of production. Thus, the commercial activities tied to distribution and exhibition; the legal and political discourses that configure film in public life; and the social and cultural histories of audiences, as Maltby points out (2011), give way to these approaches. These studies are often possible thanks to the introduction of computational analyses, that is, quantitative methodologies that can be subsequently tested or complemented with other qualitative analyses. According to its authors, the reflections these approaches

provide bring new and different conclusions to the table than those that have hegemonically been considered true by more-established history. As per Maltby (2011, 9), this reveals the inadequacy of constructing a totalizing history of cinema upon film analysis alone.

In fact, one of New Cinema History's fundamental principles is the study of audience position. While audiences have historically been considered passive, as if completely captivated by the cinematic experience, which was often considered bound within the projection space, this new historic approach proposes that the various experiences of movie-going be taken into account, with all its individual, collective, and social implications. Annette Kuhn (2011), one of the most distinguished authors in the field, proposed this idea—namely, situating experiences within their contexts. Indeed, analysing the movie-going experience cannot be unfettered from the everyday world in which the experience takes place. As such, historicizing audiences and their practices is fundamental to the construction of a new history of cinema, which relies upon consumption and circulation, as mentioned above. These practices are conditioned by audiences in a broad sense. Thus, as proposed in Maltby's collective volume (Maltby, Biltereyst, and Meers 2011), comparing the microhistory of a local audience to another audience could yield reflections on cultural history as well as on the history of cinema, in terms of institutional organisation or cinephile communities. Still, we must keep in mind that local practices can have effects on other scales of analysis—such as the global—if, as per the transnational perspective.

In addition to the issues outlined above, New Cinema History addresses the history of distribution companies; programming in movie theaters; relationships between theaters; the way movies are publicised; how film catalogues are presented; the publicizing of programming; the relationships between distribution, production, and exhibition companies; and countries' distribution, consumption, and other related policies. These issues are often viewed in terms of the cultural identities these phenomena display, deepen, criticise, or neglect.

It is worth noting that many of the proposals included under the digital humanities use digitized data from the written press and data extracted from box offices (Sedgwick, 2000; Sedgwick and Pokorny, 2005 and 2010; Clara Pafort-Overduin, 2011; Peter Krämer, 2011; Daniel Biltereyst, Philippe Meers and Lies Van de Vijver, 2011; Jeffrey Klenotic, 2011; and Robert Allen, 2011),³⁹ now that the programming from various exhibition spaces has been systematised. The written press has also proven a fundamental source of information for New Cinema History, as it allows for the tracing of a readership community around the publication, but also for the tracing of an audience around certain programming. The same can be said of magazines and bulletins, which often include additional information on the programmed films—such as articles on the private lives of celebrities, and surveys on audience preferences in terms of movie listings. Likewise, the written press includes data on other leisurely activities that these same audiences might attend. In this sense, analysing the periodic press can contribute to the historicizing of audiences, but also of exhibition and consumption politics, the

³⁹ All references from the year 2011 are to chapters of the book *Exploration in New Cinema History* edited by Richard Maltby.

relationships between distribution and exhibition, and more. Likewise, as noted above, there is a growing interest in the study of box offices, which have proven great sources of information in terms of circulation and consumption. This can lead to reflections on whether certain films were consumed more in one place or another and provide information on community interests in general—but we may also garner information on the economic practices around film consumption, on competition among spaces of exhibition, and more.

Lastly, it is worth noting that, instead of pushing aside the transnational perspective, New Cinema History has adapted this perspective to its own needs. Indeed, different phenomena can be compared among spaces while considering scale, too, in order to analyse their repercussions on different levels (local, regional, national, etc.). In this sense, New Cinema History, in line with the spatial turn, highlights the need to amplify our curricular models and strategies in order to transgress the methodological borders that have thus far limited film studies (Maltby, Biltereyst, and Meers 2011, 34).

1.5 Methodology

The methods I plan to use in my research are both qualitative and quantitative. I will employ qualitative methods for my case studies, while using quantitative methods in the following steps: first, gathering all the data I find on Ibero-American film clubs that emerged during the first half of the twentieth century and women involved in them in a database, second, in the drawing of a network using Nodegoat software and including all the actors involved in those film clubs and whose information I can find. Lately, I will use Social Network Analysis tools to find out who are the closests women to the women my case studies are based on, in order to point out to new directions regarding the research towards women and film clubs in Ibero-America. Lastly, I will take on a comparison among the case studies I will have been working on using data visualisation tools to show all the information I will have collected, applying both methodologies: qualitative (secondary sources and archival research) and quantitative (databases). The comparison will employ qualitative methods, such as the theoretical frameworks explained above, and quantitative methods, such as network analysis.

1.5.1 Quantitative Research

For this thesis I will introduce data in a database built in Nodegoat environment and shared with the research group I am part of with two purposes. First, to create a network of film clubs that emerged and organied activities between 1909 and 1959 in Iber-America. Second, I will introduce data on my case studies, including data on the women mediators I have pointed out, and on the institutions that they worked with, the events they participated in, the people who were part of their professional and personal lives, or the media outlets where they published their works. The data will be introduced

manually in most of the cases, since none of my objects (nor women, neither film clubs) have been of enough interest for researchers, so the data there is available is scarce and sparse.

Data will be gathered from different sources, which will be selected according to my criteria. Most of them will be primary sources (journals and newspapers), or documents and letters found in personal archives, and secondary bibliography on cinema history or the mediators and film clubs I will work on. I also will include in the database I am working with the little datasets that are available on the topics that my research focuses. For example, there is a dataset created by Rielle Navitski on film clubs (2022), and a dataset on Victoria Ocampo's correspondence ('Letters to Victoria Ocampo' n.d.) or about publications in the journal and editorial *Sur* (Benedict 2022), runned by Ocampo. These datasets will be integrated in my database in order to create the networks I will later analyse.

The networks I will create using quantitative methods are four, of two different types.

1. A network of film clubs in our context of concern will be traced with Nodegoat software.⁴⁰ As a team, we have a database model (Ikoff and Roig-Sanz 2020) in which all of the categories I am interested in can be visualised and analysed in relation to each other. The categories involve the information on film clubs I aim to collect in order to build a network of Ibero-American film clubs. The categories are as follows: name of the film club; when it started and finished its activities; kind of activities organised, titles and dates of the activities; participants in each activity; roles of film club participants (audiences, founders, entertainers, etc.); programmed screenings; and location of each activity. In most cases, the information will be introduced in the database manually given the data's heterogeneity. In some cases, I may find it in magazine publications, but in other cases I might only find data through letters sent and received by film club promoters. Some data may also be located in secondary sources. Finally, a digital humanist will homogenize all of the heterogeneous data in order to facilitate my analysis.
2. Three ego-networks that correspond to the three women of my case studies. The ego-networks will include information on the women mediators I will focus on, and their networks. Using the same database model I have mentioned, the data regarding these women will include: their names, their gender, the places where they travelled and lived, their roles in different institutions, events, publications, personal correspondence and their relationships. All of these categories (events, institutions and publications) include information on people involved, dates and locations, titles of the events or publications, roles of the people involved and description of the events. Thanks to the database model, an ego-network for each women including all of this information and their relationship with them will be created. These networks will be visualised and used to compare them and to run a qualitative analysis. An analysis of closeness centrality will also be

⁴⁰ My colleague Ventsislav Ikoff is the person in charge of managing the software and creating the database model.

conducted with the help of a physicist in order to pinpoint the names of other women who were also relevant in the cultural fields were my mediators played important roles (see section 4 of the thesis).

1.5.2 Qualitative Research

Qualitative methods will be used for two purposes: to identify film clubs in order to complete the large network of film clubs mentioned above, and to identify the women I will work on my case studies. Regarding the first objective, I will be retracing the actor-networks of the film clubs I am able to find that emerged in Ibero-America between 1909 and 1959. This task will not conclude until the research process is nearly over. Regarding the case studies, I have first used qualitative methods to select the women mediators I will focus on, then I will do classical archival research in personal and public archives, and lastly I will analyse and compare the selected case studies I have been working for the research project.

In order to achieve the mentioned goals, I will take the following steps. I first will read secondary sources in order to map the State of the Art for my object of study. Then, with the first mapping, I will identify the archives where the information I am interested in is located. Next, I will analyse these archives in order to assess their potential, considering the documentation I might find in the selected archives in order to choose my case studies. Our cases (film clubs and women) will be chosen according to the following parameters: their centrality in the network in which they operate; the relevance of their activity in the construction of one or several film cultures in Ibero-America; whether they were key organisations in the institutionalisation process of cinema at different (local, national, regional) levels; and the availability of documentation. The selected cases will be approached through their archives, which we plan to find in national *cinotecas*' and *filmotecas*' documentation centres, or even in other public or private institutions. Lastly, I will approach my case studies through the collected documentation, using all of the theoretical frameworks I am keen on: actor-network theory, cultural transfer, cultural mediation, and transnational perspectives.

My thesis has four parts. The first one devoted to explain the theoretical frameworks I will use for my thesis and to outline my object of study. I have been using qualitative methods for this part, in order to build my research object and to approach the state of the art. The second part of the thesis comprises my theoretical proposal and includes research on film clubs of the first half of the twentieth century in Ibero-America, and women who took part on film clubs that emerged in the first half of the twentieth century in the western world. For the part devoted to Ibero-American film clubs I have used quantitative and qualitative methods to collect the data and process it. As I will explain, there is a dataset published by Rielle Navitski on film clubs (2022) that will be added to the dataset I am creating in order to build a network among Ibero-American film clubs of the first half of the twentieth century, and also to propose a new periodisation for their history. The part related to the relationship among film clubs and women will be approached using qualitative methods. As I will explain, I will build my own feminist method based on the gender perspective I am keen on when working on

the women who took part of the first film clubs. The third part of the thesis will focus on the women my case studies will be build around, with a specific interest in tracing their networks. To collect the data and build their networks I will use qualitative methods, I will rely on Actor-Network Theory method to do it. Then, I will be able to use quantitative methods to analyse the ego-networks created around these women, and qualitative methods to analyse their relevance for the history of Ibero-American film clubs. I dedicate the fourth part to proposing a conclusion regarding the type of profile analysed in the case studies, and I put forward a quantitative methodological proposal using Social Network Analysis, which I subsequently implement using the data collected in the case studies.

1.5.3 Ethical responsibility

The database will include information mainly about deceased individuals. Sensitive data will not be collected, neither processed. The personal data we are interested in is limited to names, birth and death dates and places, gender, education, professional occupations, places of residence or travel (not precise geo-information but only limited to city-level), and personal correspondence which may be useful for identifying their participation in national, regional and international networks. I expect to gather this data both from sources in the public domain, as well as from sources not in the public domain. On the one hand, the main sources for personal data for this project are library catalogues, biographical publications, dictionaries, encyclopaedias or other reference works (both printed and digital) in the public domain and as such they can be consulted freely.

Whenever an authorization is required for the exploitation and analysis of the data from these sources for the purposes of the project, such an authorization will be requested. In the case where a source is not in the public domain, like private or publishers' archives, we will request written authorization from the source owners to 1) access and use the data for the research, and 2) to later publish the data.

Since this thesis project is part of the ERC project "Social Networks of the Past", all data I will use will be individual copies of the data owned and managed (storage and destruction) by the ERC project. Once I have defended my doctoral thesis, all individual copies I have used will be deleted.

1.5.4 Data disclosure

All the data regarding the [networks](#) created for this project is available in the following [repository](#). The data sources I have used to generate my data are not yet available, but they will be when the ERC project that funds this thesis ends. In any case, all the sources from where I have gathered the data for building the networks that are mentioned in the chapters of this thesis are also referred in those chapters.

1.5.5 Methodological Proposal: Inferring the Role of Women through Social Network Analysis

The lack of sources and data urges us to re-examine with a critical eye the historiography of women and early cinema. With this goal, I propose a few theoretical-conceptual strategies that may allow us to revalue the participation of women in the first Ibero-American film clubs. Up until this point, the research I have conducted around networks has been qualitative (part II of this thesis), using methodological proposals such as the Actor-Network Theory to build networks of different actors and agents. In this section, however, I will describe the quantitative work that could prove useful in terms of my object of study. In my view, this first approach still needs to be developed. That is, quantitative network analysis could be used to approach women in the film field, a minoritised object of study within the cultural field. Some of my object of study's specificities make this a complex, unusual task, especially the lack of data. On top of this, we must consider the heterogeneity of the agents, agencies, and relationships at play when constructing these networks.

In this sense, I have found no other texts dealing with the problem at hand. Of course, there are academic texts reflecting upon the matter of data and women, such as *Data Feminism* (D'Ignazio and Klein 2020), a cornerstone of this research. There are plenty of very interesting studies using the gender perspective and Social Network Analysis for data from various cultural and social fields (Smith-Doerr 2010; Lutter 2015; Verhoeven 2020; Morgan et al. 2021; Macedo et al. 2022; Wapman et al. 2022). Yet, I have not found the specificities and conditioning factors determining my own research elsewhere. I am referring to the lack of data and to the heterogeneous relationships that are a fundamental factor to the quantitative analysis around this object of study that has been historically overlooked.

1.5.6 Building the Network

My proposal is based on building an ego-network around a key woman agent within the field—in my case, the cultural film field—and then looking for other women agents who, thanks to their relationships to the former, also played a relevant role within this same field. Despite not posing challenges in terms of complex-network-analysis methods, my proposal is founded upon several theoretical assumptions and upon the historical conditions of the object of study. On the one hand, we know that there is a lack of data on women who participated in the film field before it became institutionalised. We have already mentioned some of the reasons why this is the case (chapter 2.4), but what is most important is that these women—whose names we do not know—did exist. Research conducted on the silent-film era, using the gender perspective, shows this. In order to supplement this lack of data in secondary and, often, primary sources, one option is to shift our focus of attention and pore through personal archives. Given the historic moment we are addressing, we know that women often worked in networks, and we also know that they used different strategies to keep their voices from being

silenced, making themselves a space in the field. For instance, women published using male pen names, or used uncensored writing formats (women's writing or self-reflection writing); they invented genealogies of women to legitimise their voices; they cited and published each other, usually with the goal of raising awareness around the importance of paying attention to women's voices in general (publishing anthologies of women, or giving conferences about women, for example); or they developed collective work that did not require them to add their specific names, either in the industry (as film editors), in the cultural field (as film club goers), or in the massive occupying of public spaces (as audiences at commercial movie theatres). By conceptualising all of these strategies, we may conclude that there was indeed network collaboration—a desire to unite, reclaim space, raise social awareness around women, and improve social conditions. This work was massive but materialised in different ways depending on each woman involved. With this as a foundation, we may assume that the women in our time and geographic place of interest did not work alone.

However, we lack the data and names of most of the women who participated in the field—these names are not in official documents and historiographies that would then allow us to discuss these women. Thus, I propose the creation of an ego network starting with one woman whom we have identified as key, likely through qualitative research, so that we may then find other women. Ideally, this woman whom we would start with would be relatively well known in history. To carry out this method, we need to have some kind of an archive, a footprint that we can trace (publications, unpublished texts, photographs, footage, etc.), preferably in the form of primary sources. Once we detect this woman mediator, we may use personal archives—letters, documents, and publications, if there were any—to generate a network of relationships. Due to the object's nature, we will likely find different kinds of relationships: personal and professional. Thus, I propose that we not differentiate between these kinds of relationships and instead generate a multilayer network, since, in the context at hand, the professional networks that these women developed were inextricable from their personal ones. Thus, all of the relationships we find should be recorded—whether these letters involve letters sent or received, participation in joint publications, photographs, participation at events, and personal relationships like friendship, romantic relationships, or family ties. Given the lack of secondary sources, these relationships might be established through the work that these women developed. For instance, in the case of photographer Lola Álvarez Bravo, I have established that relationships were professional when they involved her and any recognised person whom she photographed at that time, such as artists, writers, intellectuals, and etcetera. Though her subjects were usually men, there were women as well. Thus, even if the scant previous research does not point toward professional relationships between Lola Álvarez Bravo and, for instance, Sergei Eisenstein, a photograph may serve as proof that there in fact was a relationship. The same can be inferred from her participation in events or in clubs, as a member. Even when lacking primary sources (such as newspaper reviews) on a woman's specific participation at an event, that the woman was part of the association that organised a given activity suggests that she did participate in the activity organised by the institution in question. Of course, we cannot be one hundred percent sure of this. Yet, we believe that working with indirect data is the only way we have of demonstrating the vast activities that women carried out within the cultural field.

Once the ego network is created around the chosen woman mediator—in my research, the woman would have participated in one of the first film clubs to emerge in Ibero-America—we may transform the ego network into a peer-to-peer. This means that, if there were relationships of various or the same natures between agents, for instance between institutions and persons or between persons and persons, we may transform all of the relationships into relationships between people alone. That is, if our mediator is tied to an institution in which other people participated, we may forego the institution and transform that indirect relationship (between the mediator and the institution) into a person-to-person relationship. Likewise, if our mediator participated in an event put on by Lyceum Club Femenino, we may delete the activity itself and simply associate our mediator with the other women who participated in the activity. If we lack this data, we may associate her to the women members of the Lyceum Club, as it would have been likely for them to coincide at said event.

At the same time, when transforming our network into a peer-to-peer, we need to weigh these relationships. That is, we need to weight the relationships according to the relevance or proximity of each relationship. In terms of closeness, participating in the same event is not the same as having published in the same magazine or being someone's friend. Evidently, we need this strategy so that we may work with the heterogeneous data required to revalue women in cultural history. In network research using quantitative methods, the work of weighing relationships is a necessary step toward distinguishing the contributions of each channel of interaction within the network system. My decision to do so is supported by the idea that women often carried out mediation work. That is, they placed themselves at the intersection between different clusters and networks, allowing for the circulation of ideas, objects, and people. This mediation implies a certain degree of translation, as Latour and Hennion (1993) describe—an indirect translation that is not free of certain implications. Now, situating oneself in such mediation spaces has often been deemed insufficient for one to acquire the authority to be published or be considered an author. Thus, to weigh these heterogeneous relationships so that they may all be taken into consideration is a way of counteracting historic bias. Refer to the table of relationship weights in Annex 7.

Once the relationships have been weighed, the next step is to extract the mediator around whom we constructed an ego network so that we may detect which women were the most relevant within her network. The measures used come from Social Network Analysis and will determine which persons had the highest degree centrality, that is, which persons have more relationships to other persons, as well as which persons have a high degree of betweenness centrality, meaning that they serve as bridges between groups. Lastly, we will determine closeness centrality, namely, how close one person is with respect to everything else in the network due to the quality of her relationships. As the ego network will always give us the same result so long as the central mediators remain therein (let me recall that my key mediators are those on whom we have the most data among all the other women in the network), it is only by eliminating them that it is possible to view the relevance of other agents that had been given less weight before.

My proposed method of analysis—which I created for this specific object of study⁴¹ given my experience in the field and the data that have been introduced in the database I am working with—starts with the hypothesis that, even though we lack data on many women, their closeness to other women whom I know were key to the cultural field likely implies that they, too, were important. As I have already noted, this proposal is not demanding on the social-network-analysis level as it presents nothing new or revolutionary. Yet, within the humanities and social sciences, I believe that this method can help detect other key women in history,⁴² especially women on whom we have no data beyond what has been indirectly compiled. It is through this method that we may detect such women. In this sense, we should keep in mind that, often, the lack of available data when working with women pushes us to articulate our hypotheses based on indirect data. We should also consider the relevance of collaboration in professional networks, solidarity networks, and support networks between women who took on collective projects. Often, these networks were established in private spaces, which we can only trace through personal sources. Thus, considering these other relevant women within the field—women found through a network built around another woman—is a way of upholding the principle of sorority. We assume that the women who appear very close to my mediators either worked with them or at least were present in many of their public appearances, participating in the same institutions, publishing in the same media outlets, or taking part in the same activities. Most likely, if their names do not ring a bell to us, it is probably because they have not been researched before. Thus, this method seeks to highlight these other names in order to encourage subsequent research on overlooked women.

I have applied this method to all of the case studies developed throughout this thesis in chapter 4.2 with the help of my colleagues Ventsislav Ikoff, who helped me with the [database](#), and Alessio Cardillo, who ran the analysis.

⁴¹ I would like to thank my colleagues Alessio Cardillo and Ventsislav Ikoff for helping me formulate this method of analysis.

⁴² This proposed method is based on speculation and imagination, which have often been used in historical research with the gender perspective. For instance, we may observe Donna Haraway's *A Cyborg Manifesto* (1985), which mixes science fiction, speculative fiction, and feminist theory to explore the relationships between gender, identity, and technology. The work of Silvia Federici (2004) also deploys this method, proposing alternative narratives of history by reimagining the roles that women played in reproductive work and speculating about their agency during the witch hunts and the emergence of capitalism, reflecting on their collective resistance. Federici did this by filling in the voids in historical documentation while also examining new sources, such as folklore. Speculation is certainly close to the method of feminist imagination used by many historians with the gender perspective. This posits that the imagination should be used to speculatively reconstruct voids in history by imagining what may have been or considering alternative possibilities. Likewise, focusing on the agency of marginalised agents like women or people in the LGBTQ+ collective is one of the precepts of feminist imagination, as is working on personal histories. Interdisciplinary work has also been common among women researchers who have used these methods, as there is limited evidence with which to propose alternative narratives to dominant histories, thus requiring the use of different disciplines, such as those in this proposed method.

PART II Ibero-American Film Clubs and Women: Towards a Decentralisation of Cinema History

Introduction

This second part of the thesis is divided in four chapters. In the first chapter the history of Film Clubs in Western metropolitan centers and then the History of Ibero-American Film Clubs are tackled. The second chapter corresponds to global, relational *and longue durée* approach to the study of Ibero-American film clubs. Firstly, I conceptualise film clubs in a relational manner by referring to the networks of exchanges created through film print exchanges or the travel of film club participants between cities or countries to attend various film clubs. Secondly, I analyse issues of scale and space in the study of Ibero-American film club phenomenon, with a particular focus on the relationships between different scales of analysis, such as the local, regional, or transnational. Thirdly, I employ the perspective of the *longue durée* (inspired by Braudel) to approach the cine club concept, understanding it as the outcome of extended processes that may have occurred simultaneously in different spaces.

The third chapter of this section proposes a periodisation framework for Ibero-American cine clubs, based on the utilization of digital tools. For this chapter, I have identified a period of emergence of film clubs in Ibero-America between 1934 and 1936. Then the waning of film clubs, which I situate between 1936 and 1946. Finally, as a coda, I briefly look into a last phase of re-emergence between 1946 and 1958, when we no longer have reliable data in the database constructed for this research.

Moving on to the fourth chapter in this section, the spotlight shifts to the relationship between women and film clubs, as this interconnection constitutes the central focus of this research. The principal objective of this fourth chapter is to restore agency to the women who were engaged in the film industry during the silent period. To achieve this, I propose specific methodological and conceptual strategies. The theoretical proposal outlined in the fourth chapter is the result of the research carried out on the case studies presented in the third part of this thesis. The proposed methodology advocates for giving agency back to women who participated in the film field during the silent period. To achieve this goal, I have formulated a threefold strategy. In the concluding section of this fourth chapter, I delve into the optimal sources for comprehensively exploring the subject at hand: the intricate connection between women and film clubs.

In broader terms, this section represents an endeavor to address a topic that has been overlooked by western cinema history, namely film clubs. My intention is also to reevaluate the significance of women in the history of cinema, accentuating their roles within the initial Ibero-American film clubs. Consequently, this section puts forth three approaches to decenter cinema history: firstly, geographically, by examining cinema history from what has been wrongly deemed peripheries; secondly, by scrutinizing a marginalised subject, such as film clubs; and thirdly, by shedding light on an often invisible protagonist, women. Thus, my approach to cinema history commences from the wrongly-understood peripheries and endeavors to reposition what has been marginalised at the core of my analysis. The primary objective of the proposed section and its methods and concepts is to demonstrate that alternative narratives can be

formulated, revealing that the history of cinema, as we have thus far understood it, is replete with exclusions.

2.1 The History of Film Clubs in Western Metropolitan Centers

This section is divided into three sections. First, I present a general overview on the historiography of the film club phenomenon in the western world. Then, I focus on the history of film clubs in Europe and the United States. The last section deals with the history of film clubs in Ibero-America. After the overview, I conclude that Ibero-American film clubs have been considered secondary to the history of cinema. I also show that film history would benefit from considering Ibero-American film clubs with the same relevance as European and American ones. While the Ibero-American film clubs often had different aims and qualities that, taken together, help to broaden the general conception of the film club phenomenon presented in film historiography. I also show that most of the research devoted to film clubs has been written in national histories of cinema. As a result, theoretical and methodological proposals on the film club phenomenon have been limited to regional mappings of film clubs, or the histories of a specific film club. In this sense, the transnational and relational perspective proposed in my research has hardly been used to investigate film clubs.

The lack of interest academics have shown in exhibition and distribution—that is, in the circulation of films—is a consequence of what I call mainstream history, which has mostly focused on production and on interpreting the films themselves. As Hagener pointed out, “this framework of cinema going as an activity only became important in the 90s when the influence of cultural studies, new film history and media archaeology began to influence film studies” (2007, 85). In this respect, new cinema history is key to my research. The budding interest in cinema going has not been broad enough to cause a drastic increase in studies on the film club phenomenon. In fact, despite the increase in audience-centred studies, research on film clubs remains scarce. Latin American film clubs have received a lot of attention from scholars, but transnational and gender perspectives have been overlooked.⁴³ While we may find several, nationally centred cultural histories on one or several specific film clubs (Tariol 1965; Alexander 1981; Loyer 1992; Baecque, Frémaux, and Baecque 1995; Pougy 1996; Azevedo 1997; Gauthier 1999; Rodríguez Álvarez 2002a; Hertz 2006; Godoy 2006; Granja 2006; 2007; Malusá 2007; Correa Junior 2007; Clair 2008; Couselo 2008; Joana Isabel 2008; Escorcia Cardona 2008; Sexton 2008; Pimentel Neto 2008; Gatti 2009; A. C. Pereira 2010; Baldini and Baldi 2013; Cunha 2013; Gómez Serrudo and Bello León 2016; Bacelar de Macedo 2017), as well as aesthetic studies analysing a certain film club, given its relationship to a certain author,

⁴³ In this work, I am not addressing film clubs and film societies in other cultures—such as in African or Asian cultures—though I am aware of the research being conducted. We may note Sanghita Sen’s work on Indian film practices in the 1970s; Morgan Corriou’s research on film clubs in the Mahgreb region; and Caroline Damiens’s work on film practices in the northern Soviet Union.

movement, school, or institution (Xavier 1975; 1978; Horak 1995; Gubern 1999; Castro 2000; Posner 2001; Rodrigues 2010; Frias 2015; Cuarterolo 2017), efforts to theorise their practices, or to assess their global, historic impact, remain scarce. As noted earlier, Malte Hagener's (2007) work, Rielle Navitski and Nicolas Poppe's (2017), and recent Amieva Collado's (2022) and Ana Broitman's (2021) thesis dissertations stands out.

Except for the authors cited above, most proposals focusing on the study of film clubs use very different theoretical and conceptual frameworks than those guiding my research. Most research has focused on film clubs as national phenomena—alluding to these spaces' relevance within the cultural history of the country in which the studied film club emerged. Meanwhile, the relational and transnational perspectives exposed in this research have seldom been used to address the film club phenomenon (Campbell 1977; Hagener 2007; Bedoya 2009; Navitski and Poppe 2017; Gunning 2016; Gustaf Andersson 2014; de Cuir 2014; Caicedo González 2012; Hjort and Lindqvist 2016; Welles 2017; Rozsa 2017; Fibla-Gutiérrez 2018). There have been no efforts to theorise the phenomenon on a global level—excepting the works by Poppe and Navitski (2017), as well as by Hagener (2007), Amieva Collado (2022) and Broitman (2021), all of which, specially the first two books are crucial to this research, having systematised and/or grouped the emergence of certain film clubs in different regions. In this sense, I should highlight their use of “film culture” as a concept that both contextualises the spaces in which the first film clubs emerged and frames their historic relevance.

Malte Hagener (2014) also advocates for a relational perspective based on entangled history. The author notes that, “in some respects, this [his] book is a collaborative attempt to begin writing a *histoire croisée* (entangled history) of the avant-garde, its legacy and aftermath; it is a story of encounters and exchange, of translation and interference” (2014, 3). Hagener follows the tenants of cultural transfer and adopts the transnational perspective to consider the film club network—as has been noted earlier in the state of the art.

Meanwhile, even the title of Rielle Navitski and Nicolas Poppe's (2017) volume of case studies, *Cosmopolitan Film Cultures in Latin America: 1896-1960*, is backed by the transnational perspective. Throughout the books' many sections, the researchers allude to the film club phenomenon for a number of different reasons, but they all consider the phenomenon's transnational relations.

To date, our bibliography on the history of film clubs remains limited and has mainly focused on studying their emergence and development. Indeed, pioneering researchers in mainstream history, such as Christophe Gauthier, argue that Western film clubs (1999) first appeared in Paris and then spread to the rest of Europe. Certainly, in terms of film history, the people who were until now⁴⁴ recognized by cinema historians as the first involved in film clubs were Louis Delluc (1890-1924) and Riciotto Canudo (1877-1923), in Paris. They organised the first two registered film clubs in history: Club des Amis du Septième Art (CASA), created by Riciotto Canudo in April of 1921, and Ciné-club de France, which was founded by film director Louis Delluc in 1920 and was linked to

⁴⁴ In his books, Michael Cowan (2023) argues that numerous initiatives emerged much earlier, and their relevance by Cinema historians depends on how the film club concept is understood. I will delve into the topic in the next chapter.

the *Journal du ciné-club*. The statutes of what is believed to be the first film club were published on January 14, 1920, in the *Journal du ciné-club* “[...] to allow them to come together to address various artistic, moral, civic, technical, and other cinematographic matters. Likewise, the association aims to support the development and prosperity of the French film industry” (Gauthier 1999, 32).⁴⁵

While Christophe Gauthier’s (1999) review of Parisian film clubs does not explicitly say this, we may assume that the assembly that approved these statutes on January 3, 1920, was composed of the same people who ran the magazine that published the statutes. As Marcel Tariol notes (Gauthier 1999, 32), the film club would appear to be a means of securing a broad public for the magazine itself. If this is the case, the assembly of participants who launched the first film club would have included Louis Delluc at the helm, followed by Charles De Vesme, Georges Denola, Léon Moussinac, Lionel Landry, and Henriette Jeanne. Judging by the histories of the film clubs that Gauthier outlines,⁴⁶ as well as by Louis Delluc and Léon Mussinac’s social status, the film club phenomenon is believed to have emerged from certain artists’, professionals’, and intellectuals’ interest in film, with all of them coming together to boost the development of French film at the national level by promoting public interest in cinema. Interestingly, when it came to film clubs, the public was mostly composed of the general populace. However, when Louis Delluc, considered the founder of film clubs, left the magazine *Journal du ciné-club* in March of 1921 shortly after its foundation, he started another project geared toward intellectuals and elites. Ultimately, “like Canudo, he [Delluc] desired to attract [people] to cinema, because cinema could, with luck and political influence, pick the French film industry up from its stagnation” (Gauthier 1999, 55).⁴⁷ The stagnation of French cinema to which Delluc alludes came as a consequence of the First World War. In fact, to him, legitimizing film as an art form would only be possible if it regained its economic prosperity, which required the backing of the elite, who had the economic means to support film. Thus, to Gauthier (1999), the term “film club,” which was finally coined in 1920, appears to attribute to the historian the precise moment when, in certain circles of journalists and intellectuals, whom we could call ‘cinephiles,’ a desire to legitimise the art of cinematography prevailed over certain pedagogical and hygienist concerns. He attributes pedagogical film clubs (the first being the Cinéma du peuple in 1913) to the labour movement and to France’s community colleges (*universités populaires*), and ties the hygienist projects to mobile patriotic screenings organised by the Service cinématographique des armées (Cinematographic Services of the Armed

⁴⁵ Christophe Gauthier cites *Journal du ciné-club* No. 1, page 14, published January 14, 1920.

⁴⁶ Here, we may look toward one of the precursors to film clubs: the entrepreneur Edmond Benoît-Levy (1858-1929) created “the first, large sitting space, Omnia-Pathé, in December of 1906, which launched a film club under the auspice of *Phono-ciné-gazette* on April 14, 1907” (Gauthier 1999, 25). In the style of other nineteenth-century clubs, this club was housed in Montmartre, with a screening room called Omnia, offering its associates a place to meet, a library, and an official film club bulletin—all of which aimed to develop film in every way.

⁴⁷ We may also look to fragments of the statutes for the second film club, Club des Amis du Séptième Art, founded by Ricciotto Canudo. The statutes were published in the salon’s catalogue for the fall of 1922: “a) Declare, in every possible way, that film is an art. b) Elevate the intellectual level of French film production. e) Do everything possible to attract creative talents—writers and poets, as well as new generations of painters and musicians—to film.” (Canudo 1995)

Forces, SCA) in 1918 and to the Rockefeller foundation's antituberculosis campaigns in 1919.

Alluding to this matter seems relevant to this section, given that research on Western film clubs has pointed to Delluc and Canudo's activities as the phenomenon's birthing points—casting pedagogical and hygienist projects aside,⁴⁸ even when they preceded the intellectual ones. Thus, we have come to speak of film clubs as bodies that aimed to consecrate film as an art form,⁴⁹ while pedagogical aims have been less explored in the European context. However, in light of Ibero-America's film club experiences, I would like to question the idea that other regions followed the intellectual film club model (Welles 2017; Bacelar de Macedo 2017). It may very well be that pedagogical and hygienist concerns drove the film clubs emerging in other regions. To add nuance to this initial hypothesis, it would make sense to go back even further and consider the hygienist and pedagogical concerns behind these initiatives as fundamental to the film culture that emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century. Along the same lines, I could also consider multiple film cultures (Nichols 1973; Campbell 1977; Welles 2017; Fibla-Gutiérrez 2018)—in parallel to the more elite culture, which aimed to validate film as art—to explain the institutionalisation processes of cinema that took place in my context of study, Ibero-America from 1898 to 1959, in which film clubs played a relevant role.

If we assign broader meaning to the term "film club," it would make sense to look back to pedagogical initiatives, as Gauthier calls them (1999, 34), and to the labour movement's attempts to appropriate cinema by considering these initiatives part of film clubs' history. Instead of relegating them to the prehistory of film clubs, we could deem them the first film clubs, given that their practices spread broadly and were just as valuable as the more elitist experiences. As such, it might not make sense to call Canudo and Delluc's initiatives the first—given all the previous, pedagogical initiatives whose influence was quite broad in Ibero-America.

However, if, as has been done thus far, we do not broaden the meaning of the term "film club" or "ciné-club" in its French sense, and use the same concept to refer to initiatives that did not have the same objectives, then I can only consider the term to be diffusionist. Through a colonising rhetoric, it assimilates other initiatives that are not taken into account in the construction of the concept. This is also why I have used the concept of "Westernised" to refer to other initiatives that have adopted the "film club" or "ciné-club" concept, despite not sharing the same objectives as the initial film clubs upon which the concept was built.

In fact, these film-related, pedagogical initiatives not only marked Paris's film clubs, but those elsewhere, too. Still, the frequent political appropriation of such educational initiatives is also worth acknowledging. For instance, the International Educational

⁴⁸ The authorities initiated a hygiene project aimed at enhancing public health and sanitation. This comprehensive endeavor involved screenings.

⁴⁹ Among many others, see the work on Europe by Fremaux and De Baeque (1995); Gauthier (1999); and Gubern (1999). On the United States, see Horak (1995) and Posner (2001). For Latin America, see Rodríguez Álvarez (2002a) and Caicedo González (2012), among many others. The same can be said of works focusing on the relationship between film criticism and film clubs: see Hertz (2006), Alves dos Santo (2012), Lourenço (2011).

Cinematographic Institute (IICE) in Rome (1928), was part of the League of Nations.⁵⁰ This organisation echoed the internationalist discourse seeking durable peace, which, stood in contrast to the nationalist and militaristic policy of Mussolini (Alted Vigil 2016, 17). The institution was actually created under Mussolini—a master move by a government that sought to control training and education from within. In this sense, the Soviet government seems to have adopted a similar approach through Workers International Relief (WIR), which was founded in Berlin in 1921, as Campbell (1977) notes. WIR created Soviet films and propaganda through its producer, “Mezhrabpom-Russ (later Mezhrabpomfilm, “Mezhrabpom” being the abbreviation in Russian for WIR), including the most widely viewed Soviet feature films of the time: movies by Vsevolod Pudovkin, such as *Mother* (1926), *The End of St. Petersburg* (1927), *Storm over Asia* (1928), and *The Deserter* (1933); as well as films by Vertov, such as *Three Songs About Lenin* (1934). In Germany, many other films were created through the producer Prometheus, which was acquired in 1925 and took on the task of distributing the USSR’s best-known feature films, including *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) (Campbell 1977). As Campbell notes, WIR had ties to the Film and Photo League in the United States, which projected its movies in US film clubs. Thus, as Enrique Fibla notes, “while early Soviet cinema as a historical point of reference for building a national film industry and a culture of film education has been generally acknowledged, the appeal of the Soviet model to peripheral countries in Europe, like Spain and Italy, is only beginning to be explored” (2018, 62). In fact, the same can be said of the expansion of the Soviet, pedagogical—and we might add propagandist—model in Latin America (Welles 2017).

Along these lines, we face a void when it comes to understanding the circulation of Soviet films in Latin American film clubs—but also in terms of understanding the pedagogical (including the religious), hygienist, political, and propagandic content that circulated throughout Latin America’s film clubs. In fact, I would argue that these issues need to be addressed from a transnational perspective, allowing us to rethink film culture as a consequence of the hybridisation of various initiatives that would not necessarily have to emerge in a single space in order to eventually converge. This hybridisation was ultimately possible thanks to the circulation of various actors, many of whom were inspired, among other things, by the cosmopolitan spirit of the avant-garde.

As such, in order to understand how studying Ibero-America may contribute to broadening the film club concept, as well as to our understanding of the creation of film cultures, this overview draws a distinction between contributions centred on the history of film clubs in Europe and the United States, on the one hand, and those in Ibero-America, on the other. This will allow us to gauge the characteristics and tenets manifest in the study of either of the two currents. In any case, it is worth noting that works on the film club phenomenon remain scarce.

We may conclude that, to date, academic conceptualisations of film clubs have generally followed the model proposed by Christophe Gauthier (1999). As a consequence, film club projects following other models have been underrepresented in the histories of Western film clubs. The dominant model is thoroughly national and Eurocentric, as it takes for

⁵⁰ See Alicia Alted Vigil’s article (2016) on Spain’s participation in the IICE.

granted that film clubs emerged and developed within Europe—specifically Paris. This point of view leaves out a number of worthwhile endeavours and fails to address cultural transfer phenomena, insofar as the emergence of film clubs in Paris is considered to have resulted solely from the Parisian context itself and the actors involved were the same protagonists of the inter-war avant-gardes. However, neither the cultural exchanges, nor the channels or means of exchange are considered as fundamental elements for the development of cineclubism. As such, I believe that applying a transnational non-Eurocentric perspective to the study of film club history is essential to enriching and developing film theory.

2.1.1 The History of European and US Film Clubs

Although I advocate for a transnational perspective to approach the film club phenomenon, I think it is important to present the historiography's account of the history of film clubs in Europe and the United States, in order to contrast it with that of film clubs in Ibero-America. For, as I have argued above, the relevance that has been given to the two histories is unequal. In what follows, I outline the literature analysing the creation and development of European and US film clubs—though it must be noted that said film cultures cannot be equated and that both have their own histories. First of all, we cannot brush aside the US film industry's importance as of the beginning of the twentieth century. If turn to Gauthier's (1999) account, starting with Canudo and Delluc's initiatives, we may note that the legitimisation of film as an art form was necessarily different in the United States than in France. When the first European film clubs emerged, the industry in the United States was already awash in cash and thus did not rely on elite support in the same way. Hagener notes that "as bourgeois art never gained a strong (public) footing with state support and elite backing, the avant-garde in the US had a different relationship to mass culture and technology. For that reason, an inclusion of the United States would alter the perspective considerably" (2007, 78). Although the avant-garde did not play the same social function in the United States as in Europe, as Hagener points out, there are two important trends, related to film clubs, which I am going to explore in more detail and which affect this relationship. On the one hand, the production and distribution of films for educational and pedagogical purposes, and on the other hand, amateurism, the production of films by amateur film-interested people. Both trends are linked to the history of film clubs, insofar as they opposed the dominant industrial system of the context in which they were born and were inserted in an alternative production, distribution and exhibition circuit, in which film clubs play an important role worldwide.

Some film clubs aimed to show movies to which the public generally lacked access, as many would never make it to commercial theatres. Often, these films were produced outside the United States, as with Russian cinema. Ibero-American and European critics, intellectual circles, and professionals interested in film often drew a sharp line between

what they called “American cinema”⁵¹ and all other cinema. It is in this sense that it has been considered that the film clubs would form an alternative exhibition circuit to the commercial distribution circuit, a task that would later be continued by the cinematheques and later by film festivals. This distinction not only served to compare their qualities and flaws, but also to expose the disparities between the circulation of “American cinema” and other national cinemas, often at the expense of the latter, which did not garner the same degree of interest among the public nor among movie theatres as the great US productions did. Moreover, the difference between the types of cinema that circulated in commercial and alternative circuits at the time when film clubs emerged were not only due to questions of cultural diversity, aesthetic preferences, and commercialization budgets, but also to the geopolitical battles for cultural hegemony. These battles, especially from the 1930s onwards with the rise of nationalism, would become crucial in the functioning of film distribution and exhibition circuits (Andrew 2010). One example contrasting Soviet cinema and “American cinema” can be found in a text by Cardoza y Aragón, a Guatemalan intellectual, artist, and diplomat who lived most of his life in Mexico and wrote a film-criticism column in the magazine *Todo* from 1935 to 1936. Cardoza y Aragón believed that Soviet cinema possessed a more human character—being noble as well as pedagogical—leading it to reflect the true image of society that communism sought. In his texts, he juxtaposes Soviet cinema to bourgeois, American cinema, with its purely commercial interests and banal romances. He describes this as follows:

Chapayev [sic.] is against the public’s routines, against the tastes of a public made uniform by Hollywood. None of the foreign, superficial elements that these productions are based on can be found in *Chapayev*. *Chapayev*’s general tenets are the same as all of Soviet cinematography’s, just like *The Woman Accused* follows American tenets. In our comparison, we need not insist that *The Woman Accused* is an insignificant movie among hundreds of Hollywood productions, while *Chapayev* was awarded first place by a jury including Pudovkin, Eisenstein, Trauberg... This American film’s insignificance does not merely lie in its misery, which luck would have us consider as an example (2010, 44).

This quote casts light on the opinion that many artists and intellectuals from Europe and the Americas who frequented film clubs held regarding commercial, Hollywood cinema.⁵² Thus, it is no wonder that the relationship between art films and the film

⁵¹ I use quotation marks to clarify that I do not believe this concept can adequately refer to Hollywood’s more commercial cinema. However, this was the term used at the time.

⁵² The rejection of a large part of U.S. cinema by the Latin American intelligentsia may have been, among other more aesthetic reasons, a response to the soft power project by the United States through the Good Neighbor Policy since 1933. The Good Neighbor Policy, launched by Franklin Roosevelt’s administration, aimed to change relations between the United States and Latin America, seeking better economic agreements (mainly as a consequence of the economic depression of 1929) and ensuring the nonalignment of Latin American countries with the countries of the Axis. One of the actions promoted by this policy was the creation of the Motion Picture Division, as part of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (OCIAA), founded in 1940. This division of OCIAA was in charge of producing films to improve the image that Hollywood had of the inhabitants of its neighboring countries, and on the other, at influencing the political opinion of the Latin American public with respect to the foreign policy of the U.S. government. However, as Alejandro-Kelly Hopfenblatt (2023) demonstrates, although the

industry *per se* operated differently in the United States than in Europe. In the latter, the industry was less developed, and artists and critics often became the most praised avant-garde filmmakers in their countries, with more artisanal modes of production. In contrast, the films produced in the United States were mostly considered commercial, because the film production machine in the United States during the classical era was considered a big industry, and the labour market had more clear division among specialists—film directors worked as film directors, and screenwriters as screenwriters, just as film critics worked as critics, so the translation between roles within the U.S. film industry was not as common as it was in Europe.⁵³ The industry's focus on mass production and economic profit resulted in the commercial cinema produced in Hollywood being both conservative and liberal in its values. This situation may have boosted the emergence of a leftist and/or non-commercial film counterculture in the United States, with magazines such as *Experimental Cinema* and figures like Harry Alan Potamkin, who advocated for more politically committed audiovisual works. This would become the leftist, non-commercial culture to which some Ibero-American, and especially Latin American, film clubs could connect. The non-commercial film counterculture, often linked with communist ideals, advocated for more politically committed audiovisual works, including not just feature films but also short films and documentaries. It stood against the commercial and conservative nature of Hollywood during the classic era. In this sense, I will point toward several academic works focusing on the study of an alternative film culture in the United States during the first half of the twentieth century—a culture tied to the emergence of film clubs in Europe. As I have already mentioned, film clubs as film history has understood them were born in Europe, linked to the avant-garde movements of the interwar period. Their ideals included experimenting with cinematographic language, and many times this experimentation was aimed at transforming it into an art form, that in turn they understood should be politically committed.⁵⁴

Specifically, the Film and Photo League,⁵⁵ which both Nichols (1973) and Campbell (1977; 1979) study, grouped filmmakers, photographers, and film professionals under the Workers International Relief, to which the very politically committed film theorist Béla Balázs and the openly communist critic Leon Moussinac, among others, also belonged. Moussinac was very close to the film club movement. Thus, even though the Photo League did not call itself a film club, it screened movies and widely influenced the development of film culture both in the United States and at the transnational level. The Photo League projected newsreels that the league itself had produced. As Russel Campbell and William Alexander (1981) point out, their newsreels were often screened

Hollywood-produced films aimed specifically at Latin American spectatorship, audiences often complained about the stereotyping that continued to be projected about Latin American cultures.

⁵³ It does not mean that we cannot find exceptions, such as John Huston, who worked as a film critic during the 20s and the 30s in US periodicals and in the 40s he debuted as a director.

⁵⁴ Not all the cinema produced in Hollywood in the classical era lacked social criticism and political commitment, an example is Charles Chaplin's work, precisely so adored among the circles of avant-garde artists, not only in Europe, but also in Latin America.

⁵⁵ Initially called the Workers Film and Photo League, it was an organisation in the U.S. comprised of filmmakers and photographers who believed in film and photography as powerful tools for social change. During the 1930s, in different parts of the U.S., they produced and distributed socially and politically committed documentaries. For a complete account of its history see Campbell (1977; 1979).

alongside other, more commercial films. Campbell (1977) notes that, through its affiliation to the “Internationale Arbeiterhilfe or Workers International Relief (WIR), founded at Lenin’s instigation in Berlin in 1921,” the League also distributed Russian and European films in the United States. Paying close attention to the WIR’s activities is particularly relevant, given that it was through this organisation that the producer Mezhrabpom-Russ was created. In their pioneering work, Campbell and Alexander pushed their transnational perspective:

This company was to be responsible for many of the more significant Soviet features of the period, including Pudovkin’s *MOTHER*, *END OF ST. PETERSBURG*, *STORM OVER ASIA* and *DESERTER*, Vertov’s *THREE SONGS ABOUT LENIN*, and the first Soviet sound film, Ekk’s *ROAD TO LIFE*. Münzenberg was to claim credit for the WIR for the international perspective of many of Mezhrabpom’s productions, such as *STORM OVER ASIA*, which he termed ‘the first film to thrust deeply into the chaos of imperialist politics.’ Campbell (1977, s/n)⁵⁶

In this sense, assessing the Film and Photo League’s impact may prove worthwhile, adding nuance to our descriptions of what we call film clubs. We are interested in exploring this initiative due to the emphasis given by the club to a specific type of audiovisual production, very close to what we understand by amateur filmmaking, and very different from that of the Parisian circles of the early film clubs.

Additionally, we may also find other film clubs, such as Cinema Club of Rochester, created in 1928, and Cinema Crafters of Philadelphia, both of which had ties to the Film and Photo League (Horak 1995). While Horak’s compilation of texts does not explicitly aim to address film club initiatives, it inevitably addresses film clubs when discussing non-professional film, given their close ties to amateurism. As the author notes: “Professionalism was equated with commercialism, while amateurism connoted artistic integrity. This discourse also identifies personal expression with formal experimentation, a dualism repeated continually in contemporary aesthetic manifestoes and reviews, and echoed in the polemics of the second American avant-garde” (Horak 1995, 20). Maya Deren was one of the people at the helm of this second American avant-garde, which took root in the 1940s. Her ubiquitous text, “Amateur versus professional” (1965), specifically addresses the issue Horak points out as having articulated film discourse in the western world, and especially in the United States, throughout the first half of the twentieth century. This penchant for the avant-garde in Horak’s book, as well as in Bruce Posner’s work (2001), leads us to consider amateur cinema as having played a fundamental role in the film club movement, as both amateur cinema and film clubs developed at the same time.⁵⁷ Furthermore, if we follow Malte Hagener’s argument (2007), we could consider film clubs the exhibition spaces of the

⁵⁶ Here, the author cites Willi Muenzenberg in *Solidarität: Zehn Jahre Internationale Arbeiterhilfe 1921-1931*. Berlin: Neuer Deutscher Verlag, 1931, page 513. I cite the online version of Campbell’s article: <http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinessays/JC14folder/FilmPhotoIntro.html#n2>

⁵⁷ In fact, as we will see some film clubs of the time launched with the goal of producing amateur cinema. As such, in terms of representation criteria, film clubs focusing on amateur cinema would have to be taken into account when mapping a traceable network of Ibero-American film clubs from the first half of the twentieth century.

avant-garde. It is no wonder that these spaces are alluded to in studies on the early twentieth century avant-garde's relationship to amateurism.

Considering this brief overview of some of the literature on twentieth century non-commercial US film culture in regards to film clubs, we might conclude that two issues stand out in terms of the potential development of a film club culture, as well as in terms of the articulation of film societies as a counterpoint to commercial Hollywood cinema: initiatives with a penchant for Soviet cinema's pedagogical model, on the one hand, and amateur cinema, on the other. Film studies have yet to explore further how this non-commercial, US film culture of the first half of the twentieth century was related to other countries and regions, as well as how this culture circulated and what it gained from the circulation processes.⁵⁸

Having alluded to the US model, which, like Hagener, I consider different from Europe's, we should now look at the French case, given that it still stands as the most paradigmatic model. As noted in the last section, Paris is considered the crib of the film club phenomenon. As such, its initiatives, which blossomed in the 1920s, are the most studied in Europe. It would make no sense to divest this phenomenon from the other movements that marked cultural life in this time and space. Paris's importance as a cultural centre over the first half of the twentieth century is broadly recognised—though its relevance dissolved when the Second World War displaced many of those who once drove the cultural movement. Still, this did not keep the French capital from regaining its cultural relevance after the Second World War.

As mentioned above, academic interest in film clubs can be traced back to Christophe Gauthier's pioneering study (1999) on film clubs and specialised theatres in Paris from 1920 to 1929. Gauthier's work is key for two reasons. First off, it sparked the subsequent broadening of this interest within film studies. Secondly, its archival work is exceptionally rigorous, allowing others to theorise and build upon it. The author published an annex listing all the specialised theatres and film clubs in Paris at the time, along with a description of each. As such, his work provides access to information that would otherwise remain disperse, allowing more research to build upon it. Likewise, Gauthier adopts an historic perspective, highlighting the actors who boosted and supported various initiatives, as well as the many organs, institutions, and social groups interested in film clubs, some of which were actually founded with film clubs at the root. Several specialised press publications, for instance, either ended up inciting the creation of certain film clubs (as with the aforementioned *Journal du ciné-club*, founded in 1920), or were actually founded after the launch of a given film club (such as *Cinéa*, the magazine Delluc founded in 1921 after leaving the *Journal du ciné-club*). Likewise, Gauthier took on the task of categorizing Paris's theatres and film clubs by type, focusing on the kinds of films they screened and on their audiences. As such, Gauthier's work

⁵⁸ Masha Salazkina has devoted herself to research on how Soviet cinema circulated worldwide (2023). Enrique Fibla's thesis also traces the circulation of a left-wing film culture in Spain (2018). We also find two related publications edited by both of them, which deal precisely with this relationship between amateurism and politically committed film production and distribution circuits (Salazkina and Fibla-Gutiérrez 2018; 2020).

stands as an encyclopaedic cornerstone that any film club analysis must necessarily turn back to.

If we compare Gauthier's work to the research we aim to take on here, several differences stand out. First off, my work analyses a different geographic framework. Gauthier's commendable *La passion du cinéma* (1999) solely focuses on Paris. As a consequence, one can only begin to formulate a theorisation on the film club phenomenon with his text, given that Paris's context is practically impossible to export to other contexts, especially non-European ones. Secondly, Gauthier's text provides almost null possibilities of understanding the film club phenomenon as a transnational project. In this sense, his work's value lies in the fact that it can be compared to other studies on initiatives developed in local spaces (Tom Gunning's research (1999) on the Dutch Filmliga, as well as MacDonald's (2017) on the Film Society of London).⁵⁹

Christophe Gauthier's book appears to follow works by Fremaux and De Baeque (1995) in terms of the history of cinephilia in the French context. The most interesting feature of the Fremaux and De Baeque's proposal is its focus on the practices that stemmed from cinematographic affinity. The title of Gauthier's book—*La passion du cinéma: cinéphiles, ciné-clubs et salles spécialisées à Paris de 1920 à 1929*—draws on this love for cinema and even contextualises it, to the point that said context would appear inextricable from the film club phenomenon. The way it is conceptualised, cinephilia is understood as an impulse that pushes those who believe in film to become militant for its recognition as the seventh art form.

Still, we must keep in mind that motivations beyond cinephilia—political ones, for instance—may have led cinemagoers to push the emergence of film clubs. Indeed, if we step away from the French context and turn back to film as a pedagogical tool, cinephilia loses some of its power, given its specificity within a certain space-time context—early-twentieth-century Paris—when the elite sought to instil a certain kind of film club project. Nonetheless, this does not mean that we can divest the public from cinephilia: people had to actually go to the theatres, or the pedagogical function would not be fulfilled either. Indeed, the pedagogical function only worked because film embodied a form of mass-media communication. In reference to the period at hand, Malte Hagener highlights the fact that the “state officials had also begun to realise that modern mass media, such as cinema and radio, could be an effective platform for governing and controlling a mass society” (2014, 2) as one of the main reasons behind the emergence of film culture. In any case, when it comes to film clubs with pedagogical aims, it might make sense to use less passionate terms than cinephilia when referring to organisers' motives, such as political commitments could be.

The discussion around the idea of cinephilia and mass media communications harkens us back to the debate between massive, indoctrinating, commercial, "American cinema," on the one hand, and elitist, avant-garde, anti-American, cult cinema on the other. This opposition—which no doubt existed in certain environments at the time of study—was neither clear nor well defined. Emmanuelle Loyer (1992) addresses this in her analysis of the critical discourse around Parisian film clubs in contrast to Hollywood

⁵⁹ In any case, no exhaustive mappings of other places exist. The only comparable example would be Hagener's (2007), cited above.

cinema. Her analysis shows that, while anti-American discourse was highly present, the specialised public's avid interest in Charles Chaplin, Orson Welles, and D.W. Griffith would preclude obvious classifications and opposing positions. In fact, we can find a similar paradox in statements by film critic Luis Cardoza y Aragón, whom we cited earlier in allusion to anti-Americanism: he shows no clear proclivity for one cinema over another, though we may take note of his tendency to select works according to which specific feature he aims to highlight.⁶⁰

Film should not be a medium for mere storytelling and description, but for invention, knowledge, and absolute creation. What we might call poetic film. We are in the great era of prose: some are excellent and definitive, like the work by Chaplin—the first classic, the great primitive future. Other, more tentative, essentially poetic ones are once again being attempted in the USSR. A few years ago, Antonin Artaud, who is currently in Mexico, made *La coquille et le clergyman* as a sign, a signal that later took hold in *El perro andaluz* [sic.] (by Dalí and Buñuel), followed by the beautiful film *La Edad de Oro*, by the same Spanish authors (Cardoza y Aragón 2010, 111–12).

As such, while we have pointed out some of the differences between the motivations behind the emergence of film clubs in Europe's cultural capital at the time, on the one hand, and in Latin America, on the other, their respective film club projects did share several features, as noted in the above citation. Nonetheless, we cannot take for granted that Ibero-America's model followed Paris's exactly. In this sense, one of the assumptions we might question is the idea that film clubs, as a general norm, emerged in metropolitan centers.

Film societies were typical in large metropolitan centres, which had a large enough density of artists and intellectuals interested in the novel and innovative use of film. Even though there were similar efforts in 'marginal' places like Portugal, Poland or Denmark, these were not as continuous, as broad or as closely interrelated as the phenomena that I am dealing with here (Hagener 2007, 77).⁶¹

The lack of attention academics have paid to film clubs outside metropolitan centres (Paris, Berlin, Amsterdam, and London, as per Hagener) may stem from the assumption that other, less "stable" spaces—to use a term from the Actor-Network Theory—cannot be considered film clubs. This research aims to demonstrate that projects we may consider film clubs in fact existed in other places, which have been called marginal, espousing different practices than those established in the Paris.

Interesting research analysing other film club initiatives in the European context—beyond Paris—is also available. For instance, Jamie Sexton (2008) has examined the British context; Lars Gustav Andersson (2014) has looked at Sweden; Céline Linssen (1999), Hans Schoots (2000), and Tom Gunning (2014) have provided us with details and

⁶⁰ Cardoza y Aragón's predilection for Charles Chaplin was shared by the surrealists in Paris who wrote about film: Luis Buñuel, Antonin Artaud, Jean Cocteau, and Jean Epstein were all interested in Chaplin, despite their anti-American discourse.

⁶¹ Despite this statement, Malte Hagener's next volume provides nuance on the dichotomy between centre and periphery, considering these terms to be in "constant flux and transformation" (2014, 8).

discussion on the Dutch Filmliga; Paulo Granja (Granja 2006; 2007) has looked at Portugal; and Greg de Cuir (2014) has studied Yugoslavia (Hagener 2014, 2), Fernando Ramos has looked into the film clubs under dictatorship (2021).

Jamie Sexton's (2008) work focuses on the study of the interwar period in Great Britain, studying the modernist and non-commercial currents that emerged thanks to institutions like the Film Society of London and magazines like *Close Up*, *Cinema Quarterly*, and *Film Art*. In this sense, the author focuses on both reception and experimental production to study this forgotten moment in British cinema history. Sexton analyses the elements that made up the alternative, British film culture that blossomed between 1918 and 1939 thanks to a network of agents interested in non-commercial cinema. Hagener (2007) also addresses the London Film Society—a high-impact film club—in his work on film clubs, studying its international relationships and highlighting the differences between the Film Society and other film clubs backed by England's working class, both of which operated at the same time. "Federation of Workers' Film Societies was set up simultaneously with the London chapter, so a nationwide network was conceptualised from the very beginning" (Hagener 2007, 97). In contrast to the Film Society, which drew the intellectual bourgeoisie, which was interested in the avant-garde, film clubs from the Federation of Workers were more pedagogically and politically oriented.

Hagener's book *The Emergence of Film Culture. Knowledge, Production, Institution Building, and the Fate of the Avant-Garde in Europe* (2014), includes texts by Lars Gustav Andersson on Sweden, by Greg de Cuir on Yugoslavia, and by Tom Gunning on the Filmliga. These case studies' perspectives and methodologies follow the transnational focus that defines Hagener's research. As such, the studies showcase these nodes within a great web of transnational exchange and cultural transfer, upholding the kind of research that these complex spaces require.

Excepting the Portuguese and former Yugoslavian cases, we must recognise that in film studies the film club phenomena that developed in France, Great Britain, Germany, and the Netherlands have received far more attention. In terms of the Scandinavian context, *A Companion to Nordic Cinema*, edited by Mette Hjort and Ursula Lindqvist (2016), stands out, as it adopts a transnational focus to address many of the issues I have outlined throughout this section—commenting on film culture, cinephilia, and audiences, as well as on the relationship between Nordic cinema and the global scale, both at the industry level and from the reception perspective. Nonetheless, the rest of Europe—specifically Eastern and Southern Europe—is left out, except for Spain and Portugal, which we will address here as well.⁶² In most cases, the reason why certain regions are left out is that documentation on pioneering, non-commercial, and often-unfinanced projects may not be available or has been lost. As such, locating and preserving this documentation—if it still exists—implies additional economic costs that researchers often cannot afford.

⁶² An example of a comparative study of film clubs under dictatorship (Germany and Spain) during the 50s and 60s stands out: *Cinephilie unter der Diktatur. Filmkultur in Spanien und der DDR in den 1950er und 1960er Jahren*.

We must address two more points before concluding this section on the state of European and US film clubs. In the European case, the film club phenomenon became especially entrenched during the interwar period and, in some contexts, film clubs likely existed before the First World War as Michael Cowan shows (2023), and also Laurent Mannoni (1993) in Paris's *Le Cinéma du Peuple* (1913). When the Second World War erupted, many film clubs and related projects—such as magazines—went into exile:

However, the avant-garde culture of the interbellum did not vanish or go completely underground, it just shifted its terrain after World War Two. The energy flows that had ebbed between the cities of modernism and generated so much activity before World War Two shifted after 1945 from the imaginary axis Paris-Berlin-Moscow to the axis across the Atlantic, more specifically in the case of film, to the connection between New York and Paris (Hagener 2007, 236).

Here, Hagener refers to the culture of the avant-garde, which pushed a certain type of film culture and a specific kind of film club in Europe's metropolises. Hagener also addresses the fact that many filmmakers were displaced and ended up exiled in the United States:

The United States was possibly the most avid receiver of European avant-garde culture of the interwar period: Hans Richter and Oskar Fischinger, Man Ray and George Pal, Marcel Duchamp and Alexander Hackenschmied (Hammid), René Clair and Jean Renoir, Luis Buñuel and Iris Barry, Siegfried Kracauer and Jay Leyda – all these activists from an earlier period found temporary or permanent refuge in the US. Through their work and their legacies they planted the seeds that would grow and prosper into the independent or alternative movements that came into existence in various places around the United States, most notably in New York and San Francisco (2007, 236).

We might also add that many others—such as Luis Buñuel—would move to Latin American countries. In fact, Benjamin Péret (1899-1959), Remedios Varo (1908-1963), Leonora Carrington (1917-2011), Wolfgang Paalen (1905-1959), Alice Rahon (1904-1987), Eva Sulzer (1902-1990), and Kati Horna (1912-2000) all moved from Paris to Mexico. Thus, we should look back to how this exile may have affected the development of film club projects. Often, these artists first travelled to the United States and then moved on to other countries in the Americas, such as Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico, where their projects would take up new forms and ultimately become more transnational.

In conclusion, the literature on the study of film clubs in the European and US contexts has mostly focused on addressing this phenomenon in metropolises, leaving out smaller cities within these same national frameworks. On top of the degree of centralisation in most proposals, which have honed in on western and northern Europe and the United States, this underscores the urgency of decentralizing our perspective when analysing film clubs in order to unearth other initiatives that could add nuance to our current definition. Including the experience of currently neglected spaces would allow us to adopt a transnational perspective and follow the tenets of cultural transfer, giving way to a more open, inclusive, and comprehensive understanding of various film cultures' institutionalisation processes at the global level.

2.1.2 The History of Film clubs in Ibero-America

As noted above, the film clubs that emerged in Ibero-America during the first half of the twentieth century have received lots of attention from scholars, while most of them as part of national histories. Among the most well-known film clubs that have received more attention we find the Cine Club Español (Gubern 1999) and the Chaplin Club founded in 1928 in Rio de Janeiro (Hertz 2006; Gatti 2009; Alves dos Santos 2012; Lourenço 2011).

As this section will show, on top of that, we may note a burgeoning interest in studying the film club phenomenon, mostly in master and doctoral theses devoted to the topic. Likewise, we may highlight that Brazilian film clubs have been far more studied than those in the rest of Ibero-America. One of my hypotheses on why film clubs in Brazil have garnered more academic attention is tied to the role they played and continue to play in the history of film. The fact that the phenomenon is still alive today has helped maintain its visibility. We may find a number of texts that focus on fleshing out the social function of film clubs today, especially from pedagogical and political perspectives (Azevedo 1997; Pimentel Neto 2008; Baldini and Baldi 2013; Alves et al. 2016).⁶³

In Latin America, the first wave of film clubs started between the late 1920s to the early 1930s. The second wave was influenced by the end of the Second World War, but also by the uprisings and social movements of the 1960s that triggered aesthetic and political waves within the film world, including Third Cinema and Brazil's Cine Novo. Latin America's second wave's start went from the victory of the Cuban revolution (1959) to the mid '60s and was directly tied to revolutionary movements.⁶⁴ Meanwhile, the second wave of Ibero-American film clubs has been more studied within the context of

⁶³ I believe that the reason why cineclubism is still more prevalent in Brazil than in other Ibero-American countries, or at least is still being researched as a contemporary phenomenon in Brazil more than elsewhere, as our literature review shows, is due to a historical tendency. As we will show later, the relationships that were historically established in Brazil between educational spaces, and education in values such as religious communities, and film clubism, were very strong. I believe that, despite the fact that these structures no longer exist in the same way, the link between non-commercial cinema shown in film clubs and education is still valid. And this legacy is what facilitates the existence, even today, of film clubs or organisations that screen films to discuss them later. I do not want to say that film clubs do not exist in other Ibero-American countries, because they do exist, but clearly the number of them is less, as we can deduce from contemporary texts dedicated to the subject. Another reason that may have maintained the vitality of film clubs in Brazil today probably has to do with the social function they have fulfilled, not only as educational spaces, but also as spaces for critical reflection that are generally very politically engaged. See as an example the theoretical proposals of Felipe Macedo (2017), film club member and researcher closely linked to the phenomenon.

⁶⁴ In his master thesis, "Le cinéclub comme institution du public: Propositions pour une nouvelle histoire," Luis Felipe Bacelar de Macedo writes about the Brazilian context: "In a completely different context, more than 60 years after the first film clubs, another example harkens us back to the same conclusions, despite its entirely different conditions. Throughout Brazil's military regime (1964-1985), film clubs multiplied considerably in response, supporting the popular resistance against the dictatorship. This stands as another case in which we may glean the film club's character as a public organisation, as this work aims to show" (2017, 64).

Latin American cinema from the 1960s and '70s. At the time, many of the initiatives in the world of cinema, including film clubs, stood out for their political commitment, as we see in the example of the Nouvelle Vague in France, whose members were avid moviegoers who fed audiences to alternative exhibition circuits, such as film clubs and the Cinematheque after the Second World War (Neupert 2002). While Europe's second wave flaunted its political commitments, such as Latin America's second wave did, Latin America's first wave also had slightly different goals than the film clubs that emerged in Europe over the first half of the twentieth century—as we will now see. At the very least, Latin America's first wave has been more studied from the sociological perspective, paying attention to the relationship between film clubs and education, film clubs and religion and film clubs and politics. Meanwhile in Europe the first wave is been assessed more aesthetically, as we have already shown in the section above

Meanwhile, Latin American cinema history from the end of the nineteenth century to the first half of the twentieth century has been “examined almost exclusively through the lens of national cinema. Most scholars of transnational tendencies in Latin American cinema have focused on the present moment, with some critical interest also devoted to the continental—and tricontinental—scope of the political modernist cinema of the 1960s and 1970s” (Navitski and Poppe 2017, 2). Films from the first half of the twentieth century has been little studied from the transnational perspective—excepting Navitski and Poppe, as well as the scholars published in their book, which I will address later on. Given that theirs is a minority position, the transnational theoretical frameworks proposed in my research are quite innovative when it comes to approaching the context at hand.

Here, I am outlining several relevant topics when it comes to film club studies, many of which have come up in research adopting a similar focus to my own. These subjects include 1) cosmopolitanism and its relationship to the emergence of regional, national, transnational, global, and world film cultures (Navitski 2018; Rozsa 2019; Amieva Collado 2022); 2) localised practices among publics with certain motivations (Caicedo González 2012); 3) modern aesthetics and film's social function (Cuarterolo 2017); 4) the circulation of Soviet cinema and its opposition to commercial cinema (Welles 2017; Fibla-Gutiérrez 2018); and 5) film clubs' motivations in terms of film circulation, production, exhibition, and preservation (Rozsa 2017; Bedoya 2009). While these topics are all crucial to my research, we may observe that film club studies focusing on Ibero-America have generally addressed different issues, adopting more national frameworks. In contrast, the following topics come up the most in Ibero-American film club studies: 1) the relationship between film clubs, government ideology and censorship, with film clubs often viewed in terms of their opposition to state policies (Cunha 2013; Ramos Arenas 2021); 2) film clubs' pedagogical functions, especially their various ideological currents, such as anarchism, or educational initiatives based on Catholic values (Malusá 2007; Escorcía Cardona 2008; Godoy 2006); 3) the ties between film clubs and other national institutions preserving film materials, such as *filmotecas* and *cinematecas*, especially in light of their preservation policies and their relationships to the practices taken up by the groups who established film clubs (Pougy 1996; Correa Junior 2007); 4) the relationship between film clubs and film criticism published in specialised and cultural magazines (Rodríguez Álvarez 2002a; Joana Isabel 2008; A. C. Pereira 2010; Broitman 2021); 5) the ties between specific groups of intellectuals and certain film

clubs, or between a given film maker and certain film clubs (Xavier 1975; 1978; Gubern 1999; Castro 2000; Rodrigues 2010; Frias 2015); and, from a more traditional stance, 6) the understanding of film clubs within national film history (Couselo 2008; Granja 2006).⁶⁵ Finally, when it comes to studies on Brazil, we may observe a great fascination for film club audiences and their practices (Gómez Serrudo and Bello León 2016; Granja 2007; Bacelar de Macedo 2016),⁶⁶ which is less common in studies on film clubs in other contexts.

While Felipe Macedo (2016) research is focused on the Lusophone case, his approach is among the closest to what I aim to develop in my research. The author is especially interested in the functioning of film clubs and their audiences' practices. Furthermore, he considers the film club phenomenon as an example of audience appropriation. This appropriation is manifest through practices like yelling, commenting, or singing during, before, and after screenings. Although in the case studies that I propose in my thesis I have found few references to this type of practice, in the case study of Barcelona we will find similar behaviors described in primary sources. Macedo views nickelodeons and commercial exhibition spaces in direct opposition, as spaces aiming to repress or regulate these uncivilised behaviours in the practice of film appropriation. Furthermore, Macedo also attributes the birth of film clubs to popular initiatives stemming from early-twentieth-century workers' associations. While he focuses his analysis on the Brazilian case, probably many of his hypotheses could apply to other contexts, but since no research has been done in other contexts on earlier film societies (prior the emergence of film clubs), it is difficult to find references to the subject.

This concise review of the literature on film clubs in Ibero-America shows that the transnational perspective remains uncommon when it comes to our object of study. In fact, the few works that do some research on the relationships between film clubs, beyond their own national frameworks, do so in order to trace similarities or differences among their contexts of analysis. For instance, Fátima Sebastiana Gomes Lisboa's "O cineclubismo na América Latina: idéias sobre o projeto civilizador do movimento francês no Brasil e na Argentina (1940-1970)" (2007) reflects upon the importance of the film club movement in the construction of Latin American cinema by studying the Argentine and Brazilian cases' French appropriations. This chapter's interest when it comes to our research lies in the fact that it traces several international relationships that were important at the time for the cultural field. Nonetheless, it reproduces the idea of a innovative centre and an imitative periphery:

I believe that the film club phenomenon emerged in our country, and in Argentina, as an alternative space for the exhibition of cultural films. Its expansion from the end of the 1940s to the early 1950s is basically tied to cult European cinema's resistance against US cinema. Furthermore, it can be tied to

⁶⁵ Despite the differences between the European and Ibero-American film club contexts, we may also observe a tendency to study film clubs in Latin America from the national-history perspective, that is, as phenomena that bolster more traditional narratives.

⁶⁶ While the Brazilian case is the most popular, we may also find examples on Colombia, such as Nelson Antonio Gómez Serrudo and Eliana Bello León's book *La vida del cine en Bogotá en el siglo XX: Públicos y sociabilidad*, which also employs a national focus.

the Brazilian and Argentinean intellectual elite's aversion for the cinema these countries produced for the broader public. Faced with American film productions' domination over the exhibition market, film clubs adopted European cinema in their aesthetic discussions. This way of looking at film club activity reflected the way in which the intellectual elite approached cinema. Culturalist film clubs served as a platform for the elite's approach toward Europe's cinematographic-language-revival movement. As a consequence, the elite adopted European influences in their new, national cinematographies. Having been side-lined from cultural debate and programming around film clubs in the 1940s and '50s, Brazilian and Argentinean film became present in the discussions around national aesthetic research in the 1960s and 70s, with ties to the sociological research that projected them beyond their borders (Gomes Lisboa 2007, 374).

In an attempt to counter these trends, and in order to focus this study on film clubs from the 1920s on, Navitski and Poppe propose using the term cosmopolitanism from a decolonial perspective. Their book on Latin American film cultures bases its approach on Walter Mignolo's decolonial thought in order to avoid centre-periphery dichotomies and the idea of centres as creators and peripheries as imitative locations (Roig-Sanz and Meylaerts 2018).

Mignolo is interested in an 'actually existing cosmopolitanism' that is situated in subaltern experience and ethical practice, rather than a falsely universalising theory. In insisting on the links between cosmopolitanism, colonialism, and capitalist modernity, Mignolo provides a productive point of departure for rereading Latin American film culture and examining how the dynamics of globalisation 'from above' made possible new forms of social experience that held emancipatory potential, even as they intersected with global hierarchies of power and hegemonic processes of state formation (Navitski and Poppe 2017, 4).

Considering film clubs' impact on various visual cultures' institutionalisation processes, and given film's role in artistic modernisation processes, we believe that Walter Mignolo's proposed use of the cosmopolitanism focus would allow us to consider a different modernity⁶⁷ from the one espoused in European and US scholars' classical global history. As is well-known, modernity is sometimes used as an instrument to put forth cultural imperialism (Jameson 2000). As such, we need a change of perspective in order to propose a new categorisation: another type of modernity, composed of socio-political specificities in the Ibero-American region, as well as in other regions outside the European and North-American contexts, that considers cultures as products of

⁶⁷ Thomas Elsaesser distinguishes between three aspects of: "the modern: the 'modernism' of an artistic avant-garde; the 'modernisation', as it affects labour and work, with Fordist production-line techniques replacing the workshop and the craft practices when sound was introduced; and third 'modernity' as a particular attitude to life, in Western societies usually associated with increased leisure time and new patterns of consumption. What makes these distinctions so tricky, but also crucial is that in the domain of cinema, it is not always obvious that one can play off 'modernism' (in the sense of an artistic avant-garde) against the different forms of 'modernisation' (in technology, industry and science) and 'modernity' (in lifestyles, fashion and sexual mores) [...]" (Hagener 2007, 61–62).

international exchange. Instead of opposing national versus international, this project understands the cultural identities of places and persons as a hybrid of regional, intra-regional, and interregional attributes. My research supports the claim that the diversity of film-cultures that expanded at the global level in fact shaped world cinema. In this respect, "borders are seen to have been always permeable, societies always hybrid, and international film history to have been key to the processes of globalization" (Ďurovičová and Newman 2010, 4).⁶⁸

This is what I propose in this section, too: I believe we may construct a different idea of modernity as emerging from the foundations of film club practices, joining various Hispanic and Lusophone regions in order to ultimately consider their contributions to the emergence of the diverse, global film cultures that have persisted to this day. Andrea Cuarterolo's work (2017) pursues this same notion when studying Horacio Coppola as a cultural mediator. Coppola was the founder of one of the most influential film clubs in Argentina's film and visual-arts scene of the early twentieth century. Cuarterolo's pursuit traces the bridges Coppola drew between Argentina and Europe. As such, her work invites one to reflect upon Latin America's contributions to artistic modernity on the international level and thus conceive of the Latin American space as a producer of modernity.

Along the same lines, Sarah Ann Welles (2017) points toward a parallel modernity that was built in Latin America and configured through the reception of the Soviet films circulating among Latin American film clubs (specifically the Brazilian Chaplin Club and the Asociación Amigos del Arte in Argentina). This circulation of early-twentieth-century Soviet cinema is understood as different from the commercial-film circuit. This would also imply that the former's practices were different from the mainstream, as they were associated with the values circulating within Soviet cinema.

With similar aims to Welles's, Irene Rozsa (2017) situates the film club pioneer and cinema professor José Manuel Valdés-Rodríguez's practices in Cuba within an international framework. This cultural mediator's involvement in the film club phenomenon allows us to draw a direct line between film clubs and the various discussions taking place internationally around film as a medium. With the transnational perspective, Rozsa places Cuba on the international modernity map of the time. Rozsa's contributions reinforce Navitski and Poppe's thesis (2017) along with Welles's (2017), by tracing Latin America's contributions to artistic modernity.

Likewise, Rozsa's text allows us to point out two topics of concern for our own research: firstly, Cuba's geostrategic placement in Latin America's geopolitical map of the time,⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Also quoted by Rielle Navitski and Nicolas Poppe (2017, 1). It is important to point out that the optimism of "permeable borders" is only possible when talking about cultural projects promoted and associated with local and national elites, who in most cases led the film club projects that I describe here as transnational.

⁶⁹ As an example, see Emmanuel Vincenot's "Germán Puig, Ricardo Vigón et Henri Langlois, pionniers de la Cinemateca de Cuba" (2004). The article explores the specific conditions around the first Cinemateca de Cuba's creation and disappearance. The article also aims to demonstrate the key role that two intentionally forgotten figures in the history of Cuban cinema played: Germán Puig and Ricardo Vigón. Likewise, the text underlines the decisive help that Henri Langlois provided and reveals the existence of a film preservation centre in Havana right after the 1959 Revolution, with the support of the French

and, secondly, the significant ties between film clubs and education within the Latin American space. This pedagogical function cannot be divorced from the activities carried out in the 1920s. Valdés-Rodríguez's path "shows the unexpected continuity between the avant-garde movement of the 1920s and the institutional developments of the 1940s and 1950s" (Rozsa 2017, 298). As the author displays extensively in her thesis (2019), the ICAIC, an institution considered one of the great achievements by the Castro government within the audiovisual field, actually showed some continuity with the initiatives prior to the revolution and linked to the avant-garde movement (such as the ones organised by the first film clubs that emerged in Cuba), and led by actors such as Valdés-Rodríguez. In fact, many scholars have addressed the second wave of Ibero-American film clubs' pedagogical function, when studying Latin America's film club movement (Godoy 2006; Malusá 2007; Escorcía Cardona 2008; Bedoya 2009).

In the case of Colombia, film clubs were viewed as film schools that opened up a space for film appreciation and creation: "In our country, they [film clubs] distanced themselves from what they stood for in France in the 1920s, given that [in Colombia], they were not strictly private and elitist, as they aimed to bring together, in an alternative space, all of those who were truly interested in the Seventh Art" (Escorcía 2008, 3). Meanwhile, Ricardo Bedoya alludes to the relationship between Lima's film club, the Peruvian Catholic Action movement—which pushed the foundation of film clubs for youths—and the International Catholic Office for Film, which took up the task of issuing moral classifications for films since its founding in the Hague in 1928. Likewise, Bedoya takes a cursory glance at these film clubs' international relations, which would be worth studying further. Above all, he focuses on exposing the ties between the film club and other organs—and not just the Catholic ones, but also certain companies, movie theatres, and universities. In terms of the Spanish context, we may follow a similar train of thought. Enrique Fibla (2018) notes that, even though Cineclub Español's public was quite bourgeois, this film club's pedagogical aims germinated another group of radical critics, including the film critic Juan Piqueras (1904-1936): "Radical film critics criticised the patronizing attitude of enlightened intellectuals and called for a proletarian cinema that emerged organically from the working class itself" (2018, 31). Meanwhile, in Portugal (Cunha 2013; Granja 2007), it appears that the film club network made a dent in the social fabric by opposing Salazar's authoritarian regime. The regime may have pushed back against the club, given that some of the film club movement's most well-known members supported communism.

As previously mentioned, there are two recent doctoral theses examining the Latin American film club movement from a transnational and sociological perspective. Ana Broitman (2021) focused her thesis on the Argentine cinephile context, beginning with the emergence of cinephilia in the 1930s and tracing its institutionalisation through to the 1960s. Meanwhile, Mariana Amieva Collado focuses on the development of the cinematic sphere in Uruguay from the 1940s to the 1960s. Cineclubs are also of

authorities of the time. This article stands among the group of texts addressing film clubs in order to highlight their relationships to film-preservation institutions. Along the same lines, Irene Rozsa's yet unpublished thesis analyses the relationship between Cuban film clubs, their debates, and the ICAIC *cinemateca* that ended up appropriating the Cine club de la Habana's preservation centre in the post-revolutionary period.

significant importance in her thesis, as well as the role of certain cultural and public institutions, such as SODRE and the Uruguayan Film Archive. Both theses make a considerable effort to examine the generation and institutionalisation of the national film fields, as well as the role of international relations and associated actors in these processes. These two examples, alongside previously noted instances, demonstrate the increasing interest in applying a transnational perspective to the study of the history of Ibero American film clubs.

2.1.3 Concluding Remarks

The value that the film club movement assigned to pedagogy was a distinctive feature of Latin American film clubs—and perhaps of Ibero-American ones, too—allowing us to trace this movement’s own, non-imitative but always hybrid genealogy by observing the practices that defined it.⁷⁰ Indeed, the pedagogical question can be directly tied to other features: the film club phenomenon’s labour origins, its communist and/or anarchist ideology, educational efforts based on Christian values, and the circulation of Soviet cinema. At the same time, it is worth noting that women throughout history have worked in education (not just in the education of their children, but in a professional way), which would facilitate, in a certain sense, that they played key roles during the beginnings of the film club movement (Gusmão, Santos, and Duarte 2017). While these topics are not exclusive to the Latin American context, I believe that they had more of an impact in this space than in non-Iberian Europe. Nonetheless, we may recall the League of Nations’ founding of the International Educational Cinematographic Institute (IICE) in 1928. Leaving Benito Mussolini’s appropriation of the project aside (see Alted 2016), the institution’s very name points toward the pedagogical motivations behind its creation. In this sense, we may glean that the pedagogical aims driving the history of the moving image cannot be unfettered from the era of nationalist cinema, which, as Andrew (2009) observes, began with the introduction of sound in film in the late 1920s.

In conclusion, I argue that research on the Ibero-American film clubs that peppered the first half of the twentieth century could be complemented by studying the phenomenon through lesser-used lenses, such as the transnational, postcolonial, and gender perspectives. We have shown that very few studies consider film clubs beyond national borders. Likewise, we still need to establish a specific theory for the Ibero-American context that considers the initiatives that emerged within said context, while refraining from making value assessments based on the parameters used to define film clubs in the so-called cultural centres (in Paris, for instance). As such, we must trace and define the practices that blossomed within Ibero-American film clubs in order to create a theory that can broaden our conception of Western film clubs. These practices’ circulation helped build some of the multiple film cultures that became institutionalised in the western context. Likewise, there is a pressing need to unearth the role that

⁷⁰ One text that I have not yet cited but that I consider pioneering in this sense was written by Josetxo Cerdán: “Buñuel, Urgoiti: Las sesiones sonoras del ‘cineclub español.’” (1995) This text is interesting because of the author’s focus on gramophone use during the Cineclub Español’s sessions, revealing relevant information on the practices taking place within said context.

women played in the film club grid. As we have observed, there are no studies focusing on women as a film club audience, nor on women as film club founders or organisers. The Actor-Network Theory's tenet "follow the actor" may help us reconstruct the void around women that exists as a consequence of the little attention that history has paid to women within the study of film club initiatives.

2.2 A Global Approach to the Study of Ibero-American Film Clubs⁷¹

This chapter is divided into three sections, dedicated to three theoretical perspectives which I view as key to the study of the film club phenomenon. These perspectives have been exposed more generally in the theoretical perspective section of this thesis, but here, I aim to apply them to the study of Ibero-American film clubs over the first half of the twentieth century in a more conceptual and innovative way. These three perspectives are new to research on film clubs and remain underutilized by film historians. These three approaches, and their associated concepts, contribute to a global, decentred understanding of the history of film clubs, just as the title of this section of the thesis suggests. For each of these approaches, I conduct a theoretical review of the concept's application within film history, followed by a proposed application to this thesis's object of study.

Firstly, I seek to advocate for a relational history from the Latourian perspective, articulated through the concepts of connectivity and agency. As explained in the theoretical perspectives section of the first part of this thesis, the Actor-Network Theory's conception of a network would imply that all agents are defined in terms of the network, while the network requires these agents to constitute it in turn, meaning that both network and agent are codependent (Hennion 2016). Thus, the concept of agency is fundamental to our understanding of how the relational history of film clubs is articulated, as it is the relationship between agencies that permits the network's functioning. A connection is a relationship; thus, the duration of relationships, the way in which these relationships are established, and the number of relationships will determine the network's properties. Within this relational perspective, I propose using Social Network Analysis as a methodological tool which I believe to be of great use and that, in some cases, may complement qualitative research (Venturini, Munk, and Jacomy 2019), as long as there is an appropriate network structure available, with sufficient data to enable analysis.

Secondly, I would like to consider the concept of space as well as its related concept of scale. The global perspective (Iriye 2012) has, above all, developed these two concepts. The global perspective allows for the historical analysis of phenomena beyond national frameworks, considering other scales—from the transnational, to the regional, to the local. We will find that our object of study—Ibero-American film clubs from the first half of the twentieth century—shows various nuances when studied from scales beyond the national. Regional relationships were especially important to Latin American film clubs.

⁷¹ This chapter with some modifications is part of another chapter that will be published in Treveri Gennari, Daniela, Lies Van de Vijver and Pier Luigi Ercole (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Comparative New Cinema Histories*. London/New York, Palgrave MacMillan (forthcoming). The chapter is entitled "Towards a global and decentralised history of film cultures. Networks of exchange among Ibero-American film clubs (1924-1958)" and is authored by Clariana-Rodagut, Ainamar and Diana Roig-Sanz. A similar conceptual proposal, though applied to literary studies, was previously published in *Global Literary Studies: key concepts* (2022), authored by Diana Roig-Sanz and Neus Rotger, and published by De Gruyter.

At the same time, these regional-scale relationships were affected by transnational and local relationships between film clubs. The concept of space, conceived globally, not only considers various relational scales, but posits that relationships between spaces defined by different scales exist, as we shall observe.

Lastly, the *longue durée* perspective (Braudel 1949) is fitting for the timeframe addressed by the research at hand. In this sense, I view filmclubism as a phenomenon that emerged from a cumulus of circumstances, rather than from a single invention or event at some specific moment or place. While film clubs as a concept can be traced to the Paris of the 1920s, as we have noted in the state of the art, the idea of watching and discussing films predates the emergence of the film club concept. The idea that all phenomena are the result of circumstances that develop over time is fundamental to understanding film clubs in all of their complexity. This temporal dimension in the study of Ibero-American film club history allows for the inclusion of initiatives with fewer ties to the elite, initiatives that prove more diverse in every sense, adding nuance to and amplifying the history of Western film clubs.

2.2.1 Relational and Network Approach: Connectivity and Agency

The role of connectivity (and hyperconnectivity) and the relevance of networks as the emerging form of social organisation are at the core of a global perspective on film history. Researchers are still struggling to analyse the existence (or lack) of relations, flows, circulation, mobility, or displacement that can shed light on processes of cultural transformation. Certainly, network analysis, as it was described by Wasserman and Faust (1994), is still not fully expanded in film studies, but some interesting initiatives appearing in other fields (digital and intellectual history, literary studies) may contribute to this aim, see for example Grandjean (2018). Indeed, the analysis of movements allows us to rethink uneven or apparently asymmetrical relations, as well as understanding connections as paths of power transmission or exclusion. Thus, we can discover how connections, networks, and connectivity homogenise film cultures or make them more diverse across the world. Thus, tracing the connections between film clubs in spaces such as the Ibero-American region can allow us to understand film club experiences that have been invisibilised until now, but that played relevant roles in Western film club history and advanced the development of diverse film cultures, often independently of broadly known European film cultures.

Likewise, we should also think about the political, cultural, linguistic, religious, and economic constraints that encourage or slow down these connections and any subsequent cultural transfers (Espagne and Werner 1987; Espagne 2013) that were deployed, if we assume connections as necessary precursors to such transfers. Thus, we could situate the ideas of transfer, exchange, and impact, but also of continuities, frictions, and discontinuities, that emerge when analysing relations and interactions over time, even though the connections leading to meaningful qualitative impact are often very difficult to chart.

Finally, adopting a global perspective for film and cinema history and mixing it with a micro-historical approach allows us to highlight the role of lesser-known agents, including a number of women, in the building of transnational connections.⁷² The idea of agency also enables researchers to analyse agents with hybrid identities due to migration movements, displacement, or any sort of mobility for professional or personal reasons causing them to fluctuate between multiple spaces. Thus, agents can be described and related using social network analysis in order to shed light on their greater or lesser centrality in various spaces of sociability, as we will see in the case studies. In this sense, one of the main challenges ahead is to study their multifaceted profiles and analyse them in relation to their various sources and archives. We should consider the biases that film history has introduced by overlooking the gender perspective, one which new generations of researchers applying global and decentralised approaches have adopted as their own. In fact, from a materialist, feminist (Grosz 1999; Haraway 1989; 2003), posthumanist, and Latourian approach (Latour 1993; 2005), agency as a force of action is not only human, but also pertains to objects and other beings (actants, in Latour's words), and can circulate through networks to generate connections and circulate (Clariana-Rodagut and Hagener 2023).

Studying film clubs and their networks in Ibero-America can help us value the contributions of the region's cultures to the emergence of artistic modernity, showcasing the ties between the constructions of local, national, and regional Ibero-American modernities, on the one hand, and the modernity being constructed in already well-studied cultural capitals (Charle and Roche 2002) across the Atlantic, such as Paris, London, and Berlin, on the other.

2.2.1.1 Networks of Ibero-American film clubs, a mix of data-driven approach and qualitative research

With the goal of demonstrating the potential of applying digital tools to the history of film, I aim to analyse Ibero-American film club networks from 1917 to 1958. Meanwhile, a network and global perspective and the use of digital tools provide an innovative way of studying film clubs—privileging the analysis of connections between these entities and the agents involved therein. I aim at analysing the qualities of a network of exchange between film clubs, showing the space each of them occupied within the network, as well as its potential functions. Working with networks would also allow us to detect the presence of cultural mediators, especially those with key functions within the network, either because they connect different clusters within the networks, play central roles, or share multiple contacts. This approach contributes with a new focus to the traditional history of film, as it can resituate certain initiatives (such as film clubs and related journals) and place specific agents (including women) in the center of the analysis.

With this goal, I have created a network of film clubs using a database of film clubs which goes from 1989 to 1959 in Ibero-America ([Visualisation 1](#)). The sources I have used to

⁷² In order to apply this perspective, I will devote an entire chapter to women and film clubs (2.4), and three case studies constructed as micro-histories (3.1, 3.2, 3.3).

create this database are diverse, including primary sources (cinema and cultural journals, newspapers, institutional and personal letters and historical documents) and secondary literature (such as national histories of cinema, thesis, or biographies about film club participants).⁷³ This database also includes the work done by Rielle Navitski, published as a database entitled “Latin American Cineclubs, 1927-1965” in the [following platform](#). Navitski also published “Cineclub programming combined” (2022) consisting of another very complete database including the screenings programme of some Uruguayan, Argentinian and Mexican film clubs mostly active during the 40’s, 50’s and 60’s. The database used for the analysis presented here also includes Irene Rosza’s findings in her thesis “On the Edge of the Screen: Film Culture and Practices of Noncommercial Cinema in Cuba (1948-1966)” (2019).⁷⁴ Our database includes 423 film clubs that operated in Ibero-America at some point between 1889 and 1959.⁷⁵

In the network, we can see nodes representing 1. Film clubs, 2. people associated with or related to Ibero-American film clubs divided by gender—as these agents participated, throughout their lives, in various events where they established ties to other agents involved in different film-related entities—, and 3. other kinds of agents and actants (Latour 2005) that circulated as well. The latter would include magazines and other publications—such as books—as well as the institutions associated with film clubs, as with cinematheques and the associations in which film club members participated. In this sense, the relationships are deemed direct when two separate film clubs, as entities, have ties, or indirect when the relationship is established via other agents. The diversity of agents at hand implies that the relationships between agents may have been highly diverse. For instance, ties between film clubs could have emerged thanks to the circulation of a certain human or non-human actor: a film may have circulated between two film clubs, generating a relationship between them.⁷⁶ Likewise, a film club may be associated to a magazine, with the magazine’s organisation founding or financing the film club. Perhaps two people who participated in two different film clubs may have published in the same magazine, generating an indirect tie between film clubs. As

⁷³ Regarding the data from the secondary and primary sources, I have entered the data manually. I have not applied data mining, as data on film clubs is usually scarce and very scattered, especially regarding the first film clubs. In this respect, only a few number of sources are digitized. A very valuable source listing the available digitized journals is the [Domitor’s Journals Project](#).

⁷⁴ I am very grateful to them for sharing with us their work. The database I am using for this graph is not published yet, but it is the most complete database I am aware of on film clubs in Ibero-America during the period above-mentioned.

⁷⁵ We will use this same [dataset](#) in the next chapter, in which I will propose a periodisation of film clubs for the context at hand and I will discuss the concept of “film club” in order to understand the potential biases that have affected the gap on the sources.

⁷⁶ In terms of the circulation of films, even though I know about the exchanges of film and even programming between film clubs, we cannot study these kinds of exchanges because they were subject to which copies were available, and the latter is almost impossible to trace. We may analyse the transnational circulation of a given film by focusing on the physical reel itself, or not (Clariana-Rodagut and Hagener 2023). In this case, the copies may prove relevant but are not required for the study of circulation.

Suárez-Mansilla and Ikoff (2023) demonstrate, a relationship may also be established through the circulation of a given idea.⁷⁷

Besides film clubs and the people associated to them, the visual shows the magazines and institutions associated to film clubs and film club goers. Thus, the main nodes may be summed up as including film clubs and people related to them, from which we have established relationships with other actors, such as magazines, books, events, and organisations, which we included as long as they were related to the film field. For instance, we may observe María Luz Morales, one of the case studies in this thesis. María Luz Morales's emergence in the network stems from her active participation in the Barcelona Film Club. Besides her relationship with the Barcelona Film Club, many other nodes surround María Luz Morales—including the magazines to which she contributed film-related texts. Likewise, she has ties to people with whom she worked in the film field. On the other hand, in the visual, we have included the professional activities of people with ties to film clubs, as long as said activities are related to the film field. These activities also lead us to the persons associated to them. Furthermore, we have included the events organised by film clubs, whether screenings or other kinds of activities.

Another example of a relationship between people—one that isn't palpable in the case of María Luz Morales—is that between two people who are a couple, when one of the two has ties to the film club world. To make the decision of including romantic partners, I have operated under the assumption that the women in romantic relationships with men who participated actively in the Ibero-American film field of the first half of the twentieth century, and especially in film clubs, also actively participated in the film field. Let us take the case of the Uruguayan Fernando Pereda (1899-1994), a film collector who also participated in the magazine *Cine club*. He and his wife, Isabel Gilbert (1914-1990), hosted a film club at their home in Montevideo in 1938. It was through my qualitative research that I found a published photograph of this film club, and many women appear in the photo.⁷⁸ Although there is no available register of women's participation in the first film clubs, the photograph provides evidence of their involvement.

At a glance, we may note that most of the nodes that represent film clubs in this visual are scattered and disconnected. This is due to the lack of data empirically showing the relationships between clubs. In this sense, the study I have conducted suggests the following: firstly, that working with scattered and not always abundant data means that, in order to trace the relationships between the objects in my network, I must include long chains of interaction, so that I may identify the relationships between agents with links to film clubs and ultimately establish a network of film clubs.⁷⁹ In this respect, focusing on people with ties to film clubs has not sufficed to conduct a network analysis, since I have remained unable to corroborate these relationships and can only generate

⁷⁷ Indeed, Suárez-Mansilla and Ikoff point to the circulation of certain ideas in film criticism in Argentina, Brazil, Spain, and France, from 1910 to 1930, through critic José María Podestá (Suárez-Mansilla and Ikoff 2023).

⁷⁸ A copy of this image may be appreciated in the text written by my colleague Alessio Cardillo and I: <https://blogs.uoc.edu/in3/transnational-networks-of-ibero-american-women-in-the-silent-era/>

⁷⁹ Deployed by Alessio Cardillo with the collaboration of Ventsislav Ikoff, both of whom are post-doctoral researchers in the ERC project MapModern- Social Networks of the Past.

chains of interaction, including other events and organisations in which these people participated, allowing us to visualise relationships between film club objects and their agents. That is, in order to generate a dense network of relationships, I must resort to the chains of interaction between, for instance, a person who participates in a film club and another she has met at an event, who then knows another person with ties to the film club. If we limited ourselves to the ties between people with links to film clubs, we would find a very scattered network, with objects that remain unrelated among themselves.⁸⁰ Yet, in most cases, the relationships between film clubs were mediated by a person, screening session, or magazine, among others. In this sense, a consequence of the few known relationships between film clubs is that, in the [network](#), we may observe many star-shaped clusters. These structures have a film club at their centre, surrounded by other activities, people, and institutions. Independently of their size, these clusters tend to be disconnected from the rest of the network. These structures' star shapes are indicative of the little information that I have been able to trace for each of the film clubs at hand. However, by including extensive chains, the network becomes so dense that the object of study begins to blur. To consider the network in terms of sex, we have yet to eliminate all the men from the network, so the data will be even scarcer.

Perhaps the most significant relationships within this visual of the network of film clubs are those to which we have dedicated an entire chapter of this thesis (the case studies in Part III) along with the relationships between Uruguayan and Argentine film clubs. For the former, the amount of information on our studied film clubs and their members is more copious than the information we have on other clubs—sometimes only the year of foundation and the names of a few associated members. The clubs with more abundant information on them would include Cine club Mexicano, Cine club de México, and 16 MM Cinema, which we have studied in terms of the importance of Lola Álvarez Bravo; the Barcelona Film Club, with María Luz Morales; and Cine club de Buenos Aires, with Victoria Ocampo. I have more data on the relationships around these film clubs thanks to the qualitative research that I conducted, and it was the manual introduction of data that allowed me to establish ties between these film clubs and other ones. For instance, it was through María Luz Morales of the Barcelona Film Club and her relationship with film critic Guillem Díaz-Plaja that the latter club established a relationship with Sessions Mirador, another film club that emerged in Barcelona after the Barcelona Film Club.

As to Uruguayan and Argentine film clubs, I have been able to trace their relationships through primary sources, and other researchers have already taken note of such relationships (Broitman 2021; Amieva Collado 2022; Suárez-Mansilla and Ikoff 2023). As many sources show, the relationship between Uruguayan and Argentine film clubs was very intense (S/A 1950; Dimitriu 2007). Members of both film clubs would travel to the capitals of their neighbouring countries, where they would visit friends, exchange films, and participate in shared, regional initiatives (Broitman 2020).

Importantly, as we have shown through these examples, though the [visualisation](#) (and the [dataset](#)) we can explore film clubs that operated at different times within this broad

⁸⁰ Yet, we could easily suspect that there were relationships between film clubs, such as those in Latin America, with proof of such relationships emerging later in time, as in the 1950s, when cinematheques opened in Latin America (Amieva Collado 2022).

period of study. The film clubs that the case studies in this thesis focus on did not coincide in time with the Argentine and Uruguayan film clubs, which operated in the 1950s.

We should also note that one way of establishing more relationships between film clubs would be to trace the circulation of copies of films. This would require exhaustive research in order to find the names of the films that were screened at the film clubs' various sessions, after which we could hypothesise on whether these films were shared with geographically close film clubs, with the same copies being screened. That is, we could hypothesise on the copies' circulation among film clubs. If different copies were in use, we could at least study the programming trends among the various film clubs of a specific region. Now, as we have shown in the case studies in this thesis, tracing screenings is quite challenging, given the breadth of the archival research required. To do so for the 423 film clubs in our database would take quite a long time. The data behind this visualisation is part of the published [dataset](#).

In this case, the few relationships that we have found between film clubs (given the data scarcity), have allowed us to unearth the names of several men. This suggests that we still need to work intensely to historicise the work of women in the development of the film club phenomenon. Without a doubt, this first analysis has made manifest the importance of methodology in approaching minoritised, marginalised, or peripheral objects of study, such as women in Western film clubs. The lack of data could be compensated with a method that casts light on that which—given its invisibilised and overlooked condition—cannot be compared to objects that have already enjoyed abundant study and boast more structured and consistent data. I have thus proposed a few methodologies, such as the creation of long chains. I will outline a few other methods in the section on women and film clubs (2.4.).

Additionally, one of my working goals, is that I aspire to gather data that is valuable due to its quality, rather than its quantity. Alongside the development of methods that serve to highlight the importance of invisibilised actors, another one of my goals is to publish yet unavailable and uncurated data on minoritised objects of study, such as film clubs and women in film history, published in the mentioned [dataset](#). Thus, I seek to carry out historical, qualitative research that will cast light on data that will, at some point, allow for analysis using digital tools, such as Social Network Analysis (SNA).⁸¹ This is the work that I carry out in part three of this thesis, through my case studies.

Regardless, similar analyses studying film club agents and their interactions should be replicated outside the Ibero-American space—this being the first of its kind.

2.2.2 A Global history of film clubs, space and scale

⁸¹ In the chapter dedicated to women and film clubs, I propose certain methodological strategies with which to face this lack of data. Besides its methodological contribution, the third section of this thesis, which focuses on specific case studies, contributes data through microhistories.

Regarding the idea of space, there is no doubt that we need to challenge the relationship between European, US American, and other film cultures worldwide and encourage a more complex idea of world, transnational, and global cinema. In recognising the impact of the market and the film industry, as well as the effects of political, social, economic, or cultural constraints, we must also bear in mind the impact of the “spatial turn” and the specificities of cultural production and circulation in many contexts to avoid reproducing the diffusionist perspectives I am seeking to overcome. The idea of mapping is at the core of critical discussions in many disciplines (such as film, literary, art history) and the idea of multiple spaces (localities, regions, landscapes) and multiple boundaries—new or redrawn—now offer geographical features which are relevant to the analysis of film cultures. Space is not an empty container “in which the unfolding of events over some *durée* could take place” (Tally Jr. 2017, 2). Thus, introducing the space variable within our global perspective on the history of film would not only aggregate more regions for a multi- or transnational study, but also allow us to conceive of space through new coordinates, helping to bring new and less-studied geographies to the fore.

Another determining factor that articulates the film field, from the spatial point of view, is sociotechnology, which not only affects cinema today—as internet now conditions access to certain films in turn—but also made its mark in the past, given that technology and its progress often set the limits, possibilities, and conditions of film screenings. Thus, we may not only study the circulation of global cinema and multiple film cultures beyond the logic of the nation-state (by examining regions such as Río de la Plata, the Caribbean, the Andes, the Caucasus, or Southeast Asia) but we might also look to geographic areas like oceans and mountain ranges. This exercise could lead us to explore the place of the South within the North, South-to-South relations, and interperipheral relations. Using this framework, we can blur the lines of analysis centred on European or Western film, as well as of Eurocentric perspectives emanating from such analyses. When I use the notion of the global properly and endow it with meaning, I aspire to give voice to a broader plurality of film cultures—not only from a supranational perspective, but also from an intranational one, which can help balance out inequalities between spaces in terms of representation and power.

The notion of the global not only challenges our understanding of space and the national boundary, but also other geographical scales. Thus, based on our mutual goal of integrating scales—the local, national, and global—, rather than viewing them as mutually exclusive, I suggest exploring concepts with articulating potential from other disciplines, such as “glocalisation” (Bauman 1998), “translocality” (Von Oppen and Freitag 2010), “entangled histories” (Werner and Zimmermann 2004), “peripherocentrism” (Juvan 2010), “significant geographies” (Laachir, Marzagora, and Orsini 2018a; 2018b), and “bibliomigrancy” (Mani 2017). These terms can help shed light on the relationships, similarities, discontinuities, and frictions between scales, but also make manifest those cultural, social, political, and economic constraints that have affected, and continue to affect, the film industry. The notion of the global also implies multidirectionality when transcending multiple scales and allows us to break with those transnational approaches that tend to involve binary directions between the host and target country. Examples of multidirectionality will be explored below.

On a different level, multiple scales are also related to what I call global film narratives in contemporary cinema, a term that can closely line up with the global novel, as

understood by Ganguly (2016), among others. In this respect, global film narratives are the result of locating the narrative approach on a planetary scale in order to overcome the androcentric perspective and include themes or challenges on a global scale, such as terrorism and global violence, climate change, migration movements, diasporas, femicides, and global pandemics. In the same vein, taking into account non-human actors as agents from a narrative point of view is also a way to challenge our androcentric and small scale perspective, and take a broader, global and more inclusive perspective.

Finally, the notion of scale also leads us to consider source selection as well as analyses on a large or small scale. What is the uniqueness and applicability of little and big data in film history? Or, in other words, and as also discussed by Deb Verhoeven (2016), how can we understand and apply datafication to the discipline? How can we bring together quantitative and qualitative analyses? And how can we combine the sociological perspective with that of aesthetics? Gaining awareness of what factors promote or resist these approaches is one of the essential features of applying the global and digital perspectives to film and cinema history.

In the following section I propose an example of the relationship between scales of analysis based on the Ibero-American film clubs.

2.2.2.1 An Analysis of the Ibero-American Film clubs from Different Scales

Adopting a relational and global approach, I understand film clubs as spaces that allow people to have experiences that are not exclusive to a region, location, or nationality. By analysing Ibero-American film club networks, we may detect various scales of exchange, and also relations that are not just bidirectional, but also among more than two parts. For instance, Uruguayan, Brazilian, and Argentine film clubs emerged within national film club federations around the 1950s, but they also established relationships among themselves, creating a regional scale of exchange. We may trace such exchanges to the magazine *Cine Club* (1948-1953), an official organ of Cine club del Uruguay (1948-1960), where the members of the film club published their news. Often such relationships can be traced through historical journals, when the film clubs had an official magazine. When film clubs did not have such organs, it is more difficult to trace these relationships, as I have stated above. In this magazine, I have found a report on the Congreso Sudamericano de Cine Clubes (South American Film Clubs Conference), on the shared idea of founding a South American federation of film clubs,⁸² as well as a Brazilian Film Clubs Federation:

Soon, a South American Film Club Conference will be held in our city, hosted by Cine Club de Uruguay. This Conference's main goal is to found a South American

⁸² As noted by Mariana Amieva (2022), the Uruguayan Federation of Film Clubs ultimately took shape with José María Podestá at the helm, on December 20, 1953. Amieva shows that the Latin American Federation of Film clubs was more an interest of Henry Langois's during his time at the helm of the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF) than something that emerged from Latin American film clubs.

Federation, an organism that will especially promote mutual aid and film exchanges among affiliated institutions. On this occasion, delegates of Club Gente de Cine de Buenos Aires, Cine Club de Rosario, Arte del Cine de la Universidad de Tucumán, and Cine Club de La Plata will attend, representing the Argentine Federation, as will the delegates of the Brazilian Federation, representing some thirty entities affiliated to said federation ('Vida de Los Cine Clubes' 1950).⁸³

In this report, Cine club del Uruguay members remark upon the new federations' inaugurations with pride, celebrating such initiatives. On another scale, we may also identify ties between film clubs across various countries. For instance, the Cine Club del Uruguay and Gente de cine (1942-1965) in Buenos Aires engaged in film exchanges, and members from both film clubs had the opportunity to visit each other's clubs when traveling to either city. These regional relationships could be regarded as elements of the Río de la Plata regional exchanges, encompassing Argentina and Uruguay. This forms a regional network, which I discussed and visualised in the previous section. In the journal Cine Club, there is a reference:

[...] members of the 'Cine Club' who travel to our neighbouring country's capital will enjoy, throughout their stay, the benefits conferred to members of our partner institute, directed by Roland. Thus, we will continue to publish the interesting programs that this prestigious Club tends to offer ('Cine Club Al Día' 1948, 36-37).⁸⁴

This was also the case between Spain and Argentina and the Cine club Español (1928-1931) and Cine club de Buenos Aires (1929-1931), whose relationship can be gleaned in the relationships between their related periodicals: *La Gaceta Literaria* (1927-1932) and *Sur* (1931-1970). In the latter case, the Spanish art critic Guillermo de Torre was the mediator between both institutions. De la Torre was part of de Cine club de Buenos Aires, once he settled in the Argentinian city after his marriage to Norah Borges, and he was also secretary of *La Gaceta Literaria*, where he collaborated as a critic. In *La Gaceta* he proudly wrote about Cine club de Buenos Aires activities and screenings, establishing a relationship among both institutions. Another relevant example of this regional network among first Ibero-American film clubs can be traced in the journal *Alfar*, referring to the first film club in Montevideo. As this quote attests, the Uruguayan film club established close relations with the Chaplin Club in Rio de Janeiro (1928-1930) in Brazil and the Cine Club de Buenos Aires in Argentina: "Furthermore, the Film Club has maintained exchange relationships with Chaplin Club de Brasil and Cine Club de Buenos Aires. At the former, the poet Ildefonso Pereda Valdés gave a conference on Charlie

⁸³ "En fecha próxima tendrá lugar en nuestra ciudad un Congreso Sudamericano de Cine Clubes, bajo los auspicios del Cine Club de Uruguay. Dicho Congreso tendrá como objeto principal la fundación de la Federación Sudamericana, organismo que propiciará especialmente la mutua ayuda e intercambio de films, entre todas las instituciones afiliadas. Para esta ocasión concurrirán delegados del Club Gente de Cine de Buenos Aires, Cine Club de Rosario, Arte del Cine de la Universidad de Tucumán, Cine Club de La Plata, representando la Federación Argentina, y delegados de la Federación Brasileña, que representarán a cerca de treinta entidades afiliadas a dicho organismo" ('Vida de Los Cine Clubes' 1950, 9).

⁸⁴ "los socios de 'Cine Club' que viajen a la capital vecina gozarán durante su permanencia en ésta, de los beneficios que se confieren a los socios de la institución amiga, dirigida por Roland. Iremos publicando en lo sucesivo a esos efectos, los interesantes programas que suele presentar el prestigioso Club."

Chaplin, thus nurturing a close relationship with said centre” (‘Cine Club de Montevideo’ 1932, 45).⁸⁵

These relationships exemplify how transnational exchanges between Argentina and Spain, but also Uruguay and Brazil and Uruguay and Argentina evolved over time, either becoming more abundant or lessening. This relationships also extended beyond Ibero-America, creating a global network of film clubs. While these regional relationships surely marked other areas—as in the film clubs of Central America—I have not found examples of exchanges among film clubs there. Yet, with the foundation of Latin American cinematheques in the 1950s, exchanges would become more fluid. The main reason behind the increase in regional relationships after the founding of these cinematheques was that cinematheques operated as official organs. Film clubs sustained themselves through the funds of their partners, and founders and organisers did not earn salaries from their work, yet cinematheques were usually endowed with (sometimes modest) public funds and functioned as representatives of their nations, which film clubs did not. Thus, even though some cinematheques were founded on tight budgets, cinematheque representatives would often meet at festivals, thus establishing professional and friendly relations.⁸⁶ For instance, we might mention the founding of the Union de Cinematecas de América Latina (Union of Latin American Cinematheques, UCAL) at Festival Mar de Plata in 1965, or the Primer Congreso de la Sección Latinoamericana (First Conference of the Latin American Section) at the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF) held at the third Festival Punta del Este (Uruguay), in 1955 (Amieva Collado 2022, 281). Representatives of Cinemateca Argentina, Cinemateca Brasileira, Cinemateca Uruguaya, and Cineteca del Perú, as well as SODRE⁸⁷ representatives from Uruguay, would participate in this festival. These representatives were all associated with film clubs, as with Rolando Fustiñana (1915-1999), a representative of Cinemateca Argentina with ties to the Gente de cine film club (1942-1965) in Buenos Aires, or Eugenio Hintz (1923-2005), a representative of Cinemateca Uruguaya with ties to Cine club del Uruguay (1948-1953). Likewise, Rudá de Andrade (1930-2009), a representative of Cinemateca Brasileira, had ties to Centro de Dem Vital film club (1958-?), while André Ruszkowski (1910-2002) represented Cineteca de Perú and had ties to Cine Club de Lima (1951-1956).

Another network that extended past federations, on the local level, was produced through film clubs’ exchanges of people and films within the same city. This was palpable with the conferences and film presentations organised by members of Montevideo’s film clubs, as can be gleaned in the pages of the Uruguayan magazines *Cine club* (1948-1953), and *Marcha* (1939-1974). For example, after announcing a screening the magazine *Marcha* refers to a “screening at Cine Club de Rocha with materials from Cinemateca

⁸⁵ “El cine Club ha mantenido además relaciones de intercambio con el Chaplin Club de Brasil y con el Cine Club de Buenos Aires. En la primera de las instituciones dió [sic.] una conferencia sobre Charlie Chaplin [sic.], el poeta Ildefonso Pereda Valdés, manteniendo así una estrecha relación con aquel centro.”

⁸⁶ See Mariana Ameva’s thesis and article on the Uruguayan cinematheque (Amieva Collado 2020; 2022).

⁸⁷ Servicio Oficial de Difusión, Representaciones y Espectáculos (Official Service for Dissemination, Plays and Shows).

Uruguay, presented by Jorge A. Arteaga” (Liceo Departamental).⁸⁸ Jorge A. Arteaga⁸⁹ directed Cine club Universitario de Uruguay (1948-1960). The above citation notes that Cine Club de Rocha,⁹⁰ in Montevideo, would receive Arteaga, a member of another film club in the same city, who would present the cinematheque’s materials to be screened at Cine Club de Rocha. Thus, we may take note of the close relationship between the film clubs operating in the city of Montevideo. These relationships also appear in the magazine *Marcha*, in a section called “Funciones especiales” (Special Shows), which referred to the programming of the various film clubs that operated from the late 1940s to the early 1950s in Montevideo and other Uruguayan cities. This information is quite interesting because it empirically demonstrates what we already knew: that film clubs had relationships at the local level. Yet, this example seems to be an exception, as I have not been able to find other magazines printing testimony of the local relationships between film clubs over time.

In another issue of the same journal there is another reference to Arteaga, who presented a film at Club de Colonia:⁹¹ “A screening by Club Colonia and Cinemateca Uruguay, presented by Jorge A. Arteaga” (Club de Colonia) (‘Funciones Especiales En El Interior’ 1953a, 13).⁹² Clearly, Arteaga is associated with Cinemateca Uruguay.⁹³ Also the same Arteaga could have travelled with some films pertaining to Cinemateca Uruguay and would present them in different film clubs, as we see in the following reference “Screening by Cine Club de Minas, with materials from Cinemateca Uruguay, presented by Jorge A. Arteaga (Club de Colonia)” (‘Funciones Especiales En El Interior’ 1953b, 13).⁹⁴ Again some years after Arteaga presented a film in a film club named after a Uruguayan city that was not Montevideo: “Screening by Cine Club de Nueva Helvecia, presented by Jorge A. Arteaga” (‘Funciones Especiales En El Interior’ 1955, 18).⁹⁵ Arteaga’s presentations of film screenings at different film clubs in Montevideo and then other cities in the country is an example of the local network established among film clubs I was referring to. These film clubs likely shared films and members. Given that the clubs were in the same city but held their sessions on different days of the week, with different programming, it is likely that the audiences would attend the screenings of more than one club. Clubs also shared films, as film copies were loaned out—in this case, by Cinemateca Uruguay. What these citations show is that the film clubs’ founding members and organisers also went to other film clubs in order to present certain films. As Marian Amieva notes, Jorge Ángel Arteaga would travel to Argentina in 1957, taking

⁸⁸ “Función de Cine Club de Rocha con material de la Cinemateca Uruguay presentado por Jorge A. Arteaga” (Liceo Departamental).

⁸⁹ I have found no information on him.

⁹⁰ Of this film club, all I know is that it was active in 1953, thanks to a mention of the club in the magazine *Marcha*.

⁹¹ I have no further information on this film club, other than the fact that it was active in 1953, as inferred through the mention of the club in *Marcha*.

⁹² “Función de Club Colonia y Cinemateca Uruguay, presentada por Jorge A. Arteaga” (Club de Colonia).

⁹³ I have found no references to back this hypothesis, but it does seem plausible, given the number of times that Arteaga appears, as tied to films presented at Cinemateca Uruguay, which would have been founded a year before the article in *Marcha* was printed in 1952. As of 1954, Jorge Ángel Arteaga was part of the Film and Art Department at SODRE, which opened its doors in 1943 (Amieva Collado 2022, 57).

⁹⁴ “Función de Cine Club de Minas, con material de la Cinemateca Uruguay presentado por Jorge A. Arteaga” (Cine Doré).

⁹⁵ “Función de Cine Club de Nueva Helvecia presentada por Jorge A. Arteaga.”

with him a few of SODRE's selected programs to be screened at film clubs in Buenos Aires as well as in film-studies centres in La Plata and Santa Fe (Amieva Collado 2022, 138).

Another example of the relationships on different scales that we may trace in the history of Ibero-American film clubs involves the various cities within a given country. For instance, Cineclub Español (1928-1931), Sessions Mirador (1929-1930), and the Barcelona Film Club (1929) enjoyed fluid relationships—the latter two were located in Barcelona, and the first, in Madrid. Both of these cities pioneered in national film club history, and the two cities were often compared to each other:

It would thus be useless for us to want to turn the Barcelona Film Club into a Buñuel-type club; it must remain its own animal. We seek, on top of people of distinguished taste, a great contingent of experimental people; not one or two or three, as prudence would suggest, but sixty, one hundred, or two hundred. Naturally, not all of these experimental people will have enough distinction, taste, or literary culture to deserve admission into a club like Cine Club de Madrid, but all of them would have what it takes to join the amateur clubs of the United States or England (Ferran Coromines 1929d, 4).⁹⁶

Films and members likely circulated among these film clubs. On October 24, 1929, *Un chien andalou* premiered at Sessions Mirador, being shown at Cineclub Español on December 8 of that same year. A few months later, as Román Gubern writes, in March of 1930 “on the occasion of the Madrid intellectuals’ visit to Barcelona, Víctor Hurtado organised a session at Sala Mozart, in which *Un Chien andalou*, *El fin del mundo* (La fin du monde, 1930), by Abel Gance, and *La mano* were screened, with the participation of Giménez Caballero, Gómez de la Serna, and Jose Maria de Sucre” (Gubern 1999, 295).⁹⁷ One month later, Giménez Caballero (1899-1988), director of Cineclub Español, would bring this programming to Cineclub de Zaragoza.

Through these examples, we may note that the global perspective, which pays attention to space and scale, can prove very fruitful to the study of Ibero-American film clubs. On the one hand, the local scale has allowed us to observe the network of relationships between film clubs within a given city, as in the case of Montevideo. These film clubs enjoyed their own relationships and forms of exchange, telling their own story of the city and its ways of showing film. Likewise, we have demonstrated that, beyond the national scale, we may also find relationships between cities within a given country. The relationships between Madrid and Barcelona lay bare the similarities between two great cities in which non-commercial exhibition circuits enjoyed very similar programming and

⁹⁶ “Seria inútil, doncs, que vulguéssim fer del Barcelona Film Club um club del tipus Buñuel; há d’èsser una cosa diferent. Nosaltres cerquem, ultra de les persones de gust distingit, un gran contingent d’experimentadors; no un ni dos ni tres, com sembla que aconsellaria la prudència, sinó seixanta, cent, dos-cents. No tots aquests experimentadors tindran, naturalment, la distinció de gust ni la cultura literària suficient per merèixer d’entrar en un club del tipus del Cine Club de Madrid; però cadascun d’ells podria entrar en qualsevol dels clubs amateurs dels EE.UU. [sic] o d’Anglaterra.”

⁹⁷ “en el marco de la visita de los intelectuales de Madrid a Barcelona, Víctor Hurtado organizó una sesión en la Sala Mozart, en la que se proyectó *Un Chien andalou*, *El fin del mundo* (La fin du monde, 1930), de Abel Gance, y *La mano*, y en la que intervinieron Giménez Caballero, Gómez de la Serna y Jose Maria de Sucre.”

comparable reception practices.⁹⁸ Meanwhile, the regional scale can have different sizes. For instance, the Rio de la Plata regional scale includes Argentina and Uruguay, with their long history of cultural exchange. We might also consider a broader regional scale of analysis to include all of Latin America, as we have shown regarding the efforts around creating a South American film club federation and, later, the Unión de Cinematecas de América Latina. Transnationally, we could mention the relationship that Latin American cinemateques had to the FIAF, especially through Henri Langlois. This history of relationships is enmeshed in film clubs (Amieva Collado 2022) and in the goal of creating a federation of Latin American film clubs. Likewise, all of these histories, at different scales, are fundamental to addressing the history of the film club phenomenon. Each club was important to its own geographical context (its own scale) but also affected others. What this example shows us is that looking at other scales—beyond the national scale, which has tended to be used for the study of film clubs and the history of film—can reveal a more inclusive history, through a less diffusionist perspective. These scales allow us to appreciate the specific qualities of Ibero-American film clubs, as merely considering them copies of European clubs (usually understood in terms of the French model) would sacrifice our understanding of their own features.

2.2.3 The history of Ibero-American film clubs from a *longue durée* perspective

Reconsidering cinema history from the *longue durée* (Braudel 1949) perspective can enable researchers to study multiple film cultures. This concept is tied to the plurality of social times and structures and to the duration of an historical social system—the world—which became global (according to Braudel) in the late nineteenth century. I use this term to study cinema-history processes in an historical continuum, but also to analyse film production and cinematic experiences that develop simultaneously. Likewise, considering certain periodisations that have not been generated by the great centres of cultural production can allow other, less-studied social and political events to come to the fore in global film history. In fact, considering temporality from a global and *long durée* perspective can help establish historical cinematographic calendars and cast light on potential coincidences between them and more classical periodisations, as well as their points of disruption (if they exist as such), transition, or multitemporal circulation, which do not always align with national film histories. The notion of time has to do with processes of acceleration, canonisation, and crisis. As we will come to observe, film clubs can be analysed as global phenomena, considering the confluences, transitions, and exchanges between them over time and in space. Although the concept of 'longue durée' is typically applied to the study of history over a more extended period than the one I propose here, in this case, I employ this term to allude to the necessity of expanding the notion of a film club beyond what has conventionally been considered the emergence film clubs in traditional history. Viewing the traditional history of film clubs from a broader perspective enables the identification of certain continuities and

⁹⁸ For the controversies around the screening of *Un chien andalou* at Sessions Mirador and Cineclub Español, see Gubern (1999, 295).

ruptures that would otherwise go unnoticed and be excluded from this historical narrative

2.2.3.1 *Ibero-American film clubs in the 'longue durée'*

As noted above in regard to the temporal dimension, the history of Ibero-American film clubs can be studied from a global perspective, implying that historical periodisations are not only tied to national processes, but also to global ones. Thus, I adopted the *longue durée* perspective to study the emergence, expansion, and waning of this flow—which not only extends beyond the classical periodisations that have been used to study the film club phenomenon, but also surpasses those periodisations on national history and film that remain limited to European and US American cinema. As noted in the next chapter, from a *longue durée* perspective, we may propose a different periodisation of Ibero-American film clubs than the one that has been used up until now in the diffusionist perspective of mainstream film. Thus, in a historical-continuum framework, we could refer to a global history of Western film clubs, starting with those years when film clubs progressed more or less evenly in Europe and the Americas, only to diverge as of 1945 as, in the post-war period, Latin American film clubs saw quicker growth and recovery than some European ones. In this sense, we might expand upon Dudley Andrew's (2010) views on global film history and apply a decentered perspective, allowing us to compare diverging and converging processes in the histories of Ibero-American and European film clubs. The periodisations of analysis I propose for the Ibero-American film clubs are threefold. First, we see a phase comprising the birth of film clubs in Ibero-America (1924-1936); followed by a waning phase (1936-1946) when the avant-garde film movement of the 1920s came to an end just as authoritarian regimes took root in many Ibero-American countries, sound films were introduced, and national film industries started being developed in Latin American countries; and lastly, a phase of reemergence (1946-1958) stemming from the expansion of Latin American new waves, Latin American Neorealism, the growing interest in film as a mass-entertainment phenomenon at the global level, and the further development of Latin American film industries.

My proposed periodisation, which I will develop more extensively in the following chapter, is based on the notion that when the film club concept that emerged in 1920s Paris was adopted in Ibero-America, it in fact adapted to its new context. This would imply that even though Ibero-American Westernised film clubs widely expanded once the Parisian film club concept was instated, the region's film clubs were inspired by previous initiatives, as well as by the political, social, economic, and cultural situation of the region in which these clubs emerged. In turn, these initiatives facilitated the expansion of the film club concept as we know it in Ibero-America. I believe that if these first initiatives had not existed, film clubs (the Westernising trend) would not have taken root in the same way. These proto-film clubs prepared the terrain for the film clubs to come, especially when it came to bringing together people with similar interests, but also considering the various practices associated with film clubs, such as amateurism.

As Felipe Macedo proposes for Brazil (2016) and Michael Cowan propose in regard to the German case (2023), some of these practices would later be associated with film clubs that existed before the term “film club” existed. Thus, as Cowan notes, film clubs inherited many ways of bringing people together from a diversity of clubs that took root across Europe in the nineteenth century. Now, we should also keep in mind the myriad of ways in which the public organised around the film medium, spearheaded by many different groups before the expansion of the film club as a concept.⁹⁹ From the *longue durée* perspective, we may observe several examples demonstrating that film clubs did not emerge out of the blue, isolated from their past, but as a result of prior history. It is precisely this previous history that determined the ways in which the film club concept took root in Ibero-America.

As shown in the chapter dedicated to María Luz Morales and the Barcelona Film Club, several diverse initiatives cropped up in Barcelona, and they are all fundamental to understanding the expansion of film clubs in this city. On the one hand, stood the private club Amics de Charlot (?), and on the other, Club Cinematográfico de Horta (1923-?). Though the first film club understood as such was documented in the Barcelonan press as having emerged in 1929—namely, the Barcelona Film Club, to which I have dedicated a chapter of this thesis—the two aforementioned clubs preceded it. The most interesting aspect of these is that they shared certain qualities with the Barcelonan filmclubism that followed—the kind often equated with the French film club model (González López 1990; Gubern 1999). This suggests that the Barcelonan practices associated to initiatives that preceded the spread of the film club as a concept impacted the subsequent context in which the film club concept took root. Thus, we cannot take for granted that the concept was adopted completely, but rather we understand that it was adapted.

Amics de Charlot was a private club that brought together friends who were interested in film, who would congregate at a movie theatre in Barcelona to watch and discuss films by Charles Chaplin. Though we do not know when this club opened its doors, we do know that it preceded the Barcelona Film Club, because María Luz Morales informed about it (Centeno 1930, 21). Interestingly, one of its members—whose background we do not know—eventually participated in the Barcelona Film Club. Thus, we may appreciate a certain continuity, even if to a minimal degree, as, on the one hand, friends from Barcelona’s intellectual and bourgeois circles would come together, and, on the other, what brought them together was their shared interest in U.S. American comic film. These same two qualities would mark the Barcelona Film Club and a few other subsequent clubs. The case of Club Cinematográfico de Horta is perhaps the most significant, as it opened its doors in 1923, at almost the same time as Paris’s film clubs (1920-1921), although its practices differed greatly from those of Parisian clubs. This club of film aficionados was not comprised of intellectual and artistic elites, as I make clear in the chapter of this thesis dedicated to the Barcelona Film Club. Furthermore, Club Cinematográfico de Horta did not screen films. However, the club was marked by a certain interest in promoting amateur film production among the aficionados who

⁹⁹ I will develop this concept later on.

gathered at the club. This practice would later mark the Barcelona Film Club, in contrast to what unfolded at the first Parisian film clubs.

In Mexico, despite the contextual differences, we may trace a similar trend. We may find references to Soviet film screenings among the communist circles of the late 1920s, as I have noted in the chapter dedicated to Lola Álvarez Bravo. These screenings were organised by two women, at two different, though consecutive, times in history, and both took place in communist environments. Firstly, I am referring to the Soviet film screenings organised by Alexandra Kollontai (1927-1929), the first woman ambassador in the modern sense, who was granted the title of ambassador. As I note in the chapter on Lola Álvarez Bravo and Mexico's first film clubs, Kollontai organised the screening of several Soviet films in Mexico City, marking the first time that these films premiered in the country. The people who would comprise, years later, the audience of the first Mexican film club, Cine Club Mexicano, would attend these screenings. Secondly, in 1929, Tina Modotti, who likely attended the screenings put on by Kollontai, judging by the research by Rodríguez and Lozada (2015), organised a screening of *October (Oktaybr 1927)* by Sergei Eisenstein after an International Red Aid meeting to protest and commemorate the death of her lover, Julio Antonio Mella. Years later, Cine club Mexicano (1931-1934), considered Mexico's first film club, would begin operating in Mexico City. Its founders and public, who were tied to the los Contemporáneos circle as well as to LEAR, an organisation tied to International Red Aid, probably included the same people as those who attended the two clubs that would emerge later on. Furthermore, one of these clubs' organisers, Lola Álvarez Bravo, was a great admirer of Tina Modotti (Álvarez Bravo 1982, 97), who admired Alexandra Kollontai in turn (Rodríguez y Méndez de Lozada 2015, 159). This first documented film club in Mexico was also very interested in Soviet film and its tenets (de los Reyes 1983), as I have noted in the chapter on Lola Álvarez Bravo.

This genealogy of women and the succession of events that one might read as coincidental in fact illustrate, in my perspective, the development of a *longue durée* historical phenomenon. Thus, although some of the qualities that defined the first film clubs to emerge in Mexico City were similar to those of Parisian film clubs (as the Parisian model spread far and wide), many other qualities arose from a history of initiatives that preceded filmclubism, whether community organisations or proto-film club initiatives. It is thanks to the *longue durée* perspective that we can analyse them. In fact, as we will see in the chapter dedicated to Mexican film clubs, this same tendency of having screenings organised by women, with their programming showing similar topics of interest, would keep up until at least 1938, with cine club 35 MM Cinema. Not only that, but in 1952, Manuel González Casanova (1934-2012) participated in the founding of the Progreso film club at the National Autonomous University of Mexico's (UNAM) main campus, Ciudad Universitaria. In his magazine, when responding to the question "What is a film club?" (1961), he cited Cine club Mexicano (González Casanova 1961).¹⁰⁰ Casanova did not limit himself to screening films and to founding a film club bulletin alone but was also a professor at the Centro Universitario de Estudios Cinematográficos (University Center for Film Studies) starting in 1970. This brought a certain continuity to

¹⁰⁰ Los Contemporáneos, who would organise Mexico City's first film club, first came together to start a magazine.

the pedagogical values of film that Soviet film promoted, with Kollontai organising the distribution of the films that were projected 1927 and 1929. As I have noted in the chapter dedicated to Mexican film clubs, the pedagogical tenets of Soviet Film impregnated the aesthetic of many post-revolutionary artists in Mexico, especially those associated to the first Mexican film clubs. This continuity not only involved the subject matters of the films, but also people, programs, and institutions, as we shall see in the chapter on Lola Álvarez Bravo.

This is why considering historical processes from the *longue durée* perspective, and as results of processes that supersede the national and include other scales such as the global, is fundamental to understanding the development of historic events from a more inclusive point of view.

2.2.4 Concluding Remarks

The insights presented in this chapter are not definitive but are aimed at making some progress in current theoretical debates. Likewise, it has provided a space to discuss the transformations of overlooked cinematic experiences like film clubs (Hagener 2007), which can be productively conceptualised on a global level through the relationships, connections, and networks established by apparently secondary actors (many women among them, as I will show in the following chapters) who have been often overshadowed by the “big names,” generally, white, Western, male filmmakers. A global, decentered, relational, and data-driven approach can enhance more transnational research on relevant topics such as gender, mobility, migration, networks, global film narratives, neglected cinematic experiences, and cultural mediators in cinema history. Until recently, we lacked the tools to understand the scope of a transfer’s impact, for example.¹⁰¹ However, we now find ourselves before the possibility of imagining far more complex networks. This research is also aimed at stressing the relevance of our methods when approaching minoritised, marginalised, or peripheral objects of study in Cinema History, such as film clubs, the Ibero-American space, as well as the women agents within these entities. The lack of data could be compensated with a method that casts light on that which—given its invisibilised and overlooked condition—cannot be compared to objects that have already enjoyed abundant study and boast more structured and consistent data. This is one of my working goals, as I aspire to gather data that is valuable due to its quality, rather than its quantity. In this sense, we still require a more meticulous study, so we can work with more data and process them so that our objects of study reach scales that broaden our understanding of how vectors move and how our cultural goods circulate. Thus, it is possible to locate, map, and evaluate movements, connections, and interactions at the micro level while generating data that can shed insights at the macro level, from a social-network perspective. This is the main goal of the following chapters of this research.

¹⁰¹ For a more extensive reflection on the cultural transfer concept, see the first part of this thesis, the conceptual framework.

The kind of analysis that this chapter presents lays bare the need to conduct more qualitative research around our object of study. On the one hand, this would help make public certain data that would otherwise be impossible to trace, in the published [dataset](#). At the same time, in the future, we could use digital tools to complement our qualitative analyses. On the other hand, from a gender perspective, through our brief approach of the subject, we have found a clear absence of women. This lack of women, alongside the lack of data noted above, motivates the development of the case studies that I present in part three of this research. Likewise, before compiling the data on our case studies, I have dedicated a chapter to reflecting upon the participation of women in the film field, justifying my statement that women played very relevant roles in film history and, subsequently, in the history of the film club phenomenon in Ibero-America from its origins all the way to the mid-twentieth century.

Despite the lack of data and the need to continue working on methods to advance our theory, we have seen that the theoretical perspectives presented here, along with the proposed concepts, are especially fruitful when addressing our object of study. The relational perspective has allowed us to showcase several examples of film club networks on different scales, whether local, regional, or transnational. At the same time, we have demonstrated that these historical processes developed over a long stretch of time in history, involving various spaces, scales, temporalities, and agents, which would not have been possible without the networks of exchange that characterised and shaped them throughout history. Once again, this global approach has demonstrated the need to decentralise the history of film clubs.

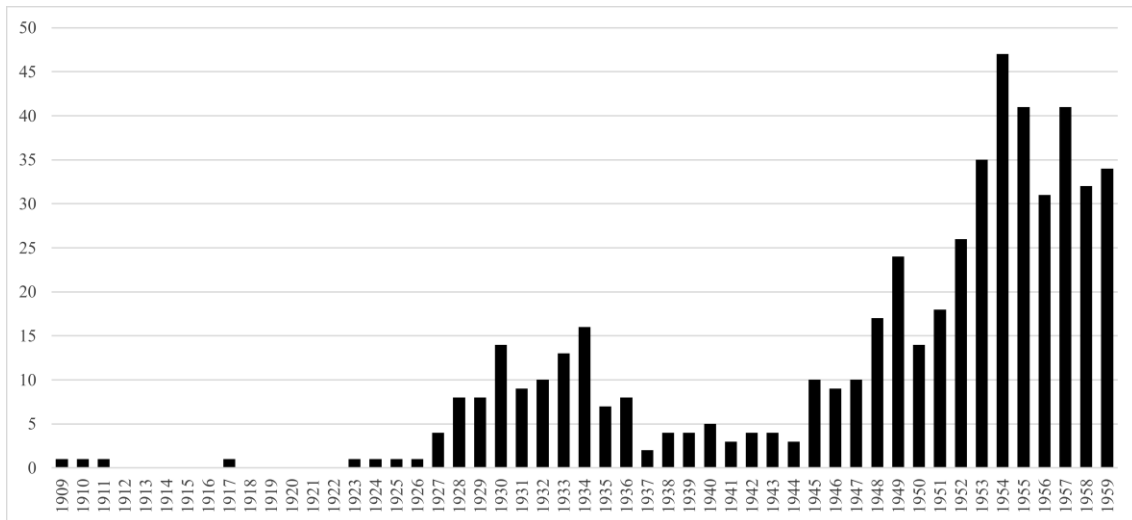
2.3 A Data-Driven Periodisation for the History of the First Wave of Ibero-American Film Clubs (1909-1959)¹⁰²

In this chapter, I propose a periodisation of the emergence, decline, and resurging of film clubs in Ibero-America over the first half of the twentieth century. Using digital tools and the global perspective, as discussed in the previous chapter, I propose considering the history of Ibero-American film clubs in three phases. This proposal seeks to decentre the history of Western film clubs, which, to date, have centred on narratives that rest upon the history of European and US cinema. Using data from primary sources that give testimony to the history of film clubs in Ibero-America, I have created a timeline that allows for a periodisation of this historical process in the *longue durée* perspective.

In essence, we may observe that the networks of people who gathered to watch films in non-commercial, Ibero-American theatres—which called themselves or were considered film clubs—emerged as of the mid-1920s. As we will show, this point in time coincides with the emergence of film clubs in Paris. In our view, and using the *longue durée* perspective to consider the previously exposed examples, the fact that this time was marked by film clubs in both Ibero-America and Paris has to do with the dissemination of the French “ciné-club” (in English “film club”) concept. While the film club concept is very useful when tracing such initiatives using digital tools, it can be limiting as well. Indeed, the concept obscures other, similar initiatives that did not use the term “ciné-club”, or “film club” in English, to define themselves. To trace this broader range of initiatives, we would require qualitative research methods.

From the mid-1920s, I have been able to trace the exponential growth of such clubs, peaking around the mid-1930s and waning thereafter. The decade spanning the mid-1930s to the mid-1940s marked a moment of stability in which film clubs stopped their expansion across the Ibero-American space. However, as of the mid-1940s, growth quickly accelerated up until the mid-1950s, with the year 1955 seeing the greatest number of film clubs. A small decline followed, but I don’t know if the drop continued into the 1960s, as I only have trustworthy information up until 1959. As we will show, the most relevant aspect of this periodisation is that it allows us to narrate a history of Ibero-American filmclubism in the *longue*.

¹⁰² Part of this chapter has been published with the following reference Clariana-Rodagut, Ainamar and Diana Roig-Sanz (2024). “Towards a Global and Decentralized History of Film Cultures. Networks of Exchange among Ibero-American Film Clubs”. In Daniela Treveri Gennari, Lies van der Vijver and Pierluigi Ercole (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Comparative New Cinema Histories*. London/New York, Palgrave MacMillan.



Graph 1: Clariana-Rodagut, Ainamar and Ventsislav Ikoff, “Emergence of Ibero-American film clubs per year”.

To illustrate my proposed periodisation, I have created this graph. This graph is based on data compiled from the [dataset](#) described in the previous chapter (2.2.1.1). The same data has been used to create a visual of relationships between film clubs ([Visualisation](#)). For this periodisation, I am only using the general trends that can be gleaned from the graph. Even though the graph shows detailed information for every decade, the data’s scarcity and only relative representativity preclude me from making any bold statements on specific years or decades, which would be difficult to corroborate. However, there is sufficient data to draw conclusions on the more general trends. The graph shows a total of 423 film clubs registered in the Ibero-American space that were active from 1909 to 1958. Not all registered film clubs in the database were active during the entire analysed period. In fact, most film clubs in the database were only active for specific years within this timeframe. Furthermore, we should note that, for some film clubs, we only have information on the dates of certain activities, but we do not know when the clubs opened or ultimately closed their doors. This is because our digitised primary sources—magazines mentioning the film clubs—remain limited. For instance, we may find a magazine that, at a specific moment, refers to the film clubs operating in a given city or region, but the magazine might not specify when the film clubs launched or closed. Furthermore, sometimes the magazines in question ceased publication, meaning that data on many film clubs stopped being printed. The fact that we only have partial data may favour certain decades over others simply because there is more information on some decades while others have no data on them or very limited data.

2.3.1 The Birth or Emergence of Film Clubs: 1924-1936

This first phase, namely, the birth or emergence of film clubs from 1924 to 1936, began with the expansion of the French film club model. Later on, I have already developed a critical discussion on film clubs as a concept, as I believe that the term has limited the inclusion of other initiatives that did not conceptually abide by the French model. In any case, given the lack of research on these and other examples that fall outside the more

general model (and also due to the lack of data on these initiatives), including heterodox trends in a periodisation like this one—which highlights general trends—remains difficult. Yet, I believe it imperative that we at least allude to these more diverse examples, as they demonstrate that the emergence of film clubs was not the result of a single, historic event, but functioned in relation to previous historical processes, as noted in the previous chapter. All historical events are the result of longer processes, which may often benefit from being traced through the *longue durée* perspective. This is the case with filmclubism. In addition, if what emerges is a concept—as in this case—we must understand how the concept’s expansion implied its adaptation to different contexts. This suggests that there are many different types of film clubs and that our periodisation may vary for every place in which the film club concept took root. This taking-root and adapting, in turn, involves the circumstances of particular contexts and is the result of a long, historical process.

The birth of film clubs in Paris led to the global circulation of the term “film club,” denoting the coming together of a group of cinephiles who sought to program films and then discuss them. The first Ibero-American film club I have documented, Associação dos Amigos do Cinema (Granja 2006), took root in Porto, Portugal, in 1924, with similar objectives to those of the Parisian film clubs led by Louis Delluc (1920) and Riciotto Canudo (1921).¹⁰³ However, the legitimation of film as an art—as in Paris’s film clubs—did not reach other spaces across history in the same way. In fact, Christophe Gauthier (1999) already notes that, after Canudo and Delluc’s clubs, several other proposals emerged with pedagogical and hygienist goals, which meant to bring up citizenship in their hygiene habits. This occurred in Paris, while in Mexico the first film clubs in 1931 also included pedagogical and political goals, among other examples. Likewise, initiatives that preceded film clubs and were not called film clubs, as was the case with Barcelona’s Centro Excursionista (Hiking Centre), whose members climbed mountains but also organised a film club.¹⁰⁴ Such prior initiatives espoused different goals than the film clubs born in France. Without a doubt, what emerged in France and extended beyond the country was the concept of the film club (*ciné-club*) as a space to screen and discuss films. Now, the ideas behind film clubs were quite varied, and not all of them ascribed to the Parisian model.

In Latin-America, the first film club was founded in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) in 1928, named the Chaplin Club. However, a few initiatives that cannot be defined as film clubs *per se*—until the concept is expanded, or until we find another concept—, paved the way for subsequent film clubs, for example is the case with Mexico’s City’s Cine Club (1909-1911), Club Cinematográfico de Horta in Barcelona (1923), and Clube Paredão (1917) in Rio de Janeiro. All of them could be considered film societies. Given the scarcity of film critics at that time, these activities were organised by the audiences themselves. At Club Cinematográfico de Horta and Clube Paredão, where Brazilian film criticism had its origins, audiences were both members and founders (Bacelar de Macedo 2016, 74). In other cases, we find entertainment companies organising activity rooms, such as the

¹⁰³ For a brief explanation of this period, see the first part of this thesis, specifically the chapter dedicated to the state of the art.

¹⁰⁴ I have not found the start and end dates of this film club’s activities: the hiking centre launched in 1891, but there is nothing to suggest that the film club opened at the same time.

film society Cine Club in Mexico City. Thus, even though these much-earlier initiatives differed from the French film club model of the 1920s, they did share a few elements, as we will see in the chapters of part III of this thesis.¹⁰⁵

All of this would lead us to think that there were initiatives with similar practices to film clubs before the French model emerged, though they are less known because their practices did not fully align with the Eurocentric film club concept associated with the elite, although the latter concept did spread beyond Europe.¹⁰⁶ José María Podestá, one of the first film critics, who was behind the first film clubs in Uruguay (1932), wrote that film clubs, understood in terms of the French concept, were created for the privileged few. At least this was the case during the film clubs' first few years of existence.

The Film Club will always be a minority organism that will never have contact with the masses. The general public will reject it systematically, and the club will only embrace the initiated, the artists, those who already know about true cinema and who do not require enlightening. The Film Club will always belong to the elite, to intellectuals, to lovers of photogenic quality and film work. It is too refined and will remain inaccessible to the multitudes. Europe has been filled with film clubs, with their films and their publics, but this has not made the least bit of an impact on the general public, which has remained completely at the margins, set apart from this art for the minorities who cannot be reached. The cinematography that fills film clubs is developed utterly apart from the cinematography that fills popular movie theatres—they are never in contact. These parallels can never touch. / It is the other, more far-reaching, economically independent organisms that might give the public the sort of film that can educate them (Podestá 1932, 21).¹⁰⁷

Clearly, the film clubs to which Podestá alludes to correspond to the French model par excellence, which extended well beyond France. Yet, this was not the only model in existence. First, we have the initiatives from the first phase, which have enjoyed little research and were not called film clubs but did carry out similar practices. The audiences

¹⁰⁵ Regarding initiatives prior to Parisian film clubs, see Macedo (2016), who provides examples such as Cinéma du Peuple 1913-1914 and Club du faubourg, 1917, in Paris, as well as Escuela Moderna de Francisco Ferrer Guàrdia, in Barcelona, which screened films for educational purposes, and the Socialist Movie Theater, 1911, in Los Angeles. Macedo traces the beginnings of film club to screenings organised by associations, leagues, clubs, and other groups with pedagogical (and often religious), political, or entertainment aims.

¹⁰⁶ I do not wish to imply that the film club initiatives born in Ibero-America were dissociated from local and national elites. However, certain initiatives at other points in history, such as those traced by Macedo, had closer ties to political associations, such as to communist and anarchist groups.

¹⁰⁷ “El Cine – Club será siempre un organismo de minorías que no tendrá jamás contacto con la masa. El gran público lo rechazará sistemáticamente y sólo agrupará en su seno a los iniciados, a los artistas, a los que ya están enterados del verdadero cine y a quienes no es necesario catequizar. El Cine club será siempre de la *élite* de los intelectuales y de los amantes de la fotogenia y su labor, demasiado depurada, quedará inaccesible para la multitud. Europa se ha llenado de cine clubs, con sus films y su público, pero todo esto no ha ejercido la más mínima acción sobre el gran público, que permanece completamente al margen, ajeno a este arte para minorías que no puede alcanzar. La cinegrafía que abastece a los cine clubs se desarrolla totalmente a un lado de la cinegrafía que abastece a los salones populares, sin que jamás se pongan en contacto. Son las paralelas que no se encuentran nunca. / Otros organismos de mayor alcance, de mayor independencia económica, son los que pueden dar al público el cine capaz de educarlo.”

of these first clubs tended to come together because they shared political ideals or edifying purposes, such as those that Felipe Macedo outlines, as well as other clubs created for leisurely purposes (such as the Cine Club in México founded in 1909). The desire to learn about the film medium also brought together people who would learn about cinema (this is the case of Club cinematográfico de Horta in 1923 and Clube Paredao in 1917). In Ibero-America, at a time when the film field had yet to be institutionalised, when magazines addressing film often printed texts on the careers of actors,¹⁰⁸ middle- and lower-class audiences tended to view film as a medium for moving up on the social ladder, as Gil Mariño writes of the industry in Argentina (2015). This was the case especially as of the 1930s,¹⁰⁹ as we may note regarding Club Cinematográfico de Horta in Barcelona.¹¹⁰ The latter club was an example of a public organising around the film medium with the goal of putting together activities for their “training” and “acculturation.” Evidently, at a time when there was no established training on the medium, nor an established film culture, the practices emerging around film were quite diverse. Club Cinematográfico de Horta organised acting classes, the sale and exchange of actor photographs, and script-writing competitions.

Now, the term to define these previous initiatives has yet to be established. Thus, they remain difficult to trace. Likewise, the lack of digitised periodical publications complicates—and sometimes bars—our ability to even detect these organisations, while manually consulting the publications of the time is unviable. Furthermore, and in contrast to most of the organisations referred to as film clubs, these kinds of associations and clubs created for audiences were not tied to elite publics but to politicised groups or to people who shared certain interests but were not necessarily part of the intellectual and artistic circles of the time. That would explain why the registering of their activities is less widespread and have seen less preservation.

It is in this sense that we understand the film club concept as Eurocentric and elitist. The term “film club” or “ciné-club” refers to the needs of the intellectual and artistic elite in the European context. This film club concept, which expanded and circulated transnationally, served to institutionalise the film field on all scales—regional, local, national, and global. One of the consequences of this institutionalisation was the controlling of audience practices during film screenings. In this sense, one of the first film club initiatives, by Delluc and Canudo, has been considered to institutionalise filmclubism:

Delluc is one of the heralds (as are the 1920s for that period) of the institutionalisation of filmclubism, that is, of the selective transformation of the experience of popular initiatives, making them more isolated, feebler, and less effective as responses to the dominant film that had already been fully installed. This was a goal that churches would also pursue—the Catholic Church in France and other parts of Europe, as well as the protestant denominations in the United States—during practically the same period as film clubs were developed. In fact, the two vied for the same publics. Institutionalised cinephilia—the tame film club—would in large part emerge as the result of a combination of this elitist

¹⁰⁸ See the magazines referenced in the chapter on the Barcelona Film Club.

¹⁰⁹ I delve further into this matter in the chapter on Victoria Ocampo and Cine club de Buenos Aires.

¹¹⁰ Refer to the chapters of this thesis focusing on the Barcelona Film Club and Cine club de Buenos Aires.

element and certain religious practices and methods (Bacelar de Macedo 2017, 60–61).¹¹¹

While the place where people began to watch and discuss films may have been a creative one that brought together the diverse practices that emerged around the film medium, the truth is that, in film clubs, audiences had assigned roles by which their behaviours had been established and constrained, in a way that was tailored to the elite public.¹¹² As noted before, this did not preclude the existence of other kinds of initiatives organised around different goals, with diverse dynamics, forms of organisations, and interests. Yet, due to the reasons we have outlined—the impossibility of consulting all of the newspapers of the time, publications’ lack of digitisation, the fact that we do not know which agents were behind these initiatives, as well as the non-elitist origins of audiences—these initiatives have not enjoyed research and sometimes were not registered at all.¹¹³

The current literature views classical French *ciné-clubs* as the channel through which filmclubism was institutionalised. Yet, in reality, the practice of coming together to watch and discuss films, independently of the meeting’s ultimate goal, can be traced to a time before the birth of what have been considered the first film clubs according to the French model. These practices, which preceded cineclubism, were developed beforehand, through groups of audiences that sought to appropriate the film medium and rebel in the face of alienating, dominating film. Citing Ross, Macedo writes: “By the end of 1914, trade unions and radicals in England, Holland France, Germany and Belgium had organised cooperatives that produced, distributed, and exhibited films and newsreels within and between different nations” (2016, 51).¹¹⁴ In his research, Macedo delves into a few of these organisations whose goal he describes as building community. This audience would come together seeking to oppose Hollywood’s film industry—which understood film as a business—instead creating community around the new medium. According to the author, these community organisations were lost to history thanks to the institutionalisation of cineclubism. This institutional filmclubism debilitated community practices, instead crystalizing certain forms of association

¹¹¹ “Delluc est l’un des hérauts (et les années vingt la période) de l’institutionnalisation du cinéclubisme, c’est-à-dire de la transformation sélective de l’expérience des initiatives populaires en les rendant plus isolées, plus faibles et moins effectives en tant que contestation du cinéma dominant déjà pleinement installé. C’était un objectif que poursuivraient les églises – la catholique en France et dans les autres parties de l’Europe, les dénominations protestantes en Amérique du Nord – presque en même temps que les cinéclubs se développaient. En fait, elles se disputaient avec ceux-ci à peu près les mêmes publics. La cinéphilie institutionnalisée, le cinéclub apprivoisé sera en grande partie le résultat de la combinaison de cet élément élitiste avec certaines pratiques et méthodes religieuses.”

¹¹² We may glean this from certain reports on the Barcelona Film Club deriding those who whistle or react to what takes place onscreen. See the chapter in the Barcelona Film Club (Birosta 1929, 3–4).

¹¹³ In this sense, we may understand this lack of historical data in terms of Latour’s perspective on measurements and tools, which require consensus in order to circulate (Latour 1985). The first community practices around film experience a similar problem that measuring tools face in terms of the lack of consensus around their shape and features. However, once the higher echelons of society institutionalised the “film club” as a concept, clubs were able to circulate globally, being more easily traced in history.

¹¹⁴ The author is referring to Steven Ross’ book *Working-class Hollywood: Silent Film and the Shaping of Class in America* (1998).

around the film medium that adhered more to the needs of the capitalist system in the process of imposing itself at the time.

2.3.2 The Waning of Film Clubs: 1936-1946

This phase spanning 1936 to 1946 is characterised by a drop in the opening of new film clubs. This waning was a consequence of the development of national industries and the emergence of sound film, which would make film-screening more technically cumbersome for some film clubs, among other factors.

As of 1936, the film clubs that had cropped up in the previous decade started to disappear, with no new film clubs emerging in their place. This waning could be attributed to the onset of sound-film circulation. The fact that film clubs weren't created for monetary gain often meant that they suffered economic losses or had trouble surviving, as can be gleaned from the press of the time. As Àngel Ferran wrote before the club started operations, "Organising a club like the Barcelona Film Club is not particularly easy. As it isn't a business, there's no capital and, naturally, we cannot move forward. [...] In addition, there are other things, the resolving of which, according to Epictetus, we shouldn't worry about, since they are out of our control" (1929a, 9).¹¹⁵

If we had more comprehensive data on the film clubs in our database, we could conduct a medium-term analysis of the film clubs in operation at the time. However, it is often so that when we have a film club's start date, we do not have its end date, as noted before. Sound film drew the public to commercial movie theatres, highlighting the technological deficiencies of film clubs and causing their audiences to dwindle. In fact, we can find negative reviews on the screening quality and venues of these clubs in the press (Birosta 1929; Orsetti 1932), as we can see in the chapters dedicated to the Buenos Aires film club and the Barcelona Film Club. On the screening of *Chapayev* in Mexico, the Guatemalan writer Luis Cardoza y Aragón, who attended the screenings of Cine club Mexicano, would state, "I know that one of the latest Russian productions, which has enjoyed the best press in the world, *Chapayev*, is now in Mexico, yet no business person wants to acquire it, being certain of its failure. It'll end up being shown by the Film Club, where it'll be poorly screened and preceded by an inevitable conference before a few dozen people" (Cardoza y Aragón 2010, 28).¹¹⁶ Likewise, as noted in the chapter on Cine club de Buenos Aires, said club organised its screenings at different locations. Audience member Luis Orsetti takes note of one of these changes, expressing his satisfaction that the next season's moving to a different location will help avoid some of the discomforts of the first season. These changes might also have been due to the technological updates

¹¹⁵ "Organitzar un club com el Barcelon Film Club no és cap cosa extraordinàriament senzilla. Com que no es tracta d'un negoci, no tenim capital, i, naturalment, no en podem avençar. [...] A més, hi há altres coses i resoldre aquestes coses de les quals, segons Epictet, no cal preocupar-se, perquè no depenen de la mostra voluntat."

¹¹⁶ "Sé que está actualmente en México una de las últimas producciones rusas que han tenido mejor prensa en el mundo, *Chapayev*, y no hay empresario que quiera alquilarla, seguro del fracaso. Terminará ofreciéndola el Cine Club, mal proyectada, precedida de una inevitable conferencia, a unas cuantas decenas de personas."

that film clubs relied on when choosing the location for screenings. In any case, sometimes clubs opted to screen silent film, given that it was easier in terms of finding copies of such films (which distributors were less hesitant to lend out than sound films), and because silent film did not require a sound system at the theatre. Yet, this was not always the case, as we may note in an article on Cine Club de Montevideo (1932), the first in said city, which states that “The Film Club has inaugurated a cycle of sound films at Cine Versailles and has announced a series of independent films, with the collaboration of our Argentine partners, for next year” (‘Cine Club de Montevideo’ 1932, 45).¹¹⁷

Ten years after the first sound film, in 1936, silent films had stopped attracting audiences in the West (Andrew 2010, 67). By the same token, avant-garde film—most of which was silent—had also lost some of its luster, and many film clubs had once enjoyed close ties to this artistic movement (Hagener 2007), prioritising its films.¹¹⁸ Besides avant-garde cinema, film clubs also tended to screen German expressionist, Soviet, Italian, and US American cinema.¹¹⁹ Now, the arrival of sound film, and its circumscription to certain linguistic communities in turn—in what Andrew (2009) describes as the era of national cinema (which started in the mid-1920s and ended after the Second World War)—left film clubs with programming that would prove less attractive to the general public. Thus, film clubs offered reruns of films that had already been screened or that hadn’t yet been launched nationwide. For instance, the Mexican film club 35 mm Cinema’s first screening marked the debut of *Un chien andalou* (Luis Buñuel 1929) in Mexico City in 1938.¹²⁰ In this second phase when film clubs sought to screen silent films (whether or not they had already premiered), while commercial movie theatres were screening sound film, film clubs suffered from a loss in audience members. This was not always the case, however, as we may note in the chapter on Lola Álvarez Bravo. When cineclub 35 mm Cinema premiered the silent film *Un chien andalou* for the first time in 1938, it enjoyed an ample audience. Still, this was probably due to the specific circumstances in which it premiered: at a historic building (Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City), with a presentation by André Breton, whose presence in Mexico had already caused quite a stir.¹²¹

Just as sound film was being introduced, national industries were developing—we might take note of the golden ages of the Argentine and Mexican industries, which were set in motion in the 1930s. Another issue tied to the relevance of national production and sound film was the idea—shared among Latin American critics—that nationally produced films were not up to the standards of what was called the art of film. The

¹¹⁷ “Actualmente el Cine Club ha inaugurado el ciclo de films sonoros en el Cine Versailles y anuncia para el año próximo la serie de films independientes con la colaboración de los compañeros argentinos.”

¹¹⁸ For instance, we may note the failure of *Tararira* (1936), one of the first experimental films made by the Argentine avant-garde, which was never launched (Aguilar 2011, 18), because by the time it was filmed, there was no longer an audience for it. The film is considered Argentine because it was produced there, by Victoria Ocampo, and its actors were Argentine. Nonetheless, it was conceived by Benjamin Fondane, a French philosopher of Romanian origin.

¹¹⁹ See this thesis’s chapters on the case studies, in which I seek to reconstruct the programming of the three film clubs that I have researched.

¹²⁰ See the chapter on Lola Álvarez Bravo and her various film clubs.

¹²¹ For a more profound analysis, see the chapter on Cine club Mexicano as well as the other film clubs organised by Lola Álvarez Bravo.

Guatemalan critic Luis Cardoza y Aragón considered the matter in his column for the magazine *Todo*—between 1935 and 1936—for which he conducted several interviews with significant industry personalities of the time. In Mexico, critics generally tended to believe that even though the country had a well-developed industry, it had yet to master the art of film. Summarizing the criticism of Luis Cardoza y Aragón, Eduardo Serrato writes, “As we shall read, film in Mexico was born as a commercial enterprise, with a penchant for easy subject matters, measuring quality in terms of the amount of money that the films made back. This was one of the reasons why what theatre was doing at the experimental level could not be done in film” (Cardoza y Aragón 2010, 17).¹²² The development of national industries, which were inclined toward commercial film, would lead some film clubs to lose their audiences. In Spain, in the 1930s, writers and artists who met at film clubs and participated in specialised magazines also complained of the industry’s shortfalls. From his newspaper column in *Nuestro Cinema* (1932-1935), the Spanish film critic Juan Piqueras demanded more authentic cinema in Spain. The fact that amateur cinema peaked in Barcelona in the 1930s (*Cinema Amateur* 1932-1939 and *Boletín del Cinemàtic Club Amateur*, 1933-1937), just as many associations became interested in creating film, is related to the industry’s inability to satisfy the novelty-seeking public.¹²³ The Spanish Civil War also truncated the art’s chances of development. We should bear in mind that, by the late 1930s, many historical events would encumber the emergence of film club projects in other countries, too. For instance, we may look to the Infamous Decade in Argentina, or the Estado Novo in Brazil and Portugal. Likewise, the Second World War made a huge impact on European film production, leaving film clubs across Ibero-America with less screening material.

Despite this fact, we cannot speak, from a *longue durée* perspective, of a breakdown. In fact, from a global-history perspective, I document certain continuities, starting with the projection of avant-garde films in Ibero-American film clubs and continuing with the exponential growth of film clubs in Latin America after the Second World War.

2.3.3 Reemergence Phase: 1946-1958

The reemergence phase, from 1946 to 1958, is characterised by a resurging in the film club movement, especially during the apogee of Latin American film culture. The reasons for this expansion are manifold, including the professionalisation of film criticism, the spread of specialised magazines, the creation of the first cinematheques and other cultural and educational institutions in the film field, and the proliferation of film clubs. This phase also marks a certain divide between the Latin American and European commercial movie-going, especially after the Second World War, from which Latin

¹²² “El cine en México, como leeremos, nació como una empresa comercial, se inclinó a los temas fáciles y concedió la calidad a la cantidad de dinero que se recuperaba. Esta fue una de las causas por las que lo que se hacía en teatro a nivel experimental no se pudo hacer en cine.”

¹²³ I am referring to my chapter on María Luz Morales in which I explore this matter more deeply, especially in the section on amateur cinema.

America would recover more swiftly than Europe, thus permitting massive movie-theatre-going.

In 1945, we begin to see a resurgence in film clubs that spanned an entire decade and peaked in 1955. This peak was sustained, with a few fluctuations, until film clubs began to ebb in 1958, after which we would come to the end of our period of analysis—meaning I have no data to corroborate further trends. However, I am interested in explaining the growth that fluctuated from the mid-1940s to the late 1950s. This growth continued well into the 1960s and '70s. In his seminal work, *Paranaguá* (2003) addresses the peak of Latin American film culture, which was in full glory by the 1960s, culminating a process that had begun a decade prior, in the 1950s. This boom had its roots in the first national film archives, the expansion of film clubs that actually boosted the creation of film archives, and the publication of specialised film criticism magazines, whose actors were many times film club audience members—coinciding with the growth of film clubs which our analysis places in the mid-1940s. Indeed, this decade also saw the global circulation of Italian neorealism, a movement that garnered great interest from new criticism magazines and film clubs in Brazil, Argentina, Cuba, Venezuela, Colombia, Uruguay, Chile, and Mexico (Paranaguá 2003, 173). Thus, it is no surprise that a considerable amount of film clubs would emerge. Neorealism boosted interest in low-cost film production, which privileged filming outdoors with non-professional actors, leading to what was later known as Latin American neorealism. This mode of production kept up until the 1960s, when Brazil's *Cinema Novo*, Argentina's *Nuevo Cine*, and Cuban Post-Revolutionary film began to explore new paths (Paranaguá 2003, 91). Interest in neorealist film production was accompanied by a fascination with French criticism and the film schools of Paris and Rome (Paranaguá 2003, 208). The latter were also closely tied to Latin American film criticism, as we may glean in film club magazines. Issue 9 of Uruguay's *Cine club* magazine (1948-1953) includes narrations of club members' trips to Europe. The articles specify that these people were sent by the government so that they could train in European schools, acting as film club representatives with the goal of returning to Uruguay, where they would share what they had learned.¹²⁴

It is worth noting that the mediators who revamped Latin American film in the 1960s—coinciding with the Latin American Boom in literature—were once film club audience members. For instance, we could name writers such as the Argentine Jorge Luis Borges, and the Colombian Gabriel García Márquez and Álvaro Mutis, as well as filmmakers and photographers like the Brazilian Glauber Rocha, the Cubans Gutiérrez Alea, and Germán Puig, the Spaniard exiled in Cuba Néstor Almendros, the Peruvians Eulogio Nishiyama, Luis Figueroa Yábar, and César Villanueva, the Spaniard exiled in Mexico Carlos Velo, and

¹²⁴ On this, we may read that “the delegates of Cine Club del Uruguay, Mr. Miranda and Mr. Juan J. Fló, departed to Europe as well, in the early days of that month, to go to the I.D.H.E.C (Institute of Higher Studies in Film) in Paris / These emissaries, Envoys of the Official Government Mission for Studies, will course several courses on film technique” (*Vida de Los Cine Clubes* 1949, 11). [“Partieron igualmente para Europa, en los primeros días del mes, los delegados del Cine Club del Uruguay al I.D.H.E.C. (Instituto des Hautes Études Cinématographiques) de París, Sres. Miranda y Juan J. Fló. / Estos enviados, deteniendo también el carácter de Enviados en Misión Oficial de Estudios por el Gobierno, cursarán diversos cursos de técnica cinematográfica” (*Vida de Los Cine Clubes* 1949, 11). We have no further information on these envoys.

the Chilean Pedro Chaskel, who participated in the film club movement.¹²⁵ It's worth acknowledging that here I have only mentioned the names of male filmmakers who contributed to the emergence of the Latin American cinema of the 1960s onwards because I have not been able to find data to empirically attest the participation of women filmmakers in film clubs, even if I am aware of the active role of some specific women such as the Brazilian Helena Solberg and the Cuban Sara Gómez in the Latin American third cinema wave. This is one of the main justifications behind this research and the case studies in the third part of this thesis. We require more historical research on the women with ties to Ibero-American film clubs. Though the case studies I develop pertain to the first phase of film clubs in Ibero-America (up until the 1930s), it is clear that we lack historical research on women and film clubs for this third phase, when film clubs reemerged in Ibero-America.

In any case, the people turning the wheels of the film clubs of the mid-1940s were around 20 years old after the Second World War, around when *Ladri di biciclette* (Vittorio De Sica 1948) came out. It was these same people who would create what is known as Latin American neorealism, as Paranaguá points out (2003). The subsequent generation, which started organising screenings at a much younger age than their predecessors, were behind the revamping of Latin American film that reached global acclaim in the 1960s.¹²⁶ In our view, it was this second generation that boosted the growth of film clubs the most, or at least helped them survive past the second half of the 1950s.

Thus, film clubs grew in Ibero-America as their audiences grew, with more audiences interested in attending their sessions. By 1953, the Cine Club de Uruguay had garnered 2,000 members, as noted in the magazine *Marcha* (C.M.G. 1959, 26), securing 2,800 participants by 1960. Uruguay's Cine Universitario had also accrued 2,143 members by 1957 (Navitski 2018, 4). In contrast, Cine club de Colombia only boasted 300 members, and the organisation began to dwindle in 1960 as a consequence of its own success, as new film clubs cropped up in direct competition with the former (Navitski 2018). These massive audiences didn't exclusively attend film clubs—rather, this activity complemented their commercial movie-theater-going. Box-office success also graced European countries, during the mid 1950s.¹²⁷ Likewise, Mexico City registered a boom in movie-going in the 1950s, extending to the rest of the country by the 1960s (Mantecón 2017, 331). Certain political goals may be discerned among the film clubs of the 1960s, both in Latin America—as in Cuba—as well as in Europe, where the youth of the Nouvelle Vague embodied the epitome of this trend (Douchet 1999).

¹²⁵ Luis Borges took part in the Buenos Aires film club (Navitski and Poppe 2017, 189); Gabriel García Márquez and Alvaro Mutis were part of the Cine club de Colombia (Escorcia Cardona 2008); Glauber Rocha was highly influenced by Cine clube de Belo horizonte (Ribeiro 1997, 41); Gutiérrez Alea, Néstor Almendros and German Puig were active members of the Cineclub de La Habana (Rozsa 2017, 315); Eulogio Nishiyama and Luis Figueroa Yábar founded the Foto Cine club de Cusco (1955-1966?) (Karbaum 2015); and Pedro Chaskel was part of the Cine club de la Universidad de Chile (1954) (L. Horta et al. 2013, 20).

¹²⁶ Such as Glauber Rocha, Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, and Pedro Chaskel.

¹²⁷ See the results of the European Cinema Audiences (ECA) project, which proposes a comparative analysis of 1952, a year in which film was a very popular form of entertainment in Europe (Ercole, Van de Vijver, and Treveri Gennari 2020).

Film clubs also sought to entertain, projecting recent releases to captivate audiences who shared interests, as was the case with Cine Club de Colombia (Navitski 2018) and Cine universitario (1949-1959). Certain film clubs—named as such by this point—that opened their doors in the mid-1940s, operating until the late 1950s, strayed from the French model. Interestingly, in Montevideo, the same place where José María Podestá (Podestá 1932) described film clubs as an elite phenomenon, another film club would be born fifteen years later, Cine Universitario (1949), which, by 1953, would boast more than 2,000 members, as the magazine *Marcha* reported on the occasion of the club's tenth anniversary (C.M.G. 1959). Unlike the film club that Podestá alluded to, *Marcha* reports that the latter club screened commercial films even before they premiered officially, attracting the masses to the film club. These kinds of film clubs, which likely spread during the third phase, that of reemergence, as described here, enjoyed large audiences, rather than circumscribing to the elite, and didn't screen films that would only be enjoyed by a select few, as was the case with the first film clubs.

2.3.4 Concluding Remarks

Using digital tools and applying the global perspective, this chapter has proposed a periodisation for the history of Ibero-American film clubs during the first half of the twentieth century. This periodisation is innovative because it is the first to use digital tools and to provide a detailed account of the matter. The three phases proposed here for the periodisation of Ibero-American film clubs begin with the first clubs of the 1920s. Then, the second phase spans the mid-1930s to the mid-1940s, marking a drop in the amount of film clubs in operation. Lastly, the third phase, from the mid-1940s to the 1960s, marked the reemergence of film clubs.

The global perspective and the concept of the *longue durée* stand behind the periodisation proposed in this chapter. In this sense, we should keep in mind the different scales of analysis beyond the national that have allowed us to perceive the similarities between film clubs situated in different countries, for example, when considering the regional, Latin American, and Ibero-American scales.

Regarding this first phase of emergence, we have noted that, since the film club concept comes from Paris, it is inappropriate when describing initiatives that did not abide by the Parisian model. I am referring to several initiatives that emerged before or at the same time as the Parisian film clubs of the early 1920s, a few of which I have described.

As to the second phase, the drop in the number of film clubs opening their doors from the mid-1930s to the mid-1940s is a consequence of two main factors. Firstly, we have the emergence of national industries, such as the Mexican and Argentine ones, which were not particularly valued by film club goers. Secondly, the appropriation of sound film left a few film clubs behind, as they were only able to screen silent films, which had lost interest for the audience by that point. Along the same lines, the eruption of the Second World War in Europe halted the production of avant-garde and experimental film in Europe and the Soviet Union, and it was precisely this kind of film that had supplied the first film clubs with their programming.

Among other reasons, for the third phase, I have found that film clubs eventually reemerged because, on the one hand, commercial movies started being screened at film clubs, attracting massive audiences. Also, during this phase, we see the creation of the first film archives, the publication of specialised film criticism magazines, and the impact of Italian neorealism after the Second World War on film club goers. This phase will lead to the apogee of Latin American film culture, as described by Paranaguá (2003), and coincides chronologically with qualitative research conducted on the creation and institutionalisation of the film field in Uruguay (Amieva Collado 2023) and Argentina (Broitman 2022). Neorealism proposed a different film production model than Hollywood's, which became popular precisely due to its ease of replication. This cinema not only had political commitments but was also praised in consecration centres, such as film festivals. I would like to underline that those filmmakers who revitalised Latin American film under what was called Third Cinema, sharing many of the values of neorealism, were also the main drivers of the final phase of Latin American film clubs that reemerged in the early 1950s

2.4 Women and Film Clubs

This dissertation advances the hypothesis that women played an active role in the emergence of cinema as an art. They not only worked in the film *milieu* as actresses, as the mainstream bibliography has already stated (Nowell-Smith 1996; Corrigan 2008; Schatz 2010; Thompson, Bordwell, and Smith 2022; Cook 2016), but they also played a key role in the development of the film industry and in the production of theory and history of film. In this respect, this chapter advances the ideas that women exercised their agency participating in the public sphere with several and overlapping roles, promoting collective action, and exercising a twofold authorship as producers of film theory during their participation in the first film clubs, both as individuals and as audiences.¹²⁸

As the project Women Film Pioneers (WFPP from now on) has shown, in the silent era, women performed all kinds of jobs, from directors, to art editors, editors, writers, film critics, producers, etcetera (Gaines, Vatsal, and Dall'Asta, n.d.), and often at the same time.¹²⁹ According to the project Explorer (Dickel et al., n.d.),¹³⁰ that allows to visualise data from WFPP, the main professions they worked the most, beside actresses, were writers, screenwriters, directors, producers, editors, film company owners, which perfectly fits with the role of cultural mediator, as understood in this research.¹³¹

As we will see in the case studies presented in this research, women were key, highly active agents of the first film clubs. Women presented films at sessions, like María Luz Morales did in Barcelona; promoted screenings and the film clubs themselves, as Morales also did; secured the circulation of films for their screenings, as Victoria Ocampo did for Cine Club de Buenos Aires; and even purchased films with their own money, which Lola Álvarez Bravo did for Cine club de México. They also founded clubs, which was the case for Lola Álvarez Bravo in Mexico City and María Luz Morales in Barcelona;

¹²⁸ There are many classical books touching upon the agency of women from a sociological perspective, such as the pioneer Beauvoir (*Second Sex*, 1949), to Butler's *Gender Trouble* (1990), or Wallach's Scott from a Historical perspective (*Gender and the Politics of History* 2018). From a cultural perspective and more specific in the film field we can rely on Miram Hansen (*Babel and Babylon*), Teresa de Lauretis (*Technologies of Gender*, 1987) or Mary Ann Doane (*The Desire to Desire*, 1987), the three I rely on for my research. While we can also refer to some classics that use psychoanalyst theory for film analysis, such as Mulvey (*Visual and Other Pleasures*, 1989) and Linda Williams (*Screening Sex*, 2008).

¹²⁹ Most of the women in the project worked in the Hollywood industry. Despite this limitation, there are no other projects sharing these features, nor bringing together this vast amount of information relating women and film during the silent period. This is why I view this project as referential.

¹³⁰ The project, developed at Philipps-Universität Marburg, seeks to facilitate data visualisation on Women Film Pioneers in many ways, showing the geographical distribution of pioneers and considering their professions.

¹³¹ As always, we need to keep in mind that these classifications are based on the project's interests. That is, we cannot simply infer that women of the silent period generally worked as directors, editors, film critics, etc., since the data were only gathered for those women deemed "pioneers," that is, women who carried out professions that were generally associated with men: directors, editors, critics, etc. Yet, thanks to this project, we may state that there were women of the silent period who worked as directors, critics, and screenwriters, among other professions, meaning that these roles were not limited to men.

wrote about film and even advanced film theory with their texts, as both María Luz Morales and Victoria Ocampo did; and participated in and organised film sessions.

In this respect, my research aims at challenging the generalized conception of women (and also movie stars) as passive agents in the construction of film history and cinema theory. But also I aim at challenging the idea of audiences as passive agents, and, more specifically, that of women. Women have been generally conceptualised in the silent period in these two categories, as passive actresses and as passive audiences. But, as my case studies show, women were not passive agents at all in cinema history, but they played a key role in the construction of cinema history. Actresses, and audiences too, did participate in the construction of film theoretical knowledge, as we will see. To restore the authority of women, I seek to demonstrate that they also theorized and reflected upon the art of film, driving several practices within the field (such as writing on women in film, spearheading certain initiatives—such as film clubs—that would become referential models for other spaces, and organising conferences on film, as María Luz Morales did). Women became key agents in the institutionalisation of the film field through their work as writers in the field, founders of film clubs, and even as directors of film magazines. Their invisibility today is partially due to the authorship that they have been denied.

With the goal of demonstrating women's authority in the construction of knowledge on the film field or, when that cannot be done for lack of data, at least restoring their agency within film history, this research proposes the following mechanisms to recover their statues. First, we must question the value assigned to the archives that have been consulted thus far. There are other archives that have not yet been consulted but that could contribute valuable information on the role of women in the age of early film, as we may read in the work by Diana W. Anselmo (2023), which focuses on the scrapbooks of U.S. American women audience members of the silent-film era. Likewise, we may reconsider the kinds of texts used to legitimise people as film experts. Amelie Hastie (2007) proposes that we focus on self-reflection texts written by renowned women in the silent-film world as sources that reveal these women's knowledge of film and, thus, their status as theorizers of film history. Second, I propose that the multiple roles that women spearheaded in the public sphere show that they were very active agents in the development of film history. This includes their role as audiences, which widely influenced the development of the film industry, contrary to the popular belief that audiences are passive agents in film history. Third, I propose that knowledge emerged in the first film clubs as a collective process that granted authority to those who participated in knowledge building, including women.

Before going deeper into the three axes above-mentioned—public sphere and multiple roles, promoting collective action and a twofold understanding of authorship related to the production of theoretical knowledge on film both from the perspective of the individuals and the audiences—let me briefly trace some of the most important milestones regarding the study of women in the silent period, as well as to briefly remind the main theoretical trends and ideas on the concept of authorship in Film Studies.

2.4.1 The Agency of Women: The Silent Period

As mentioned above, Women Film Pioneers is the most important research project today analysing women who worked in the silent-film industry. Though most of the published data focus on women who worked in the Hollywood industry, the project also includes data on women who worked in other regions and industries. In this respect, it's worth acknowledging that the data is not the same for all regions. Despite all the collective work done by the WFPP, there is still a lot of research needed to be done in order to uncover the stories of women who took part of the cinema industry, especially beyond the US.¹³² The biases of WFPP, which is based at a U.S. American university, not only affect this project but are also palpable in secondary sources on early cinema that do not necessarily focus on women, such as in the highly recognised encyclopaedia created by Richard Abel (2004),¹³³ as well as in some silent-film historiographies centred on women published in the last twenty years (Bean and Negra 2002; Bridges and Robson 2015; Hill 2016). The issue is that the silent-era historiographies focusing on women tend to circumscribe themselves to those women who participated in the Hollywood industry. Though certain historiographies from other countries have recovered the role of women,¹³⁴ they are far outnumbered by those centred on the U.S. industry. In any case, we should bear in mind that Hollywood was one of the largest film industries of the silent period, especially as of the First World War, though there were other highly relevant industries, such as Russia's as well as the European industries in France, Italian, Germany, and United Kingdom (Thompson, Bordwell, and Smith 2022).

¹³² There are many mostly women researchers making extraordinary contributions and efforts to write and make public the work done by women in the early cinema period, as I do in this thesis. For example, see Monica Dall'Asta for Italian cinema, S. Louisa Wei for Chinese cinema, Heide Schlüpmann for German cinema, Anna Kovalova for Russian cinema, Aurore Spiers for French cinema and Clara Auclair for French workers in the US, Dominique Nasta for European Cinema, or Kerstin Fookon on Japanese cinema.

¹³³ The index of people in Richard Abel's *Encyclopedia of Early Cinema* by (2004) is organised according to the countries in which they worked. The United States boasts many more people with entries than other countries. Evidently, there are also far fewer women than men, and the women we do find mostly worked in the United States.

¹³⁴ I have created a bibliographic selection of the works cited on the WFPP website, which are highly relevant to the field. My selection is based on national historiographies focusing on women, and I do not reference those that aren't focused on women, as they may or may not contain any references to women. It is worth noting that these works rarely focus on the silent period. For said period, we may find the work of the researchers whom I cited in the previous footnote. The countries and regions for which we may find historiographies focused on women include China (Lingzhen 2012), Australia (Radi 1988; Wright 1986); France (Fliterman-Lewis 1990); Italy (Dall'Asta 2009; Pravadelli 2014) with Mónica Dall'Asta's research being the only one to focus on the silent period; the Soviet Union (Lynn 1993); and Turkey (Atakav 2013). On Latin America, instead of national studies, we have regional ones (Toledo 1987; Torres San Martín 2004; Trelles Plazaola 1991). As to the comprehensive history of film, we might highlight the work being carried out by the network of researchers known as Global Women's Film Heritage, which is preparing a collective volume on women and film and their relationship to the archive from a decentered perspective. The project was led by Stefanie Van de Peer but does not focus on the silent period. Likewise, we may cite the Red de investigación del Audiovisual Mujeres en América Latina (film-research network for women in Latin America, RAMA). The associated researchers have published plenty of research on the subject. Yet, once again, this research does not focus on the silent period. Instead, most of this research centers on current film, or on the last 60 years of film history.

The same bias affects encyclopaedias, collective volumes, and monographs alike. Evidently, the women who worked in the Hollywood industry, such as Dorothy Arzner and Mary Pickford, have enjoyed more study than those in other industries. I have tried to compile a list of some of the better-known women from varying geographies who worked in multiple contexts and took on work that was historically associated with men, nonetheless garnering a certain degree of attention from the academic community. We might consider the film directors Alice Guy Blaché (Simon 2009) and Musidora (Arouet, Cherqui, and Véray 2002) in France; Esfir Shub (Lynn 1993) in the Soviet Union; Lois Weber (Norden 2019), Mabel Normand (Sherman 2019), and Dorothy Arzner (Mayne 1994) in the United States; we also find film producers in Hollywood, such as Mary Pickford (Feeley 2016) and Norma and Constance Talmadge (Loos 1978). As for screenwriters, we have Lorna Moon (de Mille 1998) and Anita Loos (Carey 1988), also from the United States. Then, we have the art directors Natacha Rambova (Lambert 1997), who worked in Hollywood, although she was of Russian descent. Film critics would include the famous French writer Colette (Bonafant 2014; Bona 2017) and the English Iris Barry (Sitton 2014),¹³⁵ who was a film critic, a curator at the MoMA, and the founder of one of the first European film clubs in history, the London Film Society.

2.4.1.1 *The Concept of Authorship in Film Studies*

Authorship in film has been heavily disputed throughout the medium's history. Various currents and theoretical-methodological proposals have attributed authorship to different agents and agencies within the film field. First of all, though the French idea of the twentieth-century auteur informs the idea of authorship that we still keep today,¹³⁶ the theoretical reflections of Third Cinema upheld collective authorship processes for the militant film production of the 1960s. However, film-genre studies focusing on the industrial forms of production that characterised classical-period Hollywood partially dissolved the idea of authorship in the production process. Subsequently, and from a structuralist perspective, authors lost agency in the face of language: Roland Barthes proclaimed the death of the author, which, in the case of film, transferred the agency around film to the audiences or to the collective that made the film. We should also recall the return to specificity in film language and the interest in textual analysis stirred by semiotics, with Christian Metz at the helm, as well as the psychoanalytical current interested in the effects of the film apparatus on spectators at the subconscious level,

¹³⁵ The disparity in the limited contexts that have been addressed is in part due to the international recognition of the U.S. film industry in the development of the first few decades of film, as well as to the importance given to primary sources, which have been more digitized and better preserved in the United States than elsewhere, thanks to its historical and political circumstances.

¹³⁶ We may observe this trend in the monographs of academic magazines dedicated to filmmakers (authors) and in retrospectives on the authors of film festivals. Some examples of special issues dedicated to authors who have received plenty of recognition in film history, given that they are considered authors in their own right, would include Alfred Hitchcock (*Screen* 43, 2, 2000), Akira Kurosawa in *Film Comment* (vol. 33, issue 3, 1997), Martin Scorsese (*Sight & Sound* vol. 9, issue 5, 1999), and Wong Kar-wai (*Cineaste* vol. 26, issue 4, 2001).

dissolving authorship so that it extends the experience of spectators, too. Authorship has even come to be attributed to devices, as Walter Benjamin and Jean Epstein argue.¹³⁷ These are just a few of the currents that have characterised the historiography of the film medium, displacing authorship thanks to the empirical and methodological tenets guiding such theoretical proposals.

In the context in which film clubs emerged, in the first decades of the early twentieth century when the film field started being institutionalised, we may find two modes of production that somewhat determined how authors were perceived. On the one hand, we have the industry production system, which characterised Hollywood all the way until the decadence of the Golden Age and its studio system (the Golden Age of studios lasted from the 1920s to the 1960s). This production system was instated throughout the span of the institutional mode of representation, as defined by Noël Burch (1969). On the other hand, artisanal modes of production characterised the work of avant-garde artists and filmmakers who experimented with the film medium in the early twentieth century. The latter sought to propose a language of film, especially during the interwar period, as an alternative to the Hollywood films that were swiftly and effectively sweeping across the globe. These two kinds of production embodied two different ways of understanding authorship. In the mammoth U.S. industry, authorship was diluted among those who participated in the industrial process. Films would be classified by genre, with the forms associated to the genre determining each film's style. Thus, the artistic responsibility around the entire film was not laid on the shoulders of a single person—there was no author.¹³⁸ On the other pole, the more artisanal form of production in which authors often financed their own films did tend to make one person responsible, as an author. The author tended to be surrounded by helpers who would carry out the roles assigned to them. Such authors would be consecrated in their own circuits, including film clubs and art cinemas, and, later on, festivals.¹³⁹ Meanwhile in Hollywood, the audiences who went to movie theatres took up the task of recognising productions: box-office earnings determined whether or not a film would be consecrated in popular culture.

Often, the theoretical-methodological current dominating any given moment in a discipline's historiography will affect the development of history itself. In my view, this is especially the case with film clubs and their relationship to women. The beliefs around authorship in the film field—which was not an autonomous field at that time and thus depended on the ideas of authorship emanating from other arts—when film clubs emerged cannot be divested from the clubs' history. That is, film clubs, in the European sense of the term, were born of intellectual and artistic circles that sought to legitimise film as an art (Gauthier 1999). To these elites, the legitimation processes implied the romantic consecration of a film author (a bourgeois, white man). The belief among European, early-twentieth-century artistic circles was that the author-writer (screenwriter), who would also direct the film (as was the case in avant-garde circles),

¹³⁷ For a thorough review of these currents, see Robert Stam (2000).

¹³⁸ I do not wish to imply that there were no artists. We should keep in mind the importance of the Star System at that time.

¹³⁹ On the circulation of films in European film club circuits, see Hagener (2007).

was an artistic genius, and, as such, that his film was a work of art (Clariana-Rodagut 2017). From this assumption, it was inferred that film was an art in itself.¹⁴⁰

These ideas around authorship marked the institutionalisation process of a still rather unautonomous field—through, among other factors, the emergence of film cultures configured by the roles and practices associated to each social group. Film clubs, in this sense, were key agents to the development of different film cultures. This is why one cannot investigate early filmclubism and women without alluding to the question of authorship. The strategies that the women who have been relegated to the background in historiography actually followed to claim their authorship and roles as audience members, readers of film magazines, etcetera, responded to their contexts. We should also bear in mind that these efforts toward securing their own recognition as authors took place in several intellectual and artistic fields at the same time, not only in the film field. The historical moment in which film clubs emerged coincided with the expansion of the idea of the modern woman in the Western world (Nash 1996b). Women started to occupy public spaces and to claim their rights to express their opinions in the sense that Habermas describes regarding occupying public space (1989). This will to occupy the public space was intimately tied to the feminism of the suffragist movement, a transnational current spanning the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century (Daley and Nolan 1994). Likewise, one highly visible way of occupying the public space was moviegoing, a massive practice among Western women of the turn of the century, as we shall see. All of these factors—suffragism, the occupation of the public space, and massive moviegoing—are intrinsic to the idea of the authorship and participation of women in the first film clubs.

2.4.2 Women in the Public Sphere: A Multiplicity of Roles

As has already been said, women earned increasing participation in the public sphere and played multiple roles. Many of the women above-mentioned have been classified according to their main professions, but, as it's well-known, they played different roles at the same time or across their lives. Often, they combined acting with other professions such as production, as was the case of the Talmadge sisters, two highly recognised actresses from the silent-film period, who had two production companies to their names: the Nora Talmadge Film Company and the Constance Talmadge Film Company. We might also look to the French movie star Musidora, a highly recognised actress from the silent-film era who also directed several films with her production company Société des Films Musidora, for which she gave herself credit. Yet, she

¹⁴⁰ The film clubs we are referring to—those born in Paris and other European capitals in the 1920s, which have become part of the mainstream historiography—sought the goal of legitimizing film as an art. Thus, I believe that this kind of film club (not all film clubs in history followed this same goal) depended on the theoretical-conceptual framework that had expanded the most in that context. In this thesis, we insist that we must always keep in mind where the film club concept in this research emerged. Those who stood behind Paris's first film clubs came from the early twentieth century circles of the avant-garde, surrealism, impressionism, and Dadaism, all of them movements that upheld a certain romantic ideal of the artist-genius.

codirected several other films for which she never received credit. We may also consider the celebrated actress Mary Pickford, who, beyond acting during the silent-film period, directed a production company and worked as a screenwriter.¹⁴¹ Many of these women have been more recognised by the general public as actresses to the detriment of their other facets, which only sparked the interest of researchers and general public in later years.

Something similar can be detected among the women film club participants we are going to analyse for the next part of this thesis (part III). Women were not only very involved in film clubs, but they also created their own work and expressed themselves through several artistic mediums. They also worked in different jobs as editors, translators, adaptors, journalists, illustrators, etc. Applying their writing skills, as in the case of Ocampo o María Luz Morales, or artistic talents, as in the case of Lola Álvarez Bravo with photography, these women inevitably reflected upon their creative mediums: writing, photography, and, of course, film—which is at the intersection of the three case studies I will present in the following pages. Besides organising and founding film clubs, the women in the case studies presented in this research performed other tasks within and beyond the film field. It was these other tasks, rather than their roles as film club promoters and founders, that garnered them recognition, with the latter facet generally enjoying less attention from researchers. Still, we should highlight their work in film clubs given that these were the spaces where the first theoretical knowledge on film emerged, while said clubs were also key spaces to the consolidation of several film cultures and their associated practices.

As part of this section, I have mapped a few film club initiatives that have led me to confirm that women participated in the public sphere, while also underscoring their leadership in film clubs. In this sense, I can affirm that film clubs directed by or at women emerged in the Western world during the first half of the twentieth century.¹⁴² In line with the idea of the sorority network, some of these film club organisations were in contact with each other, thus promoting a transnational space for the exchange of ideas and practices among the women who shared an interest in film and a certain will to transgress the gender roles that they had been assigned. Perhaps it was women's defiant attitude, as they claimed broader forms of representation, that led to women audiences to be represented as "hysterical" in classical cinema, as Hansen writes (1991, 279).

Through our research, we have been able to outline three kinds of film clubs. Firstly, we have film clubs that were, throughout or at some point in their history, directed by women. Second, we have film clubs that were directed at women—though we don't know if these were directed by women as well. Most of these initiatives had ties to the

¹⁴¹ For a more complete profile, see the entries on each of these women in the Women Film Pioneers Project.

¹⁴² Though my research focuses on Ibero-America during the first half of the twentieth century, I have extended this mapping beyond the borders of this research due to the challenges in finding these kinds of initiatives. In this sense, this research is a first approach and seeks to encourage other researchers to continue to work with this subject.

Lyceum Club,¹⁴³ a club for women with venues in many cities across the globe, whose activities included the organisation of film sessions. Lastly, we have film clubs that dedicated one or a few sessions to the topic of women and film.¹⁴⁴

Among the film clubs directed by women, we may find two French film clubs cited in secondary sources, as well as a few within my context of study: Ibero-America during the first half of the twentieth century. In France, the cradle of filmclubism, we have Ciné-club Cendrillon (1933), founded by Sonika Bo in Paris, which screened children's cinema (Olmeta 2002). María Soto Cano (2006) writes that the film club Sonika Bo was founded in 1932, though Patrick Olmeta dates its foundation to 1933. According to Soto Cano (2006), the club was created for children between the ages of six and twelve, with sponsorship from the Ministry of National Education and the Parisian Children's Cinematheque. Neither of the two authors cite their sources, so we have no way of corroborating Sonika Bo's year of inauguration nor other basic data. For a more comprehensive view of this film club and Sonika Bo's activities before and after and its film club's operation, we may refer to Souillés-Debats (2013). This author also writes that Ciné-club Cendrillon was founded in 1932 and associated to the Fédération Française des Ciné-Clubs presided by Germaine Dulac (2013, 74).

In the same text, the author also alludes to Ciné-Jeunes, a film club founded by Marie Lahy-Hollebecque (1881-1957) in Paris in 1936, which, like Sonika Bo, was aimed at children and young people.¹⁴⁵ Ciné-Jeunes not only directed its programming at youths but also promoted film production among members (Souillés-Debats 2013, 88). Lahy-Hollebecque was part of the Union Française des Offices du Cinéma Éducateur Laïque (UFOCEL), a section of the Ligue de l'Enseignement. The aforementioned film sessions for children between the ages of 9 and 15 emerged from the UFOCEL, seeking active participation from the children. In 1945, after the Second World War, Lahy-Hollebecque would relaunch the project as a film club. Ciné-Jeunes would become a club of national ambitions, extending well beyond Paris. The two women behind these two film clubs in France—the country's the first educational and non-religious film clubs—would continue to play a part in the French film field beyond the realm of film clubs.¹⁴⁶

Along the same lines as the first two film clubs we mentioned, we may also cite Cineclub Belo Horizonte (1959-1963), of which I have far less information. According

¹⁴³ The Lyceum Club was founded in England by the British writer Constance Smedley-Armfield in 1903. Lyceum Clubs were apolitical spaces with no religious affiliation that were created for women, which sought to defend their interests and offer spaces of socialization, education, and culture through the organisation of events, talks, screenings, concerts, exhibitions, and more. Lyceum Clubs would spread throughout the Western world, as noted in the examples. Likewise, these clubs tended to attract women of the high and illustrated classes, though the clubs also organised educational and cultural initiatives that would include or were designed especially for the working classes.

¹⁴⁴ I gathered some of these findings from my research on the first film clubs of Ibero-America, which emerged during the first half of the twentieth century, while I found others in secondary sources. Nonetheless, the apparent dearth in Ibero-American film clubs is evident and is due to both a lack of sources and to difficulties in accessing sources.

¹⁴⁵ I have been unable to find any other basic information on the emergence and demise of Sonika Bo, a pioneering educational film club in Paris. Yet, there is some information online regarding Marie Lahy-Hollebecque, likely due to her marriage to sociologist Jean-Maurice Lahy. Marie Lahy was also a translator and spearheaded several organisations within the film field, also with ties to education.

¹⁴⁶ See Léo Souillés-Debats's thesis (2013) for an in-depth overview of these two initiatives.

to the research on educational film in Brazil by Milene de Cássia Silveira Gusmão, Raquel Costa Santos, and Rosalia Maria Duarte (2017), a woman, Yone Augusto de Castro,¹⁴⁷ directed this film club at some point in its history. Though this period came after the French film club era, it is worth noting that these women were tied to film clubs through education. According to the aforementioned Brazilian researchers, many educational projects spearheaded by women played a part in film history from its incipience. According to the authors, the gradual feminization of education took hold as of the late nineteenth century. The church, in fact, widely boosted the insertion of women in pedagogy thanks to its promotion of certain feminine values. This led to ties between women and film clubs, with the latter playing important educational roles in Ibero-America. As Léo Souillés-Debats (2013) writes of the French context, film clubs led by women had different purposes than the first film clubs born in France, which sought to legitimise film as an art. Despite the disparities in the years throughout which the various clubs described above operated, I believe it important that we keep their pedagogical goals in mind, as pedagogy directly affected both the history of women in the Western cultural field, including Ibero-America, as well as the history of filmclubism, from its incipience.

The film clubs that I will now mention are those of the case studies developed in part three of this thesis. All of these clubs had women in leadership roles, with some directed by women. Firstly, we must mention the Barcelona Film Club (1929), in which María Luz Morales participated very actively. María Luz Morales stood among the film club's founders, which included other intellectuals of the time, and she introduced the film club's first session as a representative of the club. She also reported on the club's sessions and history through her work as a journalist. During this same period, Cine club de Buenos Aires (1929-1932) was operating in Argentina, with the significant participation of Victoria Ocampo, who arranged the procurement of the avant-garde films that would be shown at the club. Other women who participated in Asociación Amigos del Arte (1924-1942), the film club's sponsor, such as María Rosa Oliver and Elena Sansinena de Elizalde probably participated in the film club as well, though we have no evidence to prove this. My final case study is dedicated to Lola Álvarez Bravo, who directed or co-directed several film clubs. These clubs include Cine club Mexicano (1931-1934), Cine club de México (1934-1938) (as I have chosen to call them in order to differentiate the two clubs, as explained in the chapter on clubs), and 16 mm Cinema (1938-?). As I will develop later on, in these case studies, the three women associated with these three film clubs not only founded the clubs, but also carried out several tasks in the film and cultural fields of their time. The question of education also impacted María Luz Morales's leadership of certain women's associations, while, in Lola Álvarez Bravo's case specifically, pedagogical goals also marked the programming of the film clubs in which she participated.

The second kind of film club that I would like to point out now is the kind directed at women. In several sources, I have detected clubs for women that also organised screenings, such as the Lyceum Clubs in Barcelona (1931-1936) and Madrid (1926-1939). These examples, which I have been able to research in depth, have led me to sustain the hypothesis that there must have been more women's clubs with, among

¹⁴⁷ I have been unable to find more information on this film club goer.

their activities, also organised film screenings and discussions in the early twentieth century. The Lyceum Clubs brought together western white women of the higher echelons of society who were interested in culture and organised themselves to program cultural activities, including film. I have been able to trace the emergence of many Lyceum Clubs, especially in Europe, to the early twentieth century. Beyond the Spanish Lyceum Clubs, I do not know whether any other Lyceum Clubs organised film sessions, as I have been unable to access their historical documents. Nonetheless, given the relevance of film in the context in which these Lyceum Clubs emerged, I suspect that at least a few of them would have organised film-related activities, lectures, screenings, or both. I have detected Lyceum Clubs that operated in my period of interest in the following cities: London (England, 1903), Berlin (Germany, 1904), Hamburg (Germany, 1906), Paris (France, 1906), Stockholm (Sweden, 1911), Melbourne (Australia, 1912), Sydney (Australia, 1914), Brisbane (Australia, 1919), The Hague (Netherlands, 1921), Adelaide (Australia, 1922), Auckland (New Zealand, 1919), Genoa (Italy, 1921), Catania (Italy, 1928), Amsterdam (1923), Nijmegen (Netherlands, 1925), Waikato (New Zealand, 1926), Te Puke (New Zealand, 1927), Groningen (Netherlands, 1929), Famagusta (Cyprus, 1930), Helsinki (Finland, 1932), Whakatane (New Zealand, 1936), Tauranga (New Zealand, 1937), Cambridge (New Zealand, 1940), Te Kuiti (New Zealand, 1944), and Otorohanga (New Zealand, 1946).¹⁴⁸ Likewise, as I have mentioned before, the Lyceum Club Femenino in Madrid (1926-1939) organised the screening of several films, as researcher Rocío González Naranjo (2018) has noted,¹⁴⁹ and its staff included several well-known personalities of the Second Spanish Republic, such as its president, the pedagogue María de Maetzu (1881-1848), as well as the writer and translator Zenobia Camprubí (1887-1956), the writers Elena Fortún (1886-1952) and Carmen Baroja (1883-1950), the feminist lawyers Clara Campoamor (1888-1972) and Victoria Kent (1892-1987), and many others. Furthermore, the Lyceum Club of Barcelona (1931-1939), like its sister club in Madrid, also organised screenings, as I have been able to corroborate through the press (*La Vanguardia* 1934a). Those who signed the Lyceum Club of Barcelona's founding manifesto would include feminist writer Aurora Bertrana (1892-1974), journalist María Luz Morales (1889-1980), pedagogue Maria Pi de Folch (1884-1960), pedagogue and feminist writer Enriqueta Sèculi (1897-1976), and the writer and playwright Carme Montoriol (1892-1966), among others. The press of the time includes references to the cultural activities that they organised, including film screenings. Yet, there is no single publication compiling all of these activities, in contrast to those of the Lyceum Club Femenino in Madrid.

Beyond the Lyceum Clubs, I have traced two more film clubs for women to the press of the time. One was Club Cinematográfico Femenino de Los Ángeles (1927). A newspaper article in *La Vanguardia* dated August 16, 1927, refers to a "Club Cinematográfico Femenino de Los Ángeles," (*La Vanguardia* 1927) in California, citing a letter that the

¹⁴⁸ I have included the years in which the clubs started operations in parentheses. Yet, I have often been unable to find the date in which they ceased operations—many even remain active (despite potential stops during certain sociopolitical contingencies, such as the Second World War, in most cases). The fact that this institution continues to function makes access to its historical documents limited.

¹⁴⁹ The text was published on the blog *El día que supe que era feminista* (2018) and is called "Las actividades del Lyceum Club femenino de Madrid censadas en la prensa (1926-1936)" (The Activities of the Women's Lyceum Club in Madrid Registered in the Press (1926-1936)).

club's participants had sent to film director Aoan Grossland [*sic*],¹⁵⁰ congratulating him for his latest film. I have been unable to trace more information on this club, which seems so interesting at first glance. Likewise, in the same newspaper, an article dated March 23, 1935 cites the foundation of Ciné-club de la femme (*La Vanguardia* 1935). The club is said to be directed by Lucie Derain [Lucie Dechorain] (1902-1967?), a French film critic, film editor, director, and screenwriter.¹⁵¹ According to the article, the film club's committee included great personalities from the world of film and theatre, such as Mesdames Madeleine Chaumont,¹⁵² Lucie Delarme-Mardrus (1880-1945), and¹⁵³ [Marcelle] Kraemer-Bach (1895-1990),¹⁵⁴ the actresses Gaby Morlay (1893-1964) and Yvonne Netter (1889-1985),¹⁵⁵ the writer Suzanne Normand (1902-?),¹⁵⁶ the theatre actress Madeleine Renaud (1900-1994), the theatre and cinema actress Françoise Rosay (1891-1974) and the actress Titaïna [Elisabeth Sauvy-Tisseyre] (1890-1976).¹⁵⁷ According to Gauthier (2018), this film club's sessions were held at Fédération International du Film. The news article in *La Vanguardia* mentions that one of its first sessions included the screening of *Back-Street* (1932), translated as *La usurpadora* in Spanish. The screening was followed by a public debate introduced by Netter, the group's lawyer, around the topic of "la femme sacrifiée," or "the sacrificed woman."

Besides these examples of film clubs for women and of clubs for women that also organised film screenings, we also have a film club that dedicated one of its sessions to discussing the topic of women. A newspaper article in *La Vanguardia* dated May 8, 1934, alludes to the inauguration of a new film club, Club Lumière (1934), which I assume operated in France. The article states that "Marie Glory presided the session, introducing its topic: 'Love, women, and cinema.' First, the movie *Possessed*, with Joan Crawford, was screened. Then, José Germain gave a well-informed talk for the development of such an interesting topic. After that, Maurice Escande recited several

¹⁵⁰ Given the newspaper article and the mention of John Barrymore as the lead, we may infer that the congratulatory remarks were for director Alan Crosland (1894-1936), for his film *Don Juan*, which premiered in 1926.

¹⁵¹ For a more comprehensive profile, see the entry in *Women Film Pioneers* (Vichi 2017).

¹⁵² I have not found her years of birth and death, but it seems that she was in vogue as a writer, poet, and chronicle writer. In a photograph from Galerie Roger Viollet, she is recognised as having founded the Forces féminines françaises in 1940, which seems to have been a group of women of the French resistance against the Nazi invasion. Using this example, I might hypothesise that there were links between other groups of women with ties to film clubs and the resistance against Nazi occupation and the advance of fascism, though has yet to be explored. For instance, we may observe Spain's Lyceum Clubs, which rallied behind the Spanish Republic during the Civil War. Likewise, a few women who were close to Lola Álvarez Bravo in Mexico participated in the Ligas por la Paz, an international resistance against the advancement of war.

¹⁵³ A French writer with ties to the first French magazine directed at women readers, *Fémina*, according to the doctoral thesis by Pujante Segura (2011, 107).

¹⁵⁴ This feminist writer and suffragist pushed for women's rights and joined the French resistance during the Second World War.

¹⁵⁵ A French lawyer and journalist who also joined the resistance.

¹⁵⁶ Though there is little information on her, she seems to have published several novels and to have worked as a journalist. In 1927 she debuted with a novel on the social emancipation of women and on socially assigned gender roles, *Cinq femmes sur une galère* (Les Editions G. Cres et Cie 1927).

¹⁵⁷ This feminist writer and journalist had become quite famous in Paris before the Second World War.

poems, receiving ample applause among the numerous attendees, among whom plenty of ‘movie stars’ and well-known journalists shone” (*La Vanguardia* 1934b).¹⁵⁸

Beyond the anecdotal, and although we only have this single example, I still think it is important to reference it because, taken alongside other activities that I have found, it demonstrates that speaking about women socially, or about women and love, or women and film, was common in cultural and artistic circles during the first few decades of the twentieth century. Indeed, I have traced several similar activities in the Lyceum Club de Barcelona, such as a 1932 conference given by Dolors Cebrià de Besteiro¹⁵⁹ [*sic*] (1881-1973) titled “La preparación de la mujer en la nueva sociedad. Curset d’Educació Social-Política,” roughly translated as “women’s training or preparation for our new society, a short course on sociopolitical education” (*La Publicitat* 1931), this same course given by pedagogue and translator Luïsa Navarro de Luzuriaga (1890-1947)¹⁶⁰ included the conference “La mujer ante la República” (women in the face of the Republic). I have found many other events with similar characteristics organised by women from the Lyceum Club, such as the conference “La mujer en nuestro tiempo en el amor y el dolor” (women of our time in love and pain), on which the newspaper *El Imparcial* (March 17, 1929) (González Naranjo 2018) published that there was a full house and much applause. Likewise, similar conferences were given in spaces beyond the Lyceum Club, such as “La mujer en la literatura” (women in literature), by María Luz Morales, which was put on by a group of students and alumnae at the teacher’s college Escuela Normal on March 6, 1926 (*La Vanguardia* 1926).

I believe that, firstly, all of these examples show that there were strong ties between women and the film club movement. Not only that, but the clubs for Western white women that emerged in the intellectual and artistic fields also boasted ties to film, appealing to film, organising screenings, and showing an interest in film. Furthermore, the relationship between this type of women and film was sometimes mediated by education. The subject of feminism and concern for the social situation of women also permeated the groups of Western women with ties to film clubs and to the cultural world throughout the first half of the twentieth century. In the above examples, we have white Western women of high society, from the artistic and cultural elite, who often expressed their political opinions through their actions. As these examples appear to show, these women would have been particularly concerned with improving the position of women in society through their participation in the suffragist movement as well as through actions tied to the feminist movement of the early twentieth century. All of this has allowed me to affirm that women who came together around film were not divorced of certain political yearnings, and that the gesture of coming together in film clubs also strengthened the ties of solidarity and support between women. These

¹⁵⁸ Marie Glory (1905-2009) and Maure Escande (1892-1973) acted in theatre and film. Original text: “Presidió la sesión Marie Glory y se consagró al tema siguiente: ‘El amor, las mujeres y el cine’. Se proyectó en primer lugar ‘Fascinación’, con Joan Crawford. A seguido, José Germain pronunció una documentada charla para desarrollar tan interesante tema. Después, Maurice Escande recitó varios poemas, que fueron muy aplaudidos por la numerosa concurrencia, entre la que brillaban muchas ‘estrellas’ del ‘cine’ y conocidos periodistas.”

¹⁵⁹ A highly recognised professor who boosted education in Spain and was part of Madrid’s Lyceum Club.

¹⁶⁰ María Luisa Navarro Margati was an educator associated with the Misiones Pedagógicas. She was president of Agrupación Femenina Republicana.

ties would also impact the progress of suffragism and public debates around the improvement of the position of women in society at the transnational level. Indeed, women's participation in the public space, either as film club audience members or leaders, not only shows their agency within the film and cultural fields of the time. In fact, white Western women's participation in film clubs also demonstrates that these women had agency in other social spaces, including the political and economic spheres. The forms of collective participation and organisational solidarity developed in film clubs impacted these women's participation in other social fields, beyond the cultural one. As we will now see, women's massive attendance at movie theatres would also serve to further their occupation of the public space. The ties of sorority that women established through the vector of massive moviegoing, among others, favoured discussion around suffragism and the social situation of women, leading to the circulation of their feminism, which internationalized itself from the mid-nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century (Janz and Schönflug 2014).

2.4.3 Promoting Collective Action: Women Audiences

2.4.3.1 Women Audiences in Movie Theatres

Despite the scarce literature and scant attention that audiences and women have enjoyed in historiography, it seems evident that more women than we know must have participated in the film club phenomenon, judging by women's massive consumption of film during the period in which film clubs emerged. It is thus no surprise that the first texts advocating for the modernity of the film medium were written by women, such as H. D. [Hilda Doolittle], Dorothy Richardson, Iris Barry, and Caroline Lejeune (Gledhill and Knight 2015).¹⁶¹

Along these lines, Shelley Stamp notes that "one 1920 assessment suggested that 60 percent of audiences were women, another calculated the figure was closer to 75 percent, and in 1927, *Moving Picture World* determined that 83 percent of moviegoers were female (Studlar 1996, 263; Koszarski 1990, 30)" (2012, 2). Like commercial movie theatres, film clubs also constituted spaces for film screening, though clubs tended to show films that would not have easily circulated among movie theatres. The percentages mentioned above refer to commercial movie theatres in the United States, but it is still striking that, despite women's massive attendance at movie theatres, there is no information on the extent to which women participated in film clubs in the United States. Despite my research on Ibero-America, I have found no statistics on attendance by gender for any Ibero-American region either, neither for commercial theatres nor for

¹⁶¹ The three women cited in this fragment had ties to the prestigious magazine *Close Up*. They also worked in the film field and garnered plenty of attention from critics. For a broader review of Dorothy Richardson, see the website of the Dorothy Richardson Society: https://www.dorothyrichardson.org/bibliography/works_on.htm#3.1. There are plenty of publications on Hilda Doolittle. There are also publications on Bryher, a mutual friend of Richardson and Doolittle, who founded *Close Up* and was a patron of the arts.

art cinemas. There is certain data indirectly suggesting that women's massive moviegoing in commercial U.S. movie theatres may have marked Ibero-America as well. Let us observe this text by María Luz Morales:

The North American statistics documenting a weekly film-going public of 52 million people state, in the next line, that more than 75 percent of these people are women. Here, it is well known that no other art form has reached our little women the way that film does today. A film chronicle-writer from a highly reputable newspaper in Madrid took note of the fact that, when a beauty contest was held by a screening company in Madrid in order to discover movie stars, hundreds of women of all social classes attended (Morales 1926, 112–13).¹⁶²

Morales's comments seem to suggest that the phenomenon of massive movie-going among women would also have been the case in Spain just as it was in the United States, though we have no data to back this claim. As I state in the chapter on María Luz Morales and the Barcelona Film Club, Catalonia was marked by a considerable increase in women readers and writers in the general press from the 1920s to the 1930s (Real Mercadal 2006, 181). In this respect, we may consider whether the way women occupied the public space through movie-going was tied to their participation in the press, both as very involved readers (who wrote opinion columns and replied to op-eds in magazines) and as writers. In any case, this occupation of the public space was boosted by communications media, which were inevitably affected by the glimmering modernity transforming cities. Among these signs of modernity, the expansion of film was highly appreciated by audiences and the press. One consequence of the expansion of film technology as a device of modernity was the massive construction of movie theatres. Thus, it would seem reasonable for a context like that of the Second Spanish Republic to also be marked by massive moviegoing among women. The case studies in this research seem to uphold this idea. In Mexico City, the 1930s have been culturally and socially described as a period of postrevolutionary cultural effervescence, with this time's closing years including the Golden Age of Mexican cinema. In Buenos Aires, the early 1930s coincided with the advent of sound film and the Golden Age of Argentine film, as we shall see.

Argentina also saw massive moviegoing among women in the late 1920s and early 1930s. During the sound-film period, a "día de damas," or "women's day" was instated in which women would go to the movies, with the programming directed at women including melodramas and special deals for women (Conde 2009).¹⁶³ We might also take a look at Argentina's second sound film *Los tres berretines* (Susini 1933), which tells the story of a middle-class family in which each family member takes an interest in one of

¹⁶² Original: "En nuestro país, como en todos los del mundo, el arte cinematográfico encuentra su mejor apoyo, su puntal más fuerte en la mujer. Como espectadoras igual que como intérpretes. Las estadísticas de Norteamérica [sic] que acusan una cifra de cincuenta y dos millones de espectadores por semana en los espectáculos cinematográficos, dicen, a reglón seguido, que más de un setenta y cinco por ciento son mujeres. Aquí, sabido es que ninguna forma del arte ha llegado hasta nuestras [sic] mujercitas como el cine llega hoy. El cronista cinematográfico de un reputadísimo periódico madrileño, toma nota del dato de que al abrir una empresa exhibidora de Madrid un certamen de belleza con el propósito de descubrir estrellas para la pantalla, han acudido a él varios centenares de muchachas de todas las clases sociales"

¹⁶³ I would like to thank my colleague Alejandro Kelly-Hopfenblatt for this film recommendation and for letting me know about the "día de las damas" (women's day).

the following Argentine hobbies (known as *berretines*): tango, football, and movies. Significantly, in the film, women cast aside their domestic chores in order to go to the movies. Argentina's modernization process—with its urbanization plans of the late nineteenth century, the advent of sound film that rung in the golden age of Argentine cinema, and the expansion of media communications—would forge a similar context to that in Spain. We may thus suspect that women attended movie theatres en masse there as well, as seems to have been the case in Spain and definitely was the case in the United States.¹⁶⁴

The Mexican case is similar to the Argentine one. As Ana Rosas Mantecón (2017) notes, from 1930 to 1960, as part of the city's modernization process, an urban apogee consolidated movie theatres as architectural staples. These spaces became sites for social integration, with citizens from all walks of life “in geographical and economic terms”¹⁶⁵ (Mantecón 2017, 140) going to the movies. Moviegoing increased exponentially in Mexico City from the 1930s to the 1960s. Though Mantecón does not make specifications about women and moviegoing, we may expect that, in such a context, women's moviegoing would also jump. The case study on Lola Álvarez Bravo and several film clubs in Mexico City demonstrating women's interest in the film club phenomenon also supports this hypothesis.

Despite our inferences, which we have only been able to make through indirect sources, the situation of women and their relationships to film seem quite similar across the case studies in this research. Despite the geographical distances between them, the context of the pre-Civil-War Spain of the 1930s allows for comparison with Argentina and Mexico in terms of how women occupied the public space. After this period, the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War makes comparison more difficult among these regions. Yet, certain coinciding factors make comparison viable when it comes to women and film, at least for the 1930s. Despite their uneven growth, these three cities—Barcelona, Mexico City, and Buenos Aires—underwent similar moments of modernization, which, with the apogee of communications media and the suffragist movement in full force, enabled the massive participation of—at least—white Western women in the institutionalisation of the film field.

2.4.3.2 Women Audiences in Film Clubs

Attending a commercial movie theatre and going to a film club are not one and the same thing. Hansen's reflections on the implications of women's massive occupation of the public space for the social situation of women prove especially relevant in this sense. To Hansen (1991) and Stamp (2012), going to the movies in the late-1920s United States was the perfect excuse for women to get out of their homes, navigate the public space, and sit inside a dark theatre. Despite a few years' difference, this falls in line with what occurred in 1930s Ibero-America. Hansen questions what entering a dark movie theatre

¹⁶⁴ I have consulted other specialists in the early decades of film in Uruguay and Mexico but have been unable to find more references to such statistics and primary sources that might back this argument.

¹⁶⁵ Original: “en términos geográficos y económicos” (Mantecón 2017, 140).

would have meant to women, what suspicions the act could have aroused, what it was that could be seen from a position of anonymity and in the dark. She asks what it was that garnered the attention of this predominately female audience. In response, she underscores what film would have implied for massive entertainment and moviegoing among women, who, up until then, had been restricted from public spaces of the kind. “The movie theatre opened up an arena in which a new discourse on femininity could be articulated and the norms and codes of sexual conduct could be redefined” (1991, 118). To the author, massive movie-going among women collapsed the public and private spheres. This collapse would challenge established gender hierarchies and situate the female gaze in the public space, which women had not occupied before.

If modern advertising and the department store had mobilized the female gaze in the service of consumption, the cinema seemed to have institutionalised women’s scopophilic consumption as an end in itself, thus posing a commercially fostered threat to the male monopoly of the gaze. The conflict between economic opportunism and patriarchal ideology provoked a profound ambivalence toward the female spectator—as a subjectivity simultaneously solicited and feared, all the more so because of its collective dimensions (Hansen 1991, 122).

Considering Hansen’s reflections, we may ask ourselves why it would matter if it was the case that women went to movie theatres en masse, as noted, but not to film clubs, as secondary sources seem to suggest. Film club audiences tend to participate very actively, while, if we follow Hansen’s argument—which underscores that the pulse of feminine desire displaced consumerism as the industry’s incentive—spectators are anonymous in movie theatres and can thus hide from the other’s gaze. Mary Ann Doane (1987), whom Hansen cites, posits that the female spectator’s ocular subconscious was constructed at that moment through an obsessive female gaze that fixated on peripheral details beyond the narrative itself, finding, in moviegoing, an alternative to the white, male gaze of dominant classical film narratives. In this sense, to women, the practice of moviegoing would challenge common, classical storytelling thanks to the legitimacy that the industry—through media communications—attributed to the female.¹⁶⁶

At the same time, a tradition of female spectatorship can be traced through concrete historical manifestations—such as fan cults surrounding stars of both sexes, women’s clubs engaged in film-cultural activities, or the numerous women playing the piano in movie theatres as well as women writing on film—in short, a variety of configurations, often ambiguous and contradictory, in which women not only experienced the misfit of the female spectator in relation to patriarchal positions of subjectivity but also developed imaginative strategies in response to it (Hansen 1991, 125).

This occupation of the public space, Hansen states, assumes that a certain anonymity ensues through the collective. Collectivity was a fundamental form of organisation to

¹⁶⁶ Though classical narratives of Hollywood film privilege a white, male gaze, those who organised film screenings encouraged everybody to go to the movies through the specialised press, using publicity and designing special programming that catered to the tastes of various minorities. See Judith Thissen (2020) on certain minoritised collectives.

women in this context as well as in the cultural field in general, as I have already noted. Yet, I believe it fundamental that we do not limit women's participation to the anonymous. Rather, I believe we must understand their collective participation as yet another form of authorship, as I will explain in the next section. Demonstrating women's non-anonymous but collective participation in film clubs will allow us to deepen our understanding of their active participation while casting light on the different practices that they used to garner authorship, many of which have not been sufficiently considered to date. For instance, jointly attending a film club and discussing a film after its screening denotes a certain degree of creativity that may crystalize into a written text, or simply constitute a more intangible product: the practice of discussion and debate itself (Kuhn 2010). Likewise, that women attended film clubs also led to other practices, such as the reading of and writing in film magazines, participation in specialised clubs or associations,¹⁶⁷ distribution tasks taken on by cultural mediators (as seen in our case studies), conference giving, the presenting of films at film clubs (as María Luz Morales did), and the curating and preservation of film copies and documentation for future cinematheques.¹⁶⁸

In this sense, the questions that Annette Kuhn asks in her study on women audiences in 1930s Britain prove highly relevant. In a later reflection Kuhn writes about what it meant to 1930s women audiences to be film spectators:

These references within films to cinema fandom speak to certain cultural competences on the part of the (female) social audience. They assume prior knowledge about cinema, films, and stars, and about their place in the culture of the everyday; about stars currently in the ascendant; and about the character of the cinema culture itself. They also point to a cinema culture thriving beyond the cinema screen and outside the doors of the picture palace—in books and magazines about films and stars; in organisations like fan clubs; in newspapers and other media consumed by filmgoers but not concerned centrally with cinema; and perhaps above all in the routines, habits, and talk surrounding the very ordinary activity of “going to the pictures” (Kuhn 2010, 62).

¹⁶⁷ Shelley Stamp similarly writes that, “positioned as gatekeepers of culture and morality, women had been a visible force in regulating cinema early on. As narrative features began to dominate the market after 1915, reformers turned their attention to the content of films, rather than theatre conditions that had been their primary concern initially. The National Board of Censorship was staffed largely by middle-class women who volunteered to evaluate films prior to their release. By 1915, 100 out of 115 volunteers were female (Grieverson 2004, 101). Less is known about personnel who screened films at many of the state film censorship boards, but it is likely that many were also women active in progressive reform movements” (Stamp 2012, 17).

¹⁶⁸ See Christian Dimitriu's interview of Guillermo Fernández Jurado on the history of Cinemateca Argentina for the *Journal of Film Preservation* (Dimitriu 2007). In the interview, the idea behind Cinemateca Argentina is attributed to Rolando Fustiñana (Roland), at around 1942. Fustiñana is widely recognised within Argentine film history, especially in filmclubism. Yet, in the interview, Guillermo Fernández himself refers to Lidia Barletta, who was married to Fustiñana. Before Fustiñana had become a film critic, Barletta was already gathering film criticism and articles on film from the newspapers and magazines to which she had access. This documentation constituted the seeds of the documentation centre at Cinemateca Argentina. Unlike Roland, Lidia Barletta has not been recognised in early Argentine film history—as we may glean from the absence of basic information on her.

Like Hansen, Kuhn refers to all of those practices that allowed women to participate in the emergence of film cultures. If we extend these practices to the sphere of film clubs, these would include amateurism, in the broad sense of the term. By amateurism I am referring to practices like taking acting classes at the film or cinematography clubs that women who wanted to become movie stars often attended. We might also consider screenplay competitions organised by magazines, often associated with amateur production at film clubs.¹⁶⁹ Women who participated in these clubs also wrote in their favourite magazines, in the sections in which readers could publish their opinions, or in the correspondence sections in which ties were established between women as well as between film aficionados in general.¹⁷⁰ Though only a few of these texts have survived and we lack a record of all of the activities that women organised, we cannot overstate their value. Sometimes, these clubs and associated magazines served as launching pads for people who would ultimately professionalise, while others functioned as sociability spaces establishing the ways in which one should watch film, as well as the ways in which film was understood and circulated.

Another element differentiating film club participation from commercial moviegoing involves the forms of sociability associated to each. While going to a movie theatre was considered entertainment, attending a film club required more active participation, as members often pointed out.¹⁷¹ Indeed, moviegoing did imply a certain degree of socialization, but attending a film club required far more commitment. Let us recall that in the early twentieth century, a multiplicity of clubs took part in the organisation of socialization in Western culture. Film clubs implied different kinds of sociability depending on the groups of people involved (Cowan 2023). In this sense, like Cowan does with Germany and Austria, it would be worth tracing the concept of sociability in Ibero-American history in order to see what kind of sociability was proposed in spaces directed by women, spaces created for women, and in spaces in which women's participation was high.¹⁷² Perhaps sociability was different in such spaces than in clubs directed by men or with majority-male participants. We might, for example, examine the values that French *salonnières* promoted from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries, or those of book clubs, comparing such values to those promoted among women's film club networks in Ibero-America over the first half of the twentieth century.¹⁷³ I believe that comparing these different types of clubs and the kinds of

¹⁶⁹ The magazine *Cine Revista* (1921-1924), which stood behind Club Cinematográfico de Horta, organised a screenplay competition in order to pick the plot for the club's first production (see issue 105 from 1923). This same magazine issue printed that club members took classes from several film professionals (Domenico Serra, Joaquín Carrasco, and Enrique Santos are mentioned).

¹⁷⁰ See the section "Correspondencia" in the magazine *Cine-Revista*, as well as the section "Ud. Tiene la palabra," roughly translated as "It's your turn to speak" (or to write, in this case) where we may find texts written by the magazine's readers.

¹⁷¹ In my chapter on the Barcelona Film Club, see Carles Gallart's thoughts on film club goers' commitment (Gallart 1929).

¹⁷² For similar research, though without the gender perspective, see Paula Bruno (Bruno 2014a; 2014b).

¹⁷³ Like other projects addressing oral history and audiences have demonstrated, moviegoing was a social event in which audiences would recall the activities and practices around moviegoing more than the films themselves. See the European Cinema Audiences (ECA) Project for the 1950s and Annette Kuhn for the 1930s. As seen in Kuhn's work, moviegoing was a social event in which women would more often go to the movies with their friends and family than with their husbands. These same women audiences would recall that they chose films according to their actors (Kuhn 2011, 85) and not based on the plot or director.

sociability that took place among women across history would give us a few clues to understanding the kinds of socialization that would come into play at film clubs.

Given these reflections, instead of contrasting the domination of the male gaze to the subversion of modern women in dark movie theatres as Hansen does, I propose that we establish a conceptual counterpoint between the objectification of the male gaze of classical narratives and a women's gaze built upon the power of collectivity. Even if women ultimately sought subversion through mass moviegoing, the idea that they went to movie theatres to hide generates an imaginary of insecurity, shame, and obscurity. Thus, instead of adopting this self-accusatory perspective, we may interpret women's moviegoing as a conscious and collective act of empowerment. I have focused my case studies through this lens and tried to demonstrate how collaboration through networks emerged as a survival and support strategy among women at a key moment in history, when women began to massively occupy the public space and claim their voices.

2.4.4 Twofold Authorship in the Production of Theoretical Knowledge on Cinema

2.4.4.1 Audiences as Authors

Beyond considering the women who made up the audiences at film clubs as participants in the gestation of certain film cultures, this thesis also proposes that we recover their voices as authors. That is, I believe it important to highlight that women's contributions to the gestation of film cultures was not exempt of authorship. The fact that their contributions were collective should not make them less important. Thus, this research examines women as authors, considering them as theorizers of the film medium through their collective construction of the knowledge gestated in film clubs. Often, in the silent period, women would take on tasks that were important collectively, making the names of the women involved almost impossible to trace (Vatsal 2002). This is true of the working-class women who worked as film editors during the film industry's early years, cutting and pasting still by still (Hatch 2013). These tasks were assigned to women, who were thought to have superior dexterity and abilities for such meticulous work.¹⁷⁴ Despite their not being recognised as authors, these women carried out a task that would later come to be recognised as a form of authorship: film editing.

The object of analysis in my research has allowed me to reassess the existing analyses on the concept of authorship, as I seek to revisit, on the one hand, women's authorship as theorizers and historians of the film medium, and, on the other hand, the notion of

¹⁷⁴ In her still unpublished thesis, Elena Cordero Hoyo proposes using Radha Vatsal's idea of authorship to study several Iberian women with similar profiles to those that I propose in this research. In this sense, I would like to thank her for the theoretical suggestions for the case studies developed here.

authorship as something that can be collective, in this case, through women's participation in film clubs as audiences. For the first task, I reread certain texts that have been overlooked: those by Lola Álvarez Bravo, which have been cast as autobiographical, and those by Victoria Ocampo. Secondly, considering authorship as something that is collectively distributed across a network has allowed me to reconsider the relationships between women as channels for the distribution of authorship. This means that intimate relationships can also be understood as articulating elements within the field.

Sometimes, the strategies to share in this authorship, often functioning through the transmission of prestige, are highly visible. As Giuliana Bruno highlights, the phenomenon of women writing about women has occurred often in history: "women, historically excluded from authorship, have become authors by writing about other women. . . . The female reader is now effectively engaged in a double construction of the female authorial subject" (Hastie 2007, 12).¹⁷⁵ Perhaps we could consider authority in the network as being passed down from generation to generation of women who have fought to make a space for themselves in the public sphere. In fact, one of the strategies that women have followed to gain legitimacy as authors throughout history is the construction of genealogies of the self, comprised of other women with whom they share experiences like lack of legitimacy, the transgression of gender roles, or self-reflexive writing. As we shall see in the three chapters I dedicate to my case studies, Lola Álvarez Bravo, María Luz Morales, and Victoria Ocampo all constructed genealogies and alluded to other women—whether or not they were their contemporaries—with whom they shared ideas or life conditions. Though Diana Anselmo's proposal is quite different from mine, we both espouse the idea of the shared experience of white Western womanhood. The fans who would collect pictures of their favourite actors and actresses wanted to be like the movie stars, as Anselmo shows (2023). At the same time, they shared the experience of fanhood with other fans, partaking in the practice of admiring their favourite stars and thus sharing in that queer way of spectatorship that Anselmo describes. In part three of my research, we will see that the networks of women that the women in my case studies built around themselves were often sustained through shared experiences, which were inevitably contextualized by the practice of transgressing assigned gender roles.

2.4.4.2 Self-reflective books and scrapbooks as new sources of knowledge

Women took part in film history through consuming images and producing images, but they also reflected on their practices in autobiographical writings, such as memoirs or

¹⁷⁵ This phenomenon not only exists in writing, as can be gleaned by quickly reviewing a few of the WFPP's profiles of women who worked during Hollywood's silent period: this same strategy had been used for various kinds of media. On Hollywood, Cari Beauchamp (1998) has written about women helping each other.

cookbooks. As Amelie Hastie (2007) has shown, American actresses and directors reflected upon themselves as images, including the actresses Louise Brooks, Lillian Gish, Gloria Swanson, Ethel Waters, and Colleen Moore. On some occasions this occurred even before they became movie stars. In her collection of photographs of actresses, Colleen Moore left a space that she later intended to fill with her own photograph. Hastie believes that, in so doing, Moore practiced self-fandom, in a sense communicating to her future fans how *they* should practice fandom. These forms of self-reflection, which early women film directors also participated in, including the French Alice Guy-Blanché and the Canadian Nell Shipman, became reflections on the film medium and its history. As Hastie states: “autobiographical forms to reflect on stardom, film industries, film history, and film form. Put somewhat differently, they draw on this form not only to reflect on their own lives but also often to produce their own theoretical and historical models about their work and the industries they have been engaged in” (2007, 3). These texts in which the women reflect upon their careers, trajectories, and futures can be considered know-how of the film industry. Often, men and women would publish a certain kind of text on film in cultural and specialised magazines: a mélange of chronicle, poetic writing, and film criticism. In this sense, autobiographical reflections were in fact tied to the creative chronicles that permeated criticism at the time.¹⁷⁶

Recovering the auto-reflective texts (cook books or memoires) of women and considering them in the history and theorization of cinema, Amelie Hastie is also proposing an expansion of the conception of what is an author in early film history. As Catherine Grant has proposed too, I believe it could be useful to “broaden our ideas about what constitutes a ‘primary text’ in film studies and widen the scope of those texts employed to theorise about female authorship” (Paszkievick 2018, 38). These women showed their knowledge of how the industry and the film medium worked, not only exercising their practices in the film medium but also avidly consuming film. This idea is also in the proposal by Diana W. Anselmo. The author conducts in-depth research on the scrapbooks of teenage women in the United States from the 1910s to the 1920s, positing that these teens constructed their identities as women through their experiences as fans—restoring their agency within film history. The author proposes that the construction of women’s identities in the United States, through media culture, must take into account the artefacts and biographies of movie fans. Likewise, I believe that we cannot understand the history of filmclubism without studying the contributions that women made to it. Conversely, we can only understand women’s occupation of the public space from a cultural-history perspective by taking into account their interest in film. I also point to the importance of collectivity and collective experiences for the construction of identity, like Anselmo does, and similarly highlight the importance of support networks between women when understanding their contributions to the cultural field.

¹⁷⁶ See the texts on film published in *Mirador* magazine (1929-1936). In fact, the theoretical kind of film-related texts considered valid at the time were quite similar in tone to that of self-reflection and subjective texts. For instance, we may observe the theoretical proposals developed in France between the 1920s and 1940s, by authors who would come to be considered canonical, such as Louis Delluc, Jean Epstein, Jean Cocteau, Antonin Artaud, Luis Buñuel, and Alain Virmaux.

Hastie and Anselmo's proposals not only conceptualise reception as a fundamental phenomenon to studying film history, but also restore the agency of audiences of women by studying their experiences. Their research serves as models for my own work because they prove the relevance of considering the personal experiences of women in order to restore their agency within the film field, an agency which they have historically been denied. Likewise, women's identity construction, as tied to the construction of film cultures, was collective, defined by the film medium's own characteristics but also by the ways in which film clubs organised.

2.4.5 Collective authority and the emergence of knowledge in film clubs

The visible faces of film clubs were the same people who began to write about film, articulating their theorizations.¹⁷⁷ That is, those same artists and intellectuals who aimed to legitimise film as an art through their film clubs also sought to legitimise themselves as authors on the film medium. The closeness between specialised presses, magazines, and film clubs would support this idea (Rodríguez Álvarez 2002a). That these first theorizers came from other artistic fields—usually from journalism, literature, poetry, and theatre—along with the film field's lack of autonomy, would explain the need for film club goers to publish written texts on the film field. On the one hand, the publication of texts would help artists acquire, as authors, the legitimacy that they needed. On the other, the texts were often published in magazines that did not specialise in film, such as in cultural magazines and newspapers. Publishing in either of these could confer someone the title of literary author or journalist, that is, someone legitimised to speak publicly to others and in the name of others.¹⁷⁸ Certain writers published texts on film in magazines that carried symbolic weight within the literary field. For instance, Jorge Luis Borges wrote for the magazine *Sur*. Likewise, María Luz Morales wrote about film in *La Vanguardia*. Both Victoria Ocampo, director of *Sur*, and María Luz Morales were interested in actively participating in the film field of their time. Publishing about film in prestigious media outlets that had accumulated a certain degree of symbolic capital in their field was a way of transferring symbolic capital from the already autonomous artistic and intellectual fields to another artistic field that was still in the process of institutionalizing (Bourdieu 1979).¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ See the film critics and film club goers listed by Paranaguá (2003) noted in the previous chapter.

¹⁷⁸ I believe that cinematographic novels also emerged in response to the need to transfer symbolic capital of authors from the literary field to the film field. In the chapter on María Luz Morales and the Barcelona Film Club, we may observe the case of Carles Soldevila, a recognised Catalan writer who also wrote cinematographic novels.

¹⁷⁹ I have cited examples developed in this thesis. The participation of literary writers in the film field, through film clubs, who would later become film theorizers or filmmakers is a topic that I have dealt with in the chapters on Ibero-American film club networks (2.1, 2.2 and 2.3).

The legitimisation process that these first film club goers and theorizers undertook implied excluding those who did not share their same features—the features of the white, bourgeois man—such as white bourgeois women. As Robert Stam notes, what was shameful about the politics of authors—which developed in postwar France, the logical continuation of the 1920s and 1930s—was not really the glorification of the author, but the minority legitimised as such (Stam 2000, 87). Referring to the question of authorship in the film field and to the *politique des auteurs*, Paszkiewicz notes that most filmmakers granted with the status of *auteurs* are “white, middle-class men” (2018, 35).¹⁸⁰ At the time, women did not enjoy the necessary status to be classified as authors. I believe this is one of the reasons why historiography has ignored their participation within filmclubism. As noted, the visible faces of film clubs would eventually become authors, through film directing, screenwriting, or theorizing on the film medium. Women were not taken into consideration as active film club participants by their male cohorts because that would risk granting women a certain legitimacy as authors. I believe that this must be at least one significant reason why historiography has ignored their participation. It was their colleagues, who overlooked their participation, who began to theorize on the film field and to write the history of film.¹⁸¹

Despite the way in which authorship has been conceptualised in the historiography of filmclubism, which is highly influenced by the dominant author politics of that historical moment, I believe that other forms of conceptualising authorship may help recast the participation of women in film clubs. My proposal thus considers the need to view authorship as collective, by situating the cultural mediator as we have called it, “within complex discursive networks in which the creators [mediators in our case] themselves also have multiple ways of impacting the reception of their works” (Paszkiewicz 2018, 56). In fact, the film club as an object of study allows me to think about the construction of knowledge as a joint task that emanates from collective practice. I thus understand the film club as a gathering place in which knowledge emerged through the meeting of various human and non-human actors in the same time and space. Conceptually, the key comparative text on music aficionados and people with drug addictions by Antoine Hennion and Emilie Gomart (1999) could help us understand the process of the emergence of knowledge.¹⁸² In their terms, the “new” subject (understood as knowledge) emerges thanks to the practice of certain rituals and techniques that actors carry out when driven by the “attachment” or “active passion” that brings them together. These terms may prove useful when addressing film clubs, as cinephilia (Jullier

¹⁸⁰ Katarzyna Paszkiewicz remind us that this critique is directly compared to “feminist perspectives on literary and artistic authorships—in particular, in publications that reflect on the conditions under which values associated with creation, such as exceptionality, singularity, individualism, unity, anteriority, authenticity, solitariness and originality, emerge” (2018, 58).

¹⁸¹ See the case of Georges Sadoul, who, in 1967, published nothing less than the world history of film, starting with its origins which he dates to 1904 and ending with the time of publication. Sadoul participated in Paris’s surrealist circles when film clubs emerged and stood among the first film theorizers of that context. For example, one may observe the 200 “summarized biofilmographies” published in the book. In my understanding, Sadoul selected filmmakers according to whom he believed to be the most relevant to history at the time. The disparity between men and women film directors in his list is striking.

¹⁸² If we approach this matter from a more abstract perspective, we might allude to Complexity Theory, which sees emergence as a key concept. In this sense, I view the emergence of knowledge similarly to the way that Kobus Marais views translation as a sociological phenomenon (Marais and Meylaerts 2019).

and Leveratto 2012), a passion for moviewatching that characterised film club goers, can be understood as a form of “attachment.” Of course, concepts like “practices” and “techniques” are also easy to apply to the study of film clubs, since these clubs had dynamics of their own. Understanding the knowledge that emerged in film clubs as the result of collective experience is a way of dissolving authorship in favour of the collective of people who participated in the film club phenomenon. To take a step further, we could consider film clubs as agents themselves, despite lacking authorship proper. The film club as an agent is part of a network alongside other agents and is, itself, a complex system or network with agency of its own.

Furthermore, at that time and in the circles close to the European avant-garde of the turn of the century, the act of watching a film was considered a creative act,¹⁸³ as the avant-garde and psychoanalysis in vogue at the time began to assign more value to the imagination. In intellectual and artistic environments, the image in movement was seen as a materialization of the subconscious, an incarnation of the inaccessible yet highly valuable, that was capable of awakening the imagination of anyone able to let her own inner images flow.¹⁸⁴ As André Breton stated on moviegoing (Clariana-Rodagut 2017) and also as Georges Bataille’s theorization posits on the fixed image (1994), the act of collectively watching a film was considered a rite of sorts in which people would jointly experience the creation of images. The film club would thus enable collective creation through collective imagination with images as the starting point, as we may glean in many texts of the time. This creative and irrational act would be contemplated with the more theoretically rational discussions following the film screenings.¹⁸⁵ In a somewhat simplified sense, that which historically occurred at film clubs could be divided in two phases: first, people would watch a film, understood as a creative process of collective imagination; and second, there would be a rational, theoretical discussion in which authorship was no longer considered collective but appropriated by those with the power to become authors.

Yet, in my view, we should recall that this was a form of appropriation, to the extent that women also participated in the first Western film clubs, although their participation and authorship has been overlooked and undermined. One way of restoring their place in history is to work with networks and value those who mediated between networks. Women often mediated in the processes of circulation or exchange of persons and films, both of which were fundamental to the development of film history and to the

¹⁸³ Perhaps the strongest example in this thesis is Victoria Ocampo, who wrote creative texts on the film medium. In them, she also reflects upon film’s path to becoming an art form, considering the development of cinematographic language, especially in the Argentine industry.

¹⁸⁴ For a more in-depth study, see my first thesis, in which I reflect upon the creative film processes of several canonical authors associated with surrealism in the 1920s and 1930s (Clariana-Rodagut 2017). Likewise, I show how the theories of other widely recognised authors of the time who were not necessarily associated with surrealism also described similar creative processes, such as Walter Benjamin and Carl G. Jung.

¹⁸⁵ One of the founders of the first film club whose presence was documented in Barcelona, the Barcelona Film Club (1929), defined the film club goer in the following terms: the first condition is not to be a common spectator but instead to proffer “intellectual belligerence” to the film and thus carry out a technical and artistic analysis of the film (Gallart 1929). This citation condenses the importance of participants’ critical reflections regarding movies and film as a medium.

emergence of knowledge, as we shall observe. I believe that circulation processes are fundamental to knowledge building, as they facilitate certain exchanges that would not have taken place without them.¹⁸⁶ I thus understand the movement of any actor within the film club network as affecting the rest of the network, frequently through processes of cultural transfer (Espagne 2013). This is also true of actors meeting with other actors. These processes of circulation and exchange constitute and articulate film clubs for two reasons: firstly, because the material circulation of copies of films was fundamental to the history of film clubs,¹⁸⁷ and, second, because the circulation of different agent as film presenters or audience members, as seen in previous chapters, was also key.¹⁸⁸ On a less material plane, we could also speak of the circulation of ideas through the magazines associated to film clubs.

At the same time, these circulations and exchanges favour cultural-transfer processes. To address these cultural-transfer processes in the case studies at hand, I have proposed a mapping of agents and agencies that make up the networks of the women cultural mediators whom I am studying (Roig-Sanz and Meylaerts 2018). Part three of this thesis especially highlights the many spaces—institutional or not—that comprise these networks. Indeed, just as I believe that knowledge stems from collective authorship that emerges in the specific configurations of agents and agencies comprising a network, so too are movements and circulations essential to the emergence of knowledge. Thus, situating oneself in a key position within the network—in a place of mediation—is fundamental to participating in the collective processes of the emergence of knowledge (Gomart and Hennion 1999). All mediation implies translation, to which each participant has something to contribute (Latour 2005).

2.4.6 Sources for Analysing Women in the Silent Period

Research on the roles of women in the film field beyond their work as actresses or directors remains scarce. The names of many women are not listed in film club activity reports, partly because their names were erased from the public record over time but also because some were never recorded, as their male counterparts failed to appreciate their contributions. In any case, when their names do appear in public records, they are hardly ever associated with their contributions or active participation. They exist merely as names. Sometimes, even when their names have lived on in historiography, women's

¹⁸⁶ As my colleague Aurea Mota proposes (2023), I also believe that knowledge is built through exchange among actors—whether human or non-human—who move between spaces.

¹⁸⁷ Often, the films screened at film clubs would be secured using diplomatic mail services, or a film club member would buy the films or have a foreign friend send the films (Clariana-Rodagut and Hagener 2023).

¹⁸⁸ In this sense, film clubs usually gathered actors who tended to comprise the local, creative elite. These actors' socioeconomic and cultural conditions often made national and international travel possible, thus allowing these various agents to participate in cultural institutions rooted in diverse (though often urban) cultural and geographical spaces. This would explain why the women whom I approach in my case studies belonged to a certain class and privileged culture.

forms of participation have been looked down upon, as we will see in the case studies. Consequently, when we seek to work with women and film clubs as our objects of study, we find ourselves before a void in the data, with very biased and scattered data when there is any at all. This problem is not exclusive to women—film clubs have also been widely overlooked by historiography. These conditions push us to work with indirect data and to make inferences in order to further our knowledge of film clubs. When alluding to indirect data, I am delineating information that does not pertain directly to the subject of inquiry. Instead, such data may offer nuanced insights into the subject, albeit precluding definitive conclusions, save for those drawn through inferential reasoning.

2.4.6.1 *Primary sources*

For now, the best sources we have on film clubs include periodicals and journals (newspapers, cultural magazines, and magazines specializing in film), as well as historical documents retrieved from personal archives, as we shall see in part three of this research. In the specific case of women's participation in film clubs, the most important sources include women's writing in autobiographies, diaries, or letters, as is the case with Victoria Ocampo; articles, as with María Luz Morales; self-reflective writing, as with Lola Álvarez Bravo; and, regarding women who remain anonymous, we could rely on their appearance in photographs.¹⁸⁹ Despite the invisibilization that women have undergone in many publications, we may corroborate their high rates of participation by looking at historical photographs that attest to the presence of white Western women among the audience members of several film clubs. Now, these texts are often personal—as is the case of diaries, autobiographies, and letters. We may usually find such texts in personal archives or, in some cases, in publications, as with some of Victoria Ocampo's correspondence. Certain autobiographical texts, including Lola Álvarez Bravo's, have been deemed less valuable to historical research precisely because of their autobiographical nature (Álvarez Bravo 1982)—the same has been true of Ocampo's *Testimonios* (V. Ocampo 1935; 1941; 1957). As to articles on film or film clubs penned by women and published in magazines or newspapers, we only have very few—including those by María Luz Morales and Victoria Ocampo.¹⁹⁰ To researchers, articles published in the media outlets of the time have been considered more reliable sources for the construction of historiographical and theoretical knowledge. Yet, if we only trusted in these sources, we would have to conclude that there was very little "active" participation among women in the film field in Ibero-America during the first few decades of the twentieth century. Consequently, we would have to conclude that there was very little participation among women in film clubs at the time when said clubs

¹⁸⁹ As I have already stated, a copy of one of this images may be appreciated in the text written by my colleague Alessio Cardillo and I: <https://blogs.uoc.edu/in3/transnational-networks-of-ibero-american-women-in-the-silent-era/>

¹⁹⁰ See the chapters on them for more in-depth analyses of these texts.

emerged. Yet, as we shall see, this was not the case. Furthermore, there are other mechanisms of recovery that can help us identify the women and recover the roles that they may have played in the emergence of film cultures.

The same pattern of invisibility is found across social classes. Most of the members listed in the reports of film club activities belonged to the national, regional, or local intellectual elite. When it comes to women, this pattern is exacerbated, i.e. women from lower class backgrounds are much harder to find than women from upper class, intellectual, or cultural backgrounds. This is precisely the reason why the case studies of my dissertation come from upper- and middle-class groups of artists and intellectuals, such as Lola Álvarez Bravo from the League of Revolutionary Writers and Artists (LEAR) (Mexico City), Victoria Ocampo from the Friends of the Arts Association (Asociación Amigos del Arte) (Buenos Aires), and María Luz Morales from the Lyceum Club and the Barcelona Film Club (Barcelona). Despite this inequality, I can say that the women linked to the cinematographic field to whom I am going to refer all strove to include women of all classes and conditions. The white and Western women I have been doing research on often worked to defend women's civil rights (such as Victoria Ocampo with the Union of Argentine Women), to denounce the inequalities suffered by indigenous women (this is Lola Álvarez Bravo's case), or to encourage the education and cultural development of all women, regardless of their social class (an enterprise of María Luz Morales's), through politically influential institutions or initiatives. Yet, we cannot cast aside the idea that representing other women will always imply a certain feeling of superiority, which is telling of certain inequalities in terms of class, ethnicity, belief systems, and sexual orientation.

This kind of sorority between women may be seen as characterising the writing on women by women. Even though only a few of these women had enough symbolic capital to be considered authors of their own accord, or to be publicly recognized, they seem to have kept in mind all the other women whose name recognition was too low for publication.¹⁹¹ In fact, as we shall see, one of the strategies I have used to find more women was to observe those whose name recognition made them models and references for the others. In this sense, despite the scarcity of primary sources, these have proven fundamental to the study of women of the time:¹⁹² reconstructing one woman's network through her personal archive can lead us to many other women.

2.4.6.2 *Secondary sources*

¹⁹¹ I do not wish to imply that there were no disparities or differences between them. Their disparities stemmed from many factors, whether discrimination or political differences.

¹⁹² This proposal is similar to Diana W. Anselmo's. Though Anselmo does not work with networks, she uses correspondence and the finding of women as an identity self-construction strategy and as a way of generating models that can be transposed to the social sphere.

The absence of references on the relationship between women and film clubs is notable in secondary sources. While the relationship between male filmmakers, artists, and film clubs has seen quite a few mentions (Gubern 1999; Schoots 2000; Vincenot 2004; Rozsa 2017; Cuarterolo 2017; Fibla-Gutiérrez 2018), this is not the case with women. Not only are there no books and articles on the relationship between film clubs and women from a sociocultural perspective, but references to certain emblematic women, especially around their authorship, are also scant. For example, we do know of Germaine Dulac's participation in the establishment of Paris's avant-garde film culture (Williams 2014; Dulac 2019). In fact, her name appears in the records of people who participated in the founding of Paris's most well-known film clubs of the 1920s and '30s. Dulac was also a producer, filmmaker, programmer, and film critic, besides presiding the French Federation of Film Clubs (FFCC) as of 1929. Another well-known woman within the film club movement is Iris Barry, who (co-)founded the London Film Society in the 1920s. Yet, the attention that these two women have been paid is the exception. Though there isn't plethora of books on them, there are a few monographs (Williams 2014; Dulac 2019). We must keep in mind that these monographs and articles have not focused specifically on these women's relationships to film clubs but have instead described their film careers in general, meaning that it was probably thanks to their work as critics, filmmakers, and curators that their film club activities have been mentioned at all. Once again, this shows that film clubs and women have received very little attention from secondary sources.

2.4.7 Concluding Remarks

This chapter presents a conceptual and methodological proposal for the study of film clubs and women. Given the knowledge I have gathered through my case studies, I propose a few concepts and methodological strategies that may allow us to recognise the contributions of women to the history of filmclubism. Secondary sources have tended to suggest that women did not participate in the first film club initiatives anywhere in the West, including Ibero-America. Yet, as many researchers of silent film have demonstrated, white Western women played relevant roles in the silent period. In any case, this perspective has not yet permeated the historiography of film clubs, which continues to cast the first wave of film club spaces as eminently male. As a result, we have very little data to demonstrate the participation of women. Beyond the three case studies in part three of this thesis that demonstrate the effective contributions of white Western women to the first film clubs of Ibero-America, in this chapter I propose a few strategies with which to continue to pursue this topic.

Firstly, I have shown how, despite the dearth in academic literature and data on the topic, we may find film clubs of the first wave that were, in fact, led by women. These samples show that the relationship between women and the first film clubs may have been mediated by three key topics of the time: education, pro-peace and anti-war alliances, and, related to the two former topics, feminism and women's suffrage. These themes are relevant because they unveil a very different way of understanding the first wave of film clubs. Compared to the dominant historiography that has cast the first film

clubs tied to the Western European avant-garde of the early twentieth century as spaces where film was legitimised as an art, the clubs led by women present distinct film club proposals that espoused different goals. These proposals are more tied to the social fabric, being centred on the education of children, adolescents, and youths. Furthermore, it appears that the networks upon which these film clubs sustained themselves were not solely built on human agents' interest in art or film, but also on the shared political ideology among these agents. Thus, film clubs did not solely function as spaces where film would be legitimised as art, but also as spaces of social cohesion where ties were strengthened and human actors with similar political interests socialised.

Often, the women of the first film clubs played a number of roles in the film field, just as most women of the silent period did. In my case studies, these women were photographers, writers, film club goers and organisers, magazine editors, magazine and newspaper directors, professors, directors of cultural and educational institutions, etc. Studying all of their different facets is interesting because it allows us to get an idea of the impact they had, both in the film field specifically and in the cultural field in general. The concept of the cultural mediator can help us to address them as figures situated in key mediation spaces between fields, professions, and cultures. The fact that they were mediators was often detrimental to the historiography's interest in them, which is also the case of men who were mediators.

To recover the agency of these multifaceted women, but also of other, lesser-known or unknown women, I believe that we must consider the phenomenon of women's mass participation in the public space via their commercial movie-going experiences. I have shown that, when film clubs emerged, women audiences were already sustaining the film industry. This was no minor contribution, as the fact that women went to the movies en masse greatly impacted the process of the film field's institutionalisation. The practices involved in the act of movie-going would become the cornerstone for the constitution of film cultures. These practices went from writing in film magazines in the sections set aside for texts submitted by readers, to taking acting classes, participating in screenplay competitions, going to the movies in various ways (going with company or taking part in other practices throughout the film screening), to the reading of specialised magazines, purchase of merchandise associated to the film industry, and more. Massive occupation of the public space through moviegoing cannot be divorced from other processes that sought to improve the social situation of women unfolding in parallel. For instance, we may take note of the fights for women's right to vote, education, and paid work, as well as the proliferation of columns and media sections dedicated to women in non-specialised newspapers and magazines, multiplying the voices of women published in the general media. Though there are limited—practically absent—records of women's attendance at film clubs, women's high turnout at commercial movie theatres, on top of the aforementioned social processes, have led me to infer that women must have gone to film clubs, as several photographs attest.

Although the hypothesis that women participated in film clubs is plausible, as we have noted, we barely have any data to prove it. Not only that, but the theoretical and historical knowledge that emerged from the first film clubs has generally not been attributed to women. In order to redress this problem and counter women's invisibilization, I propose two ways of considering authorship. On the one hand, their

active participation as film club members and audiences could be considered a form of collective authorship. Although the knowledge that emerged from the joint discussions at film clubs generally led to texts that were penned by men, the knowledge may have been conceived collectively, with the participation of women. I believe that women's active participation in the first film clubs allows us to consider the collective authorship of the theoretical and historiographical knowledge that emerged at film club discussions. Second, I consider other kinds of texts that have often been overlooked by historiography as legitimate sources of theoretical and historical authority. I am referring to the autobiographical texts—published or not—that we may find in personal archives. As I will demonstrate in my case studies, in the first few decades of the twentieth century, many women of artistic and intellectual circles wrote autobiographical texts, including autofiction (Virginia Woolf), diaries (Anaïs Nin), epistolary novels (Victoria Ocampo), personal chronicles (María Luz Morales), texts that reflected on one's own profession (Lola Álvarez Bravo), etc. Given these texts' proximity to the film criticism of the time—which would come to comprise the first theorization around the seventh art—I posit that they should be considered contributions to the theory of film, as long as these texts deal with film.

**PART III Case studies:
the Spanish María Luz Morales, the
Argentinean Victoria Ocampo, and
the Mexican Lola Álvarez Bravo**

3.1 The Barcelona Film Club (Barcelona, 1929) and María Luz Morales¹⁹³

This chapter is articulated around one key subject and one key agent that are related to each other in turn: first, we will address the history of the Barcelona Film Club, the first film club in said city to be documented by the press for hosting film sessions, and second, we will study María Luz Morales, a spokesperson and conference speaker at the film club who publicised the club's sessions in the newspaper *La Vanguardia*. Like the other chapters in this thesis, besides addressing the Barcelona Film Club as a research object and situating its birth, expansion, and decadence within its sociocultural context, this chapter showcases how women participated in the first film clubs. That is, this chapter establishes a narrative on the participation of women in the creation and institutionalisation of various film cultures—whether local, regional, or global.

To this end, I will dedicate the chapter's first section to the Barcelona Film Club, describing its antecedents, organisation, and successors. In the second section, I will study María Luz Morales and her work in the film and cultural fields, locally (in Barcelona), regionally (in Catalonia), nationally (in Spain), and transnationally (especially focusing on Morales's relationships across the Atlantic). I will analyse María Luz Morales's relationships with other cultural institutions of the time, especially those dedicated to the education and cultural nourishment of women, such as the *Residència de Senyorettes* in Barcelona (Fulcarà Torroella 2011) and the Lyceum clubs of Madrid and Barcelona (Mangini 2006; Aguilera Sastre 2011; González Naranjo 2018). I will work with the hypothesis that María Luz Morales's ground breaking presence as a woman makes the Barcelona Film Club an interesting object of study from the historical and gender perspective.

To conclude, I will present a few visualisations that empirically show the cultural mediation that María Luz Morales carried out in Barcelona's cultural and film fields in the 1930s and how this mediation bolstered the creation of a transnational film culture of women. Indeed, our focus on the Barcelona Film Club will demonstrate that women participated in the film club phenomenon and will allow us to deepen our knowledge of film clubs by focusing on the work of María Luz Morales and other women in film clubs.

3.1.1 The Barcelona Film Club

In this section, we seek to understand what defined this club, who participated in it and how, and what we might trace of its programming so that we may grasp the kinds of

¹⁹³ Part of this text has been submitted for publication with the title "María Luz Morales Godoy as a Cultural Mediator in the Emergence of Spanish Film Culture," in Harkerma, Leslie and Evelyn Scaramella (eds.), *Translation and Cultural Mediation: New Critical Approaches to Women Intellectuals in Early 20th Century Iberia*. University of Toronto Press, Toronto.

films that the club screened. Likewise, I will refer to the audiences that the screenings were geared toward and their practices, as well as to other cultural institutions with close ties to the film club in question. Furthermore, I will present a genealogy of film clubs in Barcelona, so that we may situate the Barcelona Film Club within this genealogy as well as in the history of the inception of film clubs in Barcelona. To this end, I will also draw comparisons between these pioneering Barcelonan film clubs.

The Barcelona Film Club was the first film club that organised screenings, among other activities, to be documented by the Barcelonan press. What was new about the Barcelona Film Club was not that it brought together people who were interested in film, which the Club Cinematográfico de Horta (1923-¿?) had already done, but that it organised screenings and opened spaces for debate and socialising around the screenings, in line with the French model established by Louis Delluc and Riccioto Canudo, among others. The film club showed its first screening on January 16, 1929, (Ferran i Coromines 1929, 4) and its last on September 7, 1929 (Ferran Coromines 1929d, 4). At the time of its inauguration, it was seen as a trailblazer in the city of Barcelona, though it had direct precedents. In *La Vanguardia*, we may find a genealogy of Barcelonan film clubs articulated by María Luz Morales herself. The author calls Amigos de Charlot¹⁹⁴ the first film society in Barcelona to screen films (Centeno 1930, 21).¹⁹⁵ Unlike the Barcelona Film Club, Amigos de Charlot's screenings, at Sala Mozart,¹⁹⁶ were private and dedicated to "reviewing the life and miracles of the good Charlot,"¹⁹⁷ that is, Charles Chaplin. This first film society was graced by the presence of Xavier Nogués Casas,¹⁹⁸ who would later attend the Barcelona Film Club. In her column for *La Vanguardia*, María Luz Morales names Nogués as the mastermind behind the sessions hosted by Amigos de Charlot. Nogués would later become a spokesperson for the Barcelona Film Club, alongside María Luz Morales and others.¹⁹⁹ When describing Amigos de Charlot, Morales wrote that what brought its members together was friendship. Judging by the names of the members of the subsequent Barcelona Film Club, it would seem likely that its members, too, were brought together by their friendship, besides their interest in film. In a data [visualisation](#) of María Luz Morales's social network, we may note that the various people who made up the film club also shared other cultural spaces with her in the Barcelona of the time. For instance, Carles Soldevila and María Luz Morales would also coincide at the Conferentia Club,²⁰⁰ where

¹⁹⁴ I have not been able to trace this body, even though I searched for it among various repositories. Its very name—Amigos de Charlot—makes the entity hard to search for using key words, as both "amigos" and "Charlot" were very common terms in the press. We would need to conduct an exhaustive search among primary sources in order to understand the direct ties between the Barcelona Film Club and Amigos de Charlot, which Morales considered the first film club in Barcelona.

¹⁹⁵ This article was signed by Felipe Centeno, the pen name that María Luz Morales used for her film criticism in *La Vanguardia* so that she would not be approached on the street and feel influenced when writing on film. Morales chose the name Felipe Centeno in reference to the character in a book by Benito Pérez Galdós.

¹⁹⁶ Located on Carrer de la Canuda 31.

¹⁹⁷ "revisar la vida y milagros del buen Charlot."

¹⁹⁸ Xavier Nogués Casas (1873-1941) was a Catalan illustrator who was better known as "Babel." He drew illustrations for the comic magazine *Papitu* and was also a painter and ceramicist.

¹⁹⁹ We will outline the institution's members further on.

²⁰⁰ This cultural institution was founded in Barcelona in 1929 and would close its doors in 1973. It organised conferences with relevant members of the international cultural realm (Hermann Keyserling,

Soldevila was secretary at the time when María Luz Morales gave a conference titled “Viaje sentimental a través de las cartas de amor” in 1933. A photograph of said event shows Soldevila next to Isabel Llorach (1874-1954),²⁰¹ Mercè Plantada Vicente (1892-1976),²⁰² and María Luz Morales.²⁰³ Likewise, Soldevila and Morales were members of the board at the Residència de Senyoretets Estudiants, founded in 1931, which closed its doors in 1936 with the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. Both institutions organised cultural activities: the residence put on functions for its residents, while Conferentia Club did so for its members. Both were also geared toward the upper and middle classes²⁰⁴ and sought to culturally nourish their participants. Even some of the conference givers coincided at both venues, including Carles Soldevila and María Luz Morales, who were involved in both initiatives. Also within the network that brought together the Barcelona Film Club’s members, we may note the relationship between María Luz Morales and Àngel Ferran Coromines, who not only coincided at the Barcelona Film Club but taught together at one of the first courses on cinema to be held at a university within the Spanish state: “Curso de cinema ‘Estética del cinema’” (Díaz-Plaja Contestí 1974, 14), organised by Guillem Díaz-Plaja Contestí at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona in 1932.²⁰⁵ Thus, we might say that even though the Barcelona Film Club was more public and heavily attended than Amigos de Charlot, I believe that the idea guiding both of these initiatives was similar, bringing together people who shared personal and professional relationships and were also interested in film. This is why addressing the object of study at hand via the notion of the network may prove fruitful: the cultural field of the time was constituted through social relationships.²⁰⁶

3.1.1.1 Members and their Networks

Wanda Ladowska, and André Maurois), as well as with figures from the national (Federico García Lorca and Pedro Salinas) and regional one (like Guillermo Díaz-Plaja and María Luz Morales).

²⁰¹ A distinguished member of Barcelona’s cultural and bourgeois world of the first half of the twentieth century, she was president of the Conferentia Club, where popular figures of the time would give conferences.

²⁰² A recognised Catalan soprano.

²⁰³ See Barcelona’s Municipal Archive:

https://catalegarxiunicipal.bcn.cat/ms-opac/doc?q=%28media%3A%22true%22%29&start=4&rows=1&sort=msstored_typology%20asc&fq=no_rm&fv=*&fo=and&fq=mssearch_people&fv=%22+Morales+Godoy%2C+Mar%C3%ADa+Luz%22&fo=and

²⁰⁴ The cost of staying was 150 pesetas per month (Autor/a 1931b, 6), which included all sports and cultural activities put on by the institution. The price tag is telling of the social class that it was geared toward.

²⁰⁵ Not to be confused with today’s Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. This university is now the Universitat de Barcelona, which, with the proclamation of the Second Spanish Republic and its first Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia in 1932, came to be called Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, only to lose the word “Autònoma” with Franco’s dictatorship.

²⁰⁶ We cannot call this field autonomous in the Bourdieusian sense of the word, as the film field of the time was not yet autonomous. Yet, we may detect a network, in the sociological sense of the word (De Marneffe and Denis 2006, 266), as configured by agents who shared interests and had ties with different nodes in the network.

According to an article in *La Vanguardia* the Barcelona Film Club's staff was comprised of the following:

Don Santiago Rusiñol, honorary president; Don Miguel Utrillo, effective president; Don Enrique Casanovas, vice president; Don Mateo Soto, secretary; Don Gerardo Carbonell, accountant; Don Carlos Soldevila, treasurer; Señorita Doña María Luz Morales, Don Vicente Navarro, Don Mario Mateo, Don Ricardo Canals, and Don Javier Nogués, spokespersons; Don Francisco Millás, secretary general; and Don J. Ragasol, legal advisor. The Consultative Committee was comprised of the following: Señorita Doña María Luz Morales, Don Carlos Gallart, and Don Javier Nogués; while the Amateurs Committee included Don Angel Ferrán, Don Narciso Cuyás, Don Apolo Martínez Ferry, Don J. Pruna, and Don Joaquín Borralleras (Autor/a 1929h, 10).²⁰⁷

Among the people in the directive and organising committees of the Barcelona Film Club, most had ties to the inter-war cultural and artistic world of Barcelona. Its members included writers (like Carles Soldevila) artists (Santiago Rusiñol, Xavier Nogués, Enric Casanovas, and Ricard Canals) and journalists (María Luz Morales, Carles Gallart, and Àngel Ferran). Besides, we may highlight that Nogués and Morales held two posts, suggesting that they were both active participants. We will describe Morales's multiple roles later on. As for Nogués, his participation seems to have stemmed from the active interest in film that he showed ever since the opening of the first private film club, the aforementioned Amigos de Charlot. Besides holding two positions, María Luz Morales also wrote reviews and publicised almost all of the Barcelona Film Club's sessions in her column on film, titled "Vida cinematográfica" (or Cinematographic Life), for the newspaper *La Vanguardia*, using her pseudonym Felipe Centeno from 1923 to 1933.²⁰⁸ The author also announced the film club's foundation and, as noted, wrote a genealogy of sorts on film clubs. Morales writes that the Barcelona Film Club was followed by Sessions Mirador (1929-1930), which would later be succeeded by Studio Cinaes, the distribution company with which Sessions Mirador initially collaborated (Alberich, Gubern, and Sánchez-Biosca 2012, 436) for four sessions (González López 1990), after which Cinaes would later continue on its own. As Alberich, Gubern, and Sánchez-Biosca note (2012), the declaration of the Second Spanish Republic in April of 1931 opened the

²⁰⁷ "Don Santiago Rusiñol, presidente honorario; don Miguel Utrillo, presidente efectivo; don Enrique Casanovas, vicepresidente; don Mateo Soto, secretario; don Gerardo Carbonell, contador; don Carlos Soldevila, tesorero; señorita doña María Luz Morales, don Vicente Navarro, don Mario Mateo, don Ricardo Canals y don Javier Nogués, vocales; don Francisco Millás, secretario general; don J. Ragasol, asesor jurídico. Constituyen el comité consultivo: señorita doña María Luz Morales, don Carlos Gallart y don Javier Nogués; y el comité amateurs: don Angel Ferrán, don Narciso Cuyás, don Apolo Martínez Ferry, don J. Pruna y don Joaquín Borralleras."

²⁰⁸ I have found these dates by conducting a keyword search in periodicals library of *La Vanguardia*. I can thus confirm that these were María Luz Morales's main years of activity in *La Vanguardia* as a columnist who specialised in film, using the pseudonym Felipe Centeno. Yet, there may have been another misplaced or poorly indexed publication from prior or subsequent years that may not have shown up in my search, making me unable to trace it. We know the date when María Luz Morales started writing for *La Vanguardia* thanks to a text on Morales by Jorge Torras, also for *La Vanguardia*, dated June 9, 1973 (Torras 1973, 56), with the reference to this article printed in Maria Àngels Cabré's book (Morales and Cabré 2019, 76).

door to the proliferation of film clubs across the state,²⁰⁹ thus, this text will only focus on the period prior to the apogee of Spanish film clubs.

Likewise, Àngel Ferrán Coromines, a Catalan journalist who was part of the film club's Amateur Committee, published copious articles announcing the Barcelona Film Club's sessions while also addressing other film-related matters of the time within the film section of the newspaper *La Publicitat*, where he worked. Often, these topics included the relationship between silent and sound film; the absence of a solid Catalan film industry; the relationship between art and avant-garde film, on the one hand, and more commercial film, on the other; programming in commercial theaters versus spaces like the Barcelona Film Club; the technological changes of sound film and the conditioning of movie theaters; the challenges of the circulation and screening of certain kinds of film, such as Soviet film; the economic and management difficulties of sustaining a non-commercial space like the Barcelona Film Club; the cultural cinematographic training of film-industry entrepreneurs (such as producers and exhibitors); and the ever-present topic of the relationship between art and the industry.

3.1.1.2 A Genealogy of the First Film Clubs in Barcelona

While Sessions Mirador and its associated magazine, *Mirador*, have been the objects of prior academic studies (González López 1990; Geli Fons and Huertas Claveria 2000; Roig-Sanz 2008; Alberich, Gubern, and Sánchez-Biosca 2012), the Barcelona Film Club has not enjoyed such attention. It is barely mentioned in the above-cited studies, and when it is addressed, its descriptions usually include certain errors, given the general lack of interest in this film club thus far. Yet, considering the French film club model, the Barcelona Film Club would, in my opinion, stand as the first film club to ever have existed in Barcelona. This is relevant in and of itself, as it also proved referential to its successor, Sessions Mirador, which has usually been considered Barcelona's first film club par excellence. The reason why Sessions Mirador is usually considered the first club is due to its programming, with Soviet and avant-garde film circulating in Barcelona for the first time thanks to the film club. In contrast, neither Amigos de Charlot—the first private film club that Morales mentions in her genealogy—nor the subsequent Studio Cinaes would fall within the same category of film clubs. Amigos de Charlot has been deemed a far too private, minor experience. As for Studio Cinaes, though it shared certain features with the greater European film club project, which above all screened avant-garde cinema (Hagener 2007), it cannot be considered in the same way. Cinaes was spearheaded by a company, with commercial ends, breaking away from the spirit of film clubs by which the public would appropriate film, as defined by Felipe Macedo (Bacelar de Macedo 2017). This would allow us to consider various film club models with

²⁰⁹ See the article by Alberich, Gubern, and Sánchez-Biosca (2012) for more information. Likewise, in chapter 2.3 of this thesis, dedicated on the chronology of the birth of film clubs in Ibero-America, we may also detect this apogee not only in Spain, but in many parts of Ibero-America. Some examples of the emergence of film clubs may be read in the case studies I have conducted in other chapters of this thesis, on Cine Club Mexicano (1931-1937) and Cine Club de Buenos Aires (1929-1931).

contrasting goals, practices, and audiences.²¹⁰ Even at the time, film club members were already debating the many ways of watching a film. For instance, they viewed the way one would attend film clubs differently than how the general public would watch a movie at a commercial movie theater.²¹¹ Indeed, film club members believed that being part of a film club implied a certain predisposition toward the cinematographic medium. In the words of Carles Gallart, a film club member was not a common spectator but would offer the film “intellectual belligerence”²¹² and set out to technically and artistically analyse the film at hand. Àngel Ferran also referred to this film club spirit when defining film clubs and their associated members as “a non-commercial grouping of people for whom film is something more than a spectacle mediated by a box office at the door before which there is no other film worth the price of the ticket” (Ferran Coromines 1929d, 4).²¹³ Likewise, after the collaboration agreement between Mirador and Studio Cinaes was struck, we may perceive a certain degree of discord among their organisers regarding the clash between the film club’s purpose and Cinaes’s commercial objectives. The article’s author writes that *Mirador* gave up its sessions because a company, Cinaes, started doing exactly the same thing, at the same place, at the same time, and with programs that were copied from Sessions Mirador. The author writes, “If a company that has far more resources than we do does what we used to do and wants to make a business of it, why go on?”²¹⁴ (Autor/a 1929f, 6). In this statement, we may glean a criticism of Cinaes’s commercial model, as its spirit diverged from its preceding film club’s.

From a Bourdieusian perspective (Bourdieu 1979; 1992), we might read these clashes between cultural organisations as strife within the field, with agents seeking to occupy a strategic place in a film field that was in the processes of being institutionalised. In said case, the struggle stemmed from various agents’ desire to appropriate the concept of the film club and mold it to their goals. This is why it is important that we revisit the first film club initiatives in Barcelona. Before their emergence, there was no rigid model for them to follow, as the model was still under construction. In this struggle within the field

²¹⁰ Likewise, we may consider the geographical distribution of film club models, starting with their divergence from the French model, as we have noted. Yet, the French model was disseminated so broadly was not the only one that existed in Paris at the time. There were many other kinds, as Gauthier (1999) notes.

²¹¹ “The club theater has to be a refuge for the artist, critic, amateur, and film professional [...] club members need to attend in a totally different way than they would an ordinary movie theater. At a movie theater, she’d be a normal spectator, but at the club, she becomes a critic [...] The first condition to being a good member of the Barcelona Film Club is to not be a common spectator. She needs to give the intellectual belligerence that the film demands and attempt to conduct an analysis from an artistic and technical point of view.” Original: “La sala del club ha d’èsser el refugi de l’artista, del crític, de l’amateur i del professional de la pel·lícula [...] el soci del club ha d’assistir-hi d’una manera absolutament diferent de com aniria en un cinema qualsevol. En aquest seria un espectador normal, i en el club esdevé un crític. [...] La primera condició, doncs, per ésser un bon soci del Barcelona Film Club, és la de no ésser un espectador corrent. Ha de donar la necessària bel·ligerència intel·lectual a la pel·lícula i cerca l’anàlisi sota el punt de mira artístic i tècnic” (Gallart 1929, 6).

²¹² “beligerència intel·lectual.”

²¹³ “una agrupación no comercial de personas para las cuales el cine es algo más que un espectáculo regido por una taquilla en la puerta frente a la cual no hay ningún otro título que valga que el precio de la entrada.”

²¹⁴ “Si lo que hacíamos nosotros lo hace una empresa que cuenta con muchos más recursos y que quiere hacer un negocio, ¿para qué seguir?”

we may note that when Cinaes first partnered with Sessions Mirador, Cinaes tried to appropriate the symbolic capital that Sessions Mirador had previously accrued—but this attempt failed, as we may read in the press (Autor/a 1930a, 6). In fact, Cinaes called its sessions “Sessions Studio Cinaes,” echoing Sessions Mirador’s name. According to the author who wrote the article in *Mirador* 93 (November 6, 1930), Cinaes even decided to program its screenings at the same place, time, and day of the week as Sessions Mirador had done before.²¹⁵ It would seem that, by then, Cinaes—a film company—had picked up on the success of Sessions Mirador (Geli Fons and Huertas Claveria 2000, 98), and probably on its profitability as well. Even though Sessions Mirador had accrued great symbolic and social capital—which originated with Amigos de Charlot and grew under the Barcelona Film Club—it could not put up a fight against Studio Cinaes’s economic capital and had to abandon its goal of screening avant-garde film. As of November of 1930, Sessions Mirador stopped screening avant-garde film because Studio Cinaes had started screening the same genre very successfully, specifically with the premiere of *Bronenosets Potemkin* (Eisenstein 1925) (Ferran Coromines 1930, 4). In light of the audience success at Cinaes’s premiering of this Soviet film, Sessions Mirador’s members noted that their club had screened the film first and that they could no longer compete with a company with far more resources than their organisation’s (Autor/a 1930a, 6). Thus, we can see how Cinaes’s economic capital played against Sessions Mirador, which was left powerless when it came to premiering this celebrated film. Thus, Sessions Mirador decided to give up on the avant-garde programming it originally sought to share, with which it had already previously secured many a treasured success. Despite this, Sessions Mirador continued to screen films but decided to change its programming in order to distinguish itself from Studio Cinaes. As of January of 1931, they started calling their sessions Nou Mirador, thus eluding the word “Sessions” that Cinaes had appropriated (González López 1990), and they decided to screen silent film, which was about to disappear from movie theaters, thus providing a place for audiences to continue to enjoy it. Though it changed its model, Sessions Mirador did not lose legitimacy, judging by the articles on and reviews of their sessions published in the press. They were successful and created great expectation among the people associated with *Mirador* magazine (Geli Fons and Huertas Claveria 2000, 98). The fact that, today, we may read research on *Mirador* but not on Studio Cinaes is telling of the social and symbolic capital that Sessions Mirador maintained, despite the changes it underwent. We believe that the reason behind this is that its symbolic capital—which plays a fundamental role in the cultural field—was maintained because it depended directly on the members associated with the film club and the magazine. That is, the sessions kept their symbolic capital because, even though they changed their model, the same agents remained involved. In contrast, Studio Cinaes’s economic capital and its ability to program hard-to-get movies did not suffice for it to gain Sessions Mirador’s prestige. Sessions Mirador was the one that would continue to be cited as the first film club in Barcelona (as it was considered the first and had focused on the avant-garde). Yet, Studio Cinaes did manage to be considered something of a continuation of Sessions Mirador in the genealogy that María Luz Morales established for *La Vanguardia* (Ferran Coromines 1930, 4; Centeno 1930). This is because the rift in the cultural field between

²¹⁵ In her article on the subject, Palmira González (1990) notes that Cinaes did not program at the same theater as Sessions Mirador (Cine Rialto), but at another (Cine Miriam).

Cinaes and Sessions Mirador was a fight for symbolic and relational hegemony in the field—not for economic hegemony, which held less value in the long run but also at that time. This explains why, despite its economic capital, Cinaes was unable to acquire Sessions Mirador’s symbolic and relational capital—or could only do so to a certain extent, as we’ve described.

In this sense, it is worth reflecting upon the idea of the film club and how these examples can modify or put it at play. On the one hand, we may note that historiography has generally articulated the concept of the film club as a space in which avant-garde film is screened, as Malte Hagener exposes in her research (Hagener 2007). This is why Sessions Mirador tends to be considered the first film club in Barcelona, according to secondary sources. Yet, we know that there were other initiatives before Sessions Mirador, and that said club shifted its focus towards non-avant-garde films at one point in its history. When Alberich, Gubern, and Sánchez Biosca (2012) refer to the history of film clubs in Spain, they consider Studio Cinaes the continuation of Sessions Mirador (Alberich, Gubern, and Sánchez-Biosca 2012, 437). We may note that the legitimacy required to be included in historiography is intimately tied to the screening of avant-garde film. However, this requirement does not reflect the actual history of film clubs, since the main actors of film clubs did not give such weight to avant-garde film and in fact cherished other film clubs beyond Sessions Mirador, as we may note in María Luz Morales’s writing on the Barcelona Film Club—a club that would later be overlooked in history—within her genealogy of film clubs. As opposed to the ideas guiding historiography, we may note that what lends cohesion to the film clubs that Morales cites has more to do with the social and symbolic capital of its members than with the avant-garde character of their programming. The symbolic capital that lends legitimacy to these cultural organisations does not seem to stem from the screened films—or even from the film field itself—but from the cultural field more broadly. As proof of this, we may note the constant reference, in the press and in reviews, to the status of those who participated as audience members and organisers of film club screenings and events. Indeed, the various initiatives’ legitimacy is seen as emanating from the people involved and their recognition as writers, artists, journalists, etc.

Thus, we might glean a history of film clubs as tied to the cultural and intellectual fields of the time, reinforced by the film club’s self-proclaimed main actors’ control of the media (of the press, in this case). This history of film clubs is articulated through actors of great relevance in Barcelona’s cultural field of the late 1920s and early 1930s. It was through the symbolic capital that they had accrued in the cultural field that they lent their prestige to the film clubs that María Luz Morales outlined in her genealogy. Furthermore, the fact that these actors had control over the media, due to their participation in magazines and newspapers, gave them the power to construct this genealogy of film clubs. And in this genealogy, other initiatives with more open or general audiences were not considered—as we will see in the following section.

This would justify our undertaking of network studies within the cultural field in a broad sense, and specifically in the film field, which was undergoing an institutionalisation process and was not yet autonomous at the time. Using the Actor-Network Theory (Latour 2005) to trace the agents in the broader network allows us to work through these relationships independently of the field in which they participated, while

considering other kinds of agencies that may have played a role in the network—such as practices, the media, or films.

3.1.1.3 *The Role of Magazines*

Both in the history of film clubs and in our reconstruction of the history these clubs, magazines and the press have played fundamental roles. In the cases under analysis in this chapter, we will see that publications in the press on film club activities was fundamental to their publicizing. Likewise, we may find many reviews of the events within the publications themselves. In fact, in the history of film clubs, magazines were often associated to these clubs and operated as dissemination organs for the clubs' activities—but also as spaces for critical reflection and for audience members. Most likely, the discussions carried out at film clubs were tied to the theoretical discussions on the film medium printed in their associated magazines. We may thus find more or less tight connections between publications and various film club models.

As for media outlets, the Barcelona Film Club was mentioned in newspapers like *La Vanguardia*; *La Publicitat*; *El Diluvio, diario político de avisos, noticias y decretos*; and *La Veu de Catalunya: diari català d'avisos, notícies i anuncis*; as well as in cultural magazines like *D'ací i d'allà: magazine mensual* and *Mirador, setmanari de literatura, art i política*. The club was also mentioned in film magazines like *Cinòpolis: la revista humorística de cinema* (1929) and *Pantalla* (1927-1929). Yet, we cannot know for a fact that these were the only publications to mention the Barcelona Film Club, given that the degree of periodicals' digitalization is very low today—meaning that we cannot deem this a representative sample either.²¹⁶ Furthermore, the degree of digitalization is surely much lower among magazines specialised in film, which explains why we have only found mentions of this club in two film magazines. In any case, it is evident that highly diverse publications mentioned the Barcelona Film Club. This supports the aforementioned idea on the myriad origins of the symbolic capital that these cultural organisations enjoyed. Likewise, it serves to underscore the key positions that Barcelona Film Club members enjoyed in various news outlets of the time. In fact, the film club's organisers published in these outlets frequently. We might mention María Luz Morales in *La Vanguardia*, Àngel Ferran in *La Publicitat*, and Carles Gallart in *La Veu de Catalunya*. Furthermore, María Luz Morales's prolific career as a journalist makes me suspect that she promoted the club's activities in specialised media outlets as well.

Sessions *Mirador* was a somewhat different case, as it was born of the initiative of *Mirador* magazine's creators. Thus, the magazine would emerge as said club's quintessential organ for dissemination. We may nonetheless find mentions of their sessions in various media outlets beyond *Mirador*, such as in the newspapers *La Veu de Catalunya* and *La Publicitat*; cultural and literary magazines like *D'ací i d'allà*, *Hèlix*, and *Vida lleidatana: revista quincenal il·lustrada*; comical publications like *D.I.C (Defensa dels Interessos Catalans)* and *Xut!*; and political outlets, such as *La Humanitat*. In any case,

²¹⁶ We have consulted the digital repository at the periodicals library of Filmoteca de Catalunya, as well as the Arxiu de Revistes Catalanes Antiques (ARCA).

Mirador magazine stands as the outlet that disseminated Sessions Mirador's programs most regularly, discussing the films being projected either through texts penned by its frequent contributors or by the film directors themselves. Likewise, reviews of past sessions were published, and we may even perceive a certain desire to forge connections with audiences by directly evoking their tastes and practices. Having a dissemination outlet of its own probably helped the club reinforce its ties to the public, which enjoyed two related spaces of socialization where people could come together—with these spaces able to generate a canon of what should and shouldn't be viewed at a film club, forging the audience's tastes in turn. Thus, figures like that of Josep Palau would emerge as fundamental, as he dedicated himself to writing commentary on the films that would be screened (or not) at the film club. His texts generated a canon of the schools and aesthetics of the time.

Approaching the Barcelona Film Club is somewhat more complex than addressing Sessions Mirador. Lacking its own dissemination organ and depending on the interest and benevolence of journalists who could publish articles on the film club in the media outlets that they wrote for, the number of texts on the club and their dissemination was far lower. In fact, the tone with which the film club is addressed is telling of this distance. In her column on film for *La Vanguardia*, María Luz Morales addresses the film club and its members in the third person. This suggests that she did not have a direct tie to the institution.²¹⁷ In contrast, in his texts on the film club, Àngel Ferran writes far more intimately, calling himself a club organiser before his readers. Yet, the kinds of texts we may find on the Barcelona Film Club in *La Publicitat* and *La Vanguardia* are similar to those on Sessions Mirador published in *Mirador*. In general, articles announcing the sessions were published before the sessions, with reviews published thereafter. These texts also include other more general considerations on the film field, as tied to the historic moment, some of which we have mentioned above.

In contrast, the texts on Club Cinematográfico de Horta, which we will address in the upcoming section on amateurism, are quite different. Though this club had a dissemination outlet of its own, the magazine *Cine Revista*, the texts on Club Cinematográfico de Horta are rather distinct from the articles on Sessions Mirador in *Mirador*. *Cine-Revista* mentions just a few of Horta's activities and refers to the club as owing to its members. In Horta's case, the magazine did not direct the film club, nor was there a pedagogical goal explaining or justifying the club's activities. Rather, the narratives on the club's activities printed therein address the club as if it were an independent, autonomous organism. This divergent focus may have been due to the public's appropriation of the club, in line with the amateurism that defined it. That is, most likely, the club originated from certain readers' interest in producing films. This would justify the tone with which the club is approached in the magazine.

3.1.1.4 *Amateurism at the Heart of the Barcelona Film Club: A Key to Popularization?*

²¹⁷ We might recall that, at the time, María Luz Morales published under the pseudonym Felipe Centeno.

One element that defined and distinguished the Barcelona Film Club from Sessions Mirador was the former's interest in amateur film. As we have noted, among its organising committees, we may find an Amateur Committee. Indeed, this positive disposition toward amateur cinema was reflected in the creation of an amateur section within the film club. A news article (Autor/a 1929b, 5) shares that one of the club's first tasks was to enlist all of the cameras belonging to members of the amateur section, so that any club member who wished to film something could use them. Likewise, in a very enthusiastic article, the journalist Àngel Ferran (who signed his name A. F. in this article) encourages club members to produce amateur film in order to develop their cinematographic abilities and expand the club's amateur section so that it might have enough "electricians, painters, scenographers, woodworkers, dressmakers, and tailors."²¹⁸ To Ferran, the ultimate goal was for the amateur section of the club to stop being a mere section and to absorb most of the club itself—or all of it—so that the Barcelona Film Club could become an amateur-film club, with its members watching their very own work. In this way, he writes, members could compare their own film productions to other films, improving their creations through this learning process with the ultimate goal of making films of their own that will have secured every element they required for success. In any case, this idea never came to fruition, judging by Àngel Ferran's subsequent articles in which he continues to insist that members approach the film club's secretaries in order to enlist their cameras (Autor/a 1929b, 4). We do not know if this idea was spearheaded by Ferran alone or if all the film club's organisers ascribed to it as well.

The Barcelona Film Club did not share this feature with Sessions Mirador, which merely focused on screening films. But it did share amateurism with previous initiatives, such as Club Cinematográfico de Horta, which some authors have deemed Barcelona's first film club (Lasa Casamitjana 1995; Lanao and Torns 2019).²¹⁹ Once again, we may observe that there were in fact many models, which intermingled and varied over time. Amateurism can be understood as a form of agency that played a fundamental role within the film club network, as its circulation shifted the relationships between clubs. Also, regarding amateurism, we may observe audiences whose field of action was molded by the agency that amateurism provided within the film club network.

3.1.1.5 Club Cinematográfico de Horta, a Model Preceding the Bourgeois Film Clubs

Club Cinematográfico de Horta was founded in 1923 in the district of Horta, Barcelona. This film club was quite early for its time, considering that the first club (Ciné club de France) was inaugurated in France in 1920; while Spain's Cine club Español was founded

²¹⁸ "[...] electricistes, pintors, escenògrafs, fusters, modistes i sastres."

²¹⁹ At the exhibition on film clubs put on by Filmoteca de Catalunya in collaboration with Federació Catalana de Cineclubes, titled "Cineclubisme: el públic s'organitza," shown from October 24, 2019 to December 1, 2020, Club Cinematográfico de Horta was considered a pioneering endeavor in Barcelona, as an example of a film club that preceded the more illustrated clubs, like Sessions Mirador and Barcelona Film Club.

in 1928. Portugal's Cine clube de Portugal opened in 1931, and the Film Society of London was launched in 1925. Filmliga, in the Netherlands, started operations in 1927. The aforementioned film clubs were either tied to the film industry, as is the case of the Benoît-Lévy film club (Gauthier 1999, 25) in Paris and the Cinematógrafo Cine Club in Mexico City (Rodríguez Álvarez 2002a), or they were tied to political initiatives, as with the sessions held at embassies (Alexandra Kollontai programmed one such session in Mexico in 1928) (Rodríguez and Méndez de Lozada 2015)) or workers unions, as Macedo discusses (Bacelar de Macedo 2016). What distinguished the Horta club from the ones mentioned previously was that it did not fit within either model. Rather, under its model, its audience members, who were interested in film but had no professional ties to cinema, organised among themselves. Meanwhile, the fact that the Horta club was not situated in a more central area of Barcelona would lead us to reflect upon the origins of the film club phenomenon, which has, until now, been portrayed as highbrow and elitist in secondary sources (Gubern 1999; Alberich, Gubern, and Sánchez-Biosca 2012; Gauthier 1999). However, judging by the Horta example, we may consider the popular origins of film clubs (Bacelar de Macedo 2016; Ross 1998; Mannoni 1993). Felipe de Macedo has argued that the use of the film club concept among academics, which he claims started with Louis Delluc and Ricciotto Canudo's film club practice and theorization in Paris, is a bourgeois appropriation of the term. In contrast, Club Cinematográfico de Horta is an example of what Macedo would consider the opposite: an audience's appropriation of cinema, or a popular organisation around the film medium with no commercial interests. Yet, unlike the more well-known film club initiatives that we have mentioned, Club Cinematográfico de Horta did not initially screen films. According to our research into two magazines of the time that documented its birth,²²⁰ Club Cinematográfico de Horta organised the following activities: the reception of global personalities who would give courses and talks (such as Domenico Serra, Joaquín Carrasco, and Enrique Santos); a screenplay competition for club members with the goal of choosing one as the club's first production; and buying and selling photographs of productions and of the most famous U. S. American actors for club members (Autor/a 1923c, 12). Likewise, the institution was tied to the magazine *Cine-Revista*, which published a few articles on the club.²²¹ Furthermore, the club and the magazine shared the same honorary president, whose name is not revealed. In fact, issue 99, which addresses the club's foundation, hints that the club may have had its origins in the magazine. Likewise, we may find references to its foundation in the magazine *Arte y cinematografía* (Autor/a 1923a, 16).²²² This article celebrates the creation of this pioneering club, being the first of its kind in Spain, as a work of great merit.²²³ However, in the magazines that mention this club, we have found no reference to the films that may have been screened or discussed at the club. With more productive

²²⁰ The magazines *Cine-Revista* (1921-1924) and *Arte y cinematografía* (1910-1936).

²²¹ We have found references to the club in issues 99, 100, 102, and 105. All of these issues were published in 1923, but we don't know their specific months of publication.

²²² The article notes that several activities had been organised and that, given their success, new delegations would open in Castellón de la Plana and Badalona. Likewise, issue 105 of the magazine *Cine-Revista* alludes to another delegation in Ceuta, as well as to two delegations pending approval (Autor/a 1923c, 12).

²²³ "[...] obra meritísima."

than intellectual goals, this club differed from the previously mentioned ones in many ways, including in terms of the publications alluding to the club.

Club Cinematográfico de Horta is a precedent to other clubs that casts light on the early relationship between amateur film and film clubs in Barcelona. Though we have not deemed this club a film club per se, certain elements tie it to the film club movement. First of all, it involved the audience's organisation. That is, people who were outside the scope of the film industry²²⁴ but interested in film nonetheless organised in order to learn about film, as we may read in reviews on the club (Autor/a 1923d). Yet, we cannot leave aside the fact that this initiative was born of a film magazine, which, to an extent, could be seen as a counterargument to the idea that this film club had more popular origins. Still, in the magazine in question, *Cine-Revista*, the writers did not sign the articles with their own names. *Cine-Revista* was not directed at the educated classes. In contrast, writers of the upper crust who wrote for other publications would sign their texts with their own names and would often stand among the most distinguished personalities of the cultural world of the time. This is the case of the contributions we have read in *Mirador* magazine, which led to the foundation of Sessions Mirador six years after the foundation of Club Cinematográfico de Horta, and *La Gaceta Literaria*, which was tied to cineclub español. This distinction would lead us to believe that the first film club—Horta—was of a more popular nature than those to come. The Correspondence section of *Cine-Revista* magazine, in which readers could send in short letters with their ideas, comments, and exchanges, supports this notion. This section of the magazine took up a page and a half at the end of the publication, either before or after the section titled “Usted tiene la palabra,” roughly translated as “It's your turn to speak” (or to write, in this case). The difference between “Correspondence” and “It's your turn to speak” is that, in the latter, readers mainly wrote about film, and a page and a half would generally be dedicated to just one text by a single person. In contrast, the section titled “Correspondence” housed shorter texts in which readers wrote to each other and to the magazine. At this point it is worth mentioning that some of the communication between readers was used to flirt with other readers or to shower each other with compliments. Often, men would complement the women who wrote therein and ask for their addresses so that they could write them letters. These texts also allude to an address book that circulated among the magazine's readers, as well as to the film club and the texts published by the magazine's publisher (novelized screenplays). Likewise, readers would reply to each other, often with the goal of exchanging letters or sending each other film materials, etc. Many other times, these replies were sent from the magazine to the readers, after the readers presumably sent letters to the magazine's headquarters. This section is significant to us because its letters allude to the film club several times and cast light on the relationship between the magazine's publishers and its readers, which would eventually lead to the club's creation.

Indeed, we may highlight the magazine staff's continual efforts to address readers' concerns. The “Correspondence” section often reiterated subscription prices, the required format for letters to be published in the magazine, and other information that

²²⁴ Though many film clubs had ties to the film industry, as Hagener notes, “it was the search for medium specificity inspired by avant-garde groups in the traditional arts and a vague opposition to the commercial film industry, which united the players until roughly 1930” (Hagener 2007, 61).

readers had requested. As noted previously, the magazine also included a section called “It’s your turn to speak.” In it, the magazine staff encouraged readers to publish their opinions on film in general. The value that these texts were given—being published as long as they were submitted in the required format and didn’t include any insults—has led me to conceive of this magazine and its film club as initiatives that were close to the audience, with a popular focus and spirit. This demonstrates the fact that magazines could be spaces for socialising, not only for those who worked there or were professionally involved in some way, but also for the audiences. In contrast to more elitist magazines like *Mirador* and *La Gaceta literaria*, *Cine-Revista* magazine boasted higher audience participation, thanks to the two sections I have mentioned. In my view, this participation is what led to the creation of a film club of this popular and accessible nature, with broad participation from the film-going public.

3.1.1.6 Amateurism and the Film Clubs of Barcelona

This brief study of Club Cinematográfico de Horta speaks to the origins of Barcelona’s film club initiatives, allowing us to understand how, with which patterns, under which conditions, and with what goals they originated. With this overview, we may conclude that Club Cinematográfico de Horta was very different from the more elitist, bourgeois, and high-brow clubs that María Luz Morales considered in her film club genealogy, which begun with Amigos de Charlot. While we have no definitive proof, we are practically certain that Club Cinematográfico de Horta’s public was more open and popular, or at least it was decidedly not comprised of recognised people within the cultural field of the time. Their correspondence—which was almost always signed with pseudonyms, many of which were quite funny—and their frequently mentioned interest in succeeding or “making it” in the film world, would lead me to believe that audience members were interested in, but professionally distant from, the film medium. Likewise, the magazine did not print a list of club members nor of members of the board of directors that organised the sessions. This, in turn, leads me to believe that there was no board of directors and that the relationship between the club’s participants was more or less horizontal. In fact, in one issue of *Cine-Revista*, we may read a review by one of its writers, who describes having visited the film club (Autor/a 1923b, 10) in order to understand the club’s activities. This perspective was quite different from the ones that usually appeared in other magazines and publications with ties to film clubs (*La Vanguardia*, *La Publicitat*, and *La Gaceta Literaria*, for instance), in which club activities were promoted beforehand and subsequently reviewed, with a more informative and flattering tone, in contrast to the innocent and seemingly surprised tone of the reporter who visited Club Cinematográfico de Horta for *Cine Revista*.²²⁵

²²⁵ The author writes, “having found out about the relationship between that man and the Film Club, we, the true enthusiasts of such a charismatic society, who wish to always stay abreast of everything related to this institution, decided to go to the Club, hoping to discover any and all truths about the matter” [“Habiéndonos enterado de ciertas relaciones que existen entre dicho señor y el Club Cinematográfico, nosotros, verdaderos entusiastas de tan simpática sociedad y deseosos de estar siempre al corriente de

As noted before, despite this contrast between the Barcelona Film Club and the Horta club's members, both of their audiences shared a certain interest in filmmaking. This stands in contrast to the two film clubs that follow it in Morales's genealogy, Sessions Mirador and Estudio Cinaes, as the latter two abided by the French model. Beyond these pioneering initiatives, we have shown that, in Barcelona, amateurism was highly relevant to film as a medium, judging by the number of associations and clubs that dedicated part of their time to shooting, as well as by the birth of contests dedicated to amateur film,²²⁶ along with magazines devoted to amateurism.

Here, I believe it important to conduct a brief review of the importance of amateurism in the city of Barcelona—given the emergence of magazines and clubs in which amateurism played a key role. One of these examples is the magazine *Cinema Amateur* (Barcelona 1932-1936), a publication rooted in the Centre Excursionista de Catalunya (CEC) (1891-to date), which was highly culturally active around said time and also organised screenings, with particular interest in film production. The magazine *Cinema Amateur* saw the participation of personalities like Josep Palau Claveras, a film critic who collaborated in various media outlets of the time, such as in the magazines *Mirador* and *Destino*, while also publishing several books on film.²²⁷ Likewise, Palau Claveras would coincide with María Luz Morales and Guillem Díaz-Plaja when they taught the first course on film aesthetics in the Spanish state, at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Likewise, Palau Claveras would also share the magazine space as well as the aforementioned course with his colleague Jeroni Moragues, also a film critic. We might especially emphasise Delmir de Caralt Puig, one of the first recognised amateur producers who was recognised at the State level, who also participated in the magazine *Cinema Amateur*. In the same line as the magazine, there was also a film club—Cine Amateur—that was founded early on, in 1930. Alberich, Gubern, and Sánchez-Biosca (2012, 434) take note of this club, but we do not know its closing date nor any other information, including who participated in it.

To conclude this section, we may observe that, on the one hand, we have the model of Club Cinematográfico de Horta, which aimed to bring together film audiences or those interested in the film medium, although these audience members did not boast symbolic capital. Rather, these agents gathered thanks to their interest in film production, creating spaces of socialization around the medium. Even more so than in its affiliate magazine, which the club's audience likely read, participation in the club was quite active and usually involved acting (the public showed plenty of interest in taking acting classes). This initiative was undertaken by anonymous people, as their names were not made public by the associated magazine (whose texts are signed with pseudonyms) or by the film club. This would explain why this film club has enjoyed little

todo lo relacionado con dicha institución, decidimos ponernos en camino al Club, dispuestos a averiguar todo lo que de cierto hubiere en todo ello"] (Autor/a 1923d, 10).

²²⁶ We may find an example of this at the competition "Associació de Cinema Amateur," awarded in March of 1935 by a jury that included María Luz Morales and Ángel Ferrán, among others (Autor/a 1935a, 16).

²²⁷ María Luz Morales also had ties to the magazine, as noted in the magazine *Otro cine*, in an article by Jose Torrella titled "Así nació," which refers to the predecessors of the magazine *Otro cine*, specifically to *Cinema Amateur*. Besides María Luz Morales, Josep Palau, Guillermo Díaz-Plaja, and Jerónimo Moragas also wrote for *Cinema Amateur* (Torroella 1965, 6). There is also a reference to the amateur cinema competition celebrated in 1932 in which María Luz Morales participated as a judge (Autor/a 1935a).

research and prestige throughout history. Rather than by eminent figures, this club was defined by amateurism.

On the other hand, we may observe the Barcelona Film Club, which served as a steppingstone between Club Cinematográfico de Horta and the renowned Sessions Mirador. The Barcelona Film Club brought together key players in the cultural and intellectual field of the time, who converged around their shared interest in the film medium and translated their own prestige to the club. This itself was a guarantee of success within the cultural field. In this sense, we may ask ourselves about the value of amateurism in this film club. Judging by what we have reviewed so far, there was a certain interest in amateur film within the Barcelona Film Club, but amateur film was never ultimately produced in this club. If films had been made, amateurism could have proved a cohesive element within the network. Yet, amateurism did not pan out for the club, and the initial impulse to create films eventually vanished. This fact leads me to ask myself two things. First, whether amateurism played the same role across different social groups, and second, whether the timelapse between when the two clubs emerged caused variations in the ways audiences interacted with the film medium within the cinematographic field. As we will now see, the Barcelona Film Club and the Club Cinematográfico de Horta's audiences were not one and the same. Instead, they involved two contrasting social classes with different ties to the cultural field. This might explain why they had different relationships to amateurism. Now, Delmir de Caralt Puig (1901-1990), Barcelona's amateur par excellence, who was also widely recognized, would keep me from making such a statement. Delmir de Caralt shared various spaces of socialization with the agents involved in Sessions Mirador, the Barcelona Film Club, *Cinema Amateur* magazine, and Centre Excursionista de Catalunya (CEC), all of them elitist initiatives. We must explore his figure in order to understand the relationship between amateurism and the illustrated Catalan bourgeoisie that circulated within the cultural spaces of the early 1930s, including the Barcelona Film Club and Sessions Mirador. This would lead me to think that amateurism started to become a bourgeois activity at some point in the history of cinema.

Another consideration emanating from this reflection is whether the relationships to amateurism—whether in one group or another—may have varied over time, that is, whether the position of amateurism fluctuated within the cinematographic field itself, with its relationship to audiences varying in turn. Was this an expression of the appropriation of film among the popular classes, in line with Macedo's considerations (2017), with film clubs cropping up as spaces of socialization when film was just emerging, only to be absorbed by the bourgeoisie later on?²²⁸ This would explain why the film clubs that followed the French model were so uninterested in amateurism, as was the case with the Barcelona Film Club and Sessions Mirador, with amateurism only being recovered later on, in the mid '30s, with the screenings at Centre Excursionista de Catalunya and the creation of the magazine *Cinema Amateur*.

²²⁸ This hypothesis concurs and is coherent with the idea of the broad participation of women in the film industry before its institutionalization, as compared to the waning number of women in positions of power or creativity in the industry as it became more institutionalized. See the chapter of my research on film clubs and women for more on this matter (2.4). As is usual, we may note that groups with less social power were more present and relevant in the field before film production became a profitable business.

3.1.1.7 The Barcelona Film Club's Programming and its Target

The Barcelona Film Club's sessions weren't always celebrated the same day of the week. Sometimes screenings took place during the week, and other times, on the weekend. And they weren't held every week. The initial goal, as Ferran writes, was to celebrate two to three monthly sessions (Ferran Coromines 1929e, 4). Yet, we know that some months there weren't even two monthly sessions. This is telling of the challenges that organisers faced in securing films that could be screened. Though we don't have information on every session, screenings did seem to have occurred at the same time and place: in Sala Mozart at 10:00 p.m. Though the first session was publicised in many media outlets (*La Vanguardia* and *La Publicitat*), it required an invitation (Ferran Coromines 1929e, 4). Furthermore, it is worth noting that some functions beyond screenings and discussions were also held. For example, a conference was programmed for the fourth session, but we don't know who gave it.²²⁹ This is telling of the edifying principle that seems to have marked many of the film club initiatives of the time, manifesting in different ways across all of the examples we have mentioned. In the case of Club Cinematográfico de Horta, this edifying principle was fulfilled through the teaching of lessons. Meanwhile, at the Barcelona Film Club, it was through texts and conferences that this edification was made manifest. At Sessions Mirador, it was through texts on the screenings in the pages of *Mirador* magazine—which boasted analytic depth. Interestingly, in the inaugural session of the Barcelona Film Club, between the screening of the first documentary and the first film, María Luz Morales introduced the film club's functions “to explain the Club's purpose and the composition of its programs” (Ferran i Coromines 1929, 4).²³⁰ María Luz Morales's public appearance in order to represent the film club is especially relevant, as, beyond her double role a spokesperson and adviser to the organisation, and beyond her promoting of its activities, too, it is indicative of her leading role within the club.

In order to ensure that this historic study may serve as a tool for future researchers, I have created a table with information on the Barcelona Film Club's programming—as this information has never been compiled or published before.²³¹ See Annex 1 to consult this table. If we conduct an in-depth analysis of the programming that we have been able to recover from the Barcelona Film Club, we may note that the following genres were common: shorts (often comedies and documentaries, with the latter usually being news-related or scientific), comedy films (especially U. S. American ones, such as those by Charles Chaplin or Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy—known as “el Gordo y el Flaco” in Spanish—but also French ones, such as those by Max Linder); and a few emblematic German films (especially those by Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau, like *Tartufo* and *El último*, as well as lesser known ones like *El estudiante de Praga*). The interest shown in documentaries has also caught my attention, such as those by Flaherty (*Moana* and

²²⁹ Perhaps it was Benito Perojo, whom Àngel Ferran describes as having offered to give a conference at one of the Barcelona Film Club's sessions (Ferran i Coromines 1929, 4).

²³⁰ “Paraules de l'escriptora senyoreta Maria Luz Morales, per explicar la finalitat del Club i la composició dels programes.”

²³¹ In contrast, we may find Sessions Mirador's programming in the text by Palmira González (1990).

Nanook el esquimal), along with the constant references to UFA documentaries.²³² As we may note, this programming was uncommon for film clubs of the time, as it didn't center on avant-garde films—in contrast to Sessions Mirador and other film clubs around the globe, including Cine club de Buenos Aires (1929-1932) and the French clubs directed by Ricciotto Canudo (Club des amis du septième art), Jean-Georges Auriol (Film club), and Jean Pidault (Froupement des spectateurs d'avant-garde) (Gauthier 1999), among many other clubs of the time. This is one of the reasons why the Barcelona Film Club should be read in a different light than the clubs that closely abided by the French model. Yet, we may draw comparisons between the Barcelona Film Club and other clubs operating elsewhere at the time, such as Mexico's Cine club Mexicano y Cine club de México (1931-1937).²³³ Both clubs showed interest in Chaplin's films and U. S. American and French comedy—which isn't surprising given that it was of general interest to intellectuals and artists of the period.²³⁴ Both clubs also shared an interest in documentaries and animated cartoons.

In an article, the journalist Àngel Ferran also juxtaposed film clubs like the Barcelona Film Club against avant-garde clubs (Ferran Coromines 1929d, 4). Ferran viewed the artistic avant-garde and the Cineclub Español led by Luis Buñuel that was operating in Madrid at the same time as standing in opposition to films with “logic and common sense, without art [...] filmed intimately by the [Barcelona Film] club's members.” To Ferran, the avant-garde films in Buñuel circle were examples of “the professional, sublime lunacy imported from Paris.”²³⁵ The journalist continues by noting that, in his film club (the Barcelona Film Club), members sought refined taste, but it wasn't as snobbish or “fakir” like that of admirers of avant-garde film. In this same vein, he juxtaposes the surrealist avant-garde that appeals to the unconscious and is directed at a very select public, and the common sense (*seny*) of the Barcelonan public. This common sense (*seny*) that Àngel Ferran alludes to is among the features that defined the Catalan noucentista movement of the early twentieth century. Another noucentista feature is concern for language, as may be gleaned from the reference to the language that María Luz Morales used in her presentation of the club's activities (Ferran i Coromines 1929, 4).²³⁶ We may infer that the club and its members at least partially

²³² UFA GmbH was a key German film production company in cinema history, producing such important films as *Metropolis* (Fritz Lang, 1927). The significant presence of German cinema in the programming of the Barcelona Film Club is associated with “the market penetration policy pursued by German and Italian companies, supported by their governments” (González García and Camporesi 2011, 281). As noted by González García and Camporesi, there was a commercial promotion strategy for German films during the Second Spanish Republic.

²³³ I consider both of these together in the chapter on Mexican initiatives.

²³⁴ We may note the surrealists' interest in the comedy films by Chaplin and Buster Keaton—especially the former. The same is true of Luis Buñuel.

²³⁵ “Lógica y sentido común, sin arte [...] filmada[s] en la intimidad por las y los socios del club” and “la locura profesional más sublime importada de París.”

²³⁶ The journalist Àngel Ferran took note of the fact that María Luz Morales would present in Catalan. To her, a woman from a Galician migrant family, this would have involved a special effort. In articles, I have also found references to a company dedicated to creating Catalan subtitles for films, Palestra, which faced economic challenges when Cineaes, the distributing company, refused to lease Palestra's films with subtitles in Catalan. According to the journalist, it was a problem that the distributing company thought that screening companies would not be interested in renting films with Catalan subtitles. In this sense, the journalist stands behind Catalan, stating that, with sufficient coordination, enough people—even

upheld noucentista ideals. We may thus detect two models, which differ according to the audiences toward which they were geared. In the face of the nonsensical avant-garde, Àngel Ferran defines a film club's ideal spectator as "a man of clear thought and vision, who demands action, life and movement (film) of the screen, rather than chemistry and psychotherapy"²³⁷ (Ferran Coromines 1928, 5). Once again, we may find a reference to prudence, as opposed to the explosiveness (chemistry) of the surrealist and dada currents that dominated the avant-garde in film.

3.1.1.8 Audiences

As a spokesperson of the Barcelona Film Club, Àngel Ferran criticised the Cineclub Español (1928-1931) de Madrid²³⁸ as snobbish, right as Sessions Mirador—whose programming resembled that of the Madrid club to a great extent—was opening its doors to the Barcelonan public. To fulfill the task that the Barcelona Film Club had originally set out to do, Sessions Mirador opened its doors to the general public—we may recall that the Barcelona Film Club only admitted its own members at its screenings. We should thus pause to study the tastes of the audiences that attended both film clubs' sessions. It would seem easy to assume that avant-garde programming should be more geared toward a small public, while more commercial film, such as the U. S. American cinema screened at the Barcelona Film Club, would be directed at a more general public. Yet, in reality, despite the Barcelona Film Club's less risky programming, only its members could access it, while Sessions Mirador's screenings were open to the general public. As to the audiences that attended the Barcelona Film Club's sessions, we may note that certain reviews would describe a "very select public," "people who are true lovers of film," "many young ladies and gentlemen," "a very distinguished public [for the naming of whom] we would have to cite all of our literature, our art, and our society; personalities of film"²³⁹ (Ferran i Coromines 1929, 4), to be a club member "one cannot be a common spectator"²⁴⁰ (Gallart 1929, 6). Judging by the overlap in members and people involved in both projects, we might consider whether the audiences were actually one and the same at both film clubs. Yet, the Barcelona Film Club had a more noucentista and elitist idea of coming together, being committed to a limited collective within the Catalan cultural field. Meanwhile, Sessions Mirador would abide by the more

entire towns—who preferred Catalan subtitles to Spanish ones would show up. If there linguistic political correctness were instated, he writes, all films would be subtitled in Spanish and Catalan, and, in time, copies with subtitles in Catalan would circulate throughout the rest of the Spanish state (Ferran Coromines 1931, 11).

²³⁷ "[...] un hombre claro de pensamiento y de vista, que pide a la pantalla acción, vida y movimiento (cine) y no química y psicoterapia."

²³⁸ The first film club in the Spanish state, with films coming from Paris, chosen by Luis Buñuel. It was founded and managed by Ernesto Giménez Caballero. See Gubern (1999) for in-depth research.

²³⁹ "[...] un públic selecte", "persones que són veritablement amants del cinema", "moltes senyores i senyorettes", "distingit públic [...] hauríem de citar tota la nostra literatura, el nostre art i la nostra societat; personalitats de la cinematografia [...]."

²⁴⁰ "no ésser un espectador corrent."

avant-garde idea of collective creativity, with its founders enraptured by the promise of openness that the modernization of urban spaces could offer.

While it is true that the two initiatives had different goals from the onset, a certain sociocultural idiosyncrasy at the local scale may explain the variation between the goals that determined both clubs' activities and the results of their endeavors. Specifically, my hypothesis is that, within the local history of Barcelona's multiple film clubs, the Barcelona Film Club served as the stepping-stone between the initial, more artisanal and practical clubs and the more intellectual clubs that followed with Sessions Mirador. In his texts, Àngel Ferran juxtaposes idling contemplation and analysis to the will to act, which he associates with the amateurism that would set the two clubs apart (Ferran Coromines 1929d, 4). In any case, I believe that the Barcelona Film Club model is fundamental to understanding the film clubs and amateur clubs that proved so relevant to the Barcelona of the 1930s, with their model continuing to function up until the mid-1970s. Rather than becoming an obsolete model, it served to bridge two different models that were thus able to continue in time.

Many elements distinguish Club Cinematográfico de Horta from Sessions Mirador. However, the Barcelona Film Club shares certain elements with both, but isn't identical to either.²⁴¹ The Barcelona Film Club shared in Club Cinematográfico de Horta's interest in amateurism but also Sessions Mirador's kind of audience—one with symbolic and relational capital. Thus, although it isn't easy to find replicas of the Barcelona Film Club's model elsewhere, this club is fundamental to understanding the development of film club history,²⁴² at least in Barcelona, and especially to explaining how amateurism became increasingly appropriated by the bourgeois class.²⁴³

In any case, in 1930, once the Barcelona Film Club had closed its doors and Sessions Mirador was also drawing to an end as Cinaes took the reins, a *Mirador* writer notes that “our satisfaction comes from the fact that no one can deny that we and the Barcelona Film Club have practically generated Barcelona's entire film movement [film culture] from the onset, and our work will not be lost, but remain, as a company is taking advantage of it” (Autor/a 1930a, 6).²⁴⁴ Beyond the somewhat defeated tone of the press release from which this fragment was extracted, I find this declaration very important, as it makes clear an obvious matter: it draws a connection between film clubs and cinephilia (Baecque 2003; Hagener and Valck 2008). Before the Barcelona Film Club and Sessions Mirador, there may very well have been people with a penchant for film, people who were interested in the medium, or even spaces of socialization for them, such as magazines as well as clubs like Club Cinematográfico de Horta. However, there was no

²⁴¹ I will outline the features of these models in the next section.

²⁴² As noted, being a “minority” initiative that cannot be boxed into the French film club model, it would be safe to assume that these kinds of clubs have not seen in-depth study nationally or regionally, as was the case with Barcelona.

²⁴³ Patricia Rodden notes that “from 1897 to 1962 amateur-film discourse incrementally relocated amateur filmmaking within a romanticized vision of the bourgeois nuclear family, thereby amputating its more resistant economic and political potential for critique” (Rodden Zimmermann 1995, 10).

²⁴⁴ The Catalan original states, “La nostra satisfacció és que ningú no ens pot negar que gairebé tot el moviment cinèfil de Barcelona l'hem mogut nosaltres i el Barcelona Film Club en un començament, i que la nostra obra no s'esvaeix, sinó que queda, aprofitada per una empresa.”

specific space for people to watch films collectively—a passion that sometimes did and sometimes did not involve a desire to make films.

I would like to address another methodological aspect regarding audiences and the gender perspective. I would like to explain how I am dealing with audiences as a concept (Christie 2012). When dealing with audiences, I am considering a bottom-up methodological perspective, according to which audiences are viewed as playing a relevant role in the circulation of any cultural good, in the understanding that, during this circulation process, the meaning of material or immaterial art is constructed. It is in this sense that audiences and their relationships constitute part of the network through which a given cultural good circulates.²⁴⁵ In fact, in film clubs, the role of audiences is fundamental. Without audiences, film clubs could not function, and it was the audiences who determined the film club's final shape, or the changes that it would undergo throughout its history. Thus, insofar as film and film clubs' audiences are priority agents, I believe it fundamental to consider the products of film clubs—such as theoretical and historical knowledge around the film phenomenon—as the results of collaborative work. In this sense, I always view audiences as active actors—never as passive ones. And even though their names were rarely printed in reviews, I see the women within these audiences as very active participants in the construction of knowledge on film.

Using this methodology, I would like to situate María Luz Morales—the object of our research—as a cultural mediator, while placing her on the same plane of action as her peers, who may have attended or been potential audience members at the functions that Morales organised.²⁴⁶ I thus consider Morales a cultural mediator in a horizontal relationship with her audiences. All of these women attended cinemas and film clubs, organised cinematographic activities, wrote film criticism, circulated films, participated in contests, etc. In this sense, the role of María Luz Morales as situated in a strategic point is key to retracing, restoring and reviving all of these invisibilised women who participated in the creation of a film culture, not just in Barcelona, but also at the national and transnational levels. I believe that by retracing these networks of women in the film field, we may find more women who have been dismissed until now, including María Luz Morales herself. To this end, I propose the methodology exposed here: that we use social networks to find the women mediators who may have played the role of audience creators, gathering women around themselves and organising activities. As such, their work could be reassessed, and their contributions, not questioned.

Here, it would also be worth reflecting upon the different roles of women according to their participation in the various kinds of audiences we have addressed. It is worth exploring whether women played different roles as active audiences according to film club type. Yet, we have very little material with which to dive deeper. For starters, the differences in participation type between clubs like Horta and more highbrow clubs like the Barcelona Film Club and Sessions Mirador would determine the spaces in which we may find women. At the Barcelona Film Club, one woman on whom we may certainly find documentation is María Luz Morales. Likewise, we may recall the “many ladies and

²⁴⁵ I trace this network as per the Actor Network-Theory (ANT) (Latour 2005).

²⁴⁶ I do not aim to imply that all women who participated in the cultural field of the time were cultural mediators, nor that only women were mediators.

young ladies”²⁴⁷ whom the press reviews refer to, who must have participated as members of the film audiences and perhaps in the discussions, though we do not know about the latter. This must also have been the case at Sessions Mirador—but the difference is that we have found no documentation on women organisers or key women figures at Sessions Mirador. When comparing the three clubs, Horta stands as a counterpoint, as women often wrote in the aforementioned “Correspondence” section, declaring their interest in learning about film and especially about acting. Given these demonstrations of interests, we may assume that they participated in other club activities as well. In any case, the interests of the women who wrote for the “Correspondence” and “It’s your turn to speak” sections is worthy of further analysis so that we might understand whether their interest in acting was genuine or imposed, as we have found that, when a given woman showed interest in film, the editors would reply by encouraging them to direct their efforts toward the field of acting.

3.1.1.9 Film Club Practices

We have some information on the Barcelona Film Club’s practices, such as that membership fees stood at five pesetas per month,²⁴⁸ with people granted membership by invitation. This fee was not actually low, even though the journalist Àngel Ferran called it very inexpensive (Ferran Coromines 1928, 5). This information is telling of the kind of audience that the Barcelona Film Club was geared toward. Its members came from the upper and middle classes, for whom the five-pesetas fee was, as the journalist states, very inexpensive.

On the other hand, from its incipience, the Barcelona Film Club was considered a space of sociability, as noted by Àngel Ferran (Ferran Coromines 1928, 5). In fact, in the club’s first session, the club’s sign-up sheet was made available during the film’s intermission, at which time the audience exchanged impressions on the film. I believe this information to be fundamental, since this was the first space in Barcelona that not only encouraged watching films but also the exchange of ideas on films among audience members. Indeed, the press took note of this new practice, reporting that the audience showed enthusiasm for the screening and took advantage of the intermission to talk about what they’d seen (V. Castanys Borràs 1929, 3–4). The intermissions were long so that members could have enough time to congregate—in the first session, they gathered in groups of four or five people.

As for practices, in the same issue of *Cinòpolis* that I cited above, in reference to the film club’s third session (May 3, 1929), the article explains that people could be heard whistling after the screening, which the writer finds funny, given that the whistles sounded like the “educated whistles of a boy from a high-class home”²⁴⁹ (V. (Birosta) Castanys Borràs 1929, 13). The practice of having audiences react to what had been

²⁴⁷ “[...] muchas señoras y señoritas.”

²⁴⁸ We should keep in mind that a working-class salary fluctuated between 100 and 500 pesetas per month (Estadística 1929).

²⁴⁹ “[...] xiulets educats, de noi de casa bona.”

screened waned with time, as audiences started becoming more quiet and uniform (Lacasse 1998). Thus, that this practice emerged in the first bourgeois film club bolsters our claim that the Barcelona Film Club is situated at the crux between audience participation—one just as active as the members of Club Cinematográfico de Horta—and elitism, in which audiences approached films with a prior background on what they were about to see before they watched it and had been trained to view it with certain eyes.²⁵⁰

In the same satirical magazine that pokes fun at the Barcelona Film Club's elitist efforts, there is also a reference to the possibility of establishing an agreement with said club in order to screen a few comical scenes that were set to be recorded after a contest that the magazine organised in order to "select photogenic readers [who are] film aficionados"²⁵¹ (Autor/a 1929e, 8). This shows that the cultural organisms of the time tended to associate among themselves, at least in the film and artistic field, as we have noted in terms of the various Barcelonan film clubs²⁵² in the genealogy of the first film clubs as established by María Luz Morales. This tendency to associate would facilitate and even encourage our proposed method of working with the Actor-Network Theory, according to which the network is constructed by following an actor and her movements, relationships, and exchanges. In this sense, by tracing the Barcelona Film Club, various agents and agencies reveal themselves as indispensable to understanding the film club. For instance, we may note the differences and similarities between the film clubs that we will outline as follows.

3.1.2 Film Club Models and their Audiences in Barcelona: From Club Cinematográfico de Horta to Amigos de Charlot, the Barcelona Film Club, Sessions Mirador, and Studio Cinaes

3.1.2.1 Amigos de Charlot

To summarize the features that characterise each of the clubs, we may begin by describing Amigos de Charlot. The latter club was characterised by 1) being a private initiative that was closed to the general public; 2) having programming that was limited to Charles Chaplin's films, and, by extension, to U. S. American films; 3) gathering people from the same sociocultural stratum, with friends who got together to watch films and

²⁵⁰ As a fun fact, we might note that a quintet would play music behind a screen in order to enhance the films shown at the Barcelona Film Club (V. (Birosta) Castanys Borràs 1929, 13).

²⁵¹ "[...] sel·leccionar lectors fotogènics [...] aficionats al cinema."

²⁵² There was also a desire to establish a relationship between the Barcelona Film Club and Sessions Mirador. When Sessions Mirador announced its first session in its magazine, it specified that Sessions Mirador aimed to collaborate in other "activities that could be developed our home city, first of all, naturally, the Barcelona Film Club" ["activitats similars que es puguin desenvolupar a casa nostra, en primer terme, naturalment, al Barcelona Film Club"] (Autor/a 1929f, 6).

likely came from the intellectual and artistic field, as was the case of its leader; 4) following the general goal of screening film and discussing it; 5) lacking an organ for publicity in the press (to our knowledge, judging by the scant references to the institution that we have found); and 6) boasting a horizontal structure despite its elitism (given its privacy and its kind of audience) as the organisation comprised a small group of people brought together through their friendship.

3.1.2.2 *The Barcelona Film Club*

As for the Barcelona Film Club, we may describe it as 1) a private initiative that was closed to the general public; 2) boasting diverse programming ranging from commercial, U. S. American cinema to scientific documentaries and German expressionist films, as we have noted; 3) involving people from the same sociocultural stratum of the cultural and intellectual field of the time; 4) seeking two goals, namely, to screen and discuss films and to make amateur cinema; 5) lacking a publicity organ of its own in the press, although several of its members disseminated its activities in the media; 6) having a more hierarchical organisational model than Amigos de Charlot, as each commission was charged with its own responsibilities, while the club also had a director and followed a conference model for the presentation of certain films.

Though the Barcelona Film Club's organisation was more vertical than that of Amigos de Charlot, the former club's goal of producing amateur film may have allowed its members to interact with each other on the same level. The idea that members were producers of knowledge implies a reversal of positions in terms of the passive spectator / active creator binary. This is why amateurism played such an important part at these film clubs: it permitted the reversal of roles. This will become more evident as we analyse other film clubs, like the Club Cinematográfico de Horta and Sessions Mirador. Still, I believe it important to note that the spaces dedicated to discussing films, in our perspective, also opened the doors to film club audiences becoming active participants.

Here is one more notable difference between the Barcelona Film Club and the subsequent more recognised clubs: the former's programming. While the Barcelona Film Club screened commercial and U. S. American films in parallel to other more intellectual cinematic forms, such as documentaries and German expressionist films, Sessions Mirador and Cinaes showed the habitual programming of European film clubs of the early twentieth century (Hagener 2007), that is, they stuck to the avant-garde. Considering the debates that emerged during this period around the juxtaposition between avant-garde European film and U. S. American film, between Soviet film and U. S. American film, or between "pure" and commercial film, the difference in programming between the Barcelona Film Club and Sessions Mirador would lead me to consider them somewhat differently, with one being more elitist than the other. I believe this to be so despite the fact that the film club's members overlapped, which, at first glance, would suggest that both clubs espoused identical models. Yet, another notable difference between the Barcelona Film Club and Sessions Mirador is that the Barcelona Film Club's sessions were only open to its members, according to a reference in *Mirador* (Autor/a 1929c, 6). In contrast, Sessions Mirador sought to further the work

started by the Barcelona Film Club by opening its doors to the general public, especially to the readers of its magazine. Though it might not seem obvious, this fact makes Sessions Mirador, the second initiative, a less elitist initiative that was more open to the public than the first. Whether this stemmed from a genuine desire to popularize this specific club or followed a more general trend among film clubs that programmed transnational avant-garde films remains unclear.²⁵³

3.1.2.3 Sessions Mirador

As for Sessions Mirador, it may be defined as 1) a private initiative that was open to the general public, distinguishing it from prior clubs; 2) showing general programming focused, first, on avant-garde film, and second, on recovering silent film; and 3) boasting many of the same members as prior initiatives, namely people from the Catalan cultural and artistic field of the time. Even though it was open to the general public, Sessions Mirador was mainly targeted at readers of *Mirador* magazine—with its directors also coming from the same social class (as we may glean from the profiles of those who participated in the magazine's competitions (Geli Fons and Huertas Claveria 2000, 89-93). In this list on the features of Sessions Mirador, we may also note that, 4) it espoused the main goal of screening film and commenting upon it afterwards, but not did not focus on amateur film as the Barcelona Film Club had; and 5) it published information on the film club in *Mirador* magazine, which had been founded a few months prior (in January of 1929, while the film club was founded on April 29, 1929). Unlike the other clubs we've mentioned, which did not have an associated organ, Sessions Mirador was directly linked to *Mirador* magazine, which not only facilitated the sessions' dissemination but also allowed members to circulate from one cultural space to the other. Regarding organisational dynamics we may glean, 6) a certain prescriptive tone in the texts that Josep Palau wrote for *Mirador*, in contrast to those published by the Barcelona Film Club's members in *La Vanguardia* and *La Publicitat* in regard to their own sessions. In the reviews published in *Mirador*, we may detect certain pedagogical aims, with the authors seeking to edify the audience in terms of their taste —and perhaps to establish a canon of films that should be enjoyed by the kind of public who attended the sessions, that is, the select public of *Mirador*.²⁵⁴

²⁵³ In any case, Malte Hagener (2007) detects two film club typologies in other parts of Europe: one which was more interested in aesthetics, and another that was more politically aimed and usually associated to political parties or associations with political or pedagogical ends. The latter, which were sometimes associated with communism and anarchy, sought to reach a more general, working-class public, as with Cine club Mexicano (see my chapter on this club). In this sense, the privileged classes also aimed their pedagogical efforts toward the working classes. Yet, I have not been able to trace this popularizing effort among the more elitist film clubs like Sessions Mirador.

²⁵⁴ In all likelihood, it was Josep Palau who wrote that "*L'Estrella de Mar* is no doubt one of the most interesting works to be presented in Barcelona, and as for audience members at Sessions Mirador, whether for or against the avant-garde, we are certain that they will be interested in watching it" [*"L'Estrella de Mar* és sens dubte una de les obres més interessants de les que s'hauran presentat a Barcelona, i els assistents a les Sessions Mirador, favorables o contraris al cinema d'avantguarda, estem segurs que els interessarà conèixer-ho"] (Autor/a 1929f, 6).

This film club model is the one closest to the French one that has been most widely recognised and studied among the earliest film clubs: the film club model pioneered by Ricciotto Canudo and Louis Delluc, who sought to offer different cinema than that screened at commercial theaters. Canudo and Delluc mostly screened avant-garde film, thus creating a canon of what the avant-garde film of the time would constitute, which was legitimised by their creators who participated in the clubs in turn.

3.1.2.4 Club Cinematográfico de Horta

Lastly, while Club Cinematográfico de Horta is the oldest of the clubs we've mentioned, I am enlisting it last because it is the most unlike the rest. Its model was quite distinct and included amateurism, which is telling of the role that amateurism played in such initiatives. Club Cinematográfico de Horta could be defined as 1) a private initiative that was open to the general public; 2) seeking to edify and bring together people interested in film, which is why it organised acting courses and contests; and 3) gathering a diverse audience of people who were interested in film magazines like *Cine-Revista*. This was a more popular and less elitist or illustrated audience than those of the film clubs mentioned above. We may also note that, 4) the film club's main goal was to bring together people interested in film who wanted to learn about the medium, especially from a practical standpoint, as we may glean from the activities the club conducted. Also notably, *Cine-Revista*, 5) its magazine was an illustrated weekly with articles that discussed Hollywood actors' careers and newly released films from big distributors like Paramount. There was a section for "Letters" near the end of the magazine, followed by a few pages for serial novels. Unlike in *Mirador* magazine, the articles published in *Cine-Revista* weren't signed by the writers, nor did they wield the same tone. *Cine-Revista* was intellectually lighter than *Mirador*. While *Cine-Revista* was more informative and included commentaries, *Mirador* comes off as more analytical and illustrated. Regarding Club Cinematográfico de Horta's organisational dynamics, 6) the magazine calls the club both a "corporation" and a "collective." In narrating the club's birth, the magazine alludes to three unnamed enthusiasts and to the board of directors being approved by those who were present that day. We may also find information on member admissions and registrations and on the subsequent organisation of delegations in Badalona, Castellón, and Ceuta. The club's activities are telling of its nature. Its functions included screenplay competitions, acting training, and letter-writing to production companies in order to request photographs of their favorite actors and actresses. All of its activities were open to anyone who was interested, regardless of whether they had previous specific or specialised knowledge of the cinematic arts. Likewise, the idea of the "collective" mentioned in *Cine-Revista* suggests that the club's organisation was quite horizontal and that members themselves managed and decided upon the activities that would be carried out. We must also keep in mind the effect of amateurism. The interest in collective production may have been a cohesive element within the group, striking a certain balance of power among club members.

Through the above lists of features, we may grasp the characteristics that defined these film clubs, including their similarities and differences. The way their features were expressed and exchanged played an important role within the network of Barcelona's

first film clubs. Thus, to reconstruct the network and its changes over time, we must observe and compare these features so that we may understand the various clubs' (and their models') contributions to the development of Barcelona's film club history.

3.1.3 María Luz Morales: Culturally Mediating between Cinema and Women's Education

In this second section, I would like to focus on María Luz Morales in order to cast light on how women participated in the film club phenomenon. María Luz Morales is relevant as an outstanding member of the Barcelona Film Club but also as a highly active cultural mediator in the cultural life of interwar Barcelona, especially from the late 1920s to the early 1930s, just as the Barcelona Film Club emerged. María Luz Morales participated in multiple cultural initiatives—not only in the film field, but also in the cultural and intellectual field in general. Likewise, she worked as a cultural journalist in media outlets like *La Vanguardia*, to name the most well known, making her a visible, public figure—one whom many would rely upon to bolster a broad and diverse range of cultural initiatives.

There is a pressing need for research with a gender perspective so that we may unearth the historical role of women in the film field. Several books and initiatives on the matter stand out (Bean and Negra 2002; Dall'Asta, Duckett, and Tralli 2013; Gledhill and Knight 2015; Bridges and Robson 2015; Gaines 2018), but María Luz Morales remains in the shadows, at least in academia. There is no complete biography focused on her life, her work, or on her social relations. As mentioned, only some aspects of her work have been addressed. Yet, we must highlight the work by María Àngels Cabré, a writer and journalist who wrote a short essay completely dedicated to María Luz Morales, which, as of now, is the only book completely devoted to her.

I am dedicating this section to María Luz Morales, whom I understand in two ways: 1) as a key figure within the Barcelona Film Club who allowed for its expansion and functioning, and 2) as a cultural mediator who generated audiences, with this enabling us to connect the Barcelona film field of the '20s and '30s to institutions by and for women.²⁵⁵ First, I will review the work and social life of María Luz Morales, and then I will inquire into her position within the feminist field and within cultural institutions for women. Lastly, alongside this text, I will present visualisations that situate María Luz Morales within the cultural field of her time and highlight her relevance.

²⁵⁵ Though I'm referring to institutions, in reality, I'd like to be able to talk about the women who were interested in and participated in the cultural field of the Barcelona of the time. Yet, as we will come to see, searching for these women is easier when focusing on the institutional frameworks they were part of, rather than attempting to research the women directly, as they have been quite overlooked historically. The lack of Wikipedia entries on them attests to this (Minguillón et al. 2021).

3.1.3.1 Life and Works

Born in La Coruña, Galicia, in 1898,²⁵⁶ María Luz Morales moved to Barcelona with her family as a child. In Barcelona, she studied at several institutions, including Institut de Cultura per la Dona de Francesca Bonnemaison,²⁵⁷ where she studied pedagogy (Salgado de Dios and Lázaro 2019, 123), as well as Seminario de Pedagogía de la Diputación de Barcelona and Consejo de Investigación Pedagógica de la Mancomunitat. She also studied philosophy and letters at Universidad Nueva de Barcelona (Servén Díez 2016). María Luz Morales worked as a cultural journalist²⁵⁸ and was one of the first Spanish women to be recognised as a specialist in the journalism and editorial fields of the time. She died in Barcelona in 1980, having received several awards for her work and gained increased attention during the '70s²⁵⁹—which would spill into the '80s as well²⁶⁰ (Salgado de Dios and Lázaro 2019, 122). However, since some of her contributions to the cultural field were published and acclaimed before the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), her work was generally overlooked during Franco's dictatorship (1939-1975) and enjoyed very little study thereafter. Recently, some scholars have highlighted her role as a translator, editor, and journalist (Hurtado Díaz 2001; 2006; Santa-Maria and Tur 2012; Servén Díez 2010; 2012; 2013; Servén Díez and Rota 2014; Servén Díez 2016; Julio 2017; 2019). Nevertheless, she has not been sufficiently addressed from the standpoint of the film field, nor in gender studies,²⁶¹ perhaps because she participated in a film club that historians have not considered the most important, as I have already mentioned. Furthermore, she never considered herself a feminist, as she would confess to María Pilar Comín, even though she worked arduously for the education and cultivation of

²⁵⁶ Due to the scant research undertaken around María Luz Morales, we are not even sure of her date of birth (Salgado de Dios and Lázaro 2019, 123).

²⁵⁷ According to Mary Nash (Nash 1996b, 51), this was the most important educational institution for women in Catalonia up until the Spanish Civil War, with up to 8,000 students per year. Nash clarifies that this institution has often been read as liberal and conservative, as it worked to insert women in the market and harmonize social classes while attempting to instill the working classes with the values of the bourgeois middle classes. Yet, Nash specifies that, from a gender perspective, we cannot forget that this initiative favored a change of perspective by legitimizing the idea of paid work for middle- and lower-class unmarried women. Likewise, this pioneering institution had high organisational and educational standards, boosting the self-esteem of students and their confidence in their professional abilities. Of its director, María Luz Morales stated that “She mainly created her teaching center to broaden the cultural world of working women. Since, beyond being a place for job listings, we daughters of the liberal-professional bourgeoisie began to frequent it with great enthusiasm” [“Ella creó su centro docente sobre todo para abrir el mundo cultural a las obreras, pues era además bolsa de trabajo, pero lo empezamos a frecuentar con gran entusiasmo hijas de la burguesía de las profesiones liberales”] (Comín 1972, 41).

²⁵⁸ According to Elivira Altés (2007) (cited by Salgado de Dios and Lázaro (2019, 125)), Morales was one of the first women to pursue journalism as a profession.

²⁵⁹ In 1963 Morales won the National Theater Prize (Autor/a 1963, 111), and, in 1970, she won the Eugeni D’Ors prize for her theater criticism published in *Diario de Barcelona*. In 1971, she was honored by being asked to join the Order of Isabella the Catholic.

²⁶⁰ Antonina Rodrigo was the first person to dedicate some of her research to her, in *Mujeres de España: Las silenciadas* (Rodrigo 1979). In 1980, after Morales’s death, Rodrigo would write an article for *El País*, “María Luz Morales, escritora, entre la esperanza y la utopía” (Rodrigo 1980).

²⁶¹ Except for the work by Salgado de Dios and Lázaro (2019).

women throughout her lifetime. I argue that, at the intersection of her interests and responsibilities, María Luz Morales emerged as a key cultural mediator.²⁶²

María Luz Morales worked as a cultural journalist for many national journals and newspapers throughout her career, including *Diario de Barcelona* (1792-2009), *Gema. Revista femenina hispanoamericana* (1929), and *D'ací i d'allà* (1925-1936), as well as the renowned newspapers *El Sol* and *La Vanguardia*. Many prominent left-leaning Spanish intellectuals and artists wrote articles and news stories for *El Sol*, published in Madrid from 1917 to the end of the Spanish Civil War, including writers Ortega y Gasset, Ramiro de Maeztu, Miguel de Unamuno, Gregorio Marañón, Ramón Pérez de Ayala, and more. María Luz Morales wrote for *El Sol*, also the most well-known newspaper of the time, between 1926 and 1931, and was in charge of a section called “La mujer, el niño y el hogar” (Women, Children, and the Home) (Lázaro and Salgado 2020, 300). Furthermore, María Luz Morales wrote for *La Vanguardia* from 1921 to 1936, covering the span of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). In fact, Morales was also asked to direct the publication for six months when the conflict erupted in 1936.²⁶³ Morales had begun her career as a chronicle writer in 1920 in *El Hogar y la Moda*, a magazine geared toward upper-middle-class women that was catalogued as “family or domestic”.²⁶⁴ By 1923, she became the magazine’s director, remaining at the helm until 1926 (Servén Díez 2016, 182).²⁶⁵ One year after she wrote for *El Hogar y la Moda* for the first time, she started to write articles that were geared toward women in the newspaper *La Vanguardia*, publishing her

²⁶² Likewise, the archive on María Luz Morales at the Ateneu Barcelonès is insubstantial. It mostly includes the books from her library. There is little archive of María Luz Morales’s letters or personal work documents. If this is the case for as public an actor as María Luz Morales, as we’ve noted, then we can only imagine the state of the archives and research around women who occupied a less public space than María Luz Morales, with even more of their archives lost to oblivion. The rest of María Luz Morales’s personal archive is somewhere unknown or has been destroyed.

²⁶³ For more detailed research on her contributions to *La Vanguardia* while she was its director, see Lázaro and Salgado (2020). Briefly put, María Luz Morales was elected as director of the newspaper *La Vanguardia*, which she led from August of 1936 to February of 1937, after the newspaper had been controlled by the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (National Work Confederation, CNT) and Comisiones Obreras (Working Comissions) committee—these two confederations were Spanish communist and anarcho-syndicalist unions. She accepted due to her profession as a journalist—not because she felt prepared for it, but because she sensed that she owed the world of journalism and the fAmelies of her colleagues.

²⁶⁴ Servén Díez notes that this wasn’t a cultural magazine “according to the usual criteria, but a feminine and domestic one [...] In fact, this was a very well-known publication enjoyed by various generations of Spanish women, as it was not only distributed in Barcelona, but also in Madrid and other important cities” [“según los criterios habituales, sino una revista femenina y doméstica [...] De hecho, fue una publicación muy conocida y manejada por varias generaciones de mujeres españolas, puesto que no solo tuvo distribución en Barcelona, sino también en Madrid y otras ciudades importantes”] (Servén Díez 2013, 255). In her role as its director, María Luz Morales dignified the domestic tasks of women and would address an imagined reader whom she sometimes casted as a worker, too, as she openly supported work as well as education. The magazine’s tone was not militant in the fight for women’s rights, but it did seek to broaden the cultural, artistic, and social abilities of women, encouraging them to take part in political life. Yet, it always hinted at the importance of not casting aside the domestic chores and feminine virtues that were deeply engrained in the meaning of womanhood in society and in Catholicism (Servén Díez 2013, 255–56).

²⁶⁵ In their text, Lázaro and Salgado write that María Luz Morales took charge of the newspaper in 1920 (300). However, she was not director until 1923, as Servén Díez notes. Rather, 1920 was the year when she started collaborating in the magazine.

thoughts on literature, education, and theater (Salgado de Dios and Lázaro 2019, 123-24). Her participation in the newspaper can be read within a general trend that marked the first few decades of the 1920s, by which sections on women as well as women's supplements increasingly cropped up in cultural and general media. In fact, the trend of women entering the media field as writers²⁶⁶ stemmed from their emergence as what Lázaro and Salgado call a reading public:

[...] subjects of a certain demand for information that was considered specific to women, with new sections cropping up as publications sought to modernize themselves. These sections housed discussions on feminism—which marked the press of the early twentieth century in a scattered and intermittent way²⁶⁷ (Lázaro and Salgado 2020, 300).

During the years in which Morales collaborated with *La Vanguardia*, she specialised in film²⁶⁸ and theatre criticism.²⁶⁹ Due to her contributions to the film field, the company Paramount Spain recruited her for its literary department in 1929, where she translated and adapted film scripts but also collaborated in its journal *Paramount* (1928-1929).²⁷⁰ This was by no means her only contribution to specialised film journals: she also published in *Films Selectos* (1930-1938),²⁷¹ *Arte y cinematografía* (1910-1936),²⁷² *Publi-*

²⁶⁶ Other women who would also become directors of women-oriented sections would include Carme Karr Alfonso (1901-1917), Anna Murià (*La Dona Catalana*, 1925-1930), and Lucía Canyà (*La Veu de Catalunya*, 1928-1933) (Lázaro and Salgado 2020, 200). We might also mention other women who pursued journalism professionally, such as Irene Polo, as well as women who sporadically wrote for cultural and informative media, such as Rosa Maria Aquimbau, Aurora Bertrana, Anna Murià, Maria Teresa Gibert, Ana Maria Martínez Sagi, Rafaela Ferro, Maria Pi de Folch, Mercè Rodoreda, Carmen Nicolau Masó, and Conxa Espinalt. Some of these authors' texts can be found in *Dones que surten del paper. Periodistes catalanes que expliquen un país* (Yeste and Canosa 2018).

²⁶⁷ [...] público lector, y por tanto, sujetos de una primera demanda de información que se consideraba específica para ellas, unas nuevas secciones con las que las publicaciones intentaban modernizarse y en las que se concentraría la discusión sobre feminismo que recorrió la prensa desde principios de siglo de forma intermitente y dispersa.

²⁶⁸ She dedicated herself to film criticism from 1923 to 1933 (Salgado de Dios and Lázaro 2019, 125).

²⁶⁹ As of 1933, she wrote theater criticism, her true passion in *La Vanguardia* (Albertí 2015, 37). Throughout her life, she wrote adaptations, even premiering a comedy in Bilbao, *Romance de media noche* (1936), which she wrote with her friend, the writer Elisabeth Mudler (Salgado de Dios and Lázaro 2019, 125).

²⁷⁰ We can find a reference to María Luz Morales's ties to Paramount in an article published in *Información cinematográfica: revista profesional*, titled "Banquete = homenaje al Director de 'Paramount Films' Don M.J. Messeri" (Autor/a 1931a, 7).

²⁷¹ An example of her texts for this magazine would be the article "Cecil B. De Mille. En torno al arte de hacer buenas películas" (Luz Morales 1934, 5).

²⁷² This is considered the first film magazine in Catalonia and Spain. In it, we may find an example of a text centered on women. In this text, María Luz Morales is early in noting something that film studies with the gender perspective have more recently focused on: statistics that show that, in the development of the film industry and box-office earnings, the first few decades of the twentieth century relied on women movie-goers. María Luz Morales writes: "The North American statistics documenting a weekly film-going public of 52 million people state, in the next line, that more than 75 percent of these people are women. Here, it is well known that no other art form has reached our little women the way that film does today. A film chronicle-writer from a highly reputable newspaper in Madrid took note of the fact that, when a beauty contest was held by a screening company in Madrid in order to discover movie stars, hundreds of women of all social classes attended" ["En nuestro país, como en todos los del mundo, el arte cinematográfico encuentra su mejor apoyo, su puntal más fuerte en la mujer. Como espectadoras igual

Cinema (1934-1936),²⁷³ *Cine Arte* (1934-1935),²⁷⁴ and *Cinema Amateur*, among others, mostly during the 1930s. In these texts, she wrote about film from a sociological perspective and addressed subjects relevant to women at the time, such as fashion, the role of women in film, women as movie stars, or women as audience members. We may also read some of her publications on certain key figures from the film world, such as actresses and film directors. The articles that she published in *La Vanguardia*, in the section “Vida cinematográfica” (“Cinematographic Life”), also focused on then-current events in the film field, such as the opening of new film clubs or the celebration of Film Day. She often wrote about the ups and downs of national production, too, reflecting upon and involving herself in its development. Her writing also shows plenty of interest in classics adapted for the screen. She frequently analysed newly released films, especially those by the big Hollywood producers. Yet, what is most interesting to us is that we may find certain texts that we might call theoretical in nature: Morales reflects upon the specificities of the seventh art, comparing film to theater and literature (besides film, the latter two arts would be the ones she held most dearly). She also wrote about the advent of sound film and the general development of the film industry.²⁷⁵

It might be safe to assume that she published many further translations, adaptations, and texts in other film journals, with these works still unidentified today not only due to the disinterest scholars showed for María Luz Morales, but also because her contributions have not been sufficiently addressed in the film field.²⁷⁶ One of the main reasons for this omission has to do with the idea that women were not active in the film field nor visible in the public sphere in the '20s, '30s, and '40s, unless they were actresses. A review of historical secondary literature as well as interviews with historians of cinema journals would heavily support this idea (Gubern 1999; Gibson 2013; Nieto Ferrando and Enrique Monterde 2018). María Luz Morales's role as a woman lecturer, journalist, leader of the film club movement, director of a film journal, and president of the Film Journalists Association (1928-1939)²⁷⁷ has neither been approached nor

que como intérpretes. Las estadísticas de Norteamérica que acusan una cifra de cincuenta y dos millones de espectadores por semana en los espectáculos cinematográficos, dicen, a reglón seguido, que más de un setenta y cinco por ciento son mujeres. Aquí, sabido es que ninguna forma del arte ha llegado hasta nuestra mujercitas como el cine llega hoy. El cronista cinematográfico de un reputadísimo periódico madrileño, toma nota del dato de que al abrir una empresa exhibidora de Madrid un certamen de belleza con el propósito de descubrir estrellas para la pantalla, han acudido a él varios centenares de muchachas de todas las clases sociales, ‘sin que los prejuicios, aún demasiado arcaicos que pesan sobre la mujer española, ni otros conceptos de índole educativa que la contienen, lo hayan podido evitar’”] (Morales 1926, 112–13).

²⁷³ We may find a text titled “Cabezas 1934-35,” authored by María Luz Morales (1934a, 12).

²⁷⁴ I found the following piece by María Luz Morales, “Ellos entre ellas” (1934b, 11-12).

²⁷⁵ For an in-depth analysis of Morales's texts on film in *La Vanguardia*, see Servén Díez (2013).

²⁷⁶ Likewise, the fact that women writers have historically used pen names in order to secure their texts' publication also impedes our ability to find their writings. I believe that the case of María Luz Morales can be read in terms of all the other women who used pen names for publication: she used the name Felipe Centeno to publish her film criticism in *La Vanguardia*. It is even likely that María Luz Morales published under other yet-unknown pen names, perhaps during the dictatorship, once she was released from prison.

²⁷⁷ In my understanding, she was expelled with the onset of the Spanish Civil War. Her work in this field included defending the development of the national industry, which she would allude to often in her writing on the Barcelona Film Club's functions. After announcing that the film club's main purpose was to showcase movies that hadn't been screened elsewhere, Morales explained the club's plans: “including

considered possible, despite the fact that she actually took on all these activities and events and earned great accolades for them. All reports I have found in historical journals recalling her talks, presentations, interventions, and work are very flattering, and she was highly praised by her colleagues and audiences. All of these reports remark upon her successes, especially in the film field.²⁷⁸

María Luz Morales was a cultural mediator par excellence (Roig-Sanz and Meylaerts 2018). María Luz Morales worked as writer, translator,²⁷⁹ journalist, film and theatre critic, editor for the publishing house she started (Surco), cultural advocate (given her role in the Barcelona Film Club), university professor for one of the first film courses in Spain, and as a literary professional in general, since she wrote several prefaces and adapted multiple novels, essays, and other literary works.²⁸⁰ Morales also worked with several languages (and probably spoke at least basic Galician), as we may glean from her translations. Besides Spanish and Catalan, she translated from the Portuguese, English, French, and Italian, having learned these languages throughout her extensive studies, as

small ‘amateur’ production, which we will especially focus on, and which—freed of all commercial ends as well as of any self-serving or self-aggrandizing purposes—might finally lead to a true and still undiscovered path for us” [“Los planes del Film Club incluyen también la pequeña producción ‘amateur’, a la cual se prestará especial atención, y que, desprendida de todo objeto comercial, así como de toda mira de lucimiento o medio individual, podría llevar, al fin, al verdadero y entre nosotros aun no hallado camino]” (Centeno 1930, 22). The “path” that she refers to in the text would be the one that Spanish and Catalan film needed to take in order to become art—a goal shared by most film clubs in the western world (Hagener 2007).

²⁷⁸ In 1973 she received the Ramón Godó Lallana prize for journalism (Cabré 2017, 57). In February of 1977, she received the Galeana prize from Radio Peninsular and Televisión de Barcelona for her dedication to the fashion world (Cabré 2017, 91). We may also measure her social recognition through the sheer number of times that she was a jury member for various prizes within the Barcelonan cultural field. Since 1960, she was part of the Carlos Lemos theater troupe, which would award the Margarita Xirgu prize to the best female performance every year (Cabré 2017, 90). She was also in the jury for the Aedos prize for biography that Editorial Selecta awarded (Cabré 2017, 111). In an unpublished interview with me, Román Gubern (Clariana-Rodagut 2020) explained that in the late ‘70s and early ‘80s [but no later than that because María Luz Morales died in September of 1980], he recalled having attended a celebration commemorating and recognising María Luz Morales’s work in the film field. As early as 1935, she was part of the jury that awarded the prize for the Associació de Cinema Amateur’s competition (Autor/a 1935a).

²⁷⁹ As Servén Díez has noted, her first translation (a co-translation with Zoé without a surname, a relative of Morales who lived with her in Barcelona) was published in 1920. Servén Díez notes that Zoé, an assiduous translation collaborator of Morales, may have been Morales’s cousin or aunt (Servén Díez 2016, 181). I have found a reference to Zoé Martínez in a press clipping in *La Vanguardia* (Autor/a 1935b, 10), in which Zoé is referred to as a cousin.

²⁸⁰ María Luz Morales wrote and translated highly successful romance novels in the Europe of the time, and she also translated classical texts from the English, French, Catalan, and Portuguese (Servén Díez 2016, 194). Likewise, she adapted various kinds of texts, such as from theater to literature (as with the works of the Álvarez Quintero brothers), and from literature to film (Servén Díez 2013, 275). She also created many children’s versions of classical literary texts (for Araluce publishing house). Likewise, she wrote many encyclopedic works on the home (Argo) and fashion (Salvat), as well as an illustrated history of the seventh art (Salvat). For Surco publishing house, which she founded, she translated English authors like Jane Austen alongside her cousin Zoé Ramírez but also on her own. She also earned acclaim as the translator for André Maurois. She translated love letters and their prologues, as well as encyclopedic works like *Diccionario de la belleza* (Auclair 1950). See Carmen Servén Díez (Servén Díez 2012a; 2016) on the literary production, adaptations, and translations of María Luz Morales.

Carmen Servén Díez notes (2016).²⁸¹ Besides transgressing linguistic barriers, she also overcame disciplinary and geographic ones. We also know that Morales wrote prolifically in the literary field, even confessing to being a secret poet. Likewise, she was a reputed theater and film critic. She was thus fully interdisciplinary artistically and culturally. As for geographic barriers, she mediated between the Galician, Spanish, and Catalan cultures that she inhabited, worked with, and defended throughout her lifetime. We might note her belonging to the Galleguista political party, which she had to renounce during Franco's dictatorship.²⁸² Indeed, Morales transgressed barriers even in the political field.

3.1.3.2 *María Luz Morales's Gender Perspective*

Apart from María Luz Morales's interest in the cinema field, I would like to underline her strides in the education and cultivation of women. In the Spain of the 1930s, initiatives dedicated to improving women's social position blossomed thanks to the emancipation movement that gained traction under the Second Spanish Republic (1931-1939). In Barcelona, we may point to the burgeoning of feminist journals (*Claror* 1935-1936, *Feminal* 1907-1917, *Bondat-Bonté* 1934) and conservative journals for women (*Gema. Revista femenina hispano-americana* 1929, *La Dona Catalana* 1925-1938), as well as the emergence of some cultural and educational institutions created by and for women (Club Femení d'Esports de Barcelona, Lyceum club, Residència de Senyoretas Estudiants, Centre de cultura de Dones Francesca Bonnemaison), along with women's sections in many political parties of the time (Secció Femenina partit regionalista, Acció Social Femenina, and Lliga Femenina Catalana per la Pau i la Llibertat). All of these institutions made up the network in which María Luz Morales participated alongside many other agents and agencies. Discussions around feminism and women's rights brought this network together, too. As such, in the 1930s, the discussion on feminism and women's suffrage entered the political field and the public domain. Groups of women who struggled for their rights transgressed disciplinary boundaries and not only took up activities in the cultural field, but also in the political one. At some point, in Catalonia, and probably in the rest of Spain as well, cultural institutions were pushed to align their activities with political parties (Real Mercadal 2006). When asked about this by a *La Vanguardia* journalist in an interview in 1972 Morales states: "I have never liked or felt

²⁸¹ As María Luz Morales writes regarding her work as a translator, on the topic of her relationship with Caterina Albert, "as paradoxical as it may sound, the transfer between 'two languages of one's own' is thornier than a simple version in one's own language, from a foreign one. There are, in any good translation, two elements that need to be balanced in the opposite code: the foreign language, which is understood and wielded objectively, and one's own, a beloved cup in which the foreign language must be poured." ["por paradójico que pueda parecer, es más espinoso el trasvase entre 'dos lenguas propias' que la simple versión a la lengua propia desde una lengua ajena. Son, en toda buena traducción, dos elementos los que han de equilibrarse bajo signo contrario: el idioma ajeno, conocido y manejado de modo objetivo, y el propio, vaso amado al que la lengua extraña ha de verterse"] (Morales and Cabré 2019, 165).

²⁸² On her interest in the Galician, the unpublished master thesis Doespiritusanto Gallego (2011) also has plenty to contribute. In an article published in *La Vanguardia*, «Conmemoración del 88 aniversario de los mártires de Carral» (1934) María Luz Morales is cited as having spoken "in the name of Galician women" ["en nombre de las mujeres gallegas"] (Autor/a 1934a, 8).

convinced by the concept of ‘the feminist.’ I believe that men and women, as humans, have the right to work in whatever realm they’ve been gifted in. But of ‘isms,’ not another word. No feminism, no masculinism. [Just] Men and women, people, as God has made us” (Comín 1972, 41).²⁸³ However, in today’s understanding of feminism, her actions do not line up with her declarations, as she actually worked on the frontlines of some of the aforementioned institutions, showing, through her work, that women would not be boxed within limited roles.

Before approaching María Luz Morales’s work within two key institutions for and by women, we should consider her position on feminism as well as the sociocultural space that these kinds of institutions held in the Barcelona of the 1930s. As Salgado de Dios and Lázaro note, María Luz Morales’s position on feminism can be defined as “conservative and republican, with a clearly reflexive and intellectual vision of social reality”²⁸⁴ (2019, 132). In her writing, María Luz Morales criticised the aggressiveness of “protest feminism” (“feminismo reivindicativo”) (Salgado de Dios and Lázaro 2019, 119), which she viewed as egotistical since it did not bring men and women together but only considered women’s needs. Morales believed that women were not to abandon their traditional domestic tasks but were to broaden their cultural knowledge and take up more space in society. María Luz Morales defended this quest to improve women’s culture in her discourse and practice. In her view, this would only benefit society and would prove fundamental for women to stay abreast of the times. She thus encouraged women to participate in cultural and social initiatives that would further their education and their abilities to make a social and cultural impact on their immediate surroundings.

The idea was to have the courage to change the role of women in society while underscoring the need to freely access education, culture, and the public space. At the time, these values were viewed as deep social changes that could be classified as republican, as long as they upheld an idea of femininity that essentially comprised of giving oneself [to others]²⁸⁵ (Salgado de Dios and Lázaro 2019, 130).

This discourse on the role of women in society was in fact articulated through the concept of maternal love, as associated with tenderness, dedication, and giving oneself to others, as Nash describes it (Nash 1996a). The domestic was the realm of women par excellence and implied submission to men, who occupied the public space and who were considered prototype citizens. The submission of women was based on women’s alleged dependence on the social and moral superiority of men. Although María Luz Morales did

²⁸³ The original: “a mí, el concepto de ‘lo feminista’ nunca me ha gustado ni convencido. Creo que hombres y mujeres, como seres humanos, tienen derecho a trabajar en aquello para lo que se sientan dotados. Pero ‘los ismos’, ¡ni hablar! Ni feminismo, ni masculinismo. Hombres y mujeres, personas, como Dios nos ha hecho”.

²⁸⁴ “conservador y republicano, marcado por una visión reflexiva e intelectual de la realidad social.”

²⁸⁵ “Se trata de tener la valentía de cambiar el papel social de las mujeres y reclamar la necesidad de acceder libremente a la educación, a la cultura y al espacio público, valores que se intuían en esos tiempos de profundos cambios sociales y que se podrían clasificar como propios del republicanismo, pero siempre que se confirme una feminidad cuya esencia es, antes que nada, darse.”

not defend feminism in most of her texts,²⁸⁶ her practice aligned with that of the modern woman. The modern white Western woman was more independent than ever before, and had the ability to think, vote, and work. In fact, after the First World War, education and work had become socially accepted and permitted for women, but only up until they married (Nash 1996b, 43), at which point they were to tend to their families. Yet, María Luz Morales did not marry or have children, and she would dedicate her entire life to her professional career, leading her male colleagues to state that she was a man inside a woman's body. Indeed, María Luz Morales's practice reflected her political position on the role that, in her view, women were to occupy in society—a perspective that aligned with the Catalan feminism of the 1930s, as noted by Mary Nash:

The development of the Catalan women's movement clearly shows its ascription to gender codes of conduct and the codes of domesticity (Nash 1993) [...] it came to question one of the basic paradigms of gender codes of conduct – women's relegation to the domestic arena of the home – and to claim women's rights in civil society, in the fields of education and paid work (Nash 1996b, 47).

As per Nash (1996b), as of the 1930s, the women's movement in Catalonia became anchored in conservative Catalan nationalism and Catholic tradition,²⁸⁷ with the women's movement forged in the early twentieth century, in the context of the political and cultural struggle between the Central Spanish State and Catalonia. Thus, according to the author, the goals of the Catalan women's emancipation movement in the 1930s also focused on the subject of cultural identity,²⁸⁸ as well as on the political rights of women. This movement proved somewhat contradictory, as it sought to meld together the traditionalist values of Catalan nationalism²⁸⁹ with the struggle for the social emancipation of women. Catalan feminism was especially concerned with women's access to education and to paid work, explaining the importance of educational, professionally oriented institutions created for women, such as the Lyceum club de

²⁸⁶ Yet, she did extol certain values that had not yet been attributed to women, such as their scientific and educational abilities (Salgado de Dios and Lázaro 2019, 127). She also decried certain injustices faced by women. In her text on Molière, she rails against the wrongs that the female characters in his texts face.

²⁸⁷ Salgado de Dios and Lázaro (2019) posit that María Luz Morales's feminism may have been conservative but not Catholic, as she encouraged women to occupy new social spaces. Still, following Mary Nash's understanding of Catalan feminism, Morales's proposal could likely be considered within the ideals of the Catholic social reform movement.

²⁸⁸ In her pioneering *Estudi Feminista* (1909), Dolors Monserdà wrote that women were the "guardians of cultural heritage and the key to socialising future and traditions [...] they were key agents in the construction of Catalan society through their work, their transmission of Catalan culture, and the future development of Catalonia through their gender role in the family" (Nash 1996b, 48).

²⁸⁹ Given that María Luz Morales was of Galician origin and spoke Spanish as a first language, she must have felt herself at an impasse. In fact, we may find several instances of her being made fun of for speaking Spanish at her presentations, but also for her efforts to speak Catalan at other public appearances (Ferran i Coromines 1929, 4). Despite her not being Catalan by birth or culturally, her affiliation to the Galician party most likely earned her a certain degree of sympathy, allowing her to position herself in an intermediate space, as a cultural mediator. Regarding her participation in Galician affairs, we may find certain mentions of María Luz Morales's public appearance at events organised by the Grupo Galleguista de Barcelona in the press (Autor/a 1933a, 10). In another article published on the following year's iteration of the event, María Luz Morales is cited as having spoken "in the name of Galician women" ["en nombre de las mujeres gallegas"] (Autor/a 1934a).

Barcelona.²⁹⁰ Promoting education and paid work among unmarried or single women exclusively would allow for women to maintain their responsibilities in terms of domestic work and family affairs. Thus, the quest to improve the educational and cultural status of women was not seen as defying traditional roles but rather as a step toward embodying the “New Modern Woman” (Nash 1993; 1996a), with the need to defend the proper socialization and education for children.²⁹¹ As Nash notes (1996b, 50) the education movement had its origin in the upper and middle classes, with their efforts geared toward the working classes,²⁹² aligning with the ideals of the Catholic social reform movement. We might read María Luz Morales’s role in the *Residència Internacional de Senyorettes Estudiants* and the *Lyceum club de Barcelona* in this tenor.²⁹³

Likewise, we should reiterate that the white and Western women who wrote for cultural publications in the first few decades of the twentieth century gradually began to take up space in general.²⁹⁴ María Luz Morales stands as a prime example of this. As we will see later on, the writer participated in numerous public events, not only as an individual, given the relevance she held in her sociocultural (national and local) environment, but also as the representative of many institutions and social groups. In press reports, we may find many references to her public appearances, which peaked right before the dictatorship. Though kept in the shadows for that dark period, she reclaimed her

²⁹⁰ Likewise, Nash (1996b, 49) refers to the official school system’s failure to adapt to the new needs of half of the population. This weakness in the public system would lead to the constitution of private educational and cultural institutions spearheaded by women themselves.

²⁹¹ As Mary Nash notes, Pardo Bazán would write about the education of women in 1892, proclaiming that it should not be called education but taming, with the goal of cultivating obedience, passivity, and submission (Pardo Bazán edited in 1976, cited by Nash (1996b, 50)).

²⁹² Between 30 and 40 percent of urban and rural Catalan women were illiterate in the 1930’s (Cortada Andreu 1988, p. 46, cited by Nash (1996b, 50). Salgado de Dios and Lázaro (2019) note that the rate towered at 47.5 percent in the early ’30s (Altés 2007, 28).

²⁹³ Neus Real Mercadal has framed the *Lyceum Club de Barcelona* as part of a leftist, Catalanist political project in opposition to the right wing institutions for women that also started being organised before the proclamation of the Second Spanish Republic (Real Mercadal 2006, 239). Likewise, the author writes that the *Lyceum club* divested itself of any kind of political orientation that would limit its goal of improving the culture and education of women. The author also highlights the left and the right’s vying for control over feminism, a struggle that could not extricate itself from the political battles on the national level. The *Lyceum’s* effort to divest itself of politics was, in Real Mercadal’s view, what allowed it to become one of the most long-lasting institutions of its kind in Barcelona (2006, 223).

²⁹⁴ Mary Nash notes this as well: “In this way they questioned the boundaries that restricted gender norms of female activity to the private sphere. They created new spaces for women that were socially defined through gender roles and constructed through the development of national cultural identity in its definition of feminism. Throughout the early 20th century most of the leaders of the Catalan women’s movement were married. Nonetheless, they did not espouse the gender model of domesticity as angels of the home and did not stay in the kingdom of the home, but, rather, occupied significant positions in the public arena. Women such as Dolors Monserdà, Francesca Bonnemaison, Carme Karr, and Rosa Sensat were acknowledged figures in the fields of culture, education, Catholic reform, and social welfare. Although they did not challenge male hierarchy and many gender norms, they did not accept the separation of public and private spheres and women’s confinement to the domestic domain” (1996b, 51–52).

relevance in the mid-'50s, once she was released from the prison where the Franco regime incarcerated her.²⁹⁵

3.1.3.3 *María Luz Morales: Residència Internacional de Senyoretas Estudiantis (RISE) and the Lyceum club*

a) **Residència Internacional de Senyoretas Estudiantis**

One example of how María Luz Morales occupied the public space may be observed in her 1931 foundation and subsequent leading of the Residència Internacional de Senyoretas Estudiantis of the Generalitat de Catalunya, in the Pedralbes Palace. The Residència Internacional de Senyoretas Estudiantis (Residencia Internacional de Señoritas Estudiantes) was constituted in 1931, at the same time as its affiliated cultural association, the Lyceum club in Barcelona.²⁹⁶ Both of these Catalan institutions espoused similar ideologies to the Residencia de Señoritas and Lyceum club Femenino in Madrid. The Madrid Lyceum club started operations five years before its Barcelona counterpart (1926), while the Residencia de Señoritas opened in Madrid in 1915. All of the former institutions, in Madrid and Barcelona, closed their doors at the onset of the Spanish Civil War, between 1936 and 1937. But before then, in the pre-war context, these organisations had brought together distinguished women of the cultural field. In Barcelona, such women have enjoyed little analysis (we might mention Aurora Bertrana) or have been completely ignored (as with María Luz Morales, Enriqueta Sèculi, and Maria Carratalà). We have not even been able to find basic information (year of birth and death, or profession) on many of the women who founded or participated in these initiatives. This stands in contrast to the Madrid institutions, which have in fact been the subject of writing and analysis.²⁹⁷ On the Lyceum Club de Barcelona, we know for a fact that María Luz Morales was one of its founders (Real Mercadal 2006, 229). In any case, there is no systematic list of the Barcelona Lyceum club's activities available,²⁹⁸ nor is there a list of the women, beyond the organisers and founding members, who participated in this institution or in the Residència Internacional de Senyoretas

²⁹⁵ Here, I will list some of the events that were reviewed in various newspapers of the time, explicitly naming María Luz Morales as a participant or speaker: "Larra, cien años después" (Autor/a 1938, 4), "Almuerzo en honor a Mr. John Langdon-Davies" (Autor/a 1936b, 5), "Concurso para elegir a la 'Shirley Temple' española" (Autor/a 1936a, 14), "Eva y el espejo publicitario" (Autor/a 1936c, 8), "Primera Feria del Libro" (Autor/a 1937, 2), "Los V Juegos Florales de Horta" (Autor/a 1936d, 7), and "El Gran Escenario del Libro" (Autor/a 1934b, 13). I have only cited a few of the copious events that reference María Luz Morales's participation.

²⁹⁶ Among the Lyceum club activities in which María Luz Morales was the main speaker, we may cite the following: "Lectura del nou llibre de María Luz Morales" (Autor/a 1933c, 2), "Tercera lectura de María Luz Morales sobre su obra" (Autor/a 1932e, 5), "Larra y el Romanticismo español" (Autor/a 1932d, 12), "Encuentro de Don Quijote y Sancho" (Autor/a 1932c, 4), "Teatre espanyol antic" (Autor/a 1932b, 5), "A través del Romancero" (Autor/a 1932a, 5), "Lectura de fragmentos por María Luz Morales" (Autor/a 1933b, 11), and "Lecciones sobre literatura castellana" (Autor/a 1931d, 8). I am only citing a few of the references to María Luz Morales's participation in the Lyceum club de Barcelona.

²⁹⁷ See Shirley Mangini (2006); Aguilera Sastre (2011); González Naranjo (2018).

²⁹⁸ There is an existing list of the Lyceum club de Madrid's activities (González Naranjo 2018).

Estudians.²⁹⁹ We have thus taken up the task of listing the members of the Lyceum club de Barcelona as well as their professional information when available—as we only have partial information that has yet to be corroborated (ser Annex 2 and 3).³⁰⁰ I believe it fundamental to make this information public, not only for future research, but also to cast light on the lack of basic information on certain key actors.

For an affordable monthly fee (150 pesetas for first year students), the student residence aimed to promote university education for women and provide accommodations for students. Since its beginnings (1915), the residence in Madrid was led by the pedagogue María de Maeztu.³⁰¹ Both residences also lodged many extraordinary women who travelled to Madrid or Barcelona to give lectures, as well as some with invitations from educational government institutions or the Junta para la Ampliación de Estudios (JAE)³⁰² located in Madrid, and others still who were simply travelling around Spain. Some of these relevant women would include Emilia Bernal, Marie Curie³⁰³ and Gabriela Mistral,³⁰⁴ last two of whom would leave their mark on María Luz Morales, who wrote about them with great sensibility in her book on illustrious figures, *Alguien a quien conocí* (2019).³⁰⁵

b) The Lyceum Club

Meanwhile, the Lyceum Club Femenino, located in Madrid, was the first secular cultural institution created by and for women in Spain, opening its doors in 1926. Under the umbrella of a transnational initiative spearheaded by Constance Smedley in London in 1903, the Spanish Lyceum clubs organised conferences, courses, concerts, plays, and lectures. The Lyceum Club organised also screenings and housed a myriad of political events, such as formal petitions, fundraising for political goals, etc. Many Spanish intellectual women who were active during the first decades of the twentieth century took part in the Lyceum club's activities in Madrid. Some of them were translators (such

²⁹⁹ Some of the activities organised by these institutions, and the people associated to them, have been available in the [dataset](#) that supports the visualisation on María Luz Morales that I will mention further on. Yet, this is not an exhaustive list, as our main object of study is María Luz Morales and not the institutions and their associated persons and events. In any case, I believe this to be a valuable first approach that may serve future research.

³⁰⁰ Neus Real Mercadal (2006, 229, 234) lists most of the Lyceum club's members and their responsibilities. Likewise, we have found an account of them in an article in *La Vanguardia* (Autor/a 1931c, 8).

³⁰¹ María Luz Morales would enjoy a very good lifelong relationship with her.

³⁰² Council for Further Scientific Study and Research.

³⁰³ María Luz Morales travelled to Madrid at the request of María de Maeztu, to act as Marie Curie's guide (in April of 1931), while Curie stayed at the Residencia de Estudiantes de Madrid. One of Curie's qualities that María Luz Morales wrote about was her humility and her refusal to talk about feminism, which Morales would also refuse to do (Salgado de Dios and Lázaro 2019, 131) citing Morales (Morales 1934c, 3).

³⁰⁴ After their meeting, Morales and Gabriela Mistral kept in touch through their correspondence. The nobel-prize winning Gabriela Mistral's interest in collaborating with María Luz Morales in the publication of a collective book of poetry by Hispano-American authors is worth noting (Morales and Cabré 2019).

³⁰⁵ For more information on the Residencia de Señoritas in Madrid's work, see *La Residencia de Estudiantes* (Pérez-Villanueva Tovar 1990). We still lack research on the residence's counterpart in Barcelona.

as Zenobia Camprubí, who was part of the directive committee), pedagogues (as with Isabel Oyarzábal, who was also part of the directive committee), lawyers and politicians (such as Victoria Kent, also part of the directive committee, and Clara Campoamor), writers and poets (such as María Teresa León, María de la O Lejárraga, Elena Fortún, and Ernestina Champourcín), and artists (such as Maruja Mallo and Victorina Duran), with a total of around 400 members (Aguilera Sastre 2011). The Lyceum club in Barcelona organised similar functions to those in Madrid. We have only been able to trace one film screening, that of *La vida empieza* (1932) at cine Fémina on March 21, 1934.³⁰⁶ Notably, another activity that the Lyceum club in Barcelona organised, and that I believe is worth highlighting, was Aurora Bertrana's conference "El nostre feminisme" (Our feminism) on October 15, 1931 (Real Mercadal 2006, 229).³⁰⁷ On the functions that the Lyceum club organised in Barcelona, Neus Real notes that they involved several fields, including politics, law, hygiene, economic and moral sociology, feminism, art, literature, Catalan grammar, and even dressmaking, decor, and domestic-chore organisation.

From 1931 to 1936, besides theater soirées, the club also organised concerts, conferences, short courses, monthly conversation circles, and, somewhat anecdotally (but still significantly), cultural teas. Its functions also included dance and music recitals, educational visits, film sessions, homages, and exhibitions (paintings, photography, and artisanship), as well as public readings of still unpublished Catalan texts and literary commentary³⁰⁸ (2006, 229–30).

Despite the club's goals, the breadth of its functions, and the ample participation of women in all of them, Mercadal notes that the institution did not manage to overcome the failures and problems it faced (2006). The political and social situation did not favor the club, while the little time it enjoyed (given the outbreak of the war) and its members' inexperience in certain fields explain why their success was rather measured. Yet, like Real Mercadal notes, there was unquestionable success regarding the club's capacity to attract a public of "very avant-garde character, heterogeneous politics, all under the sigil of the modern"³⁰⁹ (Real Mercadal 2006, 244).³¹⁰ From a gender perspective, I believe

³⁰⁶ The original title is: *Life Begins* (1932, James Flood). To say the least, this moralistic and rather conservative Hollywood-style film of the time praises motherhood as the greatest value and as being more important than any of the potential needs of the mothers portrayed in the film.

³⁰⁷ On Aurora Bertrana's participation in the Lyceum club de Barcelona, we must highlight that this writer's objective in founding the Lyceum club was to create a worker's university for women, which the Lyceum club would never come to embody. Though the club members didn't ever ignore the needs of society, as Neus Real notes (2006, 249) citing Amanda Llebot in *La Publicitat* (September 12, 1931), they were not as interested in poor people as Bertrana probably would have liked. Real Mercadal believes the Lyceum Club de Barcelona's quest for social impact could have been positively attained if it hadn't been for the sociopolitical circumstances that changed the institution's direction in 1934 (Real Mercadal 2006, 249).

³⁰⁸ "Entre 1931 i 1936, i al costat de les vetllades teatrals, es van succeir els concerts, les conferències, els cursets, les tertúlies mensuals i, significativament tot i que de manera anecdòtica, els tes culturals; o els recitals de música i dansa, les visites educatives, les sessions cinematogràfiques, els homenatges i les exposicions (pictòriques, fotogràfiques i artesanals), les lectures públiques de textos inèdits per part d'escriptors i escriptors catalans i els comentaris literaris."

³⁰⁹ "[...] amplia vanguardia políticamente heterogénea, conjuntamente abanderada bajo el signo de una modernidad."

³¹⁰ Neus Real also cites Maria Teresa Gibert, who, in 1933, wrote that: "In our land, we cannot ignore that there's a rich and interesting intellectual nucleus; to ignore it would be to deny an evident fact, as well as an injustice to all of our peers who have taken on remarkable feats in terms of novels, journalism, and

that the Lyceum club's ability to attract such a public justifies our interest in this initiative and is a strong enough basis for us to read it as part of a certain feminist current. Indeed, the fact that the Lyceum club in Barcelona could bring together women of such different ideals—with leftist feminists like the writer Aurora Bertrana as well as conservative, Catholic ones like María Luz Morales—is a mark of this initiative's success. Thus, I believe that despite the fact that it was short-lived, with its many political differences and tragic end, this institution played a pioneering sociocultural role that would become a model of collaboration among women.

María Luz Morales's involvement in the RISE, over which she presided, is key to understanding her. Notably, Morales also took on the vice-presidency of the Lyceum Club of Barcelona (Real Mercadal 2006, 229). Both institutions were international by design. The residence for young women's Madrid headquarters forged close ties to other institutions for women aimed at international young ladies, such as the International Institute for Girls in Boston, with both institutions arranging student exchanges among them (Hurtado Díaz 2001, 136–37). We have yet to explore the transnational relationships forged through these Barcelonan institutions. But we might venture to outline them by taking a closer look at María Luz Morales. In Madrid and Barcelona, the Lyceum Club hosted talks as well as a wide variety of cultural activities organised by recognised women in the international intellectual and cultural field.

María Luz Morales worked arduously at these institutions. She not only managed them (as a vice-president and founder) but also organised functions and gave classes and conferences. Yet, in my view, her most important task was her mediation in and support of transnational networks of exchange and collaboration. These networks were what gave these institutions their historical relevance. María Luz Morales's central positions in such diverse fields as literature, culture, film, and theater allowed her to translate her social and symbolic capital from one field to the other, simultaneously lending these networks more cohesion. This mediation also transferred certain topics and practices from one space to another. For instance, the topics of suffragism and the rights of women discussed at the Lyceum club may have travelled to other more artistic and intellectual fields. Meanwhile, her work as a woman (and sometimes as the only woman) in film criticism, journalism, playwriting,³¹¹ adaptation, and film presenting may have also been transferred to other environments, with her pioneering practices reaching other institutions for women. The only screening organised by Lyceum club de Barcelona that we have been able to find in the press most likely involved María Luz Morales.

conferences, besides many other social activities, a model of organisations and children of the noblest efforts" ["En la nostra terra no podem desconèixer que hi ha un nucli femení intel·lectual nodrit i interessant; no reconèixer-ho seria negar una cosa evident, i a més una injustícia que fariem a moltes de les nostres companyes que han assolit èxits remarcables en la novel·la, el periodisme i la conferència, a part de moltes altres activitats socials, model d'organització i fills d'un esforç noblíssim"] (Real Mercadal 2006, 244).

³¹¹ In "María Luz Morales y la promoción de la lectura femenina en la Edad de Plata," Carmén Servén Díez notes that though María Luz Morales is commonly believed to be the screenwriter of *L'espoir* (André Malraux and Boris Peskine 1940), there is no available documentation on the matter. Yet, Servén Díez writes that Morales was in charge of adapting her novel *Tres fines de semana* (which Morales wrote using the pen name Laura Nogales in 1945), for the film *El amor empieza en sábado* (Victorio Aguado 1958).

3.1.3.4 An Ego Network of María Luz Morales's Feminist and Cultural Relations

In this section, as with the one on the other case studies, I will conduct certain methodological reflections using visualisations in order to draw my conclusions. The [visualisation](#) draws from the relationships that María Luz Morales cultivated through her cultural activities. The idea that I am putting forward is that a network of agents and agencies within the cultural world (Latour 2005) was brought together through direct or indirect ties to María Luz Morales. By direct relationship I am referring to that of agents or agencies that shared the same space-time or had some kind of tie to Morales, either because they coincided at an event, participated in the same magazine, or were members of the same institution. By indirect relationship I am referring to the potential relationships between agents and agencies that may have coincided thanks to other agents and agencies that mediated between them. For instance, if María Luz Morales were to give a conference at Ateneu Barcelonès, before she became its official spokesperson, then I would describe her relationship with another agent who gave a conference at Ateneu Barcelonès as indirect. In this network, I especially seek to highlight the women surrounding María Luz Morales, with the goal of generating a network of women cultural mediators and shining light on their role within the cultural field.

In this [visualisation](#), María Luz Morales is situated as a cultural mediator. As Roig-Sanz and Meylaerts (2018) propose, this concept can be applied to agents situated on the so-called “peripheries.” Thus, I am recasting this concept by applying it to another minoritised collective, namely, women. Furthermore, in María Luz Morales we have an agent who is also situated in a peripheral space—the Spanish state—at a time when the artistic and cinematographic avant-garde was generally located in major European capitals like Paris, Berlin, and London. Here, in considering María Luz Morales as a mediator, we strategically avoid comparing her to her male colleagues, which would downplay her importance because the parameters used for comparison would undervalue her work. For instance, we might consider the distinctions between the public and private space described by Jurgen Habermas (1989): the relevance of historical figures has generally been measured according to their public appearances in hegemonic spaces. In this sense, women are often kept in the shadows, confined to the domestic space. When they have participated in public spaces, as María Luz Morales did, such spaces have not tended to be considered hegemonic (Arendt 2005), but minoritised. Consequently, their work has not been recognised (sometimes given women’s use of pseudonyms, or because their work has been attributed to their husbands, brothers, or fathers) or has not been revisited in historiography because it is not seen as containing value (as with the translations, adaptations, and other works by María Luz Morales). On other occasions, the work that women have carried out has involved mediation and management (such as of a film club’s functions), rather than speaking and presenting. Thus, such work has also been undervalued, too. It is in the latter sense that considering women under the prism of cultural mediation—that is, as figures who allow for the meeting between two distinct clusters of any kind (being fields

or institutions, or groups of people) through their social and cultural activities (in this case through cultural institutions for film or for women)—showcases their importance at the historical level. María Luz Morales took part in multiple cultural networks and served as a nodal point within them, given her role as founder, director, president, and participant. Specifically, I would like to highlight her cultural enterprises in the film field as well as in the field of women’s education and cultivation. From this standpoint, I would argue that her character as a mediator stems from her nodal position in film and feminist networks. In this sense, I believe she transferred her knowledge from one field to another and played a relevant role in both fields.³¹²

Although María Luz Morales was a public figure who conquered the public space like few other women of the time, I believe there are other factors that we should consider regarding the position of women in the social space so that we might better understand the case of María Luz Morales. Considering María Luz Morales as a cultural mediator allows us to introduce social relationships as relevant elements to mediation, thus overcoming the idea that relationships are of little interest to history. As we know, women have historically been relegated to the private sphere, and when their relationships are built at the personal level, only sometimes can we find ways to trace them. Indeed, an example of this is the fact that María Luz Morales’s relationships within the cultural field, and her ties to some of the most relevant personalities of the time, are located within the somewhat autobiographical book titled *Alguien a quien conocí* (Morales and Cabré 2019). In the book, Morales pays homage to the impact of personally having met Gabriela Mistral, Marie Curie, Caterina Albert, Hermann Keyserling, and Federico García Lorca. The book presents itself as a tribute of sorts in which personal relationships come off as more significant than professional ones. This does not mean that these personal relationships did not lead to professional ones, or that personal affinity didn’t sometimes emanate from shared professional interests. While Morales presents herself with humility, if we read closely, we will find that Caterina Albert, Lorca, and Mistral complemented and valued her work profusely, explicitly expressing their willingness to collaborate with her.

a) Social Network derived from María Luz Morales³¹³

For the network analysis I am conducting here, instead of using the quantitative tools of Social Network Analysis, I am undertaking a qualitative analysis using network-shaped data visualisations. This will allow us to visually grasp a vast amount of data that would be hard to appreciate otherwise. When it comes to working with historical data on women specifically, data visualisations allow us to empirically show the position that they occupied in certain fields such as in the fields of culture and education. Furthermore, visualisations also allow us to understand nodes in relation to each other. We might thus [visually](#) appreciate the scope of the transnational networks of the women

³¹² Though I initially had used the term “pioneer” to describe María Luz Morales and her work in mediating between two fields, Kiki Loveday’s (2022) criticism of the term has led me to reconsider it and to portray María Luz Morales using other concepts.

³¹³ The data for the [visualisation](#) is available in the following DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34810/data977>.

under analysis. Historical figures have generally been studied within their given disciplines and national histories. This makes it difficult to understand the relationships that such figures may have enjoyed outside of their main disciplines (such as with translation, editing, or journalism, in María Luz Morales's case), or beyond the borders of the countries where they lived (in terms of María Luz Morales's relationships to key European and Latin American intellectuals, for instance). Working with social networks will allow us to transgress all of these borders and understand María Luz Morales in a more comprehensive way. This data [visualisation](#) on Morales will allow us to focus our attention on the relationships, clusters, and nodes that we deem the most important within the network. The [visualisation](#) stands as yet another tool available to us, allowing us to conduct a more focalized qualitative analysis of the points that are of most interest to us within the social network.

In the [visualisation](#), I aim to empirically show what I have explained. The data you see as a graph here constitutes María Luz Morales's social network, composed mainly of her relationships in the film field and in the two cultural institutions created by and for women in Barcelona that I have mentioned, Lyceum club and Residència Internacional de Senyoretas Estudiantes. Any event—that I have found in the press—or institution she participated in is retraced, and the people whom she met (or might have met) or knew because of these activities are partially retraced here as well. I say “partially” because I have not sufficiently researched all of them; the data are extracted from lists of people who participated in the activities or of people related to said institutions.³¹⁴ However, I did not research their specific forms of participation individually.

As I stated earlier, we have prioritised María Luz Morales's relationships in the film field and in spaces reserved for women. Here, we may appreciate the direct and indirect relationships that she maintained with different personalities of the time thanks to her participation in the aforementioned cultural institutions and their functions. Likewise, we have introduced basic data from María Luz Morales's biography, naming the publishing houses and magazines in which she participated. For the purpose of visualisation, we have highlighted the presence of women in marine blue, showing María Luz Morales's importance as a driving force of this women's film culture. Indeed, María Luz Morales would prove a role model for the women who, like her, participated in these institutions created by and for women. Using this network, I believe it of great value to highlight the breadth of the ties that María Luz Morales maintained across multiple fields. Without a doubt, her occupying of these positions allowed her to translate her practices, knowledge, and social and symbolic capital from one field to the other.

The space that the Lyceum club Femenino in Madrid, its members, and its activities occupy within the visual is quite striking. As I've already noted, this institution has enjoyed enough analysis so that we now have a list of its affiliates (Aguilera Sastre 2011, 65–90). In the visualisation, this Madrid-based institution would appear to be far larger than Lyceum club de Barcelona.³¹⁵ Yet we cannot prove this, since we lack the data to

³¹⁴ Most of the data come from primary sources, newspaper, and magazines of the time.

³¹⁵ This research contributes something novel in this sense, as it is one of the first investigations to address this topic, albeit indirectly. The list of the Lyceum club de Barcelona's activities that are available in the published [dataset](#) is the first piece of archival research to be published on the topic.

introduce the names of all of the Barcelona club's members and associates (besides the names introduced in the Annex 3). Still, I believe that it is important for us to include the Madrid Lyceum club's participants in this visual, since María Luz Morales had very close ties to them. It was through this club that Morales broadened her network of relationships from the cultural field to the transnational realm. Likewise, we have found that magazines played a very important role in the reconstruction of this network, especially given María Luz Morales's ample participation in them and the fact that magazines constituted, in and of themselves, fundamental spaces of socialization within the cultural field of the time. In contrast, we may note that the institutions created around the film field do not appear to have ties to other nodes, like *Films Selectos*, which just has two ties, one with Morales and the other one with Tomás Gutiérrez Larraya, Catalan painter and writer who was the journal's director. There is a lack of data on these institutions and magazines, since, in the cultural field, film has enjoyed far less study than other art forms, like literature. If we were to review the people who also wrote for film magazines, this network would grow, as it would include more agents whom we have not accounted for, who had contact with María Luz Morales thanks to their mutual interest in film.³¹⁶

In sum, in the [visualisation](#) we may see María Luz Morales at the center and appreciate her role as a cultural mediator who tied together different disciplines and cultural fields. Through this visual, we may also take note of the ample social network that our protagonist boasted in the Barcelonan cultural field. Together, these two conditions place her as a creator of women audiences for (but not limited to) a field that was slowly gaining institutionalisation—namely, the film field.

In this [visualisation](#), I would like to highlight María Luz Morales's relationship to Caterina Albert (Víctor Català), as the latter would put Morales in contact with the reputable newspaper *El Sol* in Madrid. Another relevant relationship is that of María Luz and Concha Espina, a writer who enjoyed ample recognition in the early twentieth century—but then aligned with Franco's dictatorship. At the transnational level, we might highlight Morales's relationships with Gabriela Mistral (Vicuña, Chile 1889 - New York, United States 1957) and Victoria Ocampo (Buenos Aires, Argentina 1890 - Beccar, Argentina 1979), with the latter mediated by another key figure in Morales's network, María de Maeztu. In fact, Maeztu expressly invited Morales to Madrid when Ocampo visited, so that Morales could attend Ocampo's talks and meet her in Madrid. Meanwhile, Mistral not only stayed in Madrid but would also stay at RISE in Barcelona, where she coincided with Morales, forging an intense friendship that would thrive through correspondence. Likewise, with this [visualisation](#), another figure come to the fore—María Domènech Escoté—a person who appears close to María Luz Morales but who would likely be totally ignored in history if it weren't for this visualisation. María Domènech Escoté was a Catalan writer and unionist who advocated for the rights of working women. Domènech Escoté coincided with María Luz Morales at several institutions (such as at Instituto de Cultura and Biblioteca Popular de la Mujer), events (like in the homage to Concepción Arenal as well as in a conference cycle), and publications (like *La Veu de Catalunya* and *Gema. Revista femenina hispano-americana*).

³¹⁶ In any case, as with the Lyceum club de Barcelona, this is the first time that the Barcelona Film Club's activities are being reviewed—albeit partially—in academic research.

In order to determine the value of her social relationships, we would also have to trace the agents who had ties to her so that we might understand the scope of her social network and the interrelationships between agents and agencies beyond their ties to María Luz Morales alone.

Likewise, at the transnational level, to gauge the scope of María Luz Morales's relationships, we would have to trace the networks of key agents with whom she enjoyed a relationship, such as the aforementioned Victoria Ocampo and Gabriela Mistral. It was through them that María Luz Morales accessed a much broader transnational cultural circle than the one shown in this network. Caterina Albert's case functions similarly, but at the regional level, while Concha Espina or María de Maeztu operates this way nationally.

Despite the limited data available on the film field, we must take note of its appearance in Morales's ego network, as our agent of focus's ample network was fundamental to the institutionalisation of said field (Bourdieu 1992). The little institutionalisation of the film field is reflected in the visualisation through the redundant connectivity between agents. That is, we may see the names of the members of different institutions showing up repeatedly across various institutions. For instance, we may observe certain members of the Barcelona Film Club (1929), such as Carles Soldevila: he was an active member of the film club, of *Sesions Mirador* and its magazine (*Mirador*), and of the Conferentia Club (where María Luz Morales gave a talk titled "Viaje sentimental a través de las cartas de amor"), while he also stood among the founding and management committee of RISE. We might likewise look to critic Guillermo Díaz-Plaja, a friend of Morales and film club-goer with whom Morales would give the first course on film at a Spanish university (*La Vanguardia* 1932), sharing the stage at many public events.

Using the network as a tool to investigate María Luz Morales and her relationship to film has allowed us to trace certain practices that, through her, were transmitted from one field to another, and from one scale of analysis (local, national, or transnational) to another. In this sense, the mediation between fields and cultures emerges as highly relevant to our analysis of María Luz Morales, who encouraged new practices and stood as a model for other women—which was key to the institutionalisation of a women's film culture. For instance, she participated as a leader and spokesperson for the first film club in Barcelona to be recognised by the intellectuals of the time and the press (the Barcelona Film Club), taught the first film course at a Spanish university, worked at key institutions within the film field (such as Paramount Spain's delegation and the Agrupación de Escritores Cinematográficos), directed a magazine in the field (Paramount Spain's magazine) and published op-eds, criticism, and theorizations on the film medium in specialised film magazines as well as in more general publications (like *La Vanguardia*). All of these practices that were associated to the film field were uncommon among the women of María Luz Morales's time and context. This is what makes Morales such a relevant leader in the field, which is reflected in the homages she received and in her ample presence in the field, as we have shown.

3.1.4 Conclusion

Through the contacts between the various personalities in the cultural world in general and the film world specifically, we have demonstrated that the film clubs, magazines, and other cultural institutions that I have referred to had very close ties to each other in the Barcelona of the 1930s.³¹⁷ Yet, we may note that the institutions tied to the film field are somewhat more scattered if we compare them with the ones from the literary field. This is not surprising, since the film field was in the process of institutionalisation to the extent that it still lacked fixed institutions and its practices remained insular with only a few professionals working in the field. However, what we can find is a network of people who were interested in film and who orbited several institutions and created new ones based on preceding institutions' success. The institutions or organism that these mediators orbited were ever changing, but they were kept alive by the persons who circulated among them, spurred them on, and connected them.³¹⁸ We have thus attempted to create a network in time, analysing the aforementioned film clubs and their features, as well as María Luz Morales with the goal of providing a picture of a world in motion, rather than a static image, in order to account for the changes and movements that operated throughout the network's articulation. Indeed, it would be impossible to trace a tie or agency without an action guiding us. This also is true of non-human entities, which are only traceable through action (Clariana-Rodagut and Hagener 2023). These non-human agencies have only historically been considered when involved in fully established cultural institutions, but not in still amorphous ones, as is the case of amateurism.³¹⁹

As we have seen, between the early 1920s and the late 1930s, when the civil war erupted, there were a variety of film club initiatives in Barcelona, each with different characteristics. Some more closely resembled the French model than others, but the description and analysis of all of them have given us a clearer understanding of the development of film cultures and the institutionalisation process of the film field that occurred in Barcelona during those decades. As for women, finding their names and last names among lists of organisers of film clubs in general is often impossible, but this would by no means prove that they did not actively participate in such clubs. The fact that, historically, women have not occupied spaces in the public sphere (Beard 2018) does not mean that they did not participate in the cultural institutions of their time, such

³¹⁷ In one of the articles cited above, journalist Àngel Ferran states that he already knows all of the true "friends of cinema" ["amigos del cine"], allowing him to send personal invitations to each and every one of them (Ferran Coromines 1929e, 4).

³¹⁸ I do not seek to divest these organisms of all agency, nor divest of agency the potential non-human actants circulating around them and comprising them either. Yet, a fact of film club research is that the possibility of understanding their agency depends on our ability to find information (or lack thereof) on them. Given the very limited information available, I have only been able to trace the circulation and composition of networks that can attest to the articulation and functioning of these organisms thanks to the mediators who participated in them. Likewise, as I have shown in another text (Clariana-Rodagut and Hagener 2023), films are another object whose materiality and whose effects in the network can be traced thanks to research on reception, thus revealing the tension between the object's ontology—constituted through the network in which all of the conglomerate components that constitute it circulate—and its epistemology—which depends on the network in which it circulates as well.

³¹⁹ This fact would lead us to reflect upon whether it is appropriate to include amorphous entities (Latour 2005) that have agency nonetheless (*actants*) and can thus obviously play a role within the network in the database. We have yet to explore this.

as in film clubs. Some photographs from the period attest to this,³²⁰ contradicting the dominant narrative. Thus, my goal has been to rescue the names of these women who have remained faceless and nameless in publications but who did play a prominent role in sustaining the networks that would allow for the circulation and functioning of certain cultural organisms, including film clubs (Leigh-Star 1999). In any case, María Luz Morales is in a category of her own, since she spearheaded and was the face of many institutions, both public and private.³²¹ She was also highly present in the institutionalisation of the Spanish film field when it was still being forged, putting her in a privileged position as a model to other women. María Luz Morales was the right agent for this, since she worked side by side with many other women—sometimes recognised and sometimes not—both in the public sphere (as with her translations of Caterina Albert) as in the private one (as Marie Curie’s guide, for instance). As we’ve mentioned, she worked with copious women in the aforementioned institutions. Not only that, but she concerned herself with the edifying of women and the broadening of their culture. Likewise, her strategic position in the cultural field, characterised by her hybridity and mediation between fields, has facilitated the reconstruction of a broad network in which agents and agencies from different fields participated. In this sense, the breadth of her network allowed for the circulation of practices and models in diverse circles. Her position between fields, and her leading role in the film field as well as in the education and cultural edification of women, have led me to deem her a creator of women audiences and, thus, a key figure in the gestation of a women’s film culture.

Taking María Luz Morales as an example opens the path for us to research other women. We might, for instance, trace the names of women with ties to Morales, either through personal correspondence (if available) or through the columns on letters from readers in the magazines in which she wrote. Yet, it would prove even more helpful to gauge this women’s film culture by looking to the women who participated in the institutions for and by women that Morales was involved in and these women’s relationships to the film field. This approach could encourage researchers to recover the personal archives of all of these women, who have not yet been researched but whom we suspect played a relevant role not only in the national and regional film fields, but also in the transnational one.

Moreover, building this [visualisation](#) and making the [dataset](#) available to understand the case of María Luz Morales is also a way to publicise data on other women who may have been less publicly relevant than María Luz Morales and on whom we thus have even fewer data. Yet, having them appear as nodes in the network, that is, to even give them a space within the Barcelonan cultural field of the time is a way to begin to unearth their stories. Implicitly, through this visualisation and the dataset we are freeing this data in order to encourage collective work aimed at giving a voice to these women who remain silenced in historiography, so that this task can be carried out as of now and into the future.

³²⁰ See the chapter of my research on film clubs and women 2.4.

³²¹ This is why her colleagues believed her to be a man within the body of a woman, showcasing the sexist environment in which women of the cultural field had to operate at that time.

3.2 Victoria Ocampo and Cine Club de Buenos Aires (1929-1932)³²²

This chapter has two main objectives—just like the other case studies in this thesis. Firstly, I seek to deepen our understanding of the history of the Buenos Aires film club known as Cine Club de Buenos Aires (1928-1932), which the Asociación de Amigos del Arte (1924-1942) (or Friends of the Arts Association, also in Buenos Aires) decided to take under its wing. With this in-depth study, I seek to broaden our historical knowledge of Ibero-American film clubs from a sociohistorical perspective. Second, I seek to understand Victoria Ocampo's role in the transnational field of film and culture. In contrast to the other women whom I have studied in this thesis, Victoria Ocampo has enjoyed ample research. Thus, from the gender perspective, revaluing her role within history is not as urgent as it is for personalities like Lola Álvarez Bravo and María Luz Morales. Nonetheless, even though she has been paid ample respect within the Argentine, Latin American, and (to a lesser extent) international cultural field, her importance within the film field specifically has been insufficiently studied, as we will now see. Like the women addressed in other chapters of this thesis, Victoria Ocampo was key to the film club phenomenon. Furthermore, Victoria Ocampo was highly relevant internationally, and she played an important role as a transnational cultural mediator and as a vector of feminist transfer, as we will see in the figures presented below. To hone in on Victoria Ocampo, we will emphasise social networks more than in other chapters, deeming them fundamental to valuing her work from a feminist perspective. This perspective is also fundamental in terms of the intellectual battle that Victoria Ocampo waged in order to improve the position of women.

I will divide the text in two blocks according to the two topics at hand. The first will focus on Cine Club de Buenos Aires and the second, on Victoria Ocampo. Regarding Cine Club de Buenos Aires, I will consider its practices and programming, the people involved, and its associated institutions. As for Victoria Ocampo, I will address her role and her interest in the film field, establishing a link to the first block while I simultaneously seek to position her, an intellectual, within the debates around the rights of women and their social situation, especially focusing on the feminist practices and forms she adopted in her work. Lastly, I will analyse the transnational networks that Victoria Ocampo participated in, her mediating position within them, and how they facilitated and allowed for all of the work that she carried out within the local, national, and transnational cultural and intellectual fields.

3.2.1 Cine Club de Buenos Aires

³²² Part of this text has been submitted for publication under Clariana-Rodagut, Ainamar and Diana Roig-Sanz (2024). "Victoria Ocampo's Transnational Networks: A Sociocultural and Data-driven Approach." In Donato, Clorinda and Claire Martin (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Transnational Women's Writing in the Long Nineteenth Century*. London/New York, Palgrave MacMillan.

Cine Club de Buenos Aires was born in 1929, with ties to Asociación Amigos del Arte, another Buenos Aires association that opened its doors in 1924 and operated until 1942. Amigos del Arte played a fundamental role within the Argentine cultural field. All manner of cultural activities were put on by the association: ballet and music recitals, intellectual gatherings, conferences, theater samples, exhibitions, and film screenings. Its activities often stood at the vanguard, bringing in pieces that had never been showed in Argentina before while also highlighting the Argentine and Latin American artistic and intellectual feats of the twentieth century. Many key figures from the Buenos Aires intellectual and artistic elite of the turn of the century boasted ties to this association, such as Jorge Luis Borges, Victoria Ocampo, Horacio Coppola, and Delfina Bunge, among many others.³²³ The association also invited widely recognised international intellectuals and artists, who were brought in by the organisation especially or who became associated with it out of an interest of their own, with their projections helping to position Argentina, Latin America, and Hispano-America on the map of artistic modernity in turn. We might highlight many personalities from a myriad of disciplines and fields who passed through Amigos del Arte at some point in time: Igor Stravinsky, María Montessori, Filippo Tomaso Marinetti, Jane Bathori, Waldo Frank, Germaine Dermoz, Federico García Lorca, Margherita Sarfatti, Le Corbusier, David Alfaro Siqueiros, and Alfonso Reyes, among many others. Likewise, given our goal of emphasising the value of Victoria Ocampo and her relationship to Amigos del Arte and the transnational cultural field, I believe it important to allude to the constant efforts that the institution and its associated organisations—such as *Sur* magazine and publishing house—made to provide a refuge for Spanish intellectuals caught in the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) as well as for international artists and intellectuals persecuted by Nazis during the Second World War (1939-1945). For instance, we might name María de Maetzu, Maruja Mallo, Ramón Gómez de la Serna, Gisèle Freund, and José Ortega y Gasset, among others. This political work cannot be divested from the association's cultural work, since political ideology tended to guide its artistic proposals as well as the cultural management behind them, as we will see in Victoria Ocampo's case.

As Eduardo F. Constantini (2008) notes in the catalogue he wrote for the first exhibition to ever honor the institution as a whole,³²⁴ we must mention the ties between Amigos del Arte and other international institutions that played a key role in the transnational cultural and political fields of the time, such as the Pen Club, Jockey Club, and Lyceum Club. The same might be said of the relationships between the institution and certain publications that marked the course of Spanish-language literary and publishing history, among which we should at least mention *La Gaceta Literaria*, *la Revista de Occidente*, and *Contemporáneos*, or the nationally recognised *Nosotros*, *Martín Fierro*, and *La Nación*, all of which had close ties to both the *Sur* magazine and publishing house (1931-1992) directed by Victoria Ocampo. As for transnational networks, through Ocampo and the scope of her magazine, the institution wove networks beyond Ibero-America,

³²³ See the catalogue for the exhibition “Amigos del Arte 1924-1942” that took place in Malba (Buenos Aires) in 2008. The exhibition was curated by Patricia M. Artundo and Marcelo E. Pacheco (Artundo et al. 2008).

³²⁴ For the first time, this exhibition put the entire focus on Amigos del Arte. Beforehand, as Eduardo Constantini notes (Artundo et al. 2008, 9), the institution had only been tangentially touched upon when the artists involved were researched.

reaching the United States, France, and England, as we will prove by studying the pieces published in the *Sur* magazine and publishing house (translations and originals) as well as the people invited to give conferences and participate in cultural activities (such as poetry recitals, plays, musical performances, etc.) in Amigos del Arte.

3.2.1.1 An Introduction to Film Clubs in Buenos Aires

There appears to be historiographic consensus around the origins of the Argentine film club phenomenon. Miguel Couselo (2008) is often cited as a historian of reference, placing the screenings organised by Leon Klimovsky at the Anatole France library in Buenos Aires in 1927 as the first film club-like experiences in the country. Couselo references an article published in *Ediciones Cine Arte* (Buenos Aires no. 1, 1942) as his source regarding the city's first art-film screenings, including of *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* (Robert Wiene, 1920), *Crainquebille* (Jacques Feyder, 1922), and a silent version of *Knock ou le Triomphe de la médecine* (theatre play by Jules Romains presented the first time in 1923), among others. The next initiative, Cine Club de Buenos Aires (spanning either 1928 or 1929 to 1931 or 1932), included León Klimovsky among its main supporters. Due to its formality and frequency, this is considered the first proper Argentine film club. According to Fernando Martín Peña (Peña 2008, 59), the club held weekly sessions on Wednesdays (Artundo et al. 2008, 240).³²⁵ The sessions were open to the public and would start at 9:00 p.m., and were initially held in “a prestigious room of Amigos del Arte’s,”³²⁶ according to Guillermo de Torre (De Torre 1930a, 5), with Amigos del Arte located at Florida 659 (Alfo 1931a, 45). According to publicity printed in *La Nación* (1929)—which Andrea Cuarterolo also cites (Cuarterolo 2017, 189), coinciding with Martín Peña (2008) and Jorge Miguel Couselo (2008), the latter of whom also cites the literary magazine *Nosotros* (Buenos Aires no. 247, December 1929)—the film club held its inaugural session on August 21st, 1929, and screened the last film of the first cycle on November 27th of that same year.

Yet, I’ve found contradictory information about the club’s start date, which is a significant detail. According to two reviews printed in the newspaper *La Nación*, Benjamin Fondane presented several films and fragments of avant-garde films at Amigos del Arte on August 6th and 16th, 1929. These included *Un chien andalou* (Buñuel and Dalí, 1929), *L’Étoile de mer* (Man Ray, 1928), and *Entr’acte* (René Clair, 1924), as well as fragments of *La Coquille et le Clergyman* (Germaine Dulac, 1928), *Le Cabaret épileptique* (Henri Gad, 1928), and *La Perle* (Henri d’Ursel, 1929). Fondane titled his presentation “Presentación de films puros: homenaje a Victoria Ocampo” [A presentation of pure film: an homage to Victoria Ocampo] (Artundo et al. 2008, 250),³²⁷ which is important

³²⁵ In the section on film and theater for the year 1929, the catalogue states that “Amigos del Arte kindly lends its rooms to the Film Club on Wednesday nights so that the club can develop its Film program” [“Amigos del Arte cede gentilmente sus salones al Cine Club los miércoles a la noche para que desarrolle esa entidad su programa Cinematográfico.”] (2008, 240).

³²⁶ “[...] sala prestigiosa de los Amigos del Arte.”

³²⁷ The aforementioned catalogue alludes to a text published in *Síntesis* magazine, year 3, no. 28, on September 28th, 1929.

considering the goals of this text. The reason why Fondane chose to honor Victoria Ocampo was that she had arranged his journey to Buenos Aires (Aguilar 2011). A review of the first set of films that Benjamin Fondane presented after bringing them in from Paris was published on same page of *La Nación* in which the film club's guidelines and the announcement of its upcoming foundation (on August 21st, 1929) were printed on August 7th, 1929 (p. 11). Thus, it is possible that the screenings that Benjamin Fondane presented may have taken place before the film club made itself public, or perhaps they were held entirely outside of Cine Club de Buenos Aires. In any case, these presentations would explain why León Klimovsky had referred to the year 1928 as the year when the film club's screenings begun (Couselo (2008) cites Klimovsky's 1955 statement).³²⁸ Just like the films that Fondane showed, other films may have been screened privately at Amigos del Arte before the film club's official inauguration, meaning that activities could have begun in 1928.

In any case, the public and official inauguration of Cine Club de Buenos Aires³²⁹ took place on August 21st, 1929. Now, the last screening may have taken place in 1931 or 1932. Secondary sources point to October of 1931 as the month when the club ceased operations: Martín Peña (2008, 62) cites the club's last alleged program as coinciding with its third cycle, which was celebrated in 1931. Most likely, Martín Peña—like Cuarterolo (Cuarterolo 2017, 191)—is following Couselo (2008), who deems the last reference to the club's screenings to be in the magazine *Nosotros* (Buenos Aires no. 265, June 1931). This same researcher also references a brochure titled "El film independiente" published by the Cine Club de Buenos Aires on the occasion of a film cycle that was to take place at Amigos del Arte from September to October of 1931. According to these registries, no further screenings took place in 1932. Yet, several publications that I have located in the magazine *Nervio* would suggest the contrary. According to an article that Luis Orsetti published in *Nervio* magazine in July of 1932 (year II, no. 15), the film club would celebrate its fourth cycle at the Empire Theatre (on Corrientes Street, number 699) in June of that year.³³⁰ At the end of the article, Orsetti writes that the film club would "put on weekly shows in certain theaters downtown. The films are mostly Russians (which is a guarantee [of quality]) and will be screened with no conferences!" (Orsetti 1932, 50–52).³³¹ Leaving Orsetti's assessments aside, it's worth noting that his statements suggest that, even in 1932, the Cine Club de Buenos Aires still seemed to be organising activities, and further film sessions were expected downtown even after the fourth cycle. This falls in line with the trends started in 1931, which Couselo refers to in citing *Nosotros* once again (no. 265, June 1931), according to which, in "a note signed by the writer Sigfrido A. Radaelli. On March 6th regular sessions

³²⁸ Couselo cites *Cuadernos de Cine* no. 3, Buenos Aires 1955.

³²⁹ Martín Peña (2008, 59) notes that the club was originally just called Cine Club, with the "de Buenos Aires" specification added during its least season (2008, 59). This seems to be the case, judging by the articles in the press and other publications of the time, which referred to the institution as "Cine Club," without "de Buenos Aires" appearing. The full name was printed in publicity on independent films in *Sur* magazine, no. 3, in 1931.

³³⁰ This seems to have been called Teatro Ateneo when it opened in 1909. See: <http://arquitectos-franceses-argentina.blogspot.com/2010/11/arquitecto-jacques-dunant-caba.html?m=1>

³³¹ "[...] efectuará funciones mensuales en ciertas salas del centro. Los films son en su mayoría rusos (lo que es una garantía) y serán pasados ¡sin conferencias! (lo que es un alivio)"

opened at the easy-to-get-to Hindú Palace” (Couselo 2008).³³² It would seem that, according to Couselo, as of March of 1931, the Cine Club de Buenos Aires’s screenings no longer strictly took place at Amigos del Arte and were beginning to be held in other spaces, all of them movie theaters.³³³ In consequence, we might state that the periodisation that has generally been established for the Cine Club de Buenos Aires’s functioning (1929-1931) has been limited to the time when it held its screenings at Amigos del Arte on Calle Florida (Peña 2008, 59).

3.2.1.2 Members

As to the film club’s members, both Jorge Miguel Couselo (2008) and Martín Peña (who cites Couselo) name art critic Jorge Romero Brest, photographers Horacio Cópola (who was the president) and Héctor Eandi, the filmmaker León Klimovsky, historians José Luis Romero, Leopoldo Hurtado, and writers María Rosa Oliver, Enrique Amorim, Guillermo Guerrero Estrella, Augusto Mario Delfino, Sixto Pondal Ríos, Ricardo Setaro, Emilio Solezzi, Nicolás Olivari, Carlos Olivari, Ulises Petit de Murat, Jorge Luis Borges, Néstor Ibarra, Guillermo de Torre, Mario Casano, and César Tiempo; also the visual artists María del Carmen Portela, Horacio Butler, Juan Carlos Castagnino, Lino Spilimbergo, Ramón Gómez Cornet; and the musicians José María Castro and Juan Carlos Paz; the art critics Córdoba Iturburu, Leonardo Estarico, Alfredo González Garaño, Isidro Odena (Couselo 2008, 96). We might also add those whom Klimovsky names as members of the Committee in charge of editing a film club magazine that never came to fruition, namely J. E. Badaracco, D.J. Sussman,³³⁴ J. Muchnik,³³⁵ Raúl Pembo,³³⁶ and the aforementioned Néstor Ibarra (Author 1930b, 258). It wouldn’t be far fetched to add Victoria Ocampo either, given that she undoubtedly arranged for Benjamin Fondane’s invitation to Buenos Aires. Notably, the fact that Fondane would bring with him the aforementioned avant-garde films gave Cine Club de Buenos Aires a pioneering reputation among the Spanish public for having screened *Un chien andalou* (Buñuel 1929) even before the Cineclub Español did (founded in Madrid by Luis Buñuel, Ernesto Giménez Caballero, and César Arconada in 1928). In her list, Andrea Cuarterolo does include Victoria Ocampo, as well as Nicolás Olivari, Sixto Pondal Ríos, artist Horacio Butler, and Lino Spilimbergo, stating that there were still others whom she does not name (Cuarterolo 2017, 189). We might also consider Felipe Debernardi, whom Guillermo de Torre

³³² “[...] nota firmada por el escritor Sigrfido A. Radaelli. El 6 de marzo se inauguraron las sesiones regulares en el céntrico cine Hindú Palace”

³³³ Except for the “independent film” cycle that was screened at Amigos del Arte room.

³³⁴ This is probably referencing writer David Sussman, who wrote for *Qué* magazine (1928-1930) using the pen name Julio Trizzi. Consulted in: <https://icaa.mfah.org/s/es/item/732506#?c=&m=&s=&cv=&xywh=-628%2C0%2C4555%2C2549>

³³⁵ This may have been Jacobo Muchnik (1907-1995), founder of Fabril press. Consulted in: <https://icaa.mfah.org/s/es/item/732506#?c=&m=&s=&cv=&xywh=-628%2C0%2C4555%2C2549>

³³⁶ Also in *Qué* magazine, we may find a reference to Raúl Pombo, the pen name for writer Ismael Piterbarg. This was probably him, as Romero Brest alluded to him in an interview. Reference found here: <http://www.magicasruinas.com.ar/revdesto029.htm>

mentions as having given a conference at one of the film club's sessions (De Torre 1930a, 6).

To open our perspective, we might also include regular members of the public, including those who penned reviews or articles on the films screened at the club. For instance, Alfonso Longuet³³⁷ wrote about the film club for the magazine *Nervio*³³⁸ (as well as about film in general). We might also mention Luis Orsetti³³⁹, who likewise wrote about the Cine Club de Buenos Aires's sessions for *Nervio*, albeit less frequently than Alfonso Longuet did.³⁴⁰ Both authors wrote for the magazine's film column and addressed other related topics, such as the actors and actresses of the time, character types, the directors they believed to be the most relevant, the idea of film as the opium of the people—which we may find elsewhere, too—³⁴¹, animated pictures, and commercial and American film. As for Orsetti specifically, he wrote about the representation of the working class in film—or lack thereof.

Members mentioned by other scattered sources included Carlos Macchiavelo, whom a *Nosotros* writer (Author 1929d) cites as part of the film club's organisation committee; and historian Sigfrido A. Radaelli, whom Couselo (2008) cites in his seminal text for having penned another article on the film club.

As for the profiles of those who participated in the Cine Club de Buenos Aires, we might mention an article of the time in *La Gaceta Literaria* by the magazine's secretary, Guillermo de Torre, stating that the film club was led by "competent youths of very good will."³⁴² In this same article, de Torre wrote that "all of the screenings were accompanied by prior conferences, given by young writers and filmmakers"³⁴³ (De Torre 1930a, 5).³⁴⁴

³³⁷ I have not been able to find information on this writer. Lucio Mafud notes that he conducted Argentina's first investigation "on the film phenomenon from a leftist perspective, *El cinema y la realidad social*" ["sobre el fenómeno cinematográfico desde una perspectiva de izquierda, *El cinema y la realidad social*"] (Mafud 2020, 162).

³³⁸ See numbers 1 through 7 of *Nervio* magazine, year 1 (all of these were from 1931).

³³⁹ This documentary filmmaker was active in Argentina as of the early '30s but has been generally ignored by film historiography, according to Lucio Mafud (2020).

³⁴⁰ We have only detected one reference—albeit a very valuable one—to the film club in the magazine *Nervio*, in year II, no. 15, written by Luis Orsetti. In subsequent issues, Orsetti also wrote a column on film, though he deals with other topics and does not reference Cine Club de Buenos Aires and its sessions again (1932).

³⁴¹ For instance, we may find a reference to this same idea in the aforementioned article by Guillermo de Torre in *La Gaceta Literaria*. De la Torre juxtaposes the films screened at "low-class movie theaters" with those screened at the film club. Likewise, he writes that "the typical movie theaters downtown (and there are less than 10 in the space of four blocks in Buenos Aires) proffer excellent and terrible films alike to a public with a somewhat opiumlike addiction, instead of a with a true appreciation for film" ["los cines típicos del centro de la ciudad (y en Buenos Aires no hay menos de diez en el espacio de cuatro 'cuadras' o manzanas) prodiguen indistintamente lo excelente y lo pésimo ante un público más opiómano que cinéfilo."] (1930a, 5). This reference would lead us to think that the idea of film being a kind of opium for the people was not only common in left-wing intellectual circles, but also in other illustrated circles in which political positioning and commitment varied, as is the case of *La Gaceta Literaria*. We should note that the magazine's founder, Ernesto Giménez Caballero, was openly fascist.

³⁴² "[...] jóvenes competentes y de bonísima voluntad."

³⁴³ "[...] todas las exhibiciones fueron acompañadas de conferencias previas a cargo de escritores y cineístas jóvenes."

³⁴⁴ Fernando Martín Peña also writes about the generation that founded the Cine Club de Buenos Aires, noting that the founders were between twenty and thirty years old when they launched the club. The

These references are important because they illustrate how the club was perceived among similar circles: as an initiative launched by youths of good will, but without “much of a name for themselves,”³⁴⁵ as De Torre writes, stating that, if they’d had more of a reputation, they would have “attracted the attention of a much more copious and qualified public.”³⁴⁶ With perspective, we can state that these then-unheard-of youths later enjoyed broad and recognised careers in many realms, eventually making the film club a celebrated part of Argentine cultural history.

In fact, we may note that the two cited articles mention that the film club was created without any kind of economic support (Author 1930b, 258) or artistic institution behind it (De Torre 1930a, 5). Both authors write that the club was the product of a great effort among the “organisingyouths”³⁴⁷ and that it prevailed despite certain “expressions of malevolence and antipathy.”³⁴⁸ Likewise, I believe that the fact that the sessions were held in a room (or maybe auditorium) belonging to Amigos del Arte, at least until 1931, implies that there was, in fact, a reputable institution backing the club. Klimovsky also alludes to “the sincere support of the most respected critics in the country.”³⁴⁹ This stands as proof of the true support that the club enjoyed, with contrasts with the complaints that organisers were unknowledgeable, focused on youthful novelty, and had to take great pains in the face of an unpromising situation. Evidently, we cannot dismiss the symbolic power that the institution enjoyed thanks to the fact that it had the support of Amigos del Arte from the onset, even if this support wasn’t economic. Yet, there most likely was economic support involved, considering that Victoria Ocampo arranged for Benjamin Fondane to come to Argentina, bringing with him the avant-garde films that ended up causing quite a stir at the film club.

Leaving aside the age of the club’s founders, we have corroborated that all of the aforementioned people with ties to the club participated in Buenos Aires’s intellectual and artistic circles at some point in their careers, whether before or after their involvement in the club. Almost without exception, participants were recognised artists and intellectuals, at least at some point in their professional lives. Some of the members of other pioneering Western film clubs of the 1920s and ’30s, were of similar character, as noted in other case studies within this thesis. This is the case of the Barcelona Film Club and of Cine club Mexicano. In a way, this is telling of the proximity between these initiatives and their pioneers in Paris, under Delluc and Canudo. These shared features would set them apart from organisations we’ve mentioned in other chapters, such as Club Cinematográfico de Horta, whose organisation and audiences were more

same was true of Amsterdam Filmliga (founded in 1927) and Ciné-club de France, founded by Louis Delluc in 1920. Peña writes that these youthful proposals stood in contrast to that of the Film Society of London, which was founded by already consecrated personalities such as H.G. Wells, Bernard Shaw and John Maynard Keynes (2008, 59). I would also like to highlight that Virginia Woolf participated in the latter (Marie 2015, 516), given Woolf’s relevance in the life and works of Victoria Ocampo and because her presence reinforces the idea of a network of women cultural mediators in the transnational cultural, and especially cinematographic, field during the first few years of the film medium’s expansion among the Western white middle and upper classes.

³⁴⁵ “[...] ancho renombre auténtico.”

³⁴⁶ “[...] atraído la atención de un público más cuantioso y calificado.”

³⁴⁷ “[...] jóvenes organizadores.”

³⁴⁸ “[...] malevolencias y antipatías.”

³⁴⁹ “[...] apoyo sincero de la crítica más autorizada del país.”

anonymous and less hierarchical, as the club's audience and coordinators all melded into one group.

3.2.1.3 Film Club Practices

Orsetti remarks upon the hierarchies separating those who directed the Cine Club de Buenos Aires and those who attended as audience members in one of his longest articles on the club. In this article, the author alludes to the club's greatest pitfall: "the Film Club suffered from another great evil: the dictatorship of its Committee. Members were limited to being mere spectators. They had no knowledge of its statutes, regulations, or anything of the sort. The Committee members elected themselves as a clique, without the involvement of other members"³⁵⁰ (1932, 51). This would imply that a certain nucleus of people made the decisions without heeding other members' interests. This, meanwhile, suggests that even though people in the audience were club members, their participation was limited, as coordinators enjoyed more privileged positions.

On the importance of key figures, we may also highlight the roles that the organisers took on as educators of the audiences who attended screenings. As we will later see in the section dedicated to reconstructing the film club's program, the screenings were mostly accompanied by conferences. Considering the aforementioned article by Guillermo de Torre, at least during the film club's first cycle, the founders seem to have given the conferences—alongside a few of their closest participants, who were often considered part of the coordinating committee. Orsetti harshly criticises this fact (1932, 50). According to Orsetti, the problem of the conferences, alongside the organising committee's cronyism, ultimately emptied out the film club, causing "the gradual cleaving away of a great number of sympathizers."³⁵¹ After stating that the club's main problem lay in its directors, Orsetti goes on to state the following:

A great weakness dominated them: the conferences. Brave in the face of any challenge, some of them would get on stage and improvise, mumbling, enshrouding themselves in ridicule. Others, who were less prone to rash behavior, would read their cerebral dissertations, thus boring the audience. One day, the audience was taken aback by the appearance of a callow "little doctor" in a tuxedo, who perhaps believed that this would add weight to his dissertation on on-screen love! (1932, 50)³⁵²

³⁵⁰ "[...] de otro gran mal padecía el Cine Club: la dictadura de la Comisión. Los socios se limitaban a ser simples espectadores. Ellos no conocían estatutos, reglamentos ni cosa parecida. Los miembros de la Comisión se elegían entre sí, en camarilla, sin participación del resto de los asociados."

³⁵¹ "[...] la separación paulatina de gran número de simpatizantes."

³⁵² "Una gran debilidad los dominaba; las conferencias. Con valentía a toda prueba, algunos subían al tablado, y allí improvisaban, tartamudeando, y cubriéndose de ridículo. Otros, menos propensos a los arrebatos, leían sesudas disertaciones, con el consiguiente hastío del público. Un día los espectadores fueron sorprendidos por la aparición de un 'doctorcito' imberbe, que se había enfundado su *smoking* tal vez con la creencia de dar así mayor solemnidad a su disertación acerca del amor en la pantalla!"

Among his criticisms, Orsetti mentions a filming course, which, in his view, failed before it even started: “theory, practice, projects were reduced to mere words.”³⁵³ In his view, the first lesson of this course dug its own grave due to excess talk. This film course marked the end of the season, leading the audience to believe that the film club would finally close its doors. To Orsetti, the subsequent announcement of the sessions’ continuation downtown was a surprise on two accounts, because it attested to the institution’s vitality and also suggested a certain shift. As of that point, the club would screen Russian films, implying a certain guarantee in Orsetti’s view, without conferences, which he called “a relief”³⁵⁴ (1932, 52).³⁵⁵ Thus, even though Couselo (2008), Martín Peña (2008), and Cuarterolo (2017) posit that the film club closed its doors in 1931, that was actually the year when the club decided to screen Soviet film at downtown movie theaters, according to Orsetti. This, of course, implied a change in the internal organisation of the film club, effective as of 1932.

To conclude our summary of Orsetti’s statements, we would need to corroborate whether his words are true and consider whether his criticisms might stem from Orsetti’s political differences with the film club’s sympathizers. As Mafud (2020) has noted, Orsetti was one of the first Argentine documentary filmmakers, and he was working at the same time as the film club was in existence. Furthermore, he conducted the first study of Argentine film from a leftist perspective, wrote in leftist magazines (*Nervio* and *Metrópolis*), and was part of Teatro del Pueblo (Theater of the People), while translating for anarchist and communist presses (*Imán*, *Américalee*, and *Cartago*) (Mafud 2020, 162). This, of course, could lead us to consider the reasons why a documentary filmmaker who was committed to the revolution of the working class would have distanced himself from an institution managed by an intellectual elite of varied political affiliation that was probably less left-winged than Orsetti would have liked.³⁵⁶ Still, we cannot know the extent to which such political differences might have influenced his criticism. What we can glean is that, just as Orsetti and Klimovsky note, the film club’s conferences and the course that it organised (Author 1930b, 258) were marked by the institution’s didacticism.³⁵⁷ Whether or not the public was aligned with what was taught is another matter. In any case, there was a clear desire to forge a certain taste among those who organised the club’s activities and dictated its programming. As we shall see, the club’s programming is revealing of its artistically aimed didacticism, as Klimovsky expresses. Most likely, the goal would have been to

³⁵³ “[...] teoría, práctica, proyectos, quedaron reducidos a simples palabras.”

³⁵⁴ “[...] un alivio”

³⁵⁵ Given his political ideals, it’s no surprise that this journalist was interested in Soviet film. Despite Orsetti’s criticisms of Cine Club de Buenos Aires, Orsetti enjoyed plenty of Soviet film at the club, as he wrote that he watched films by Sergéi Eisenstein and Dziga Vértov, both of whom would be key to Orsetti’s own productions. As Lucio Mafud notes (2020), there are similarities between *El mundo nuevo*, one of Orsetti’s first pieces, and *Berlin: Symphony of a Metropolis* (Ruttman 1926) which was screened at Cine Club de Buenos Aires on November 19th and 20th, 1929 (see the film club’s program in the annex). For more on this topic, see the text by Mafud (2020).

³⁵⁶ One example of this is the positioning of *Sur* magazine with regard to the Russian revolution and, later on, Peronism in Argentina.

³⁵⁷ David Oubiña (2009) also writes about the edifying task of organising the 16 mm film course in late August of 1931 as well as the exhibition on amateur film. See Mafud (2020).

create an audience for film as a new artistic medium—an audience that both Orsetti and Guillermo de Torre characterise as “more opiophile than cinephile”³⁵⁸ (1930a, 6).

This idea of film as opium doesn’t seek to equate film with religion—as per the Marxist motto—but would harken us to Jean Epstein’s film theory. Yet, to Epstein, the idea that film was like a drug (Epstein 1921) as a consequence of its intrinsic modernity is not negative in and of itself. Rather, he views it as a condition that can lead the spectator to access suprarational knowledge. As Martín Peña notes, “the programming’s guidelines seem to have surged from a combination of specialised French and Saxon readings, with the local cinephile experience to boot”³⁵⁹ (Peña 2008, 61). Peña writes that the film club’s theoretical references included León Moussinac, Élie Faure, and especially Jean Epstein, who used ideas on cinematographic language and its specificities to propose concepts that became widely used at the time, such as Delluc’s “*photogénie*,” which Epstein later developed. Peña writes that, when the film club was created, film wasn’t spoken of as an art, but people spoke of its expressive autonomy. Before calling film an opium of the people, Guillermo de Torre actually wrote that, as long as specialised movie theaters didn’t emerge, the film club would be “the only refuge for this (film) art as such”³⁶⁰ (1930a, 60). The need to discursively develop a specifically cinematographic language was inextricably linked to the need to claim film as an art, when the context so required, as Guillermo de Torre states. And at a time when the national film industry was expanding in Argentina and audiences started becoming massive due to sound film’s accessibility to the working classes (Gil Mariño 2015), there must have been a need to recall that film was not just a form of entertainment, but an art.

a) Amateurism

Regarding the club’s edifying endeavors, we must highlight at least some of the club participants’ interest in amateur cinema and its production. In the aforementioned interview with Klimovsky, the latter alludes to a production that he filmed with D. J. Sussman, “another young filmmaker,”³⁶¹ titled *El Riachuelo*, whose main character is the port (Author 1930b, 258).³⁶² It would seem that this film—which was being recorded in May of 1930 or earlier—might have been screened later on in a cycle dedicated to 16 mm film, from November of 1930 to October of 1931, “with exercises by aficionados”³⁶³

³⁵⁸ “[...] más opiómano que cinéfilo”

³⁵⁹ “[...] los lineamientos de la programación parecen haber surgido de la combinación de lecturas especializadas francesas y sajonas, con el agregado de la experiencia cinéfila local.”

³⁶⁰ “el único refugio de este arte (el cine) como tal.”

³⁶¹ “[...] otro joven cineísta.”

³⁶² Like Orsetti’s *Derrumbe* (1932), in which Puerto Nuevo acquired much relevance, but also Orsetti’s *El mundo nuevo* (1932), which also highlights city living (Mafud 2020). This would point to the confluence of aesthetic influences between the two and to their proximity to the precepts of the avant-garde, with Walter Ruttmann among its leaders, with his piece on the city of Berlin. Another example of the impact that the German avant-garde may have had on members of Cine Club de Buenos Aires can be found in Horacio Coppola’s films as well as in his photo-essays published in *Sur* magazine on the city of Buenos Aires in a period that was closer to when the film club operated, between 1931 and 1932 (Cuarterolo 2017, 191).

³⁶³ “[...] con ensayos de aficionados.”

(Alfo 1931c, 42). In the magazine *Nervio*, Alfonso Longuet (Alfo) wrote about this session—among the last of the season according to Couselo (2008),³⁶⁴ it was dedicated to 16mm films and included “foreign films, reductions (from 35 to 16mm), and documentary films by Argentine aficionados.”³⁶⁵ Couselo argues that this session marked the first time that Argentine film was screened at the club. Whether or not Klimovsky’s film was screened at this session, what is clear is that there were links between the film club and amateur production. Though this link seems less striking than it may have been at other film clubs, it existed nonetheless and was especially important to Klimovsky himself. In an article that he didn’t sign but that Couselo attributes to Klimovsky, it is stated that one of the most important lessons of the film club was realizing the importance of “amassing one’s own work³⁶⁶ as much as possible, and, on the other hand, studying just enough regarding commercial organisation to allow for the support of the purely cultural and artistic, being the essential goal of these purposes and experiments” (Couselo 2008).³⁶⁷

We may find such interest in amateur and national film among the other film clubs we are studying, which experienced their apogees at the same time as Cine Club de Buenos Aires, such as the Barcelona Film Club. Both the Barcelona Film Club and the Cine Club de Buenos Aires demonstrated their interest in producing amateur film in an attempt to promote regional and national production. It would seem that, in a way, these pioneering film clubs felt that they carried the responsibility and the authority to spearhead national film production. This idea isn’t far fetched. As Gil Mariño writes, in Argentina, the advent of sound film gave national cinema the chance to develop. In fact, in 1932 two films were shot, after which the industry gradually grew. By the late 1930s, the country boasted 9 recording studios and 30 companies with 4,000 employees, along with 2,500 movie theaters (Gil Mariño 2015, 39). The incipience of the Argentine film industry coincided with the period when the film club was in operation.

In this sense, we may glean a correlation between the birth of the national industry and film club-goers’ interest in producing amateur film. In most cases, amateur film would be created and proposed as an alternative to mainstream production, as film club participants aimed to elevate national film to the status of art. As we have noted in other chapters of this investigation, we may find various manifestations of this in writing as well as in film production. In Mexico, the texts that Luis Cardoza y Aragón published in the magazine *Todo* are telling of the discontent that national production provoked among the artists and intellectuals who were close to Cine club de México, as we will see in chapter 3.3 of this thesis (Cardoza y Aragón 2010). In terms of film production, in Mexico we might highlight *Disparos en el Istmo* (Manuel Álvarez Bravo 1935), which can certainly be categorized as avant-garde (de la Vega Alfaro 2002, 88). As for Manuel Álvarez Bravo’s production beyond photography, his films were often created in collaboration with other people who had ties to Cine club Mexicano, such as Juan de la

³⁶⁴ Here, Couselo cites the article by Sigfrido A. Radaelli for *Nosotros* magazine (no. 265, published in June of 1931).

³⁶⁵ “[...] films extranjeros y reducciones (de 35 a 16 mm) y films documentales de aficionados argentinos.”

³⁶⁶ Referring to productions.

³⁶⁷ “[...] reunir un material propio lo más amplio posible y, por otra parte, estudiar una organización comercial mínima que permitiera sustentar lo puramente artístico y cultural, objeto esencial de estos propósitos y estos ensayos”

Cabada and José Revueltas.³⁶⁸ We might also mention what James Oles calls the absent film of Emilio Amero, an author who has often been considered as having participated in the first wave of film clubs in Mexico City. Thanks to Antonieta Rivas Mercado,³⁶⁹ Amero seems to have filmed at least part of a screenplay written by Federico García Lorca³⁷⁰ (Oles 2002). In this sense, another example in the context of the Barcelona Film Club can be traced through the texts that Àngel Ferran wrote for *La Publicitat*,³⁷¹ in which he insists upon the need for amateur production, so as to elevate regional (Catalan) production to an artistic form (1929c). Regarding amateur production, an example par excellence in Barcelona is that of Delmir de Caralt, who had close ties to the Barcelona Film Club and wrote alongside the likes of Jeroni Moragues (a colleague of María Luz Morales's, who was one of the key figures within the Barcelona Film Club) and Josep Palau i Clavera (a colleague and friend of Guillem Díaz-Plaja, who was also a Barcelona Film Club aficionado). Likewise, María Luz Morales herself participated as a secretary for the leftist documentary *Sierra de Teruel* (1938), directed by André Malraux.³⁷² The same can be said of Argentina: film clubs were associated with amateur film practices—especially of the avant-garde—as we have seen with Klimovsky and Horacio Coppola. One of the goals of filmclubism was to propose a film and production model that could articulate a new artistic language.³⁷³

Thus, we should ask ourselves about the relationship between amateurism, the first avant-gardes, and what was called independent film (Cosandey and Thomas 2000). We may thus ponder the specificity of amateur film in regards to professional film production because, as we may note, the film productions by film club members in the '20s and '30s, as outlined above, stood at the frontier between various qualities of film: between the amateur and the professional, the artistic and the home-made,

³⁶⁸ The screenplay written by Lola Álvarez Bravo and Manuel Álvarez Bravo in 1930, which was never filmed, is also worth noting. It was called *Nuevo Horizonte*, as Lola Álvarez Bravo states. The subject matter—the life of a group of abandoned children who had joined gangs—would have favored the proposal's avant-garde tone. The original screenplay is housed at the Center for Creative Photography in Arizona.

³⁶⁹ We may also highlight the mediation of another fundamental woman to the post-revolutionary Mexican cultural scene: Antonieta Rivas Mercado, who, like Victoria Ocampo, was also a sponsor, underwriting the magazine *Contemporáneos*, among other projects. Despite all of her contributions, she is usually only cited in regard to her tragic suicide in Notre Dame and as Vasconcelos's lover.

³⁷⁰ These Mexican films that we might call avant-garde, amateur, or experimental have been lost. In any case, we should note that the avant-garde Mexican film of the 1930s, especially that with close ties to the artists and intellectuals of Cine club Mexicano, LEAR, and *Contemporáneos* magazine was indelibly marked by the unfinished film by Sergei Eisenstein *¡Qué viva México!* (1932). As Eduardo de la Vega Alfaro notes, Lola and Manuel Álvarez Bravo likely accompanied Eisenstein and Tissé for much—if not all—of their journey across Mexico (2002). Manuel bought Eduard Tissé's camera before the latter left. Likewise, Aragón Leiva was Eisenstein's guide and camera assistant throughout the trip, and we should keep in mind that Aragón Leiva had close ties to Cine club Mexicano. For a more in-depth analysis of Eisenstein's travels in Mexico, see Masha Salazkina (2009).

³⁷¹ See Chapter 3.1.

³⁷² Still, the most obvious and common relationship between Spanish film clubs and the originally experimental production—also considered avant-garde or amateur, depending on the perspective—can be found in Luis Buñuel's first films.

³⁷³ As seen in chapter 2.3 of this thesis, Latin American neorealism had its apogee in the 1960s, having started in the mid-'50s. As we have noted, Latin American neorealism was proposed as an alternative to the ways Hollywood industry worked. It was spearheaded by the second generation of filmclubists. These first incursions may be seen as opening the doors to subsequent ones.

documentary and fiction. As Greg de Cuir (2014) aptly notes when referring to Oktavijan Miletić³⁷⁴ (a very similar figure to the ones we focus on in this thesis and who operated at the same time, though from a different geographical context), there is a divide regarding the trends relative to amateur production, which I believe are relevant: De Cuir distinguishes between more artistic amateur cinema and the more domestic kind. He later describes the necessary ties between film clubs and festivals, as well as the artistic trends of amateur films, juxtaposing them to the domestic trends that he associates with more familiar and home films. To De Cuir, Miletić (founder of the Zagreb film club in 1928) is relevant because is an example of the fine line that divide the professional and the amateur. In this sense, De Cuir explores whether there is a desire among all amateurs to ascend to professional production, and whether the amateur condition relies, more than anything else, on a lack of resources. The Croatian filmmaker that De Cuir focuses on for his study occupies a liminal position between the home-made and the public, oscillating between private and public presentations of his work at festivals, as well as between the amateur and the professional, and even between fiction and documentary.

In this sense, I believe that the artists and intellectuals I have referred to, who produced or were interested in producing amateur cinema and had ties to film clubs, occupied a similar position to that which De Cuir describes in his case study. Indeed, the written examples I have referred to (from Klimovsky to Ferran's texts) often alluded to the need to produce amateur film (with low-budget and experimental) to boost national industries. Even though, in retrospect, what they and their colleagues produced is now viewed as avant-garde film. It means that, in many cases, these products were experimental, situated between rudimentary low-budget film production and a more artistic, experimental intent informed by other arts. This is the case of Manuel Álvarez Bravo and Horacio Coppola, two widely known photographers who created films, as noted before. Regarding Manuel Álvarez Bravo and his *Disparos en el Istmo*, his work may be considered as fluctuating between documentary and fiction—with his anthropological aesthetic being quite similar to the one Eisenstein used in his Mexican film. Meanwhile, Coppola and Klimovsky were more aligned with the documentary tendencies of the Parisian avant-garde that would lead to Cinema vérité, with representative works including the city symphonies by Ruttman and Jean Vigo's *À propos de Nice* (1930). In any case, these were their creators' initial audiovisual experiences, and they were very experimental indeed, though, in the course of history, they would eventually lose their label as "amateur" productions. We may thus ask ourselves if, in light of these artists' subsequent careers and successes, we might still consider early productions within a given medium as mere experiments and amateur works that lacked professionalism, or whether they were true works of art from the onset.

We might also consider the textual experimentation in screenplays and novelisations of films that was generally taken on by artists and intellectuals from the literary and journalistic world with evident ties to the film club movement. We might consider these

³⁷⁴ This Croatian film director was very important to the European avant-gardes. He boasted close ties to film clubism and directed many movies, documentaries, and short films, at both the amateur and the professional level.

screenplay attempts within the amateur film club phenomenon. We would thus find many authors with ties to film clubs who sought to introduce their ideas into the film field through their experience in the field of writing—for instance, María Luz Morales and Carles Soldevila³⁷⁵ (who had ties to Morales as well as to the Barcelona Film Club). As for Cine club Mexicano, Emilio Armero attempted to produce García Lorca's³⁷⁶ screenplay. Likewise, members of the magazine *Contemporáneos* (who were known as “Los contemporáneos”), experimented with a myriad of film-related techniques in their texts.³⁷⁷

Considering these reflections on amateur cinema, we should compare film clubists' interest and participation in the film medium with that of people of the working class. In her book on mass culture and tango in the Argentina of the 1930s, Gil Mariño delves into how tango mediated the relationship between mass audiences and the film phenomenon's apogee. Part of her argument is that musicals represented a field of social ascendance for Argentine audiences, and the dance's ties to film made tango appearance onscreen widespread. Consequently, the “narratives of these films consolidated the metaphor of the popularization of paths of socioeconomic ascent that stood in contrast—and even in opposition to—marriage and liberal professions, the most consecrated paths of high society”³⁷⁸ (Gil Mariño 2015, 154). In this sense, there is a certain class-based contrast in the way that different social sectors participated in film. The high society that Gil Mariño refers to involves those who would go to the film club and take up 16mm cameras in order to provide their surrounding community with properly cinematographic artistic productions. They also published in cultural magazines. As Hafter (2012) notes in his study of the magazine *Síntesis* (which also printed texts on the Cine Club de Buenos Aires),³⁷⁹ writers and intellectuals from the Argentine and Hispanic field in general appropriated film as a medium through their writing in cultural magazines during the first few decades of the twentieth century.³⁸⁰ Through such writing, they would theorize upon the medium while developing a prose stylized with cinematic echoes—which was also the case in Catalonia.

Could film clubs have attempted to bring together different social classes and their participation in the film medium, and thus these two ways of understanding film? Ideally, openness toward all kinds of audiences would lead to massive participation in film screenings. To understand this further, we'd need information on how much

³⁷⁵ For a deeper exploration of this author's works, as well as of pieces by other authors of the same time and context, regarding their film techniques, see the thesis by Teresa Iribarren (2007).

³⁷⁶ James Oles cites Amero, who said that García Lorca wrote the screenplay in just a few hours, while sitting in Amero's house. “Go ahead,” he said when he finished, “see what you can do with this. Maybe something will come of it,” [“Adelante, me dijo cuando lo terminé, mira qué puedes hacer con esto. A lo mejor sale algo”] Amero reportedly said (Oles 2002, 96). Oles is citing an interview between Richard Diers and Amero, “Un guión cinematográfico de Lorca,” published in *Revista de Occidente* 211 (December 1998).

³⁷⁷ See Aurelio de los Reyes's “Aproximación de los contemporáneos al cine” (de los Reyes 1994).

³⁷⁸ “[...] narrativas de estas películas consolidaban la metáfora de la popularización de las vías de ascenso socio-económico, diferentes —y hasta enfrentadas— al matrimonio y las profesiones liberales, que eran los caminos consagrados de los sectores altos de la sociedad [...]”

³⁷⁹ I have not been able to consult these texts. Yet, one example was published in *Síntesis* on the occasion of Benjamin Fondane's visit, referred to in this chapter.

³⁸⁰ Most of the members of Cine Club de Buenos Aires came from the literature and photography field.

attending a screening cost and how publicity was disseminated. We would thus be able to evaluate whether prices were accessible to the working classes, considering the difference between ticket prices at film clubs and movie theaters. We only have partial access to such information,³⁸¹ but we might observe other clubs, such as the Barcelona Film Club (see Chapter 3.1). A similar club to the Cine Club de Buenos Aires, its member ticket prices were much more expensive than what a working-class person would could afford. As to the dissemination of the Cine Club de Buenos Aires's activities, while most publicity was printed in cultural magazines that had ties to the clubs, we may also find articles about the film club in the far-reaching newspaper *La Nación*. This was one of the most important media outlets in the country, with one of the highest print runs, and it espoused a liberal-conservative perspective. Other outlets in which we may find references to the film club's activities would include *Sur*, *Síntesis*, *Nervio*, *Nosotros*, *La Literatura Argentina*, and *La Gaceta Literaria*, the latter of which was printed in Spain. All of these cultural magazines were directed by intellectuals and artists, and their dissemination would have been far more limited than that of national newspapers, while, most likely, their audiences weren't as varied. Nonetheless, the politics of the intellectuals at their helms may have been diverse, as I noted above.

Given all of this information, most likely, the film clubs under study did not bring together two forms of participation—with elitist and less-pretentious participants alike—since the practices and strategies that defined these initiatives left out the working classes. Yet, we may determine that, at film clubs where non-professional, amateur participation wasn't associated to avant-garde circles or festivals, there is a high chance that such practices may have included the working classes. When it came to films or film club initiatives directed by artists and intellectuals, chances were that people outside the upper class were not involved. However, film clubs aiming to reverse these trends by promoting participation among those who were disdainfully referred to as "film opiophiles"³⁸² did exist. For example, we may look to Cine club Mexicano, which did not see much success in its attempt to invite working classes to their screenings, as noted in the chapter on said club (3.3). Such initiatives existed in many other places, too, such as in France (Gauthier 1999) and Central and Northern Europe (Hagener 2007). In this study, I will also describe Club Cinematográfico de Horta in Barcelona (1923) and Cine club de Buenos Aires's failed attempts at openness. Likewise, we should keep in mind that Latin America's cultural revolution of the 1960s would bring in new practices that would profoundly affect the film medium, so also their practices, with the birth of the Third Cinema.³⁸³

3.2.1.4 *The Cine Club de Buenos Aires's Programming*

³⁸¹ According to the publicity for the independent film session printed by Amigos del Arte for September to October of 1931, the price was 24 pesos. I have not been able to gauge the purchasing power of 24 pesos in relation to the salaries of 1931 in Argentina.

³⁸² "[...] opiómanos del cinematógrafo."

³⁸³ I discuss this matter more deeply in the first chapter of this thesis, in the state of the art.

Here, I would like to reconstruct the Cine Club de Buenos Aires's programming, since there is no public document available on the matter. Though Horacio Coppola seems to have kept a copy of the printed programs that were handed out at film club screenings, as Martín Peña (2008, 62) notes, these programs have not been digitized and are unavailable to researchers. Perhaps Martín Peña had the luck of consulting them, given his detailed explanations of the kinds of films screened at the club. Martín Peña groups films by genre (such as comedy), author, and nationality. This is similar to what Couselo does in his seminal text (2008).³⁸⁴ In contrast, what I aim to accomplish here is to reconstruct the sessions one by one, in order to facilitate subsequent research on this film club. We might thus acquire a broader perspective of its functioning. We lack information on the days of most of the screenings, so, instead, we might provide information by season or session. As for the second cycle, we lack information entirely. Regarding the first and third, as we will see, the data remains quite scattered. Thus, we have gathered information from various primary and secondary sources in order to reconstruct it for Annex 4. This would have been more effective if we had had access to all of the primary sources. However, some of them are unavailable. As for secondary sources, the fact that writers often commented on the programming has led to imprecision, and sometimes the primary sources from which their information was extracted is not specified.

One of the findings that our reconstruction of the club's programming presents is that the film club may have operated beyond 1932. Indeed, the club was functioning in 1932, despite what has been argued elsewhere (Couselo 2008; Peña 2008; Cuarterolo 2017). As seen in Annex 4, this hypothesis is bolstered by a primary source, a text in *Nervio* magazine by writer Luis Orsetti. Though the author may have made a mistake, there are far too many reviews of screened movies published in 1932 for us to think that Orsetti was wrong. It is possible that the fourth cycle never came to exist, but the third cycle may very well have continued into 1932, judging by the amount of reviews of new programming announced in the magazine *Nervio* for 1932.

Before considering the film club's programming, we might note that all of these sessions, up until the fourth and last that Orsetti mentions (1932, 50), were preceded by conferences. These were celebrated at the Amigos del Arte location, as well as in La Peña (as mentioned earlier), Cine Hindú (at least once), and the Empire Theatre, according to our sources. It is possible that the films may have been screened elsewhere as well, especially at downtown movie theaters, during the last few cycles.

Following our initial approach of the film club's programming, we may note that the productions screened at the film club were contemporary at the time. In fact, most of the programmed films were produced and launched from 1925 on, which attests to how quickly the film club acquired them. The Barcelona Film Club, whose programming we do know, screened more films from the 1920s and 1910s than the Cine Club de Buenos Aires did, even though the Barcelona Film Club opened its doors in the same year as the Argentine club (1929). The same is true of Cine Club Mexicano. Despite its opening years

³⁸⁴ Noting that "the programming for 1930 was not laid out in detail, nor in other sources" ["la programación de 1930 no aparece detallada, ni en otras fuentes"], blaming commercial journalism for not caring about this activity, which had not been promoted by its distributors and screening circuits (Couselo 2008).

after the Cine Club de Buenos Aires, it screened fewer contemporary films. The fact that, in 1929 and 1932, the Cine Club de Buenos Aires screened films that had been produced within the same timeframe stands out. In this sense, to researchers, it'd be quite valuable to know where these films were acquired and through whom, so that we might ascertain who performed such historically relevant mediation, despite not enjoying a central position in film historiography today.

As we have already stated, the only person whom we know to have occupied this place was Victoria Ocampo, given her arrangement of Benjamin Fondane's journey to Buenos Aires in 1929. We will come back to this topic later on, but before, we must ask ourselves who acquired all the other films for the club and how. Considering the people who founded the club, as well as their socioeconomic status, which allowed them lifelong travel, it may be that the founders took advantage of their travels in order to import films. For instance, Horacio Coppola travelled to Europe between December of 1930 and May of 1931 (Cuarterolo 2017, 192). Guillermo de Torre had close ties to members of *La Gaceta Literaria* and, thus, to Cine club Español, which would also have allowed him to send and receive films. Another possibility is that, like Benjamin Fondane, other guest speakers of Amigos del Arte and *Sur* may have brought copies along with them when travelling to Argentina, including Waldo Frank and Le Corbusier, both of whom spoke at conferences organised by Amigos del Arte in 1929 (Artundo et al. 2008, 237).³⁸⁵ Waldo Frank himself might have brought Charles Chaplin films with him so that they might be screened at the film club.³⁸⁶ Alfonso Reyes may also have been a reception channel, being Mexico's ambassador to Argentina from 1927 to 1931, meaning he was in the country when the Cine Club de Buenos Aires started operations. If Alfonso Reyes was a mediator, he may have brought films into Buenos Aires using diplomatic mail services, perhaps through Jaime Torres Bodet. Transporting film reels via diplomatic mail seems to have been a common practice in the first two decades of the twentieth century, as Alexandra Kollontai did for the distribution of Soviet cinema in Mexico City in 1927 (de los Reyes 2020, 154).

In this sense, the diversity and number of films screened at the Cine Club de Buenos Aires are significant. In contrast to what unfolded in Barcelona and Mexico City's first film clubs, which are also analysed in this thesis, the Cine Club de Buenos Aires screened far more films, the initiative was more long-lived, and the films, more diverse. This would

³⁸⁵ Waldo Frank gave three conferences, the third of which was hosted by Sociedad de Conferencias. The second must have referred to the renowned Charles Chaplin, considering its title: "Prophets in North American Modern art. Isadora Duncan and Dance. Alfredo Stieglitz and Painting. Eugenio O'Neil and Theater. The Development of Jazz. Chaplin and the Revolution" ["Profetas en el arte moderno de Norte América. Isadora Duncan y la danza. Alfredo Stieglitz y la pintura. Eugenio O'Neil y el teatro. El desarrollo del jazz. Chaplin y la revolución"] (Artundo et al. 2008, 237). In July of that same year (1929), Waldo Frank also published a text in the magazine *Contemporáneos* (Mexico 1928-1931) titled "A Portrait of Charles Chaplin" ["retrato de Charles Chaplin"]. Let us recall that the magazine *Contemporáneos* enjoyed close ties to Cine club Mexicano (1931), which also screened films by Charles Chaplin. In fact, according to Rodríguez Álvarez (2002a), Agustín Aragón Leiva knew Waldo Frank, joining him to boycott producer Upton Sinclair given that he stopped financing Eisenstein's film in Mexico. Agustín Aragón Leiva played a key role in Cine Club Mexicano and secured several films for the club (though Lola Álvarez Bravo likely secured many as well, as argued in this chapter). This is proof of Waldo Frank's interest in film.

³⁸⁶ There may have been mentions of this in the correspondence between Victoria Ocampo and Waldo Frank, given their lifelong friendship.

imply that the Cine Club de Buenos Aires's sources were likely different than those of other clubs. In Barcelona, screenings depended on whether producers would lend the club their films. In Mexico, reels were bought and sold at unexpected places (as Lola Álvarez Bravo notes), or a given film club member would manage to acquire a reel thanks to his or her contacts, as Agustín Aragón Leiva did with *Natalidad*.³⁸⁷ Most likely, it was the Argentine club participants' symbolic and economic resources³⁸⁸ that gave them access to such diverse material.

Understanding the physical circulation of reels could unveil many clues regarding the film club's functioning and its members' work within it. Yet, tracing material circulation is immense and onerous work (Hagener, Opitz, and Tellmann 2020). Secondary sources often remark upon how early avant-garde and Soviet films were screened at the Cine Club de Buenos Aires. This information has been gleaned from Guillermo de Torre's article in *La Gaceta Literaria* (1930a), and from the press releases published in *La Nación* on Benjamin Fondane's journey to Buenos Aires. The fact that the person who mediated the acquisition of films was a woman is telling of the Argentine cultural context of the time and also speaks to the relevance of women like Victoria Ocampo in Argentina, who not only disseminated film nationally, but transnationally, too —though we might also highlight Lola Álvarez Bravo in México.

Among the avant-garde films screened at these sessions, *Un chien andalou's* gracing of the Cine Club de Buenos Aires is often highlighted given that it was screened there before being projected at Cineclub Español, only one month after its Paris premiere. The screening of avant-garde films was common in the first European film clubs (Hagener 2007) as well as in Latin American ones especially before during the silent period, up to the Second World War. Regarding the Cine Club de Buenos Aires, Martín Peña (2008) notes that the film club's programming was informed by the fact that Horacio Coppola and León Klimovsky read French and English magazines. Beyond films from the Parisian avant-garde, the club also showed Soviet and German avant-garde films. Another independent film session not only included films from the French avant-garde, but also films from other European countries like Holland, Italy, Czechoslovakia, England, and Belgium. Peña also notes that these "films were imported for these exhibitions."³⁸⁹ As Couselo (2008) writes, using the label "films independientes" to refer to avant-garde films stands in direct allusion to the first International Conference of Independent Cinema, celebrated in La Sarraz in 1929. The likes of Eisenstein and Moussinac attended the conference, which dealt with film clubs, independent production, and movie theaters for art films, with representatives drawing comparisons between the situations of their various countries. While we don't really know about the direct or indirect ties between Amigos del Arte and the latter opening conference, the fact that the category "independent film" was used at the club implies that there must have been a certain understanding of such films among club members.³⁹⁰ The category "independent films" emerged from said conference, with the term prevailing over prior labels used for such

³⁸⁷ See Rodríguez Álvarez (2002a).

³⁸⁸ And its relationship to Amigos del Arte, which was fundamental in this sense.

³⁸⁹ "[...] films importados para estas exhibiciones."

³⁹⁰ Perhaps through the review of the conference in La Sarraz published in *La Gaceta Literaria* (Giménez Caballero 1929).

films in other contexts—in Argentina, for instance, the films that Fondane had imported were labeled as “films puros” (Author 1929g). Benjamin Fondane himself titled his conference “Presentación de films puros: homenaje a Victoria Ocampo” (Couselo 2008, 250).³⁹¹ This disparity in the way that avant-garde films were labelled is telling of the importance of the material circulation of films as well as the value of the networks in which they circulated when they were endowed with meaning.³⁹²

The screening of comedy, especially from the United States and France, was common in film clubs in the '20s and early '30s.³⁹³ Charles Chaplin was especially beloved and his films frequently graced film club programs, as in the Barcelona Film Club and Cine club de México. Buster Keaton was also often onscreen, while Harry Langdon was honored with many an homage. Martín Peña notes that this devotion to comedy may have come from the surrealist circle's interest in such film: surrealists saw comedy as revolutionary, as it was able to generate social criticism while toying with the absurd (2008). Nonetheless, beyond the surrealists, comedy films—especially those from the United States—were very popular in commercial movie theaters of the time as well.

Animated film—created by various studios and artists—also often made its way into the Cine Club de Buenos Aires's programs. We don't yet know whether such screenings were enjoyed by young people, or whether these were meant for children's sessions.

Another kind of film that enjoyed praise among critics with close ties to film clubs was Soviet film, which was often screened. Soviet film was quite common in European and Latin American film clubs, given that, to cinephiles, it presented the ideal of a “parallel modernity” (Welles 2017). It enjoyed broad commentary, even when the films weren't screened. Indeed, an organiser from the Barcelona Film Club lamented that *Potemkin* didn't premiere there (Ferran Coromines 1930), instead premiering at Sessions Mirador (1930), while a Cine club Mexicano organiser, Agustín Aragón Leiva, complained that even though some Soviet films were screened, there weren't as many as he would have liked. He also complained to Sergei Eisenstein that he was unable to get his hands on his films (Rodríguez Álvarez 2002a). As we shall see, people were interested in Soviet film independently of the political sentiments of film club organisers. The political differences between Cine Club de Buenos Aires members, LEAR associates, and Cine club Mexicano's members were manifold. Nonetheless, they shared aesthetic tastes—despite their political ideologies.

3.2.2 Victoria Ocampo: Her Brand of Feminism

³⁹¹ Citing *Síntesis* magazine, year III, no. 28 (September 1929, 9-20). This same magazine specifies that this conference was meant to accompany the screening of the aforementioned avant-garde films screened at the first two sessions of Cine Club de Buenos Aires in August of 1929. The above cited article in *La Nación* also refers to “films puros.”

³⁹² For a deeper reflection on the matter, see Clariana-Rodagut and Hagener (Clariana-Rodagut and Hagener 2023).

³⁹³ See the state of the art in the first section of this thesis.

Undoubtedly, Victoria Ocampo (1890-1979) was a renowned Argentine patron, writer, and editor. In contrast to the other women whom I'm addressing in this thesis, Ocampo has enjoyed ample study, is often cited, and has been highly valued nationally and internationally. Numerous studies deal with her work in a myriad of cultural fields (Leston 2015), in her institutions (Giuliani 2020), and in the publishing field via her magazine and press (Gramuglio 1983; Pasternac 2002b; Sitman 2003), as well as with her role in the field of translation (Sarlo 1998; Willson 2004). Scholars have also addressed her social networks (Doll y Salomone 1998; F. Ocampo 2009; Liendo 2017), cosmopolitanism (Vázquez 2018), and gender perspective (Owen Steiner 1999; Salomone 2006; Queirolo 2009; Amicola 2019; Streppone 2020), analysing her from different angles (Doris 1981; Matamoro 1986). Thus, I would not like to repeat what has already been said about this essential woman to the Argentine and transnational cultural field of the first half of the twentieth century.

Rather, this thesis will only focus on two matters that I have deemed of particular interest and that have been little studied in secondary sources on Victoria Ocampo. The first matter is film. Though film was of great interest to Ocampo, she has not been addressed in this regard, except for Leston's work.³⁹⁴ The other topic, which is fundamental to this approach, is that of the social relationships between Victoria Ocampo and other women. Much has been written—in passing and in general—on Victoria Ocampo's social relationships. These were varied, manifold, transnational, and highly relevant to her personal and professional life. However, no study has focused specifically on her relationships with other women and the value that such relations might have added to her professional career and personal life. To address this, I use a database and visualisations that will allow me to understand Ocampo's place within her social networks as well as their origins and articulations. I believe it important to note that, even though these two topics have been kept at the margins in other studies on Victoria Ocampo, they were central to her, judging by the space that she granted them.

3.2.2.1 *What Film Meant to Victoria Ocampo*

There is no question that film played a key role in Ocampo's life, as we may note in one of the articles published in the first issue of *Sur* magazine,³⁹⁵ Benjamin Fondane's "El cinema en el atoladero" [Film: In a Tight Spot]. In this article, Fondane writes a diatribe against spoken film—a common topic at the time. Yet, in contrast to other writers, Fondane doesn't seem to have believe sound film to be a total loss. Rather, he provides nuance in saying that, the way film was being produced at the time, it was destroying the cinematographic language that silent film had worked so hard to start to create. Let

³⁹⁴ Excepting Paz Leston's book *Victoria Ocampo va al cine* (2015).

³⁹⁵ *Sur* (1931-1992) was a magazine that Victoria Ocampo directed and edited up until the end of her life. It had ties to the Amigos del Arte association, and it translated and published important writers of the time. For instance, Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* was published in Spanish for the first time in *Sur*. The novel was published in installments, in 1936, in translation by Jorge Luis Borges. The magazine then led to the foundation of a press of the same name in 1933 (Pasternac 2002a). *Sur* magazine and the publishing house of the same name were important articulators in the Argentine and transnational cultural fields, especially in Europe and the Americas.

us recall that the author had travelled to Buenos Aires two years before publishing the text—bringing with him several avant-garde films that would premiere at the Cine Club de Buenos Aires, as we have already noted. He also reviewed the film club’s first screening (see Annex 4).

I believe that the fact that Fondane published in the first issue of *Sur* magazine, combined with the fact that Ocampo arranged for his stay in Buenos Aires two years earlier, stand as strong proof of Ocampo’s proclivity for film. Though she was not able to remain involved as much as she would like to, her intention seems clear. As has been stated by many sources, Victoria Ocampo wanted the Russian director Sergei Eisenstein to film an Argentine version of *¡Que viva México!* after Eisenstein left Mexico (Leston 2015) in 1932. Despite seeking out finance for the project, Victoria Ocampo never managed to secure it. Still, she tried to push the project again a few years later, requesting that Vittorio De Sica shoot a film in Argentina (Leston 2015, 99). Either of these projects would have easily gone down in history, establishing Ocampo’s name within the transnational film field. Yet, the film project that ultimately did get financed in Argentina, *Tararira* (1936), directed by Benjamin Fondane, was never distributed or commercially screened (Aguilar 2011). Its only copy seems to have been lost. In any case, had this avant-garde film been shot ten years earlier, Aguilar (2011) notes, it would have stood among the other productions that Fondane had imported to Buenos Aires. Gonzalo Aguilar believes that, ten years later, when the film was finally finished, there was no longer a public for it, since the arrival of sound film had waned interest in experimental film in Buenos Aires.

Furthermore, Victoria Ocampo also wrote about film,³⁹⁶ referencing the film medium multiple times in her correspondence, *Testimonios (Testimonials)*, and in the commentaries on film that she published in her magazine.³⁹⁷ She charged her friend Jorge Luis Borges with writing reviews of premieres,³⁹⁸ with his opinions becoming well known in history for their arbitrary nature, according to Leston (2015, 45). In somewhat general terms, Victoria Ocampo believed that film needed to truthfully reflect reality, or whatever was being portrayed.³⁹⁹ Thus, when Italian neorealism emerged, Ocampo pronounced that that was the path that the Argentine industry needed to follow. And she would prove her acumen, as, at the time, Latin American neorealism was about to emerge, spearheaded by the second generation of film clubists.⁴⁰⁰

3.2.2.2 Victoria Ocampo’s Correspondence as a Form of Feminist Activism and Creative Writing

³⁹⁶ Including letters to film directors and artist of interest to her, such as Jean Renoir (V. Ocampo 1980, 79).

³⁹⁷ Eduardo Paz Leston (2015) has done monumental work in compiling and commenting upon the articles, reviews, and op-eds that Victoria Ocampo wrote on film.

³⁹⁸ Compiled in *Borges en y sobre cine*. Edited by Edgardo Cozarinsky, Buenos Aires: Fundamentos, 1981.

³⁹⁹ Aligning with the tenets of Italian neorealism, the current of realist thought spearheaded by critics like André Bazin and Siegfried Kracauer.

⁴⁰⁰ I delve deeper into this idea in chapter 2.3 of this thesis.

The sociability that Victoria Ocampo built with other women throughout her lifetime—which I am especially interested in—cannot be approached independently of her relationship to the feminist movement and the discussions on the role of women in society of the time. As noted, much has been written about Victoria Ocampo’s particular brand of feminism, so I will not expound upon it in detail. I would merely like to adumbrate how important her relationships with women were throughout her life, determining her career. Ocampo promoted a trans-Atlantic sociability in which women—both European and Latin American—played significant roles. These roles tended to be less visible than those of men—who made up the bulk of the collaborators in most of her editorial projects, i.e., in the magazine and publishing house *Sur*.⁴⁰¹ Yet, women were prominent in Ocampo’s social network and helped construct her ideas and literary works. Most of the literature has exclusively focused on a single relationship set (Ocampo-Woolf or Ocampo-Mistral), or on the impact of Ocampo’s sociability in one context alone, such as in Buenos Aires. But I aim to analyse her social relationships with women in terms of how they were built within the framework of the feminist movements of the early twentieth century. This perspective will also allow me to understand the crucial role that Ocampo played in articulating a network of exchange and collaboration among Ibero-American women in the cultural field, a role that she maintained well through her correspondence and many other activities, up until her death.

In this sense, I view the letter format as holding significant value for Ocampo throughout her lifetime. It is in her letters that I find most of her thoughts and ideas, as well as excerpts of her lectures. Notably, her most well-known publication is *Testimonios*, a compilation of letters, among other kind of texts. These letters were addressed to multiple intellectuals of her time, but also to made-up people⁴⁰² and cities, such as Buenos Aires.⁴⁰³ Letters proved an ideal format by which Ocampo could weave meaning through comings and goings that paradoxically defied the instabilities of space-time. Ocampo’s letters prove that while letter-writing constitutes an intimate form of expression, it often spills into the public sphere. The letters attest to how the actors, actants, and organisations comprising these networks were not isolated from each other, despite the breadth of the geographic space that may have separated them. As the editors of the correspondence between Ocampo, Gabriela Mistral, and Victoria Kent write, “all of the actual and potential collaborations initiated through friendships, romantic or not, pave the way for political pacts and patronage agreements,” but also for the sociability between these women, or what the editors call “queer sociability” (Horan, Urioste Azcorra, and Tompkins 2019, 21). This term refers to a particular form of engagement in relationships in which all parties help and care for each other, while yielding a privileged space to the relationship itself. Friendship was key to these women’s work and to how they organised their lives, defining where they lived, travelled, and worked, as well as with whom they associated. This was evidently the case

⁴⁰¹ Both projects played a prominent role in the Argentine and Latin American milieu, but also in the whole Spanish-speaking area. For more details, see María Cristina Arambel-Güñfázú, *La escritura de Victoria Ocampo: Memorias, seducción, “collage”* (Barcelona: Edicial, 1993).

⁴⁰² This is the case of the music aficionado with whom she wrote a fictional exchange of letters in the first volume of *Testimonios, primera serie* (V. Ocampo 1935, 92–125).

⁴⁰³ Dated January 5, 1975, see *Victoria Ocampo. Correspondencia* (V. Ocampo 1980, 105–7).

for Ocampo and Kent, a Spanish lawyer and politician who intensely worked for women's civil rights and for the Second Spanish Republic (1931-1939). The idea of "queer sociability" aligns with Anzaldúa's concept of collaborative writing, which considers the reader's voice as part of the creative writing process (Anzaldúa 2009).

Certainly, there is something queer about the intense exchange between these women who lived at the margins of their expected social roles and tried to subvert them, despite being blamed or judged by a white, patriarchal hegemony that punished those who sought different paths. It was precisely in these networks of collaboration that women found strength. Certainly, we may glean a marked need for dialogue, as opposed to the need for an imposing, prescriptive monologue deemed to be overbearingly male—a feature that Mary Louise Pratt also sees in the canonization processes, which she views as fostered to rule over classes, genders, and races (Pratt 2021). Ocampo also refers to this in her text "La mujer y su expresión" (*Women and their expression*), which she read at a radio-telephone conference in 1936, aired in Spain and Argentina: "I'd like to ask you to interrupt me. This monologue does not make me happy. I want to speak with you, not to myself. I want to feel your presence. And how can I that know you are present, that you are listening to me, if you don't interrupt me? / I fear that this feeling may be too feminine. While monologues won't suffice for the happiness of women, they seem to have sufficed for men's for centuries."⁴⁰⁴

In short, letters stand as objects of Ocampo's creative writing and as the source of her feminine sociability and feminist activism. Her networks of collaboration contributed to the liberation of white privileged Western women and to forging a collective identity. As Ocampo says, "Our small, individual lives won't count for much, but all of our lives together will weigh on history in such a way that they'll change its course. We need to keep this in mind constantly so as not to be discouraged by our personal failures and not lose sight of the importance of our mission"⁴⁰⁵ (V. Ocampo 1941, 283).⁴⁰⁶ The experience of suffering from the dismissive treatment of the patriarchal hegemony was (and still is) so paralyzing that the safe space of the letter provided solace and freedom of speech to women who trusted in the experience of other women.⁴⁰⁷ After Ocampo published the

⁴⁰⁴ "[...] quisiera deciros: 'Interrumpídmme. Este monólogo no me hace feliz. Es a vosotros a quienes quiero hablar y no a mí misma Os quiero sentir presentes. ¿Y cómo podría yo saber que estáis presentes, que me escucháis, si no me interrumpís? / Me temo que este sentimiento sea muy femenino. Si el monólogo no basta a la felicidad de las mujeres, parece haber bastado desde hace siglos a la de los hombres."

⁴⁰⁵ "Nuestras pequeñas vidas individuales contarán poco, pero todas nuestras vidas reunidas pesarán de tal modo en la historia que harán variar su curso. En eso debemos pensar continuamente para no desanimarnos por los fracasos personales y para no perder de vista la importancia de nuestra misión."

⁴⁰⁶ In this same text, "La mujer y su expresión" (1936) she would later state that, "it is this feeling of maternity toward the humanity of future women that should sustain us today. We need to support each other with the conviction that the quality of this future humanity depends on ours, that we are responsible for it" (V. Ocampo 1941, 284) ["Es este sentimiento de maternidad hacia la humanidad femenina futura el que debe sostenernos hoy. Tenemos que apoyarnos en la convicción de que la calidad de esa humanidad futura depende de la nuestra, que somos responsables de ella"].

⁴⁰⁷ Victoria Ocampo alludes to the challenges that women must face in order to write: "All the women who have written have, in some way or another, taken part in Jane Austen's gesture, hiding her manuscript under a towel when visitors or servants walked into her room. Everyone who has confided in me in this respect, from the Princess of Brancovan to Condesa de Noailles, Virginia Stephen, and Virginia Woolf, have faced terrible and absurd difficulties, this ripping apart that one has to bear" (V. Ocampo 1941, 34). ["Todas las que han escrito han hecho, de uno o de otro modo, el gesto de Jane Austen

first essay of her career, *De Francesca a Beatrice* (1924)—whose second edition was printed in *Revista de Occidente* in 1928—she was publicly criticised by her friends José Ortega y Gasset and Paul Groussac. She published *La laguna de los nenúfares* two years later, but another ten years would elapse before her next publication (Barral 2020, 11). Ortega y Gasset was a friend of the family and would judge Ocampo's first book as pedantic and unmeasured (Sarlo 1998, 90). Groussac, as an example of the anachronic society in which Ocampo was immersed, commented upon her essay as if it were too daring, too public, especially if she dared reference master Dante. Likewise, Ángel de Estrada would deem the book immodest, given its autobiographical allusions to adultery (Salomone 2006, 75). In this sense, the essay's publication would emerge as a liberation for Ocampo's personal life and professional career, as she dared to cut "the ties of affection and morality that had put her in a lover's yoke for years. With this book, her fear of scandal came to an end [...] she touched the limit of the socially acceptable, of the prejudices in which gender and genre intersect (what can a woman do or not do in literature?), of the legitimacy of certain topics and of the explicitness of the relationship between the literary and the autobiographic" (Sarlo 1998, 93).⁴⁰⁸ This is only one example of the public and private grievances that she described in her texts, which cast light on the subjugation she experienced as a white privileged Latin American woman—a condition that propelled her emancipation. Victoria Ocampo was criticised again when she spoke before "a brilliant assembly of writers"⁴⁰⁹ at a PEN Club Conference in Buenos Aires and said that she only dared speak to them as a "common reader" when discussing Virginia Woolf. Marinetti interpreted Ocampo's self-portrayal as a "common reader" very poorly, which "would continue to float around the atmosphere of this illustrated assembly until the very end"⁴¹⁰ (V. Ocampo 1941, 56). Afterwards, when the conference was published ("*Virginia Woolf, Orlando y Cía*"), Ocampo felt the need to cite Ortega y Gasset in order to explain who would constitute a "common reader."⁴¹¹

ocultando su manuscrito bajo un secante cuando los visitantes o los criados entraban en su cuarto. Todas las que me han hecho confidencias a este respecto, tanto la Princesa de Brancovan, después Condesa de Noailles, como Virginia Stephen, después Virginia Woolf, han tenido terribles y absurdas dificultades que vencer, desgarramientos que soportar". She herself declared that, as a woman writer, she had to expend half her energy on getting her head out of the water, which pushed her to declare herself a feminist. "Half my energy. So I'm a feminist 100 per cent; and not just for myself, but for all the women in the world, beginning with the Argentine" (Christ 1972, 10). The aforementioned quotation, and the previous one too, underscores the perspective of a Western, privileged white woman from which she articulates and to whom she directs her discourse. Her claim that her protective position encompass all women mirrors the superior disposition historically espoused by privileged Western white women through the discourse of 'white feminism', a construct that did not face significant challenge until the 1970s.

⁴⁰⁸ "[...] los vínculos afectivos y morales que la habían sostenido en una relación de amantazgo durante años. Con este libro termina el miedo al escándalo [...] ha tocado el límite de lo socialmente aceptable, de los prejuicios donde se cruzan género sexual y género literario (¿qué puede y qué no puede hacer una mujer con la literatura?), de la legitimidad de ciertos temas y de la explicitación de las relaciones entre orden literario y orden autobiográfico". With this first publication, she made public her writerly being and her desires as an adult woman. This gesture would lead to the expected and much feared familiar and social rejection that were necessary for her to pave the path toward her own self, the Victoria Ocampo that she would ultimately become. See Manuela Barral (2020, 11) and Ronald Christ (1972, 10).

⁴⁰⁹ "[...] una brillante asamblea de literatos."

⁴¹⁰ "[...] siguió flotando hasta el fin en la atmósfera de la ilustre asamblea."

⁴¹¹ For her episode with Marinetti, see Ocampo (1941, 56).

Another two affronts that would go down in history include Ocampo's disenchantment after meeting Hermann Keyserling and believing that he would become her spiritual teacher. Ocampo travelled to Europe to see him but then realized that he believed that in order for them to join in "spiritual communion, they would require carnal communion,"⁴¹² as she writes in her *Autobiografía V* (p. 24. cited by Tompkins in Horan, Urioste Azcorra, and Tompkins 2019, 124).⁴¹³ The second affront would happen when, as representative of the Unión Argentina de Mujeres, she spoke to the president of the Supreme Court and, after a very embarrassing conversation and much humiliation, she realized that the subordination of women remained very much in place. She writes about this episode in an essay on Virginia Woolf, "Virginia Woolf en su diario" [Virginia Woolf in her diary].

Her experience is also inextricable from her education as an Argentine patrician. As Sarlo notes, for women of her class, learning foreign languages was meant for feminine consumption, not production. She would learn English, French, Italian, mathematics, and history, but she was not allowed to leave her house on her own,⁴¹⁴ or to study theater—which Victoria Ocampo said she would have liked—⁴¹⁵ nor could she read anything she wanted. When writing about Virginia Woolf, Ocampo would often compare the former's freedom to her lack thereof.⁴¹⁶ Her education was very limited by her condition as a patrician woman. Significantly, she often shared that her father would tell her that, if she had been born a man, she would have been able to pursue a career.⁴¹⁷ In this respect, see her reflections on the matter in *Autobiografía* and *Testimonios*. However, Ocampo subverted this by making her knowledge of languages productive. In

⁴¹² "[...] comunión espiritual, debía incluirse la comunión carnal."

⁴¹³ This experience seems to have led to great learning, as she expressed in her reflection on *Orlando*: "like everyone who is obsessed with the cult of the great writers, like everyone who has transferred their gullibility to these gods, there is still a hard lesson to learn. And it is that writers put their perfection in their works and not in their lives, outside of themselves and not in themselves" ["como todos los obsesionados por el culto de los grandes escritores, como todos los que han transferido a estos dioses su parte de credulidad, tienen todavía que aprender una dura lección. Y es que los artistas ponen su perfección en sus obras y no en su vida, fuera de sí mismos y no en sí mismos"]. For her altercation with Keyserling, see her *Autobiografía V*, 24. Cited by Tompkins (Horan, Urioste Azcorra, and Tompkins 2019, 124).

⁴¹⁴ When she attended classes by Henri Bergson in La Sorbonne, as well as other philosophy and literature classes at Collège de France, she was always accompanied by a governess.

⁴¹⁵ In her memoirs, she often wrote that she would have liked to pursue theater, but that her condition as a woman of her status would never have allowed for it (V. Ocampo 1957, 22). She stated this once again in 1972, in an interview with Ronald Christ. She did ultimately take private theater lessons with Marguerite Moreno (1972, 9). These lessons, along with the friendship she established with Delfina Bunge through their correspondence, as Streppone notes, led her to resignify the idea of womanhood that she was raised with in order to move past the limits imposed on women of her context, as an adult (Streppone 2020).

⁴¹⁶ Both had received an upper-class education which, in a way, brought them together despite their different contexts. Sarlo refers to this as "patrician unculture" when describing the situation that the young Ocampo was in before she married and left that confinement behind, only to end up all the worse, having entered an unhappy marriage that she could not divorce herself from, due to it being prohibited (Sarlo 1988, 89).

⁴¹⁷ In her *Autobiografía* she would write: "My perspective was that of a capable adolescent whose endowments cannot be fully used or developed through an adequate education, and who intuits this daily" (V. Ocampo 1983, 16, cited in Sarlo 1988, 86) [Mi punto de vista era el de una adolescente capaz, cuyas dotes no puede aprovechar ni desarrollar plenamente por vía de una educación adecuada, y que lo intuye a diario"]. Evidently, she felt trapped by the drama of these limitations in her daily life.

Ocampo's first essay, she cites quotes from multiple languages, showcasing her broad knowledge of Western cultural tradition and thus defying gender conventions and class-based morals.

It was after her meeting with Virginia Woolf in 1935 that Ocampo decided to publish her first series of essays and letters, *Testimonios*.⁴¹⁸ In fact, all of her writing—not just her *Testimonios* and autobiography, are autobiographical in nature.⁴¹⁹ Given this fact, we will analyse her professional career as tied to her private life. Indeed, Ocampo created a literary genre at the intersection of the diary, the art review, and the chronicle, which was based on her private life and her experience as a woman. Ocampo “set out to make a literary genre with public, feminist, Argentine, and [continental] American purposes out of a genre that had been relegated to private life”⁴²⁰ (Streppone 2020, 111-32). We may also venture to say that her kind of writing is diametrically opposed to modern rationalist and objectivist ways of generating knowledge (Vázquez 2006, 1–6), as Latour would say (2007). As an example of the kind of writing we are describing, we may revisit the beginning of Ocampo's lecture on Woolf. Ocampo shared her personal experience and began her conference on Virginia Woolf with a warning: “I am going to speak to you as a ‘common reader’ of Virginia Woolf's work. I am going to talk about the impression of her that I keep. Don't expect pure literary critique; you'll be disappointed”⁴²¹ (V. Ocampo 1941, 13). Through the pleasure of observation and reading, from a place of fascination and subjectivity, Ocampo sought to explore and share her personal experience. The lecture continues as follows: “My meeting with the author of *Orlando* once again granted me—among other things—the certainty that nothing that I had imagined of the woman, dreamed for her, defended in her name, is false, exaggerated, or vain”⁴²² (V. Ocampo 1941, 13).⁴²³ Indeed, the encounter between the two writers in 1934, and their correspondence, prompted Ocampo to reflect upon the place of women

⁴¹⁸ A very symptomatic example of this lies in the importance that Victoria Ocampo and Virginia Woolf gave to space and their relationship with it. As Irene Chikiar (2016) notes, their homes stood as intimate spaces in which they would develop their private lives (let us recall Woolf's room of her own) but also places that housed their professional and editorial projects (Hogarth Press and Sur). To Chikiar, this occupation of space is telling of the new roles of women being constructed throughout the first two decades of the twentieth century.

⁴¹⁹ As Enrique Pezzoni writes in the 1980 edition of *Sur*, “If any writer's correspondence is a kind of autobiography, this is especially true in the case of Victoria Ocampo. These letters were not only a vehicle for her, but, above all, they were a space in which she could fully and naturally *be*” (V. Ocampo 1980, 1) [italics in the original]. “Si la correspondencia de todo escritor es una forma de autobiografía, esto es especialmente cierto en el caso de Victoria Ocampo. Las cartas no han sido para ella sólo vehículo, sino más aún, un espacio donde ser con plenitud y naturalidad.”

⁴²⁰ Streppone is referring to Cristina Viñuela (2004, 86): “Se propuso hacer de un género relegado a la vida privada, un género literario con oficio público, femenino, argentino, americano.”

⁴²¹ “Voy a hablarles a ustedes como ‘common reader’ de la obra de Virginia Woolf. Voy a hablarles de la imagen que conservo de ella. No esperen ustedes oír crítica literaria pura; se decepcionarían.”

⁴²² “Pues el encuentro con la autora de *Orlando* me ha traído una vez más —entre otras cosas— la certidumbre de que nada de lo que había yo imaginado de la mujer, soñado para ella, defendido en su nombre, es falso, exagerado, ni vano.”

⁴²³ The fact that she writes “once again brought me” [“me ha traído una vez más”] and “nothing that I had imagined of the woman” [“imagen que conservo de ella”] speak to a style of writing from the self, from the subjective, with no pretense of objectivity or imposition of knowledge.

in the literary sphere, as well as upon the apparent inferiority of women.⁴²⁴ Through the above statement, Ocampo positions herself, showing us her awareness around gender and her subsequent subversion in what simultaneously constituted a form of aesthetic renovation. She would often write about these topics, and take action, too.⁴²⁵ In Ocampo's essay "Virginia Woolf en su diario" (1954), she writes about her condition as a woman who writes and alludes to the "humiliation of bearing an arbitrary male dictatorship."⁴²⁶ In her introduction to the letters that Woolf and Ocampo exchanged, Manuela Barral writes that it was as of the two's first encounter in 1934 and their correspondence that Ocampo started to reflect upon the space that women occupied in the literary sphere. Importantly, Ocampo opens her *Testimonios* with a letter that she wrote to Virginia Woolf—marking a foundation and declaration of intent by which she confesses that her only desire is to write "more or less well, more or less badly, but as a woman"⁴²⁷ (V. Ocampo 1935, 12). Through this statement, Ocampo positions herself politically, showing us her awareness of gender and her subsequent subversion of it.⁴²⁸ At the time, Argentine society's attitude "before women wasn't precisely indulgent."⁴²⁹ Thus, the creative gesture itself is already an act of rebellion. Writing from the self—which was considered a feminist writing form par excellence at the time—was also a way of writing about the feminine condition, as in *A Room of One's Own* (1929). Yet, Ocampo not only reflected upon her gender and simultaneously developed writing from the self, but also wrote in the form closest to private life: the letter.

It is clear that Ocampo's ties to other women, which she maintained through correspondence, were fundamental to her at the personal level, which was inevitably tied to the professional. Yet, her relationships with men were also important, as Cynthia M. Tompkins suggests, citing Lóizaga, "She experienced everything in SUR with so much passion that affection always imposed itself. Though she wasn't a close friend of all of her collaborators, many of her great, star-crossed loves emanated from SUR"⁴³⁰ (2019, 127). As the history of women has progressed, the borders between the public and the private have blurred. Indeed, Ocampo, Victoria Kent and Gabriela Mistral also

⁴²⁴ Graciela Queirolo points to numerous texts in which Victoria Ocampo dedicated herself to the topic of the inferiority of women (2009, 137).

⁴²⁵ She was president of the Unión Argentina de Mujeres (Argentine Women's Union) from 1936 to 1938.

⁴²⁶ "humillación de soportar la arbitraria dictadura masculina." Manuela Barral cites this fragment in her introduction to the correspondence between Woolf and Ocampo (Barral 2020, 20).

⁴²⁷ "[...] más o menos bien, más o menos mal, pero como una mujer."

⁴²⁸ Unlike other women of the time, Victoria Ocampo openly declared herself a feminist: "As a girl I thought very much about the way women were treated. So I've been a feminist since I had *l'âge de raison*, I think" (Christ 1972, 10). Here, we might note that even though neither María Luz Morales nor Victoria Ocampo sought to signify themselves politically, to María Luz Morales, calling herself a feminist would imply a political position (although she was a feminist in practice), while for Victoria Ocampo, feminism lied beyond her political ideas and she did not hesitate to declare herself a feminist. Besides certain friendships (to which I will refer later on), they shared their admiration for Marie Curie, whom they saw as an example of what was desirable for women, referring to how she took on scientific work while she heated up milk bottles for her newborn. See Ocampo (1941, 266) and Luz Morales (2019).

⁴²⁹ "[...] frente a una mujer escritora no era precisamente indulgente." In Victoria Ocampo, *Autobiografía III. La rama de Salzburgo*. Buenos Aires: Revista Sur, 1982, 105. Cited by Streppone (Streppone 2020, 115).

⁴³⁰ "Vivía con tanta pasión lo que había en SUR que allí se imponía lo afectivo. Podía no ser amiga íntima de sus colaboradores, pero varios de sus grandes amores prohibidos tuvieron que ver con SUR."

orchestrated political maneuvers to assuage the effects of the war.⁴³¹ It is through Victoria Ocampo's letters that we may witness her efforts to save people who were trapped in ravages of the Spanish Civil War, especially intellectuals and children—an effort that she would take up once more during the Second World War. Thus, “the letters illustrate Ocampo's contributions to supranational institutions such as the League of Nations, the UNESCO, etc.”⁴³² (Horan, Urioste Azcorra, and Tompkins 2019, 113).

In short, I believe that the transgressive forms of her writing, as well as her reflections, gave power to her own brand of feminism. One example of how she transgressed gender is the way she approached public figures in her essays. Ocampo legitimises her own personal experience by publicly sharing her views (in her articles and public lectures) about outstanding figures such as Woolf, and she dares to consecrate her own feminine voice by analysing and discussing them. If we bear in mind that Ocampo came from a social milieu that would expect women not to be prominent figures, we may certainly describe her attitude and writing as disruptive. It's worth remembering how inspiring the encounter between Woolf and Ocampo was. The British writer made Ocampo believe in the great interest her opinions held for the rest of the world, and Ocampo honored her British friend by organising a lecture at Amigos del Arte in 1937 titled “Virginia Woolf. Orlando y Cía” (Artundo et al. 2008, 124–94). Those who have been critical of Ocampo's feminism have neglected to view her ideas in their historical and social context.

It is therefore clear that the ties Ocampo maintained with other women through correspondence were fundamental at both the personal and professional level. As we will now see, these women included Gabriela Mistral, Victoria Kent, María de Maetzu, Elena Sansinena de Elizalde, the countess of Noailles, Josefina de Atucha, and Delia del Carril, to name but a few.⁴³³ With all of them, Ocampo maintained simultaneously friendly and professional relationships, sharing artistic and intellectual projects while blurring the public and private spheres. I have used data-visualisation tools with the goal of reconstructing the social network of women that Ocampo established and the relevance of her relationships therein. Beyond working with the texts penned by Ocampo, I have created a [dataset](#) with information from primary sources (letters, the periodical press of the time, and historical documents), as well as secondary sources on her multiple social relationships with both men and women. Subsequently, using a qualitative approach to study the most salient relationships in my [visualisation](#), I have analysed some of these ties in more detail. Adopting a feminist perspective, I have given equal weight to personal and professional interactions as, in Ocampo's case, they are closely intertwined. Through the [visualisation](#), I may infer that even though Ocampo had ties to a similar number of men and women, she more frequently relied on women to

⁴³¹ The correspondences between the three of them is especially revealing of how they supported, cared for, and were interested in one another up until the end of their lives. See *Preciadas cartas 1932-1979* (Horan, Urioste Azcorra, and Tompkins 2019).

⁴³² “[...] las cartas ilustran los aportes de Ocampo a instituciones supranacionales, tales como la Liga (o Sociedad) de Naciones, la UNESCO, etc.”

⁴³³ For more information, see Liendo (2017).

help carry out her endeavors.⁴³⁴ As we will see in the following section, I do not consider the intensity of relationships in the data analysis, but if we were to weigh Ocampo's relationships with both men and women, we would reach the conclusion that her relationships with women were more intense. From a social-network-analysis perspective, I understand intensity as depending on the number of exchanges between two actors or nodes. In Ocampo's life, her relationships with women were more intense than with men, since she shared professional collaborations such as those she established with Sansinena de Elizalde through *Amigos del Arte* and with María Rosa Oliver through her multiple publications in *Sur* magazine. Operating from a feminist stance, I also consider non-professional encounters (dinners or trips abroad) as relevant.

3.2.2.3 Victoria Ocampo's Role in solidifying her Social Network

Before analysing Ocampo's social network of women, we would like to stress her cosmopolitanism, which some researchers have viewed as a form of openness to Europe, while others see it as a foreignizing snobbery.⁴³⁵ According to Delanty's broad perspective, cosmopolitanism is "the extension of the moral and political horizons of people, societies, organisations and institutions. It implies an attitude of openness as opposed to closure" (Delanty 2019, 2). Ocampo was a cosmopolitan *par excellence*,⁴³⁶ with her multiple trips abroad being inextricable from her influential relationships, economically privileged position, the innovative ideas in her essays (from a Western-modernity perspective), and her multilingual writing.⁴³⁷ Ocampo also left her mark as a cultural mediator in the transnational intellectual field. The texts that she published in *Sur*⁴³⁸ and the ideas in her *Testimonios* and *Autobiografía*, as well as her essays and reviews, stand as proof. Her cosmopolitanism and her interest in Europe and its cultural traditions—which she often juxtaposed with what she viewed as a Latin American desert—were inextricable from her social relationships. Indeed, her relationships unfolded through her travels and were configured around her vision of Europe and her idea of herself as a Latin and continental American in the face of Europe. One clear example of this is her correspondence with Virginia Woolf. Using hunger as a metaphor, Ocampo not only appropriates the exoticizing perspective and characterization through

⁴³⁴ Please refer to the text I co-authored with Diana Roig-Sanz (2024), with the assistance of Alessio Cardillo in the data analysis section, for a quantitative analysis of Victoria Ocampo's relationships, based on the same data used for the visualisation presented in this chapter.

⁴³⁵ On Victoria Ocampo's snobbery, see Victoria Liendo's article "Victoria Ocampo: una esnob para el desierto argentino" (2017). Interestingly, Ocampo was labeled a snob by conservative academics and socialist youths alike. Her lack of commitment to any political group is one of the main reasons why she has been deemed a snob.

⁴³⁶ Citing Borges upon Ocampo's death, María Celia Vázquez wrote that Ocampo's interest "led her to assimilate [to] and consume various cultures, especially European culture" (Vázquez 2018, 90–91). "[...] es lo que la llevó a la asimilación y al consumo de las diversas culturas, preferentemente de la europea [...]"

⁴³⁷ She wrote in English and French, for which she has been widely criticized. Ortega y Gasset's prologue to Ocampo's first book, and also referred to her preference towards French in *De Francesca a Beatrice* (1921), written in French (Ortega y Gasset would publish the manuscript in *Revista de Occidente*).

⁴³⁸ Another reason why she has been dismissed was that she published few Latin American authors in her magazine and publishing house.

which Woolf describes her in their letters and encounters, but responds with the irony of one who is aware of her own position, capable of moving past the space of subjugation in which Woolf places her.⁴³⁹ This gesture, along with her position with respect to gender, should at least be taken as a product of her heightened awareness around gender, class, and race,⁴⁴⁰ which allowed Ocampo to strategically situate herself in a privileged position within the international cultural field. In this sense, her mastery is more than demonstrated by the success of her greatest pursuit, *Sur* magazine, as well as the publishing house by the same name. Despite being economically unviable, these enterprises accumulated enormous symbolic capital and prestige in the Bourdieusian sense (Bourdieu 1992), thus proving their worth not only at the time but also in today's historiography. This success, as has been noted, is inextricable from Victoria Ocampo's social reach, much of which was built upon the pioneering translations that she chose for publication. Her cosmopolitanism, as the entrepreneur and mastermind behind *Sur*, must be considered in order to understand the work she carried out through her publishing projects.⁴⁴¹ Two of the main factors behind her success were, first, her ability to forge cultural bridges of exchange between Europe and Latin America, on the one hand, and Latin America and the United States, on the other, and second, the modern aesthetic of these enterprises.⁴⁴² Though this modernity was somewhat eccentric, given that said authors were somewhat on the margins of Western modernity, they were nonetheless modern.⁴⁴³ Likewise, the way *Sur* magazine engages with women and their role in society was itself modern. The space given to reflect upon the matter alone is a modern gesture—as is the fact that the magazine concerns itself with film, giving space to address cinematic aesthetics.

Surpassing the limits that women like Victoria Ocampo were ascribed would require, without a doubt, seeking out references, accomplices, and role models. Thus, there was a need for her to establish dialogue with authors whom she saw as models, such as Virginia Woolf and Gabriela Mistral (Doll and Salomone 1998), although Ocampo cited and forged connections with other women in her writing, too.⁴⁴⁴ It was through

⁴³⁹ For a dissertation on the matter, see “Cosmopolitismo, excentricidad y mezcla en los ensayos de Victoria Ocampo,” by María Celia Vázquez (2018). Likewise, in the chapter titled “Quiromancia de la Pampa,” within her *Testimonios, primera serie* (V. Ocampo 1935, 144–55), Ocampo dwells upon her awareness of being seen as unequal in Europe, as an Argentine.

⁴⁴⁰ The relationship between Woolf and Ocampo was clearly a colonial one, as Salomone (2006) notes: Woolf exoticized Ocampo while the latter admired Woolf in turn. However, as we have proposed, this relationship grew more complex with time. By articulating the racial awareness that defined Ocampo and her relationship with the old continent, beyond the initially marked inequality, Ocampo proudly defined herself as an “other” who carried within her the mestizo roots of Americanness, which in fact brought her close to Gabriela Mistral.

⁴⁴¹ As Heloisa Pontes (2020) notes, without Victoria Ocampo's financial support and intellectual and social capital within and beyond Argentina, *Sur* would not have existed (2020, 2).

⁴⁴² Meanwhile, according to Paula Bruno, at the time, “Argentina was a future cultural possibility for Europe [“Argentina representaba para Europa una futura posibilidad cultural”] (Streppone cites Bruno's *Visitas culturales en Argentina. 1898-1936* (Buenos Aires: Biblos, 2014) (Streppone 2020, 116)).

⁴⁴³ Among other pioneering enterprises, Victoria Ocampo recommended that certain editors in New York translate and publish Jorge Luis Borges before anyone else did, but her suggestion was received with indifference. As Streppone notes, Roger Caillois would have to propose Borges's dissemination for the latter to start being celebrated in Europe (2020, 130).

⁴⁴⁴ Salomone sustains this argument, alluding to Jane Austen, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, George Eliot, and the Brontë sisters (2006, 71).

repeating these references that she built a public image of herself, little by little.⁴⁴⁵ Simultaneously, by associating with other women through her writing—in whichever form—she sought validation. This was the case with Woolf, a writer and feminist (Salomone 2006) whose approval was fundamental for Ocampo to take up writing and publishing after having endured paralyzing criticism. As Salomone notes, it was no coincidence that Ocampo mentioned Woolf and Mistral in her acceptance speech upon entering the Argentine Academy of Letters in 1977 (Salomone 2006, 83). She thanked Woolf, as a woman, for having encouraged her to write, and Mistral for having helped her take ownership of her Latin American cultural specificity. As Salomone notes, Ocampo finished her speech by alluding to her Guaraní ancestors, showing gratitude for her mestizo background. Nearing the end of her life, Ocampo recognised this genealogy of women as having played a fundamental role in her existence and having made her the person she was.

It is in this sense that it is so important to trace the social relationships that Victoria Ocampo established and the network she thereby created throughout her lifetime. This will help us gauge her central role in the Latin American and European cultural and intellectual field and show that she served as a bridge and mediator between cultures, but it also allows us to more deeply understand with which women, and via which movements and mediations, she enjoyed local, national, and transnational relationships. I will thus present a little-data visualisation drawing from heterogeneous yet trustworthy sources that will allow us to analyse these matters.

a) Visualisation and Analysis

The first thing that catches our attention in this [graph](#)—at least compared to other graphs we’ve shared—is the breadth of Victoria Ocampo’s network.⁴⁴⁶ This might be due to the fact that she has received more attention from researchers as compared to the other women we have addressed thus far. As such, we have more data on her and on the institutions and people surrounding her, too. Likewise, this broad network is also a consequence of the diversity and scope of her relationships. Victoria Ocampo travelled frequently throughout her lifetime, visiting New York, Paris, London, and Madrid on several occasions. In contrast, she did not travel much around Latin America and did not reference her voyages throughout her own continent very often.⁴⁴⁷ The places she visited played fundamental roles in Ocampo’s trajectory, as their key society members, cultures, architectures, and music often appear as referential elements in her works. At the same time, these were places where Ocampo would leave her mark, in one way or another, thus proving her central role as a mediator in the transnational intellectual and cultural field.

⁴⁴⁵ As late as 1972, she would refer to Brontë to compare Ocampo’s predicament as a young woman to the Victorian context of the English writer, as “a Young girl was not allowed to write to young men or speak on the telephone with them. I thought that was hell –absolute hell” (Christ 1972, 10).

⁴⁴⁶ The data behind the visualisation are available in the following DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34810/data977>.

⁴⁴⁷ Likewise, she refers to a trip along the Pacific coast in a letter to Ortega y Gasset (V. Ocampo 1980, 143–46) alluding to the Chilean coast, Panama, and Lima.

We might consider that her ever-important mediation between cultures, given her bridging of Europe and Latin America, and Latin America and the United States, has generally been misunderstood. Her assimilation of English and French cultures has seen plenty of commentary, as has the fact that she often wrote in said languages and published English- and French-language authors.⁴⁴⁸ Her work has been read as a unidirectional act, as if she had simply exposed herself to being influenced by these cultures without leaving her mark on them, or as if her references to these cultures were detrimental to her promotion of and attention to her own culture. It is as if this contact between cultures weren't an exchange in and of itself. As if Ocampo hadn't taken up the real task of mediation, but merely partaken in individual absorption. However, this was not the case, as the value of *Sur*, her greatest enterprise, in fact lies in its international scope and prestige. In a letter she wrote to Ortega y Gasset in 1930, she defined *Sur* magazine, her greatest cultural project, as follows: "My project was this: to publish a quarterly magazine addressing the [continental] American problem in all respects, for which Americans with something of their own would collaborate alongside Europeans who are interested in America"⁴⁴⁹ (V. Ocampo 1980, 143). In 1972, 40 years later, she would define *Sur* once again:

One of my main ideas was to build bridges between continents. I wanted to bring France and Italy, England and this country, and India to my home. In fact, I wanted as much of the world as was available to me. And I wanted to send Argentina to all those places. I think part of this ambitious undertaking has been accomplished in these forty years of *Sur's* existence (Christ 1972, 11–12).

In the interview cited above, she alludes to her attempt at convincing New York publishers of printing Borges before anyone else did, but she was ignored. Ocampo gave conferences at two among other places where she'd been invited: Lyceum club de Madrid (1929 and 1935) and Residencia de Señoritas (1931 and 1935). Even though she did not speak about Latin American literature at these conferences, her presence was always noted, as was her relevance in the international cultural field and her humanitarian work during the wars afflicting Spain and the rest of the world in the 1930s and '40s. For more on this, see the letters that many key people of the time sent each other, commending her work as a writer as well as her courage to head such a pioneering cultural initiative. Another way of gauging the mark that Ocampo left on the places she travelled is to look at the many mentions and titles she received,⁴⁵⁰ with her life and

⁴⁴⁸ See the justification that Victoria Ocampo feels the need to make in her "Palabras francesas" (V. Ocampo 1935, 20–43).

⁴⁴⁹ "Mi proyecto, helo aquí: publicar una revista trimestral que se ocuparía principalmente del problema americano bajo todos sus aspectos y en la que colaborarían los americanos que tengan algo adentro y los europeos que se interesen en América."

⁴⁵⁰ In 1943 she received a Guggenheim scholarship, with which she travelled to New York. Furthermore, in 1946 the British Council for Cultural Relations would pay for her to travel to the United States and Great Britain. In 1958 she was named president of Fondo Nacional de las Artes. In 1977 she became the first woman to enter the Academia Argentina de Letras. Likewise, she was the only Latin American woman able to attend the Nuremberg trials, as a guest of the French government, in recognition of the assistance she gave to artists and intellectuals during the Second World War. For instance, she managed to help photographer Gisèle Freund flee France in the midst of Nazi occupation.

works standing as subjects of interest to historiography.⁴⁵¹ Nonetheless, we must keep in mind that the cultural field mirrors the geopolitics of the world and the economic inequalities therein. Thus, Ocampo's dissemination of certain European cultures, especially in Argentina, would seem deeper, faster, and broader than what she did the other way around, in terms of spreading Argentine culture on the opposite side of the Atlantic. In any case, I believe it to be more interesting to talk about Ocampo as a vector of cultural transfer (Espagne 2013) who facilitated—as a mediator—the transatlantic circulation of cultural objects and agents. It was especially through women writers and intellectuals, and their ideas and works, that Victoria Ocampo wove the networks I seek to cast light on here. She did so through sponsorship, translation, citations, publishing, and even the management of exiles.

Another of the networks that Ocampo built in her lifetime was the one with the so-called “modernas de Madrid,” as Mangini (2006) would call them. These intellectuals were tied to the Lyceum Club and the Residencia de Señoritas. Ocampo stayed at the Residencia in 1929, 1931, and 1935. During these residencies, she would give at least two lectures, and the ties she built at these institutions would be long lived. The two conferences that we know of took place in 1931—with “En Harlem (impresiones del barrio negro)” [In Harlem (Impressions of a Black Neighborhood)]—and 1935—with “Supremacía del alma y de la sangre” [Supremacy of the Soul and of Blood] (Pérez-Villanueva Tovar 1990). In 1935, she also gave a conference at Lyceum club Femenino called “Anna de Noailles y su poesía” (González Naranjo 2018). The conferences she gave at the residency and at the club in 1935 must have taken place during the same trip, since only four days went by between the first and the second. When she first visited the Residencia in 1929, the residence organised a “Tea in honor of Victoria Ocampo” at the Lyceum club. This event, which was publicised in the press of the time (Autor/a 1929a), was graced with the presence of María Luz Morales, whom María de Maetzu had invited from Barcelona on the occasion of Ocampo's visit (Vázquez Ramil and Porto Ucha 2018).⁴⁵² Ocampo's audience at the event gathered the Spanish intellectual elite of the time—at least in terms of men, since the press cited mostly men—including José Bergamín, Ramón Gómez de la Serna, Federico García Lorca, Rafael Alberti, and Eugeni d'Ors. Though we can find no proof of this in *El Sol*, we must assume that more members of the Lyceum club Femenino would have participated in this tea than what the article mentions—only 14 of the 50 people mentioned in the text were club members, namely the wives of the intellectual males who attended.⁴⁵³

⁴⁵¹ The most notable example is that of Doris Meyer, whom Ocampo met in New York when Meyer was just twenty years old. Meyer decided to write Ocampo's biography (Horan, Urioste Azcorra, and Tompkins 2019, 141). This first biography would be followed by many subsequent studies of Ocampo by researchers.

⁴⁵² Besides having met when Ocampo first visited Madrid's institutions, María Luz Morales and Victoria Ocampo also shared friendships with María de Maetzu and Gabriela Mistral, whom María Luz Morales met at the Residencia de Señoritas de Barcelona, where the Chilean Gabriela Mistral stayed during her visit to Barcelona in 1935; an interview that María Luz Morales conducted for *La Vanguardia* (January 24th, 1935) attests to this. Like she did for Ocampo, María de Maetzu also organised a tea in honor of Gabriela Mistral in 1924, when the latter visited the Residencia de Señoritas for the first time (Vázquez Ramil and Porto Ucha 2018, 426).

⁴⁵³ Among the women cited in the news article, the only well-known one is Isabel Oyarzábal.

In 1931, besides speaking at a conference, Ocampo met Victoria Kent at a dinner hosted by María de Maetzu, to which Caroline Bourlant also went. The latter was head of the Junior Year Abroad at Smith College, with which the residence established an agreement so that Spanish and US American students could participate in exchange programs. Bourlant wrote a letter to the president of Smith College in which she alluded to the dinner and to her impressions of the other guests' thoughts and reflections.⁴⁵⁴ Scholar Santiago López-Ríos argues that a love triangle between Victoria Kent, Victoria Ocampo, and María de Maetzu (2013) can be gleaned from these letters. Whether or not this was the case, the ties between Ocampo and the other two writers were long lived.

Ocampo invited María de Maetzu, a Spanish educator, to give a lecture in Buenos Aires, leading Maetzu to eventually move there after going into exile (Zulueta and Moreno 1993, 48). Beside her relationship to Maetzu, Ocampo also sustained relationships with Victoria Kent and María Martos de Baeza, pioneers from other Spanish cultural and educational institutions. In fact, Ocampo hosted Martos and her husband in 1931, Ricardo Baeza, Oscar Wilde's translator who later served as ambassador in Buenos Aires. María Martos and Victoria Kent were not only members of the Lyceum club but stood among its founders.⁴⁵⁵ Ocampo hosted María Martos and her husband with pomp and circumstance. Likewise, when the couple was exiled to Argentina in the 1940s, Baeza joined the writing staff of the magazine *Sur*, directed by Ocampo, and became a translator for the *Sur* publishing house, which suggests that Victoria Ocampo and María Martos must have enjoyed a sustained friendship. Likewise, Ocampo's relationship to Kent was long-lived. Their relationship was reinforced through the friendships they had in common with Mistral, Louise Crane (a well-known American philanthropist), and Maetzu, with these relationships also visible in their correspondence (Horan, Urioste Azcorra, and Tompkins 2019). In fact, their relationship was so close that Ocampo stayed at Kent and Crane's home during one of her visits to New York.

These exchanges and collaborations between women would not go unnoticed in their lives and works. Both Kent and Ocampo wrote texts honoring Mistral upon her death, and Kent would do the same for Ocampo when she passed away. Ocampo published the first edition of Kent's *Cuatro años en París* in *Sur* in 1947⁴⁵⁶ and fronted the expenses for *Tala*, a poetry book by Mistral published in *Sur* in 1938, with the proceeds going to the orphans by the Spanish Civil War, and it was Victoria Kent who managed the proceeds (Horan, Urioste Azcorra, and Tompkins 2019, 135). All of this demonstrates that these relationships and their ensuing exchanges had a direct impact on the transnational cultural field, given the labor that took place along the vector of transfer that was culturally mediated by Victoria Ocampo. Another obvious example of this lies in Victoria Ocampo's dissemination of the work and ideas of Virginia Woolf. As we've noted,

⁴⁵⁴ One of the topics that Bourlant deals with is sexual freedom, making her feel old fashioned among her peers.

⁴⁵⁵ It would seem that Victoria Kent thought up the Lyceum club, asking Zenubia Camprubí for her help (Horan, Urioste Azcorra, and Tompkins 2019, 148). María Martos actively participated in the Lyceum club's foundation, and she was also a librarian.

⁴⁵⁶ Kent's texts would continue to be published in *Sur* magazine. For instance, in 1971, following Victoria Kent's publication in *Sur* alongside another text by Manuela Carmena Castrillo, Kent wrote to Ocampo to critique the imprecisions in Castrillo's historic study on the situation of women in Spain. See the letter dated November 2nd, 1971 (V. Ocampo 1980, 565–66).

Ocampo published the celebrated essay “A Room of One’s Own” in Spanish translation for the first time. She also organised a conference at Amigos del Arte in 1937 titled “Virginia Woolf. Orlando y Cía.”

In terms of these networks, we must especially highlight that one of the main topics guiding and maintaining these exchanges, cultural transfers, and networks is the fate of women. Thus, their exchanges and transfers must be analysed from this perspective, specifically considering the feminism of the time. For Virginia Woolf⁴⁵⁷ and Victoria Kent alike, feminism was an articulating and decisive matter, something they shared with Ocampo.⁴⁵⁸ While Ocampo’s relationship to each of these women was quite different, all three held in common their reflections on the situation of women in society.

Kent and Ocampo enjoyed a prolific friendship in terms of their correspondence and exchanges, which crystalized in other fields through the solidarity networks woven through what we might call an ideal of feminist care. In their letters, they often discussed the situation of women. Gabriela Mistral also discussed these matters.⁴⁵⁹ As for Ocampo’s exchanges with Virginia Woolf, these especially emphasised ideas around feminism. Woolf’s importance to Ocampo’s work proved fundamental, while, for Woolf, her exchanges with Ocampo would allow for the translation of one of her seminal texts and for the dissemination of this autobiographic writing of the self, encouraging Ocampo to explore such writing in turn (Barral 2020, 47).⁴⁶⁰

By exploring the collapsed network of Ocampo’s relationships in the referenced paper (Clariana-Rodagut and Roig-Sanz 2024), I have found that, despite having more relationships with men, her strongest relationships were with women, who supported her in both professional and personal projects.⁴⁶¹ The prevalence of men among Ocampo’s relationships contrasts with the same quantity computed by averaging over

⁴⁵⁷ As noted above, these ideas are reflected in Woolf’s writing, both in her subjectivity and in the topics she chose to write about. One of these topics is everyday life. From the feminist perspective, we may view everyday life in contrast to historical events, epic narratives, and heroic tales. The everydayness of *Mrs. Dalloway* is an example of how the unexpected may emerge within the space of the kitchen, the home, and the feminine routine. “When she speaks of the most humble, most trivial things of everyday life, she suddenly and unexpectedly underscores, through the smallest, sparkling detail, the presence of an almost-expressed occult meaning that obsesses her” [“Cuando nos habla de las cosas más humildes, más triviales de la vida cotidiana, subraya en ellas de pronto, de manera inesperada, por un pequeñísimo detalle chispeante, la presencia de ese oculto sentido casi expresado que la obsesiona”] (V. Ocampo 1941, 24). To Ocampo, Woolf’s writing is also a writing of the self: “she has made her entire self infiltrate her style, in such a way that when she speaks about anything at all, she is speaking about herself, she, who never talks about herself” [que ella ha llegado a hacer pasar todo su yo a su estilo, de tal modo que hablando de cualquier cosa habla de sí misma, ella, que nunca habla de sí misma”] (V. Ocampo 1941, 59).

⁴⁵⁸ Often, the correspondence between Mistral, Kent, and Ocampo refers to feminism, as well as to publications and to the literary and intellectual world that they shared.

⁴⁵⁹ In the letters that Gabriela Mistral and Ocampo exchanged, as well as in the ones between Mistral and Kent, there is much talk of politics. Still, they frequently referred to publications as well.

⁴⁶⁰ Woolf wrote to Ocampo: “I hope you will go on to Dante, and then to Victoria Okampo [sic.]. Very few women yet have written truthful autobiographies” (Barral 2020, 47). Manuela Barral cites this in her introduction to the correspondence (2020, 19). Ocampo would allude to the same idea two years later (1936): “It’s easy to corroborate that, until now, women have spoken very little about themselves directly” [“Es fácil comprobar que hasta ahora la mujer ha hablado muy poco de sí misma, directamente”] (V. Ocampo 1941, 281).

⁴⁶¹ Please, see the list of the closest women to Ocampo, which I present in chapter 4.1.

all the women (or men) in the network, which displays a prevalence of women neighbors over men. Among the closest women to Ocampo we may find María Rosa Oliver (a close friend, who, with Ocampo, founded the Unión Argentina de Mujeres, and a very active participant of Amigos del Arte and *Sur* magazine)⁴⁶² and Sansinena de Elizalde, with whom Ocampo broadly collaborated, given Sansinena's position as president of Amigos del Arte.⁴⁶³ Like Ocampo, Sansinena de Elizalde enjoyed a very broad transnational social network, which likely favored the success of Amigos del Arte. María de Maetzu was another woman with close ties to Ocampo and someone whom the latter would consider a true friend (along with María Rosa Oliver) (Horan, Urioste Azcorra, and Tompkins 2019, 132).⁴⁶⁴ Two other women who appear close to Ocampo in our data analysis are the Countess of Atucha and Delia del Carril, who have yet to enjoy in-depth analysis in academic literature (Clariana-Rodagut and Roig-Sanz 2024). Nevertheless, their closeness to Ocampo suggests that they very likely had access to Ocampo's network, potentially collaborating in the public sphere. In this respect, my prosopographic analysis of the women in Ocampo's social network has revealed that they were all white Western privileged women and came from the upper-middle class, including some aristocrats (the French Anna de Noailles) and patricians of the Latin American (de Elizalde, Mistral, Oliver, and Atucha) and European intellectual urban elite (Kent, Maetzu, Woolf, Martos de Baeza, Luz Morales, and Oyarzábal). These women were often rebellious and proposed new artistic forms through their creations (as with Woolf, Mistral, Victorina Durán, and Remedios Varo), which were in line with the artistic modernity of the time. Besides artists, Ocampo enjoyed connections to other women who also eschewed the traditional roles imposed by patriarchal society. Thus, their collaboration may have empowered them to face the social challenges of their time. Indeed, the transnational nature of Ocampo's network reaffirms that women often articulated their quest to surpass their established roles through intellectual and artistic fields of transnational scope, which allowed for the circulation of their ideas on gender and women's rights.

3.2.3 Conclusion

On the one hand, as I have demonstrated, the Cine Club de Buenos Aires stood as a pivotal cultural initiative, not merely at a national level but also transnationally. Its significance primarily hinges on two facets. Firstly, the symbolic, relational, and economic influence the film club garnered, owing to the institutional backing it received from the Asociación Amigos del Arte and its associated luminaries. Secondly, the club's recognition within the Western history of cinophilia is intrinsically tied to its programming, resonating closely with Western perceptions of what constitutes a cine club. The programming notably prioritised Soviet and avant-garde European cinema. In

⁴⁶² They sought to revoke Law 11357 to reinstate the civil rights of women that had been recognised in 1926 and advocate for women's suffrage. In 1937, Mistral asked her to support the association, believing it would help their cause (Horan, Urioste Azcorra, and Tompkins 2019, 132).

⁴⁶³ Today, Sansinena de Elizalde's archive remains inaccessible. On May 5th, 2022, I interviewed Verónica Meo Laos, the only researcher who has ever been able to do research on Sansinena's personal archive.

⁴⁶⁴ See footnote 37 of the cited book.

this context, the prominence of individuals involved in the Argentine cinephile project facilitated such a distinct screening programme. A pivotal figure in this endeavour would be Victoria Ocampo. Furthermore, the recognition accorded to all associated personalities of Amigos del Arte, as observed in other case studies within this thesis, frequently emanated from diverse cultural spheres such as photography, literature, or the intellectual realm. Often, these figures, instrumental in acknowledging what is deemed Argentina's inaugural cine club, would allude to cinema through texts, lectures, or their creative oeuvre. The particular aesthetic allegiance demonstrated by cine club affiliates underscores the profound impact the cinephile project exerted upon their professional trajectories.

On the other hand, Victoria Ocampo overcame the limitations that had been ascribed to women, even to elite women like herself, through a feminine transnational network that functioned by offering points of reference, accomplices, role models, and potential collaborators. We might thus understand Ocampo's need to establish dialogue with outstanding intellectuals and writers, but also with many other women, constituting a broad transnational network that would sustain her fundamental position in the cultural field. Ocampo performed the tasks of a cultural mediator, facilitating the circulation of ideas and people from one side of the Atlantic to the other. She also pushed for the circulation of films—and of and ideas on literature and film. She broadened her network through sponsorship, translation, citations, publishing, and even the management of exiles. Her constant references to women, and her building of a network of women, proved strategic to the construction of her public image and literary work. Likewise, it was her concern with the place of women in society that served to bind these networks together. The value of feminism was that it not only articulated discourse—pushing for aesthetic innovation—but also provided a way of living and connecting with other people. The women who comprised Ocampo's network not only shared multiple reflections on the social condition of women, but also their life experiences, which often pushed them to break with convention and create new forms of social interaction while challenging old ones, both in their personal lives (especially in their marriages and *fAmelies*), as well as in their professional commitments. By [visualising](#) Ocampo's network, we can see how Ocampo had ties with a great variety of women. This has also allowed us to appreciate the movements and mediations that led to the creation of her network. One of her main strategies stems from the weight she gave to her correspondence, if we consider the large number of men and women with whom she exchanged letters. She also mediated between cultures (through social relations and multilingual writing) and fields, entrusting the continuation of the projects she engaged in to women. These strategies also helped her to consecrate her position in the cultural sphere.

In this broad collaboration network of women who were interested in feminism during the early twentieth century, and who jointly reflected upon the matter and followed feminist communication, creation, and socialization strategies, many of them had ties to the film field. Their ties to the medium were diverse, as were their degrees of involvement with it. I putting forward the idea that mostly all of them shared a common interest in film. In most cases, they actively participated in the medium by attending film clubs. Though we've spoken about Victoria Ocampo in depth, we might also note that the "modernas" of Madrid organised screening through the Lyceum club, while Virginia

Woolf attended several sessions at the London Film Society (Hovanec 2019). On the whole, examining the involvement of women in Western film clubs has enabled me to contemplate a transnational cultural domain, the cultural mediation of which was also championed by women. This also encompasses a transnational women's film culture, founded upon the practices and exchanges that facilitated the establishment of the aforementioned networks sustaining this transnational cultural milieu.

3.3 Lola Álvarez Bravo, an Audience Creator at Cine Club Mexicano (1931-1934), Cine Club de México (1934-1938), and 16MM Cine Club (1938-?)⁴⁶⁵

Cine club Mexicano did not enjoy any analysis until 2002, when Gabriel Rodríguez Álvarez dedicated part of his thesis to said club. Both interesting and illuminating, the thesis fundamentally focuses on the relationship between the magazine *Contemporáneos* (1928-1931)⁴⁶⁶ and the film club. Before this thesis's publication, references to Cine Club Mexicano were scarce and often inaccurate, as Rodríguez Álvarez notes at the conclusion of his meticulous archival work.

The first reference to Cine club Mexicano that we may find today was published by filmmaker Manuel González Casanova in 1954, in his magazine *Cine-club*. As Rodríguez Álvarez (2002a) notes, González Casanova mentions the club in response to a question from an anonymous reader who asks about the origin of film clubs in Mexico. González Casanova replies by alluding to the announcement of Cine Club Mexicano's inauguration, which was published in 1931 in the magazine *Contemporáneos*. Likewise, González Casanova published a list of the films that were allegedly screened at the club, as well as the names of those who gave conferences at Cine club Mexicano. A few years later, in 1961, in his book *¿Qué es un cine club?*, he would write about the club as well, reiterating the same information:

The first film club in Mexico started being organised in 1931, as an affiliate of the Film Society of London and the League of film clubs in Paris. Their main features were as follows: To screen good European, American, and Asian films, as well as avant-garde films.

- To instill educational cinema, with a special focus on the systematic screening of scientific films.
- To recreate film history through retrospective exhibitions.
- To offer propaganda conferences on the aesthetic, scientific, and social importance of cinematography.
- To create a favorable environment for the emergence of Mexican cinematography.

⁴⁶⁵ Part of this text has been submitted for publication under Clariana-Rodagut, Ainamar (forth. 2024). "Lola Álvarez Bravo et les ciné-clubs mexicains dans les années 1930 : entre invention d'un public et médiation d'une culture" in Christophe Gauthier (ed.), *Histoire culturelle du cinéma*. Paris, École nationale des chartes.

⁴⁶⁶ *Contemporáneos* was an avant-garde literary magazine that sought to modernise Mexican literature and culture. The magazine's director was Bernardo Ortiz de Montellano, while Jaime Torres Bodet and Enrique González Rojo were in the writing staff. Other writers who participated included José Gorostiza, Xavier Villaurrutia, Salvador Novo, Jorge Cuesta, and Gilberto Owen.

- To follow the steps of those foreign film clubs that have succeeded, adjusting their activities according to a conscientious study of our needs.
- Its ends will be highly social and non-lucrative.

These points were of singular importance. However, given that the environment did not favor such organisations, as I stated previously, after an irregular stint, Cine Club Mexicano disappeared without a trace. The last news I received from the club dates back to June of 1935: in a partial report of its activities and an announcement with its activity program (González Casanova 2020, 32).⁴⁶⁷

These points on the definition of the film club were also published in the “Acera” section of *Contemporáneos* in May of 1931, when the club was first announced. Abel Plenn published these in English in issue 4 of the magazine *Experimental Cinema* (Plenn 1933).⁴⁶⁸ Both publications also included reports of the naming of the film club’s executive committee as well as its statutes. Likewise, this same article announces the future publication of a manifesto, which (to our knowledge) never came to fruition. The texts mention the following members of the executive committee: Bernardo Ortiz de Montellano (Artistic Director), Emilio Amero (Technical Director), Manuel Álvarez Bravo and María Izquierdo (Financial Secretaries), Carlos Mérida (Secretary of Propaganda), María M. de Álvarez Bravo [sic]⁴⁶⁹ and Roberto Montenegro (Directors), and Agustín Aragón Leiva (Secretary General). The statutes outline the rights and obligations of the club’s members, its goals, and its internal organisation and admission policies. Likewise, they state that any leftover funds would be used to produce art films in the future.

The paragraph following the once cited above, in which González Casanova outlines his sources, is the one that has caused Rodríguez Álvarez (2002a) to question the validity of Casanova’s statements. Having dug deeper into the archives of a few of the film club’s participants,⁴⁷⁰ Rodríguez Álvarez criticises that subsequent academics have reprinted

⁴⁶⁷ Cited in the magazine *Cine Toma*, issue 32, in a fragment of González Casanova’s original brochure, published in 1961. Original text: “El primer cine club que hubo en México comenzó a organizarse en mayo de 1931, como filial de la Film Society de Londres y de la Ligue de Cine Clubes de París, sus puntos esenciales eran los siguientes: Procurar la exhibición de buenas películas europeas, americanas y asiáticas, así como películas de vanguardia; implantar el cine educativo, con especial cuidado en la exhibición sistemática de películas científicas; recrear la historia del cine, por medio de exhibiciones retrospectivas; ofrecer conferencias de propaganda sobre la importancia estética, científica y social de la cinematografía; crear el ambiente propicio para que surja la cinematografía mexicana. Seguir los pasos de los cine clubs extranjeros que han logrado éxito, ciñendo sus actividades a un concienzudo estudio de nuestras necesidades; su fin será altamente social y no lucrativo. / Estos puntos eran de singular importancia pero, debido a que, como señalé arriba, el ambiente no era favorable para la vida de este tipo de organizaciones, el Cine Club Mexicano, después de haber tenido una vida irregular, desapareció sin dejar rastro. La última noticia que tengo de éste data del primero de junio de 1935: se trata de un informe parcial de las acciones realizadas y un anuncio del programa de actividades.”

⁴⁶⁸ It is worth noting that the magazine *Experimental Cinema*, as Enrique Fibla notes (2018), was part of the global leftist film culture. The issue in which the announcement of Cine club Mexicano is printed was dedicated to Sergei Eisenstein.

⁴⁶⁹ Referring to Lola Álvarez Bravo.

⁴⁷⁰ Specifically, the correspondence that Bernardo Ortiz de Montellano and Agustín Leiva maintained with other film personalities of the time, including Seymour Stern, Jaime Torres, Sergei Eisenstein, and Sol Lesser. See Ortiz de Montellano, Bernardo (1999). *Epistolario*, editing, notes, and indexes by María de Lourdes Franco Bagnouls, Mexico: UNAM. With the help of Oliver Debroise, Gabriel Rodríguez managed

González Casanova's information without corroborating it. This is the case of Emilio García Riera's *Historia documental del cine mexicano* (1992), in which Riera would write:

By June 1, 1935, Cine club Mexicano had celebrated several sessions in which the following films were screened: *Sky-ing*, two old films by Chaplin; *The Informer*, based on the novel by O'Flaherty; *Mother*, by Pudovkin; *Vida y amores de las plantas*; *Maravillas del microscopio*; *Misterios de la vida de un estanque*; *Rutas aéreas*; *Historia de la sífilis*; *Pescadores de ballenas*;⁴⁷¹ a comedy by Arbukle, and conferences by Aragón Leiva, Agustín Velázquez Chávez, and Doctor Roberto Esparza Peraza. [...] On that date, Cine club Mexicano announced that upcoming sessions would also screen *October*, *Thunder Over Mexico*, and *Strike* by Eisenstein; *Natalidad*, by Eduard Tissé; *Resurrecciones*,⁴⁷² with Max Linder, Chaplin, la Bertini, and a few reels with authentic scenes of the Mexican Revolutions. As well as the cultural shorts *Energía solar*, *La malaria* and *Disparos sobre el Istmo*⁴⁷³ by Manuel Álvarez Bravo (García Riera 1992, 25).⁴⁷⁴

Rodríguez Álvarez notes that none of the films mentioned above coincide with the reports of Aragón Leiva (2002a, 310), except for *Natalidad* and *October*; as for *Thunder over Mexico*, though it has not been confirmed, it may have been screened, as Leiva did set out to acquire it. Likewise, Rodríguez Álvarez notes that "Max Linder may be included in the list by Lola Álvarez Bravo"⁴⁷⁵ (2002a, 311). The researcher writes that neither González Casanova nor García Riera took note of the film club's alleged name change, from Cine club Mexicano to Cine Club de México, or de Méjico, as Aragón Leiva would call it in a letter to the directors of Cineclub Español in June of 1931.

In reconstructing the history of Mexican film, some authors have vaguely mentioned Cine Club Mexicano, including Aurelio de los Reyes (1994), who wrote about the artists in the Contemporáneos circle and their relationship to film, and recently in another book where he explains the origins of the "cine club" concept in Mexico (de los Reyes 2020). Likewise, Guillermo Sheridan's (1994) work on the Contemporáneos also mentions the club. On the club, Aurelio de los Reyes would write:

to consult Agustín Aragón Leiva's correspondence. Part of the Oliver Debroise collection is in the Arkheia collection at the MUAC. I do not know whether the letters are there, too.

⁴⁷¹ In rough translation, *The Life and Loves of Plants*; *Marvels of the Microscope*; *The Mysteries of Life in a Pond*; *Aerial Routes*; *The History of Syphilis*; and *Whale Fishers*.

⁴⁷² In rough translation, *Natality* by Eduard Tissé, and *Resurrections* with Max Linder.

⁴⁷³ In rough translation: *Solar Energy*, *Malaria*, and *Shooting the Isthmus*.

⁴⁷⁴ All of the cited information is the same as that which González Casanova cited when he first referred to Cine Club Mexicano. Cited by Gabriel Rodríguez Álvarez (2002a, 310). Original text: "Para el 1º de junio de 1935 el Cine club Mexicano llevaba celebradas varias sesiones en las que se exhibieron los siguientes films: *Sky-ing*, dos antiguas de Chaplin; *Traiciones*, basada en *El delator de O'Flaherty*; *La madre*, de Pudovkin; *Vida y amores de las plantas*; *Maravillas del microscopio*; *Misterios de la vida de un estanque*; *Rutas aéreas*; *Historia de la sífilis*; *Pescadores de ballenas*; una comedia de Arbukle y conferencias sustentadas por Aragón Leiva, Agustín Velázquez Chávez y el Doctor Roberto Esparza Peraza. [...] el Cine club Mexicano anunciaba en esta fecha que en las siguientes sesiones se exhibirían películas como *Octubre*, *Tormenta sobre México* y *La Huelga* de Eisenstein; *Natalidad*, de Eduard Tissé; *Resurrecciones*, de Max Linder, Chaplin, la Bertini y algunas cintas con escenas auténticas de la Revolución mexicana. Además de los cortos culturales *Energía solar*, *La malaria* y *Disparos sobre el Istmo* de Manuel Álvarez Bravo."

⁴⁷⁵ "Max Linder podría incluirse en la lista de Lola Álvarez Bravo"

According to the open call for the founding of Cine Club Mexicano, this would be an affiliate of the London Film Society and Ligue des Cineclubs de Paris. Without a doubt, Eisenstein served as the link, because how else would they have connected to the aforementioned institutions? Both clubs had invited the filmmaker to visit London and Paris, respectively. I also think his presence is detectable in the writing of the film club's goals [...] (Franco et al. 1994, 164).

The historian continues by noting that the principles behind the film club's creation were close to "certain features of Soviet film transmitted by Eisenstein"⁴⁷⁶ (Franco et al. 1994, 164). He finishes his commentary by noting that the only people capable of speaking at the film club's conferences were Aragón Leiva, Torres Bodet, and Eisenstein. He rhetorically asks himself "What other film specialists were there in Mexico at the time who might satisfy the concerns laid out in the open call? I believe there were no others"⁴⁷⁷ (Franco et al. 1994, 164). Yet, Rodríguez Álvarez disavows de los Reyes's inferences because, in 1932, the year when, according to Rodríguez Álvarez's calculations, the club opened its doors, Torres Bodet was in Madrid and Eisenstein had already returned to Moscow (2002a, 313).⁴⁷⁸

Miguel Capistrán (1994) also mentions the club in his study on Villaurrutia and film. Capistrán writes of the inauguration of Cine club 16 mm Cinema [sic], born of the Contemporáneos under the auspices of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (the National Autonomous University of Mexico, UNAM from now on) (Rodríguez Álvarez 2002a, 289). Yet, Rodríguez Álvarez discards this alleged fact without providing much information on why. The main reason he mentions for his discrediting of this argument is that, in their correspondence, Agustín Aragón Leiva and Bernardo Ortiz de Montellano never referred to an entity of the name cine club 16 mm Cinema, but, as we will note further on, Miguel Capistrán may have been right. Nonetheless, we may concur with Rodríguez Álvarez in that most research on Cine Club Mexicano has generally been inaccurate and quite limited. As we will see, many of its features have been overlooked.

Edited by Eduardo Serrato, the recent book on the film chronicles written by Luis Cardoza y Aragón (Cardoza y Aragón 2010) from 1935 to 1936 for the magazine *Todo* is quite illuminating in terms of the screenings that Cine Club de México organised, which the writer Cardoza y Aragón attended rigorously. Thanks to Serrato's research on Cardoza y Aragón, we may confirm that all of the controversies about what Cine club de México screened or did not screen are becoming increasingly unfruitful, since the list of films that Casanova found in the now unretrievable report practically match up with those that Cardoza y Aragón reviewed, which would have been screened at the film club.

Yet, beyond analysing the films themselves, academic literature has neglected certain aspects of the club, such as its practices and spaces, and the articulation of all the people involved in this Mexican film club initiative. For instance, although Serrato's work may contribute to such a discussion, we may find no mentions of Lola Álvarez Bravo in his

⁴⁷⁶ "[...] ciertas características del cine soviético transmitidas por Eisenstein."

⁴⁷⁷ "¿Qué otros especialistas cinematográficos había en México en ese momento capaces de satisfacer las inquietudes planteadas en la convocatoria? Me parece que no hubo otros."

⁴⁷⁸ Though the announcement on its foundation was printed in *Contemporáneos* in 1931, according to the letters reviewed by Rodríguez Álvarez, the first screening—of the film *Natalidad*—would not take place until 1932, when a copy reached Mexico (2002a, 278).

book. Now that we have reviewed the academic literature on the film club, we may deepen our understanding of the relationships and exchanges that defined this film club.⁴⁷⁹ We will now delve into certain aspects of the club in order to reconstruct what we will deem a transnational film culture.

3.3.1 The Absence of Lola Álvarez Bravo

Having conducted a brief review of the literature on Cine club Mexicano, we may ask ourselves why Lola Álvarez Bravo has been so overlooked, despite the fact that we have a first-person account of the film club's organisation and screenings. Indeed, Elena Poniatowska (1993) interviewed Lola Álvarez Bravo, while Olivier Debroye (1994) also compiled Lola's testimony referring to her participation to the film club. It is thus surprising that Lola Álvarez Bravo's comments on Cine Club de México and/or Cine Club Mexicano have been practically ignored by everyone who has subsequently written about the film club.

In his thesis on Cine club Mexicano, Rodríguez Álvarez writes that Agustín Aragón Leiva and Lola Álvarez Bravo in fact participated in two distinct clubs. He states this despite the fact that, in 1931, when Cine club Mexicano was founded, Lola Álvarez Bravo is mentioned as a member of its executive committee,⁴⁸⁰ as we have noted above. Rodríguez Álvarez bases his statement on his determination that the films that Aragón Leiva refers to do not line up with those that Lola Álvarez Bravo cites in her *Recuento fotográfico* (1982). Specifically, Rodríguez Álvarez highlights that Lola Álvarez Bravo does not refer to Eisenstein, nor to a session in solidarity with Spain during the Spanish Civil War that Aragón Leiva does cite in his correspondence with Torres Bodet. Rodríguez Álvarez has also chosen to dismiss the information that Lola Álvarez Bravo shared in her interview with Poniatowska (1993), stating that the dates mentioned therein are imprecise.

The history that Rodríguez Álvarez constructs on the film club directed by Lola Álvarez Bravo starts in 1934, with the foundation of Liga de Escritores y Artistas Revolucionarios (League of Revolutionary Artists and Writers, LEAR from now on).⁴⁸¹ Rodríguez Álvarez glosses over this imitative stating that "it seems that Lola Álvarez Bravo launched it and sought—without much success—to turn the circle into another tribune for activists in the [LEAR] League"⁴⁸² (Rodríguez Álvarez 2002a, 307). Thus, even though there is proof

⁴⁷⁹ Rodríguez Álvarez's efforts to point to the international relationships of several organisation members are commendable.

⁴⁸⁰ As María M. Álvarez Bravo.

⁴⁸¹ This was a collective for artists and intellectuals who came together to reclaim the social importance of art in post-revolutionary Mexico. It boasted ties to many artistic, cultural, and political institutions and organisations of the time, such as Socorro Rojo Internacional, the John Reeds Club, and the Mexican government itself. Highly recognised Mexican artists of the time participated in the organisation, putting together international conferences attended by international artists and intellectuals, among other events. I will return to the subject of LEAR later on.

⁴⁸² "[...] tal pareciera que Lola Álvarez Bravo lo echó a andar y se buscó—sin mucha gloria—hacer del círculo otra tribuna para los activistas de la Liga."

of this film club's existence in the press article, as well as in Lola Álvarez Bravo's declarations and a LEAR document,⁴⁸³ Rodríguez Álvarez deems her club of little historic value, seeing it as a tribune for activists in the League, and as an unsuccessful one at that, which is why he decides not to research it further. His two statements are not based on a single declaration beyond one disdainful comment by Carlos Monsiváis. In 1994, in describing the LEAR's activities, Monsiváis wrote that "there was a new apogee of cultural missions, and LEAR was organising a Pedagogy section alongside its sections for the visual arts, literature, theater, and film (the latter of which functioned as a rudimentary film club)"⁴⁸⁴ (1994, 1463). This position is inconsistent with Monsiváis's previous denouncing of the sexism that women suffer. Interestingly, years earlier (1982), Monsiváis had contributed a text to artist and photographer Lola Álvarez Bravo's autobiographical work, a book in which they both denounced sexism.⁴⁸⁵

Despite being generally omitted from history, Lola Álvarez Bravo's participation cannot be denied. In conflict with his own statements, Rodríguez Álvarez cites the only available document on the film club within the LEAR archives—with this club being the great void in the LEAR's archives, as Rodríguez Álvarez is right to note. The document in question is a flyer announcing the second screening session to be held as part of the fourth LEAR festival, which we would place in 1936, although there is some controversy around the date.⁴⁸⁶ The flyer advertises that the session would be hosted by Dolores Álvarez Bravo "with the goal of studying the cinematographic process in history up until today. It will take place at the LEAR premises"⁴⁸⁷ and screen "films from the first phase of Italian and French film, with the actors Pina Menichelli, Itala Almirante Manzini, Salustiano, and Max Linder. Interpretation by writer Luis Cardoza y Aragon"⁴⁸⁸ (Rodríguez Álvarez 2002a, 307). Ticket prices were announced at 50 Mexican cents, or 15 cents for those with a labor I. D. (*carnet obrero*). The sales would benefit the magazine *Frente a Frente*.

This second activity can be corroborated through Luis Cardoza y Aragón's subsequent commentary on this second session of the fourth LEAR festival. In his review, the Guatemalan writer would write:

LEAR, which has deemed it important to gather a public that is willing to appreciate and support the valuable efforts of the past, as well as those of our time, which are being produced all over the world in terms of film, will present a film screening organized by Dolores Bravo to this end, in its second festival. The

⁴⁸³ I am referring to the only flyer referencing the film club in the LEAR archives. In her text on LEAR, Elizabeth Fuentes Rojas (1995) cites this flyer as well.

⁴⁸⁴ "Hay un nuevo auge de las misiones culturales y la LEAR organiza una sección de Pedagogía junto con las de artes plásticas, literatura, teatro y cine (funciona un rudimento de cine club)."

⁴⁸⁵ The text is titled "Carlos Monsiváis: Y ahora, con su venia, conversaré de usted mi luciente señora (y no menos admirable fotógrafa)" in Álvarez Bravo, 1982, Penélope.

⁴⁸⁶ In her thesis on LEAR, Elizabeth Fuentes cites this same flyer, stating that it has no date. Rodríguez Álvarez, however, believes it was written in 1934 or 1935, which does not align with Fuente's idea, due to the address at Jerónimos that the flyer includes. According to Ferrer, in mid-1936, LEAR moved to Donceles street (Fuentes Rojas 1995, 168).

⁴⁸⁷ "[...] con objeto de estudiar el proceso histórico del cinematógrafo hasta nuestros días. Se realizará en el local de la LEAR."

⁴⁸⁸ "[...] películas dentro de la primera etapa del cine italiano y francés, actuando Pina Menichelli, Itala Almirante Manzini, Salustiano y Max Linder. Interpretación del escritor Luis Cardoza y Aragon."

screening will be considered the first of a cycle of eight such screenings. The series will cover the growth of film from its origins up until our days, and each program will be accompanied by brief commentary on the general social trends in the screened films. The first program included the following: *Cómo es la mujer japonesa*, *Celos y Embriaguez de Pierrot*, *El país de los molinos*,⁴⁸⁹ French films. Pathé Frères, from 1910 or perhaps earlier. The three are very important. *Celos* and *Embriaguez de Pierrot* stand out for their candor, for their grace, and for their interest in film⁴⁹⁰ (Cardoza y Aragón 2010, 37).

With these documents as proof, the importance of Lola Álvarez Bravo in this film club is clear. This does not mean that Agustín Aragón Leiva wasn't important to the organisation as well, being the director of the LEAR film section, as Elizabeth Fuentes writes (1995, 168).⁴⁹¹ Yet, a declaration in Lola Álvarez Bravo's autobiographical text makes it clear that Aragón Leiva and Álvarez Bravo's film clubs were likely one and the same.

Alongside Emilio Amero and Julio Castellanos, we first set up the main hall at the University and then the first LEAR venue for the first film club in Mexico, making for a very poorly equipped display room with benches that were basically slabs of wood atop piles of bricks. There, we showed old movies that I miraculously found in a strange spot in the town of Tacuba, with Max Linder and Pina Menikelli [sic], followed by *El perro andaluz*, which I bought with my own money, as well as pieces by Chaplin. Bayer would lend us good science documentaries, and we also screened *Natalidad* there, an excellent film by one of the assistants that Eisenstein brought to Mexico. Soon after Cárdenas took power, and LEAR became exquisite, sending people to Spain and moving to a very fine venue on Donceles [street]⁴⁹² (Álvarez Bravo 1982, 98–99).

It's hard to understand why Rodríguez Álvarez excludes Lola Álvarez Bravo from the club's founding project and presumes that Álvarez Bravo was part of a separate film

⁴⁸⁹ In rough translation, *The Ways of the Japanese Women*, *Pierrot's Jealousy and Drunkenness*, and *The Country of Windmills*. I will mention them again in the programming section of this chapter.

⁴⁹⁰ "La LEAR, juzgando importante la organización de un público dispuesto a apreciar y apoyar los valiosos esfuerzos del pasado y los que actualmente están produciéndose en todas partes del mundo, en materia cinematográfica, presentará con tal objeto, en su segundo festival, una proyección de cine organizada por Dolores Bravo. La exhibición se considerará como la primera de un ciclo de ocho proyecciones semejantes. La serie cubrirá el crecimiento del cine desde sus orígenes hasta nuestros días, y cada programa estará acompañado por un comentario breve sobre las tendencias generales sociales de las películas exhibidas. El primer programa fue el siguiente: *Cómo es la mujer japonesa*, *Celos y embriaguez de Pierrot*, *El país de los molinos*, películas francesas. Pathé Frères, de 1910 o acaso anteriores. Las tres muy importantes, sobresaliendo por su candor, por su gracia y por su interés cinematográfico *Celos y embriaguez de Pierrot*."

⁴⁹¹ In 1935, Aragón Leiva would publish an article in the magazine *Frente a Frente*, as he was in charge of the film section (Fuentes Rojas 1995, 170).

⁴⁹² "Con Emilio Amero y Julio Castellanos pusimos primero en el paraninfo de la Universidad y luego en el primer local de la LEAR el primer cine club que hubo en México, en un galerón pobrísimo, con bancas que eran puros tablones sobre montoncitos de ladrillos. Ahí dimos películas viejas que de puro milagro encontré en un extraño nidero en el pueblo de Tacuba, de Max Linder y Pina Menikelli [sic.], luego *El perro andaluz*, que compré de mi bolsillo, y cosas de Chaplin. La Bayer nos prestaba buenos documentales de ciencia, y también ahí pasamos *Natalidad*, una excelente película de uno de los ayudantes que Eisenstein trajo a México. Poco después subió Cárdenas al poder y la LEAR se volvió de lujo, mandó gente a España y se cambió a un local muy elegante por Donceles."

club, deeming that there was a certain rivalry between Aragón Leiva and Lola Álvarez Bravo,⁴⁹³ rather than considering them from a more conciliatory perspective by which a single film club would have had two, committed leaders.⁴⁹⁴ Researchers' neglect of Lola Álvarez Bravo and her relationship to the film club and, by extension, to film itself is twofold: first, her figure is not studied in relation to the film club, and second, her declarations have been dismissed. Though many sources cite the existence of a film club organised by Lola Álvarez Bravo,⁴⁹⁵ its relevance and existence are questioned.

In this sense, it should call our attention that when Cine Club Mexicano has been studied, there has been little in-depth research on Lola Álvarez Bravo's work that might corroborate or bolster her statements on the club. We may recall that although Rodríguez Álvarez does cite the photographer's autobiographical work, he glosses over her nonetheless. Furthermore, the judgement that Rodríguez Álvarez passes on Álvarez Bravo's initiative (considering hers as a separate entity from Cine Club Mexicano) is completely unfounded. Rodríguez Álvarez calls her club unsuccessful and a mere tribune for LEAR. Yet, if we do view their clubs as separate, compared to Aragón Leiva's Cine club Mexicano, Álvarez Bravo's alleged lack of success seems relative. We may recall that the last screening that Rodríguez Álvarez registers took place in 1935. Thus, Aragón Leiva's Cine club Mexicano would have operated from 1931 (when its founding was announced) or 1932 (the year when the first screening took place) to 1935, when Aragón Leiva wrote to Sergei Eisenstein announcing that his film *October* would be screened at the club's fifth session. Yet, if we heed Lola Álvarez Bravo's statements, we may note that her film club celebrated many more sessions and was in operation for longer. If, as Rodríguez Álvarez states, these film clubs are not one and the same, with Lola Álvarez Bravo's founded in 1933 or 1934, when LEAR opened its doors (in the understanding that this was allegedly a tribune for militants), then it would have operated at least until 1938, when LEAR started to fall apart, that is, for four or five years, which is at least one more year than Aragón Leiva's club would have operated.

⁴⁹³ In an article published in *Luna Córnea* magazine, issue 24 (2013), Rodríguez Álvarez would address this topic again, stating that "When the League of Revolutionary Writers and Artists (LEAR) was founded in 1934, it included a film club among its activities. Yet, in contrast to the visual arts workshops, it did not consolidate itself within the group's political project. LEAR assigned Lola Álvarez Bravo the task of coordinating what years later Carlos Monsiváis would call 'a rudimentary film club,' but that Lola called a 'the first film club in Mexico' in her memoirs. In her testimony *Recuento fotográfico* (Editorial Penélope, 1982), she did not mention her comrade Aragón Leiva as part of the founding group, providing no explanation" ["Al fundarse la Liga de Escritores y Artistas Revolucionarios (LEAR) en 1934, se incluyó al cineclub entre las actividades pero, a diferencia de los talleres de artes plásticas, no se consolidó entre las prioridades del grupo en su proyecto político. La LEAR encomendó a Lola Álvarez Bravo la coordinación de lo que Carlos Monsiváis llamó, años después, un 'rudimiento de cine club' y que Lola asumió en sus memorias como 'el primer cine club de México' En su testimonio publicado en *Recuento fotográfico* (Editorial Penélope, 1982), ésta eliminó del grupo fundador al camarada Aragón Leiva, sin explicación alguna"] (Rodríguez Álvarez 2002b, 78).

⁴⁹⁴ Other researchers before him (González Casanova 2020; García Riera 1992; Capistrán 1994; de los Reyes 1994) failed to notice Lola Álvarez Bravo's importance as well, even though some do mention her name as a session organiser or as part of the film club's founding group.

⁴⁹⁵ We may cite the historical document found at the LEAR collection as well as the chronicles by Luis Cardoza y Aragón, alongside the more significant works on Lola Álvarez Bravo: *Recuento fotográfico* (1982), *Lola Álvarez Bravo In Her Own Light* (Álvarez Bravo 1994), and Poniatowska's interview with Lola Álvarez Bravo (1993).

When stating that her enterprise failed, we should ask ourselves what “failure” means in this context. If this failure corresponds to the club’s goals not being upheld, then we should consider its goals. Most of the members of the Contemporáneos, who conceived the idea for Cine Club Mexicano, would later join LEAR. This would lead me to believe that the goals of this first Cine club Mexicano founded in 1931, whose most active members would have included Ortiz de Montellano and Agustín Aragón Leiva, must not have been that different from the goals of the film club during its second phase, as associated with LEAR. The two initiatives would have held much in common. Agustín Aragón Leiva, the alleged founder of the Contemporáneos’s first film club (de los Reyes 1994, 164), coordinated the film section that the LEAR’s film club relied upon as of 1937.

Likewise, both film clubs—if they were actually two—had a penchant for Soviet film. Alluding to the manifesto on the film club’s founding (referred above), Aurelio de los Reyes states the following:

That quest to see “good European, American, and Asian films”, that “implanting [of] educational cinema,” that “aesthetic, scientific, and social importance of cinematography” and those “highly social and non-lucrative” ends sound to me very much like the Soviet film that Eisenstein brought in, since, as we may remember, Lenin had said that, among the arts, film was the most important, because it allowed one to get to know all the peoples of the earth⁴⁹⁶ (de los Reyes 1994, 164).

As for the kind of film that LEAR’s film section preferred, we may also find a predilection for Soviet film. “In a letter to the Soviet Film Distribution Company in New York, they commented on their special interest in showing these films and ... ‘starting an intense campaign in favor of Soviet films ... creating a favorable environment for their commercial exhibition’”⁴⁹⁷ (Fuentes Rojas 1995, 168). In her thesis, Elizabeth Fuentes is citing a letter from LEAR’s Executive Committee to a Soviet-film distribution company in New York, dated February 8, 1935. A reconstruction of the programming can be found in the Annex 5.

In fact, if we review the films we have mentioned already, which may have been screened at Lola Álvarez Bravo or Agustín Leiva’s film clubs, we may note that the Eisensteinian principles that Aurelio de los Reyes outlines marked both clubs’ cinematographic aesthetics. We may find references to educational film, including the films that Bayer lent out on syphilis, malaria, and solar energy, which Álvarez Bravo alludes to. This pedagogical concern is also in the Soviet films of Pudovkin, Eisenstein, and Vertov, which conveyed certain political values of Soviet communism.⁴⁹⁸ These

⁴⁹⁶ “Ese afán por conocer ‘buenas películas europeas, americanas y asiáticas’, esa ‘implantación del cinema educativo’, esa ‘importancia estética, científica y social de la Cinematografía’ y ese fin ‘altamente social y no lucrativo’ me suenan a ciertas características del cine soviético transmitidas por Eisenstein, pues, se recordará, Lenin había dicho entre otras cosas que, de las artes, el cine era la más importante porque permitía conocer a todos los pueblos de la tierra.”

⁴⁹⁷ “En una carta dirigida a la Compañía Distribuidora de Películas Soviéticas, de New York, comentaron sobre su interés especial en que se exhibieran estas películas y para ‘...iniciar una intensa campaña pro películas soviéticas y... crear un ambiente favorable para su exhibición comercial.’”

⁴⁹⁸ Though many have interpreted Eisenstein’s visit to Mexico as an inflection point regarding the Soviet aesthetic that took root in Mexico thanks to his physical presence, it would be more productive to study

“good” Asian films may have included the aforementioned film on Japanese women, while the European films may have included Luis Buñuel’s *Un chien andalou* or films with the Italian Pina Menichelli or the French Max Linder. A lot of the American film would have especially involved Charles Chaplin.⁴⁹⁹

In order to cast light on the controversies around the club or clubs in question, we take a conciliatory stance and deem that Cineclub Mexicano was founded in 1931, under the wing of the *Contemporáneos* magazine, being adopted by LEAR in 1933 or ’34. Its sessions would last until at least 1938, when the LEAR started to fall apart. Furthermore, we will finish this section by going back to what we declared at the onset: that it is urgent to address women in order to ensure a more complete understanding of history and avoid biases that obscure our knowledge. As we have seen, Lola Álvarez Bravo was fundamental, and this has already been well established. In this sense, we believe that it is urgent that we propose new tools to observe the past with a fresh perspective.

3.3.2 Lola Álvarez Bravo: A Film Mediator

Olivier Debroise revindicated Lola Álvarez Bravo’s importance in Mexico, her country of birth,⁵⁰⁰ at a time when Mexican and world art history had forgotten her legacy:

Lola and María [Izquierdo] were part of the League of Revolutionary Writers and Artists (LEAR) as of its creation in 1934, participating actively in the group’s activities. Alongside painter, engraver, and photographer Emilio Amero, Lola and Manuel Álvarez Bravo created a film club (perhaps the first to ever exist in Mexico) where they screened, among other materials, films that the Soviet government sent to them directly: *October*, *Mother*, and *Ivan the Terrible*. Pudovkin, Eisenstein, Dziga Vertov, and even Luis Buñuel became known in Mexico through this channel⁵⁰¹ (Alvarez Bravo 1994, 24).

his visit as a two-way process of cultural transfer. Eisenstein not only shared his knowledge with Mexican artists, but these artists also informed him, which broadened Eisensteinian thought, as Masha Salazkina (2009) demonstrates in her study on Eisenstein in Mexico and how important his surroundings during this work visit were to him.

⁴⁹⁹ The *Contemporáneos* were not the only avant-garde artists of the late ’20s and ’30s to show great appreciation for the films of Charles Chaplin. The surrealists in André Breton’s circle and the Dadaists who preceded them were also very interested in Chaplin. It is thus unsurprising that André Breton cited him in his second manifesto, in 1930.

⁵⁰⁰ Olivier Debroise published *Lola Álvarez Bravo. In her own Light* (1994). As noted in the preface, interest in Lola Álvarez Bravo had only recently taken hold, when Debroise published a book thanks to the hype around Lola Álvarez Bravo’s portraits of her friend, the painter Frida Kahlo. We should also cite the long interview of Lola Álvarez Bravo by Elena Poniatowska (1993) in *Todo México*, tome II.

⁵⁰¹ “Lola y María [Izquierdo] formaban parte de la Liga de Escritores y Artistas Revolucionarios (LEAR) desde su creación en 1934, y participaba activamente en las actividades del grupo. Junto con el pintor, grabador y fotógrafo Emilio Amero, Lola y Manuel Álvarez Bravo crearon entonces un cine club (quizás el primero registrado en México) y exhibían, entre otras cosas, películas que les proporcionaba discretamente el gobierno soviético: *Octubre*, *La Madre*, *Iván el terrible*. Pudovkin, Eisenstein, Dziga Vertov, Luis Buñuel inclusive, fueron conocidos en México por este conducto.”

While the information that Debroise shares on film clubs is somewhat vague, there is one idea that we must keep in mind. According to Debroise, the Soviet films of Pudovkin, Eisenstein, and Vertov, but also the films of Luis Buñuel, would become known in Mexico thanks to Lola Álvarez Bravo and her film club. We may take Debroise's words with a grain of salt. Soviet film's introduction to Mexico is well documented and was the result of the efforts of the first woman ambassador in history: Alexandra Kollontai, a Russian communist who defended the rights of women (Rodríguez and Méndez de Lozada 2015). Kollontai, a fascinating character, played a prominent role in the history of Mexican film thanks to her distribution of Soviet films, which made a great impact on the government policies of the time and on the people who watched Soviet film—as is the case of the intellectuals of the Contemporáneos group—and, by extension, on the history of Mexican art and film (de los Reyes 2000). But Kollontai would also stand as an inspiration to politically active women of the 1920s artistic and cultural world in Mexico City, such as Tina Modotti,⁵⁰² whom Lola Álvarez Bravo viewed as a referential photographer. In fact, Álvarez Bravo bought Modotti's camera before the latter was deported, seeing her as an independent, admirable woman (Álvarez Bravo 1982, 97; Poniatowska 1993, 47).

Regarding Olivier Debroise's declarations on Luis Buñuel, the first film by Buñuel and Dalí, *Un chien andalou*, was premiered at Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City on May 17, 1938, just before a conference by André Breton. The Secretariat of Foreign Affairs had paid for André Breton to travel to Mexico and give five conferences on European poetry and painting at the UNAM. Of these conferences, only the first would materialise. It took place on May 13 at the university's main hall in San Ildefonso and was titled "Las transformaciones modernas del arte y el surrealismo" (A. Pereira 2011).⁵⁰³ Yet, Fabienne Bradu notes that:

While waiting for the conferences at the National University to resume, André Breton made his second public appearance at the Palacio de Bellas Artes on the occasion of the premiere of the film by Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí: *Un perro andaluz*, on May 17, 1938. The screening initiative may be attributed to the Mexican photographer and illustrator Emilio Amero, who returned to his country

⁵⁰² As researchers María de las Nieves Rodríguez and Méndez de Lozada (2015) have shown, Alexandra Kollontai organized the import of 23 Soviet films to Mexico. The first Soviet film to be screened was *Abrek Zaur* or *El hijo de las montañas* by Boris Mijin, as organised by Kollontai at the Russian embassy in Mexico in 1927. Kollontai's participation as a woman in film culture would open the doors for Tina Modotti, a friend and great admirer of Kollontai, to preside the screening of Eisenstein's *October* at Teatro Hidalgo after a meeting organized by Socorro Rojo Internacional, to "commemorate and show indignation before the death of Julio Antonio Mella" ["conmemorar y mostrar la indignación ante el fallecimiento de Julio Antonio Mella"] (2015, 164). The film had also been screened on November 7, 1928, at the Communist Party's offices on Mesones 54. "Mitin," *El Machete*, issue 136, as Rodríguez and Méndez de Lozada note (2015). This demonstrates that it was common for screenings to accompany the communist group's discussions even before Cine club Mexicano existed. The information provided by Méndez de Lozada and de los Reyes does not match. While the former points to the screening of 16 films between 1927 and 1929 out of the 23 that Kollontai managed to import to Mexico through her agreement with Sovkino (Rodríguez y Méndez de Lozada 2015), according to Aurelio de los Reyes, only one was screened (de los Reyes 2020).

⁵⁰³ A book containing all of these conferences has been published, but it was sold out three years before my thesis was written. The book is called *Las conferencias de México 1938* by André Breton, published in 2015 by Aueio in Mexico City (Breton 2015).

after a long stay in New York and sought to organise a film club, 16 mm Cinema, in order to disseminate films that fell outside of commercial distribution circuits. Another Mexican photographer who would soon earn worldwide acclaim, Manuel Álvarez Bravo, seconded him in this enterprise. The May 17 show would include—besides *Un perro andaluz*—*Viajes mexicanos: Taxco y Acapulco*,⁵⁰⁴ a color film by Rafael García, animated cartoons with Mickey Mouse, the Lupino Lane comedy *Be My King*, and a documentary—*La malaria*—as well as three songs sung by Lupe Medina, Amero’s old friend from the time of Teatro de Ulises⁵⁰⁵ (2012, 91).

Thanks to a review that Xavier Villaurrutia published in *Hoy* magazine on May 30, we know that the first screening organised by 35 mm Cinema included *Un perro andaluz*.⁵⁰⁶ Thus, the club must have opened in May of 1938, if we take its first public activity as a starting point. Thanks to a text that Efraín Huerta published in the newspaper *El Nacional* (May 24, 1938), we know that this session saw great success (Huerta 2006, 171).⁵⁰⁷

Many elements found in these sources draw our attention. Yet, what is most noticeable is, once again, the absence of Lola Álvarez Bravo. The document that I would like to present (Annex 6) in this chapter demonstrates that Lola Álvarez Bravo was the director of this film club. Dated May 14, this document grants permission to Dolores Álvarez Bravo “and other signees, directors of 16 MM Cine Club” to celebrate two film sessions “at the conference room of Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City.”⁵⁰⁸ Though the dates for which the license was issued (May 16 and 21) are not the same ones as those when *Un perro andaluz* was ultimately screened (May 17 and June 21),⁵⁰⁹ the sessions in

⁵⁰⁴ In rough translation: Mexican Voyages: Taxco and Acapulco.

⁵⁰⁵ “Mientras esperaba la reanudación de las conferencias previstas en la Universidad Nacional, André Breton hace su segunda aparición pública en el Palacio de Bellas Artes con motivo del estreno de la película de Luis Buñuel y Salvador Dalí: *Un perro andaluz*, el 17 de mayo de 1938. La iniciativa de la proyección se debe al fotógrafo y dibujante mexicano Emilio Amero, quien, de regreso a su país después de una larga estancia en Nueva York, se propone organizar un cineclub: 16 mm Cinema, para difundir las películas que no participan en los circuitos comerciales de distribución. En esta empresa lo secunda otro fotógrafo mexicano que pronto ganaría fama mundial, Manuel Álvarez Bravo. La función del 17 de mayo incluía, además de *Un perro andaluz*, *Viajes mexicanos: Taxco y Acapulco*, una película a colores de Rafael García, dibujos animados del ratón Miguelito, una comedia con Lupino Lane: *Tú serás mi rey*, y un documental, *La malaria*, así como tres canciones interpretadas por Lupe Medina, antigua compañera de Amero en los tiempos del Teatro de Ulises.”

⁵⁰⁶ Cited by Bradu, Villaurrutia wrote that “once more, a film club is being organised in Mexico that seeks to present films that have not—at least until now—been accepted at theaters that only show commercial films. 16 mm Cinema’s first program found an ace of spades in *Un perro andaluz*, a plate of vitriol” [“Una vez más se organiza en México un cine club que se propone presentar films que no tienen —por ahora— aceptación en los salones donde se exhiben únicamente films comerciales. El primer programa del 16 mm Cinema tuvo en *Un perro andaluz* su número de fuerza, su platillo de vitriolo”] (Bradu 2012, 96).

⁵⁰⁷ During the same session when *Un perro andaluz* was presented, a Chaplin film, *The Gold Rush*, was also screened, as Efraín Huerta notes in the review we have cited (Huerta 2006). This information does not align with that of Fabienne Bradu, who cites different films. Thus, they might have been alluding to two different sessions.

⁵⁰⁸ “demás firmantes, directores de 16 MM Cine Club en la Sala de conferencias del Palacio de Bellas Artes de Ciudad de México.”

⁵⁰⁹ On June 21, Breton would give a conference at Bellas Artes on the trajectory of surrealism. On June 25, he would pronounce another conference at Bellas Artes titled “Perspectivas del surrealismo” (Perspectives on Surrealism). See this information in Bradu (2012).

question were the same. Fabienne Bradu (2012) highlights the difficulties and cancellations involved in the organising of this screening, which ultimately took place on May 17, with a presentation by André Breton. Yet, returning to the matter of Lola Álvarez Bravo's absence, we still don't know why both Villaurrutia's and Huerta's reviews, but also Fabienne Bradu's (2012) research, have overlooked the presence of Lola Álvarez Bravo and work that she with no doubt put into this. This is all impossible to understand, especially considering her declarations and the official letter sent to her by Oficina de espectáculos y diversiones del Departamento del Distrito Federal (the Office of Shows and Entertainment from the Federal District Department) (Annex 6). While she seems to have co-directed this endeavor with Emilio Amero, we may find no justification for her absence in this history. Even if Amero, as Villaurrutia notes, had decided to organise the film club upon his return from New York (Pasillas Mendoza 2017), this would not detract from the work that Lola Álvarez Bravo must have done, since, according to the little information we can find on Amero's life, it seems that ever since 1933 this poet essentially lived in New York, travelling to Mexico City from time to time. Thus, the person who would have managed the film club and directed the project—as the document states—must have been Lola Álvarez Bravo.

I believe it very important that we revisit Lola Álvarez Bravo's work as a cultural mediator, that is, as an agent who meets at least two main parameters: multilingualism and the performance of multifold activities and roles across linguistic, artistic, and geographical borders (Roig-Sanz and Meylaerts 2018).⁵¹⁰ It was thanks to her that *Un chien andalou* premiered in Mexico City on May 17, 1938. The truth is that a screening of *Un chien andalou* would not have been possible without her mediation between the Oficina de espectáculos y diversiones del Departamento del Distrito Federal and her other affiliations: besides her relationship to LEAR, she was a photographer for the Museo de Arte Popular of the Palacio de Bellas Artes at the time,⁵¹¹ and had relationships with various figures in the Mexican cultural and artistic postrevolutionary world. In fact, Lola Álvarez Bravo stated that she bought the film with her own money (1982, 98–99). Thus, her participation in Cine club Mexicano (1931-?) and 16 mm Cinema/cine club (1938-?), corroborates Poniatowska's vague statement that Lola Álvarez Bravo “also organised, along with Manuel, several film clubs”⁵¹² (Poniatowska 1993, 82). Though this is something of a vague statement, we have corroborated that she participated in several film clubs, and not just in one allegedly unsuccessful one, as has been thought until now.

In fact, if we revisit the document, which states that the first session of the cine club 16 mm Cinema was organised by Palacio de Bellas Artes, it is hard to keep thinking that Lola's project had no success, especially considering its first screening. As for projects, as we have seen, between 1931 and 1938, Lola Álvarez Bravo very actively participated in several film club projects. History thus appears quite different from what we've been

⁵¹⁰ I would add that, as a mediator, she was capable of moving through different Mexican cultures as well, such as that of Spanish background but also indigenous culture, as shown in her photography.

⁵¹¹ In a letter dated March 11, 1938, Lola Álvarez Bravo is said to have been commissioned by the Sección de Artes Plásticas (Visual Arts Section) directed by Víctor M. Reyes, where she would be in charge of “Works of Artistic Photography” [“Trabajos de Fotografía Artística”]. The letter is housed in the Center for Creative Photography in Arizona.

⁵¹² “Organizó también, junto con Manuel, varios cineclubes.”

told until now. If we amass the information, documentation, and secondary literature that does not exclude Lola Álvarez Bravo, we may state that Cine Club Mexicano (1931-1935) was coordinated by Lola Álvarez Bravo alongside other peers, including Agustín Aragón Leiva. This is confirmed in the film club's foundational charter (Plenn 1933; Aragón Leiva 1931), as well as in statements by Lola Álvarez Bravo (1982) and Agustín Aragón Leiva (Rodríguez Álvarez 2002a), both of whom mention the film *Natalidad*, which was presumably screened at the film club's first session, in 1932, according to the latter. With the birth of LEAR in 1934, the film club was adopted by said league. As of that moment, Lola Álvarez Bravo's prominence increased, given that she was in charge of organising the sessions, as we may observe in the flyer announcing the second session of the fourth film festival, when French and Italian films were screened. While this document has no date, according to the two experts we've cited, it must have been printed between 1934 and the first half of the 1936. Yet, it must have been in 1936, as the second incontrovertible proof we have on Lola Álvarez Bravo's role as a festival programmer is the text that Cardoza y Aragón published announcing the second LEAR festival of the aforementioned film club in October of 1935. Thus, the first festival must have unfolded in 1935 itself, screening the films that Cardoza y Aragón mentions: *Cómo es la mujer japonesa*, *Celos y Embriaguez de Pierrot*, *El país de los molinos*, and French films. According to this chronology, the second festival may have begun in late 1935, but the fourth one would have been celebrated before mid-1936, when LEAR moved to Donceles street. As of 1937 (Fuentes Rojas 1995) Agustín Aragón Leiva would conduct the film section that the film club depended on. We might call this second half of the club's existence Cine club de México, to distinguish it from its first phase. Though we don't know how long this second film club lasted, it must not have survived past 1938, when LEAR started breaking up. Because of this document, we know that, that year, 16 mm Cinema launched its programming, once again under Lola Álvarez Bravo, but this time with help from Emilio Amero. Likewise, Manuel Álvarez Bravo would participate in both projects, as Poniatowska (1993) and Fabienne Bradu (2012) note. Other participants would include Julio Castellanos, as Lola Álvarez Bravo states (1982), as well as conference givers and members of the Executive Committee of the club's first iteration, such as Cardoza y Aragón, André Breton and, according to González Casanova (2020) and Emilio García Riera (1992), Agustín Aragón Leiva, Agustín Velázquez Chávez, and Doctor Roberto Esparza Peraza.

Everything we've mentioned until now seeks to cast light on how all of the research conducted on Cine club Mexicano and its successors to date have invisibilised Lola Álvarez Bravo. Why this has happened involves many diverse factors. First of all, film studies have shown a certain lack of interest in film clubs. Second, Ibero-American film clubs in particular have enjoyed very little attention in the transnational sphere, with its idiosyncrasies cast aside. Third, historical archives that might empirically demonstrate the significance of such initiatives are scattered and sometimes lost. Lastly and most importantly, Lola Álvarez Bravo's absence from film history is a consequence of the late development of the line of research considering the relationship between women and film. We must keep this in mind—along with all of the previous points—when proposing a methodology with which to address various issues that have been neglected to date.

3.3.2.1 Document Collections with Information on Lola Álvarez Bravo

The document collections that I will now cite contain highly relevant information, as we will now see. Yet, much of Lola Álvarez Bravo's legacy cannot be found in any of these collections and is also impossible to trace in periodical publications. The same is true of the LEAR archives. As we will now see, the documents referencing the LEAR's film section are either lost or somewhere that we have yet to find.

a) Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona

This museum within the University of Arizona in Tucson acquired part of Lola Álvarez Bravo's archive in 1996. As noted on its website, this archive is comprised of 200 gelatin silver photographs by Lola Álvarez Bravo, of which 100 were selected by the photographer in 1993. Another 100 were selected by the museum's curators from her photographic legacy to complete the collection.

Though this center and its archives must not have appeared very valuable to the study of film clubs at first glance, the most interesting document to us—which I presented in the previous section (Annex 6)—was found in this archive. Though my consultation of this archive has been limited because of physical distance and also because of COVID-19, I have been lucky to have received a few digitized documents. I believe that some of these may be highly relevant to the study of Lola Álvarez Bravo and film. Notably, the center has preserved a screenplay that Lola Álvarez Bravo wrote alongside Manuel in 1930: *Nuevo horizonte*. Likewise, I was able to find the script to *La Capilla de Chapingo*, written by Lola Álvarez Bravo to film the murals that Diego de Rivera painted in the 1960s, according to Elizabeth Ferrer (2006, 52). Yet, it also contains correspondence that the photographer maintained with several personalities of the cultural world, including Edward Weston, Olivier Debroyse, and Manuel Álvarez Bravo, as well as posters and announcements for exhibitions and cultural activities.

Without a doubt, studying these materials closely as Deborah Dorotinsky did for the exhibition "La otra Lola: documentación, persuasión y experimentación fotográfica 1930-1955" would allow Lola Álvarez Bravo's figure to reemerge in Mexico's postrevolutionary cultural world, because it especially casts light on the photographer's very active role from the '30s to the '60s'.⁵¹³

b) Fondo Leopoldo Méndez, Cenidiap

This collection is under the custody of the Centro Nacional de Investigación, Documentación e Información de Artes Plásticas (National Center for Research, Documentation, and Information on Visual Arts, or Cenidiap from now on). The LEAR

⁵¹³ Debroyse notes that when he met Lola Álvarez Bravo in 1977, nobody remembered Lola Álvarez Bravo's photography and her last exhibition had been held in 1965 (Álvarez Bravo 1994, 28).

archive is housed within the Leopoldo Méndez Collection. Though Elizabeth Fuentes (1995) wrote a thesis on this document collection, a few additional documents from the collection are also worth reviewing. In particular, the section on film has seen little study. Though the documents referring to the film club are scarce and many have already been cited by Elizabeth Fuentes (1995) and Gabriel Rodríguez Álvarez (2002a), it would be worth checking if there are any other documents on the film club initiative archived under a different category, since this absence does stand out.

The Juan de la Cabada Digital Archive managed by the University of Campeche also includes documents on LEAR.

c) Fondo Olivier Debroise, MUAC

The Olivier Debroise Collection is housed within the Arkheia Documentation Center at the Museo Universitario de Arte Contemporáneo (University Museum of Contemporary Art, or MUAC, from now on) at UNAM, on the university's main campus in Mexico City. Though the collection does not focus on Lola Álvarez Bravo exclusively, many interesting documents and media may be consulted therein. Beyond a copy of the article announcing Cine club Mexicano's inauguration in the "Acera" column of the magazine *Contemporáneos*, several articles allude to Eisenstein's stay in Mexico, as well as to posters and invitations to exhibitions. This collection may help trace the relationships between the members who participated in Cine club Mexicano, casting light on their ideas on film. Lastly, in order to reconstruct the figure of Lola Álvarez Bravo, the tapes with interviews between Olivier Debroise and Lola Álvarez Bravo are especially interesting. While I don't know what information these interviews contain, they will likely be of great relevance, as, surely, the photographer must have referred to the many people who surrounded her as she grew professionally.

Thanks to the investigation by Deborah Dorotinsky for the exhibition "La otra Lola: documentación, persuasión y experimentación fotográfica 1930-1955" I may point to a few other collections that could be of interest for researchers on this Mexican photographer. These collections are mainly mentioned by Dorotinsky because of the inclusion of copies of historical journals where Lola Álvarez Bravo published her photographs. Some of them are: Centro Nacional de Conservación y Registro del Patrimonio Artístico Mueble del Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes (the National Center for the Conservation and Registry of Artistic Heritage Building, or CENTROPAM, of the National Institution for Fine Arts, or INBA), the Mexican Secretariat of Foreign Affairs' archive, the film archive and collection of Fundación Cultural Televisa, and the reserved collection at the library of Universidad Pedagógica Nacional in Ajusco, which has copies of *Maestro Rural*, among other places where we might find the magazine, such as Biblioteca Nacional. Though I doubt that these collections will include references to Lola Álvarez Bravo's film club projects, I believe that we should follow any and all clues that may allow us to reconstruct her role in cultural history.

3.3.2.2 Magazines and Newspapers Citing Lola Álvarez Bravo

Beyond document collections, we should also mention other publications that could potentially include information that might aid our research.

Besides the magazines that I have already mentioned, Lola Álvarez Bravo published her photographs in other outlets, including *Mexican Folkways*, *El maestro rural*, *Rotofoto*, and *Futuro y espacios* (Ferrer 2006, 17). Yet, I have not included these publications in the list I am compiling because I doubt that these will contain information on Lola Álvarez Bravo's film club projects. This does not imply that they should not be consulted in order to broaden our understanding of the networks in which the photographer may have participated throughout her professional career. Deborah Dorotinsky adds the magazine *Mexican Art and Life* (2022).

a) *Frente a Frente* (1934-1937)

Frente a Frente was the magazine of the LEAR. Cenidiap has four issues of the magazine, while another three are at the Biblioteca de las Artes del Centro Nacional de Artes (CENART). In the magazine, we may find contributions by members of LEAR, including Lola Álvarez Bravo. Though, as Rodríguez Álvarez (2002a, 307) notes, the magazine *Frente a Frente* does not mention the LEAR's film screenings, analysing potential LEAR film-section members' participation in the magazine could contribute information on Cine club de México.⁵¹⁴

b) *Todo* (1933-?)

There is a copy of *Todo* in the archive of Centro de Estudios de Historia de México, at Fundación Carlos Slim. The magazine was founded by Félix Palavicini. From this publication, the column that Luis Cardoza y Aragón wrote on film from 1935 to 1936 is especially interesting. Though Eduardo Serrato Córdova has created a fabulous compilation of Cardoza y Aragón's texts on film, which has answered many of our questions on Cine club Mexicano,⁵¹⁵ a few of Cardoza y Aragón's reviews could also be of help. As Serrato notes in the compilation *Crónicas cinematográficas (1935-1936)*, some of the reviews that Cardoza y Aragón wrote on films that weren't of interest to

⁵¹⁴ On this matter, we may also allude to the magazine *Contemporáneos*. Yet, I believe this less relevant, as it has already been widely studied. As to the relationship between the *Contemporáneos* and film, I revisit the works of Aurelio de los Reyes (de los Reyes 1983; 1994), Gustavo García, Guillermo Sheridan, and Miguel Capistrán (all of whom are in de los Reyes 1994). A facsimile of the magazine *Contemporáneos* was republished by Fondo de Cultura Económica (1981), and some digitized issues are available for consultation at the following Biblioteca Nacional de España website: <http://hemerotecadigital.bne.es/results.vm?q=parent%3A0004515654&s=0&lang=es>.

⁵¹⁵ Though I have chosen to call the second phase of our film club of study Cine club de México, Luis Cardoza y Aragón called it Cine Club Mexicano in his reviews, suggesting that, in contrast to what Rodríguez Álvarez wrote (2002a), the film club did not change names.

him were not included in the book,⁵¹⁶ because Cardoza y Aragón “only noted the name of the film club, movie theater, film description, and ticket price” (2010).⁵¹⁷ Given Serrato’s goals, these texts were not as valuable to him as they would be to us.

c) *Hoy* (1937-1977)

The magazine *Hoy* was founded by journalists Regino Hernández Llergo (1894-1976) and José Pagés Llergo (1910-1989), as noted in the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia website. This same institute’s national photography library houses 26 boxes of the magazine’s photographic materials; with 74,754 photographs from between 1938 and 1977, more or less. This magazine is interesting because Xavier Villaurrutia published a few reviews on film—such as with the aforementioned premiere of *Un perro andaluz*—and because, as Elizabeth Ferrer writes (2006, 17), Lola Álvarez Bravo also published in *Hoy*.

Daily presses like *El Popular* (1938-1961), a newspaper that disseminated the labor movement, or *El Nacional* (1929-1998), founded by the National Revolutionary Party (PNR), are also highly relevant archives to our research on film club phenomena. These publications may also include announcements of the activities carried out at film clubs or by people who participated in their organisation. Efraín Huerta,⁵¹⁸ whose review we mentioned above, wrote for both. Meanwhile, *El Nacional* published Cardoza y Aragón, among writers like Octavio Paz, Silvestre Revueltas, and Carlos Monsiváis, all of whom were part of Lola Álvarez Bravo’s social circle.

3.3.3 Lola Álvarez Bravo’s Social Networks: Reinserting her Presence in the First Mexican Film Clubs

This chapter originally sought to study the role of Cine club Mexicano in the institutionalisation of a film culture at different scales of analysis—local, regional, national, and global. At first, our focus was on the practices, discourses, and exchanges surrounding the film club. The value assigned to this club in the historiography of Mexican film (González Casanova 2020; García Riera 1992; Franco et al. 1994; Capistrán 1994; de los Reyes 1994), as well as in the historiography of Latin American film (Lerner and Piazza 2017), demonstrates that there is consensus around this club’s historic relevance among historians. Indeed, studying this Mexican film club allows us to observe transnational (Lionnet and Shi 2005) and translocal⁵¹⁹ flows of exchange between

⁵¹⁶ Private email from July 1, 2020.

⁵¹⁷ “[...] sólo consigna el nombre del Cine club, o sala y la ficha de la película y el precio de la entrada.”

⁵¹⁸ See the book compiling the chronicles of Efraín Huerta, edited by Guillermo Sheridan (Huerta 2006).

⁵¹⁹ What interests me regarding this term is the possibility of addressing little-established exchanges. In the first part of their book, Von Oppen and Freitag state that this term “explores modes of movement and mobility by seemingly marginal, ‘local’ actors which are often regarded as erratic, accidental, and hence at odds with mainstream globalisation. Despite the lack of attention, or even repressive intervention, by

institutions (such as the magazines *Experimental Cinema* and *La Gaceta Literaria* or public and private institutions like the Secretariat of Public Education or LEAR) that are important from the cultural history and film studies' perspective.

Throughout the analysis process for this object, we sought to demonstrate that the film club was directed by a woman: Lola Álvarez Bravo (1903-1993). Yet, this reality has not reached consensus among all the researchers who have worked with this club as an object. To date, no researcher has considered the fact that Lola Álvarez Bravo directed Cine club Mexicano as central to the analysis of this institution. Meanwhile, even the value of her presence in this institution has been questioned, with some believing that there is not enough evidence for us to gauge how important it was that, at that time, a woman stood at the helm of Cine club Mexicano.

Consequently, the main goal of this chapter is to recognise Lola Álvarez Bravo's importance as a creator of women audiences⁵²⁰ thanks to her role in the field of visual arts in postrevolutionary Mexico. We thus recognise the artist's participation in Cine club Mexicano and/or Cine club de México, which would later be called 16 mm Cinema.

3.3.3.1 *Lola Álvarez Bravo's Social Network*

The data that we have available to reconstruct the relationship network around Lola Álvarez Bravo is very heterogeneous. The [dataset](#) my colleagues and I have published includes data comes from secondary and primary sources. Primary sources include letters and publications from Lola Álvarez Bravo's time, such as those found in magazines like *Contemporáneos* or *Frente a Frente*, Lola Álvarez Bravo's book *Recuento fotográfico* (1982), and the photographs she took. As visual materials, photographs are important sources with which to understand the relationships in this network, assuming that the author established a professional relationship with the persons whom she photographed. If this relationship eventually became a personal as well, a personal tie is added in the [visualisation](#). In this sense, the letters serve to determine the relationships between Lola Álvarez Bravo and those with whom she exchanged letters. Regarding the magazines and books that I have mentioned, we have considered the professional relationships established through publications: we believe that there are professional ties between the various people who participated in the same publication. Yet, as noted, this chapter does not seek to trace all of the publications put out by LEAR or *Contemporáneos*—rather, I have only worked with parts of these sources. Likewise, the archives that I mentioned in the section on sources could not be consulted in depth due to the global COVID-19 pandemic at the time of research. Thus, a systemic effort to

more dominant social actors, these mobilities can be seen to constitute significant and lasting connections between particular places and regions" (Von Oppen and Freitag 2010, 4:4).

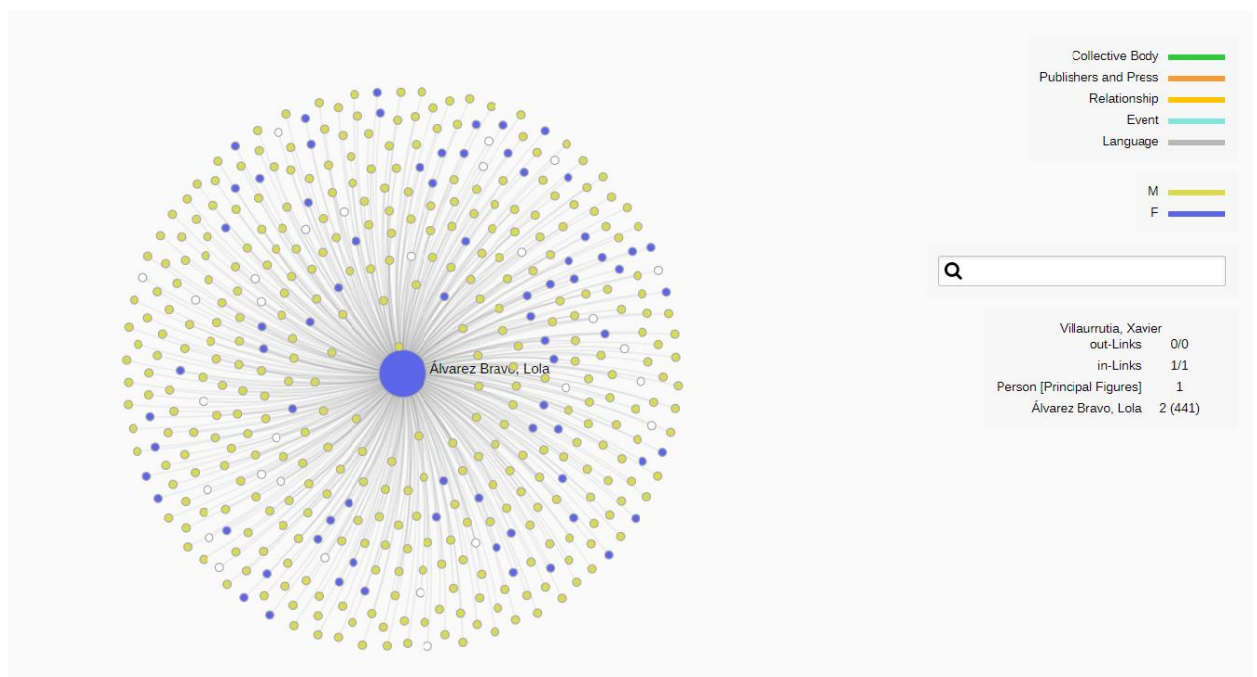
⁵²⁰ The current chapter seeks move past essentialist discourse on authorship and its value, instead proposing an affirmative perspective on Lola Álvarez Bravo's role as a creator of audiences. We are basing ourselves on a relational sociological focus in which authorship is blurred in order to give space to collective actions.

work with the aforementioned sources and archives could broaden the research at hand.

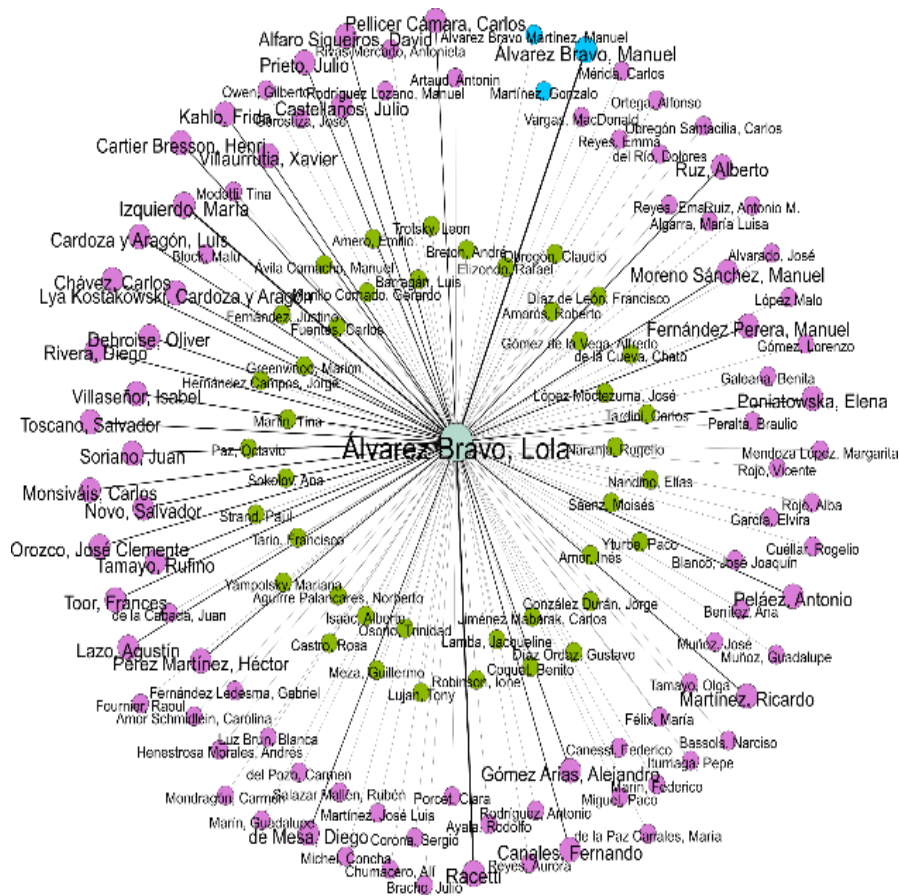
Secondary sources on Lola Álvarez Bravo are also quite limited. Only three reference books exist, which we have cited profusely (Poniatowska 1993; Alvarez Bravo 1994; Ferrer 2006), while Álvarez Bravo has been mentioned in a few other publications (Debroise 2005; Comisarenco Mirkin 2008; 2013). Unfortunately, there are scarce monographs on her work. I have worked with these secondary sources exhaustively, studying their photographs and texts. Elena Poniatowska’s book is especially interesting, as it outlines many of the relationships between Lola Álvarez Bravo and various other artists and intellectuals of postrevolutionary Mexico.

My colleague Ventsislav Iloff and I have generated some visualisations based on select portions of the mentioned [dataset](#) to illustrate several of my hypotheses. All of this complements the dynamic [visualisation](#), which can be explored, as previously mentioned.

Visual 1. Peer-to-Peer LAB and her Relationships, by Ainamar Clariana-Rodagut and Ventsislav Iloff.



The first visual contemplates all of Lola Álvarez Bravo’s relationships, of any kind, throughout her lifetime that I have been able to trace in the aforementioned sources. This is a Peer-To-Peer (P2P) network representing relationships between people. These relationships may have been established through any event, organisation, or publication in which Lola Álvarez Bravo participated. As always, these only include the data that I have been able to trace. In the visual, the nodes that connect persons to each other—which would represent events, organisations, or publications—have been made invisible so that we may appreciate the relationships between people—particularly the audiences around Lola Álvarez Bravo at the film clubs that she participated in. We have not considered the additional relationships of those people whom she had a relationship with because if we did so, the network could extend into infinity. This does not imply



These two visuals contain data on the relationships that Lola Álvarez Bravo maintained throughout her lifetime, according to the monographs written about her. To construct these visualisations, I compiled data on her ties, specifying whether these ties were personal (such as with friends, lovers, romantic partners, or family) or professional (persons with whom Lola Álvarez Bravo shared in a professional activity). The data also specifies whether certain ties were simultaneously personal and professional. In visual 2.1 we may note that, according to secondary sources, Lola Álvarez Bravo seems to have enjoyed very few professional relationships. Yet, when we add her personal relationships to the visual, her universe grows dramatically. These visualisations helped me understand how secondary sources have approached Lola Álvarez Bravo in a sexist way. Up until now, sources have given more weight to her personal relationships than to her professional ones. Some of the monographs that I extracted information from allegedly focused on Lola Álvarez Bravo’s work as a photographer. Despite this, the number of personal relationships mentioned are far greater than her professional ones.

Likewise, conducting this data visualisation helped me realize the potential of a tool that casts light on relationships when it comes to studying women. Reflecting modern, western thought, secondary sources have addressed historical women in a sexist way— associating them with an emotional sphere that has been de legitimise d due to the modern reason-emotion, public-private, culture-nature, and mind-body dichotomies (Bargetz 2020). Consequently, the professional has been associated with men, and the

social and private, with women. Thus, it is no surprise that even the monographs dedicated to historical women have tended to focus on their personal relationships at the expense of their professional ones. Too often, when tracing the histories of women, we only have secondary sources that have reproduced this same pattern, focusing more on the social, intimate, and personal aspects of the person in question instead of on her work in the professional world. I do not seek to imply that the private sphere is not essential to the study of practically any woman in history, especially in the cultural sphere. This is especially so when referring to a field that is little institutionalised, as is the case of film and white privileged women in the period and context that concerns us. Frequently, as our research has shown, the work of women in the cultural field cannot be divested from their ties and development in the private sphere. Extending the concept of cultural mediator to the idea of mediation between the public and private spheres may prove helpful in this sense. Cultural mediators would not be able to do their tasks if they hadn't established certain ties—often crystalized in the private sphere—first. Thus, our research aims to make public the data from the intimate sphere so that we no longer view this data in opposition to that of the public sphere. These visuals will allow us to designate the type of relationship at hand and refer to the potential audiences of agents. We may now see the number of people whom our actor reached through her work and how many people she transmitted her knowledge to—and it was thanks to these people that this knowledge was able to transform, and, just as importantly, generate a community around her.

The data-visualisation tool also facilitates our conception of clusters of women. The tool allows us to work with cultural phenomena, in this case Cine club Mexicano and the women surrounding, managing, and comprising it. If we go back to the idea of audiences as participants, the women who appear in the previous visualisations thanks to Lola Álvarez Bravo would have actively configured the film club experience. Indeed, this was a collective experience in which film was appropriated by participants (Bacelar de Macedo 2017). It is in this collective space of creation that women may stop being understood as passive audiences in order to be seen as creators and authors of the knowledge emanating from the collectivity.

[Interactive visualisation: Social Network derived from Lola Álvarez Bravo](#), by Ainamar Clariana-Rodagut and Ventsislav Iloff.

Lola Álvarez Bravo in the center, with all the events, publications, organisations, and persons that she had ties to, along with the organisms she shared with those whom she had ties to.

The goal of this research was not to trace all the members of the various institutions in this graph, which is why we are not reproducing a complete list of the people who participated in them. To reconstruct the LEAR, we have drawn from the thesis of Elizabeth Fuentes Rojas, Ph. D. (1995), who studied the archive at Fondo Leopoldo Méndez. Thanks to her thesis, we were able to trace the various LEAR sections and the people in charge of them. Besides LEAR, which has proved fundamental to our object of study, a few other institutions emerge, such as the Mexican Communist Party, which

had ties to LEAR thanks to a few of its members who participated in both.⁵²¹ Also related to these organisms, we may note Frente Único Pro Derecho de la Mujer (the United Front for the Rights of Women). As such, we may situate the efforts of this group of artists who participated in the various film clubs under study within the framework of a leftist transnational film culture.⁵²²

The leftist film culture that Fibla describes was part of the resistance against Franco's regime in Spain and involved most of the film clubs that emerged in Spain between 1939 and 1945. This culture tied Juan Piqueras to other international mediators, and these relationships allowed for the mapping of a transnational leftist film culture of the early twentieth century. Besides Piqueras, another mediator in this map was Leon Moussinac, who was in France and created one of the most famous Parisian film clubs of the 1920s, Les Amis Spartacus. Moussinac was also part of the French film club association movement, participated in the magazine *Regards*, and was an associate editor for *Experimental cinema*. As noted previously, the magazine *Experimental cinema* published the announcement of Cine club Mexicano's birth as well as various texts by Agustín Aragón Leiva. Furthermore, it dedicated an entire issue to Sergei Eisenstein's visit to Mexico, where he filmed *¡Que viva México!* It is worth noting that Manuel and Lola Álvarez Bravo attended its shooting. Lola Álvarez Bravo in fact photographed the Russian director. Leon Moussinac was also a militant at the French Communist Party and was a founder of Association des écrivains et artistes révolutionnaires (AEAR), the LEAR's counterpart in France—we may note that even their acronyms were similar. Other characters of this leftist film culture participated in the U. S.-based *Experimental cinema* magazine, including Seymour Stern, a director and correspondent for said magazine in Hollywood, and Alan Potamkin, a film theorizer who also wrote for the magazine. "In fact, this line of inquiry would be aligned with the theoretical proposal made by Masha Salazkina (2023) as she maps the transnational networks of socialist cinema circulation during the Cold War. Although we are discussing different periods, I believe that these networks of alliance, solidarity, and affinity, as the author describes them, could have started to take shape earlier, as seen in 1930s Mexico within cultural spheres such as film clubs.

Let us also recall the sociocultural and political relevance of André Breton's visit to Mexico, when the first session of 16 mm Cinema screened *Un chien andalou* (Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí, 1929). Breton's visit elicited certain public arguments among those who supported Trotsky and militants of the Mexican Communist Party. The meetings between André Breton and Leon Trotsky, whom Diego Rivera was hosting at his home when the French writer visited, fanned the flames. Fabienne Bradu's research (2012) on

⁵²¹ For instance, Juan de la Cabada was part of the Mexican Communist Party as of 1928 and was a founder and president of LEAR. In any case, there were tensions between the Mexican Communist Party and LEAR, both of which espoused different ideological currents of communism. In fact, the visit of André Breton—a follower of León Trotsky's, as was Diego Rivera—caused controversies among Mexican journalists of the time. Efraín Huerta, for instance, wrote a review of the premiere in which he mocked André Breton (Huerta 2006, 171–73).

⁵²² According to Fibla, Piqueras "echoed the international campaign run by Seymour Stern against Upton Sinclair's mutilation of Sergei Eisenstein *¡Que viva México!* (1932)" (Fibla-Gutiérrez 2018, 157). Rodríguez Álvarez (2002a) writes that Agustín Aragón Leiva started a campaign against Sinclair due to Eisenstein's film. This campaign rallied many intellectuals of the transnational leftist film culture.

Breton's visit to Mexico details the disagreements, attacks, and defamation published in the press at the behest of Mexican intellectuals. We have found no clear references that may inform us regarding Lola Álvarez Bravo's political orientation—even her closest friends were involved in opposing factions, as noted in Bradu's account of intellectuals' positions regarding André Breton's visit to Mexico. The same is true of the institutions. As an article in *Nacional* prior to Breton's arrival notes, LEAR organised a few literary activities for André Breton. However, in a text published in *Novedades*, on June 25 (2012, 107), after Breton had been to Mexico and undergone a boycott from the communist party, Diego Rivera upbraided LEAR for being at the service of Stalinism.⁵²³ Meanwhile, many of Lola Álvarez Bravo's close friends would sign a protest article published in *El Universal* on June 20, denouncing the way that Breton's visit to Mexico was managed institutionally.⁵²⁴ Beyond the fights and political arguments that André Breton's visit to Mexico elicited, I believe it important that we highlight that the film club spaces that Lola Álvarez Bravo was involved in had close ties to leftist film culture. Independently of Lola Álvarez Bravo's political preferences, it is clear that the spaces she founded, directed, and managed were part of a network of agents and agencies of clearly transnational scope.

3.3.4 Conclusion

Just as we may deem that Mexico participated in leftist transnational film culture, thanks to the network created around Cine club Mexicano, subsequent clubs, and the institutions associated to this club and its members, we may also now point to a transnational network of women in film clubs. Constructing this network has allowed us to situate certain spaces, initiatives, and communities of women within a map of transnational relationships. Simultaneously, this has helped us uphold our ethical-political commitment to address our object of study—the film club phenomenon—from a feminist perspective. This can help us overcome the limitations of our own perspective and essentialism—an essentialism that views origins as situated in certain cultural spaces, and the disappearances of currents, phenomena, and ideas because of the death or disappearance of persons and institutions. To counter this, we may adopt the perspective of cultural transfer (Espagne 2013) and creolization (Glissant and Wing 1997). We thus view all cultural phenomena as changing and transforming with circulation. Likewise, all cultural phenomena are viewed as the result of the blending and exchange of cultures—including ideas, values, and aesthetics. Alluding to a transnational culture, we operate under the assumption that circulation can overcome national borders, although circulation may, of course, be limited by economic and

⁵²³ Sympathizing with Breton, Diego Rivera made public a letter that the French Communist Party sent to an unnamed Mexican intellectual, inciting a boycott against André Breton's visit to Mexico given its poor organisation (Bradú 2012). Among other institutions, Diego Rivera spoke out against Bellas Artes, a dependent of the Secretariat of Public Education, where Breton's two conferences in Mexico took place in June of 1938, after his presentation of *Un chien andalou*, in May of 1938.

⁵²⁴ Among the friends of Lola Álvarez Bravo who signed a letter protesting the way that André Breton was treated in Mexico, we may name Frida Kahlo, Julio Bracho, Guadalupe Marín, Agustín Lazo, Salvador Novo, Manuel Álvarez Bravo, and Xavier Villaurrutia.

political interests as well as by discrimination based on class, beliefs, or cultural belonging.

Through our proposed methodology and with the goal of studying Lola Álvarez Bravo and her potential audiences through Cine club Mexicano, another tie that our research has delved into is that between the women who participated in Residencia de Señoritas en Madrid (Residence for Young Women in Madrid) and the Consejo Feminista Mexicano.⁵²⁵ Though Álvarez Bravo was not directly involved in this feminist council, or at least has not been documented as such, this council emerged from the Mexican Communist Party, which we know had close ties to LEAR. Furthermore, Consejo Feminista Mexicano put together many national women's conferences with Frente Único Pro Derechos de la Mujer, also under the wing of the Mexican Communist Party, in which Frida Kahlo and other cultural figures who were close to Lola Álvarez Bravo participated as militants. The Consejo Feminista Mexicano had relationships with Residencia de Señoritas en Madrid, as Adelina Codina Canet has written (Codina Canet 2015) in her study of archives that attests to the Residencia's international character. These clues are worthy of further exploration. Along the same lines, María Teresa León, who was part of the Lyceum club Femenino de Madrid (Women's Lyceum Club in Madrid), could have participated—although I cannot confirm her participation in person—in the Congreso Nacional de Escritores (National Writers Conference) celebrated in Mexico that was organised by LEAR in 1937. As we know, Lola Álvarez Bravo was part of the LEAR, which would link them directly. Furthermore, Teresa León published many texts in *La Gaceta Literaria*, which announced the publication of Cine club Mexicano in an article by Agustín Aragón Leiva. Yet, these preliminary ties that we may detect between Residencia de Señoritas and Consejo Feminista Mexicano could lead to a certain hypothesis, namely that the film clubs or associations of which film clubs were born, organised by women or with the active participation of women in the Ibero-America of the early twentieth century, often included political struggles among their goals—either by favoring women's suffrage, defending peace,⁵²⁶ or, from a more conservative perspective, taking care of the “less fortunate.”⁵²⁷ While these struggles

⁵²⁵ I am referring to the Lyceum club given its relevance in another of our case studies for this thesis, as seen in the chapter on María Luz Morales. Likewise, the Lyceum club also appears in the chapter on Victoria Ocampo.

⁵²⁶ For instance, on January 19, 1932, *La Vanguardia* printed a piece on a women's assembly for peace at the Palacio de Proyecciones in Barcelona. In this piece, Aurora Bertrana was said to be the president of the Lyceum club of Barcelona. Clara Campoamor, who was part of the women's Lyceum club in Madrid, also participated. We might also note Irene Falcón's participation in the World Congress of Women Against War and Fascism celebrated in Paris in 1924. Irene Falcón was also part of the Lyceum club in Madrid. In Paris, she would meet with founder of the Mexican Communist Party Consuelo Uranga. Uranga's story is fascinating, and she may have coincided with Lola Álvarez Bravo at the Mexican Communist Party as well as in José Vasconcelos's electoral campaign, in which Lola Álvarez Bravo's friend Antonieta Rivas Mercado participated. She may also have coincided with her through Concha Michel, a mutual friend of Consuelo Uranga and Lola Álvarez Bravo.

⁵²⁷ As Shelley Stamp writes, “an industry that had invested so much energy into courting female patronage now found those patrons discerning, critical, and always vocal. As Anne Morey remarks, ‘women used filmgoing to advance their own influence, parlaying their role as consumer into a more obviously political function as the arbiters of their own and others’ consumption’. On the one hand, women's activism drew upon an outmoded view of middle-class women extending a maternal hand into the public sphere, taking care of ‘less fortunate’ working-class and immigrant communities; on the other hand, it also drew upon

would transfer from one circle to the next and transform in turn, these goals informed the construction of a network of exchange—even of sorority—among those who comprised it.⁵²⁸

newly radicalized women's organisations recently successful in their campaigns for women's suffrage and Prohibition, both ratified in 1920" (2012, 13).

⁵²⁸ Eva María Moreno Lago's text "La identidad de las exiliadas del Lyceum club en sus escritos autobiográficos" describes the sorority between club participants who were exiles of the Spanish Civil War, many of whom moved to Latin America (2015).

PART IV Final Discussion: Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis

4.1 A Comparison between my Case Studies

I dedicate the following section to outline some characteristics that define the profiles of the women and the film clubs that have been the subject of study in this research. This delineation allows me to identify certain similarities and differences. Consequently, I will divide this chapter into the following sections. Following a brief introduction, I will focus on the actors and groups of human actors that were relevant to the construction of the social networks of my cultural mediators, namely, the actors who were part of their private and public spheres. Within this section, I will conduct a comparative analysis of the scope of these networks, in terms of their geographical scale, with the aim of understanding the function of this scope in the historical recognition received by these figures. In a second point, I will concentrate on the institutions they were part of, aiming to comprehend their importance within the national, regional, and transnational cultural and cinematic fields, and how these institutions could have influenced their professional careers and recognition. In this second section, I will also establish points of connection between the networks of the three women based on the institutions they were associated with, paying special attention to film-related activities. In a third section, I will analyze the issue of authorship construction, which, in my view, is established in these cases through the mediation between the private and public spheres referenced in the preceding points. That is, I propose here that it is precisely in their ability to translate the private into the public and vice versa that these women managed to have a publicly recognised voice. Within this point, I will address the importance of feminism and support networks among women to carry out this mediation between spheres. Finally, in a fourth section, having constructed and compared the profiles of these three women, both personally and professionally, and having addressed their strategies to have a voice in the cultural field, I propose to understand their contribution to the cinematic field as a key step towards the establishment of a transnational women's film culture. To achieve this, I analyse the relationship of the three with the cinematic field, their stances regarding different types of cinema, their relationships with various actors within the field, and understand their pioneering position in the field as a way of leading the establishment of a feminine film culture. This leadership, despite having individual names, is exalted and sustained by a collectivity that I believe is crucial to visualise. This collectivity can be observed through the work with networks and the theoretical proposal I presented in the second part of this thesis.

4.1.1 My modernas

These women held prominent positions in the history of the early Ibero-American film clubs, and I have been able to examine them from the perspective of their trajectories and personal relationships, as well as from the standpoint of their professional activities. The purpose of this exercise is to identify patterns and/or common characteristics that explain their position within the field and the fact that their names have endured to the

present day. It is not a random occurrence that some of their names are more or less known, nor is it coincidental that there are women whose names are much more challenging to trace and link to the cinema or cultural field. The issue of representativeness in historiography, and the same can be said for the data to which I have had access, is directly linked to the inequalities underpinning the capitalist world-system. In this specific context, the representativeness of the data cannot be separated from the Eurocentrism behind the coloniality of power, as Quijano (2000) understands it. Indeed, as observed in the three case studies I am examining, the mediator who has received the most recognition from historiography came from a higher social class and lived in the most economically privileged situation, Victoria Ocampo. Ocampo was an Argentine patron and aristocrat, whereas both Lola Álvarez Bravo and María Luz Morales came from upper-middle-class backgrounds. Therefore, while it is crucial to make it clear that without the privileged status of these three women, their names would not have reached us, it is also possible to inquire why we encounter their names, and not those of other contemporaries in similar privileged positions. Let's not forget, as I have already highlighted, that in all three cases, these were white women from middle and upper-class backgrounds who were part of the intellectual elites of their places of residence.

This comparative exercise I am aiming at is designed to assess their personal and professional lives, seeking to understand where their paths may have crossed and the environments and networks they might have shared. This endeavour also serves to validate the hypothesis I have previously articulated in each case study –that it was networks of support among women that facilitated these leaders' prominent roles within the cinematic and cultural spheres of their era. Therefore, notwithstanding their individual capabilities, including their proficiency in establishing significant connections for their careers, it is imperative to clarify that I perceive their accomplishments not solely as a result of their individual efforts. Rather, their achievements are more accurately ascribed to support networks that enable their leadership roles, and to privileged positions of power that socially position them where they are.

Moreover, I consider the theme of feminism to be fundamental for the cohesion of the networks that supported these women. In all three cases, the ways in which they perceive feminism differ, although they all draw from their personal experiences. In this regard, Victoria Ocampo would focus her reflection on what is known as women's writing, as she distinguished herself in the cultural field as a writer, editor, and translator. On the other hand, María Luz Morales would centre her reflection on the inequalities experienced by women in terms of educational and employment opportunities, issues she personally addressed. Lola Álvarez Bravo, in contrast, directed her advocacy towards the economic inequalities faced by women, which she deemed highly pronounced in the Mexican context in which she lived.

The method of social network analysis also enables me to identify the names of other women who, despite not having been investigated thus far likely played significant roles within the Ibero-American cultural and cinematic field in the early 20th century (refer to the second part of this Section IV of the thesis). This is because, as my case studies and other works on this matter have demonstrated (Clariana-Rodagut and Roig-Sanz 2024), the lack of research on women in the history of cinema is not a result of their passivity within the field but rather stems from a structural situation of invisibility that womens

suffer from in historiography. The absence of any research on women and film clubs supports this assertion.

In the following, I summarise the case studies with which I have engaged in the third part of this thesis.

- The first case study is on Lola Álvarez Bravo (1903-1993), a Mexican photographer who, alongside other post-revolutionary (1917-1940) personalities, founded Cine club de México (1931-1934). Later, she also backed the foundation of the League of Revolutionary Writers and Artists in Mexico's film club (1934-1938). Lastly, she directed the 35 mm Cinema film club (1938-?), which screened *Un chien andalou* in Mexico for the first time.
- The second case study focuses on María Luz Morales (1889-1980), a Galician cultural journalist who worked in Barcelona until Franco's regime banned her from continuing. She was one of the first journalists who wrote film criticism in Spain, and she did it in a national newspaper, *La Vanguardia*, that she also directed, becoming the first woman in Spain who directed a national newspaper. Alongside several others, she founded the first documented film club in Barcelona, the Barcelona Film Club (1929). She also worked as a translator, reviewing screenplays in Paramount's literary department in Spain, and as an editor and founder of a publishing house, Surco. She directed one of the most important institutions for women of the Second Spanish Republic (1931-1939), Residència de Senyoretas Estudiantes, the Student Residence for Young Women (1931-1936), and was a vice-president of Lyceum club of Barcelona (1931-1936), a cultural and educational institution also for women.
- The third case study is on Victoria Ocampo (1890-1979), a patron of the arts, a writer and editor for the magazine and publishing house Sur, both of which were fundamental to the Argentine and Spanish-speaking literary field, but also to the European one. She was active part of Amigos del Arte, an Argentinean cultural institution widely recognised for which she organised many cultural activities and invited wide amount of international artists and intellectuals. Victoria Ocampo actively participated in the Buenos Aires Film Club (1929-1932), which was highly recognised for its avant-garde screenings of both European and Soviet films in the Spanish-speaking world. Victoria Ocampo played a key role in importing avant-garde French film to Argentina very early.

The film clubs in which these three women participated were not only relevant to the national film histories of the countries where they emerged, but also to the regional and global history of film. The importance of these film clubs stems from how early they appeared in their respective national scenes, but also transnational. The three are considered to stand among the first film clubs and were documented by the press in the places where they emerged. Likewise, they operated using the traditional model of the first film clubs in film history. Importantly, despite there being scant literature on women and film clubs on any national scale, the three women I am working with marked these pioneering film clubs in significant ways. This is another reason that makes them exceptional examples in the history of cinephilia. As I noted throughout the thesis and reiterated above, secondary literature indicates that the first Western film clubs were not led by women, a claim consistently refuted by the case studies. On the other hand,

the significance of the existence of these three film clubs for the history of women in cinema lies in the fact that female leadership in them could have served as a role model for other women interested in the cinematic and cultural field of that time. Other women, whose voices had not yet been legitimised, could have seen the studied mediators as role models. A model that, in reality, not only operated locally and nationally but also transnationally. We have observed this in the chapter on women and film clubs (2.4), where I traced different examples of film club initiatives for women reported in national press. For instance, *La Vanguardia* references both the ciné-club de la femme that opened its doors in Paris in 1935 and a film club for women in Los Angeles, which also opened in 1927. In both cases, the film clubs are cited in the press as models for Spanish women.

The three case studies my research is based on involve women from similar cultural, social, and economic contexts. They did share certain circumstances. Firstly, they came from well-off or aristocratic families and some of their close relatives also had a career in the cultural field. Likewise, the three in their adult lives were surrounded by culturally and intellectually privileged people who were interested in film, the seventh art. These people included their friends, alongside whom they developed their personal and professional lives. Furthermore, their cultural contexts were closely related to the artistic avant-garde of the early twentieth century, regardless of the three's disparate geographies. In fact, they were promoters of artistic avant-gardes in each of their contexts and in disparate forms. Lola Álvarez Bravo, through her photography and the programming of films in her film clubs; Victoria Ocampo, through her writing style and the inclusion of commentary and film reviews in her magazine *Sur*; and María Luz Morales, in her work as a journalist as well as her involvement in cultural and educational institutions for women, as explained above. Furthermore, the film industries of the countries where they lived were scarcely developed when these women participated in the film clubs, as I have already pointed out in all case studies.

As for their lives, their professional careers developed more or less in parallel, with only a few years' variation. Their careers spanned the mid-1920s to the '80s, they all died between 1979 (this being Ocampo's case) and 1993 (when Lola Álvarez Bravo died). They dedicated their entire lives to their intellectual and creative careers, which implied challenging socially established gender roles. They were gender dissidents as well, in that they did not marry, like María Luz Morales, in that they separated at a very young age, like Lola Álvarez Bravo, or in that they openly maintained love affairs, as Victoria Ocampo would. In order to boost their professions and live off of their work—and to acquire a certain degree of prestige in so doing, they frequently wove transnational networks of sorority—that is, they established support networks with other women who were also trying to make a space for themselves in the public sphere. They established support networks through their involvement in the cultural field and in cultural, political, and educational institutions to which they belonged or founded. Simultaneously, their leadership and position in the cultural field were made possible through these relationships. The actor and the network are codependent elements that do not exist without each other; therefore, the actor, in this case, the mediators of my case studies, cannot be understood without comprehending the networks they were part of and helped to generate. In all three cases, these were transnational networks precisely because they included actors who would operate beyond national boundaries and

maintained relationships that crossed borders. This international projection was crucial for the recognition and consolidation of their professional careers. The three also reflected on the social situation of women in interviews and in their writings, linking such reflections to their individual and personal situations. These reflections were inevitably intersected by the political context of the Western world of the time, when the suffragist movement was in full swing (Daley and Nolan 1994). Thus, their relationships with women of the cultural and intellectual realms sometimes involved a certain degree of reflection upon their shared situation as women. By sharing their awareness of the inequality they were experiencing through such self-reflection, consciously or not, they felt the need to create a genealogy of other white privileged and Western women who also defied gender roles and inspired their work as artists and intellectuals. This genealogy would ultimately legitimate their work in the cultural and artistic fields they participated in.

Therefore, I argue that these circumstances, which pertain to both their personal and professional lives, and the networks surrounding them, are not mere coincidences but rather essential factors for comprehending their position and significance within the cultural sphere to which they belonged.

4.1.2 Álvarez Bravo's, Morales' and Ocampo's Social Networks

Though their purchasing powers differed vastly, none of them were born among the working class. Lola Álvarez Bravo lost her mother at a very young age and was educated by her father and his side of the family. Her father sold antique furniture and does not appear to have suffered any economic hardship throughout his lifetime. Lola became interested in art from a very young age. As a young woman, she co-wrote a play with Manuel Álvarez Bravo, whom she would later marry. Manuel Álvarez Bravo was Lola Álvarez Bravo's neighbour. According to the historiography, she became interested in art thanks to her relationship with Manuel, an avant-garde photographer who enjoyed recognition in post-revolutionary Mexico and worldwide. Like so many other women artists, she worked for her husband for a very long time, revealing his photography and even taking photographs. In fact, whether some photographs attributed to Manuel Álvarez Bravo were actually taken by Lola remains unknown (Ferrer 2006). It seems too simple and stereotypical to state that she met all the other artists and intellectuals who comprised her circle of friends and collaborators thanks to Manuel alone. The fact is that the start of her adult life coincided with her marriage and her return to Mexico City after she had lived in Guadalajara for a time—and that was when she began to associate more intensely with several groups of artists and intellectuals who would accompany her and with whom she would professionally collaborate for the rest of her life.

Here, I think we should highlight two things about Lola Álvarez Bravo. The first has to do with her environment, which was chock with highly recognised artists. Among the male artists from the Contemporáneos movement, we may note José Gorostiza, Xavier Villaurrutia, Salvador Novo, and Gilberto Owen. I have been able to trace at least one professional collaboration between her and each of the first three, and a personal

relationship with every one of them. Besides them, she was friends with some of the most well-known male artists of the time, such as the painters Julio Castellanos, José Clemente Orozco, Agustín Lazo, Julio Bracho, Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros, Vicente Rojo, Rufino Tamayo or Gabriel Fernández Ledesma, the poets and writers Carlos Pellicer, Carlos Monsiváis, Luis Cardoza y Aragón, André Breton, Leon Trotsky, Carlos Fuentes, Octavio Paz, or Juan de la Cabada, the architect Luis Barragán, and the photographer Henri Cartier Bresson. With most of these, she carried out at least one artistic project, photographing many—with the photographs in her archive standing as proof. She showed the work of some of these artists in exhibitions at her two galleries—she shared her first gallery with Manuel Álvarez Bravo, while the second was her own (Poniatowska 1993; Ferrer 2006). As per her testimony, we can expect that she administered both galleries while he was preoccupied with his career as a photographer. And she ran the second gallery on her own entirely. Likewise, we may note that besides a professional relationship, she also enjoyed friendships with many of the men I mentioned (Poniatowska 1993). Regarding women artists and intellectuals, we can name the gallery owners Inés Amor and María Asúnsolo, the editor Frances Toor, the journalist and writer Elena Poniatowska, the actress María Félix, the designer Clara Porset, the patron of the arts Antonieta Rivas Mercado, the painters Frida Kahlo, María Izquierdo, Isabel Villaseñor, Jacqueline Lamba, Carmen Mondrgón or Marion Greenwood, the photographer Tina Modotti, and the writer Guadalupe Marín, among the most famous.

She did share some of these friendships with the man who was her husband for a few years, Manuel Álvarez Bravo. After her separation and eventual divorce, Lola kept the last name “Álvarez Bravo.” This decision inevitably conditioned her career by tying her to the legacy of her former husband. At the same time, it was a strategy of self-invisibilization that makes it hard to search for her and identify her as a photographer. I believe that, perhaps unconsciously, her use of a man’s last name cannot be divorced from the long line of women who have used male pseudonyms or the names of their husbands to publish their work.⁵²⁹

Let us now turn to Victoria Ocampo, an aristocrat from Buenos Aires with family ties to Argentina’s founders. Her great purchasing power allowed her to found a publishing house and magazine, both called *Sur*, neither of which were ever economically viable. Her privileged position put her in touch with other women from the upper class who had received as vast an education as her own. Ocampo’s social capital allowed her to access to certain initiatives started by other cultural agents of her same social class, such as *Amigos del Arte* (Friends of the Arts), an institution directed by Elena Sansinena de Elizalde between 1924 and 1942. Sansinena de Elizalde was an Argentinean woman of the upper class who directed the institution for many years.

⁵²⁹ One example from Lola Álvarez Bravo’s time, whose self-veiling has been widely cited, is that of María de la O Lejárraga. Her husband, Gregorio Martínez Sierra, was an alleged playwright, among other jobs, but his authorship of many plays is now being questioned thanks to the letters between the two. What is most curious about Lola Álvarez Bravo and María de la O Lejárraga is that they kept up this self-veiling even after separating. María continued to publish under her ex-husband’s name, and Lola Álvarez Bravo kept her ex-husband’s last name (Rodríguez-Moranta 2018). Thus, they were not recognised as authors.

However, the economically privileged environment into which Victoria Ocampo was born also implied certain barriers associated to her social class and condition. As I have already explored in the chapter I devote to her, her education was limited to what was recommended for women of her class and station. For instance, as has been noted before, as a teenager she was not allowed to go outside on her own and always had to be accompanied. In that chapter, I also explore how dedicating herself to writing implied defying the gender roles assigned to her as an upper-class woman. As Sarlo explains (1998), this defiance was reflected in the matters she discussed in her writing, as well as in the formats through which they were exposed. Her proposal was not only formal and aesthetic, expanding the established norms for literary genres, but she also pushed the limits in terms of the topics she addressed.⁵³⁰ Her first work focused on Dante Alighieri, and the second, on her personal life—heeding her colleagues’ suggestions that she focus on women’s issues. Again, she went too far by putting the topic of adultery on the table, which, she wrote, was fundamental to the development of her own personal life.

To describe Victoria Ocampo’s personal and professional relationships is a monumental feat. This is because her network was exceedingly broad and transnational. Not only did she build these relationships around the cultural institutions she participated in, but she also later expanded and revamped her circle through the publishing house and magazine *Sur*. All of these relationships were reinforced through the numerous trips to Europe, the United States, and Latin America that she took to see collaborators and friends while broadening her network. With the goal of adumbrating her relationships with men, I will name just a few of the most famous ones: the writers or poets Rabindranath Tagore, Adolfo Bioy Casares, Aldous Huxley, Eduardo Mallea, Jean Desbordes, Jorge Luis Borges, Alfonso Reyes, Waldo Frank, Blaise Cendrars, José Ortega y Gasset, Pierre Drieu de la Rochelle, Ramón Gómez de la Serna, Jean Cocteau, Roges Caillois, or André Malraux, the philosopher Benjamin Fondane, the museologist Georges Henri Rivièrè, the painters Max Ernst, Pablo Ruiz Picasso, the musicians Ernest Ansermet and Igor Stravinsky, the photographers Alfred Stieglitz and Man Ray, the architects Charles Le Corbusier, the physiologist Jacques Lacan, the filmmakers Jean Renoir, Vittorio De Sica, and Sergei Eisenstein.⁵³¹ She exchanged letters, worked on professional projects, collaborated, and/or enjoyed personal relationships with them. Through such examples, we may note her proximity to circles of the Parisian avant-garde of the first few decades of the twentieth century, as well as to the writers who reignited Latin American literature. Regarding the relationship she had with women, there were many artists and intellectuals too, such as: writers Gabriela Mistral, Virginia Woolf, Sylvia Beach, Anna de Noailles, intellectuals such as Victoria Kent, María de Maeztu, Louise Crane, patrons of the arts such as Elena Sansinena de Elizalde, Josefina de Atucha, translators such as Delia del Carril, to name the most famous ones.

Now let us move on to María Luz Morales. María Luz Morales arrived in Barcelona with her family as a child thanks to her father’s job as a tax official. As Rodrigo (1980) notes,

⁵³⁰ See the chapter I wrote on Victoria Ocampo in which I reflect upon her form of writing and the enmity she cultivated with her male colleagues after publishing her first work on Dante Alighieri, which was seen as too daring at a time when she did not enjoy sufficient legitimacy among readers.

⁵³¹ All of these relationships have been found among the data in her correspondence, some publications from the magazine and publishing house *Sur*, and primary and secondary sources. See the chapter on Victoria Ocampo (3.2).

“after the First World War and with the death of her father, she was faced with the imperious need to make a living” (208), pushing her to try her hand as a writer. Of the three women described here, María Luz Morales was the one who was born the most removed from the cultural circles in which she would later become enmeshed. Her profession was what brought her into the cultural field of the Barcelona of the Second Spanish Republic. Though her career could have continued developing for many more years, the Spanish Civil War fractured her professional career in two, and what she could do thereafter, she did in the shadows (she was imprisoned in 1940 for one month and was deleted from the official record of journalists until 1948). Not only that, but the dictatorship also caused her to be forgotten throughout the regime, and a recovery of her figure did not come until very late, in the 1980s, the decade when she died. This historic circumstance not only makes it hard to trace her professional career, but it also led to a disappearance of María Luz Morales in the public space throughout the dictatorship. In consequence, what we know of the author is less public than what we have traced of the other women whom we have addressed. However, during the period when María Luz Morales did occupy the public space, she was in fact a more visible figure than Lola Álvarez Bravo and Victoria Ocampo. The news outlet in which Morales published boosted her visibility, and we can find her imprint in news cuttings, commentary on the events that she participated in, and in the work she published. She was also the director of the renowned national newspaper *La Vanguardia*, for six months when the civil war started.

We should also consider the people who lived in the three womens’ cities at the same time as them. María Luz Morales associated with key Barcelonan personalities of the time, such as Carles Soldevila, Guillem Díaz-Plaja i Contestí, and Tomàs Garcés, as well as with a few national and international ones like the Álvarez Quintero brothers, Federico García Lorca, and Hermann Graf Keyserling. Yet, in her case, the ties we can trace most easily are her connections with women that I have been working on. She had the chance to meet all the intellectuals and artists of the Lyceum club in Madrid, such the pedagogues María de Maetzu and the writers and translators Zenubia Camprubí, and Isabel Oyarzábal, the writers Elena Fortún, Ernestina Champourcin and Carmen Baroja, the set designer Victorina Durán, the feminist lawyers Clara Campoamor and Victoria Kent, among others. From the Lyceum club of Barcelona (1931-1939) she met the feminist writers Aurora Bertrana and Enriqueta Sèculi, the pedagogue Maria Pi de Folch, or the dramaturge Carme Montoriol, among others. She also had the chance to meet international artists and intellectuals, such as Victoria Ocampo, Gabriela Mistral or Marie Curie.

By studying this brief outline of their lives, we may note that they took on dissident gender positions in the socio-affective field. María Luz Morales never married, stating that she had too much work and too little time. Lola Álvarez Bravo only gained recognition as a photographer after she separated from her husband, which was not ideal for a woman of her context, while Victoria Ocampo is well known for her many lovers and even came to reveal her long-lived extramarital relationship with her husband’s cousin. Through these examples, we may consider gender dissidence as benefiting the development of women’s professional careers in the cultural field of this period. To corroborate this theory, we may consider a few examples of women creators

who, in contrast, remained married or in a relationship and thus suffered tragic endings or produced less work than they would have desired or needed.⁵³²

4.1.2.1 Recognition and Extent of Their Social Networks

Concerning the comparative analysis of the life trajectories of these women and their personal networks, it is important to note that Victoria Ocampo has been the most extensively studied among the three (Doris 1981; Matamoro 1986; Sarlo 1988; 1998; Viñuela 2004; Flaminia 2009; Liendo 2017; Pontes 2020), examining various facets of her life, including her role as a writer, her feminist thought, and her influence on cultural and editorial enterprises. In contrast, Lola Álvarez Bravo has been primarily investigated in terms of her career as a photographer (Álvarez Bravo 1994; Debroise 2005; Ferrer 2006). Nevertheless, beyond the well-known interview conducted by Poniatowska (Poniatowska 1993) and her autobiographical texts (Álvarez Bravo 1982), there is scant secondary literature or research that can assist in reconstructing the personal or professional networks of the Mexican photographer. Regarding María Luz Morales, it should be remembered that she has been examined in her role as a cultural journalist (Servén Díez 2010; Santa-Maria and Tur 2012; Servén Díez 2012a; 2013; Servén Díez and Rota 2014; Lázaro and Salgado 2020) and translator (Servén Díez 2016). However, the research dedicated to her is quite limited. In any case, among the three cases, only Ocampo has received attention concerning her professional or personal networks (Flaminia 2009). Despite the fact that networks were crucial for understanding their roles within the cultural and cinematic fields of their time, as well as the scope of their professional careers.

If we compare the networks of these three women in terms of scale, we can highlight some differences. As seen in the account of key personalities with whom Victoria Ocampo had relationships, she appears to be the most cosmopolitan of all (Sitman 2003). Therefore, her network of relationships is more transnational than those of the other women under analysis. As indicated in the chapter dedicated to her, Victoria Ocampo's networks were particularly focused on Europe and the United States. Her travels and relationships extended to France, Spain, and England, primarily, and to New York, where, in addition to professional connections, she maintained close relationships with notable friends such as Victoria Kent and Louis Crane. In contrast to Victoria Ocampo, we find the example of María Luz Morales, whose network of relationships was more local and national. María Luz Morales had a significant impact on the local Catalan context, as demonstrated through her public appearances in cultural events and her participation in numerous institutions and organizations throughout her life. Additionally, as shown in Chapter 3.1, she maintained close ties with the Lyceum

⁵³² An example from the period is Elena Garro, Octavio Paz's second wife. According to their daughter's memoirs, Elena Garro attempted suicide several times following arguments with her husband, who was jealous of her creative abilities (Paz Garro 2019). It is worth noting that these intellectual and artistic men obstructed or failed to support their female partners' artistic aspirations. Of course, certain cases stand in complete contrast, as with Remedios Varo, whose work was widely promoted by Walter Gruen, her partner for the last 10 years of her life.

Femenino and the Residencia de Señoritas in Madrid, which she visited on numerous occasions. Furthermore, she never severed her connection with Galicia, her place of origin, through her involvement in the Galician party and her advocacy for the Galician language and culture. The international relationships built by María Luz Morales were a result of her participation in local or national cultural institutions, where she encountered individuals such as Marie Curie, Gabriela Mistral, or Victoria Ocampo. However, I have not found records of international travels by the journalist.

Lola Álvarez Bravo represents an intermediate case between Ocampo and María Luz Morales; her networks of relationships are also predominantly local and national, but the type of institutions she was part of may have had more international connections than those of María Luz Morales. Although the Lyceum clubs in which María Luz Morales participated had international ties, their activities were oriented towards the national context. Meanwhile, in the case of Lola Álvarez Bravo, the connection of LEAR with the international Socorro Rojo broadens the scope of her networks. Additionally, it is crucial to remember that we are comparing a city where Lola Álvarez Bravo was situated, such as Mexico City, with another like Barcelona, which is much smaller. In this regard, due to Lola Álvarez Bravo's involvement in these more transnationally oriented institutions, her photographic and intellectual activities were also directed towards a more transnational audience, as is also the case with Victoria Ocampo. This is evident in the types of reflections and themes they address and the audiences they target. Conversely, María Luz Morales, perhaps because her activity was journalistic in local and national media, engaged in activities more oriented towards influencing local and national contexts. The geographical scale of the networks these women constructed is significant as it also determines the recognition their work will receive, both in life and posthumously.

In this regard, the recognition these mediators have received from historiography has been greater based on the scope of their social networks. Therefore, Victoria Ocampo is unquestionably an important figure in Argentine cultural history, as well as in the Spanish-speaking and Western world. The collaborations she established throughout her career with intellectuals and artists from different regions or pursuing their careers in various places make her figure recognized from diverse perspectives. Consequently, her authority, in this sense, is more readily accepted and less easily disputed, for example, in adverse national political circumstances, as was the case with the Peronist regime, which she openly opposed.

Lola Álvarez Bravo, on the other hand, despite being overlooked by historiography, was subsequently partially recovered due to the international interest sparked by Frida Kahlo, her close friend whom she had photographed and recorded. Likewise, the work carried out by Olivier Debrouse, an Israeli art researcher and critic, on Lola Álvarez Bravo's figure was crucial for the process of reclaiming her place in history. Thus, compared to Ocampo, the recognition received by Lola Álvarez Bravo came later in her life and also depended on her relationships with national artists and intellectuals. In this sense, we could say that the international reach of Lola Álvarez Bravo's networks was more limited, and especially, the relationships that formed this international network were weaker. However, the close ties she cultivated throughout her life with artists and

intellectuals of post-revolutionary Mexico, and of course, the recognition they received, facilitated her recognition by historiography.

In this comparison, María Luz Morales had a less international network, and in fact, she has received less recognition from historiography. Despite being a highly recognized figure locally, regionally, and even nationally before the dictatorship, her figure gradually faded during its long duration. And although there have been various attempts to recover her work, she remains relatively unknown. In this case, we could say that, despite establishing some international relationships, they were not numerous enough, nor strong enough to prevent the oblivion pushed upon her by the dictatorial regime. It is obvious in this case that the fact that her networks primarily had local, regional, and national reach did not help her face adverse political circumstances. Let us remember that the regime imprisoned her and prevented her from working as a journalist for many years after her release.

4.1.3 Cultural Institutions: Carrying Symbolic Power in Their Networks and Influence on Cinema

Having addressed the relationships with human actors that characterised the social networks of the three women explored in this thesis, I would now like to turn to the non-human actors that comprised their networks. I believe that, once again, there are certain similarities as well as differences that can assist us in understanding their profiles and the roles they played in the cultural and cinematic fields in which these women participated.

The three women occupying my research participated in various cultural institutions with great symbolic capital in each of their contexts. These institutions were not only recognised nationally, but transnationally, too. As stated, María Luz Morales participated in both Spanish lyceum clubs, in Madrid and Barcelona. Lola Álvarez Bravo was part of the LEAR, the League of Revolutionary Artists and Writers, and Victoria Ocampo was part of Amigos del Arte, an Argentinean cultural institution. The mentioned are the most international institutions they were part of, but they took part in many other institutions in their whole life, as I have explained in the chapters devoted to them. This made it so that at least two of these women would have coincided in space and time—namely María Luz Morales and Victoria Ocampo at the Lyceum club in Madrid. They likely also would have stayed at the Student Residence for Young Women at the same time.

It is noteworthy that the three institutions with the broadest geographical reach in which these three women participated had connections to cinema; both Amigos del Arte and LEAR had their own film clubs, and film sessions were organized at the Lyceum clubs. Therefore, the symbolic power of these three institutions, while not specifically derived from their organized activities in the cinematic field, did extend to it. In the sense that the accumulated symbolic power of the personalities associated with these institutions in other fields—such as the art field in the case of Diego de Rivera, a member of LEAR, or the literary field in the case of Jorge Luis Borges, who participated in Amigos del Arte's

film club— legitimise d their involvement in the cinematic field. These two examples are well-known, but like them, there were many more. It is important to consider this matter as the scope of these institutions and their significance at different levels inevitably affected the activities they organized in the field of cinema, even though cinema was not their primary focus. Furthermore, as demonstrated in the three chapters dedicated to my case studies, the impacts on the cinematic field by the three institutions that were so relevant to the women I investigated were also significant for the history of cinema. In other words, despite not being the central focus of any of the three institutions, the film club practices that they would promote were pioneering in the contexts in which they originated.

María Luz Morales directed a news outlet as important as *La Vanguardia*, worked in Paramount's literary department in Spain, and founded the publishing house Surco. In contrast to Victoria Ocampo's publishing house, we know little about Surco, which does not seem to have sparked great transnational relationships. Yet, we should again keep in mind the political context of the dictatorship under which the enterprise was founded. María Luz Morales's cultural relationships especially took hold throughout the Second Spanish Republic, which was very short-lived. In contrast, during the dictatorship, her participation in the public sphere was quite limited, meaning that her interpersonal and professional relationships did not expand during that time. In any case, *La Vanguardia* and the other outlets for which she wrote as a cultural journalist, focused on cinema and then theater, must have earned her plenty of recognition in the cultural and intellectual local and national fields, as well as ample visibility.⁵³³ The authority that she would have garnered as a journalist and by participating in cultural initiatives like the Barcelona Film Club must have increased her social and symbolic capital. In this context, it would be worth speaking of the cultural and educational institutions for women that she directed—as with the Student Residence for Young Women—and that she participated in—the Lyceum clubs of Barcelona and Madrid—due to their political, historical, and cultural relevance. Their symbolic power perhaps should have been greater than that of the other social and cultural institutions in which she participated. Still, we should point out the disparities in symbolic power that such institutions enjoyed due to the fact that they were created for and led by women, and that finished their activities when the Franco regime was established. By tracing María Luz Morales's relevance in the transnational cultural field, we may easily note that her participation in the Lyceum clubs and in the Student Residence for Young Women is not what stands out the most, even though she participated in them very actively, met international personalities thanks to them, travelled to go to their events, and even founded the residence in Barcelona. Indeed, the available data on her mostly has to do with the fact that she directed *La Vanguardia* for six months out of her entire life. Despite the fact that María Luz Morales's role as a journalist is more extensively studied, it remains surprising that her involvement in the cinematic field has not been specifically investigated.

Among the institutions in which Maria Luz Morales participated, the most relevant in terms of internationalisation was the Lyceum Club of Madrid and Barcelona. However, despite promoting some screenings, this institution is not the focal point of my analysis

of programming and practices within the cinematic field. In fact, the chapter on Maria Luz Morales and the investigation of her networks oscillate among three institutions: the Lyceum Club and the Residencia de Señoritas Estudiantes in Madrid and Barcelona, and the Barcelona Film Club. It is within the intersection of these three institutions that I have situated the relevance of Maria Luz Morales's networks in the cinematic field. Of the three, the Barcelona Film Club allows for a comparison with the Argentine and Mexican institutions I mentioned for the other case studies. The significance of the Barcelona Film Club as a cultural institution within the cinematic field lies in being the first to promote practices not seen in Barcelona until that time. For instance, the gathering of recognised intellectual and artistic personalities interested in cinema around film screenings, creating a space for discussion. The social networks generated by these encounters would later become part of the Sessions Mirador, the second documented film club in Barcelona.

Unlike the first, this second film club, an heir to the first, aimed to establish a canon of films, defining what would be considered art cinema. Meanwhile, the Barcelona Film Club screened films that had mostly already premiered in commercial cinemas, a result of its connections with commercial film distributors, such as Paramount, likely through Maria Luz Morales. The contribution of the Barcelona Film Club to the history of cinema is tied to the generation of practices and groups formed around them, rather than its programming. This does not negate the pedagogical intention of the cinephiles, as despite the Barcelona Film Club's programming not being radically different from that of other commercial cinemas, the commentary on the films was critical and aimed at educating audiences about the cinema they were viewing.

On the one hand, similar to the case of Mexican film clubs, the relationship with the industry is twofold. Firstly, through the critical commentary on films released not only in the film club but also in commercial cinemas, the intention is to guide audience preferences and educate exhibitors. The writings of Carles Gallart, Àngel Ferran, and Maria Luz Morales align with this approach. Secondly, though never implemented, the intention to produce amateur cinema would also be a way for the members of the Barcelona Film Club to impact the industry. The significance of amateur cinema in the Barcelona context of the 1930s supports this hypothesis.

On the one hand, the case of the Lyceum Club and its film screenings in this thesis is tangential, as the value of the Lyceum Club is not directly linked to the cinematic field, although it has some impact on it. In Chapter 3.1 dedicated to María Luz Morales and the Barcelona Film Club, I highlight the relationship between the Lyceum Club and cinema. This relationship is based on the interest of the Lyceum Club members in the cinematic phenomenon, but one cannot speak of a regular film club since more discussions related to cinema were organized than screenings, and the screenings served more of an illustrative function. Therefore, the film club explored in Chapter 3.1 is the Barcelona Film Club.

However, in this section where I aim to emphasise the scope of networks and the symbolic power of the institutions to which the women I have investigated belonged throughout this thesis, I refer to the Lyceum Club and the International Residence of

Female Students in both Barcelona and Madrid. In both cases, these were international organizations, and therefore, their impact is more significant in the transnational cultural field than that of the Barcelona Film Club, which was relevant at the national and local levels. Nevertheless, María Luz Morales's importance for historiography lies in the intersection of all these institutions, as she could mediate between the two fields: women's education and the cinematic. Hence, even though we could only trace one screening organized by the Lyceum Club of Barcelona - of which María Luz Morales was the vice-president - this occurrence indicates the institution's interest in cinema. This interest is also evident in the Lyceum Club Femenino in Madrid, where discussions about cinema were organized. It is worth asking, therefore, if María Luz Morales could have been the driving force facilitating the organization of an activity of this kind among the members of the Lyceum Club of Barcelona. This would be another demonstration of her pioneering role in integrating women into the cinematic field.

Lola Álvarez Bravo was a very active member of the LEAR, the League of Revolutionary Artists and Writers. The LEAR was highly relevant to post-revolutionary Mexico and brought together artists and intellectuals who rekindled the Mexican art scene. Its new forms included muralism and the literary avant-garde led by the Contemporáneos, who were very close to LEAR. The painters Frida Kahlo and María Izquierdo were also involved in LEAR. The second film club that Lola Álvarez Bravo participated in was born of LEAR. The film club's programming would respond, as much as possible, to a mix of the cultural-political values of LEAR and the Contemporáneos. We may detect an interest in Soviet cinema intermingled with an interest in the artistic avant-garde of the early twentieth century. As I have already mentioned, this pattern would be fairly common among the first few film clubs, independently of the political ideologies of the institutions sustaining them, such as the Buenos Aires film club, part of Amigos del Arte. The film club promoted by the LEAR was not the first in Mexico City, but it was the successor to the first, and therefore the second. The novelty lies in the political orientation of the organization that drove it. While the first in Mexico City, the Cine Club de México, was promoted by the Contemporáneos, this second one, the Cine Club Mexicano, was driven by an artistic group with political objectives. However, as I already mentioned in the corresponding chapter, both the members and the type of programming were similar between the two film clubs, which is why I consider them the same film club, with the fundamental difference being financed by different organizations.

From the history of Western film clubs, what is interesting about both film clubs is precisely their political orientation, with their "ends will be highly social," as announced at the creation of the Cine Club Mexicano. This trend continued when the LEAR began financing the initiative, as seen in the promotion of one of its festivals. The brochure announced that those with a worker's card would pay less to attend sessions, with a difference of over 50% discount. For any attendee, the entrance fee was 50 Mexican cents, while those with a worker's card would pay 15 cents. Unlike the Cine Club de Buenos Aires, we cannot say that the first film clubs in Mexico City programmed films that had not been shown before in the city. As I also pointed out in the corresponding chapter, the Soviet cinema that interested those who coordinated the first Mexican film clubs had already been exhibited some years earlier through the mediation of Alexandra Kollontai, who had arranged for it to be shown in the city.

Unlike the Sessions Mirador and the Cine Club de Buenos Aires, which we will see next, neither the Cine Club Mexicano nor the Cine Club de México had the intention of creating a canon of art or avant-garde films. The relationship with the film copies they screened, as far as I could investigate, depended on the personal relationships of the members who were part of the institutions on which the film clubs were based. This does not mean that there was no curatorial idea in generating the programming; rather, it had a political, not aesthetic, objective, and access to copies was more limited. Therefore, if we review the programming (Annex 5), we see that the curatorial objective in the programming is sometimes somewhat diluted or confusing. As for relationships with the industry, just like in the case of the Cine Club de Buenos Aires, we see that this relationship is practically limited to two activities. On the one hand, to the critique of the production being promoted by the national industry, through texts that educate in the taste for a specific type of cinema, as seen in the case of Luis Cardoza y Aragón, an active participant in the early Mexican film clubs and a film critic in the magazine *Todo*. Other examples include Xavier Villaurrutia or Efraín Huertas, who also reviewed the activities of the third film club directed by Lola Álvarez Bravo, 35 mm Cinema. In these texts, an appreciation of the films programmed in the film club is encouraged, which, in general, are different from those programmed in commercial cinemas. This, in turn, represents an attempt to educate the audience's taste so that, through this, national production can be properly guided. In the case of Luis Cardoza y Aragón, who frequently attended sessions of the Cine Club de México, the intention was to promote Soviet cinema as a model of educational and artistic cinema, opposed to commercial American cinema.

The Revolutionary Writers and Artists League (LEAR) organised an international conference in Mexico City in 1937. Very important international personalities of the cultural world attended this conference. Interestingly, the conference issued nominal responsibilities to people who were not present at the conference but who were highly recognised in the field, which was the case of Victoria Ocampo. This would lead us to think that, even if Lola Álvarez Bravo might not have met Victoria Ocampo, at least Lola Álvarez Bravo would have known of her. *Amigos del Arte* (Friends of the Arts), in which Victoria Ocampo was highly involved, put on an exhibition titled "Exhibition on Rodríguez Lozano and Julio Castellanos. Drawings and Paintings from Mexican Artists' Latest Trends" in 1924, which both Julio Castellanos and Manuel Rodríguez Lozano attended, with the latter giving a conference titled "Visual Arts in Mexico" in 1925. We may thus assume that they both coincided with Victoria Ocampo, who could have attended the conference and visited the exhibition. The two men were friends and collaborators of Lola Álvarez Bravo. They both published in the magazine *Contemporáneos*, whose members were close to Lola Álvarez Bravo. Notably, Julio Castellanos was a LEAR member and participated in its film club, which was managed by Lola. Julio Castellanos and Lola Álvarez Bravo were members of LEAR's Visual Arts Section and consequently of its Visual Arts Workshop-School. Therefore, while we cannot assume that Ocampo was aware of the existence of Lola Álvarez Bravo, we do know that she had a direct relationship with Ocampo's circle of friends and collaborators. This connection makes it possible to include both of them in the same social network.

Just like with Victoria Ocampo, the LEAR conference also named the Spanish writer María Teresa León president of a committee, but I could not find if she was actually present. María Teresa León was also a member of the Madrid Lyceum Club, in which María Luz Morales participated very actively as well. This would lead me to think that Lola Álvarez Bravo potentially may have known about the Madrid Lyceum Club through sources that I have not been able to trace. A LEAR delegation also went to Spain—specifically to Valencia and Madrid—in 1937 (*La Vanguardia* 1937). María Luisa Vera—a writer who has not been researched much to date—was among those who journeyed there. In Valencia, the LEAR delegation was heading to the Second International Conference of Antifascist Writers organised by the Intellectual Alliance for the Defense of Culture (Garro 1992, 160). This conference was financed by the Soviet Union and was held in Valencia, because that was where the Government of the Spanish Republic resided at the time.⁵³⁴ This encounter may also have included Rafael Alberti, María Teresa León’s husband, who had ties to the Student Residence in Madrid and the LEAR delegation in Spain. In a photograph in the book *Memorias de España* 1937 (Memories of Spain 1937) by Elena Garro, we can make out Rafael Alberti, María Luisa Vera, José Chávez Morado, Fernando Gamboa, Elena Garro, Octavio Paz, Susana Gamboa, Silvestre Revueltas, and José Mancisidor. The same delegation later went to Madrid, which makes me think that, through Alberti, they may have met members of the Student Residence, such as Federico García Lorca, Salvador Dalí, Luis Buñuel, and Gómez de la Serna. It would not be surprising for people with close ties to the Lyceum club or the Student Residence for Young Women to have coincided with a LEAR delegation either, since the members of the Student Residence were had close ties with the members of the Lyceum Femenino.

Victoria Ocampo’s life and career were framed by two very important institutions, Amigos del Arte and Sur. As we have noted, Amigos del Arte (Friends of the Arts) was an institution with great symbolic power in early-twentieth-century Argentina as well as in Latin America. Its name reached Europe and the United States through various paths. On the one hand, the institution itself was interested in inviting international personalities to give talks, put on exhibitions, play concerts, or participate in various cultural events. On the other, its participants also took multiple trips to participate in other institutions’ cultural events. The example I researched on this occasion was that of Victoria Ocampo. As I stated in the chapter I wrote on her, she gave various conferences in the Student Residence for Young Women in Madrid and in the Madrid Lyceum Club on the occasions when she travelled to Spain. Through Sur publishing house and magazine, Victoria Ocampo published many internationally renowned writers from various parts of the world, especially from Europe and the United States. Through these publications, we may trace certain similarities between the three women whom I have referred to. For instance, María Teresa León published in Ocampo’s *Sur* magazine. And María Teresa León and María Luz Morales were both members of the Lyceum Club of Madrid. Also, as I mentioned, María Teresa León might have been attended the international conference organised by the LEAR in Mexico City in 1937. Octavio Paz, a friend of Lola Álvarez Bravo, also wrote for *Sur* magazine. Meanwhile, Alfonso Reyes,

⁵³⁴ I have also consulted the blog “Las mil notas y una nota” by Omar González.

who was very close to the Contemporáneos in Mexico, participated in Friends of the Arts, wrote for *Sur*, and also participated in the Friends of the Arts' film club.

The film club promoted by Amigos del Arte was the first in the city; therefore, the practices initiated from there (film commentary, organization of amateur film courses, competitions, publication of texts, etc.), as well as the type of cinema promoted, were pioneering in the context, as I already mentioned in Chapter 3.2. The Cine Club de Buenos Aires screened the first avant-garde cinema to reach Buenos Aires, along with Soviet and documentary cinema. Except for avant-garde and amateur cinema, I have not been able to determine where they obtained film copies, probably through one of the members who were part of the film club. However, unlike the film clubs in Mexico City, it is clear that the programming was much more extensive, the activities were more regular, and there was an intention to create a canon of avant-garde and artistic films.

In terms of the relationship between the investigated Mexican and Argentine contexts, and in connection with Lola Álvarez Bravo and Victoria Ocampo, it is important to note that there is a conceptual and actor relationship between the magazines *Contemporáneos* and *Sur*, the magazine edited and founded by Ocampo. Both magazines emphasised translation and published texts or commented on texts by the same authors, such as Herman von Keyserling, who coincidentally would personally know both Ocampo and María Luz Morales. Posthumous poems by Lorca were also published in *Sur*, and in *Contemporáneos* Bernardo Ortiz de Montellano commented on the *Romancero Gitano* by the Spanish poet and playwright. Both magazines published texts by Jorge Luis Borges and Vicente Huidobro, as well as Jules Supervielle. In *Sur*, texts by André Breton were published, while in *Contemporáneos* Torres Bodet commented on *Nadja*, and texts by Paul Morand were published in both magazines. Similarly, the presence of Alfonso Reyes is prominent in both magazines. In *Sur*, Reyes published various texts, and in *Contemporáneos*, he was in charge of the sections "Cuadernos de Lectura," where he translated and commented on foreign literary essays, and also "Ocio y placeres del periódico," where he humorously commented on the contemporary cultural scene (A. Pereira 2004).⁵³⁵ In both magazines, works by Diego de Rivera and Pablo Picasso were published. However, more importantly, Bernardo Ortiz de Montellano and Jaime Torres Bodet, founders of the magazine *Contemporáneos* and part of the literary group of the same name, also published in the magazine *Sur*, edited by Victoria Ocampo. It's worth noting that both were involved in the Cine Club Mexicano, of which Lola Álvarez Bravo was a part. Additionally, the *Contemporáneos* group had strong ties to the LEAR, in which Lola Álvarez Bravo also actively participated. All these relationships between the two magazines reveal certain shared policies and interests, expanding their network beyond the magazines themselves, particularly with other magazines where the same writers contributed, such as the Argentine magazines *Nosotros* or *Martín Fierro*, the Cuban magazine *Revista Avance*, or the Spanish magazines *La Gaceta Literaria* or *Litoral*.

These relationships extended, in various ways, to the field of cinema, especially through film reviews or critiques. As I mentioned earlier, the *Contemporáneos* extensively wrote about cinema in their texts, both within and outside the magazine. In fact, they

⁵³⁵ Los datos sobre las publicaciones en *Sur* están sacados del dataset de Nora Benedict (2022).

announced in their magazine the creation of the Cine Club Mexicano, naming the magazine as the official organ of the cinematographic project. The foundations of the Cine Club Mexicano, published in *Contemporáneos*, also appeared in the specialised magazine *Experimental Cinema*, in an issue dedicated to Sergei Eisenstein, where his trip to Mexico was also mentioned. In *Sur*, texts on cinema were also published, as I previously noted, written by Borges, among others. Benjamin Fondane wrote "El cine en el atolladero" during his visit to Buenos Aires, curated by Ocampo, and this resulted in the screening of avant-garde films from Paris at the Cine Club de Buenos Aires. Therefore, cinema should be included in this network of magazines as a topic or subject of interest that connected them. However, tracking the relationships between cineclubs is more challenging, as the tracing of film copies is particularly difficult, and the circulation of copies between Mexico City and Buenos Aires in non-commercial circuits must have been complicated due to the geographical distance.

Nevertheless, when we talk about the circulation of ideas in magazines, as my colleague Pablo Suárez-Mansilla is investigating from some shared data, the relevance of cineclubs cannot be ignored. As I mentioned at various points throughout the thesis, the theory of the cinematographic medium partly originated collectively in the film sessions organized by cineclubs. However, this collective theoretical contribution, at least in the early cineclubs, is often intangible or challenging to trace without resorting to the identification of individual names, as I have frequently done in the research. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that the earliest film critics in the investigated contexts were part of cineclubs (see chapter 2.3). Members of the first initiatives of this kind often wrote reviews or critical comments on films in specialised or cultural magazines and/or mainstream media. Some of them would later professionalise, while in other cases, their cinematic comments would go down in history due to the significance of the author in another field, such as literature. Examples include Jorge Luis Borges's texts on cinema, published in the magazine *Sur*, or Carles Soldevila's texts on cinema in the Catalan context. In both cases, they were literary figures whose contributions were considered relevant within the cinematic field as a result of the symbolic power accumulated in another artistic field, such as literature.

4.1.4 Women's Mediation between Private and Public Spheres

The fact that Lola Álvarez Bravo built her career as a professional photographer after separating from Manuel Álvarez Bravo is significant. Victoria Ocampo wrote at a distance from her husband, Luis Bernardo Mónaco de Estrada, from whom she symbolically had to separate before making her work public. Meanwhile, María Luz Morales was never in a public relationship with a man, and instead deemed a man, as only that would allow her to acquire the status that she enjoyed, for which she would later be punished in prison. All of this would lead us to consider how authority is acquired—and this is a social quality for which playing a role in the public sphere would prove fundamental.

That is, in feminist terms, all of these women acquired their voices after their separation or because they never were in a relationship.⁵³⁶ To have a voice is closely tied to their ability to autonomously develop their own artistic style. In Sniader Lanser's terms, the ability to acquire a certain authority, that is, to express oneself publicly and be considered, is "determined not by essential properties or isolated aesthetic imperatives but by complex and changing conventions that are themselves produced in and by the relations of power that implicate writer, reader, and text" (1992, 5). Thus, a piece's style cannot be dissociated from social, political, or artistic value, or from the author's social condition as a woman. Likewise, according to Sniader Lanser, acquiring the necessary power to have a voice in the public sphere is still tied to "race," gender, class, nationality, education, sexuality, and civil status, all of which interact with social structures. The discursive authority, intellectual credibility, ideological validity, and aesthetic value linked to specific authors or works are produced interactively, depending on their communities of circulation or to whom they are addressed. This is why I've insisted on describing the communities to whom these women directed their work, as well as the roles they played therein.

The question of authorship is highly relevant to this context. As Sniader Lanser notes on the topic of writing, the act of publishing, that is, the will to publish, implies a will to acquire discursive authority. However, authorship in itself does not imply discursive authority. The example of María Luz Morales is illuminating in this sense. The public authority that led her to become director of *La Vanguardia* at her colleagues' behest, as she did not want the responsibility, perhaps emanated from the fact that her colleagues considered her, as they described, "a man in the body of a woman." Following Irigaray's theory on phallogentrism, public authority was only possible through the man who María Luz Morales was, according to her colleagues. This point leads us back to the topic of masculine pen names that women donned for centuries in order to gain the public authority they needed in order to be heard. This long-lived way of acquiring authorship did not die with the nineteenth century, but in fact persisted into the twentieth century and continues today.⁵³⁷

If we transfer the notion of discursive authority to the field of photography, just as publication is a form or quest for legitimate authority, so are exhibitions. Now, focusing on Lola Álvarez Bravo, we may note that she published and exhibited her works very late in her professional career. Her first solo exhibition took place in 1944, when she was already 41 years old, after she had been named Chief of the Department of Photography in the Division for Extrascholastic Education and Aesthetics—later renamed as the National Institute for Fine Arts and Literature (1941)—and had shown her work at the Philadelphia Museum of Art (1943). It was not until the 1980s and 1990s that she started participating in more solo and collective exhibitions internationally. In fact, her work wasn't truly recognised until the '80s and '90s. We may thus deem that one needs to

⁵³⁶ Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which is Not One*, Catherine Porter with Carolyn Burke, Ithaca: Cornell University 1985, cited in Susan S. Lanser (1992). Lanser refers to ideas developed by poststructuralists like Irigaray and Hélène Cixous, who argue that phallogentrism has deauthorised women's bodies. In Irigaray's terms, phallogentrism privileges the masculine, which is associated to the rational, the immaterial, and the transcendental, in Abigail Rine, Irigaray, *Incarnation and Contemporary Women's Fiction*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2013.

⁵³⁷ See the paradigmatic case of Joanne Rowling (J.K. Rowling).

separate from one's husband in order to dedicate oneself to photography, but one needs a man's name to secure the opportunity to, one day, acquire authority. In this sense, I believe that in Lola Álvarez Bravo's case, her decision to keep her husband's last name after her separation speaks to her awareness of the lack of privilege that came with being a woman.

Meanwhile, also borrowing from men as Lola Álvarez Bravo did, María Luz Morales used a masculine pseudonym to become a film critic. Not only that, but she also founded the publishing house Surco under her cousin's name during the dictatorship. In her texts, she notes that she was encouraged to use her pseudonym (Felipe Centeno) so as not to be recognised on the street or approached by the people in charge of film distribution and exhibition in the Barcelona of the time.⁵³⁸ However, this did not justify the fact that her pseudonym was male. Other examples support the need that women felt to use male pseudonyms or androgynous names to have authority as film critics. The most well-known case in the history of early European film criticism is that of the founders and contributors to the prestigious Swiss film magazine *Close Up*, the poets and writers Bryher and H.D. Both wrote using androgynous names and led lives that challenged gender norms. Another exemplary case is that of the French film critic Colette, who not only defied gender norms but also used a pseudonym for her writing. In Mexico, we have the case of Cube Bonifant, born Antonia Bonifant, who wrote film criticism and engaged in cultural criticism from the 1920s. This Mexican journalist also used the pseudonym Luz Alba to publish film criticism (Torres San Martín 2016). There's another significant episode tied to María Luz Morales's pseudonym. Apparently, Paramount got in touch with *La Vanguardia* due to interest in María Luz Morales's film criticism. The people who worked at Paramount were very surprised to find out that the criticism was written by a woman (Cabré 2017). She got the job nonetheless. Whether she would have enjoyed this same opportunity had she not used a male pseudonym will always remain unknown. Despite mentioning only a few cases, it is evident that there is a trend among the early women who engaged in film criticism or commentary to use male or androgynous pseudonyms to legitimise their work in a predominantly male-dominated field.⁵³⁹

The two cases lead me to think that the women mediated their relationship with the public sphere through male figures—even if through a male name alone. At the same time, their public spheres did not exclude the private. We may observe that, often, these women intermixed their public and private lives, making it impossible to study one without the other—for instance, to study their work, one must also take into account their personal relationships. As she writes in her memoirs, it was not until she lived with the painter María Izquierdo that Lola Álvarez Bravo began to make a living as a photographer. She notes that it was surprising to see a woman taking photographs, carrying her equipment on her back (Poniatowska 1993). The apartment that she shared with María Izquierdo became a lifelong point of reunion for all of the friends, artists, and

⁵³⁸ There is a self-published book by the compilation's author, Julio Tamayo (2023), in which the film criticism texts that María Luz Morales published under the pseudonym Felipe Centeno for *La Vanguardia* in the 1920s and 1930s are compiled. The compilation is titled "María Luz Morales. La 1ª crítica de cine (1923-1933)."

⁵³⁹ A topic that has been more extensively studied in the field of literature (Gilbert and Gubar 2020; Moi 2002).

intellectuals in their closest circle. In her book *Alguien a quien conocí* (Somebody Whom I Met), the only book in which María Luz Morales writes about herself, she casts light on some of her relationships with key personalities of the time, such as Federico García Lorca, Marie Curie, Gabriela Mistral, Caterina Albert, and the Count of Keyserling. In her writing, we can read about her constant transit between public and private life. When María Luz Morales spent a day with Marie Curie in Madrid, the scientist got along swimmingly with her mother. Morales hosted the Spanish poet García Lorca in her home, and they enjoyed very close and intimate dialogue due to their shared interest. With the Catalan writer Caterina Albert, whom Morales translated, she reflected on the art of translation, language, and her role as a translator. María Luz Morales also exchanged letters with Gabriela Mistral throughout her lifetime. And Mistral constantly praised her, encouraging her to publish an anthology of Hispano-American poetry, which she never did (Morales and Cabré 2019).

But the constant transition between the public and private sphere that these women performed as a way of acquiring authority is most obvious in Victoria Ocampo's case. As I wrote in chapter 3.2, this mediation between spheres was not only reflected in her style of writing, but in the intimate topics that she addressed in some of their writings. Indeed, she came up with a genre of her own, shifting between cultural criticism, essays, chronicles, and memoirs, with her correspondence being published as a compilation. This exploration of genre implies that she had the authority to do so.

Through the ways they socialised, I believe that these women mediated between the public and the private sphere in such a fluid way that one cannot fully distinguish the two spheres. While these categories do make sense in that these women had to make an effort in order to occupy public spaces that were off limits, their positions may have been halfway between the public and the private, in a semiofficial sphere (Patz 2016), making the dichotomy devoid of value. Still, we need to allude to it in order to understand how their own movement erased the barriers between the two.

4.1.4.1 The Feminist Networks: From Their Personal Experience to Their Professional Career

The strategy of mediating between the public and private spheres, which I have identified among the women I have researched, also had effects on their feminist thinking. The fact that their authority, on one hand, and their work, on the other, depended on their personal lives and social relationships often led them to reflect on their experiences as women artists or intellectuals. It is essential to note, as always, that as white women from intellectual elites, their experiences as women are not comparable to those of Black women or working-class women. Despite this, they often attempted to appeal to less privileged women, as I mentioned in each case. However, intersectional criticism of white feminism would not emerge until the 1970s-80s. It is not surprising, then, that the positions of the three women I investigate were often paternalistic and infantilizing regarding other women with fewer social privileges.

Frequently, in the works of the three cineclubists, we find references to other women whom they identify with, alluding to them as a form of self-genealogy for their own

work, which, I believe, socially legitimises it. For example, Victoria Ocampo would cite some of her contemporaries, such as Gabriela Mistral or Virginia Woolf, and others who had already passed away, like the Brontë sisters, as inspirations for her work as a writer. As I have also pointed out, Ocampo organized talks on Virginia Woolf to introduce her work in Argentina and was inspired by her writing style after having met her. Concerning Mistral, Ocampo would mention her alongside Woolf in her induction speech as a member of the Academia Argentina de Letras in 1977. In that speech, she also cited her Guarani ancestor to express gratitude for her roots.

Lola Álvarez Bravo, on her part, would refer to other contemporary women artists as clear supports for the development of her artistic activity, such as María Izquierdo, with whom she lived, or Frida Kahlo, a close friend she photographed and recorded throughout her life, and whom she greatly admired. She would also extensively refer to the impact Tina Modotti had on her life, as a photographer and independent woman, from whom she acquired her camera before Modotti was deported from Mexico.

María Luz Morales praised in her texts contemporary women who had inspired her, such as the Catalan writer Caterina Albert, who wrote under the pseudonym Víctor Català, and whom she translated in close collaboration. She also mentioned Gabriela Mistral, with whom she lived at the Residència Internacional per a Senyoretas Estudiantis (RISE) that María Luz Morales directed. In her work *Alguien a quien conocí*, in addition to Caterina Albert and Gabriela Mistral, she also referred to the impact of her encounter with the scientist Marie Curie. Throughout her career, she also mentioned the Galician writer Rosalía de Castro as a model and inspiration. In an interview with Soledad Balaguer for *La Vanguardia* in 1971, she cited Oriana Fallaci and Sofia Casanova, two of the first female war correspondents, as inspirations for her work as a journalist.

In addition to self-genealogies, the three reflected on their condition as women artists or intellectuals and acknowledged the exceptional nature of the power they had as women within the context they lived. Victoria Ocampo shared her experience as a patrician woman educated under her father's authority, with all the limitations that entailed, such as not being allowed to go out alone as a teenager or being educated to entertain men. In recounting her meeting with Virginia Woolf, Ocampo referred to the precarious position she experienced as a woman writer within society. She also recounted various sexist episodes she endured throughout her life, involving different individuals, particularly men in positions of power who would mock her, treat her with disdain, or undervalue her work simply because she was a woman. These life experiences were publicly shared, attesting to her disagreement or lack of understanding. In 1936, she founded the Argentine Women's Union with two close friends, María Rosa Oliver and Susana Larguía, with the aim of preventing the repeal of a law that granted independence to married women. Throughout her life, Ocampo continued to address the unequal situation faced by women in her contemporaneity in her writings and speeches.

María Luz Morales also addressed her situation as the only woman in the editorial staff of the newspaper *La Vanguardia*. When she was appointed director after the outbreak of the Civil War, she doubted her ability to lead the media, considering that she did not deserve or possess the skills for the position, despite all her colleagues pointing to her as the best possible director. Throughout her life, she served as a clear model of an

independent and determined woman who built her career to support her family after her father's death. Although she denied being a feminist, she founded the *Residència Internacional de Senyoretas Estudiantis (RISE)* and served as vice president of the *Lyceum Club de Barcelona*. Both institutions, dedicated to the study and acculturation of women, were led by women and promoted activities focused on improving the social situation of women. María Luz Morales also advocated for women's right to wage labor and to receive a good education. In her texts on cinema, she addressed subjects relevant to women at the time, such as fashion, the role of women in film, women as movie stars, or women as audience members. Her insistence on highlighting the role of women in the field of cinema reflects the importance she attached to the topic. In one of her most relevant texts, which I cite in Chapter 3.1 dedicated to her, she discussed the dependence of the film industry on women, both as audiences and as actresses. Speaking about “unattractive women” in cinema, she asserted:

[...] it turns out that filmmakers go crazy looking for truly unattractive women. / Suggestive ads in magazines and newspapers are useless: the desired unattractive ones don't respond to them. The prospect of increased remuneration and easy work also has no effect... Perhaps because unattractive women prefer to work with less profit but in less danger of exposure? Or maybe because they discreetly think that their place is, more than in the white clarity of the clamorous screen, in the merciful shadows of the office, the office, or the workshop? Oh, no! By no means. It's just that when it comes to women, truly unattractive ones do not exist. / It is not fantasy or a ridiculous claim that should provoke our laughter; it is not self-ignorance either. On the contrary, it is a wonderful compensation with which God endowed them, a precise vision, a clear awareness of everything that is valuable in them; intelligence, goodness, industriousness, selflessness, tenderness of their souls that animates and beautifies, putting a halo of beauty around their incorrect, unpleasant, or grotesque faces when they look in the mirror. If we see them only in appearance and not as they truly are, it's worse for us because we don't know how to see. Because, in reality, there are no unattractive women⁵⁴⁰ (Morales 1924).

This text likely responded to María Luz Morales' need to address the demand for "unattractive women" from the film industry through ads in magazines and newspapers, as she herself points out. Despite the political inappropriateness of her comment, the text reveals a clear interest in reversing the misogynistic trend of superficially and

⁵⁴⁰ “[...] resulta que los cinematografistas se vuelven locos buscando mujeres feas de verdad. / Son inútiles los anuncios sugestivos en revistas y periódicos: las deseadas feas no acuden a ellos. La perspectiva de una remuneración crecida y de un trabajo fácil no surte tampoco efecto alguno... ¿Acaso porque las feas prefieren trabajar con menos provecho pero en menos peligro de exhibición también? ¿O acaso porque piensan – discretamente- que su lugar está, más que en la blanca claridad de la pantalla vocinglera, en la penumbra piadosa, de la oficina, el despacho o el taller? ¡Oh, no! De ninguna manera. Es que cuando de mujeres se trata no existen feas, feas de verdad. / No es ello fantasía ni pretensión ridícula, que deba excitar nuestra risa; no es desconocimiento de sí mismas tampoco. Es, ante al contrario, en compensación maravillosa con que Dios las dotó, visión precisa, conciencia clara de cuanto en ellas vale; de la inteligencia, de la bondad, de la laboriosidad, de la abnegación, de la ternura de sus almas anima y embellece y que en torno a sus rostros incorrectos, desagradables o grotescos, pone aureola de hermosura en que se ven envueltas cuando se miran al espejo. Si nosotros las vemos sólo en apariencia y no tal cuales son, peor para nosotros que no sabemos ver. Porque, en realidad, no hay mujeres feas.”

negatively judging the bodies of actresses. Nevertheless, in her texts, she often refers to women in cinema, taking every opportunity to praise them with adjectives related to their elegance, beauty, kindness, or fragility, thereby contributing to the idea of women made for the pleasure of men. Despite this, she also seized every opportunity to advocate for women's right to work and education.

Lola Álvarez Bravo, though having less written work available, addressed the challenges she faced as a female photographer and the abusive treatment she received from Manuel Álvarez Bravo throughout their relationship in her few writings. Not only that, but she also reflected on the situation of other women artists and intellectuals around her, denouncing cases where they had been mistreated by their male partners. She narrates the dramatic case of Lya Kostakowsky, whom she believed died of suffocation due to her inability to leave her home, cultivate friendships, and be creative in the way she needed (Poniatowska 1993). This commitment to denouncing the social situation of women extended to her photography. In her photographic work, we find images of prostitutes and women in desperate social situations, demonstrating the effort she made to publicly denounce the social inequality experienced by women in different spheres.

These reflections and experiences also translated into the networks they built around them. These women with significant roles in the cultural and cinematic fields of their time not only relied on other women to carry out their work but also collectively reflected with their surroundings on their shared experience as women. As explored, especially in the case of Victoria Ocampo, whose correspondence is partially accessible, the issue of women's inequality was present in her social relationships. The founding of the Unión de Mujeres Argentinas also attests to this. In María Luz Morales's personal archive, I found an invitation from a friend to participate in a committee for the improvement of women's social situations. All of this leads me to believe that, in addition to being role models for other women, by publicly occupying male-dominated fields such as cinema and conveying their feminist thoughts in their publications and public appearances, they also built support networks with other women.

4.1.5 Women's Film Culture

Everything discussed so far allows me to talk about a women's film culture driven by individuals who became role models for others. I believe that the three mediators, through their roles as leaders of film clubs, carried out public activities that contributed to the institutionalisation of film cultures. Additionally, they were not only founders of the first film clubs in the cities where they resided but also actively participated in these film clubs in various ways. María Luz Morales was the presenter of the first session of the Barcelona Film Club; she also promoted the activities of the film club and secured films for it. Victoria Ocampo sponsored the arrival of avant-garde films from Paris, with the journey of Benjamin Fondane, which she organised. Furthermore, Ocampo also published texts on cinema linked to the Buenos Aires Film Club in the *Sur* magazine, written by both Fondane and Borges, who was also part of the film club. Lola Álvarez Bravo personally purchased some films that were screened in the film clubs she was a

part of and also presented some of the sessions. Through her management, she also succeeded in screening *Un chien andalou* for the first time in Mexico, with the presentation being handled by André Breton in the third film club she took part in.

In addition to the activities they carried out in the mentioned film clubs, all of them engaged in other cinema-related endeavors that would establish them as significant figures in the cinematic field of their context. María Luz Morales extensively wrote about cinema in various outlets, including specialised magazines, cultural journals, and mainstream media like *La Vanguardia*, where she managed a cinema section. In these texts, she reflected on the cinematic medium, reviewed activities related to the film world, critiqued premieres and screenings, and promoted other initiatives that she found interesting. She also authored the three-volume book *Cine: historia ilustrada del séptimo arte* (1950), which, despite being a somewhat generic history, was one of the first histories written in Spanish by a Spanish female author (Soto-Vázquez 2017). Additionally, she worked for Paramount España in the literary department, adapting scripts and dialogues, and directed the institution's magazine. Furthermore, she participated in numerous public events related to cinema, such as serving as a jury member for amateur film awards. Even more notably, she was the assistant director on André Malraux's film *Sierra de Teruel* (1949), written by the Spanish writer exiled in Mexico, Max Aub, although there is no academic consensus on this collaboration. Likewise, her novel *Tres fines de semana* (1945) was adapted into a film titled *El amor empieza el sábado* (Victorio Aguado 1958).

Lola Álvarez Bravo, in addition to being a founder of three of the first film clubs in Mexico City, also co-wrote a script with Manuel Álvarez Bravo before their marriage, which unfortunately never materialised into a film. She recorded her friend Frida Kahlo in a short documentary and captured the murals painted by Diego Rivera at the University of Chapingo. While there is no definitive evidence to confirm, it is probable that she participated in Sergei Eisenstein's journey to film *¡Qué viva México!* A photograph of the Russian director seems to support this hypothesis, as does the fact that Agustín Leiva, a friend of the Álvarez Bravo couple, served as his guide during the trip.

Victoria Ocampo demonstrated a profound interest in the cinematic medium, a proclivity that permeated various facets of her life, as previously elucidated. This engagement manifested through diverse channels, notably in her composition of chronicles and critiques evaluating the films she encountered. In these critiques, she exhibited a distinctive blend of wit and conciseness, delineating the audience's response to the actors (Leston 2015, 17). Apart from facilitating Fondane's visit, Ocampo assumed a patronage role in the production of an avant-garde film by the philosopher within the Argentine landscape, namely *Tararira* (1936), a venture regrettably never unveiled to the public (Aguilar 2011). Her endeavours extended to Sergei Eisenstein, whom she sought to persuade for the creation of an Argentine rendition of *¡Que viva México!*, albeit encountering insurmountable challenges in securing financial backing. Subsequent attempts with Vittorio de Sica were similarly futile (Leston 2015, 99). Correspondence with these directors reflects Ocampo's persistent pursuit of cinematic collaborations. Concurrently, Ocampo's epistolary exchanges with luminaries in the cinematic realm such as Jean Renoir, Jean Cocteau, and Louis Malle further underscore her substantive involvement in the discourse of film. Beyond critical analysis, Ocampo immersed herself in the cinematic realm as an actress, notably contributing to the silent

film *Blanco y negro* [White and Black](1919), directed by Defilippis Novoa (Leston 2015, 30). Her creative inclinations extended to the composition of a film script encapsulating a familial narrative, wherein her great-uncle purportedly committed the murder of Felicitas Guerrero de Álzaga. While Ocampo aspired for the esteemed Argentine novelist, dramatist, and filmmaker Manuel Antín to realise this cinematic vision, financial constraints thwarted the project's fruition. In a final attempt, she corresponded with the ailing Luchino Visconti, beseeching him to undertake the cinematic realisation of her script (Leston 2015, 102).

Concerning the genre of cinema that these three women advocated, we observe certain similarities and distinctions.⁵⁴¹ The case of Lola Álvarez Bravo is challenging to explore due to the limited quantity of available text. Nevertheless, the themes and style of her photographs suggest a connection with documentary cinema. Perhaps a cinema of social denunciation, displaying empathy towards the socially marginalised, such as children (*Ciego (Entre la luz y la sombra)*, [Blind (Between Light and Shadow)], 1945) or women engaged in sex work (*Tríptico de los martirios I, II y III* [Triptych of Martyrdom I, II, and III], 1949), indigenous communities (*Entierro de Yalalag* [Burial in Yalalag]), and women experiencing poverty or marginalization (*Un descanso, llanto e indiferencia* [A Break, Weeping, and Indifference], 1940). This documentary photographic style resonates with her other interest, education, to which she devoted a significant part of her life, notably through her extensive participation in the magazine *El Maestro Rural* [The Rural Teacher], a crucial publication during the 1930s in Mexico.

Lola Álvarez Bravo, both for her assignments for the Secretaría de Educación Pública (SEP) and for her independent projects, travelled to different parts of the country to document various situations. She often reached places where a lone woman in that era would find it very difficult to reach, such as Yalalag (Oaxaca), where she took the photograph *Entierro en Yalalag* (1946) (Dorotinsky Alperstein 2022). Indeed, this interest in education and documentary work is also evident in the programmes of the film clubs in which the photographer participated. In them, we find titles that seem to be documentaries (*Misterios de la vida de un estanque* [Mysteries of the Life of a Pond]; *Rutas aéreas* [Air Routes]; *Historia de la sífilis* [History of Syphilis]). In fact, in her account of her film club experience, she refers to the documentaries borrowed from Bayer (Álvarez Bravo 1982, 98–99). Furthermore, the interest in documentary and educational cinema is not far from the ideals of Soviet cinema, which was also programmed and praised by the members of the film clubs to which Lola Álvarez Bravo belonged.

On her part, Victoria Ocampo partially shared the values that Lola Álvarez Bravo seemingly embraced in the aesthetic decisions made for her photographs and in the programming of her film clubs. Ocampo believed that cinema could also serve as an educational medium when it did not solely serve commercial interests (Leston 2015, 42). She was particularly interested in cinema that aimed to depict the social reality surrounding it, as evident in her admiration for Italian neorealism, which she praised in her writings. She wrote, "The Italians [De Sica and Rossellini] manage to discover beauty even in the midst of squalor. There is always in their films a vibration, a human tremor

⁵⁴¹ Refer to the annexes of this thesis, where I have compiled the programming of the film clubs in which these three women participated.

that communicates to the audience and achieves that miracle. We sometimes ask ourselves: 'Is this beauty?' And we answer: 'It is life.' And conveying the sensation of life, in art, is one of the most reliable means to attain beauty"⁵⁴² (Leston 2015, 69). Despite Ocampo's favourite film being *Henry V* (Laurence Olivier 1944) and her preference for English cinema, the writer aspired for Argentine cinema to be authentic and educational. This aspiration led her to attempt collaborations with Eisenstein and De Sica.

In both cases, Ocampo and Lola Álvarez Bravo seem to align in values, despite slight differences in aesthetic preferences. It is worth noting that both advocated for avant-garde programming in the film clubs they were involved in. Lola Álvarez Bravo, through her initiative in bringing *Un chien andalou* (1929) to Mexico City in 1938, and Victoria Ocampo, with avant-garde films in Buenos Aires in 1929, including *Un chien andalou*. Additionally, in this context, it is important to recall that the film clubs they were associated with demonstrated an interest in Soviet cinema, which they also screened.

María Luz Morales, as a diligent cultural journalist, demonstrated an inclination towards a sociological and documentary approach to cinema over a purely aesthetic one. She unequivocally considered cinema as an art form, drawing comparisons in her writings to other arts such as theatre and literature. Convinced that the role of cinema was fundamentally educational, she asserted that cinematography was a popular art form for the masses, inherently modern, and capable of reflecting contemporary life. However, she expressed ironic sentiments towards the Parisian avant-garde, a viewpoint echoed in a text by Àngel Ferran, her colleague at the Barcelona Film Club. Morales frequently addressed the responsibility of the cinematograph, as it was termed at the time, and the intersection of cinema and children or, conversely, children in cinema.

Rather than traditional critiques, her reviews of films delved into various aspects associated with the seventh art. These included explorations of cinema and fashion, cinema and mysticism, the art of scriptwriting, set design, and interior aesthetics in cinema. Morales also attached significance to audience reactions, exploring applause and the films that garnered the most acclaim. In contrast to her fellow film club enthusiasts, Morales exhibited a preference for American cinema, evident in the references commonly cited in her texts. These references encompassed luminaries such as Charles Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks, and American film producer Cecil B. DeMille, as well as film stars like the Talmadge sisters and Mary Pickford. Notably absent from her reviews were references to other forms of cinema, such as Latin American cinema. In her reviews, the journalist devoted ample space to discussions of the skills of various actors and actresses, the allure of film stars, their photogenic qualities, beauty, and stereotypical characterizations, including vampires, traitors, and murderers. Her fondness for American cinema, particularly in the comedic genre, was also reflected in the programming choices of the Barcelona Film Club. In contrast to other investigated film clubs, the Barcelona Film Club prioritised American cinema, eschewing Soviet or European avant-garde selections. This alignment coincided with Morales' professional

⁵⁴² "Los italianos [De Sica y Rossellini] consiguen descubrir la belleza hasta en medio de lo sórdido. Hay siempre en sus films una vibración, un temblor humano que se comunica al público y opera ese milagro. Nos preguntamos a veces: '¿Es esto belleza?'. Y nos contestamos: 'Es vida'. Y dar la sensación de la vida, en el arte, es uno de los recursos más seguros para alcanzar la belleza."

role at Paramount España, where she likely obtained copies of films for her film club. While Morales acknowledged the generally subpar quality of national cinema, she lauded notable achievements and dedicated a chapter to Spanish cinema in her illustrated history of film.

The differences in the type of cinema championed by these three women also defined the nature of the film club projects in which they participated. As discussed in their respective chapters, I believe that María Luz Morales' film club contains some characteristics of previous film club projects that emerged in Barcelona, demonstrating an interest in production and distancing itself from avant-garde environments. Additionally, as highlighted in the chapter dedicated to the Barcelona Film Club, the Noucentisme cultural movement, which dominated the Catalan cultural scene at that time, partially opposed the radicalism of the artistic avant-garde that characterised the Parisian atmosphere of the 1920s and 1930s. Meanwhile, the project in which Victoria Ocampo participated resembled more closely the Parisian model, explaining the interest in avant-garde cinema. On the other hand, I believe that Lola Álvarez Bravo's film club initiatives resembled Ocampo's, partly in terms of programming, but they also demonstrated a penchant for Soviet and educational cinema that went beyond the aesthetic interests seemingly present in the Cine Club de Buenos Aires.

The contribution of these women to cinema was primarily intellectual, as Victoria Ocampo noted (Leston 2015, 109). However, we observe a certain engagement with the industry in Lola Álvarez Bravo, through scriptwriting, and even more so in María Luz Morales. The latter's work at Paramount, in addition to her involvement in films, particularly her participation in events within the cinematic field as a judge in competitions, I believe, contributed to the development of the national film industry. In another sense, Álvarez Bravo, Ocampo, and Morales contributed to the cinematic field by introducing women in leadership roles, thereby encouraging the participation of other women who potentially saw them as role models, allies, or collaborators. In this regard, the networks formed by these women within the cultural and cinema fields would foster practices that this thesis has proposed to conceptualise as women's film cultures.

4.2 Networks to Find Women through a Woman: A Social Network Analysis

In this section, I present the findings resulting from the application of the method proposed in section 1.5.5, which forms part of the chapter dedicated to methodology.

4.2.1 A Quantitative Analysis⁵⁴³

Firstly, a network has been constructed based on the three mediators studied in each case, following the methodology outlined in section 1.5.6, "Building the Network". Lola Alvarez Bravo (hereafter denoted as LAB), María Luz Morales (MLM), and Victoria Ocampo (VO). In the following, we describe the main results of the analysis of these ego-networks.

	N	N_m	N_f	E	ρ	\underline{k}	\underline{C}	l_{topo}	\underline{w}
LAB	454	334	92	43242	0.42	190.49	0.78	1.67	2.97
MLM	2436	1632	689	171908	0.06	141.14	0.84	2.26	2.24
VO	2880	1621	1137	121950	0.03	84.69	0.67	2.16	2.44

Table 1. Alessio Cardillo, "Networks main topological features". The table displays for each network the values of: Total number of nodes, N , of male and female nodes N_m and N_f , the number of edges, E , the edge density, ρ , the average value of the degree (i.e., number of connections) of the nodes, k , and the average clustering coefficient (i.e., number of triangles), C , the average topological path length (i.e., number of hops to go from one node to another), l_{topo} , and the average edge weight (i.e., intensity of a connection), w (Latora, Nicosia, and Russo 2017).

One of the initial characteristics of these networks, as I verified after conducting the quantitative analysis, is that despite being constructed as ego-networks following the Actor-Network Theory's principle of 'follow the actor,' the resulting networks are not, in fact, ego-networks. This is precisely because not all nodes appearing in them are

⁵⁴³ I would like to express special thanks to my colleagues Alessio Cardillo and Ventsislav Ikoff. My colleague Ventsi assisted me in data cleaning, organization, and review. My colleague Alessio conducted the quantitative analysis of the data collected by me and verified and extracted by Ventsi. The tables, as well as the results of the analysis, are attributed to his authorship.

connected to the main mediator upon which I built the network. Instead of ego-networks, they are peer-to-peer networks, i.e., networks among peers. Initially, the network contained nodes with diverse characteristics; for example, some represented cultural institutions or magazines, while others represented individuals. As suggested earlier, I transformed this network into a unipartite, or unimodal, network of nodes with the same characteristics, i.e., all representing human actors, with the assistance of my colleague Alessio Cardillo. It was this unipartite network that confirmed I was not working with ego-networks but rather with three peer-to-peer networks.

This characteristic is evident in the difference between the number of nodes (N) in each network in the first table (Table 1) and the number of nodes to which each of our mediators is connected (k) in the second table (Table 2). In LAB's case, this difference is less noticeable, with a total of 453 nodes in her network, and she is related to 428 of them. In MLM's case, almost 1000 nodes are not connected to her. In VO's network, she is connected to almost all nodes, except for around 300 with which she does not have a direct relationship. This situation is a result of how the networks are constructed and the type of data I had when building them. I delve into this further below.

According to the network analysis performed by Alessio Cardillo, we observe that LAB's network is quite dense (it possesses 42% of all the possible connections) and that, in general, the networks have high density of triangles ($\underline{C} > 0.65$) and short average path length ($1.6 < l_{topo} < 2.3$) which allow us to classify them as "small-world" (Watts and Strogatz 1998). As my colleague Alessio's analysis concludes, the small world he refers to resonates precisely with how I have constructed the case of Lola Álvarez Bravo. Among the three cases, Lola Álvarez Bravo's is the example for which I have been able to trace fewer relationships outside her country of birth. Moreover, in the primary and secondary sources consulted, Lola Álvarez Bravo's professional career is linked to specific artistic circles that she frequented throughout her life. This fact could be the result of a bias in the collected data, stemming from a lack of representativeness of other moments in the mediator's professional life, and thus, the lack of representativeness of individuals associated with these other periods of her career. All of this could explain why, in the resulting network, our mediator is consistently connected to the same cultural and artistic circles. Nevertheless, considering that the sources consulted, as evident in the dedicated chapter, are the most renowned about the mediator in question, this lack of representativeness not only affects my research but also impacts research on her in general conducted by historians.

Moreover, unlike the other case studies, the data available to me regarding the cultural and educational institutions to which Lola Álvarez Bravo was connected are less comprehensive than the data I have for the institutions involving the other mediators. This discrepancy is not due to the cultural and educational institutions with which the Mexican photographer was associated having fewer individuals than those associated with María Luz Morales or Victoria Ocampo. However, in the case of Lola Álvarez Bravo, for instance, the list of individuals who worked at the Secretaría de Educación Pública, a notably large educational institution where she worked, has not been included. In contrast, for example, María Luz Morales was linked to the Residencia de Señoritas Estudiantes in Madrid, and the data for its affiliated women are included in her network. Similarly, Victoria Ocampo was part of Amigos del Arte, and the activities organized by

this cultural institution in Buenos Aires, along with its participants, are included in her network.

The construction of the networks for Victoria Ocampo and María Luz Morales results in a larger number of individuals forming part of their networks. However, the decision not to introduce extensive data in the case of Lola Álvarez Bravo is not arbitrary. The omission of data related to, for instance, the Secretaría de Educación Pública in Mexico, where Lola Álvarez Bravo worked, is attributed to the nature of the institution. It functioned as a political body overseeing education and promoting Mexican culture through the establishment of educational institutions such as rural schools, as well as cultural institutions and events like libraries or exhibitions. I considered that including data about bureaucrats and political representatives of these institutions would introduce too much noise into the network, as it would not contribute to relevant relationships. While including these individuals would certainly increase the number of actors in the network and Lola Álvarez Bravo's connections, I deemed that these individuals would not have any other link in the network apart from their association with the political institution, and this would not be a compelling enough reason for them to play a significant role in the Mexican cultural scene of that era. Hence, it would only add noise. Their status as politicians or bureaucrats did not inherently connect them directly to culture or cinema. Moreover, the dimensions and nature of an entity of this kind make it challenging to argue that all individuals within it were genuinely interconnected. Nevertheless, there were some individuals employed by this institution who actively participated in the Mexican cultural scene of the post-revolutionary era, but they were introduced into the network through alternative channels of interaction, as exemplified by Mexican muralists who also had ties to the Secretaría de Educación Pública.

In contrast to the case of Lola Álvarez Bravo, the large cultural and educational institutions mentioned in the case of María Luz Morales and Victoria Ocampo were directly and unequivocally linked to the cultural field to which they belonged. The characteristics of these institutions, namely their objectives and the activities they organised, make them relevant organisations within the cultural and artistic field of that era (see part III of this thesis). Therefore, I considered that the introduction of data about these institutions would result in relevant relationships within the network of the cultural field to which they belonged.⁵⁴⁴

Another characteristic that may explain the difference in Lola Álvarez Bravo's network compared to the other two is that hers is the only network for which the data collection process has been entirely manual, and I have included almost no data from sources not directly related to Lola Álvarez Bravo. In other words, the majority of information has been extracted from primary and secondary sources about Lola Álvarez Bravo or written by her. In comparison, in the case of Victoria Ocampo and María Luz Morales, there are data from more heterogeneous sources. For instance, in the case of Victoria Ocampo, I have included automatically extracted data from the correspondence between Ocampo and other individuals. Additionally, in the case of María Luz Morales, I have included

⁵⁴⁴ Undoubtedly, Lola Álvarez Bravo likely participated in other events or large-scale organizations for which we currently lack data. Acquiring such data could potentially expand her network. Refer to the dedicated chapter on her to delve further into this matter.

data about events announced in mainstream media in which she participated alongside many other individuals from the cultural field of that era. Therefore, in this case, we could assert that the manual introduction of data has resulted in a more compact and denser network (p). On the other hand, the other two examples demonstrate that a greater introduction of data from diverse sources makes the network larger (contains more nodes). However, this does not necessarily imply a higher level of connection density between the nodes, meaning that the network does not have a greater density of connections.

In addition to the differences in the total number of nodes and the quantity of links that Lola Álvarez Bravo has with the rest of the nodes, we can observe other indicators that are relevant to the small world effect I mentioned. For instance, it is crucial to consider the intensity of connections (w) and the number of connections for each node (k), both of which are highest in the case of Lola Álvarez Bravo. These indicators signify that there were numerous connections among all individuals within Lola Álvarez Bravo's network, and furthermore, these relationships were highly intense (according to *the weighted relationship model in Annex 7*). This effect arises because, in most cases, the cultural institutions and associated events introduced into Lola Álvarez Bravo's network featured the same or very similar participants. Moreover, these participants not only shared a significant number of professional activities but also maintained relationships of familiarity, friendship, or affection (intensifying their connections). Many of these personal relationships are referenced in the interview that Elena Poniatowska conducted with Lola Álvarez Bravo (*Poniatowska 1993*). The interview mentions friendships, romantic relationships, and familial connections. When comparing the three mediators, this is a distinctive aspect of Lola Álvarez Bravo's case because we lack this type of secondary source for the other case studies, for which we have less information regarding personal relationships among nodes within the network. Nevertheless, in the case of Ocampo, we have networks established through her correspondence. However, I haven't read these letters, and therefore, the relationships established through them, based on the type of connection, are not encoded.

4.2.1.2 Structure of Connections of Focal Nodes

We look at the neighbors of the focal nodes (LAB, MLM, and VO) and study the properties of their connections. In particular, for each focal node, i , we compute the distance, d_{ij} , with each of its neighbors, j . The latter is computed as the inverse of the weight, w_{ij} , of the edge connecting these nodes: (i.e., $d_{ij} = \frac{1}{w_{ij}}$). A value of $d_{ij} \simeq 0$ indicates that two nodes are very close to each other (i.e., they are connected by a strong interaction), whereas $d_{ij} = 1$ indicate that they are connected by a weak interaction (because the minimum possible weight for an edge is equal to one). We notice that in the LAB network the number of male and female neighbors (k_g) of LAB are very different, whereas this is not the case of the other focal agents. Also, LAB is connected to almost every other node (k) in the network albeit this is not true for MLM and VO. Finally, we notice that the minimum distance is quite small in all the cases, indicating that there are quite heavy connections. Another interesting feature is that

except for the MLM case, the values of the average distance (\underline{d}) for males and females are similar. Finally, we notice that the values of the standard deviation, σ_d , are quite big, suggesting the existence of multiple scales of interactions' intensity (i.e., edge weights) (Barrat et al. 2004).⁵⁴⁵

Network	k		k_g	Distance d			
				min	max	\underline{d}	σ_d
LAB	428	male	323	0.0208	1.00	0.30	0.33
		female	77	0.0263	1.00	0.21	0.22
MLM	1364	male	732	0.0185	1.00	0.68	0.38
		female	597	0.0286	1.00	0.33	0.33
VO	2592	male	1468	0.0078	1.00	0.61	0.31
		female	1002	0.0036	1.00	0.53	0.32

Table 2. Alessio Cardillo, "Focal nodes and neighbours, properties and connections".

After conducting the quantitative analysis using the proposed method and making comparisons, two interesting results emerge for this project. On one hand, the quantitative analysis of the different complex networks reveals that the three mediators I have studied had more connections with men (k_g male) than with women (k_g female). Additionally, in almost all cases (except for Victoria Ocampo), the relationships they maintained with men were more intense (d min male) than those with women (d min female). It's important to note that this distance is not topological but metric, depending on the weight assigned to each type of interaction. In other words, the distance in this table is equivalent to the intensity in the previous table.

Also, recall that I applied the method of weighing relationships with the aim of bringing women closer to the center of the network, i.e., the focal node around which the network is constructed. This objective is reflected in the list of women neighboring the focal node presented in Annex 8. The method has also enabled women to be positioned at a distance from the focal node similar to that of men (d min male vs d min female), as seen in Table 2. This proximity would not have been possible without weighting the relationships as proposed. If we hadn't given greater weight to personal relationships

⁵⁴⁵ The paragraph has been written by my colleague specialist in Network Sciences Alessio Cardillo.

than professional ones, women might have been situated more peripherally in the network, at a greater distance from the focal node. It could also have resulted in many women not appearing within the network of our mediators, and fewer among their neighbors (Annex 8).

For instance, Graciela Amador Sandoval appears as number 62 on the list of neighbors of Lola Álvarez Bravo. Although a brief qualitative investigation reveals that Graciela Amador was involved with the Mexican Communist Party (Cueva Tazzer 2017), likely establishing a direct connection with Lola Álvarez Bravo, we have no evidence in our database, nor have we found in any consulted source, of any direct relationship between them. However, probably due to the fact that she was married to David Alfaro Siqueiros (information recorded in our database), she appears on the list of neighbors of the Mexican photographer. This is a result of the way relationships have been weighted. As Siqueiros collaborated with Lola Álvarez Bravo and participated with her in organizations for which we have data, he is very close to Lola Álvarez Bravo in her network. Graciela Amador, who was Siqueiros's partner, gets closer metrically to Lola Álvarez Bravo due to the information we have about the marriage between Siqueiros and Amador.

Despite the application of the devised method to bring women closer to the center of the network, we still observe in the analysis results that men have more intense relationships with the focal node than women. This, once again, is due to the lack of data on relationships that develop in intimate, private spaces. As demonstrated throughout this thesis, the contributions of women to the cultural landscape in the early twentieth century in the Western world were often denigrated by their contemporaries.⁵⁴⁶ This led to their work being frequently left unpublished, unmentioned, unstudied, overlooked by the media, and not cited by their peers, among other things. Consequently, the amount of data we have on women's contributions in this context is limited, justifying the crafting of microhistories for my case studies. I have also demonstrated that precisely this undervalued situation pushed women to collaborate with each other—an age-old strategy for women's survival—especially to make their voices heard in the cultural sphere of their time. This is why I devised the proposed method to highlight the names of some women who likely had significance in the cultural field, even though they may not have been thoroughly investigated yet.

However, the lack of data on women's collaborations in private spaces results in a lower intensity of relationships between women and the focal node in our analysis compared to relationships between men and the focal node. Despite giving importance to personal relationships to address the mentioned data gap and allow the inclusion of women in the network who might not have appeared otherwise, the weight given to these personal relationships also affects men. In other words, giving greater weight to personal relationships not only impacts relationships among women but also between individuals identified as women and those identified as men. While relationships among women in our database are particularly recorded in private spaces, those between men and women are also documented in public spaces. Therefore, despite personal relationships carrying more weight than professional ones, the sum of professional plus

⁵⁴⁶ An example of this is precisely seen in Graciela Amador Sandoval, Siqueiros's first wife, whom we have just mentioned (Cueva Tazzer 2017).

personal relationships (for men) will always be greater than those that are solely personal (for women).

The only way this method would have been "fair" to women would have been if we had all the friendship relationships among them and could weigh them based on other criteria such as the duration of the relationship. I am not suggesting that relationships between men and women couldn't last the same amount of time. However, qualitative research on the case studies has shown that it was often these personal relationships among women that shaped the careers of our mediators.

4.2.1.3 Closest Female Nodes to Focal Nodes

On the other hand, another relevant outcome generated by this analysis is three lists (Annex 8) of the women closest (up to 100) metrically to the mediators in my case studies within their own networks. These lists are arranged from highest to lowest closeness between the main mediator and her neighboring nodes. I operate under the hypothesis, as outlined in the method description, that women who are metrically closer to the main nodes (the mediators) must have had relevance within the cultural field in which our mediators participated. The concept of metric, borrowed from physics, refers to the closeness determined by the weight assigned to each type of relationship (Annex 7). Thus, a kinship relationship will make two nodes metrically closer than a relationship established at an event. However, if these two human actors have encountered each other at numerous events, their relationship may be closer than one based solely on blood ties. In the case of Victoria Ocampo and Silvina Ocampo, for example, where there exists both a personal relationship (in this case, a blood tie) and a professional collaboration (Silvina published with Victoria's editorial), the bond is very close, perhaps one of the closest (see position 8 in Ocampo's network in Annex 8). However, in Victoria Ocampo's network, the closest bond was maintained with Angélica Ocampo. This network closeness is attributed to the amount of correspondence we have in our [dataset](#) between the two sisters. One could argue that this quantity of correspondence may not reflect reality but is rather a result of our limited access to their correspondence. However, a study by Paz Leston on Ocampo's correspondence seems to demonstrate that the closest personal relationship she had was with her sister Angélica (Leston 1997). This case illustrates that a very close personal relationship in our network results in greater closeness than a less close personal relationship with a high level of professional collaboration, as seen in the cases of the relationship between Victoria Ocampo and María Rosa Oliver or Elena Sansinena de Elizalde. Victoria Ocampo considered María Rosa Oliver one of her best friends (see position 2 in the list), and she also collaborated professionally with her. With Elena Sansinena, she shared both a close collaboration and a friendship (see position 3 in the list). These examples demonstrate that the decision on the weight assigned to each type of relationship was partially accurate (Annex 7).

The concept of metric distance, which determines the closeness between nodes in these networks, is different from topological distance (l_{topo} in Table 1), which refers to the average number of jumps a node has to make to reach all parts of the network. As a consequence of this difference in measuring distance (topological versus metric), a node

(A) can be directly linked to another (B), for example, because they have met at an event, and yet have a lower metric distance (dist in Annex 8) with another node (C) with whom there is no direct link. This is the case we have presented with Graciela Amador Sandoval, who does not have a direct relationship with Lola Álvarez Bravo in her network (topological distance is large), as some women below her in the list do, but she is metrically closer to the focal node than those below her. This effect is due to metric distance, determined by the weight assigned to relationships. In other words, metric distance depends on the intensity of the relationship between nodes, influenced by the weight assigned to each type of relationship (Annex 7).

The example of Graciela Amador is relevant in that her appearance at this position in the list is likely due to the fact that she was the wife of Siqueiros, a friend and frequent collaborator of Lola Álvarez Bravo. This is not to say that Graciela did not collaborate with Lola or was not her friend, but, in line with what has been previously discussed, we lack data that can corroborate this relationship, both professionally and personally. It could be a problem of access to archives or consulted sources, but whatever the issue, among all the sources consulted, there is no mention of this relationship. It is precisely an example of these characteristics, among others, that demonstrates the value of the proposed methodology. While a purely topological measurement (giving importance only to the quantity of links and not measuring the intensity of relationships) would keep these women, whose links in public spaces are less visible, on the margins of the network, a metric measurement allows them to be brought closer to the center. Precisely because their personal relationships, or the few we have been able to trace, place them in the center of the network.

In these lists (Annex 8), we find names of women who have been more and less investigated by historiography, as well as relationships that are very obvious and others that may be unexpected. Surely, there are also many gaps resulting from the lack and scarcity of the data we have. But, in any case, it is a list of names of women that I suggest for future research on the contribution of women to cultural history. A proposal that may be more or less accurate but points towards collaborative work focused on the future of research.

Part V Conclusion

This thesis has aimed to examine the relevance of women in the early Ibero-American film clubs in the first half of the 20th century in light of the research conducted on the film club phenomenon, in which women has been neglected. The global cinema history referred to here is one marked by discontinuities and does not claim any macrostructure beyond the description of continuities and ruptures that historically occurred and are associated with the cinematic phenomenon. The importance of referring to these discontinuities, in the Foucauldian sense (2008) of the term, led me to allude to the contribution of Ibero-American film clubs and women who played a role in them to this global history, which has been enriched by an experience that, as will be seen, is not uniform either. Therefore, the use of the adjective "Ibero-American" to refer to a history of film clubs that I want to reclaim only serves to delimit a geographical space but does not intend to allude to stable common cultural qualities throughout history. However, as I have demonstrated throughout the thesis, during the historical development of artistic modernity and in relation to cinema understood as a socio-cultural phenomenon, it is possible to identify some continuities and some connectivities that persist in the *longue durée*. These continuities and connectivities, as highlighted in Chapter II and IV, align with certain qualities that characterise Ibero-American cinephilia and the profiles of women associated with it. These qualities, collectively, introduce discontinuity in the global history of cinema. Thus, addressing them further enhances its richness. The diversity of objectives that early Ibero-American film clubs had, and the pioneering roles of the mediators associated with this cinephile movement, imply ruptures and discontinuities with respect to the history of global cinema as narrated by mainstream historiography.

Furthermore, this thesis has focused on two primary objectives: firstly, to demonstrate the presence of women in the history of Ibero-American film clubs, and secondly, to explore the significance of the social and intellectual networks these women managed to establish in order to comprehend their active involvement in these spaces. In order to do so, I have employed the methodology proposed by Actor-Network Theory, with the aim of reconstructing the networks associated with these women who played significant roles in the early Ibero-American film clubs. For the reconstruction of these networks, I have applied a global and gender perspective, enabling me to highlight the power imbalances generated by the world system, while also emphasising the contribution of agents marginalised by mainstream film history, such as women, and the significance of initiatives originating in wrongly-called peripheral spaces, such as Ibero-America, within this narrative.

The affirmation of the presence of women in the early Iberoamerican film club history constitutes not only a quantitative contribution, in terms of additional data for the global history of cinema, but also serves as a cultural historical contribution, as it enables the recognition of alternative forms of participation associated with a certain marginality. As demonstrated, the participation of women cannot be dissociated from the personal and professional networks they established or fail to establish throughout their lives. This, in turn, justifies the relevance of the employed methodology to address

the subject under study. Simultaneously, the specific and limited profile of women to whom I attributed agency in this research also reflects the power-reproducing process generated by the networks I have constructed around the same subject. In other words, the chosen profile of women from which I initiated the creation of networks has determined the profile of other actors appearing in the network I have traced. It also partially defines the limits of this research. Meaning, the women I attributed agency in this research were white, Western, privileged women. While I acknowledge the fact that this profile excludes the majority of women, and while I suppose other less privileged, and perhaps non-white and non-westernised women also participated in the early Ibero-American film clubs, I failed to find their names. It is an acknowledgment of these limitations that prompted the formulation of the fourth part of this investigation. The comparative analysis presented therein, along with the quantitative method and analysis, seeks, within its constraints, to surpass the inherent limitations of the research, pointing towards its own limitations while offering a list of other women that could eventually broaden the scope of the research.

The thesis has been structured into the following sections: an initial section providing a description of the object of study, the research objectives and questions, the hypotheses, the theoretical perspectives, an analysis of the state of the art and the methodology (Part I). Within the second part, first (2.2), I developed a theoretical proposal aimed at advancing the application of a transnational perspective in the study of Ibero-American film clubs, with the objective of highlighting their contribution to global film history. To achieve this, I proposed a theoretical framework to emphasise the specificities of Ibero-American film club history when they existed, as well as the discontinuities that differentiate them. Some of the elements that I managed to analyse generated dissonances within the broader history of Western film club movements. The main goal was to liberate the history of film clubs from categories and analytical frameworks derived from analyses of European and US-American case studies. To demonstrate the agency of Ibero-American film clubs, I illustrated the networks of exchange between film clubs and institutions associated with them—such as journals, cultural and educational institutions, such as film archives or screening venues, etcetera—throughout the period under analysis (1909-1959). Additionally, I suggested the importance of considering different spatial and temporal scales in the analysis, taking into account the specificities of various contexts. This approach aimed to decenter the historically entrenched conceptualization of the Western film club phenomenon. I also introduced a periodisation (2.3) for Ibero-American film club history, using digital tools and historical data to be considered to expand the history of Western and Westernized film clubs. For example, I demonstrated that the second wave of Western film clubs, typically associated with the 1960s, began to take shape in Latin America from the mid-1940s. This chronology, achieved using digital tools, represents the first effort of this type. In the final chapter of this second part (2.4), I proposed certain theoretical and methodological tools that I believe can aid in researching the contributions of women to both the history of cinema and the history of film clubs. These tools include the reevaluation of certain data sources, collective distribution of authorship, and strategies employed by women to highlight their authorship in the cultural field, particularly during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Some of these strategies include the use of pen names to ensure publication, the creation of genealogies of other well-known women that could be references for their work, the

establishment of networks of collaboration with other women, and the acknowledgment of other women's work.

In the third section (3.1, 3.2, and 3.3), I have analysed, in the form of microhistories, three case studies focused on the activities of the Mexican Lola Álvarez Bravo, the Argentine Victoria Ocampo, and the Spaniard María Luz Morales. These case studies have allowed me to explore their contributions to the cinematic and cultural fields through their networks, both personal and professional. The conducted research has led me to confirm the initial hypothesis of this work, namely, that women played significant roles in the history of the early Ibero-American film clubs and successfully established notable social and intellectual networks at local, regional, national, and international levels. The leadership roles assumed by some women in the early Ibero-American film club movement provide another reason to underscore the value of these film clubs in a global history of cinema and enabled me to conceptualise the efforts of these women as a means for them to promote a women's film culture. In this regard, on the one hand, the case studies contribute to the objective of retrieving and disseminating data on women's contributions to Western cultural history. On the other hand, they serve as confirmation of the efficacy of the methodology proposed in the second part of the thesis. The methodology of reconstructing networks based on certain key mediators, incorporating a gendered and global perspective, enabled me to comprehend and justify the relevance of these mediators within the cultural field, and specifically within the cinema field. Concurrently, working with networks led me to uncover the significance of support networks among women, which would facilitate the sustenance of authorship for some. It is in this vein that I proposed the collectivisation of authorship, as a means to align with the principle of collaboration without which the recognition of these privileged individuals would not have been feasible. Simultaneously, the characteristics of the research subject, film clubs, prompt engagement with networks, given their historical reliance on each other to obtain film copies, organise activities, and advocate for policies within the cultural field they were part of.

In the fourth part I have crisscrossed the case studies presented in the third part and I have proposed a comparative analyses (4.1) allowing for the identification of similarities and disparities among my subjects of study. Thus I have constructed the kind of profile of the Ibero-American woman film club enthusiast in the 1930s who could contribute to the cinema field fostering a women's film culture. Secondly, my subject of study has compelled me to devise a quantitative methodology (1.5.5) for tracing the contribution of Ibero-American women to the Western history of film club movements. This methodology, with the results of the applied method situated in this fourth part (4.2), is designed to be replicable when dealing with scarce, scattered, and heterogeneous data on women's participation in the history of various Western and Westernized cultural and knowledge fields. Specifically, the proposed methodology integrates qualitative research methods, such as Actor-Network Theory, and quantitative analysis methods, such as Social Network Analysis. I ground my methodological proposal on the theoretical premise that knowledge emerges from collectivity and circulation processes, and that tracing networks can help unearth the contributions of agents who have hitherto been overlooked, such as women.

The lack of secondary bibliography addressing the relationship between film clubs and women, along with the challenge of finding primary sources to support this research,

has been a fundamental theme that has shaped the theoretical and methodological proposal. In this context, to ascertain the positions occupied by women and locate them within a historiography that has rendered them invisible, I have worked with the concept of networks of support, collaboration, and solidarity. This has, in part, necessitated essentialising their initiatives, workgroups, and the networks they formed. One such essentialisation relates to the concept of "woman" or "women," which I have employed to bring together disparate groups of individuals I deemed to have shared certain experiences. Nevertheless, it is evident that the category itself, as well as the examples proposed, excludes women of color, women from working-class backgrounds, and non-cisgender individuals, who, despite my efforts to include them, fall outside this analytical framework. I partially justify this exclusion based on the historical context, the nature defining my object of analysis, and the lack of historical data and archives tracing the participation of women of colour or women from working-class backgrounds in the cinema field's institutionalisation process.

The intention to restore women's contributions to the history of Western film club movements using digital tools has not facilitated the tracking of women of color and those from non-privileged classes. The very concept of "ciné-club" or the English translation "film club" encompasses initiatives associated with white elites and intellectuals in the cultural field that I have historically studied. However, the method proposed in the second and fourth parts of the thesis and the application thereof in the data analysis (4.2) aim to overcome these limitations. The idea of generating lists of women with limited information but whom I believe could have been significant in the cultural field of their time through their relationships with the mediators around whom I have constructed my networks aims to facilitate future research on other women who may be less privileged and have received even less attention from historiography than our mediators. Nevertheless, it would be necessary to create much broader networks, including grassroots institutions involved in labor struggles linked to the cinematic field through individuals traced in my network, to include less privileged women within the proposed network. However, like any research endeavor, this work has its limits, and these potential relationships, if they existed, are far from the focal node from which I have constructed the networks. Therefore, it is clear that the actors from whom the networks have been created have both facilitated and determined the extent of the social fabric traced—a fabric that, obviously, does not correspond to the historical reality of the moment but represents only a fictitious reproduction thereof.

The subject that has occupied me in this research is triply marginal due to the triple decentering to which I have subjected it. Film clubs have been a denigrated object within the history of cinema. Additionally, Ibero-America as a creative region and driver of artistic modernity has been insufficiently recognised in Western cultural historiography, especially in the first half of the 20th century. Lastly, but most importantly, women have been considered passive agents in the history of cinema, as I have demonstrated throughout this investigation. These three characteristics defining the object of this thesis explain the lack of archives and data that have been so crucial to it.

In this regard, the limited sources available to trace the phenomenon I am addressing become even scarcer when the actors in question come from non-privileged collectives, such as women of color or working-class women. Therefore, from the outset, I proposed that the knowledge-generation process be considered the result of collective effort. The

tracking of networks was suggested as an appropriate way to map this collectivity. The idea of teamwork and collaboration among women, as well as the notion of mutual support, served as the guiding thread that not only led me through my thesis but also allowed me to understand the connections between film clubs, exchanges, and the forms of collective knowledge construction. Additionally, aware of my privileged ignorance and standpoint, I advocate for data openness and a concept of collaborative work in academia. Hence, none of the statements made or posed in these conclusions are intended to be definitive but rather lines of research aimed at encouraging future exploration.

5.1 Historical Setting of this Research

The birth of the cineclub concept took place in Paris during the interwar period. One socio-cultural response to the devastations of the First World War was the emergence of artistic avant-gardes, some of whose proponents facilitated the establishment of the first cineclubs. Concurrently, the nationalism of the 1930s, which would lead to the Second World War, intertwined with the advent of sound cinema and the emergence of key film industries in Ibero-America, such as those in Mexico and Argentina (Lusnich, Aisemberg, and Cuarterolo 2017). In Latin America during the 1930s, partly as a consequence of the economic depression in the late 1920s, there was a rise in authoritarian governments, exemplified by the coup in Argentina led by General José Félix Uriburu, as well as those of Getúlio Vargas in Brazil and Luis Miguel Sánchez Cerro in Peru. Furthermore, on the other side of the Atlantic, the rest of Ibero-America, namely Spain and Portugal, also witnessed the onset of their lengthy totalitarian regimes in the 1930s — Salazarism and Francoism. This surge in nationalism was accompanied by a certain propagandistic use of the cinematic medium driven by state governments, as evident in the German case and the establishment of the International Institute of Educational Cinematography in Rome between 1927 and 1937 in Italy (Andrew 2009). Similarly, the Soviet Union's government early on accorded a privileged place to the cinematic arts, nationalizing and financially supporting them since after the revolution in 1919 to disseminate its ideology. The circulation of Soviet cinema, in this context, was perceived by governments as a means to exert political influence on other countries or regions. In this sense, cinema began to be viewed as a privileged tool for exercising soft power (Nye 2004; Carbó-Catalan and Roig-Sanz 2022).

The connections between the avant-garde and film club movement shape the concept of what would be understood by traditional historiography as a cineclub (Gauthier 1999). In other words, an organisation of white male artists and intellectuals interested in the cinematic medium, gathering to watch films they deem of quality and subsequently discuss them, with the ultimate goal of legitimizing cinema as an art form. The artists involved in these early cineclubs in the early 1920s were considered authors in their own right within their circles, in the romantic sense of the term, and they experimented with the cinematic medium as part of their creative process. These cineclubs they founded served them both to showcase their own works and to learn

about those of their peers and other potential artists and intellectuals who also considered cinema an art. Concurrently, they also created magazines in which they advertised film sessions and reflected on the movies they had screened in their cineclubs. This idea of cinephilia persisted over time, against which other initiatives would be characterised. Other cinephilic initiatives with different goals, for example, educational, political, or community-building, also existed (Bacelar de Macedo 2017). There were also initiatives different from the Parisian ones with less elitist and more general audiences (Navitski 2018). Additionally, there were cineclubs that programmed not only avant-garde but also commercial cinema (such as the Barcelona Film Club). However, historiography has focused much more extensively on European cineclubs, especially those in Paris in the 1920s, considering the rest as peripheral initiatives. Likewise, cineclubs led by women, aimed at women, or sessions focused on women's issues have also been ignored by film historiography.

Before the onset of the Second World War, which would end up with many European cine club initiatives, in the 1930s, the expansion of sound cinema contributed to the development of some national film industries. The silent films of the United States, Germany, and France, which had dominated global cinema during the silent era, became less appealing to audiences demanding films in their own languages. However, the major film industries of the silent era did not have the resources to produce sound films in all the languages of the regions they had previously penetrated. This moment of weakness in the American film industry, in particular, would be one of the factors driving the development of national industries, such as in Argentina and Mexico in the 1930s (Lusnich, Aisemberg, and Cuarterolo 2017). Even for industries that would not fully develop during that period, this moment represented a kind of opportunity in the eyes of those involved, as seen among participants in the Barcelona Film Club. Cinephiles, often considered the first film theorists before professionalisation, were the ones setting the demands for these emerging industries (Cardoza y Aragón 2010), which were frequently seen as producers of commercial cinema. This encouraged many cinephiles to venture into amateur film production. Indeed, it is worth noting that amateur production would often become inseparable from experimental, art, or avant-garde production, with some amateur filmmakers eventually turning professional (Rodden Zimmermann 1995). At the same time, the expansion of sound cinema also had technical implications that affected film clubs, which often operated on limited budgets and under more or less precarious conditions in terms of their ability to screen films.

On the other hand, the history of women in their relationship with cinephilia exhibits certain peculiarities that make it unique. During the First World War, women took on wage-earning positions that, since the implementation of the capitalist system in the late 17th century (Federici 2004, 142), had not been widely occupied in the Western world. After the First World War, and despite some social pressure for women to return to the roles they had held within the nuclear family since the capitalist expansion, positions related to household and family care, the feminist movement regained strength to assert women's right to economic independence and the right to vote. They argued that if they had been able to fight, they could also vote (Higonnet et al. 1989).

In this vein, I contend that cinema played a crucial role in the renegotiation of gender roles during the interwar period, as demonstrated by Miriam Hansen (1991). The widespread occupation of public space by women, as evidenced in contemporary

accounts, is a testament to this (Kuhn 2010). The history of cinema cannot ignore that the American film industry during the interwar period, as indicated by women's testimonies and statistics in the United States, was sustained by women's attendance at movie theaters (Stamp 2012). While exact data may be lacking, it seems that a similar phenomenon existed in other Western and Westernized regions, as argued in my research. Additionally, the industry and the media, with their portrayal of the modern woman ideal (Nash 1996a), partly encouraged this renegotiation of the social space occupied by women. Besides cinema, there was a surge in female voices, columns, and sections dedicated to women (Real Mercadal 2006) in specialised and mainstream media. This historical period, during which all of this unfolded, coincides with the birth of film clubs. These historical circumstances led me to hypothesise that women must have played a significant role in the history of cinephilia, even though the literature has tended to render them invisible. Moreover, if women were crucial to the emergence of film clubs in the West, they must also have been instrumental in the formation of the initial theoretical and historical knowledge about the cinematic medium, as exemplified by the case of María Luz Morales. María Luz Morales would be part of the group of the first individuals who wrote film criticism in Spain, and she did so in a nationally circulated newspaper, adopting a male pseudonym. The latter aspect, crucial for understanding the process of occupying public space in the Western and Westernized cultural field, among others, will be revisited later and underscores the role women played in the early 20th century.

The outbreak of the Second World War profoundly impacted the history of film clubs in the Western world. Many cinephile initiatives rooted in Europe dissolved due to the exile of their participants. Additionally, the development of new cinephile initiatives during the wartime period was practically impossible. Post-Second World War film movements were also closely linked to the history of film clubs, often driven by the same filmclubbers. Although I have observed this significant connection between, for example, the Nouvelle Vague, Italian neorealism, and the third Latin American cinema with filmclubism in this research, I haven't delved into it because I consider this part of the history to correspond to a second wave of film clubs (2.3), which is not the focus of this investigation.

Similarly, it is crucial to note that, although the history of mainstream film clubism is determined by events in Central Europe (especially France, England, the Netherlands, and Germany), as we have demonstrated, numerous regions had their own histories of film clubism. These histories were influenced by national, local, regional, and transnational historical events that make them unique. In this sense, this thesis has aimed to decenter this mainstream history to facilitate the broadening of the concept of film club. Instead, each region may have its particularities, even if they are not stable, and thus define a different idea of film club. Specifically, based on the periodisation I proposed in the second part of this thesis (2.3), I demonstrated that the rise of the second wave of Latin American film clubs in the 1960s begins with the re-emergence of film clubs in the mid-1940s. I have also demonstrated the importance of adopting a global and *longue durée* perspective when approaching the subject at hand. This is because there were connectivities among Ibero-American film clubs involving various actors, such as film prints, ideas, and events, which shaped the history of film clubism.

5.2 Film clubs and Modernity

5.2.1 Film clubs

One of the initial observations I made when starting my research on the early film clubs in Ibero-America was the scarcity of transnational perspectives on the film club phenomenon. Malte Hagener's book (2014) was enlightening in this regard, but it focused on Central and Northern Europe. In contrast, there are little studies on Ibero-American film clubism from a transnational perspective. We find some recent examples, particularly driven by master's or doctoral students (Escorcia Cardona 2008; Rozsa 2019; Broitman 2021; Amieva Collado 2022), but there are hardly any monographs addressing the connections between film clubs located in different geographical and/or cultural spaces in the Ibero-American region. Most research on the early film club movement in Ibero-America stems from national cinema histories (Granja 2006; Couselo 2008; Alberich, Gubern, and Sánchez-Biosca 2012). This is why the history of Western film clubism has considered that film clubs spread based on the European model, born in Paris, and that initiatives beyond Central Europe were merely copies of the initial Parisian model. Nevertheless, as Rielle Navitski and Nicolas Poppe demonstrated (2017), multiple film cultures in Latin America emerged, among other factors, thanks to initiatives like film clubs. These film cultures of the early decades of the 20th century were, at their core, cosmopolitan (P. L. Horta, Appiah, and Robbins 2017; Delanty 2019). In the second part of this thesis, I precisely demonstrate these networks were constructed at different scales that were established among individuals connected to film clubism. These networks and the circulation through them of both material and non-material agents, human and non-human, were crucial for the emergence of the diverse film cultures that would shape both the history of film clubism and that of Western and global cinema.

As I have argued in all the case studies of this thesis, it is worthwhile to apply a cultural transfer perspective (Espagne and Werner 1988; Espagne 2013), rather than a diffusionist one, to understand the functioning of any cultural phenomenon. The examples of the early film clubs in Ibero-America do not fully conform to all the characteristics of the French model, at times even challenging it. The cosmopolitan vision of these ventures also had an impact in a transnational context, beyond the place of their foundation, as seen in cultural initiatives, particularly in cinema, undertaken, for example, by Victoria Ocampo. As I have been demonstrating throughout the thesis, the goals that drove the emergence of film clubs were varied. Contrary to what historiography may suggest, not all of them had the primary objective of legitimising cinema as art. Gauthier himself highlights, among other objectives, the educational and hygienist goals of some film clubs that emerged in Paris, functioning concurrently with those of Canudo and Delluc. However, historiography has considered that these models did not exactly correspond to the concept of what has been understood as a film club

As I have indicated in the chapter on the history of Ibero-American film clubs (2.1), in the study of the early Ibero-American film club movement, we find objectives other than

the legitimisation of cinema as art that were promoted by the film clubs. The most prominent among these objectives, as revealed in this research, is the educational goal, which appears to be characteristic of the early film clubs in the investigated context. The educational objective is not only evident in educational film clubs driven by women in various Western contexts, as demonstrated in the chapter dedicated to women and film clubs (2.4), but is also linked to other themes that have been pivotal in this research. Among them, we find a preference for Soviet cinema that characterised the Cine Club Mexicano, but was also significant in the Cine Club de Buenos Aires and Sessions Mirador in Barcelona, as we see in its programming. Soviet cinema, aside from promoting communist ideology, was built on certain pedagogical principles advocated, among others, by Sergei Eisenstein (de los Reyes 1994). In fact, the Cine Club Mexicano, associated with the Communist Party, the International Red Aid, and the League of Revolutionary Writers and Artists, also programmed educational films, such as educational documentaries (Álvarez Bravo 1982). This interest in education and pedagogy is not only reflected in the programming of film clubs but also in activities driven by the members themselves. For instance, in the three cases of women film club enthusiasts to whom I have dedicated a chapter, they worked as educators, such as teachers like Lola Álvarez Bravo, or as speakers and trainers like María Luz Morales or Victoria Ocampo. Additionally, María Luz Morales was the founder and president of the Residència Internacional de Senyoretas Estudiantes in Barcelona, and also the vice president of the Lyceum Club, which aimed at the education and acculturation of women.

As a result of the disappointment that film club enthusiasts felt regarding the output of their emerging national industries, which they often deemed commercial and not meeting the standards of what art should be, they began producing footage. This production, initially amateur, would, in some cases, professionalise and evolve into what we now consider avant-garde or experimental cinema. The link between amateurism and pedagogy is established in film clubs through activities aimed at cinephiles interested in filmmaking. For instance, this is evident in the organisation of courses or competitions designed to educate film club enthusiasts to produce high-quality work. Examples of this can be found in the amateur section of the Barcelona Film Club (Birosta 1929) or in the amateur production led by some film club enthusiasts of the Cine Club de Buenos Aires (Autor/a 1930b). This connection is also evident in the film screenings themselves, which, accompanied by discussions, were considered educational activities for film club enthusiasts and other audiences. It was commonly understood that by watching art cinema, one would eventually comprehend it and might even be capable of producing art cinema.

The idea of film screenings as educational activities not only applied to those film club enthusiasts who wanted to create works but also extended to the general audience. Very often, the programmers and founding members of film clubs referred to their activity as pedagogical for the general public. Those "mass audiences" attending commercial cinema theaters could be educated in art and quality cinema through the programming of film clubs. Sometimes this education was directed towards specific social groups, such as workers, in the case of the first two film clubs in Mexico. Other times, it aimed to educate other intellectuals and artists interested in the cinematic medium, as seen in the case of the Barcelona Film Club. Nevertheless, the education of

the masses could not be realised until attendance at film clubs became widespread, especially in the 1950s, as we have noted (Navitski 2018). These years of large audience attendance coincide with the post-war era and the widespread attendance at commercial theaters as well (Mantecón 2017). Moreover, in many of these mid-20th-century cases, the high number of attendees at film clubs was also related to programming that included commercial cinema. This was less associated with film club initiatives directed at intellectual elites, as was more common in the early film clubs, or at least in the more well-known ones.

In this regard, given the pedagogical orientation of many activities organised by film clubs, I believe that their role as programmers was aimed at shaping the taste of audiences. This desire to mould the tastes of both the general and specialised audience could also be seen in the texts that many film club enthusiasts published in cultural and specialised magazines, serving as film critics or reviewers. Examples of this can be found in the case of the Cine Club de Buenos Aires. Guillermo de Torre published texts of a critical nature on the films exhibited in the film club in *La Gaceta Literaria*, just as Benjamin Fondane or Luis Borges did in the magazine *Sur*, also discussing the films showcased in the same film club. Sometimes, film club enthusiasts defended one type of cinema over another in their texts, often praising the films they themselves had programmed in their film clubs. They promoted their sessions in mainstream media and critiqued both the films they programmed and those released in commercial cinemas. Similar examples can be found in the case of the Barcelona Film Club, where sessions were advertised before they occurred and reviewed afterward in *La Vanguardia* by María Luz Morales, in *La Publicitat* by Àngel Ferran, or by Carles Gallart in *La Veu de Catalunya*. Furthermore, these film club enthusiasts published film criticism texts in the same media, evaluating and giving their opinions on the films screened in their own film clubs. In this sense, I see a clear connection between early, not yet professionalised film criticism driven by individuals associated with the history of film clubism and the intention to shape the public's taste that defined some activities and objectives of the early film clubs.

This link between film clubism and film criticism has been extensively researched in the Ibero-American context (Rodríguez Álvarez 2002a; Joana Isabel 2008; A. C. Pereira 2010). In the three case studies of this thesis, the film club enthusiasts I investigated commented on the films they themselves or their colleagues in the film clubs they founded had programmed. In these texts, there is an evident tendency to educate the audience. María Luz Morales would be the clearest case, as she wrote about cinema in both specialised and general press. As a cultural journalist, she wrote film reviews for films that were released (including those shown in her own film club), covered events within the world of cinema (such as sessions organised by her film club), and discussed general trends in film production or reviews of past activities, etc. (Clariana-Rodagut 2024). On the other hand, Victoria Ocampo also wrote about cinema. While it wasn't the main focus of her texts, it was a subject that occupied and interested her (Leston 2015). Clear links exist between the film club she was part of, the one in Buenos Aires, and the texts she published about cinema. The most obvious example was commissioning Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges to write about cinema in her magazine *Sur*; Borges was part of the same film club. Similarly, Benjamin Fondane published texts in the magazine *Sur*, and in its first issue he wrote "El cinema en el atolladero" (1931).

Benjamin Fondane brought copies of avant-garde films that were screened at the Cine Club de Buenos Aires, thanks to Victoria Ocampo organising Fondane's visit and covering his travel and stay expenses (Aguilar 2011). Lola Álvarez Bravo, in her autobiographical book, also referred to some of the films shown in her film clubs, implying that they were of high quality (1982). These examples make it clear that film club enthusiasts had a pedagogical intent. Considering themselves as the chosen ones to assess good cinema, they sought to educate the public and other contemporaneous artists and intellectuals in cinematic tastes and preferences.

Another very different example from the previous ones but related to this pedagogical objective is that of film clubs organized by members belonging to the Catholic Church, who founded and led film clubs. These spread across Latin America (Malusá 2007; Escorcía Cardona 2008; Godoy 2006), and as I have particularly traced in Brazil, there are examples of film clubs driven by the OCIC (Catholic International Film Office), aiming to educate in Christian values through the cinematic medium. These initiatives gained a large number of followers and spread particularly in the 1950s, as shown by examples like Cine Clube Belo Horizonte (1959-1963), Cine Clube da Ação Católica (1957), or Cine Clube do Centro Dom Vital (1958).

This pedagogical intent, found in many film club initiatives, is inseparable from the understanding that developed in the 1930s regarding cinema as a means of persuasion and propaganda. Cinema served not only to educate but also to persuade about ideas, values, or political trends. Although the notion of cinema as a propagandistic medium existed almost since the beginning of cinema, with examples like D.W. Griffith's film *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), an ideologically biased story that glorified racist values, it was in the 1920s and 1930s that we have more examples of this utilitarian use of the cinematic medium for political purposes, as seen in the examples of the Soviet Union, Germany, or Italy.

In this latter sense, we also find examples within the history of Ibero-American film clubism, pointing to initiatives that leverage the educational and idea dissemination capacity of the cinematic medium to promote and defend certain political ideas, sometimes in favor and sometimes against the ruling government. The most obvious example among our case studies is that of Mexican film clubs, which were linked to the Mexican Communist Party, the International Red Aid, through their members and their connection to the League of Revolutionary Writers and Artists. On the other hand, in Spain, we find some film club initiatives both in favor and against the Franco regime (Ramos Arenas 2021), after the Republican period that I have worked on, as would happen in Portugal (Cunha 2013) with Salazarism. In this sense, film clubs not only influenced the cultural and cinematic fields in which they emerged but could also participate in the political arena through their events.

In the same vein, other enlightening examples, despite not being centered on Ibero-America, as highlighted in the chapter dedicated to women and film clubs (2.4), demonstrate the links between film clubs led by women and movements for peace or against the advance of fascism in Europe. An example of this is the Lyceum clubs in Spain, which organized fundraising events for the Republican cause. Another example would be the Ciné-club de la femme (1935) in Paris, which, as we have shown, had members with ties to political movements that fought for the French resistance against Nazi

occupation. These examples point to a less explored research path for the study of early film clubism, which is film clubs as spaces for sociability (Cowan 2023) and community building. I believe that these gatherings in film clubs could have contributed to strengthening relationships among individuals who were already part of the same networks due to shared interests not necessarily related to cinema, such as specific political ideologies. In these examples, the film club would not necessarily be the space where a shared political ideology is transmitted or discussed among its members. Instead, the film club would be a space for sociability that helps strengthen existing ties. Although this hypothesis remains to be proven, as the more common focus has been, as I mentioned, on the role of film clubs in political struggles or the transmission of political ideologies.

Similar to this last line of research, which I find truly interesting for studying the relationship between film clubs and women, we find research indicating the association between film clubs and artistic and intellectual groups (Xavier 1975; 1978; Gubern 1999; Castro 2000; Rodrigues 2010; Frias 2015). In this thesis, I have found that this approach could be fruitful for some of the film club examples mentioned in my case studies. For instance, we have seen that the Cine Club Mexicano (1931-1934) emerged from the efforts of the Mexican Contemporáneos, a group of artists and intellectuals who came together, among other things, to found the magazine *Contemporáneos* (1928-1931). Or, after the Cine Club Mexicano, there was the one I have called Cine Club de México (1934-1938), founded within the League of Revolutionary Writers and Artists (LEAR) (1934-1938), whose main objective was to organise artistic activities. However, cinema was not the reason for their gathering. Another example is the intellectuals and artists who gathered around the *Mirador* magazine (1929-1936) in Barcelona, a topic I develop in the chapter dedicated to the Barcelona Film Club and María Luz Morales (3.1). Again, these agents started the Sesiones Mirador (1929-1930) after the foundation of the magazine, with film sessions not being the initial reason for their union. These examples indicate that there was indeed an association between groups of individuals who, despite coming together due to other shared interests, also decided to organise regular film sessions.

Another topic that has been addressed by researchers in the study of Ibero-American film clubs is the relationship between film clubs and other institutions for the preservation and archiving of film material, such as film libraries and cinémathèques (Pougy 1996; Correa Junior 2007; Amieva Collado 2022). This is one of the issues that has appeared less frequently in this thesis due to the period focused on in my case studies, namely the 1930s. However, institutions for the preservation of material had their moment of emergence around the 1950s in Ibero-America. Although the concern for preserving film material for history occupied film club enthusiasts of all times, it was later when these efforts were institutionalised and formally articulated. Until that moment in history, we find some brief testimonies referring to the obsession of cinephiles to preserve material (Dimitriu 2007), but at least in the examples I have come across, these were scattered efforts.

5.2.2 Audiences

In this research, audiences have played a fundamental role from a theoretical perspective. However, in terms of empirical research in the case studies, I have not had access to data about the audiences due to the lack of archives containing such information. In this regard, I have addressed the audiences' contribution primarily from a theoretical perspective, thus inferring the participation of women audiences in film clubs. Following the principles of New Cinema History (Maltby, Biltereyst, and Meers 2011), I consider cinema as a socio-cultural phenomenon inseparable from the context in which it emerges. Thus, audiences sustain the film industry and determine its functioning on one hand, and on the other hand, they are crucial in the process of constructing meaning in films. Furthermore, films and exhibition spaces participate in the processes of community generation at the social level. In turn, film clubs arise from the effort of audiences to watch the films they desire; audiences organise, regardless of their socio-cultural profile, to obtain copies, find a venue for exhibition, promote their activities, organise film screenings, and then discuss them. Not only that, but some of the earliest theories and histories of cinema emerge from the context of film clubs, as a result, in part, of the collective learning that took place in these clubs. Thus, film cultures, for whose construction audiences are the most important agents, determine how to watch films, the contexts in which they are viewed, the rituals around them, and the forms of audience organisation or activities around the cinematic act. Initiatives to organise the audience around cinematic art that preceded the so-called film clubs would determine the ways in which these film clubs were born. These initiatives, born out of the audience's interest in appropriating the emerging art (Bacelar de Macedo 2017), drove various activities around cinema, such as organising scriptwriting contests, conducting acting courses, or buying and selling photographs or merchandise of the early film stars, as seen in the Club cinematográfico de Horta (1924) (chap. 3.1). All these collectively and non-hierarchically driven activities by audiences determined the beginning of what would later become more formal and elitist film club movements. Acting courses and scriptwriting contests would evolve into what we later call amateurism, and the initiatory texts of those readers in fan magazines, published in correspondence sections or those giving voice to the reader, would eventually become the collectively gestated theoretical knowledge in film clubs through discussions, film presentations, or talks about cinematic art. Thus, those audiences from the middle and lower classes who saw cinema in the 1920s and 1930s as a means of social ascent, even though they would later be excluded from authorship, creative positions within the film industry, and film clubs, had already left a trace in the history of cinema traceable from a *longue durée* perspective.

This theoretical and methodological perspective, which emphasises the importance of audiences, has allowed me to change the paradigm with which the role of women in cinema and the history of film clubs has traditionally been studied, giving them agency. I have considered that, despite the lack of records and contrary to historiography, women actively participated in the early film clubs. This is because, as I have also pointed out following various authors (Hansen 1991; Kuhn 2010; Stamp 2012), women—at least white women in the late 1920s and early 1930s in the West—occupied public spaces to attend cinemas. I find it important to emphasise, once again, as I have throughout this research, that the women I am referring to are white women. I focus on them because they are the ones I have been able to investigate. This is not to say that racialised women did not also occupy public spaces to go to the cinema in the West. However, I cannot

make this claim as I lack the knowledge to support it. On the other hand, I have not specified, in this case, that the women I am referring to were bourgeois women. This is because, based on the testimonies I have found through this research, women (and men, of course) from all social classes attended the cinema during the period I am examining, albeit in different ways depending on the context. This disproportionate attendance of women in cinemas led me to suspect that they also must have attended sessions of the early film clubs, at least women from the same social classes as the men whose names are generally associated with early film club activities, i.e., white bourgeois men from intellectual elites and artistic circles. As a result of this suspicion, through my case studies, I managed to demonstrate that white women from middle and upper classes in the West were also leaders in the early Ibero-American film club movement.⁵⁴⁷

The reevaluation of the role of audiences in this research has allowed me to restore agency to women, considering that their role as audiences, both in commercial cinemas and film clubs during the silent era and beyond, was not limited to passivity but was highly active and therefore relevant to historiography. In turn, this research has enabled me to broaden the role of women in cinema history, encouraging exploration into roles beyond that of actress, director, screenwriter, and producer, with an emphasis on less explored roles undertaken by women, such as cultural mediators through their involvement in film clubs. By considering that audiences were not passive but constitute a fundamental part of the history of cinema, I also argue that those who participated in the early film club movement were authors of the first theoretical and historical knowledge about the cinematic medium. This knowledge would emerge during discussions and sessions organised in film clubs. Although this knowledge was later written and published by men, who at that time had social legitimacy to do so, it resulted from a collective effort. Women, as we now know, did participate in the early film clubs and were authors of the production of this knowledge, not only in their roles as audiences but also in their leadership roles.

5.2.3 Women and film clubs

Due to the lack of secondary literature, I have devoted the third part of this thesis to investigating case studies of women who participated very actively in the early Ibero-American film club movement. I have selected three case studies for several reasons. The most pertinent is that in each of my case studies, a woman performed highly significant functions for the operation of the cineclubist projects examined in each chapter. Furthermore, these women acted as cultural mediators within their lived

⁵⁴⁷ It is challenging for me to assert whether female leadership in the early Ibero-American cineclub movement was an isolated or minority phenomenon. The invisibility of these stories, that is, the reproduction of a historically biased, hegemonic, racist, and sexist knowledge, has hindered the identification of more examples. In this regard, at this moment, I can emphasise that this leadership did exist, as I can demonstrate in the case studies developed in this research. I can venture to say that there may have been more similar cases, but I do not have sufficient data to assert this beyond the contributions made throughout this thesis.

contexts, thereby fostering crucial networks—in which women were key— for their professional careers. Additionally, in all cases, these film club experiences were very early for the local, regional, and national contexts in which they originated. Moreover, the film club initiatives examined in each case study are situated in different geographical contexts, yet comparable in socio-cultural terms, especially during the 1930s, the focus of my research. Furthermore, the objectives of each film club in my case studies, the types of activities they promoted, and the institutions they engaged with were diverse, thus representing varied projects that can provide a broader perspective on the history of Western film clubs.

Regarding the cultural mediators on whom I have conducted research, I have researched their socio-cultural profiles as micro-histories, recounting their life trajectories, both personal and professional, to understand their thinking and the values they disseminated. In addition to bringing to light what historiography had legitimised, my case studies also demonstrate that the women featured in them served as role models for others. That is, their visible positions in their context legitimised them as role models for other women who, having less visible positions in the cultural and filmic field, could lean on these trailblazers when seeking to participate in the same domain. Having role models is crucial for feeling entitled to occupy new spaces. An example of a role model for women is María Luz Morales, who was a pioneer in the most patriarchal sense of the term (Loveday 2022)—being considered a man by her fellow journalists—by acting as a film critic in a mainstream medium and as the public face of the first documented film club that originated in the city of Barcelona. At that time, it was truly unusual for a woman to be writing film criticism or being the public face of an initiative emerging across the Western world, such as film club movements. Simultaneously occupying these positions of power in the film field, María Luz Morales would also be the founder and president of the *Residència Internacional de Senyoretas Estudiantis (RISE)*, where she served as a guide for the residence's students, white bourgeois women who wanted to pursue their studies.

In addition to María Luz Morales, the cases of Lola Álvarez Bravo and Victoria Ocampo point in the same direction. As demonstrated in their case studies, both, through their work, addressed the situation of social inequality in which women lived. Whether through lectures and texts, as Victoria Ocampo would do, or through their photographs, as Lola Álvarez Bravo would do. In both cases, both were pioneers in their fields of expertise, thereby proving through their actions that women could occupy those public spaces.

Despite lacking data that could demonstrate whether these students from the residence attended any cinemas or felt a closer connection to cinematic art due to the role model that María Luz Morales could represent for them, or despite not having data to prove the impact of the conferences given by Victoria Ocampo on Virginia Woolf, in which she praised the qualities of women's writing, or having data to help measure the impact that the presence of Lola Álvarez Bravo as a professional photographer at social, political, or cultural events might have had, one of the hypotheses and conclusions of this work is that there must have been an impact. And that part of this impact must have affected, necessarily, the cinematic field, as it was a highly masculinised field in the studied contexts. As we have already noted, there are very few women recognised in the history of cinephilia, and also in the field of early film criticism; therefore, occupying these

spaces involved breaking with the social norms that dictated gender roles. This hypothesis is one of the arguments that directed me towards the method of working with networks. If women did not have a naturally assigned space in the cinematic field, and if occupying public space meant deviating from the social mandate they had received for being born women, having a network of women around them that identified with a model of women who had moved away from the assigned gender role could have facilitated the disobedience involved in attending cinemas and film clubs.

As demonstrated in the fourth part of the thesis, these women who gained certain recognition in the cultural and cinematic field of their time in various contexts shared certain qualities. They were all white women from middle or upper-class families, all were part of cultural institutions with significant symbolic power nationally and transnationally, all were gender dissidents, and all reflected in their own way on the social situation of women. Moreover, all can be understood as cultural mediators, mediating not only between different artistic and social disciplines but also between different cultures. Likewise, as I have shown, I believe that mediation between the private and public spheres in these cases was fundamental to acquiring the recognition they obtained in life, authorising them to have a voice in the cultural and cinematic field. Thus, fostering the establishment of what I have termed women's film culture.

5.2.4 Future Lines of Research

In this thesis, besides demonstrating the relevance of Ibero-American film clubbism to the Westernised history of film clubs, and aside from revealing the presence of women in this history, I have also put forward a theoretical and methodological proposal. This proposal has resulted from the attempt to apply qualitative and quantitative methods to a triply marginalised object, as I have pointed out. Cineclubism has been a disparaged object in the history of cinema; moreover, Ibero-America has been considered a peripheral space in the construction of artistic modernity, where cinema holds significance; and last but not least, women have been marginalised in this history. As I have stressed many times, this marginalisation could be even more intense if my research were attempting to trace the contributions of women from less privileged or racially diverse backgrounds to the history of Ibero-American film club phenomenon. In this regard, my methodological proposal has not overlooked this circumstance and also points to the future of research on the topic. I am aware that this thesis paves the way for research by arguing for the relevance of the object itself—women and film clubs—yet it does not exhaust this line of inquiry it initiates. Throughout the research, I have emphasised the importance of collaborative work in addressing the historical object under analysis, and I believe that the theoretical and methodological proposal can eventually facilitate the inclusion of other profiles of less privileged women in the historiography of film clubs and in the historiography of cinema.

My theoretical-methodological proposal is based on understanding authorship construction through the idea of support networks, with the aim of demystifying the conviction that authorship is singular. This theoretical premise would allow us to

understand that women had the same responsibility in generating the first theoretical knowledge about cinema as men, to whom authorship has been exclusively attributed until now. Knowledge that originated in the early film clubs and was later published in the form of reviews or film criticism. Also, in order for this network to be as extensive as possible, I have advocated for the use of data from different private and public archives, as well as primary and secondary sources. This proposal includes taking into account data about personal relationships, which I consider fundamental to understand the scope of women's social networks in the context I address. I have argued in my proposal for the relevance of knowledge derived from the experience of being a woman to fully understand the thinking and legacy of the women I study. I have also proposed mediation between spheres as a basic strategy to acquire a recognised voice within the cultural field, and the creation of networks among women as a way to sustain this voice, as a means of generating authorship. With the theoretical premises outlined, I have approached data collection following the principles of Actor-Network Theory. I have systematised these data to publish a dataset consistent with the theoretical principles outlined. The aim of publishing the dataset has been to open the data to future research so that it can be expanded. Finally, thanks to the collaboration with my colleagues, I have been able to present a methodological proposal using social network analysis tools that aims to take a step further in the humanities and social sciences research in which this thesis is framed. Through the conviction that interdisciplinarity is the path to advance knowledge, I have proposed the application of my feminist theoretical principles to certain quantitative tools. The result of the application of the proposed method is a list of names of women (Annex 8) who were part of the networks of my mediators and whom I hypothesise must have been important for the cultural field of the time. I reach this conclusion based on the inference that if they were close to my mediators, it means that, through their collaboration with them, they likely had relevant roles within the cultural field to which they belonged.

In this regard, the future directions indicated by this research are diverse. In terms of expanding the object of analysis, it would be particularly interesting to include women from less privileged classes and non-Western cultures to understand their contribution to the history of film clubs. On the decolonial front, it would also be of great interest to broaden the concept of film clubs on which the history of film clubs has been based so far—a notion limited to the Parisian context. I refer to it as a decolonial approach in the sense that this expansion would allow incorporating into the definition of film clubs other initiatives involving film screenings or discussions that did not unfold in Western and Westernized environments. Of course, another easier way to extend this research geographically would be through the inclusion of other similar case studies emerging in comparable contexts, for instance, in other Latin American countries such as Uruguay or Brazil. I found ample data on film clubs akin to those addressed in this research, as detailed in Chapter 2.3. Another line of inquiry could be to broaden the investigation to other countries, European or otherwise, which have not been particularly considered in the history of film clubs, for example, Eastern European countries or Southern European countries like Greece, Cyprus, or Croatia. Extending this research chronologically might involve analysing the relationship between the first and second waves of film clubs through networks, as proposed here. Expanding the research in terms of scale could entail examining relationships between film clubs that are geographically and culturally more distant, such as connections between Latin American film clubs and perhaps those

in Asia or Africa, which probably occurred especially from the second wave of film clubs onward and the release of the Third Cinema manifesto. Including more data within the dataset could facilitate an analysis of a larger dataset, thus increasing its scale in quantitative terms.

Another potential line of inquiry highlighted by this thesis concerns the Lyceum clubs, which are key cultural organizations for Western cultural and political history. There is a lack of research on these institutions using a gender and transnational perspective. Indeed, some of these institutions have not even been investigated by national historiographies. However, in this thesis, it has been possible to grasp the relevance that these clubs had and continue to have in shaping the transnational cultural field.

Methodologically, I believe the path I outline through my research holds many possibilities due to its novelty. Just as I based my quantitative methodological proposal on the use of some proximity analyses after converting multipartite networks into unipartite networks, I consider that there are many other tools from social network analysis that could be explored. Steering the research in this direction would allow testing the effectiveness of these quantitative tools and their suitability for analysing historical and heterogeneous data on marginalised objects, as implied by research of this nature.

In order to follow the path opened by gender studies and Data Feminism (D'Ignazio and Klein 2020), I cannot conclude this thesis without stating that the best way to advance this research is by making my standpoint public so that the biases that have limited my investigation are as obvious as possible. Perhaps someone in the future with a different perspective can complement my vision with theirs. This research is written from the Global North's South, by a white cisgender woman and has been funded by an ERC StG project. Therefore, the thesis is written under economic conditions better than those of most doctoral students in my context. Beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, no extraordinary social or political circumstances have limited this research. I take responsibility for all the biases exposed in this research, apologising in advance for any ignorance that may arise from them.

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Annexes

Annex 1 - The Barcelona Film Club's Programming

I have tried to identify all of these films and add their original titles in the footnotes by using the information that journalists have provided in their film reviews. Yet, this information is sometimes rather vague and, in some cases, I have been unable to find an exact title. In such cases, I have mentioned the title that the reviewers provided, the title given at the film club, or the title that circulated nationally. Likewise, when the information is uncertain, I have added a footnote with all of the information on the film contained in the review or press article in question, in order to facilitate the film's recognition for subsequent researchers. This is a tentative proposal, as this is the first time it has been done.

Sessions	Dates	Films	References ⁵⁴⁸
1	16/01/1929	1. La Creación ⁵⁴⁹ 2. <i>Tartufo</i> ⁵⁵⁰ 3. <i>El encendedor maldito</i> ⁵⁵¹	Àngel Ferran. <i>La Publicitat</i> (Ferran Coromines 1929b, 4) / Àngel Ferran. <i>La Publicitat</i> (Ferran i Coromines 1929, 4) / María Luz Morales, "Cine - Club - Barcelona". <i>La Vanguardia</i> (Morales 1929, 22) / (Autor/a 1929i, 5)
2	22/02/1929	1. Bulgaria. El país de les rosas ⁵⁵² 2. <i>Un momento de apuro</i> ⁵⁵³ 3. <i>Y el mundo marcha</i> ⁵⁵⁴	Àngel Ferran, <i>La Publicitat</i> (Ferran Coromines 1929e, 11)

⁵⁴⁸ All the articles in this section that do not have an author probably were written by María Luz Morales since they are on the same page of *La Vanguardia* where she wrote her film review.

⁵⁴⁹ UfA documentary, edited by the 'Alfa' cultural department.

⁵⁵⁰ Original title *Tartuffe* (F.W. Murnau, 1926).

⁵⁵¹ Original title: *The Lighter That Failed* (J. Parrott, 1927).

⁵⁵² UFA documentary.

⁵⁵³ Original title: *From Hand to Mouth* (A. J. Goulding and H. Roach, 1919).

⁵⁵⁴ Original title: *The Crowd* (K. Vidor, 1928).

3	05/03/1929	<i>El erizo</i> , ⁵⁵⁵ <i>Un dolor de muelas</i> ⁵⁵⁶ <i>Volga! Volga!</i> ⁵⁵⁷	Àngel Ferran, <i>La Publicitat</i> : (Ferran Coromines 1930, 5) / Birosta ⁵⁵⁸ "Cinema Amateur." <i>Cinòpolis: la revista humorística de cinema</i> : year 1, no. 10 (V. Castanys Borràs 1929, 13)
4 ⁵⁵⁹	16/03/1929	<i>La paliza diaria</i> , ⁵⁶⁰ <i>Moana</i> ⁵⁶¹	Àngel Ferran, <i>La Publicitat</i> : (Ferran Coromines 1929d, 9)
5	26/03/1929	<i>El estudiante de Praga</i> , ⁵⁶² <i>Que no lo sepa la esposa</i> ⁵⁶³	P. de F. ⁵⁶⁴ <i>La Publicitat</i> : (F. de P. 1929a, 4)
6	09/04/1929	<i>Los Huerfanitos o La cuna de Luisito</i> , ⁵⁶⁵ <i>El último</i> , ⁵⁶⁶ <i>Dos músicos</i> ⁵⁶⁷	P. de F. <i>La Publicitat</i> : (F. de P. 1929b, 5) / (Autor/a 1929j, 4)
7	25/04/1929	<i>Chirurgie moderne</i> , ⁵⁶⁸ <i>La tintura maravillosa</i> , ⁵⁶⁹ <i>Max estrena zapatos</i> , ⁵⁷⁰ <i>En la isla</i>	P. de F. <i>La Publicitat</i> : (P. 1929, 5) / (Autor/a 1929h, 19)

⁵⁵⁵ This may have been the German animation short *Der Wettlauf zwischen dem Hasen und dem Igel* (H. Jaeger, 1921).

⁵⁵⁶ Given the plot and the data at hand, this was likely *Leave 'em Laughing* (C. Bruckman and L. McCarey, 1928).

⁵⁵⁷ Original title: *Volga Wolga* (V. Tourjansky, 1928).

⁵⁵⁸ The pseudonym used by Valentí Castanys Borràs.

⁵⁵⁹ According to the journalist, this session began with a didactical conference, but who imparted it is unspecified.

⁵⁶⁰ A film in the series by producer Hal Roach, produced by Metro Goldwyn Mayer, with actors from "The Gang" ["La pandilla"], namely Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy.

⁵⁶¹ Original title *Moana* (F. H. Flaherty and R. J. Flaherty, 1926).

⁵⁶² Original title: *Der Student von Prag* (H. Galeen, 1926).

⁵⁶³ Original title: *That's my wife* (Ll. French, 1929).

⁵⁶⁴ I have not been able to ascertain whether this is a pseudonym that Àngel Ferran used or if the author was a different person.

⁵⁶⁵ Original title: *La culla di Gigino* (no author detected 1911).

⁵⁶⁶ Original title: *Der letzte Mann* (F.W. Murnau, 1924).

⁵⁶⁷ Likely *Berth Marks* (L. R. Foster, 1929), given the journalist's mention of producer Hal Roach and actor Stan Laurel, as well as plot similarities.

⁵⁶⁸ The only information we have on this film was that it was produced before 1900. This may have been a recording of surgeon Eugène-Louis Doyen, who, in Paris, introduced cameras as a tool for learning about surgery for the first time (Laios et al. 2018).

⁵⁶⁹ I have been unable to identify this film, as I have not been able to trace much information on it. I only know that, according to journalist Àngel Ferran, this was likely an older film, like the one that had been screened before (*Chirurgie moderne*), but more technical, in his words.

⁵⁷⁰ Likely *Max lance la mode* (R. Leprince and M. Linder, 1912), as María Luz Morales calls it a primitive, 100-meter comedy, implying that it is short, like *Max lance la mode*, which lasts nine minutes.

		<i>del Betún</i> , ⁵⁷¹ <i>Charlot emigrante</i> , ⁵⁷² <i>Tomasín en los bosques</i> , ⁵⁷³ <i>Charlot armas al hombro</i> , ⁵⁷⁴ <i>Fuera sombreros</i> ⁵⁷⁵	
8	07/05/1929	<i>Estampas españolas</i> , ⁵⁷⁶ Diez minutos de reportaje de antes de la guerra, ⁵⁷⁷ <i>Nanuk, el Esquimal</i> ⁵⁷⁸	<i>La Publicitat</i> (P. 1929, 4) ⁵⁷⁹
9 ⁵⁸⁰	28/05/1929	<i>La muerte de Orestes</i> , ⁵⁸¹ <i>Koko enamorado</i> , ⁵⁸² Un noticiario, ⁵⁸³ <i>El teatro siniestro</i> ⁵⁸⁴	A. F. <i>La Publicitat</i> : (Ferran Coromines 1929f, 4)
10	26/06/1929	<i>Vacaciones</i> , ⁵⁸⁵ <i>El peregrino</i> ⁵⁸⁶	(Autor/a 1929k, 2)
11	07/09/1929	<i>El Gabinete del doctor Caligari</i> , ⁵⁸⁷ <i>Varité</i> ⁵⁸⁸	P. de F. <i>La Publicitat</i> : (F. de P. 1929c, 5)

⁵⁷¹ Perhaps this is the film *Why Worry?* (F. C. Newmeyer and S. Taylor 1923), as Harrold Lloyd acts in it—as mentioned in the review—and because of the reference to the island in its title, which is of great importance in *Why Worry?*

⁵⁷² Original title: *The Immigrant* (C. Chaplin, 1917).

⁵⁷³ Most likely *The Sawmill* (L. Semon and N. Taurog, 1922).

⁵⁷⁴ Original title: *Shoulder Arms* (C. Chaplin, 1918).

⁵⁷⁵ Original title: *Hats Off* (H. Yates, 1927).

⁵⁷⁶ In Radio Televisión Española's historical archive, I have found a reference to *Estampas Españolas: Santander* (L. Alonso, 1929), which coincides with said year, with shots taken by the military air force and the operator cited by Ángel Ferrán.

⁵⁷⁷ We lack a title on this report. The only information that the journalist has provided is his appreciation for the film because it addressed the history of the life of film. After the session, in an article published on 11 May, he notes that the film is about the ploys of the Russian Army, with the help of the czar.

⁵⁷⁸ Original title: *Nanook of the North* (R. J. Flaherty, 1922).

⁵⁷⁹ The name of the review's author is not included.

⁵⁸⁰ This session was divided in two: the first, "Variedades," included three short films, while the second was a feature film.

⁵⁸¹ I have not been able to trace the feature film.

⁵⁸² Though I have also been unable to trace the short film, this animated short was part of a series of animated cartoons produced between 1918 and 1929, *Out of the Inkwell*, whose main character was Koko the Clown. The cartoon's creator, Max Fleischer, and his brother, Dave Fleischer, opened their own animated-cartoon studio, Fleischer Studios, Inc., under Paramount Pictures. It would be safe to assume that this film would reach the Barcelona Film Club thanks to María Luz Morales's relationship with Paramount Spain, where she worked as of 1929.

⁵⁸³ Paramount News was a news outlet produced by Paramount from 1927 to 1957. According to the journalist, this was an old-fashioned news outlet.

⁵⁸⁴ Original title: *The Last Warning* (P. Leni, 1929).

⁵⁸⁵ Original title: *The Idle Class* (C. Chaplin, 1921).

⁵⁸⁶ Original title: *The Pilgrim* (C. Chaplin, 1923).

⁵⁸⁷ Original title: *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* (R. Weine, 1920).

⁵⁸⁸ Original title: *Varieté* (E.A. Dupont, 1925).

Annex 2 - Members of the Lyceum club de Barcelona and their Functions

Here, we are listing the Lyceum Club de Barcelona's members and their functions, according to the information we've found in the media and in secondary sources.

Members of LCB	Functions and Period
Maria Carratalà Van den Wouver (1899-1984)	Founder, musicology adviser, and president (1933-1935)
Leonor Serrano Pablo (1840-1942)	Founder and sociology adviser
Isolina Viladot Viñas (?-1956)	Founder, librarian (1931-1932), and secretary (1936-?)
Montserrat Graner de Bertrán ¿?)	Founder and spokesperson
Anna Miret (?)	Founder and spokesperson
Enriqueta Sèculi Bastida(1897-1976)	Founder and secretary (1931-1936)
Amanda Llebot (?)	Founder
Carme Cortés Llefó (1892-1979)	Founder
Maria Pi Ferrer (1884-1960)	Founder and spokesperson
Josefina Bayona de Cortés (?)	Treasurer
Mercè Ros (?)	Archivist
María Luz Morales (1898-1980)	Vice-president
Carme Díaz (?)	Hygiene adviser
Aurora Bertrana (1892-1974)	President (1931-1933)
Maria Baldó Massanet (?)	President (1936)

Annex 3 - Members of Residència Internacional de Senyoretas Estudiantis (RISE) and their Functions

Here, we are listing the members of Residència Internacional de Senyoretas Estudiantis (RISE). Though they weren't many in number, they were part of its board. In any case, we are less interested in this information, since most of the information we found is on men, whose basic data is much easier to find. In this list, we may note that only two women were part of the board without holding any specific position, beyond their status as members of the board. The other three women on the board were directors and codirectors.

Members of RISE	Functions
Joaquim Xirau Palau (1895-1946)	Board of the Residence
Ferran Valls Taberner (1888-1942)	Board of the Residence
Carles Soldevila (1892-1967)	Board of the Residence
Maria Solà de Sellarés (1899-1998)	Board of the Residence and director
Carme Montoriol Puig (1892-1966)	Board of the Residence
Augusto Pi Suñer (1879-1965)	Board of the Residence
María Luz Morales (1898-1980)	Board of the Residence and co-director
Lluís Massot Balaguer (1890-1962)	Board of the Residence
Francesc Maspons Anglasell (1872-1966)	Board of the Residence
Teresa Cabarrús de Abaria (1891-1948)	Board of the Residence
Manuel Folguera Duran (1867-1951)	Board of the Residence
Pompeu Fabra (1868-1948)	Board of the Residence
Joan Estelrich (1896-1958)	Board of the Residence
Candelària Escolà Fontanet (1905-?)	Board of the Residence and co-director
Pere Coromines (1870-1939)	Board of the Residence
Rafael Campalans Puig (1887-1933)	Board of the Residence
Agustí Calvet (1887-1964)	Board of the Residence

Annex 4 - The Buenos Aires Film Club's Programming

Both León Klimovsky⁵⁸⁹ and Guillermo de Torre⁵⁹⁰ concur in that the film club's first season comprised fifteen sessions. We don't know which of the screenings outlined here may have been screened within other sessions or screened individually, separately from the film club. Though the film titles often coincide with those in our current film databases, we don't always know what film is being referenced. In some cases, we have deemed certain unstandardized titles to correspond to a given film due to similarities in their titles, plots, début year, or director. Yet, there is room for human error in such attributions, since we cannot always be certain about what film is being referenced.

Cycle I: August 21st, 1929, to November 27th, 1929⁵⁹¹

Day/Session	Film/s	Place	Organiser(s)	Ref/s
6/08/1929	<i>Entreacte</i> , ⁵⁹² <i>L'Etoile de Mer</i> , ⁵⁹³ <i>Un chien andalou</i> , ⁵⁹⁴ <i>La coquille et le clergyman</i> (fragment), ⁵⁹⁵ <i>Cabaret Epyleptique</i> (fr.), ⁵⁹⁶ and <i>Perle</i> ⁵⁹⁷	Amigos del Arte	V. Ocampo B. Fondane ⁵⁹⁸	<i>La Nación</i> 672 (Autor/a 1929l)
16/08/1929	<i>Entreacte</i> , <i>L'Etoile de Mer</i> , <i>Un chien andalou</i> , <i>La coquille et le clergyman</i> (fr.), <i>Cabaret Epyleptique</i> (fr.), and <i>Perle</i>	A. A. ⁵⁹⁹	V. Ocampo B. Fondane	<i>La Nación</i> (Autor/a 1929g)

⁵⁸⁹ In an interview that mentions the film club, printed in *La Literatura Argentina*, year II, no. 21 (Autor/a 1930b, 258).

⁵⁹⁰ In his often-cited review of "El 'Cineclub' de Buenos Aires" in *La Gaceta Literaria*, year IV, no. 79 (De Torre 1930a, 5).

⁵⁹¹ The person who wrote for *Nosotros* references the conferences' topics as well as the people at their helm, without specifying when or in which sessions they took place. On German film, the presentation was given by Héctor Eandi, Carlos Macchiavello and Guillermo de Torre. On French film, the presentation was conducted by Jorge A. Romero Brest, and Felipe Debernardi. Héctor Ibarra on Harry Langdon presented documentary film and animated cartoons. José Luis Romero presented on Russian film. León Klimovski was in charge of the technical history of film.

⁵⁹² Correct original title: *Entr'acte* (R. Clair, 1924).

⁵⁹³ Correct original title: *L'étoile de mer* (Man Ray, 1927).

⁵⁹⁴ Coincides with the original title: *Un chien andalou* (L. Buñuel, 1929).

⁵⁹⁵ Original title as written, *La coquille et le clergyman* (G. Dulac, 1928). From this point on, I will use "fr." for "fragment."

⁵⁹⁶ Original title: *Le Cabaret épileptique* (H. Gad, 1928).

⁵⁹⁷ Original title: *La perle* (H. d'Ursel, 1929). Unlike other films screened in this session, this one did not go down in history as a relevant avant-garde film.

⁵⁹⁸ We may find an article on film by Benjamin Fondane in the first issue of the magazine *Sur* (Fondane 1931), which is telling of Victoria Ocampo's interest in film and stands as a declaration of intent. The exact month in which this issue was published coincides with Fondane's arrival in Buenos Aires and the presentation of avant-garde films at Amigos del Arte on August 6th and 16th, 1929.

⁵⁹⁹ From here on, I will use A. A. to refer to Amigos del Arte.

21/08/1929	Inaugural session	A. A.	Horacio Coppola, Héctor Eandi, Interim Governing Committee	I. I. <i>Nosotros</i> (Autor/a 1929d)
11/09/1929	Homage to Paul Leni and the 'film' of mysteries: <i>El gabinete de los rostros de cera</i> (fr.), ⁶⁰⁰ <i>El gato y el canario</i> ⁶⁰¹	A. A. ⁶⁰²		Martín Peña / G. Torre (Peña 2008; De Torre 1930a)
25/09/1929	<i>El gabinete del doctor Caligari</i> , ⁶⁰³ <i>Cazadores de almas</i> , ⁶⁰⁴ <i>La leyenda de Gosta Berling</i> , ⁶⁰⁵ <i>La noche de San Silvestre</i> ⁶⁰⁶	A. A.	Jorge Luis Borges ⁶⁰⁷	Martín Peña / G. Torre / <i>Nosotros</i> (Peña 2008; De Torre 1930a; Autor/a 1929d)

⁶⁰⁰ This was likely *El hombre de las figuras de cera*, originally titled *Das Wachsfigurenkabinett* (L. Birinsky and P. Leni, 1924), which we may glean because of the publicity and importance given to Emil Jannings and due to a reference to the homage the film club dedicated to Paul Leni in this session.

⁶⁰¹ Original title: *The Cat and the Canary* (P. Leni, 1927).

⁶⁰² We know about the reference to the place of exhibition thanks to *Nosotros* (Autor/a 1929d, 444). Martín Peña also notes that the room at Amigos del Arte was used for the film club's sessions up until 1931 (2008). Likewise, according to the magazine *Nosotros*, the film club also held sessions at Asociación de las Artes de La Plata, Universidad de Paraná (as per the publication in *La Gaceta Literaria*, no. 85, this was due to the screening of *Sinfonía metropolitana* and the conference by Guillermo de Torre), and La Peña de Buenos Aires, which Couselo calls a "grouping" (2008).

⁶⁰³ Original title: *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* (R. Wiene, 1920). The film seems to have been screened twice: in the first and third cycles.

⁶⁰⁴ Original title: *The Salvation Hunters* (J. Sternberg, 1925).

⁶⁰⁵ Original title: *Gösta Berlings saga* (M. Stiller, 1924).

⁶⁰⁶ Original title: *Sylvester* (L. Pick, 1924). Added by *Nosotros* when referring to the German films that were screened at the film club that season.

⁶⁰⁷ Couselo alludes to a conference, which has been lost, in which Jorge Luis Borges presented on the films by Josef von Sternberg. In issue 3 of *Sur* magazine (1931) we may find an article by Jorge Luis Borges on film, in which he alludes to Sternberg (among other directors and films) and praises the films he created before *Marruecos* (Borges 1931, 71–73).

02/10/1929	Anthology of the comedy 'film' Charles Bowers, Larry Semon, and <i>Juanito Pocacosa</i> ⁶⁰⁸	A. A.		Martín Peña / G. Torre / <i>Nosotros</i> (Peña 2008; De Torre 1930a; Autor/a 1929d)
No date	Documentary films		Romero Brest	Martín Peña/ G. Torre (De Torre 1930a; Peña 2008, 62)
No date	<i>Juana de Arco</i> ⁶⁰⁹	A. A.		M. Peña / <i>Nosotros</i> (Peña 2008; Autor/a 1929d)
19 and 20/11/1929	<i>Sinfonía metropolitana</i> ⁶¹⁰	A. A.	G. Torre (conf)	G. Torre ⁶¹¹ / Couselo (De Torre 1930a; Couselo 2008)
No date	Anthology session, "La evolución del cine" (or "The evolution of film") ⁶¹²	A. A.		G. Torre (De Torre 1930a)

⁶⁰⁸ I have not been able to determine what film is being referenced. The magazine *Nosotros* references this as a Langdon film, and Guillermo de Torre only comments upon the films by Harry Langdon, without saying if he meant the films directed or starred by Harry Langdon.

⁶⁰⁹ Original title: *La passion de Jeanne d'Arc* (C. T. Dreyer, 1928).

⁶¹⁰ Original title: *Berlin - Die Sinfonie der Großstadt* (W. Ruttmann, 1927).

⁶¹¹ M. Peña adds that this was the only film premiering in Buenos Aires's movie theaters in 1928 to be considered "absolute film." Guillermo de Torre gave a conference at the University of Paraná and at A. A. (De Torre 1930b, 6).

⁶¹² Guillermo de Torre has noted that this session was "very representative despite its forced adherence to certain models" ["muy representativa dentro de su forzado esquematismo"].

No date	Sport and cinema	A. A.	Romero Brest ⁶¹³	G. Torre (De Torre 1930a)
No date	'Antología del dibujo animado' (or "Animated Cartoon Anthology")	A. A.	Héctor Ibarra ⁶¹⁴	G. Torre (De Torre 1930a)
No date	<i>Acorazado Potemkin</i> (fr.), ⁶¹⁵ <i>Octubre</i> (fr.), ⁶¹⁶ <i>La sexta parte del mundo</i> , ⁶¹⁷ <i>El fin de San Petesburgo</i> (fr.), ⁶¹⁸ <i>La aldea del pecado</i> , ⁶¹⁹ <i>Ivan el terrible</i> ⁶²⁰	A. A.	José Luis Romero ⁶²¹	G. Torre (De Torre 1930a)

Cycle II: 1930⁶²²

Day/Session	Film/s	Place	Refs
30/04/1930	<i>Una mujer de París</i> ⁶²³		M. Peña (Peña 2008)

⁶¹³ According to an interview with Romero Brest published in *Primera Plana* on April of 1967, which can be found on the website "[Mágicas ruinas](#)," the first conference given by this critic (who would later become well known) took place at the film club and addressed the topics of film and sports.

⁶¹⁴ According to *Nosotros's* writers, this session may have been presented by Héctor Ibarra, but we cannot truly know, since he also was in charge of documentary film and, according to Martín Peña, Romero Brest was actually in charge of documentary films for that season.

⁶¹⁵ Original title: *Bronenosets Potemkin* (S. Eisenstein, 1925).

⁶¹⁶ Original title: *Oktyabr* (G. Aleksandrov and S. Eisenstein, 1927). According to the magazine *Nosotros* these films were screened in synthesis. Thus, we may infer that they likely were fragments.

⁶¹⁷ Original title: *Shestay chast mira* (D. Vertov, 1926). According to Luis Orsetti (Orsetti 1932, 51) this film was screened too quickly, reflecting the lack of comfort at the film club.

⁶¹⁸ Original title: *Konets Sankt-Peterburga* (V. Pudovkin and M. Doller, 1927). This one also states that it's a synthesis.

⁶¹⁹ Original title: *Baby ryazanskie* (I. Pravov and O. Probrzhenskaya, 1927).

⁶²⁰ Original title: *Krylya kholopa* (Y. Tarich, 1926). In the journal *Nosotros* they also mention this film among the Russian that were screened at the film club.

⁶²¹ According to *Nosotros*, José Luis Romero, who was in charge of Russian film, would have presented this session as a conference.

⁶²² As Couselo notes, there is no reference to the cycle in 1930 (2008). Yet, we could conceive of the movies that Luis Orsetti cites in issue 15 of the magazine, *Nervio* (footnote 669), may have been among the ones that were screened at this cycle, given that they were not cited in any other sources that we consulted for cycles I or III, for which we have the most complete programming (Orsetti 1932).

⁶²³ Original title: *A Woman of Paris: A Drama of Fate* (Ch. Chaplin, 1923).

Cycle III: ⁶²⁴ 1931⁶²⁵ (November of 1930 to October of 1931)⁶²⁶

Day/Session	Film/s	Organiser	Place	Refs
06/03/1931	Animated film: Pat Sullivan, Walt Disney, Charlie Bowers, Max Fleischer, Ub Iwerks, Bud Fisher, a Chaplin film, and <i>Las marionetas de Gorno</i> (puppets) ⁶²⁷		Cine Hindú	M. Peña / Couselo (Peña 2008; Couselo 2008) ⁶²⁸
15/04/1931	<i>La línea general</i> ⁶²⁹	Héctor I. Eandi ⁶³⁰		Alfo, in <i>Nervio</i> (Alfo 1931f, 41)
15/05/1931 or/ and 13/05/1931 ⁶³¹	Amateur Film: <i>Palomas</i> (J.M. Méndez), <i>Imágenes urbanas</i> (Carlos Connio), <i>Experiencia de montaje</i> (M. Cassano y L.	L. Klimovsky (commentary) ⁶³³	A. A.	M. Peña / Alfo in <i>Nervio</i> 1, no. 2 (Peña 2008;

⁶²⁴ In July of 1932, Luis Orsetti wrote that this cycle ended disastrously, with an attempted film course (1932). See the “practices” section of chapter 3.2 for a reflection on the matter.

⁶²⁵ According to Couselo, the sessions begun at Cine Hindú on March 6th. They were later held at Amigos del Arte, though the writer does not specify when. Couselo also writes that there were four cycles in total. “Besides animated cartoons, Langdon, Chaplin, and Carl Froelich were considered, too, and Eisenstein’s *La línea general* premiered” [“Además del dibujo animado se revisó a Langdon, Chaplin y Carl Froelich, y se estrenó *La línea general*, de Eisenstein”] (2008). Yet, there seems to have been more than four cycles.

⁶²⁶ Despite what Couselo writes (2008), in *Nervio*, Alfo outlines the aforementioned dates (1931c).

⁶²⁷ I have not been able to determine which film this is referring to.

⁶²⁸ Couselo is citing an article penned by Sigfrido A. Radaelli for the magazine *Nosotros*, no. 265, from June of 1931, which we have not been able to consult.

⁶²⁹ Original title: *Staroye i novoye* (G. Aleksandrov and S. Eisenstein, 1929). This screening was a premiere in Argentina (Alfo 1931c, 42).

⁶³⁰ We may assume that Arturo S. Mom organized a parallel conference at Amigos del Arte, given its title: “Los grandes maestros de la cinematografía rusa. Primera exhibición en Buenos Aires de *La línea general*, film ruso del director Einsestein” [“The great masters of Russian cinematography. First screening in Buenos Aires of *Old and New* a Russian film directed by Eisenstein”] (Artundo et al. 2008, 237). There is some incoherence regarding the dates, since the Malba exhibition’s catalogue states that this conference was held in 1930. Yet, as we’ve cited, *Nervio* magazine printed that the film was screened in April of 1931 with a presentation by Héctor Eandi. Perhaps either the catalogue or *Nervio* magazine misprinted the screening date. It is also possible that the film may have been screened twice: first for the conference and then for the film club itself.

⁶³¹ The dates that are referred are two. In *Nervio*, Alfo writes that the screening was held on May 13th, 1931.

⁶³³ In *Nervio*, Alfo writes that “the dissemination of Einstein’s theories on relativity preceded all of this, fulfilling the proposed objective of the simplicity of the exhibition” [“precedió a todo esto una divulgación de las teorías de Einstein sobre la relatividad, que llenó el objetivo propuesto por la sencillez de la exposición”] (Alfo 1931f, 50).

	Klimovsky), <i>El ralentiseur en 16 mm</i> (G.W. Hayes) ⁶³²			Alfo 1931d, 49)
03/06/1931 s. 40 or s. 39 ⁶³⁴	<i>Fausto</i> , <i>Tartufo</i> , ⁶³⁵ <i>El viaje imaginario</i> , ⁶³⁶ <i>El fantasma del Moulin Rouge</i> , ⁶³⁷ object films and Bowers series, and <i>Los Piratas</i> (5 minutes) ⁶³⁸		A. A.	<i>Nervio</i> I, no. III (Couselo 2008; Alfo 1931b, 47) / Couselo
Session 40 ⁶³⁹	Three comedies by Charles Bowers and <i>El gabinete del doctor Caligari</i> ⁶⁴⁰		A. A.	<i>Nervio</i> I, no. III (Alfo 1931b, 47)

⁶³² As they are amateur films, they cannot be found in any databases. We may infer that they were produced around the same year they premiered (1931). Surprised, Alfo writes that there was an “interesting nucleus of aficionados [...] the field of artistic experience that 16 mm film can lead to is palpable” [“un núcleo interesante de aficionados [...] se advirtió el ancho campo de experiencias artísticas a que puede dar lugar el ‘film’ de 16 milímetros”] (1931d).

⁶³⁴ According to Alfonso Longuet (Alfo), in *Nervio* magazine, year I, no. 3 (1931b), this was session 39, not 40 (as Couselo (2008) notes).

⁶³⁵ *Tartufo* (original title *Herr Tartüff*, by F.W. Murnau, 1925) and *Fausto* (original title *Faust: Eine deutsche Volkssage*, by F.W. Murnau, 1926) may have been screened here—Martín Peña cites them as films that were screened at the film club. These must have been the films in question, as, in *Nervio*, Alfo refers to the same ones. However, Couselo writes that this was merely an homage to F. W. Murnau. Still, I doubt that they would have been screened on the same day as Clair and Dulac’s films, as the session would have been very long.

⁶³⁶ Likely *L’invitation au voyage* (G. Dulac, 1927), given the similarities in the titles.

⁶³⁷ Original title: *Le fantôme du Moulin-Rouge* (René Clair, 1925).

⁶³⁸ I have not been able to determine which film this is referring to, since the reference is somewhat vague. Without citing a source, Couselo writes that “beyond the mentioned films, Klimovsky adds others like *El expreso de Manchuria* (I. Trauberg) and *La caída de la casa Usher* (J. Epstein)” [“A los films enumerados Klimovsky agrega otros como *El expreso de Manchuria* (I. Trauberg) y *La caída de la casa Usher* (J. Epstein)”]. I have not been able to determine which Leonid Trauberg film this was. The film by J. Epstein was *La chute de la maison Usher* (1928). Most likely, given the coincidence in two of these films, this must have been the same session that Alfo reviewed for *Nervio* (year I, no. 3), which he denotes as session 39. The journalist is referring to the screening of the film *L’invitation au voyage* by Germaine Dulac and *Le fantôme du Moulin-Rouge* by René Clair, as well as to “five minutes of the prehistoric film *Los piratas*” [“cinco minutos de film prehistórico *Los piratas*”]. Yet, the author makes no reference to Murnau, which is strange in and of itself.

⁶³⁹ As per Alfonso Longuet in *Nervio* (Alfo 1931b, 47).

⁶⁴⁰ Original title: *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* (R. Wiene, 1920). According to this reference, this would have been the second time that *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* was screened, as it had already been shown on 25/09/1929.

Session 41	Dedicated to Chaplin. 7 films from the first era ⁶⁴¹		A. A.	<i>Nervio</i> I, no. III (Alfo 1931b, 47)
Session 42	<i>Vivir de nuevo</i> ⁶⁴²		A. A.	<i>Nervio</i> (Alfo 1931a, 45)
09-10/1931 ⁶⁴³	Independent film: ⁶⁴⁴ <i>Lluvia</i> , ⁶⁴⁵ <i>El jardín de Luxemburgo</i> , ⁶⁴⁶ <i>El puente de acero</i> , ⁶⁴⁷ <i>Ritmos de luz</i> , ⁶⁴⁸ <i>A propósito de Niza</i> , ⁶⁴⁹ <i>Velocidad</i> , ⁶⁵⁰ <i>Imágenes de Ostende</i> , ⁶⁵¹ <i>La marcha de las máquinas</i> , <i>Las noches eléctricas</i> , <i>Negativos</i> , <i>Montparnasse</i> , <i>Robots</i> , ⁶⁵² <i>Cinco minutos de cine</i>		La Peña ⁶⁵⁷	Couselo in a brochure he kept, which was printed by the film club and called “El film independiente” /

⁶⁴¹ According to the author, this led to a comparative study of the best film artist, with pieces from between 1912 and 1918, which included 7 films from the time and “highlighted through the inevitably judgement, with its latest productions, the art which is now more mature and has consolidated itself, and the manifest transition” [“resaltó en el juicio inevitable, con sus últimas producciones, el arte ahora más madurado y ya impuesto, y la transición manifiesta”] (Alfo 1931b, 47).

⁶⁴² This was likely *Las ruinas de un imperio*, given the topic and production date. Original title: *Oblomok imperii* (F. Ermler, 1929). This premiered in Argentina (Alfo 1931c, 42).

⁶⁴³ Though we have dates on this exhibition (or perhaps exhibitions) and lack dates for the prior ones, we may glean that this one took place at a later date, as it was announced in *Nervio* magazine later than the previous ones were.

⁶⁴⁴ This is the only session for which we still have an accessible program. The session was titled “El film independiente.” I consider the term “film independiente” in the section on programming in the chapter 3.2.

⁶⁴⁵ Original title: *Regen* (M. Franken and J. Ivens, 1929).

⁶⁴⁶ Original title: *Jardins du Luxembourg* (M. Franken, 1927).

⁶⁴⁷ Original title: *De brug* (J. Ivens, 1928).

⁶⁴⁸ Original title: *Light Rhythms* (O. Blakeston and F. Bruguière, 1931).

⁶⁴⁹ Original title: *À propos de Nice* (B. Kaufman and J. Vigo, 1930).

⁶⁵⁰ Original title: *Velocità* (T. Cordero, 1930).

⁶⁵¹ Original title: *Images d’Ostende* (H. Storck, 1929).

⁶⁵² Original titles: *La marche des machines* (1927), *Les nuits électriques* (1928), *Négatifs* (1932), *Montparnasse* (1929), *Vers les robots* (1932). There’s a small contradiction in the dates. Either *Vers les robots* and *Négatifs* circulated before 1932, or the sessions were celebrated in 1932, with the third cycle extending beyond October of 1931, as Alfo noted.

⁶⁵⁷ The place of exhibition appears in the cycle’s publicity brochure.

	<i>puro</i> , ⁶⁵³ <i>Campos Elíseos</i> , ⁶⁵⁴ <i>Borderline</i> , ⁶⁵⁵ <i>El riel</i> ⁶⁵⁶			(Alfo 1931a)
Session 45	Program comprising films by Buster Keaton		A. A.	<i>Nervio</i> (Alfo 1931d, 46)
Session 46	Two comedies by Charles Bowers, <i>Los misterios del mar</i> ⁶⁵⁸		A. A.	<i>Nervio</i> (Alfo 1931e, 43)
Session 47	<i>La hija del verdugo</i> (5 min. of prehistoric film), ⁶⁵⁹ a fantastic comedy by Lupino Lane, <i>Teresa Raquín</i> ⁶⁶⁰		A. A.	<i>Nervio</i> (Alfo 1931e, 43)
Session 48 ⁶⁶¹	Second festival for animated cartoons: El conejo Blas, ⁶⁶² El gato loco, ⁶⁶³ Mimbo ⁶⁶⁴ and creations by other illustrators ⁶⁶⁵		Cine Empire	<i>Nervio</i> (Alfo 1931e, 43)

⁶⁵³ Original title: *Cinq minutes de cinema pur* (H. Chomette, 1926).

⁶⁵⁴ Original title: *Champs Élysées* (J. Lods, 1930).

⁶⁵⁵ Original title: *Borderline* (K. MacPherson, 1930).

⁶⁵⁶ This was likely *El riel*, originally titled *Scherben* (L. Pick, 1921). In *Nervio* magazine I, no. 4, p. 45, these exact same movies are cited, with the same exhibition dates, from September to October of 1931. These were probably both based on the publicity that the film club printed in *Sur* magazine, no. 3, year 1 (1931). See Artundo (2016).

⁶⁵⁸ I have not been able to determine which film this is referring to. Alfo states that these were “submarine scenes created under the direction of doctor Schutz” [“escenas submarinas realizadas bajo la dirección del doctor Schutz”] (1931e, 43).

⁶⁵⁹ I have not been able to determine what production is being referenced.

⁶⁶⁰ Original title: *Thérèse Raquin* (J. Feyder, 1928).

⁶⁶¹ The session number isn’t specified. We don’t know whether the sessions stopped being numbered once they were held at Cine Empire. Given this clarification, we may infer that the other sessions announced in the same article took place at Amigos del Arte.

⁶⁶² This is referencing the series of animated shorts created by Walt Disney, whose main character was called “Oswald the lucky rabbit,” or “Blas, el conejo de la suerte” in the Spanish-speaking realm.

⁶⁶³ This is probably referring to the animated cartoon Krazy Kat. Yet, we don’t know which production was screened, since this cartoon strip saw many adaptations.

⁶⁶⁴ Referring to the cartoon character Bimbo, which appeared under said name in 1929 for the first time, in a series of animation shorts called Talkartoons, by Fleischer studios.

⁶⁶⁵ The author specifies that this involved creations by W. Lanz, W. Disney, and M. Fleischer, among other illustrators. He highlights that this presentation of animated cartoons was created anthologically (Alfo 1931e, 43).

No date	<i>Juana de Arco</i> ⁶⁶⁶			M. Peña ⁶⁶⁷ / <i>Nervio</i> (Peña 2008; Alfo 1931c, 42)
No date	<i>Prisioneros de la montaña</i> ⁶⁶⁸			<i>Nervio</i> (Alfo 1931c, 42)
No date	<i>La rosa de los vientos</i> ⁶⁶⁹			<i>Nervio</i> (Alfo 1931c, 42)

Cycle IV: 1932⁶⁷⁰

Day/Session	Film/s	Organiser	Place	Refs
June			Empire Theatre	<i>Nervio</i> (Orsetti 1932)

⁶⁶⁶ Original title: *La passion de Jeanne d’Arc* (C. T. Dreyer, 1928). We do not know when or in what session this was screened, but this is referenced in the magazine *Nervio*, in the summary on the third cycle of exhibitions, as well as in Martín Peña’s research.

⁶⁶⁷ Martín Peña states that *La passion de Jeanne d’Arc* was screened in 1929 and 1931, but we lack further information.

⁶⁶⁸ Original title: *Die weiße Hölle vom Piz Palü* (A. Fanck and G.W. Pabst, 1929). Though referenced in *Nervio*, we do not know when or in what session it was screened.

⁶⁶⁹ Likely *The Wind* (V. Sjöström, 1928). We do not know when or alongside what other films this was screened, but this is referenced in the magazine *Nervio* as well as in Martín Peña’s research.

⁶⁷⁰ This is the cycle, to be projected in certain downtown cinemas monthly, which Luis Orsetti refers to in *Nervio*. Furthermore, Orsetti specifies that these were Russian films to be presented without conferences. In this same article summarizing some of the film club’s activities up until that point (1932), he cites some films but doesn’t specify what cycle they were screened in, and we have not found references to these films in any other sources (1932, 51–52). Thus, these may have been screened within the second cycle, for which we have very little information, or the fourth cycle. The films would include as referred: *Las tres luces* (also called *La muerte cansada [Der müde Tod]*) (F. Lang, 1921), *El difunto Matías Pascal [Feu Mathias Pascal]* (M. L’Herbier, 1925), *La tempestad amarilla o La tempestad sobre Asia [Potómok Chinguiz-Jana]* (V. Pudovkin, 1928), *El hijo del otro [Moy Syn]*(Y.Cherviakov, 1928), *Zvenigora* (A. Dovchenko), *Un día de libertad* (an adaptation of Barbusse’s short story, by Alexis Room), and *La caída de la Casa Usher [La Chute de la maison Usher]*(J. Epstein, 1928).

Annex 5 - The programmings of Cine club Mexicano (1931-1934), Cine club de México (1934-1938) and 16 mm Cine club (1938-?)

The films that were screened at all these film clubs (with their estimated years of operation in parentheses) were as follows:

Cine club Mexicano (1931-1935)⁶⁷¹

Day/Session	Film/s	Place	Refs
Session 1 (1932)	<i>Natalidad</i> ⁶⁷²	Main Hall [<i>parainfo</i>] (UNAM) ⁶⁷³	Lola Álvarez Bravo referred by Rodríguez Álvarez (Rodríguez Álvarez 2002a, 305), Cardoza y Aragón (Cardoza y Aragón 2010, 19), Emilio García Riera (García Riera 1992, 25)
Session 2 (1932)	<i>La Troika</i> ⁶⁷⁴	Main Hall (UNAM)	Agustín Aragón Leiva, cited by Rodríguez

⁶⁷¹ The films I have not referred to their original title I have not been able to determine which productions are being referenced.

⁶⁷² Original title: *Frauennot – Frauenglück* (E. Tissé, 1929-1930).

⁶⁷³ We have information on its location thanks to Lola Álvarez Bravo's statements (1982, 98–99). It doesn't seem far-fetched that the university would participate in this event, given the historical document presented above (Annex 6) stating that she was given permission to celebrate the first two film screenings "of the series of this show to be underwritten by the Department of Fine Arts and the National University" ["de la serie de este espectáculo llevarán a cabo patrocinados por el Departamento de Bellas Artes y por la Universidad Nacional"]. We presume the location of the following sessions was the same.

⁶⁷⁴ Likely *Troika* (V. Strizhevsky, 1930). In a letter from Agustín Aragón Leiva to Sergei Eisenstein dated September 14, 1932, the former writes of the little enthusiasm that the audience showed at the screening—as cited by Rodríguez Álvarez (2002a, 296).

			Álvarez (2002a, 296)
Session 3 (1933) ⁶⁷⁵	<i>Thunder over Mexico</i> ⁶⁷⁶	Main Hall (UNAM)	Lola Álvarez Bravo (1982) and Aragón Leiva, by Rodríguez Álvarez (2002a, 311)
Session 4 and 5 (1933-1935) ⁶⁷⁷	<i>Sky-ing</i> , two old Chaplin films, ⁶⁷⁸ <i>El delator</i> , ⁶⁷⁹ <i>La madre</i> , ⁶⁸⁰ <i>Vida y amores de las plantas</i> , <i>Maravillas del microscopio</i> , <i>Misterios de la vida de un estanque</i> , <i>Rutas aéreas</i> , <i>Historia de la sífilis</i> , <i>Pescadores de ballenas</i> , a comedy by Roscoe Conkling Arbuckle. ⁶⁸¹		Eduardo Serrato (Cardoza y Aragón 2010, 19)

Cine club de México (1934-1938):⁶⁸²

⁶⁷⁵ I do not know what year this was screened.

⁶⁷⁶ Original title: *Thunder Over Mexico* (S. Eisenstein 1933), Sol Lesser's montage of *¡Que viva México!*

⁶⁷⁷ I don't know the date when these sessions were organised, neither which films were screened in each session. The screenings could have also been organised at the Cine club de México, under the umbrella of the LEAR organisation, since *The informer* was premiered in 1935, so until 1935 could have not been possible to screen it any of the film clubs. Eduardo Serrato considers these screenings and the ones I have placed under the first session of Cine club de México part of the Cine club Mexicano's programming. If these sessions were have been organised by Cine club Mexicano, then both cineclubs would have been organising activities at the same time.

⁶⁷⁸ According to Eduardo Serrato (Cardoza y Aragón 2010), probably the two old Chaplin films were: *The Kid* (C. Chaplin, 1921) and *The Gold Rush* (C. Chaplin, 1925).

⁶⁷⁹ Original title: *The informer* (J. Ford, 1935).

⁶⁸⁰ Original title: *Mother* (V. Pudovkin, 1926).

⁶⁸¹ Translation of the titles: *Life and Loves of Plants*, *Wonders of the Microscope*, *Mysteries of Pond Life*, *Air Routes*, *History of Syphilis*, *Whale Fishers*. I have not been able to determine which films this is referring to, probably they were short documentaries. Eduardo Serrato, based on Luis Cardoza y Aragón reviews reports that some of the screenings were accompanied by conferences by Agustín Aragón Leiva, Agustín Velázquez Chávez, and Doctor Roberto Esparza Peraza. Lola Álvarez Bravo confirmed that Bayer lent them films: most likely, *Historia de la sífilis*.

⁶⁸² I have decided to use two different names in order to make it clear that we are speaking of different phases—albeit of the same project. Most likely, the film club in question actually did not change names. In contrast to the third phase, the first two phases were quite similar to each other, despite their being under the wings of different organisms, with different people. The second initiative owes plenty to the first, despite some differences.

Day/Session	Film/s	Place	Refs
1 st festival (1934-1935)	<i>Cómo es la mujer japonesa, Celos y Embriaguez de Pierrot</i> , ⁶⁸³ <i>El país de los molinos</i> , and other French films.	LEAR premises, San Jerónimo 53	Cited by Cardoza y Aragón (Cardoza y Aragón 2010, 37)
2 nd festival (1935-1936)	1 st session: Films that “cover the growth of film from its origins until our days.” ⁶⁸⁴ 2 nd session: <i>Octubre</i> . ⁶⁸⁵	LEAR premises, San Jerónimo 53	Cited by Cardoza y Aragón (Cardoza y Aragón 2010, 37), and Aragón Leiva (Rodríguez Álvarez 2002a, 303)
3 rd festival (1935-1936)	<i>La Huelga</i> , ⁶⁸⁶ films by Chaplin, starred by Francesca Bertini, “and a few reels with authentic scenes of the Mexican Revolution,” as well as the cultural shorts <i>Energía solar</i> , <i>La malaria</i> , ⁶⁸⁷	LEAR premises, San Jerónimo 53	Cited by García Riera (García Riera 1992, 25)

⁶⁸³ Likely *Histoire d'un Pierrot* (B. Negroni, 1914), since García Riera refers to Francesca Bertini starred films that were screened at the film clubs (García Riera 1992, 25).

⁶⁸⁴ The reference also states that the screening would be accompanied by presentations of the films. Though we lack an exact date, we know that this festival was also organised by Lola Álvarez Bravo, given the inventory at Fondo Leopoldo Méndez, which alludes to a document inviting people to a second festival organized by Dolores Álvarez Bravo. I have been unable to consult this document, but it is located at Fondo Leopoldo Méndez, which is managed by Cenidiap (Fuentes Rojas 1995, 168).

⁶⁸⁵ Original title: *Oktyabr* (G. Aleksandrov and S. Eisenstein, 1927). The film was presented by Rafael Alberti. We do not know if this film was included in the second festival, as Agustín Aragón Leiva refers to the film in his second letter to Eisenstein, dated June 16, 1935 (Rodríguez Álvarez 2002a, 303–4). The issue we have with placing this film is that Leiva is referring to the film club’s fifth session, making it difficult for us to organise the materials. Yet, we do not believe that Aragón Leiva was referring to two different film clubs, since Alberti and María Teresa de León also had relationships with LEAR, which would manifest once more when they attended the Congreso Nacional de Escritores y Artistas organised by LEAR in 1937. Fondo Leopoldo Méndez houses a letter from Lic. José Rivera P.C, of the Departamento Autónomo de Publicidad (Autonomous Publicity Department), to Julio de la Fuente of the LEAR, informing him that he may go to the film section (Sección Segunda, Cinematografía), in order to address his issue with C. F. Gregorio Castillo. Though we have not been able to consult this document, it contains information on the film club, which would lead us to believe that, in 1937, LEAR organized an activity that was related to this organ.

⁶⁸⁶ Original title: *Stachka* (S. Eisenstein, 1925).

⁶⁸⁷ Translation of the titles: *Solar energy, Malaria*.

	<i>Disparos en el Istmo</i> . ⁶⁸⁸		
4th festival (1936-1937)	1st session: some of the films outlined in the point on the third festival may have been screened at this festival. 2nd session: films from the first stage of Italian and French film, with the actors Pina Menichelli, Itala Almirante Manzini, Salustiano, <i>Resurrecciones</i> , de Max Linder.	1 st and 2 nd sessions took place at LEAR premises, San Jerónimo 53. If any other sessions were held, they would have taken place at the LEAR's address on Donceles street.	The session was organised by Lola Álvarez Bravo (Rodríguez Álvarez 2002a, 307) ⁶⁸⁹

16 mm cine club (1938-?)

Day/Session	Film/s	Place	Refs
1st session (May 17, 1938)	<i>Armas al hombro</i> , ⁶⁹⁰ <i>Un perro andaluz</i> ⁶⁹¹	Conference Room at Palacio de Bellas Artes	Efraín Huerta in 1938 (Huerta 2006, 171), Xavier Villaurrutia in 1938 in <i>Hoy</i> magazine (Bradú 2012, 96)
2nd session (May 21?, 1938)	<i>Un perro andaluz</i> , <i>Viajes mexicanos: Taxco y Acapulco</i> , a color film by Rafael García, animated cartoons of Mickey	Conference Room of Palacio de Bellas Artes	Cited by Fabienne Bradú (Bradú 2012, 91)

⁶⁸⁸ Original title: *Disparos en el Istmo* (M. Álvarez Bravo, 1934) These are the films that Casanova (2020) lists. They lack dates and we only know that they were screened after 1935. We have listed them under the third festival.

⁶⁸⁹ There is a document referring to this session and stored in Fondo Leopoldo Méndez at the Departamento Autónomo de Publicidad y Propaganda, in the second section of its Propaganda Office. The letter is dated February 3, 1937.

⁶⁹⁰ Original title: *Shoulder Arms* (C. Chaplin, 1918).

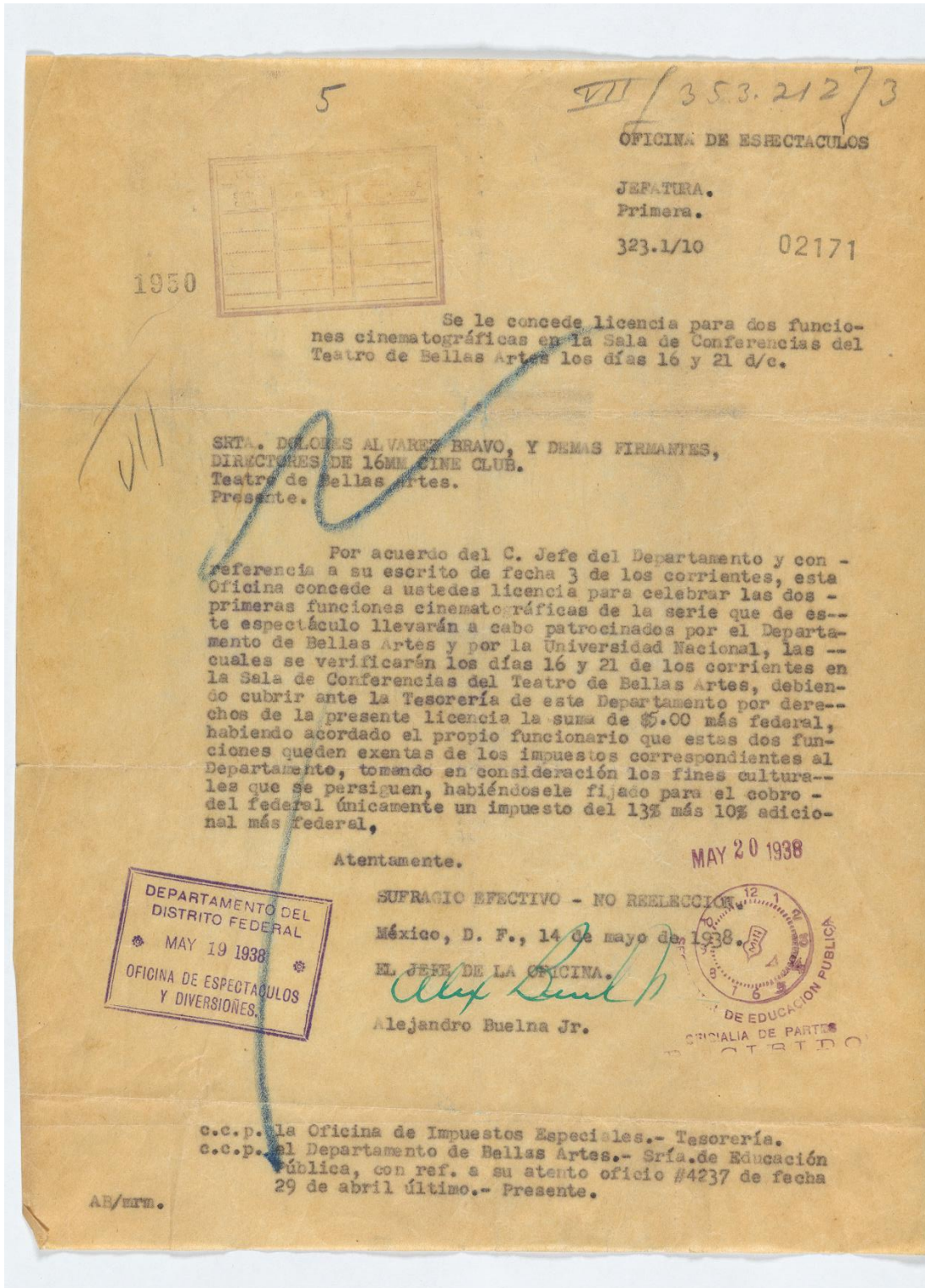
⁶⁹¹ Original title: *Un chien andalou* (L. Buñuel and S. Dalí, 1929). The premiering film was presented by André Breton.

	Mouse, <i>Be My</i> <i>King</i> , ⁶⁹² <i>La</i> <i>malaria</i> . ⁶⁹³		
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⁶⁹² Original title: *Be My King* (L. Lane, 1928).

⁶⁹³ It seem that the second session was also accompanied by three songs sung by Lupe Medina. There may have been two sessions, as Lola Álvarez Bravo was granted permission to organise two dates (on May 16 and 21, as cited above). Though the first session was hosted on May 17 rather than May 16, the second would have been held on May 21. This would make sense, considering Fabienne Bradu's concerns and the official letter that Lola Álvarez Bravo received (Annex 6). Yet, the publication dates of the news articles that Fabienne Bradu cites would be worth checking in order to determine when the second screening took place. The session in which Chaplin's *The Gold Rush* was screened, which Huerta alludes to, took place either on May 17 or 21, seeing as the review was published on May 24. Though I have contacted Fabienne Bradu, she has been unable to send me digitised versions of the press cuttings in question due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Annex 6 Historical document – 16 mm Cinema



Annex 7 Relationship weights

Relationship

1. Friends: 5
2. Wife-spouse: 5
3. Lovers: 4
4. Siblings: 4
5. Mother/father: 3
6. Professional: 2
7. Cousins and other familiars: 1
8. Flatmates: 1

Correspondence

1. Sender - Recipient: 2

Book

1. Authors (same book): 1⁶⁹⁴
2. Author - translator: 1
3. Editor (publishing house) - Authors (and translators, and prologues): 2
4. Co-editors (same volume/book): 3
5. Publishing house co-edition: 2

Journal publication

1. Editor - Contributor / translator: 2
2. Gente con rol en la revista: 3⁶⁹⁵
3. Co-authors (same article): 3
4. Co-translators (same article): 3
5. Translators - Authors: 0
6. Authors in the same volume: 1
7. Translators in the same volume: 1
8. Authors / contributors en distintos números: sin nada.
9. Author – Reviewed author (reviews): 1

Event

⁶⁹⁴ Includes any kind of author, author of a book, of a prologue, or introduction.

⁶⁹⁵ People with active roles in the journal, the category does not include collaborators.

1. Organizer - Attendee: 2⁶⁹⁶
2. Organizer - Organizer: 3
3. Attendee - Attendee: 1
4. Attendee – Organising CB (members): 1
5. Organiser – Organising CB (members): 2
6. Organising CB (members) - Organising CB (members) : 2 (como CB-CB)

Collective body (CB)

1. Part of collective body (capacity in the collective body): 3
2. Relationship among 2 CB: CB members – CB members: 2

⁶⁹⁶ If two actors have a relationship that multiplies their weight due to different types of interactions caused by an event, we only keep the heaviest interaction. For example, if two people organise the event and also participate in it, we will keep the number corresponding to co-organising the event to weigh the relationship. But we will not add to this weight the number assigned by the fact of having met at the event. Otherwise, we would have very heavy relationships caused by events.

Annex 8 Closest female nodes to my mediators⁶⁹⁷

We present the list of the closest 100 female nodes (when available) of our focal nodes. Beside their names and distance (*dist*), we also report whether they are neighbors of the focal node or not (*neigh*). The grey color indicates that starting from the colored cell, the distance to the next cell might match with other names of women. We have not included the names corresponding to the distances below those indicated in the orange-colored cell in order not to create an excessively long list.

Position	LAB			MLM			VO		
	Name	dist	neigh	Name	dist	neigh	Name	dist	neigh
1	Izquierdo, María	0.0263	Yes	Carratalà, Maria	0.0286	Yes	Ocampo, Angélica	0.0036	Yes
2	Kahlo, Frida	0.0476	Yes	Pi i Ferrer, Maria	0.0312	Yes	Oliver, María Rosa	0.0069	Yes
3	Reyes, Aurora	0.05	Yes	Montoriol i Puig, Carme	0.0323	Yes	Sansinena de Elizalde, Elena	0.0455	Yes
4	Porset, Clara	0.05	Yes	Baldó i Massanet, Maria	0.0476	Yes	Bathori, Jane	0.0526	Yes
5	Benítez, Ana	0.0625	Yes	Miret, Anna	0.0556	Yes	Lenhardson, Antonieta S.	0.0556	Yes
6	Greenwood, Marion	0.0625	Yes	Sèculi i Bastida, Enriqueta	0.0556	Yes	Maeztu, María de	0.0625	Yes
7	Galeana, Benita	0.0625	Yes	Bertrana, Aurora	0.0556	Yes	Woolf, Virginia	0.0667	Yes
8	Villaseñor, Isabel	0.0714	Yes	Díaz, Carme	0.0588	Yes	Ocampo, Silvina	0.0667	Yes
9	Muñoz Hoffman, Esperanza	0.0714	Yes	Viladot, Isolina	0.0625	Yes	Schultz de Mantovani, Fryda	0.0769	Yes

⁶⁹⁷ This list is the result of the network analysis presented in Chapter 4.2 carried out by Alessio Cardillo based on the data included in the published [dataset](#).

10	Beloff, Angelina	0.0769	Yes	Serrano Pablo, Leonor	0.0625	Yes	Herczegh Konjovich, Ivy	0.0833	Yes
11	Copado Gómez, Luz	0.0909	Yes	Bayona de Cortés, Josefina	0.0667	Yes	Ficher, Ana	0.0909	Yes
12	Sapien Covarrubias , Fanny	0.0909	Yes	Llebot, Amanda	0.0667	Yes	Forner, Raquel	0.1	Yes
13	Muñoz, Sara	0.0909	Yes	Cortés i Lledó, Carme	0.0714	Yes	Castro, Esther	0.1	Yes
14	Martín del C., Concepción	0.0909	Yes	Ros, Mercè	0.0714	Yes	Borges, Norah	0.1111	Yes
15	Becerra de C., Ma. Concepción	0.0909	Yes	Graner de Bertrán, Montserrat	0.0714	Yes	Ocampo de García Victorica, Francisca	0.1111	Yes
16	Refugio Muñoz V., María	0.0909	Yes	Espina, Concha	0.0769	Yes	Del Carril, Delia	0.1111	Yes
17	Grace, Greenwood	0.0909	Yes	Mantua, Cecilia A.	0.0833	Yes	Kent Siano, Victoria	0.1111	Yes
18	Muñoz Montes, Antonia	0.0909	Yes	Maeztu, María de	0.0833	Yes	Garcés, Delia	0.1111	Yes
19	Becerra, Guadalupe	0.0909	Yes	Antem, María Luisa	0.0833	Yes	Knoll, Sofía	0.1111	Yes
20	Sánchez, Ana María	0.0909	Yes	León, María Teresa	0.0837	Yes	Mulhall Girondo, Laura	0.125	Yes
21	Robledo García, Concha	0.0909	Yes	Rufí i Bosch, Pilar	0.0909	Yes	Billod-Cottier, Yvette	0.125	Yes
22	Waterland, Annie O.	0.0909	Yes	Domènech i Escoté, Maria	0.0909	Yes	Mistral, Gabriela	0.125	Yes

23	Hernández, Constanacia	0.0909	Yes	Borges, Norah	0.0984	No	Ibels, Jacqueline	0.125	Yes
24	Orozco, Rosario	0.0909	Yes	Mallo, Maruja	0.0984	No	Spottorno, Rosa	0.1333	Yes
25	de Olivares, Idolina G.	0.0909	Yes	Arciniega, Rosa	0.1032	No	Sackville-West, Vita	0.1429	Yes
26	Ruíz, María Luisa	0.0909	Yes	Champourcín, Ernestina	0.1061	Yes	Jurado, Alicia	0.1429	Yes
27	Cueva, Magdalena	0.0909	Yes	Chacel, Rosa	0.1161	No	Beach, Sylvia	0.1429	Yes
28	Barajas, Salomé	0.0909	Yes	Conde, Carmen	0.125	No	Brancovan, Anne	0.1429	Yes
29	Sánchez V., María Luísa	0.0909	Yes	Cebrián, Dolores	0.125	Yes	Dato y Barrenechea, Isabel	0.1429	Yes
30	Maciel, Braulia	0.0909	Yes	Navarro Margothi de Luzuriaga, María Luisa	0.125	Yes	Molloy, Sylvia	0.1429	Yes
31	Sansores, Dalila	0.0909	Yes	Colette, Nicole	0.125	Yes	Talenton, Onelia	0.1667	Yes
32	Aldrete, Carmen	0.0909	Yes	Méndez, Concha	0.1297	Yes	Sánchez Reulet, Aníbal	0.1667	Yes
33	Charles, Edelmira	0.0909	Yes	Gutiérrez Abascal, Pilar Zubiaurre Aguirrezábal de	0.1429	Yes	Reyles, Alma	0.1667	Yes
34	Arguizana, Luz	0.0909	Yes	Turián, Elena	0.1429	Yes	Castro, Fides	0.1667	Yes
35	González Cordero, Guadalupe	0.0909	Yes	Hidalga, Consuelo E. de la	0.1429	Yes	Iruretagoyena, Julia	0.188	Yes
36	Romero, Cástula	0.0909	Yes	Palencia, Carmen B. de	0.1429	Yes	Crane, Louise	0.188	No

37	Rosales, Laura	0.0909	Yes	Zamora, Josefa Pons de	0.1429	Yes	Atucha Llavallol, Josefina Secundina	0.2	Yes
38	Toor, Frances	0.1	Yes	Ruiz Espuig, María	0.1429	Yes	Almonacid, Esmeralda	0.2	Yes
39	Modotti, Tina	0.125	Yes	Fromkes, Eva	0.1429	Yes	Ferro, Hellen	0.2	Yes
40	Michel, Concha	0.125	Yes	Beckler, Helene	0.1429	Yes	Schiaparelli, Gogo	0.2	Yes
41	Lya Kostakowski, Cardoza y Aragón	0.1429	Yes	Escalera, Emma	0.1429	Yes	Bengolea de Sánchez Elía, Magdalena	0.2	Yes
42	Poniatowska, Elena	0.1429	Yes	Aranaz, Rosa	0.1429	Yes	Huici de Errázuriz, Eugenia	0.2	Yes
43	Brenner, Hannah	0.1726	Yes	Rojas, Engracia	0.1429	Yes	Chanel,	0.2	Yes
44	Heyden, Doris	0.1875	Yes	Elliott, Catherine	0.1429	Yes	Atucha Llavallol, María Adela de las Mercedes Apolonia	0.2	Yes
45	Mondragón, Carmen	0.2	Yes	Zena de Delgado, Ana María	0.1429	Yes	Cifone, Dora	0.2	Yes
46	Muñoz, Guadalupe	0.2	Yes	Fernández Bordás, María B. de	0.1429	Yes	Durán, Victorina	0.2	Yes
47	Félix, María	0.2	Yes	Rodero, María del Carmen	0.1429	Yes	Bengolea, María Raquel	0.2	Yes
48	Block, Malú	0.2	Yes	Galvao, Nieves Pi de	0.1429	Yes	Greene, Vivien	0.2313	Yes
49	del Río, Dolores	0.2	Yes	Grimm, Herta	0.1429	Yes	Huxley, Laura	0.2313	Yes

50	Algarra, María Luisa	0.2	Yes	Jiménez, Zenobia Camprubí y Aymar de	0.1429	Yes	Nys, Maria	0.2313	Yes
51	Rojo, Alba	0.2	Yes	Rodríguez Collete, Julieta	0.1429	Yes	León, María Teresa	0.2333	Yes
52	Marín, Guadalupe	0.2	Yes	Pavía, Teresa	0.1429	Yes	von Keyserling, Goedela	0.2345	Yes
53	García, Elvira	0.2	Yes	Sánchez Román, Encarnación	0.1429	Yes	de Bosset Stravinsky, Vera	0.24	Yes
54	Reyes, Emma	0.2	Yes	Haro, Eulalia Gallego de	0.1429	Yes	Sansinena, María Ester	0.2455	Yes
55	Brum Elizalde, Blanca Luz	0.2	Yes	Clar Margarit, M ^a Francisca	0.1429	Yes	Masferrer, Carmen	0.25	Yes
56	de la Paz Canales, María	0.2	Yes	Riaño Herrera, Pilar	0.1429	Yes	O'Keefee, Georgia	0.25	Yes
57	Tamayo, Olga	0.2	Yes	Baldasano y López, María Cruz	0.1429	Yes	Baeza, María Martos Arregui de	0.25	Yes
58	Rivas Mercado, Antonieta	0.2	Yes	Elorrieta, Rosario Lacy de Palacio de	0.1429	Yes	Stamati, Carola	0.25	Yes
59	Amor Schmidtlein , Carolina	0.2	Yes	Caballero, Emilia	0.1429	Yes	Walsh, Maria Elena	0.25	Yes
60	del Pozo, Carmen	0.2	Yes	Multedo Villarreal, Angustias	0.1429	Yes	de Gallacher, Yole J.	0.25	Yes
61	Mendoza López, Margarita	0.2	Yes	Zubiaurre, Isolina Y. Gallego de	0.1429	Yes	Meyer, Doris	0.25	Yes

62	Amador Sandoval, Graciela	0.2333	No	Ouxley du Bose, Clara	0.1429	Yes	Lombroso, Gina	0.25	Yes
63	Clews, Elsie	0.2476	Yes	Pérez, Quintina Rodríguez de	0.1429	Yes	Morrell, Ottoline	0.25	Yes
64	Osorio, Trinidad	0.25	Yes	Smith, Marjorie	0.1429	Yes	Crocco, Rosalina	0.25	Yes
65	Yampolsky, Mariana	0.25	Yes	Hurdisán, María	0.1429	Yes	Ortega Spottorno, Soledad	0.25	Yes
66	Martin, Tina	0.25	Yes	Falcón, Irene	0.1429	Yes	Hugo, Valentine	0.25	Yes
67	Costa, Olga	0.2714	No	Estrada, María	0.1429	Yes	Santamarina, Mercedes	0.25	Yes
68	Kahlo, Bernadetta	0.2976	No	Troy,	0.1429	Yes	Saslavsky, Dalila	0.25	Yes
69	Valladares, Margarita	0.3056	No	Marañón, Dolores Moya de	0.1429	Yes	Kurzmann-Leucher, Rita	0.25	Yes
70	Kollontai, Alexandra	0.325	No	Sangróniz, Amparo S. de	0.1429	Yes	Pini de Chrestia, María	0.25	Yes
71	Park Redfield, Margaret	0.3333	Yes	Lanzarote, Mercedes E. de	0.1429	Yes	Ritter, Lucy	0.25	Yes
72	Fernández Villaseñor, Olenka	0.3718	No	Riaño, Aurora Lanzarote de	0.1429	Yes	Rubens, Nelly	0.25	Yes
73	Asúnsolo, María	0.5	Yes	Suárez Rivas, Pilar	0.1429	Yes	Loos, Anita	0.25	Yes
74	Robinson, Ione	0.5	Yes	Baldi, Estrella Fontanals de	0.1429	Yes	Arata de Erize, Jeannette	0.25	Yes

75	Lamba, Jacqueline	0.5	Yes	Lafora, Ana	0.1429	Yes	Lynch, Marta	0.25	Yes
76	Vera, María Luisa	0.5	Yes	Valderrama Alday, Pilar	0.1429	Yes	Thompson, Barbara	0.25	No
77	Carrington, Leonora	0.5	Yes	Díaz de Mendoza Aguado, Carmen	0.1429	Yes	Maritain, Raissa	0.2526	No
78	Sokolow, Anna	0.5	Yes	Sabater, Celia Muñoz de	0.1429	Yes	Goldschmidt Malraux, Clara	0.2556	No
79	Castro, Rosa	0.5	Yes	Muñoz, Inés	0.1429	Yes	Multedo Villarreal, Angustias	0.2625	Yes
80	Garro, Elena	0.5111	No	Otaola, Ascensión	0.1429	Yes	Calvo Roderro, Isabel	0.2625	Yes
81	de Anda, Sara	0.5333	No	Von Eggelind,	0.1429	Yes	Campo Alange, Marquesa de	0.2625	Yes
82	Hernández, Julia	0.5625	No	Usera, Asunción	0.1429	Yes	Sotil, Clotilde	0.2625	Yes
83	Gutiérrez, Margarita	0.5625	No	Martín Granizo, Josefina S. de	0.1429	Yes	Gil, Rosario Castiello de	0.2625	Yes
84	Uranga, Consuelo	0.625	No	Pedroso, Linda	0.1429	Yes	Ezquerro, Emilia	0.2625	Yes
85	Dodge Luhan, Mabel	0.7	No	Schneider, María Teresa	0.1429	Yes	Morales, Isabel Bañón de	0.2625	Yes
86	Ocampo, Victoria	0.7	No	Sala Sampil, Luz	0.1429	Yes	Sala Sampil, Luz	0.2625	Yes
87	Atasheva, Pera	0.7	No	Fernández Bordás, Yolanda	0.1429	Yes	Burmester, María Luisa M. de	0.2625	Yes
88	Williams, Anne	1	Yes	Morán, María Pinazo de	0.1429	Yes	Huici, Matilde	0.2625	Yes

89	Barry, Iris	1	Yes	Campoamor, Clara	0.1429	Yes	Jiménez, Zenobia Camprubí y Aymar de	0.2625	Yes
90	Rogo, Elsa	1	Yes	Cantero, Araceli R. de	0.1429	Yes	Ibáñez Gallardo, Carmen	0.2625	Yes
91	Palma, Andrea	1	Yes	Pinazo, Magdalena M. de	0.1429	Yes	Gorostidi, Luisa Salín Cigarraga de	0.2625	Yes
92				Olivé, Alcira	0.1429	Yes	Porrero Rodríguez, Pilar	0.2625	Yes
93				Meabe, Julia Y. de	0.1429	Yes	Orueta, Marta	0.2625	Yes
94				Cebrián, Amparo	0.1429	Yes	Allende, Pilar Ysasi de	0.2625	Yes
95				Casas, Rosa Moraleda de	0.1429	Yes	García Sardinero, María	0.2625	Yes
96				La Roda Morris, Vicenta	0.1429	Yes	Saunt, W.	0.2625	Yes
97				Baroja, Carmen	0.1429	Yes	Alonso, Luisa Castellanos de	0.2625	Yes
98				Marañón, Carmen	0.1429	Yes	Ouxley du Bose, Clara	0.2625	Yes
99				Escribá de Romaní, Rosario	0.1429	Yes	Martín, Enriqueta	0.2625	Yes
100				Ortega, Bernardina	0.1429	Yes	Whitney, Anne Louise	0.2625	Yes