



REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN THE MUSICAL IMAGINARY: Analysis of the most Watched Videoclips in the International and Spanish Context.

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ABSTRACT

The videoclip is the most widely consumed audiovisual format today and is particularly popular with young people. These videos offer content full of stereotypes, including gender stereotypes. It is therefore of particular interest to analyse the image of women portrayed in these clips. Therefore, the 300 most viewed videoclips worldwide and the 300 music videos of Spanish origin with the most views on YouTube were analysed. 50.33% of international music videos have sexist characteristics. The role attributed to women is that of a sex object (11%), interested in money (7.33%) and dominated by men (20%), while men do not display these characteristics. The analysis confirmed that the image of women in music videos is more sexualised and denigrated than that of men.

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1. Introduction

Music has accompanied mankind for at least 40,000 years (Cross, 2001). During this time, it has evolved dramatically, partly due to the technological advances that have taken place in the music industry, such as the advent of the cassette, the CD, the MP3 or the Internet, but also due to social and cultural developments over time. One of the revolutions in the music industry was the combination of music and images, which in the 1970s led to the emergence of the videoclip, a format whose clearest precursor was the music cinema that emerged in the 1930s (Sedeño Valdellós, 2002; Viñuela Suárez, 2007).

The golden age of the videoclip was the 1980s with the emergence of the international television channel MTV, which was followed by a decline in the 1990s when it turned into a channel full of reality shows (Grijalba, 2011; Sedeño Valdellós, 2002). With the advent of the internet, and in particular the emergence of YouTube, the videoclip experienced a resurgence and began its second golden age (Grijalba, 2011). YouTube is the second most visited website in the world and, in the case of Spain, it is the leading website according to data published by the consultancy Barlovento in September 2024. Within this platform, the videoclip is the most consumed audiovisual format and has positioned itself as one of the most important channels for music consumption (Baños-González et al., 2020). The IFPI Music Consumption Study 2023 shows that video streaming is the second most used option for accessing music content in Spain, especially in the 16-34 age group. This type of consumption is only behind audio streaming services. In this sense, the videoclip:

One of the most important media phenomena of our time is the audiovisual production of the music industry. This area of visual culture is undoubtedly one of the most popular and widespread among the various cultural manifestations of our time. In the transition from a mainly written and literary culture to a visual culture of images and audiovisual games, the video, which combines music, images and words, is an excellent communication channel, not only for economic purposes, but also as a cultural act that changes reality. The influence of the music video as a producer of visual culture that modifies the perception of the reality that surrounds us is located in contexts close to the knowledge of reality. It is about the ability to show not only what the artist and his environment want to convey, but also the production of relationships between different categories of reality (gender, ethnicity, class, cultural differences, beliefs, etc.) that change the habits of seeing and the production of reality itself and its meanings. (Martínez Cano, 2017, p.476)

Despite the richness of the videoclip as an object of cultural study, few scholars have taken the time to deepen their knowledge of this format, unlike other audiovisual genres such as film or advertising (Frith, 1981; Gálvez, 2020; Gorissen, 2021; Pérez-Rufí, 2017; Sedeño-Valldellós et al, 2016; Selva Ruiz, 2014; Venegas, 2010). Furthermore, the majority of this research was conducted in the 1980s and 1990s, when the videoclip reached its peak (Presencio Herrero et al., 2021; Ruiz Muñoz et al., 2024). Although there has been a resurgence of research interest in this format in recent years following its success online with studies such as those by Jorge Alonso et al. (2020) and Presencio Herrero et al. (2021), the bibliography is largely outdated (Ruiz Muñoz et al., 2024).

1.1. *The debate on gender equality*

Feminism and gender equality continue to be a topic of debate, as it is one of the areas in which the study of power relations and their reflection in cultural and social discourses is most important (López-Maestre, 2021). In this sense, gender equality is part of the management of diversity in organisations, culture and society and is part of the social dimension of sustainability (Paz Gil et al., 2024).

In March 2024, the International Monetary Fund published that none of the 17 indicators and sub-indicators are at the level of "target achieved or nearly achieved" with regard to the goal of gender equality set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. For example, according to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index 2023, no country has yet achieved full parity between men and women. The overall figure for the gender gap in 2023 for the 146 countries included in the study is 68.5%.

In the case of Spain, there were several moments in the debate on gender equality in 2024 that divided public opinion. For example, in January 2024, the CIS published a survey in which 44.1% of male participants and 32.5% of female participants stated that the promotion of equality had led to

discrimination against men. On the other hand, in the same year, Spain sent the group Nebulossa with the song Zorra to the Eurovision Song Contest, the most important music festival in the world. The song sparked a fierce debate about its lyrics between those who believed that the work defended women's self-determination and freedom by freeing the word "zorra" from its negative connotations, and another group that argued that the song merely affirmed machismo against women. As Venegas (2010) points out, songs are fundamental educational tools that can transmit social values and provoke opinion movements. In this sense, songs such as Blurred Lines by the singers Robin Thicke T.I. and Pharrell Williams or the song Cuatro Babys by Maluma have caused great controversy after their respective releases due to the videoclips that accompany them. In the case of the latter, a campaign was even organised on the Change.org platform to have it removed from digital media because it was degrading for women. However, the respective controversies could not prevent both songs from becoming real phenomena, reaching the top of the charts and amassing hundreds of millions of views on YouTube.

Currently, songs and videoclips, even though they sometimes create fictional worlds that have little to do with the lyrics of the songs they accompany, occupy an important place in the social construction of reality, either to legitimise social phenomena or to question them, and therefore they are a cultural product that can be used to study contemporary reality (Gértrudix-Barrio & Gértrudix-Barrio, 2010; Sánchez-Vizcaíno & Fonseca-Mora, 2019). The depiction of relationship patterns between men and women in videoclips and the inequality and discrimination suffered by the latter should be emphasised (De la Concha et al. 2010; López-Maestre, 2021). Furthermore, according to Arnold et al. (2017), representations of sexuality and gender in music videos are particularly amplified and questioned. Therefore, mainstream music videos are traditionally criticised for portraying women as sexual objects (Sánchez-Vizcaino, 2021). As Freeman (2020) states (...) "exploring what is portrayed in music videos and how audiences respond to it is crucial to understanding contemporary culture" (p. 3).

1.2. Women in videoclips

Illescas (2015, p.21) states that "music stars and their videos have a strong influence on the values and ideology of young people" (p. 21). In 2018, a report by the European project Play for Change, coordinated by the Surt Foundation, found that, following a survey in three Catalan high schools, young people stated that the representations of masculinity and femininity in music were configured as reference models and influenced the way they dressed, behaved and related to others. The same study found that 84% of students thought that the appearance of women in music videos is valued more than that of men and that women are portrayed in a hypersexualised and submissive way, while men are shown as powerful, wealthy and objectifying women. For example, Guarinos (2012) points out that videoclips, due to their short duration, have to condense the stories and present very simplified situations and stereotypical characters. Thus, according to this author, women tend to either sing or be mute characters, with their appearance and gestures being of fundamental importance.

For this reason, it is interesting to analyse musical pieces and their role in the dissemination of gender roles. This is particularly important during adolescence and youth, a key period in identity construction (Erikson, 1994; Frith, 1981). Evidence of the identity-forming power of music is the formation of small groups or gangs among adolescents based on the genre of music they consume (rock, rap, punk, etc.), which in turn denotes their values, inherited social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 2008; Frith 1981; Hormigos and Martín-Cabello, 2008; Illescas-Martínez, 2017).

The so-called majors (large US production companies) have a business rather than a cultural vision and are dominated by a production cycle in which resources are channelled into the most commercial proposals, to the detriment of those committed to innovation. In this sense, risks are carefully weighed in the music industry, which is why there are not many second chances for artists (Lieb, 2018). In this way, both songs and music videos are standardised in formal and narrative terms, leading to a strong homogenisation of the products that are brought to market (Illescas, 2015; Zallo Elguezabal, 2016). It is therefore necessary to understand the commercial videoclip as a mass cultural product that is the result of a cultural industry capable of generating hegemony (Gramsci, 1977). "In the culture industry, only the result counts, and that means that even the president of a record label, who is the most open to the art of the videoclip, must reduce experimentation to minority niches outside the production intended for the big stars" (Illescas, 2015, p.128).

With the advent of MTV in the 1980s, the barriers for singers to become successful artists were lowered, including for black singers. Thus, the music video is able to change the perception of different

aspects of reality, such as gender or social class, by constructing the realities that artists and record companies want to convey (Martínez Cano, 2017). However, this has not been the case for women, who have been the main victims of the rise of music videos. The increased attention brought about by the popularisation of music videos meant that expectations of an artist's appearance were more pronounced. In this context, Lieb (2018) points out that the success of female artists who have become music legends, such as Aretha Franklin or Barbra Streisand, whose physical appearance does not conform to the prevailing canon of beauty, preceded the era of MTV and the emergence of music videos, a time when, as this author emphasises, artistic careers were built on the basis of musical talent. As Flynn et al. (2016) note, "women in particular are judged not only on their talent, but also on their attractiveness and waist size" (p.166). Although there are exceptional cases today, such as the singers Adele or Meghan Trainor, who possess what could be described as "non-normative bodies", we can also observe a development in the bodies of these artists, which have increasingly approached the normative canon of beauty over the course of their careers. For "throughout history, the female body has been objectified as a source of sexual arousal or suggestion, and in rock and pop music, when the star is the centre of media attention, this expectation is reinforced" (O'Brien, 2003, p.210-210).

In her 1975 work *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, Laura Mulvey pointed out the existence of a "male gaze" that leads to women being objectified and their appearance being the only feature that is paid attention to in order to satisfy sexual fantasies. The degree of sexualisation of women within current videoclips has become so normal that authors such as Gill (2007) and Lieb (2018) point out that they have become content that could be described as "everyday pornography". Pérez-Rufí (2017) explains that the music video was conceived with the aim of impressing the viewer in order to maintain their attention and encourage them to watch it repeatedly, as well as to make the singers into stars, and that the way to achieve this is to focus the discourse of the music video on the performer's body.

Aubrey and Frisby (2011) point out that despite the strong sexualisation of women, there is a difference between the cases in which female artists are sexualised in their own music videos and the objectification of women in the videos of male singers. This ambivalence of media representations takes place in a post-feminist context, which, according to Gill (2007), is characterised by the representation of women as sexual subjects who desire and, above all, want to be desired.

In contrast to the frequent sexualisation of female artists, this is only one of the possible strategies that men can choose in order to have a successful career (Lieb, 2018). This is particularly evident in the case of singers who target a young audience. Thus, boys are portrayed in an asexual way, in contrast to young female singers who implicitly play with sexuality. For example, when the Canadian Justin Bieber entered the music scene, he presented an open image in contrast to Miley Cyrus, a contemporary of Justin Bieber, who presented a much more adult image almost from the beginning. Even more paradigmatic is the case of the group founded by the Jonas brothers, who promoted the chastity ring.

The appearance of female singers is not trivial, as the media is nowadays one of the main sources on the basis of which the canon of beauty is constructed within the social imaginary, the videoclip being one of the tools of this machinery (Sibaja Cumplido, 2024). This is particularly evident among women and the younger population, as shown by several studies that have found an influence on women's satisfaction with their bodies (Bell et al., 2007; Tiggerman & Slater, 2004). For example, it has been observed that adolescent girls who see thin models in music videos have higher body dissatisfaction than those girls who only listen to the same songs but are not exposed to visual information (Bell et al., 2007).

However, Illescas-Martínez (2015,) notes that "although they are still a minority in relation to women, more and more videos depict men as sexual objects in the service of the woman with power, who usually represents the female pop star" (p. 288). Lieb (2018) also goes in the same direction, but this author qualifies that the degree of sexualisation of singers in general is still much more timid than that of their female counterparts or that of the women who accompany them in music videos. It can be observed, for example, that women in video clips touch their bodies much more frequently, dance lewdly and cast seductive glances. There is also a clear difference in clothing, which is much more provocative for women (Wallis, 2011). It is possible that, as Illescas-Martínez (2017) points out, the equality of men and women in music videos is not achieved through a lesser sexualisation of female artists, but through the visual objectification of the bodies of both genders, even if this is far from being the reality. The difference between male singers and female performers reflects how unaccustomed the public is to the objectification of men. Thus:

While objectified men appear ridiculous, objectified women appear glamorous, like beautiful bodies to be admired. This statement has a cultural reading: we are so used to receiving these kinds of images of women as beautiful objects of contemplation that posing in forced postures or the mere static and passive display of their bodies does not provoke a reaction of strangeness or contradiction in the audience; on the contrary, when it is the man who assumes this position of passivity and display of his body, it provokes a reaction of strangeness in the audience that receives the message. (Pérez-Ruffi, 2017, p.228)

These differences between the two genders are not only evident on a visual level, but also in the lyrics of the songs. While men tend to objectify women, women have also been found to objectify themselves more in their song lyrics than male singers do in their own (Flynn et al., 2016). This pattern appears to be independent of musical genre, as several studies have shown (Flynn et al., 2016; Rasmussen & Densley, 2017).

In genres such as reggaeton, a tendency has been observed in the lyrics of male singers to adopt a perspective of domination over women and their bodies, which are at the service of men's sexual gratification (Bas-Peña and Pastor-Bravo, 2024; Benavides, 2007). In this musical genre, "women are generally destined to fulfil the function of a mere sexual object that men receive and deserve and to which they cannot resist, since in most cases they have no will of their own" (Mata-Núñez, 2024, p.225). In this way, the idea of masculinity associated with the possession of women is portrayed. Similarly, zoomorphic appeals referring to women, such as "gata" ("cat"), "perra" ("bitch") or "zorrra" ("slut"), are frequently found in songs of the urban genre (Benavides, 2007). However, in an attempt to redefine these terms, we can observe how female artists, for example, have started to refer to themselves as "bitches" to show a defiant and sexually empowering attitude. This can be seen in songs such as *Loba* by Shakira (2009), *Una perra sorprendente* by Nathy Peluso ft Bizarrap (Bzrp Music Sessions, vol. 36, 2020), *Loba* by Rozalén (2020), *A ti mujer* by India Martínez (Nuestro Mundo, 2022), the collective cry "¡Quiero ser una perra!" by the women's choir of the song *Perra* by Rigoberta Bandini (La emperatriz, 2022) or the song *Zorra* by Nebulossa (2023).

2. Objectives

Given the importance that the videoclip has acquired in this second golden age of the format and its role as a transmitter of gender values and stereotypes, the specific objectives (SO) of this article are defined:

- SO1. To examine the gender differences within the videoclip in terms of the projected image of men and women in terms of age and beauty standards.
- SO2. Observe how women are described in the lyrics of the most played music videos in the world and the most watched music videos of Spanish origin.
- SO3. Analyse the degree of nudity and sexualisation of men and women in music videos.

3. Methodology

3.1. Inclusion criteria for the analytical sample

The subject of this study is the 300 videoclips with the most views worldwide on the YouTube video platform as of 6 November 2024 (Appendix 1). The inclusion and exclusion criteria for the list of analysed pieces are as follows:

- Music videos that were on the YouTube platform.
- Videoclips whose songs were not or do not originate from soundtracks.
- Videoclips whose songs were not from sports event adverts.
- Music videos that were not aimed at a children's audience.
- Videos that do not feature male or female characters at any time.
- Videoclips that do not belong to the lyric video format and in which the lyrics of the song are not shown in the video.

- Music videos that were not live performances by the singers and were subsequently used as music videos.

On the other hand, the 300 most viewed videoclips in the Spanish music industry at the same time were also analysed (Appendix 2). To create this list, the criteria mentioned above were added:

- The videoclips had to correspond to songs released by artists from the Spanish music scene.
- The music videos had to belong to artists who, if supported by a record label, were based in Spain.

3.2 Criteria for the analysis

Once the videoclips had been selected, a series of factors were established to analyse different aspects related to their possible sexist or sexist nature.

Firstly, the 11 factors defined as sexist by the Women's Image Observatory of the Women's Institute (2014) were used. As some were considered superfluous, the number of factors was reduced to 8:

1. Justification of behaviour or attitudes that involve any form of violence against women.
2. The categorisation of women as subordinate or inferior, with lower abilities or incapable of assuming responsibility, or the allocation of skills according to gender for the exercise of different professions or occupational groups.
3. Demeaning or ridiculing activities or values attributed to women or implying the superiority of male or female activities.
4. Denigrating, undervaluing or demeaning the portrayal of women in any type of professional activity.
5. Using women and their bodies exclusively as mere sexual objects, passive and in the service of men's sexuality and desires, or promoting a model of female beauty based on youth, thinness or physical perfection.
6. Assign women, in a clear and differentiated way, exclusive or primary responsibility for the care of others and the domestic sphere.
7. Distinguish between different social options or activities that are appropriate for men or women.
8. Use language that invisibilises or excludes women, e.g. where there is a contradiction between image and text in terms of the gender being alluded to.

These factors were exacerbated by the use of the terms “perra”, “zorra”, “puta” and “bitch” to describe women in song lyrics.

To analyse the gender stereotypes present in the videoclips, we used the classification developed by Álvarez-Cueva et al. (2021), which establishes the following categories (Table 1).

Table 1. Types of Gender Stereotypes

Femininities	Masculinities
<p>1. Western hegemonic femininity (Heg. O) The model shows a delicate, submissive, caring heterosexual woman. Situations may arise in which she is dominated by men or other women dominate her (Connell, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).</p>	<p>6. Western hegemonic masculinity (Heg. O) The physically well-trained man with a bold and aggressive stance. It is the type of man who appears elegant and glamorous, usually young, uninhibited, consumer-orientated, powerful, narcissistic, happy and hedonistic (Connell, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).</p>
<p>2. Western pariah femininity (PO) The heterosexual woman who is socially undesirable or not taken as a role model because some of her characteristics are outside the hegemonic and normative framework, either because of her skin colour, her body shape or her unfeminine behaviour such as aggressiveness and (hyper)sexualisation and episodic sexual relationships (Schippers, 2007).</p>	<p>7. Western protestant masculinity (PO) It encompasses masculine representations that: 1. challenge the Western hegemonic pattern (working class background, ethnicity or racialisation) and 2. are associated with undesirable social issues. It is a type of representation that continues to perpetuate a hierarchy of power, particularly in relation to women (Poynting, Noble & Tabar, 2011).</p>

<p>3. Western hybrid femininity (HO) The generally white, slender, sensual woman who takes care of her body and presents herself as self-determined while maintaining various patterns of idealised femininity (including make-up, perfect hair, dresses, heels and jewellery) while displaying a generally elegant, jovial and, above all, sensual demeanour (Gill, 2007; 2017).</p>	<p>8. Western hybrid masculinity (HO) The man who combines some of the elements associated with marginalised or subordinate masculinities and sometimes some femininities. This type of masculinity reveals a new and positive representation that moves away from the aggression, brute force and irrationality of traditional masculinity. It therefore also includes masculinity that is portrayed as vulnerable (Bridges & Pascoe, 2014).</p>
<p>4. Dike (lesbian) femininity (D) A woman who shows a homosexual inclination in her (re)presentation without giving up her female physicality. This includes representations associated with both femme and butch (Gomillion & Giuliano, 2011).</p>	<p>9. Sissy masculinity (S) The man who displays a homosexual inclination without relinquishing his masculine physicality (Gomillion & Giuliano, 2011).</p>
<p>5. Trans femininity (T) A person who does not fit into a cisgender identity. Although she may have characteristics of other femininities or masculinities, the difference is that this woman is still defined/differentiated as a 'trans woman' in the hegemonic normative discourse.</p>	<p>10. Trans masculinity (T) A person who does not fit into a cisgender identity. Although he may share characteristics of other femininities or masculinities, the difference is that this man is still defined/differentiated as a 'trans man' within the hegemonic normative discourse.</p>
<p>In the case of femininities, there is no counterpart, as the concern for maintaining the hegemonic normative canon is limited to the case of mainstream male commercial artists.</p>	<p>11. Western assured masculinity (AO) A heteronormative representation of a man who, despite publicly acknowledging his homosexuality, maintains the patterns of Western hegemonic masculinity in his (re)presentations (Anderson, 2002).</p>
<p>Not Determined (ND) for cases that do not fall into the above categories.</p>	<p>Not determined (ND) for cases that cannot be categorised under the above.</p>

Source: Álvarez-Cueva et al. (2021).

On the other hand, the degree of nudity of men and women in the images that make up the analysed videoclips was also examined. To determine the degree of nudity, the scale proposed by Presencio Herrero et al. (2021) was used. This scale consists of the following degrees:

1. Fully clothed woman, not exposing any part of her body and not wearing tight clothing.
2. Woman in tight-fitting clothing that emphasises the natural curves of her body and where parts of her body are uncovered
3. Woman wearing a miniskirt, heels or any other garment that is categorised as short clothing.
4. Semi-clothed woman wearing underwear or swimsuit-like clothing or barely covering fabrics.
5. Fully nude woman or nudity is implied.

Since the scale developed by these authors referred only to women, this article proposes an equivalent to also examine the degree of male nudity in videoclips and suggests the following gradations:

1. Fully clothed male, exposing no body parts and wearing no tight clothing.
2. Man with tight-fitting clothing that shows off his muscles and leaves parts of his body uncovered.
3. Man without a shirt, but with the rest of his body covered.
4. Half-dressed man, in underwear or swimming costume.
5. Fully naked man Nudity is implied.

In addition, the sexual behaviour of men and women was observed both individually and with other people. The scale developed by Presencio Herrero et al. (2021) was again used for this purpose. This scale consists of the following degrees:

1. Behaviours in which there is no contact with other people and no erotic postures or gestures are made by the person.

2. Behaviours in which there is contact with other people, such as kissing or hugging, but which are not of a sexual or erotic nature, but of an intimate or friendly nature.
3. Behaviour in which sexuality is implicitly and individually indicated by body posture, looks, etc.
4. Behaviour in which contact with other people is maintained and sexuality is implied through posture, looks, etc.
5. Actions in which sexual behaviour is explicitly implied, either individually or with other people.

4. Results

After analysing the sample of music videos, the results obtained are presented. The first aspect analysed was the number of music videos in the sample according to the artist's genre (Table 2).

Table 2. Number of songs included in the sample by artist genre

Context	Men	Women	Mixed
Spanish scope	197	40	63
International scope	189	48	63

Source: Own elaboration, 2025.

A similar trend can be observed on both the Spanish and international markets. Male singers account for 63% of the most viewed international videoclips, a figure that rises to 65.33% on the Spanish videoclips market. In contrast, the number of videoclips by female singers has fallen to 16% of the international sample and to 13.33% in the list of most-watched videoclips in Spain.

On the other hand, the lyrics of the songs included in the sample were analysed. In relation to the presence of sexist traits, according to the parameters presented in the previous section, the results shown in Table 3 were obtained. It was found that the most recurring factor in the sample of songs was the sexualisation of women by male singers. Thus, 36.66% of the videoclips from the international scene had this characteristic, compared to 17.33% of the songs from the Spanish music market.

Table 3. Maleness traits in the lyrics of the songs

Context	Songs (Spain)	Songs (International)
Category 1	4	13
Category 2	2	3
Category 3	0	6
Category 4	5	1
Category 5	52	110
Category 6	3	7
Category 7	6	13
Category 8	1	1

Source: Own elaboration, 2025.

As for the derogatory treatment of women (Table 4), it was found to be more frequent in international songs, with the word *slut* being used most frequently in a total of 8.33% of the lyrics in this domain.

Table 4. Insults to women in song lyrics

Context	Songs (Spain)	Songs (International)
Bitch	5	25
Perra	4	1
Puta	9	1
Zorra	2	1

Source: Own elaboration, 2025.

On the other hand, a major difference was found when referring to people's physical appearance (Table 5). With a similar tendency in both the international and the Spanish domain, it was found that 17.66% and 15.66% of the songs mentioned physical aspects or words related to the beauty of women. On the other hand, the number of songs whose lyrics refer to the attractiveness or physical appearance of men is reduced to 1.66% of the songs in the Spanish market and 2% in the case of compositions in the international song scene.

Table 5. Reference to the beauty of the songs

Context	Songs (Spain)	Songs (International)
Men's physique	5	6
Women's physique	47	53

Source: Own elaboration, 2025.

After analysing the songs of male singers, a lower sense of belonging to women was found in the pieces that originated in the Spanish market (Table 6). Thus, a sense of belonging was found in 3.14% of the songs by Spanish singers, a figure that rises to 15.95% in the lyrics of songs by international artists.

Table 6. Women's sense of belonging

Context	Songs (Spain)	Songs (International)
Yes	6	26
No	191	163

Source: Own elaboration, 2025.

In addition to these aspects, the meaning of the song lyrics in the videoclips in the sample was also analysed to determine whether the compositions exhibit macho characteristics. To determine whether macho characteristics were present, it was observed whether at least one of the factors described in the methodology section was present. If these characteristics were present, it was concluded that sexist behaviour was indeed reflected in the lyrics. The results are presented in Table 7, which shows that 50.33% of the international videoclips contain songs that can be characterised as sexist in one way or another. This figure drops to 32.33% of songs by artists from the Spanish music market.

Table 7. Maleness in song lyrics

Context	Songs with sexist lyrics
Songs (Spain)	97
Songs (International)	151

Source: Own elaboration, 2025.

As can be seen in Table 1, the number of songs assigned to male singers was much higher than that of female artists in both videoclip samples. Similarly, the visual presence of both genders in the videoclips was also analysed (Table 8).

Table 8. Appearance of men and women in music videos

Presence by gender	Videoclips (Spain)	Videoclips (Internationa)
Appearance of men	286	287
Appearance of women	262	279

Source: Own elaboration, 2025.

As with the songs, the male presence is greater in both the Spanish and international videoclips. On a visual level, however, there is greater parity in terms of appearance in the videos. However, this data alone does not explain the importance of each of the themes within the images that make up the videoclips. For this reason, the role that each gender plays in the videos was analysed (Table 9).

Table 9. Role within the narrative of the videoclip by gender

Category	Protagonist	Co-starring	Secondary	Appearance	Object
Male (Spain)	154	95	25	6	7
Male (International)	152	97	26	9	3
Female (Spain)	51	95	66	21	28
Female (International)	51	97	69	28	33

Source: Own elaboration, 2025.

The data reflects a much greater leading role for men than for women in music videos, a finding that is consistent with the fact that the number of music videos released by male singers is also greater in the two samples analysed. It should also be noted that the data obtained is very similar at both Spanish

and international level, with a clear tendency to give more weight to men in the stories and images shown in the music videos. Compared to 51.33% of Spanish music videos in which men are the protagonists, the figure drops to 17% in the case of women, a figure that also applies to international music videos. In the latter type of videos, a man is the protagonist in 50.66%.

Interestingly, there is also a notable difference in the "object" category, to which we have included the appearance of people whose only role in the development of the videoclip was limited to emphasising their physical features or being subordinate to the sexual desire of the singer. In this category, a greater number of cases can be observed in which women were limited to this role. Thus, in 11% of international music videos, women exclusively played the role of sexual object, a figure that drops to 1% for men. In the case of music videos by Spanish artists, the figures are similar to the previous case: 9.33% of the music videos feature women and 2.33% men.

With regard to the degree of agency in the stories of both genders, two patterns of behaviour were analysed with which women are sometimes labelled: that they manipulate men or that they are supported by men (Table 10).

Table 10. Character of the women in the narrative of the videoclips

Category	Manipulative woman	Women let themselves be bought
Songs (Spain)	9	13
Songs (International)	10	22

Source: Own elaboration, 2025.

It was found that in 3% of Spanish videoclips and 3.33% of international videoclips, women were portrayed as manipulating men. Being held out by men or only interested in their money was 4.33% in the Spanish videoclips and rose to 7.33% in the international videoclips. As far as stereotypes are concerned, the following types were found in the analysed videoclips (Table 11).

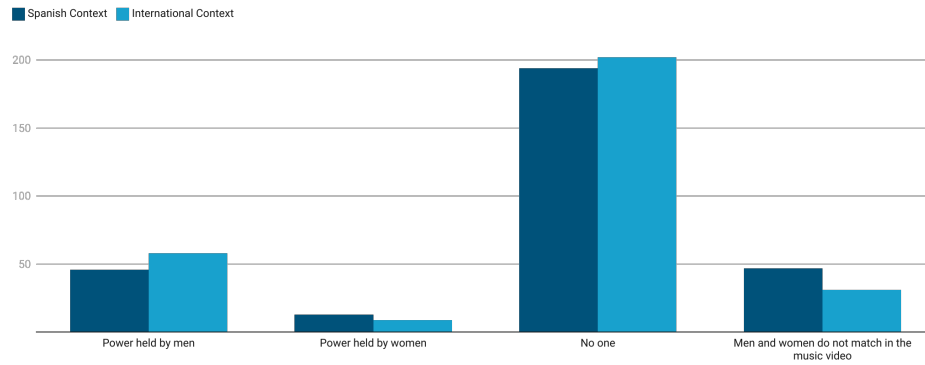
Table 11. Gender stereotypes in videoclips

Category	Videoclips (Spain)	Videoclips (International)
Femininity dike	0	1
Western hegemonic femininity	40	17
Western hybrid femininity	142	192
Western pariah femininity	20	27
Various types of femininity	12	9
Femininity not determined	48	33
Assured masculinity	4	1
Western hegemonic masculinity	162	161
Western hybrid masculinity	54	67
Western protestant masculinity	13	4
Sassy masculinity	0	1
Various types of masculinity	10	21
Masculinity not determined	44	30

Source: Own elaboration, 2025.

For men, the most frequently occurring category was Western hegemonic masculinity, which was represented in 54% of the Spanish videoclips and in 53.66% of the international videoclips. The most frequently represented type of femininity, both globally and in the Spanish market, was Western hybrid femininity, appearing in 64% and 47.33% of cases respectively.

In relation to these characteristics sometimes associated with women, the power relations between men and women shown in the videoclips were analysed (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Male-female power relations in music videos

Source: Own elaboration, 2025.

In most of the videoclips, it was not possible to recognise a clear dominance of one gender over the other in the images shown. The least common option was that of a dominant role of women over men. Thus, only 4.33% of music videos on the Spanish market showed women in a male-dominated position, a figure that fell to 3% for music videos worldwide. The number of male-dominated women rose to 15% of Spanish music videos and 20% of international music videos.

Linked to the power relations is the possibility of abuse and violence by one of the parties. Thus, the number of occasions in which violence of any kind towards women was reproduced was observed (Table 12).

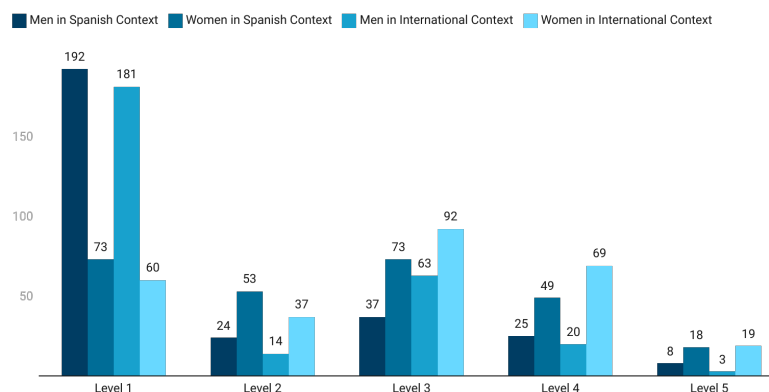
Table 12. Violence against women

Category	Physical Violence	Psychological Violence
Videoclips (Spain)	12	1
Videoclips (International)	15	3

Source: Own elaboration, 2025.

It was possible to identify more physical violence than psychological violence, although this is much more difficult to determine in a study object such as the videoclip, in which the narrative is very condensed and in many cases there is no dialogue. For example, physical violence was observed in 4% of Spanish music videos and in 5% of international videos. In the case of psychological violence, it was 1% of the most-watched videos worldwide and 0.33% of the most-watched Spanish music videos. It should also be noted that sometimes scenes of violence against women appeared in songs intended to illustrate or denounce this type of situation suffered by women, as in the case of songs such as Treat You Better by Shawn Mendes, Firework by Katy Perry or Bad Guy by Billie Eilish.

On the other hand, the degree of nudity shown to both men and women in the videoclips was analysed to see if there were any notable differences due to the gender of the subjects (Figure 2).

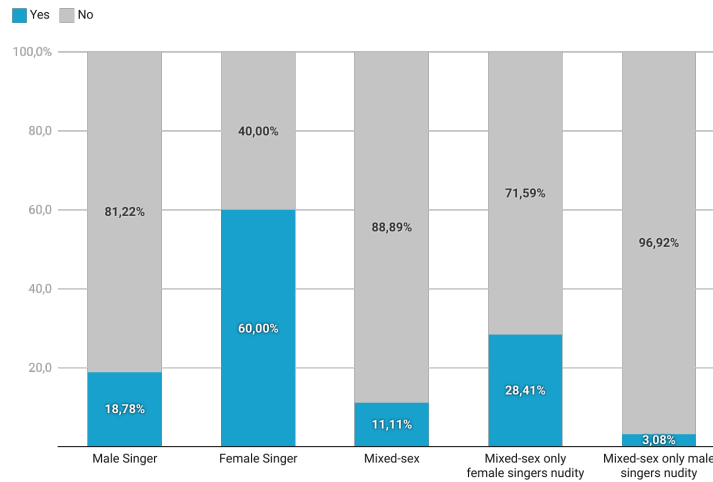
Figure 2. Degree of nudity by gender

Source: Own elaboration, 2025.

Based on the data obtained, we can see a clear difference in the degree of nudity between men and women, which is more pronounced among women, as well as depending on the context of origin of the music videos. Thus, the data show a higher level of nudity among women in the most played music videos worldwide.

On the other hand, the same data was also analysed with a focus on the artists. The results are as follows. In the case of Spain (Figure 3), it can be observed that women show a higher level of nudity in both solo songs and songs by mixed groups or collaborations of artists of both genders.

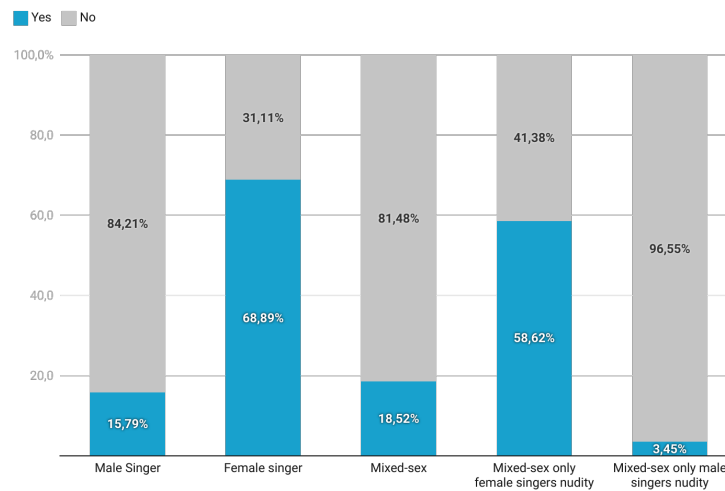
Figure 3. Nudity of Spanish singers in music videos



Source: Own elaboration, 2025.

The same trend can be observed in the videoclips with the most plays worldwide as in the Spanish market, even if they are more accentuated (Figure 4). Thus, the percentage of videoclips in which female singers show nudity is increasing, both in songs led exclusively by female singers and in songs in which there are collaborations with male artists.

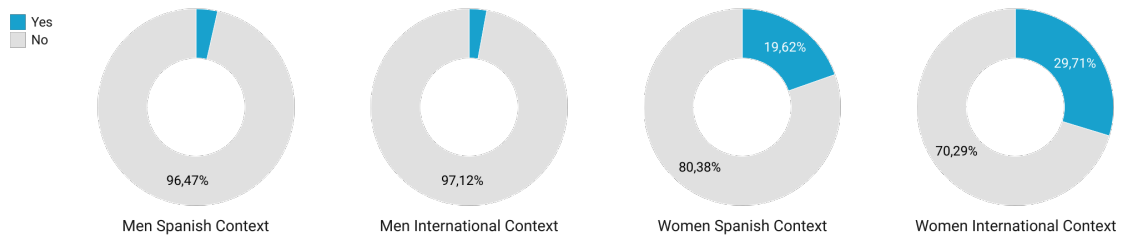
Figure 4. Nudity of international music video singers



Source: Own elaboration, 2025.

Associated with this is the use of images that can be described as "reifying" (Figure 5). This term refers to images in which only individual parts of people are shown, which usually serves to emphasise the sexual character of these people. The data we obtained are as follows: A notable difference can be observed between men and women. For example, it was found that 1 in 5 Spanish videoclips have an "objectifying shot" and 1 in 4 international videoclips have an "objectifying shot".

Figure 5. Reifying level



Source: Own elaboration, 2025.

The degree of nudity of men and women is related to the sexual behaviour shown by the people in the videoclip. A 5-point scale was created for this purpose, as already explained in the methodology section. The results obtained using this scale are shown in Table 13.

Table 13. Individual and interpersonal sexual behaviour

Category	Degree 1	Degree 2	Degree 3	Degree 4	Degree 5
Male (Spain)	138	61	13	62	10
Male (International)	106	66	21	82	6
Female (Spain)	78	49	59	72	9
Female (International)	49	41	91	89	7

Source: Own elaboration 2025.

A tendency towards more sexualised behaviour was observed among women. There is only one case, that of maximum nudity, in which, paradigmatically, slightly more men are represented in the Spanish videoclip market.

The fact that the singer is surrounded by a group of people of the opposite sex who display marked sexualised behaviour is related to sexual behaviour and the relations of domination between men and women. The classified cases found in this way were as follows (Table 14). Especially at the international level, a greater use of this tool by male singers can be observed.

Table 14. Harem around the singer

Type of singer	Harem presence
Male singer (Spain)	22
Female singer (Spain)	0
Male singer (International)	36
Female singer (International)	5

Source: Own elaboration, 2025.

On the other hand, the degree of representation of women and men by age in the videoclips studied was also analysed, with the following results (Table 15). The age group most represented in the music videos of both genders is that of young people, with an even more pronounced presence among women. It is worth noting that 44.33% of Spanish music videos feature men of different ages, with this category being the second most important among men, only behind the young men segment.

Table 15. Age groups represented in the videoclips

Category	Child	Teenager	Young	Middle-Age	Elderly	Various
Male (Spain)	0	1	167	21	0	98
Male (International)	0	2	148	3	0	133
Female (Spain)	6	2	192	7	0	55
Female (International)	0	5	189	0	1	84

Source: Own elaboration, 2025.

The last aspect analysed was the appearance of bodies that can be described as "non-normative" and that represent progress in the representation of a more realistic and faithful image of society. It was also analysed whether these appearances had a positive or negative impact on the representation of the diversity of bodies and sizes, assuming a negative appearance only in those cases in which conflicts or problems arose due to a body different from the one imposed as "normative". The results were as follows (Table 16).

Table 16. Occurrence of non-normative bodies

Category	Yes	Negative representation
Male (Spain)	114	1
Male (International)	118	1
Female (Spain)	59	2
Female International)	85	1

Source: Own elaboration, 2025.

It was found that there were more cases of men with "non-normative bodies", which in the case of men were considered overweight or very thin. For women, this representation was lower, with women whose bodies were not slim being seen as not conforming to the prevailing canons of beauty. It is worth noting that the negative representation of "non-normative bodies" can be categorised as residual for both genders, as the number of cases is minimal.

5. Conclusions and discussion

It has been observed that the most played videoclips, both worldwide and produced in Spain, feature young artists in the leading role. This can be explained by Illescas-Martínez (2017), who points out that the fact that young people star in these videos is a way for the main audience to identify with the characters that appear in these narratives. This aspect is amplified in the case of female artists, as it has been observed that videos of male singers tend to feature men of a wider age range. This is due to the loss of commercial appeal in terms of branding that female singers suffer after a certain age (Doug Melville, cited in Lieb, 2018), indicating a clear gender inequality in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2024).

On the other hand, according to Illescas-Martínez (2015), although a trend reversal has begun in terms of the sexualisation of male performers, this is still much more tentative or occurs in lower numbers than their female counterparts, as Lieb (2018) notes. This is confirmed by the data collected. Thus, there are numerous songs in which male and female artists collaborate, in which the former appear fully clothed, while the female singers are shown completely naked or with very little clothing, such as *Ya es hora* by Ana Mena, Becky G and De la Ghetto, *Break Free* by Ariana Grande and Zedd or *Ateo* by C. Tangana and Nathy Pelusso. This is paradoxical, because on many occasions it was the female artists who were the most popular or had the highest sales figures, as in the case of the song *Stay* by Rihanna and Mikky Ekko, *Bad Blood* by Taylor Swift and Kendrick Lamar or *Bon Appétit* by Katy Perry and Migos. Although this nudity can be understood as a way for the artists to express and affirm their own sexual freedom, as reflected in the theoretical framework and highlighted by authors such as Ruiz Muñoz et al. (2024), the sexualisation of these artists is a lure to seduce and attract the audience within the consumer society. It is therefore clear that "in general, the man has the power to objectify; that is, the man is the acting subject and the woman is the passive object" (Vizcaíno et al. 2023, p.29).

In addition to the visual sexualisation of women in music videos, it was also found that beauty is still a more important factor in relation to women. For example, the physical appearance of women was referred to much more frequently in the song lyrics. This was also visually reflected in the number of cosmetic shots in the videoclips, which were also more numerous in the case of women. These aspects are in line with what Mulvey (1975) refers to as the male gaze and what authors such as Aubrey and Frisby (2011) have shown in previous studies.

In detail, the results of this study show the following with regard to its objectives:

S01. There are clear gender differences in music videos, both Spanish and international, in terms of the different image of men and women. Thus, while men perform with a greater diversity of ages, this is much less the case for women, showing a tendency towards youth both in the artists and in the secondary performances. As far as the beauty channels are concerned, the differences remain. The image of women is more homogeneous and corresponds to certain beauty channels (slim, toned body, long hair, etc.) than that of men.

S02. The representation of women compared to men also shows differences in issues such as their sexual behaviour (overt or implicit), their decision-making capacity (active or passive role), their appearance as a sexual object or complement or, more generally, their representation as an unwilling accessory or, if they have one, as perverted or manipulative.

S03. The degree of nudity or sexualisation of women is also greater than that of men in both Spanish and international videoclips. This sexualisation is sometimes intentional, as a form of female empowerment, but mostly as a form of objectification of women in the social scene.

In conclusion, Soler-Campo and Oriola-Requena (2019) state that in commercial music in general, gender stereotypes continue to be transversally present as an implicit perpetuation of the dominant system. For this reason, Illescas-Martínez (2017) argues that the videoclip has become a privileged cultural asset within the dominant cultural industry due to its ability to reproduce the hegemonic ideology and culture among young people. Thus, it can be observed that the success of music videos continues to be linked to songs whose lyrics and visual representations reproduce gender stereotypes, in which the most prominent aspects of women continue to be their bodies, their beauty and their youth; and in the case of men, the power they exercise over women, which confirms the power of the music video as a tool for transmitting cultural values that can contribute to or slow down the appropriation of sustainability as a model of management and social relations.

This article contributes to updating the academic literature on the importance of the music videoclip, especially in relation to the transmission of cultural values and gender equality, and helps to consolidate an academic theoretical corpus that can serve as a basis for future studies.

On the other hand, it highlights the importance of this tool, the videoclip, as a social constructor of identities and roles that could be used to convey more egalitarian values in which gender differences are less pronounced, so that the message, through social modelling, would thus contribute to less sexualised societies and to greater perceived, shown and manifested equality between men and women.

Finally, the article looks at the role of videoclips as transmitters of gender values and stereotypes. It shows that the treatment of women in these productions tends to be derogatory and sexist, that they do not occupy leading positions and are portrayed as sexual objects, thus thematising and making visible this female representation in such important cultural creations as videoclips. It deepens the debate on the role of women in the media and their importance in conveying options, opportunities and expectations to the general population, especially to the youngest, i.e. those who are called to build the future and better societies.

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