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Cinema and LGBT community: evolution of the representation of sexual minorities and reception of the specialised press

El colectivo LGTB en el cine: evolución de la representación de las minorías sexuales y recepción de la crítica especializada

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Abstract

Cinema plays a crucial role in shaping attitudes and promoting values. In the case of minorities, inclusive representation contributes to giving visibility and eradicating negative stereotypes, thereby leading to greater awareness and understanding of social diversity. This paper aims to describe the historical evolution of cinema about sexual minorities through its relationship with the specialised press. To this end, we analysed all the data sheets on the Filmaffinity database ($n = 3,497$), as well as all the critiques that the audiovisual products on sexual diversity received ($n = 4,848$). The results reveal an indisputable prominence of homosexual minorities compared to transsexual and transgender minorities, in films that generally belong to the drama genre and gain presence decade after decade. The film is the preferred formula to represent the LGBTI collective, despite the growth of the series in the last few years. Most of the critiques they receive are issued by men (almost 80%), which denotes the lack of female perspectives in this professional sector. Women are more benevolent towards titles about the LGBT reality and give better scores than their male colleagues. Regarding the media, the American magazine *Rolling Stone* is the one that gives the best ratings; on the other hand, in the Spanish ecosystem, *Fotogramas* and *Cinemanía* are the ones that show greater sensitivity towards this cinema, a vision not so frequently shared in the general press.

Keywords

Sexual minorities; sexual diversity; LGBT cinema; cultural journalism; criticism; inclusion; specialisation

Resumen

El cine desempeña un papel crucial en la configuración de actitudes y la promoción de valores, de manera que una representación inclusiva de las minorías contribuye a visibilizar y erradicar estereotipos negativos y deriva en una mayor conciencia y comprensión de la diversidad social. Este artículo tiene como principal objetivo describir la evolución histórica del cine sobre minorías sexuales a través de su relación con la prensa especializada. Para ello se han analizado todas las fichas de Filmaffinity ($n = 3.497$), así como todas las críticas que han cosechado estos títulos sobre diversidad sexual ($n = 4.848$). Los resultados muestran un indiscutible protagonismo de las minorías homosexuales frente a las transexuales y transgénero, en cintas que corresponden, sobre todo, al género dramático y que ganan presencia década tras década. La película se presenta como la fórmula preferente para representar al colectivo LGTB, pese al crecimiento de las series en los últimos años. La mayor parte de las críticas que cosechan son emitidas por hombres (casi el 80%), lo que denota la falta de miradas femeninas en este sector profesional. Las mujeres se muestran más benévolas con los títulos sobre la realidad LGTB y arrojan mejores puntuaciones que sus compañeros varones. La revista estadounidense *Rolling Stone* es la que otorga mejores valoraciones, mientras en España son *Fotogramas* y *Cinemanía* las que muestran una mayor sensibilidad hacia este cine, distanciadas de la prensa generalista.

Palabras clave

Minorías sexuales; diversidad sexual; cine LGTB; periodismo cultural; crítica; inclusión; especialización

1. Introduction

The representation of sexual diversity in cinema has been present since its inception, although it took a long time for it to be shown explicitly, and even longer for it to be devoid of clichés, and stories that had little or nothing to do with the reality of the LGBT community.

If academic research on the representation of gender in film production is prolific, that concerning homosexual identity is an important chapter. Studies on the media image of homosexuality have historically approached the issue from two perspectives (see Alfeo, 1999): the first is that of those who analyse the evolution of representation, characters, and meanings; the second is that of those who focus on the effects of representation on the audience, considering cinema as a powerful tool for learning to understand, respect and value differences.

Today we can even speak of a thematic genre, LGTBQ+ cinema, composed of many films that fight homophobia as well as vindicate the rights of all sexual minorities (Huerta, 2016, 2020; Huerta, Alonso-Sanz and Ramón, 2019; Rivaya, 2022). From the point of view of the media and queer studies, nowadays academic literature studies the impact of contemporary cinema on audiences around the world (Yosef, 2022; Andreevskikh, 2023; Maity, 2023), highlighting the progress of this genre in countries such as India, where until 2018 homosexuality was not decriminalised (Martinez, 2018) and, two years later witnessed the premiere of the first gay Bollywood film. In 67 countries, homosexuality continues to be persecuted, with penalties ranging from a few months in prison to the death penalty.

1.1. Cinema and sexual diversity

"Effeminate mannerisms", "inversion", "sexual aberration", "deviations", "fags" are some of the terms with which Spanish censors referred to homosexuality and homosexual characters since the early post-war years, in films that were rejected for all audiences in case sexual deviation was not presented as tragic (Gil, 2009; Melero, 2015; Gil-Gascón, 2021). It was, therefore, strictly forbidden to show sexual diversity, as well as prostitution, incest, any attack on the traditional family, or even suicide, unless it was shown with a sobering purpose for the viewer.

In Spanish cinema, control was exercised subjectively, according to the criteria of the censor, within the framework of such diffuse concepts as respect for "good customs" (González de Garay and Alfeo, 2017; Gil-Gascón, 2021). There was, therefore, no detailed and explicit code in the style of the American Hays code, which would allow screenwriters and producers to anticipate the reviews of censors (Zubiaur, 2010). The Film Censorship Rules were made public in Spain in February 1963, following repeated complaints from filmmakers about the arbitrariness and obscurity of the criteria that had been used by the members of the successive Classification and Censorship Boards since the beginning of the Franco regime.

Until the arrival of democracy, there were only two ways to address the LGBT issue in cinema: either by resorting to the "hidden mode", i.e. not making it explicit, or by resorting to traditional stereotypes. In the latter case, the gay man used to be a laughable character, provoking comic situations, while the lesbian woman adopted a perverse role, that of a vampire (Pelayo-García, 2010; Pérez-Gañán, 2014; González de Garay and Alfeo, 2017; Parra, 2021). However, Lomas (2018, 2020) warns that in a large corpus of films, expressive traces of the homosexual subculture of that time can be found, from creators (producers, screenwriters, directors, etc.), mainly homosexuals, who played with the prevailing heteronormativity to cinematographically develop their own creative interests.

Alfeo et al. (2011) studied the representation of the adolescent homosexual character in Spanish cinematography since the last years of the Dictatorship and detected an evolution that goes from the "hidden mode" due to Franco's retention, the thematic and erotic hatching of the Transition and, years later, the conditioning factor of "political correctness".

In the United States, the Motion Picture Production Code, known as the Hays Code, determined for more than three decades what could be seen on screens and what could not, highlighting the prohibition of all illicit sexual behaviour and any manifestation beyond strict heterosexuality. Leff and Simmons (2001) provide a valuable and thoroughly researched history of Hollywood censorship through the analysis of 12 films.

Cinema "took a long time to come out of the closet", which happened in the West in the sixties; then we witnessed the birth of a successful thematic genre with a spectacular transversal growth, with thousands of films and in all kinds of genres: tragedy, comedy, musical, western, thrillers, etc. (Rivaya, 2022: 408-409). The fact that great filmmakers are or have been homosexuals influenced the end of a centuries-old history of repression, where love or same-sex relationships were condemned. In the early nineties, the *New Queer Cinema* appeared, a movement born within independent cinema as an objection against films that sought to give a sweetened image of homosexuality (Aaron, 2004, 2022; Rich, 2004, 2013;

Morris, 2019). This cinema has continued to evolve over the past 30 years and, according to Richards (2016), experienced a renaissance in the 2010s.

Meanwhile, the big Hollywood production companies advertise the inclusion of LGBT characters, through *marketing* strategies -such as *pinkwashing*-, and in the face of the complaints that the GLAAD association has been making since 2013 in its annual reports, although these feature films are framed within the heteronormative logic (Sánchez-Soriano and García Jiménez, 2020).

1.2. Lesbian cinema

In 1999 Patricia White wrote *Uninvited: Classical Hollywood Cinema and Lesbian Representability*, a dissection of classic cinema chronicling the 30 years of the ban on the depiction of lesbian characters, stories, and images on screen along with all forms of sexual perversion. Despite social progress in terms of visibility, representations of lesbianism or transsexuality came later, even more so in the field of commercial cinema (Alfeo et al., 2011). The success of the French film *La vie d'Adèle* (Abdellatif Kechiche, 2013), winner of the Palme d'Or for Best Film, brought critics, audiences, industry and jury in agreement on a lesbian film about sexual awakening, which holds much more, and to which proceeded in the past decade others of the success of *Portraits of a Woman on Fire* (Céline Sciamma, 2019), *Ammonite* (Francis Lee, 2019), *Carol* (Todd Haynes, 2015), *Disobedience* (Sebastián Lelio, 2017), *The (mis)Education of Cameron Post* (Desiree Akhavan, 2018), *The Handmaiden* (Park Chan-wook, 2016) or *The Favourite* (Yorgos Lanthimos, 2018).

In Spain, with the fall of the Franco regime, cinema began to portray the female homosexual character free from certain stigmas: "The 'vamps' and 'butches' give way to women of different ages and ethnicities. To female engineers, teachers, students, writers, pianists. Women who are involved both sexually and emotionally with other women and do not hide it. Neither inside nor outside the celluloid (González, 2011: 222). In her thesis, Pelayo-García (2010) addresses the most frequent stereotypes and reiterations in the filmic representation of lesbianism in Spanish cinema, to conclude that the general profile corresponds to a single woman, between 19 and 30 years old, far from the cliché of the butch lesbian, with a medium-high cultural level and professionally associated with the world of art or show business.

The filmic representation of lesbianism, as well as its evolution, is addressed in the current academic literature either through the analysis of specific works, directors or periods (Bradbury-Rance, 2023; García-Catalán and Morales-Roig, 2023; Rodrigues-Poletti, 2023; etc) as well as from the approach of different cinematic contexts, as in the case of the Bollywood film *mecca* (Arya, 2023; Parveen and Mishra, 2023; Singh, 2023; Yadav and Jha, 2023), where its first lesbian film was not released until 2019.

1.3. Cinema and transsexuality

Some titles such as *The Danish Girl* (Tom Hooper, 2015), *Just Charlie* (Rebekah Fortune, 2017), *A Fantastic Woman* (Sebastián Lelio, 2017), *Girl* (Lukas Dhont, 2018) or, earlier, such as *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* (Stephan Elliot, 1994), *My Life in Pink* (Alain Berliner, 1997), *All About My Mother* (Pedro Almodóvar, 1999), *C.R.A.Z.Y.* (Jean-Marc Vallée, 2005) and *Breakfast on Pluto* (Neil Jordan, 2005) have won awards and public and/or critical acclaim, and are examples of films that address the sexual identity and discrimination faced by transgender people. Beyond fiction, we should highlight documentaries such as *Vestidas de azul* where Antonio Giménez-Rico (1983) made a collective portrait of six *trans* women through their life stories, and an analysis of how society and the media reflected issues such as prostitution, sexual reassignment, and social exclusion the eighties in Spain (Vegas, 2019).

The representation of transsexuality in Spanish cinema is not new, as reflected in academic research, with studies of titles released during the Franco dictatorship or in the early years of democracy, (Quílez, 2013; Melero, 2017; Asenjo-Conde, 2019). Such is the case of *Mi querida señorita* (Jaime de Armiñán, 1972), a transgressive film at the time, ahead of its time, where the story of a change of gender did not find its most enabling environment and which became, however, an unlikely success and a classic of Spanish cinema. Other studies have focused on more recent stages, and on specific directors, such as Pedro Almodóvar in whose work transgender women are abundantly represented (Vázquez-Lima, 2015; Ho-Joon, 2017; Wright, 2020).

We do not intend to give a description of how the cinema reflects, in the opinion of the academics, the *trans*, gay or lesbian community, but it is worth noting the disparate reception of the titles by one or the other. We illustrate this with the case of the aforementioned *Girl* (2018), which won the Audience Award at the 2018 San Sebastian Film Festival, and was honoured at Cannes, the Césars and the European Film Awards, but reviled by *trans* and *queer* writers. Thus, it has been written about it that "it is a bloody film, obsessed with *transbodies*", that "it wants to humiliate Lara -the protagonist- instead of extolling her struggle" (Matew Rodriguez in *Into* magazine), or that "it is the most dangerous film in years about

a *transcharacter*" (Oliver Whitney, in *The Hollywood Reporter*). Perhaps, thus evidencing the need to include more transgender people in the film industry (in Areni and Cirilo, 2019).

2. The social role of the film industry and the role of critics: between entertainment and education

The cultural journalist exercises a role of intermediary or mediator by serving as a "filter" to the huge amount of works that are launched on the market (Bourdieu, 1984; Janssen and Verboord, 2015); this is what is known as "cultural prescription", which consists of hierarchizing, interpreting, and contributing to the understanding of the ultimate meaning of the works analysed. Among these -and from the audiovisual field- are films dedicated to showing sexual diversity, and which could be considered as part of a "film subgenre", that of *queer* cinema. The latter, although born within the independent circuit in the United States in the early nineties, has evolved during the 21st century to reach more universal audiences thanks to the appearance of titles such as *Brokeback Mountain*, *Milk*, *The Kids Are All Right* or *Boys Don't Cry*, demonstrating a profound change in the heteronormative discourse of the industry.

If the media have a responsibility, as interpreters of reality, to create opinion, transform values and break down prejudices, their task is especially sensitive when they report on certain groups that have traditionally suffered discrimination; so, when it comes to the seventh art, professionals who write critical reviews also have an inherent educational duty. Academic literature has barely dealt with the effects that reviews have on the social perception of minorities but, according to Robbins (2016), favourable reviews condition the public's interest in films whose primary purpose is, in recent times, to involve and sensitise society to the problems and realities of disadvantaged groups.

According to Nieto (2017), ten fundamental themes are identified in the Spanish film press, among them the relationship between cinema and education, addressing the potential of the medium as a didactic instrument, capable of integrating all diversities (Huerta, 2016, 2020; Huerta, Alonso-Sanz and Ramón, 2019, Marcos Ramos, 2023). The power of cinematic representation of minorities thus goes hand in hand with the educational responsibility of both filmmakers and film writers.

But critics are not the only ones who have the power in the Internet age. According to García-Fanlo (2016: 144), the autonomy and empowerment of the consumer by virtue of the possibilities of the Web is also due to a new distribution of information and communication, whose monopoly is no longer reserved either for the producers of the series or for the specialised critics. The web allows the organization of consumers, to the point of generating criticism and opinion movements that reduce the power of the evaluative review of critics (in Bermúdez and Dámaso-Martínez, 2021: 8). García-Fanlo (2016) sees a real empowerment of the viewer, who now possesses the tools to influence series producers and television networks. Thus, the criticisms expressed by both sides on a voting and recommendation page for films and series -such as Filmaffinity- undoubtedly have an impact on the success of these audiovisual products that move away from heteronormativity, and that consider the sensory and affective involvement of the viewer (Vázquez-Rodríguez, 2022).

3. Objectives

Given the significant role of film in fostering social inclusion and acceptance, this paper has two main objectives,

O1: To broadly describe the historical evolution of cinema related to sexual diversity (or LGBT cinema), paying attention to aspects such as the volume of productions, the types of formats and the genres and subgenres with which it is usually associated, as well as the reception of viewers according to their evaluations.

O2: To describe the historical evolution of the treatment given by specialised critics -as a validator of cultural creations and a guide to public perception- to LGBT cinema, observing how they affect both the characteristics of the productions (format, decade, country, genres, and subgenres) and those of the professionals themselves (genre, nationality or medium).

4. Methodology

The methodology of this work is based on a double content analysis, in conjunction with the objectives set: in the first one, the technical files of the films, series, documentaries or short films that address issues related to sexual minorities are examined, while in the second one, the focus is on the reviews received by each of these productions. The reason for choosing Filmaffinity, Spain's leading database of film content, as a source for analysis is based on its ability to bring together in a single resource the detailed technical specifications of each title - from direction, screenplay, photography and music to length, country of production and main genres and subgenres -, the public's assessment - through a voting system fed by almost one million users - and the critics' reception - through extracts from the main Spanish and English-language media.

4.1. Analysis of data files

First, we downloaded from Filmaffinity the files of all the productions that included as tags -also considered topics or subgenres in the portal language- the words "Homosexuality" and "Transsexuality", the only ones related to sexual minorities [1]. Data extraction was carried out using *data scraping* techniques on April 6th, 2022. A total of 3,497 files were obtained.

Once the data was downloaded, it was organized and operationalized as variables following the original classification used by the Filmaffinity portal:

- Format of the work: This is a nominal variable that distinguishes between different formats such as "Movie", "TV Series", "TV Miniseries", "TV", "Short Film" or "Music Video".
- Title: Also, a nominal variable that represents the specific name of each work.
- Decade: Ordinal variable with 13 categories based on the decade the work was produced, from "1901-1910" to "2021-2030".
- Country: Nominal variable indicating the main producing country, with a value assigned to each of the 96 nations present in the data collection, from "Albania" to "Yugoslavia".
- Genre(s): Multiple nominal variables that dichotomously measure the inclusion of the work in genres such as "Action", "Animation", "Adventure", "War", "Science Fiction", "Film Noir", "Comedy", "Documentary", "Drama", "Fantasy", "Children's", "Intrigue", "Musical", "Romance", "TV Series", "Horror", "Thriller" and/or "Western".
- Subgenre(s): Multiple nominal variables that dichotomously measure the inclusion of the work in 323 subgenres or topics, from "9/11" to "Cold/Polar Zones".
- Average user rating: Scale variable measured from 0 to 10, with one decimal place, representing the average rating of registered users.
- Number of user votes: Scale variable indicating the total scores received by platform users.
- Number of reviews received: Scale variable representing the total number of professional reviews collected for the work.
- Number of positive, neutral, and negative reviews received: Scale variables indicating the total number of favourable (green), neutral (yellow) and unfavourable (red) professional reviews collected for the work.
- Majority of reviews: Nominal variable that measures whether the criticisms are mostly in favour ("Positive"), against ("Negative") or if there is a balance between both ("Tie").
- Aggregate score: Scale variable measured from 0 to 1, calculated by averaging positive (value 1), neutral (value 0.5) and negative (value 0) reviews.

4.2. Analysis by specialised critics

In a second phase, all the professional reviews -that is, those written by journalists or film experts belonging to specialised media, thus excluding any text written by users- collected in Filmaffinity for each of the titles included in the database were downloaded and tabulated. All of them (n = 4,848) were obtained from the same portal and using the same method four days later, on April 12th, 2022. Subsequently, they were operationalised as follows, again using the information provided by the website:

- Author's name: Nominal variable indicating the name under which the specialised professional signs. A total of 891 different values were used, representing each author present in the collection, from "A. A. Dowd" to "Zhuo-Ning Su".
- Author's gender: Nominal variable that was measured as "Male" or "Female", according to the label provided by the portal for each professional; this binary classification, although not ideal, has been maintained for operational reasons.
- Media: Nominal variable measured with 173 values, one for each media outlet present during data collection, from ABC News to *Vulture*.
- Middle country: Nominal variable measured with 16 different values, one for each country present during data collection, from "Argentina" to "Uruguay".
- Sense of criticism: Nominal variable measured with three positions: "Positive" when the review was highlighted with green, "Neutral" with yellow, and "Negative" with red.

5. Results

5.1. Historical evolution of films about sexual minorities

Table 1 shows the undisputed prominence that cinema has traditionally given to homosexual minorities compared to transgender and transsexual minorities. Thus, of the 3,497 units that make up the sample, 89.3% are titles about homosexuality compared to only 13.0% of films about the trans reality. As can be seen, most of the titles analysed are concentrated in the past decade (almost half of them, 49%, produced between 2011 and 2020), and the immediately preceding one (24.3% between 2001 and 2010). The film format is the most common, accounting for 72.5% of the units in the sample, and the United States is the producer of the largest number of tapes analysed, with 36.4% of the total, a figure that is almost three times higher than the second country on the list (Spain, with 12.6%). The dramatic genre predominates, present in 42.7% of the files, followed at a great distance by romance (16.5%) as well as comedy (14.7%) and documentary (10.3%). Only 396 titles have at least one professional review on FilmAffinity, which constitutes 11.3% of the sample. Half of them do, however, have ratings from portal users. As *Good as it Gets* (1997), by James L. Brooks, has more than 133,000 votes; followed by five other titles that surpass the 70,000 barriers: *Philadelphia*, *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, *Brokeback Mountain*, *Mulholland Drive* and *Billy Elliot*.

Table 1: Description of the sample (data files)

| | | | | | |
|----------------|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| n | 3,497 | | | | |
| Subject | Homosexuality = 89.3% | | Transsexuality / transgender = 13.0% | | |
| Decade | 1901-1910 = 0,0% | 1911-1920 = 0,1% | 1921-1930 = 0,1% | 1931-1940 = 0,1% | |
| | 1941-1950 = 0,1% | 1951-1960 = 0,3% | 1961-1970 = 1,8% | 1971-1980 = 3,6% | |
| | 1981-1990 = 4,4% | 1991-2000 = 10,9% | 2001-2010 = 24,3% | 2011-2020 = 49,0% | 2021- = 5,4% |
| Format | Film = 72.5% | | TV series = 6.3% | | TV miniseries = 1.9% |
| | TV = 3.5% | Short Film= 14.8% | | Music video = 1.1% | |
| Country | United States = 36.4% | Spain = 12.6% | France = 8.6% | United Kingdom = 7.9% | |
| | Argentina = 5.3% | Mexico = 5.1% | Germany = 4.7% | Others = 19.3% | |
| Genre | Drama = 42.7% | Romance = 16.5% | Comedy = 14.7% | Documentary = 10.3% | |
| | TV series = 5.0% | Thriller = 2.7% | Animation = 1.6% | Other = 6.4% | |
| Reviews | Yes = 11.3% | No = 88.7% | Min. = 1 | Max. = 396 | Average = 1.48 |
| Votes | Yes = 51.5% | No = 48.5% | Min. = 21 | Max. = 132.631 | Average = 1,558.21 |

Source: own elaboration.

Table 2 shows the evolution of the volume of titles representing sexual minorities as well as the most used formats. Up to almost the 1960s, the number of titles listed in FilmAffinity is derisory; while between 1961 and 1970, a total of 63 films portraying sexual diversity from different approaches are recorded.

Table 2. Distribution of titles by format and decade.

| Decade | n | Film | TV Series | TV Miniseries | TV | Short Film | Music video |
|-----------|-----|--------|-----------|---------------|------|------------|-------------|
| 1911-1920 | 2 | 100,0% | 0,0% | 0,0% | 0,0% | 0,0% | 0,0% |
| 1921-1930 | 4 | 100,0% | 0,0% | 0,0% | 0,0% | 0,0% | 0,0% |
| 1931-1940 | 3 | 100,0% | 0,0% | 0,0% | 0,0% | 0,0% | 0,0% |
| 1941-1950 | 3 | 33,3% | 0,0% | 0,0% | 0,0% | 66,7% | 0,0% |
| 1951-1960 | 9 | 88,9% | 0,0% | 0,0% | 0,0% | 11,1% | 0,0% |
| 1961-1970 | 63 | 92,1% | 0,0% | 0,0% | 0,0% | 7,9% | 0,0% |
| 1971-1980 | 126 | 84,9% | 0,0% | 0,0% | 5,6% | 8,7% | 0,8% |

| Decade | n | Film | TV Series | TV Miniseries | TV | Short Film | Music video |
|-----------|-------|-------|-----------|---------------|------|------------|-------------|
| 1981-1990 | 153 | 80,4% | 2,6% | 1,3% | 5,9% | 6,5% | 3,3% |
| 1991-2000 | 381 | 80,8% | 4,5% | 0,5% | 5,5% | 7,9% | 0,8% |
| 2001-2010 | 850 | 74,9% | 4,8% | 1,1% | 4,7% | 13,2% | 1,3% |
| 2011-2020 | 1.714 | 69,0% | 6,7% | 2,3% | 2,3% | 18,8% | 0,8% |
| 2021-2030 | 189 | 53,4% | 22,8% | 7,4% | 2,6% | 12,2% | 1,6% |

Source: own elaboration.

Titles focused on sexual minorities, mainly homosexuals, are significantly increasing decade after decade. Thus, between 1971 and 1980, twice as many audiovisual works were collected as in the previous decade (126 versus 63), and except for an insignificant increase during the eighties -which barely exceeded thirty- this geometric progression continues to the present day. The film, generally above 80% of the total number of titles until 2000, is presented as the preferred formula to represent the LGBT collective, but it is losing weight thereafter in favour of other formats, mainly the short film and, to a lesser extent, the series, which concentrated 18.8% and 6.7% of the titles, respectively, between 2011 and 2020. Judging by the data of the last two years, the series will continue to bet on diversity and increase its representation in this decade.

The films received 71.1% favourable reviews, 8.3% negative and 20.5% neutral (Table 3). If the overall number of ratings for each tape is considered, the figure rises to 89.0%. This data contrasts, however, with the score of users, who give the films a score that is just above passing (5.74 on average), and which is below that obtained by television miniseries (6.82), the highest rated product that portrays sexual minorities. *Carol* (2015), by Todd Haynes, is the film with the highest number of positive reviews (a total of 49); and it is accompanied by others with very good reception by specialised critics such as the Italian *Call me by your name* (2017), by Luca Guadagnino (41 positive out of 43); the French *La vie d'Adèle* (2013), by Abdellatif Kechiche (29 positive out of 30); or the Spanish *Dolor y gloria* (2019), by Pedro Almodóvar (48 positive out of 54, and no negative reviews). The aforementioned *As Good as It Gets* is the film that received the highest number of ratings from viewers, who gave it a score of 7.6; and, although less popular, William Wyler's *The Slender* (1961) received a score of 7.8, at a time when the mere mention of homosexuality or lesbianism was still grounds for banning the release of a film in the United States due to the Hays Code still in force.

Table 3. Reception of titles by format (total reviews, majority of reviews and user ratings).

| Format | n | Total criticism | | | Majority of critiques | | | Users | |
|----------------------|-----|-----------------|---------|---------|-----------------------|------|----------|-------|-------------|
| | | For | Neutral | Against | Positive | Draw | Negative | n | Media |
| Film | 345 | 71,1% | 20,5% | 8,3% | 89,0% | 3,5% | 7,5% | 1.413 | 5,74 |
| TV Series | 31 | 74,6% | 18,8% | 6,6% | 90,3% | 3,2% | 6,5% | 100 | 6,02 |
| TV miniseries | 13 | 83,8% | 13,3% | 2,9% | 100,0% | 0,0% | 0,0% | 25 | 6,82 |
| TV | 7 | 81,4% | 10,2% | 8,5% | 100,0% | 0,0% | 0,0% | 67 | 6,17 |
| Short Film | 0 | | | | | | | 171 | 5,13 |
| Total | 396 | 71,7% | 20,2% | 8,1% | 89,6% | 3,3% | 7,1% | 1.802 | 5,73 |

Source: own elaboration.

Specialised critics are slightly more generous when it comes to judging series on sexual minorities (74.6% of favourable reviews compared to 71.1% in the case of films), although the sample is much smaller: only 31 can be compared against the 345 films available in the catalogue. Some notable titles according to their number of positive reviews seem to come from streaming companies: *Orange Is the New Black* (2013) and *Feel Good* (2020), both from Netflix; *Transparent* (2014), from Amazon Prime Video; and, the audience favourite, *Pose* (2018) which, produced outside the major platform circuit, achieves a score of 7.6. With similar user ratings (7.7) along with the miniseries *It's a Sin* (2021), both titles chronicle the 1980s, when the rise of AIDS wreaked havoc among the gay population.

Miniseries and television films are positioned as the best rated products for reflecting sexual diversity: 100% of both formats have mainly positive reviews and reach a user rating of 6.82 and 6.17, respectively. This data must be interpreted with caution when considering both their low number and their scarce representation in comparison with films, only 13 miniseries and 7 television films.

In any case, the type of representation does not seem to be equal according to the data shown in Table 4: the productions that show the trans collective seem to be somewhat better received by the public -more than half a point above that of homosexual: from 6.14 to 5.69- and, above all, by the specialised critics. This last aspect is evidenced not so much in the number of films that receive a majority of positive reviews - up to 97.9% for trans films compared to 88.5% for homosexuality: almost 10 points difference - as in the probability of finding a negative review: there is not a single title about the trans collective that has received poor critical reception, with the exception of those that also show gays and lesbians; on the other hand, productions that address homosexuality have a majority of negative reviews in 8.0% of the cases.

Table 4. Reception of the titles by group represented (total reviews, majority of reviews and user ratings).

| Subject | n | Total criticism | | | Majority of critiques | | | Users | |
|---------------------------|-----|-----------------|---------|---------|-----------------------|------|----------|-------|-------|
| | | For | Neutral | Against | Positive | Draw | Negative | n | Media |
| Homosexuality | 349 | 71,5% | 20,3% | 8,1% | 88,5% | 3,4% | 8,0% | 1.656 | 5,69 |
| Homosexuality only | 340 | 71,4% | 20,4% | 8,2% | 88,5% | 3,5% | 7,9% | 1.629 | 5,68 |
| Trans | 56 | 74,2% | 18,5% | 7,3% | 96,4% | 1,8% | 1,8% | 173 | 6,14 |
| Trans only | 47 | 73,6% | 18,6% | 7,8% | 97,9% | 2,1% | 0,0% | 146 | 6,13 |
| Both | 9 | 77,6% | 17,6% | 4,7% | 88,9% | 0,0% | 11,1% | 27 | 6,19 |

Source: own elaboration.

Other details stand out when studying the historical series (Table 5). The seventies might be of interest, when we observed that 40% of the titles had mostly negative reviews, compared to 60% of positive ones; however, this data refers to a sample of only five units, making it inadvisable to make any kind of reading or comparison between periods prior to the nineties.

Table 5. Reception of titles by decade (total reviews, majority of reviews and user ratings).

| Decade | n | Total criticism | | | Majority of critiques | | | Users | |
|-----------|-----|-----------------|---------|---------|-----------------------|------|----------|-------|-------|
| | | For | Neutral | Against | Positive | Draw | Negative | n | Total |
| 1901-1910 | 0 | | | | | | | 0 | |
| 1911-1920 | 0 | | | | | | | 2 | 6,25 |
| 1921-1930 | 0 | | | | | | | 2 | 6,80 |
| 1931-1940 | 0 | | | | | | | 2 | 7,05 |
| 1941-1950 | 0 | | | | | | | 3 | 6,73 |
| 1951-1960 | 1 | 42,9% | 42,9% | 14,3% | 100,0% | 0,0% | 0,0% | 6 | 6,70 |
| 1961-1970 | 3 | 68,4% | 21,1% | 10,5% | 100,0% | 0,0% | 0,0% | 35 | 5,86 |
| 1971-1980 | 5 | 44,7% | 26,3% | 28,9% | 60,0% | 0,0% | 40,0% | 74 | 5,85 |
| 1981-1990 | 12 | 73,2% | 15,9% | 11,0% | 91,7% | 0,0% | 8,3% | 80 | 6,12 |
| 1991-2000 | 36 | 72,5% | 18,4% | 9,1% | 88,9% | 8,3% | 2,8% | 222 | 5,78 |
| 2001-2010 | 48 | 67,3% | 21,3% | 11,4% | 87,5% | 4,2% | 8,3% | 497 | 5,50 |
| 2011-2020 | 272 | 72,2% | 20,3% | 7,5% | 90,1% | 2,9% | 7,0% | 838 | 5,75 |
| 2021-2030 | 19 | 75,9% | 18,2% | 5,9% | 94,7% | 0,0% | 5,3% | 41 | 6,14 |

Source: own elaboration.

In that decade, the percentage of favourable reviews by the specialised press (72%) is practically the same as between 2011-2020, but in the 2000s it experienced a drop of 5 percentage points, and stood at 67.3%, while negative reviews increased (11.4%). This data could point to a loss of quality in films about sexual minorities according to the experts' reviews, which also coincided with popular taste: in this period, it gave an average score of 5.50 points, the worst rating ever given by users. The current series, 2021-2030, shows in these 2 completed years a very promising outlook for cinema representing sexual diversity.

Table 6. Distribution of titles by genre and decade and average aggregate score.

| Decade | 1901-1930 | 1931-1940 | 1941-1950 | 1951-1960 | 1961-1970 | 1971-1980 | 1981-1990 | 1991-2000 | 2001-2010 | 2011-2020 | 2021-2030 | Total | Rev. |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------|------|
| n | 9 | 4 | 5 | 11 | 78 | 158 | 216 | 620 | 1.334 | 2.617 | 344 | 5.396 | |
| Drama | 55.6% | 75.0% | 60.0% | 72.7% | 65.4% | 56.3% | 50.0% | 43.1% | 43.4% | 41.8% | 28.8% | 42.7% | 0.81 |
| Romance | 22.2% | 25.0% | 20.0% | | 3.8% | 7.0% | 13.0% | 15.8% | 18.4% | 16.4% | 21.2% | 16.5% | 0.78 |
| Comedy | | | | | 9.0% | 16.5% | 14.8% | 20.2% | 16.5% | 13.2% | 11.3% | 14.7% | 0.75 |
| Documentary | 11.1% | | | 9.1% | 6.4% | 6.3% | 8.3% | 6.0% | 6.7% | 13.6% | 11.3% | 10.3% | 0.92 |
| TV Series | | | | | | | 1.9% | 2.6% | 3.5% | 5.6% | 15.7% | 5.0% | 0.83 |
| Thriller | | | | | 2.6% | 5.1% | 3.2% | 3.1% | 2.8% | 2.3% | 3.2% | 2.7% | 0.79 |
| Animation | | | | | | | 0.5% | 1.9% | 1.3% | 1.9% | 2.3% | 1.6% | 0.56 |
| Musical | | | | | 3.8% | 0.6% | 4.2% | 1.5% | 1.8% | 1.3% | 1.7% | 1.6% | 0.85 |
| Intrigue | 11.1% | | | 9.1% | 3.8% | 1.9% | 0.9% | 1.8% | 1.8% | 0.7% | 0.9% | 1.2% | 0.80 |
| Horror | | | | | 3.8% | 3.2% | 0.9% | 1.3% | 1.7% | 0.9% | 0.6% | 1.2% | 0.69 |
| Fantasy | | | 20.0% | | | 0.6% | | 0.8% | 0.6% | 1.1% | 2.0% | 0.9% | 0.91 |
| Action | | | | | | 0.6% | 1.4% | 1.0% | 0.5% | 0.4% | 0.6% | 0.5% | 0.51 |
| Science fiction | | | | | | 0.6% | 0.5% | 1.0% | 0.4% | 0.4% | | 0.4% | 0.73 |
| Adventure | | | | | | | | | 0.3% | 0.3% | 0.3% | 0.2% | 0.66 |
| War | | | | | | 0.6% | 0.5% | | 0.1% | 0.0% | | 0.1% | |
| Western | | | | | 1.3% | 0.6% | | | 0.1% | 0.1% | | 0.1% | 0.90 |
| Film noir | | | | 9.1% | | | | 0.2% | | | | 0.0% | 0.67 |
| Children's | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Source: own elaboration.

The preferred genre, drama, is not the one that yields the best aggregate scores: 0.81, compared to 0.92 for the documentary and 0.91 for the fantasy genre, even though the latter does not even account for 1% of the sample. Documentaries, on the other hand, have a greater representation (10.3% of the total), and doubled their presence between the 2000s and 2010s. Chris Bolan's *A Secret Love* (2020) stands out among the documentaries in the showcase with all the reviews being positive (a total of 17) and a 6.9 from users. At the other extreme, horror and comedy are the least rated by the specialised press (0.69 and 0.75, respectively). As with the fantasy genre, the horror formula is rare in the sexual minorities category, but in the case of comedy, the data shows that while many are produced, they do not tend to enjoy critical acclaim.

In relation to the subgenres, the small number of titles in each of them prevents any generalisation, although there is a greater presence of products on "Adolescence", perhaps coinciding with the sexual awakening at this stage of life, or on the "Family" and the attitudes of parents and the closest environment when a person reveals that their sexual orientation or identity is different from the expected one. The "AIDS" category appears in the last positions of the table, although the first films on AIDS focused on the effects of the epidemic among the homosexual community.

Table 7. Distribution of titles by main subgenres and decade.

| Decade | 1901-1930 | 1931-1940 | 1941-1950 | 1951-1960 | 1961-1970 | 1971-1980 | 1981-1990 | 1991-2000 | 2001-2010 | 2011-2020 | 2021-2030 | Total |
|------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| n | 6 | 3 | 3 | 9 | 63 | 126 | 153 | 381 | 850 | 1.714 | 189 | 3.497 |
| Short film | | | 66.7% | 11.1% | 7.9% | 9.5% | 9.2% | 8.1% | 14.0% | 18.2% | 12.2% | 14.8% |
| Adolescence | | | | 11.1% | | 4.8% | 4.6% | 6.8% | 8.1% | 6.9% | 3.2% | 6.7% |
| Family | | | | | 1.6% | 2.4% | 4.6% | 6.3% | 5.1% | 5.0% | 0.5% | 4.7% |
| Erotic | | | 33.3% | | 14.3% | 23.0% | 9.8% | 3.9% | 4.7% | 2.3% | 1.1% | 4.3% |
| Biographical | | | | 11.1% | 3.2% | 3.2% | 5.9% | 5.2% | 3.4% | 4.2% | 6.3% | 4.3% |
| Independent USA | | | | | 12.7% | 3.2% | 3.3% | 10.0% | 5.6% | 2.6% | 0.5% | 4.2% |
| Friendship | | | | | 1.6% | 3.2% | 3.9% | 6.0% | 3.6% | 4.6% | 2.1% | 4.2% |
| Medium-length film | 16.7% | | 33.3% | | 9.5% | 3.2% | 4.6% | 4.5% | 4.6% | 3.9% | 2.1% | 4.1% |
| Romantic drama | 16.7% | | | | | 1.6% | 3.9% | 3.9% | 5.2% | 3.2% | 1.6% | 3.6% |
| Prostitution | | | | 11.1% | 6.3% | 4.8% | 3.9% | 5.8% | 3.6% | 2.3% | 1.6% | 3.2% |
| Television film | | | | | | 4.8% | 4.6% | 5.2% | 4.2% | 1.9% | 2.1% | 3.0% |
| Crime | | | | 22.2% | 4.8% | 9.5% | 4.6% | 6.6% | 2.9% | 1.6% | 1.1% | 2.9% |
| AIDS | | | | | | | 5.9% | 6.6% | 2.8% | 1.3% | 1.1% | 2.3% |
| Based on real events | | | | | 1.6% | 1.6% | 5.2% | 2.6% | 2.2% | 2.2% | 1.6% | 2.3% |
| Romantic comedy | | | | | | | 0.7% | 3.9% | 3.8% | 1.8% | | 2.2% |
| Schools & Universities | | | | 11.1% | 1.6% | 1.6% | 2.0% | 1.8% | 1.9% | 1.8% | 6.3% | 2.1% |
| TV miniseries | | | | | | | 1.3% | 0.5% | 1.1% | 2.3% | 7.4% | 1.9% |
| Dramatic comedy | | | | | | 0.8% | 0.7% | 2.9% | 1.6% | 2.0% | 1.1% | 1.8% |
| Experimental cinema | 16.7% | | 66.7% | | 12.7% | 7.9% | 3.3% | 2.6% | 1.8% | 0.6% | | 1.8% |
| Religion | | | | | | 1.6% | 2.0% | 0.5% | 1.9% | 1.8% | 2.1% | 1.6% |
| Disease | | | | | | | 1.3% | 3.1% | 2.1% | 1.2% | 1.6% | 1.6% |
| Sequel | | | | | 1.6% | 2.4% | 3.9% | 0.5% | 1.3% | 1.5% | 2.1% | 1.5% |
| Drugs | | | | | 1.6% | | 3.3% | 2.6% | 1.5% | 0.9% | | 1.3% |

Source: own elaboration.

5.2. Analysis by specialised critics

The second block of the article focuses on critics and how their attributes are linked to the meaning of their reviews of works that reflect sexual minorities. The sample, composed of 4,848 reviews of 396 titles (12.24 reviews per title on average), is mostly based on the opinions of men (79.7%), who outnumber women fourfold (18.8%), which shows that there are few female reviews, regardless of the type of film in question. The United States - the hegemonic producer - is also the country that issues the most reviews (40.2% of the total), double the second on the list, Spain (12.7%), followed, in order, by Argentina, the United Kingdom and Mexico, which shows that FilmAffinity limits the recording of its reviews to English-speaking or Spanish-speaking countries, with only a few exceptions.

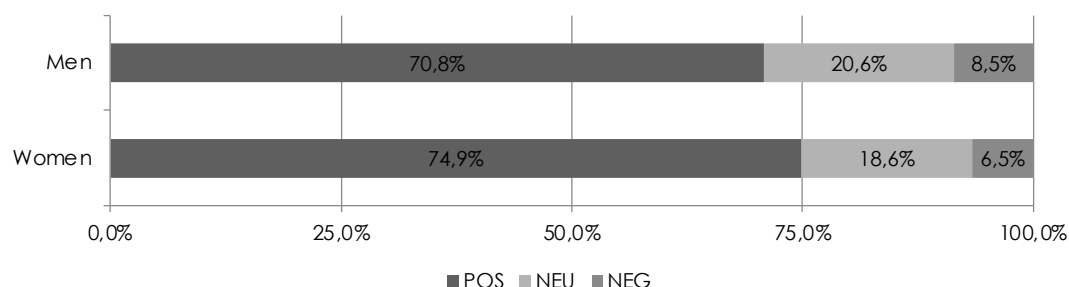
Table 8. Description of the sample (reviews).

| | | | | |
|----------------|-----------------------|---------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| n | 4.848 | | | |
| Gender | Men = 79,7% | | Women = 18,8% | |
| Country | United States = 40,2% | Spain = 20,9% | Argentina = 12,7% | United Kingdom = 10,5% |
| | Mexico = 8,1% | Chile = 1,8% | Colombia = 1,6% | Others = 4,2% |

Source: own elaboration.

Figure 1 also shows distances between men and women with respect to the meaning of their reviews. The latter are more welcoming of titles related to sexual minorities, writing more positive reviews (74.9% vs. 70.8%) and fewer negative ones (6.5% vs. 8.5%) than their male peers.

Figure 1. Critical sense by gender of the professional.



Source: own elaboration.

When we disaggregate, we observe that titles reflecting LGBT diversity have better reviews when they address transsexuality compared to homosexuality, regardless of the gender of the writer. While women write unfavourable reviews in the same proportion (6.6%) about both groups, men are again somewhat more pious with productions about trans reality (7.7% of negative reviews), compared to those about gays and/or lesbians (8.6%).

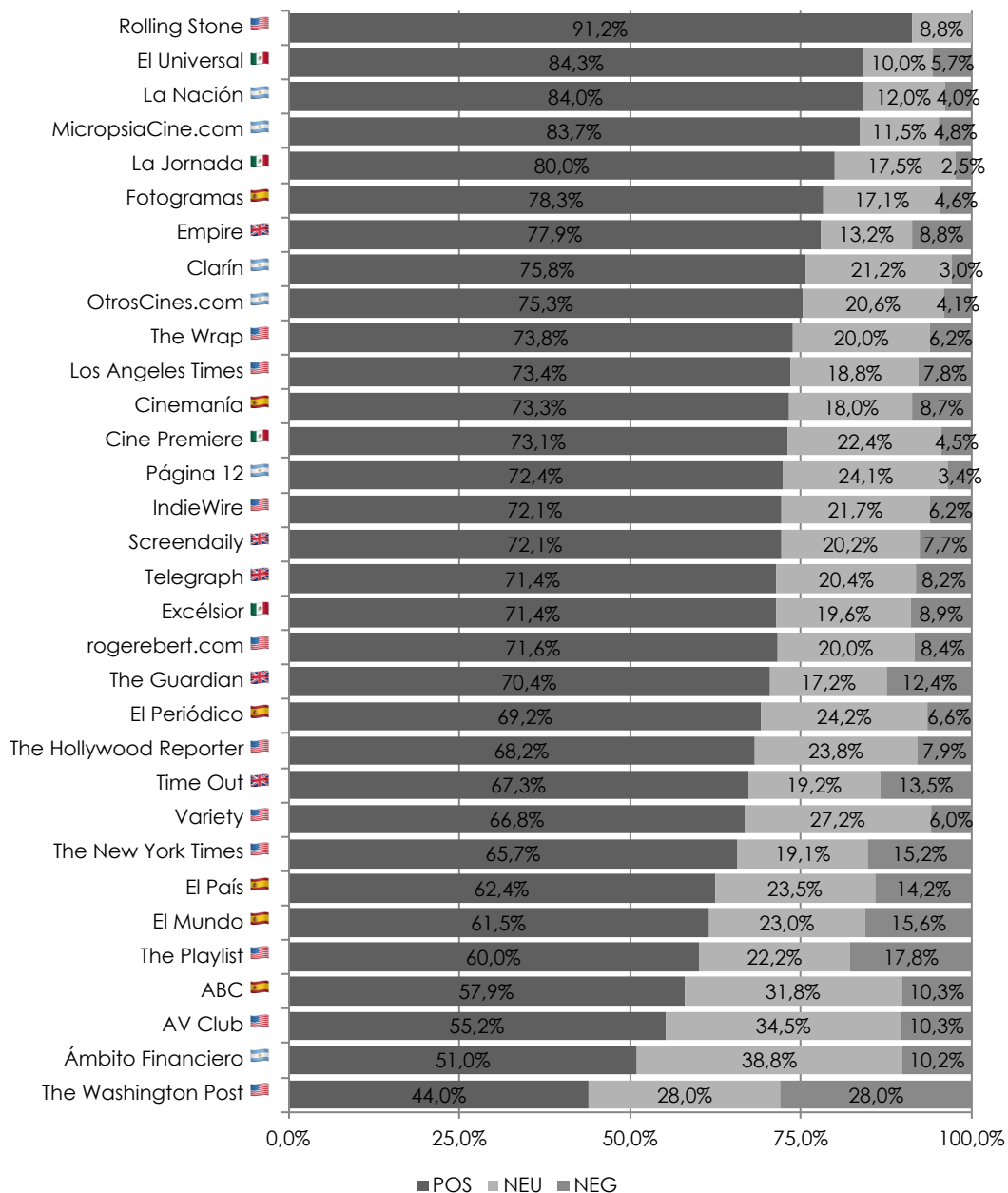
Table 9. Critical sense disaggregated by gender of the specialised professional and sexual minority.

| Gender | Subject | Positive | Neutral | Negative |
|--------|----------------|----------|---------|----------|
| Men | Homosexuality | 70,6% | 20,9% | 8,6% |
| Men | Transsexuality | 73,5% | 18,8% | 7,7% |
| Women | Homosexuality | 74,7% | 18,7% | 6,6% |
| Women | Transsexuality | 76,6% | 16,8% | 6,6% |

Source: own elaboration.

There are also differences depending on the publication and country of origin of the review. As shown in Figure 2, which shows the data for media with at least 45 ratings, the U.S. magazine *Rolling Stone* is the highest rated, with a positive review rate of 91.2% and no negative reviews. They are followed by four newspapers that remain above 80%: Mexico's *El Universal* and *La Jornada*, and Argentina's *La Nación* and *MicropsiaCine.com*. In Spain, the specialised magazines *Fotogramas* and *Cinemanía* show a greater sensitivity towards minority films, which is reflected in higher ratings (78.3% and 73.3% of positive reviews, respectively), while the general press is less favourable to this type of work: ABC, at the bottom of the ranking, has 57.9% of positive reviews compared to 42.1% of neutral or negative reviews.

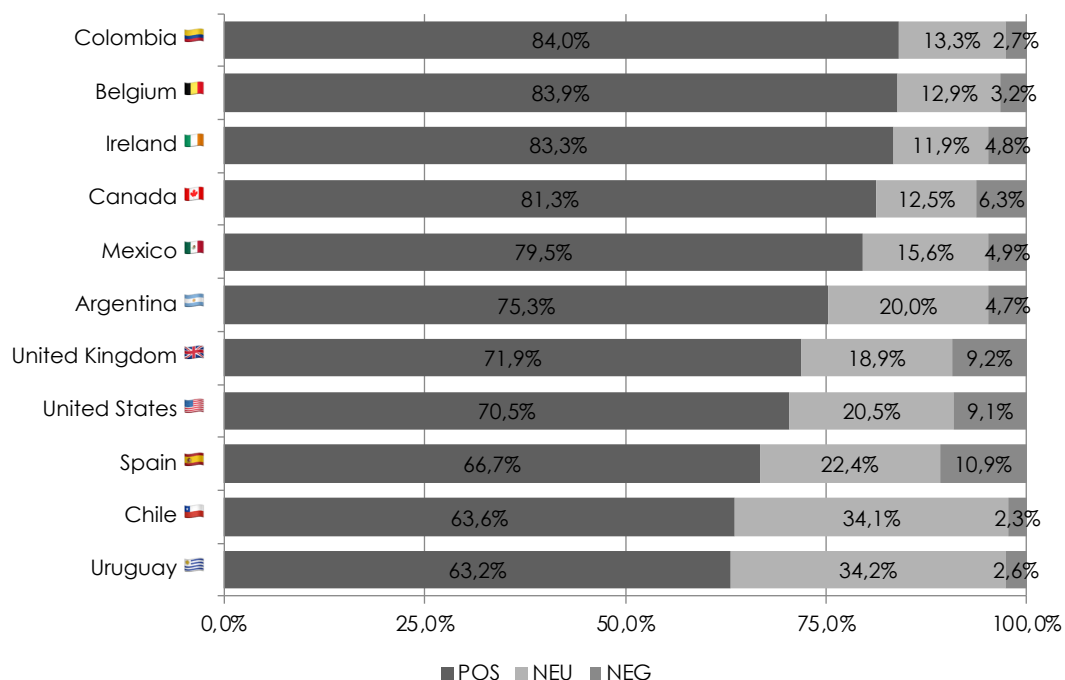
Figure 2. Critical sense by media (minimum 45 ratings).



Source: Author1 and Author2 (202X)

Figure 3 shows the list by country, considering for the sample those countries that have issued a minimum of 30 ratings indexed in the portal. Colombia leads the way (84.0% positive reviews), followed by Belgium and Ireland, with similar scores (83.9% and 83.3%, respectively). Spain appears in second to last position in a ranking of 11 countries, where in all countries favourable reviews exceed 63%, and among the rest, neutral reviews prevail over negative ones: in Uruguay and Chile, at the bottom, unfavourable reviews barely exceed 2%, which prevents us from speaking of rejection or poor acceptance.

Figure 3. Critical sense by country (minimum 30 ratings).



Source: own elaboration.

Table 10, which gathers data from five countries with more than 100 ratings (including Spain) segmented by topic, does not show consensus or clear preferences of the critics for one or another sexual minority: while in the United States and Mexico there are more positive reviews for stories about transsexuality, in Spain, Argentina and the United Kingdom the acceptance is higher when it comes to stories about the homosexual community. Regarding negative reviews, the case of the United Kingdom stands out, where bad ratings for trans reality products are twice as high as the rest.

Table 10. Distribution of reviews in countries with more than 100 ratings, segmented by topic.

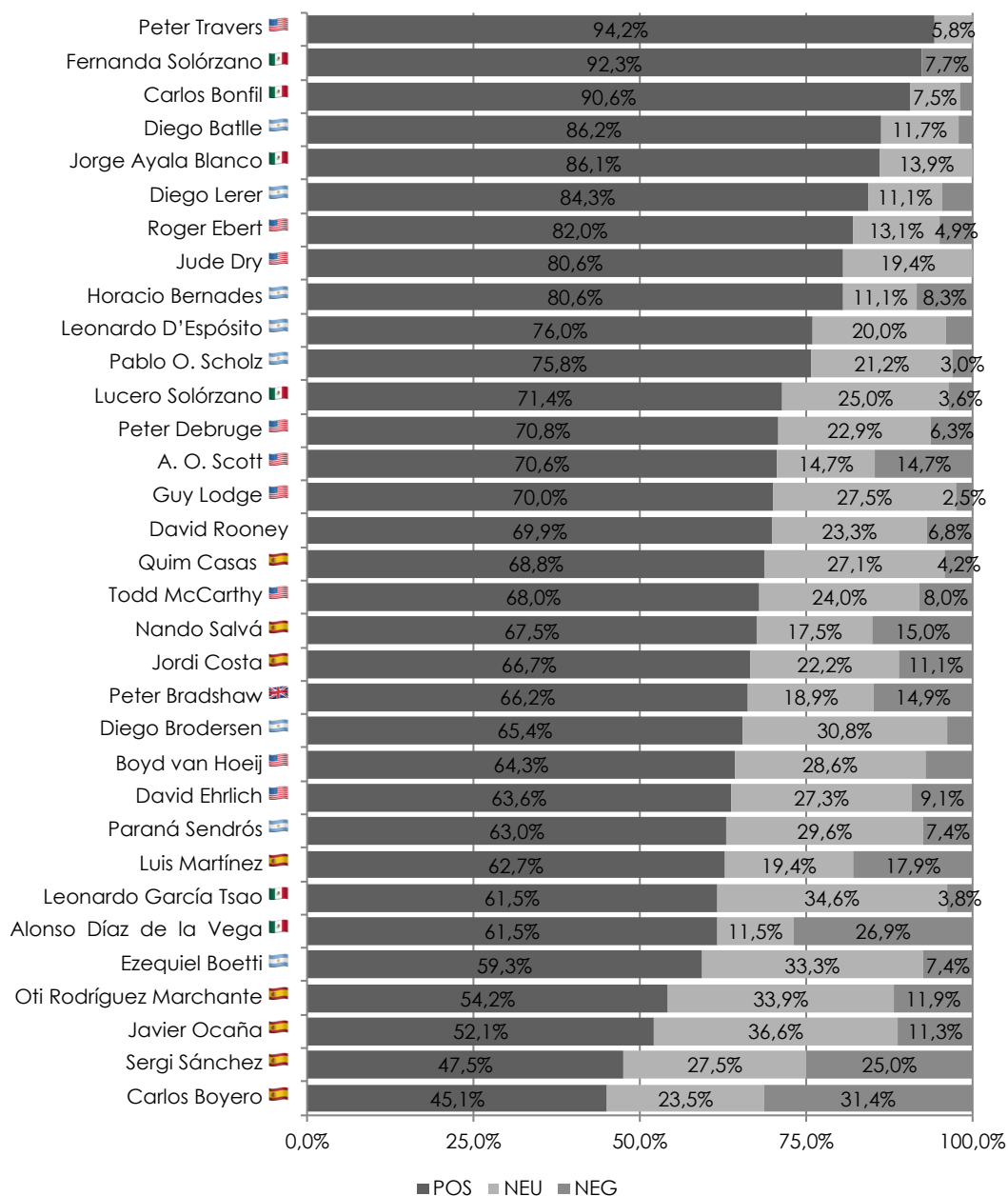
| País | Tema | Positivas | Neutras | Negativas |
|----------------|----------------|-----------|---------|-----------|
| United States | Homosexuality | 69,5% | 21,2% | 9,4% |
| United States | Transsexuality | 76,8% | 16,9% | 6,3% |
| Spain | Homosexuality | 67,2% | 21,9% | 10,8% |
| Spain | Transsexuality | 63,2% | 26,3% | 10,5% |
| Argentina | Homosexuality | 76,1% | 19,6% | 4,3% |
| Argentina | Transsexuality | 71,1% | 21,7% | 7,2% |
| United Kingdom | Homosexuality | 72,6% | 18,8% | 8,6% |
| United Kingdom | Transsexuality | 66,7% | 16,7% | 16,7% |
| Mexico | Homosexuality | 78,2% | 16,5% | 5,3% |
| Mexico | Transsexuality | 88,5% | 9,6% | 1,9% |

Source: own elaboration.

Where the distances are best appreciated is in observing (Figure 4) the cinematographic chroniclers, the vast majority of whom are men, with three exceptions. The American Peter Travers, from *Rolling Stone* -we already noted that it was the most favourable headline- is the critic who gives the best scores

to films related to sexual minorities, and his positive reviews (94.2%, and no negative reviews) exceed the most adverse critic by almost 50%, Carlos Boyero, of *El País*, probably one of the most controversial figures in Spanish cinema, and therefore the protagonist of the documentary *El crítico* (2022), by Juan Zavala and Javier Morales, a work that reflects on the major changes that film criticism is undergoing in Spain. Boyero is also the author of the highest number of unfavourable reviews (31.4%), preceded in the ranking by three other Spanish critics: Sergi Sánchez stands out among them (25.0% negative reviews), compared to Javier Ocaña and Oti Rodríguez Marchante, who adopt a more neutral attitude towards titles on sexual diversity. In the ranking, which includes professionals with at least 25 ratings, the second position of Mexican critic Fernanda Solórzano stands out (92.3% of favourable opinions), while her colleagues Jude Dry, with no negative reviews, and Lucero Solórzano (3.6% of unfavourable opinions) also show a good reception of these works.

Figure 4. Critical sense by professionals (minimum 25 ratings).



Source: own elaboration.

6. Conclusions

This work has made an exhaustive analysis of most of the LGBT-themed cinema in more than 100 years of history, paying particular attention not only to its characteristics but also to its reception by both the public and the critics. This is the first study of this magnitude based on quantitative methodologies, although other similar research to date has mainly focused on the filmography of specific directors, or on the analysis of the representation of sexual diversity in specific works, genres, or regions.

We started with two main objectives in this study: to describe the historical evolution of cinema related to sexual diversity through its main characteristics -formats, genres, countries, and popular reception- and, likewise, of specialised professional criticism, in terms of both the titles' own attributes and those of the experts.

In relation to the first research objective (O1), the findings are varied. First, it was found that homosexual themes are much more widespread in cinema (89.3%) than transgender themes (13.0%), in a ratio of almost seven to one, even though both constitute minorities within commercial cinema -the historical average is around 30 productions per year, although this figure is conditioned by the capacity of the Filmaffinity portal to label each one of them-. It has also been observed that film is the preferred format, although it is gradually losing ground to series -a phenomenon that is very likely to be extended to the rest of the themes-; that the United States is, as could be expected, the major producer of content on sexual diversity; or that the number of titles on minorities is growing decade by decade -although, again, this can be explained by Filmaffinity's capacity to incorporate more files-.

The fact that drama (42.7%) is the most common genre deserves a separate mention, as it continues to prevail a predominantly serious and reflective look that, from narratives centred on personal stories, brings to the audience the challenges that sexual minorities continue to face, such as discrimination, stigma, family rejection, etc. However, other genres such as romance (16.5%) and comedy (14.7%) could seek this connection with the public through de-dramatization, humour, and the celebration of love in all its forms.

Looking at the subgenres, the presence of "erotic", in third place, and prostitution, among the 10 most popular, could be interpreted as a somewhat limited representation of LGBT experiences. The same is true of films about AIDS, which were most represented in the 1990s, coinciding with the epidemic, and where films served as a platform to address a public health issue in the absence of accurate information and the stigmatization suffered by the homosexual population. This repetition of themes could, however, contribute to reinforcing stereotypes, even though their initial intention may have been to challenge them.

Films about sexual minorities obtain, on average, a 5.73 out of 10 audience rating, a figure that, in context, is almost half a point away from that of films about disability, the only one for which data are available (see García-Borrego and González-Cortés, 2022). However, the critics' reviews are far from this perception: 89.6% of the titles analysed have mostly positive reviews, or 94.7% if we look only at the current decade. The gap that manifests itself between critics and the public, although it's seemingly getting narrower, can be explained by the existence of different levels of awareness between society in general and the critical specialist, the latter -and we agree with the educational responsibility to which Nieto (2017) pointed- aware of the impact that their review can have on the collective perception.

In any case, it is not advisable to make sweeping generalizations in this regard with films representing the LGBT collective, since the results show that the treatment is different depending on the sexual minority: trans themes are better received by both the public and film critics, to the point that no title related to this minority has been rejected by the specialized media. It could be due to an attempt to compensate a community that has been historically underrepresented and that now, in an era of greater social awareness, is receiving more attention and support to correct this imbalance.

In relation to the second objective (O2), on the specialised critics that these titles receive, it is worth noting first of all the obvious imbalance between the number of male critics (around four out of five) and female critics (less than one out of five), which, although partly attributable to the platform's strategy of incorporating critics, may explain much of the negative weight of the critics, although partly attributable to the platform's strategy of incorporating critics, may explain much of the negative weight of the critics, since men make more negative judgements about these types of titles, in line with what also occurred with films about disability (García-Borrego and González-Cortés, 2022). In this case, negative criticism is approximately 30% more common in men than in women, especially in the case of productions representing the homosexual community. In fact, there are no women among the authors most suspicious of these topics -the one with the worst results, Spain's Carlos Boyero, of *El País*, gives a negative evaluation of almost one in three films-, but there are women among those with the most favourable reception -Mexican Fernanda Solórzano, of *Letras Libres*, gives 92.3% positive evaluations-.

Along these lines, there are also different sensitivities depending on the headers and countries. The Spanish case is paradigmatic of how specialised magazines, such as *Fotogramas* and *Cinemanía*, are more receptive to films about sexual minorities than generalist newspapers with ideologies as diverse as *El País* -progressive-, *El Mundo* and *ABC* -conservative-, even though, in a general sense, favourable criticism prevails. The U.S. *Rolling Stone*, also specialised, is at the top of the list with 91.2% positive reviews (0% negative), while *The Washington Post*, a U.S. generalist, closes the list with less than half of the favourable reviews (44.0%, compared to 28.0% negative). We did not find a defining interpretation that justifies a better treatment by the specialised media, so considerations such as a greater interest in them for products that promote social inclusion, or a greater influence in generalist newspapers of their editorial lines, which would bias criticism by ideological considerations to the detriment of objective technical criteria, may enter here. Future work could delve deeper into the specific parameters that prevail when issuing a review, and whether patterns can be identified depending on the publication medium. In the same way, future research could broaden the vision to other viewpoints -either the alternative voices of specialised critics, or the new and increasingly powerful agents in the digital ecosystem-, or propose textual analyses of the reviews to determine the terms or themes with which this type of cinema is most frequently associated, or the general feeling of the evaluations.

The big screen is presented as a tool to explore, reflect on and challenge social stereotypes that especially affect minorities. In the case of sexual ones, there is an increase in tapes that combat homophobia and vindicate the rights of the LGBT community, according to Huerta (2016, 2020), Huerta, Alonso-Sanz and Ramón (2019) and Rivaya (2022). An educational purpose is thus fulfilled, consisting, as Robbins (2016) pointed out, in raising awareness of the problems and realities of disadvantaged groups, but it highlights the lack of balance in this representation, with a greater presence of the gay reality over that of transgender people, a group historically made invisible and, even today, underrepresented. This aspect, together with the permanence of certain subgenres, such as prostitution and AIDS, calls for a better approach to films on sexual diversity, challenging stereotypes that are as dangerous as they are ingrained. Regarding the critics, although the reception is generally positive, it is worrying that men are more wary of LGBT issues, therefore, it is imperative to encourage the incorporation of more women in film criticism, because of their more understanding and committed approach to sensitive social issues.

7. Contributions

| Tarea | Firmante 1 | Firmante 2 |
|-----------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Conceptualisation | X | X |
| Content curation | X | X |
| Formal analysis | X | X |
| Acquisition of funds | | |
| Research | X | X |
| Methodology | X | X |
| Project management | X | |
| Resources | X | X |
| Software | | X |
| Supervision | X | |
| Validation | X | X |
| Visualisation | | X |
| Drafting: original draft | X | X |
| Writing: proofreading and editing | X | X |

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11. Bibliographic references

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Notes

1. Films about groups such as queer or intersex do not have a specific topic in the FilmAffinity database, possibly because it is still an unexplored theme in cinema. Due to the nature of the analysis, sometimes some of these unlabelled films could not be included in the sample when they are not linked to the subgenres "Homosexuality" and "Transsexuality/Transgender".