

The integration of gender analysis in interdisciplinary research:

Challenges and solutions of a project on multimedia heritage

As a recipient of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowship, Federica Bressan shares her experiences of incorporating gender analysis and gender aware activities into the field of multimedia cultural heritage.

Picture books for women. Sacred books for men.

Yentl (movie), 1983

1 Introduction

The promotion of gender equality has been at the heart of European social and economic policies since 1957, when the principle of equal pay for equal work became part of the Treaty of Rome. During the past few decades the status of women in our society has improved significantly. For example today women are present at every level of the academic hierarchy – although gender gaps still exist and the number of women tends to decrease along the career path, in the so-called leaky pipe [1]. The value of their contribution has been recognised to the point that the absence or the exclusion of women is now regarded as an impoverishment of the research itself. Yet the scenario remains complex and raising concerns around ‘gender issues’ often receives mixed reactions from both men and women in the day-to-day personal and professional life.

Horizon 2020 (H2020) structurally encourages the inclusion of gender equality in project applications. For projects where it seems completely irrelevant or impossible to relate the research interests to gender, applicants are asked to include a statement justifying the exclusion of gender. Attention to gender can be interpreted as having different levels of impact: (1) gender equality in scientific careers;

(2) gender balance in decision making; and (3) integration of the gender dimension into the content of research and innovation. Yet translating these guidelines into a concrete action plan for project applications that deal with topics not related to gender is not easy. How do we make the commitment to gender credible? What activities can actually have an impact on gender research or society at large?

In this article, I present my experience of thinking, structuring and implementing a successful Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowship proposal which includes gender mainstreaming in a gender non-related field of research, namely that of multimedia cultural heritage. The project runs for two years (2017-2019) and implements gender aware activities in the research process and in the research content.

The article is structured as follows: section 2 summarises the starting point of my experience, section 3 presents the main challenges posed by the implementation of gender analysis in gender non-related research, and section 4 goes into the details of the steps and actions I took before, during and after the project proposal submission and evaluation.

2 State of the art

Including gender at micro and macro level throughout the project cycle has required a systematic reflection and an effort to learn about the methods and the indicators of the gender research field. My case study is relevant in that the reflections I carried out during the preparation of the application touch upon the critical obstacles that normally prevent other researchers from including gender in their work.

Despite my efforts to consider the gender dimension at micro and macro level throughout the project cycle, as required by the H2020 calls (see Subsection 4.1), I have found some resistance in the implementation phase. One of the crucial problem lies in 'arbitrariness' of the gender dimension in gender non-related studies, so I have often been asked: "Couldn't you carry out your research without considering gender?" The correct answer is yes, I could: gender in my research is not the focus, but it is arbitrary in the sense that the well-known 40% quota of female members on public committees and boards proposed at institutional level in Europe is arbitrary.

It's like asking General Motors, who has been receiving media attention for their active policy of including women at every level of company hierarchy¹, also partnering with the initiative Gifs Who Code²: "Couldn't you put together a board without women?" Of course, they could. The point is to give women a chance and facilitate their access to positions that were traditionally filled by men, as the only strategy to divert the inertia of the status quo. The same rationale can be found in training programs like Cyberwayfinder³, targeted at women in their mid-careers and helping them become fully-certified cybersecurity professionals.

The gender dimension is integrated within Horizon 2020, at two levels: (1) gender balance within the research teams; and (2) gender dimensions within the content of research (source: ESOF Conference⁴, also mentioned in Subsection 4.2). The inclusion of women on committees and boards is comparable to their inclusion in research teams in science. The concept can be extended to other collaborators, mentors, and also subjects involved in the research, unless their gender needs to be determined by the nature of the research. But how to integrate gender in the content of research?

Some research may reveal a more meaningful connection, like those explained in the

examples provided in the video mentioned in Subsection 4.2. For other types of research, the connection may seem non-existent. In how it was structured, my research seemed to belong to this category. However, I kept reflecting on the real impact of gender on my research, and also on the impact of my "gendered" research on other projects and areas. I came to the conclusion that most research is currently gender blind, and basic statistical data on the representation and behaviour of each gender group is simply missing. Therefore a systematic and structural monitoring of gender representation and typification is highly desirable in every field, compatible with most research fields, and virtually cost-free.

At present, an organic debate on the challenges of integrating gender analysis in gender non-related research does not exist. There is no platform dedicated to researchers in gender non-related studies that wish to come together, get organised and actively contribute to the cause of gender in its broad sense and in its concrete societal embodiment. Most importantly, they cannot connect to the experts in the field, who are ultimately responsible for (1) providing us with methods and tools that we can borrow (or develop together with them); (2) supervising and assessing the results of our collection and analysis; and (3) integrating these results into the research field where they ought to be best exploited and repurposed in the future.

3 Main challenges

The challenges that researchers today have to face to successfully implement attention to gender in their research are manifold - but some are subtler than others, and also harder to overcome because they are systemic, and therefore beyond the possibilities of a single individual's power to change.

One has been addressed in the previous section: **acceptance**. While we are encouraged to make our research gender aware, and it seems a given fact that the inclusion of gender in our research automatically increases the quality of our research and its usefulness to society (see video mentioned in Subsection 4.2). At the same time, we are questioned when we do, and our methods and intentions are put under the microscope.

Checking genuine intentions is necessary to avoid attention to gender spreading as a trend to gain easy recognition, but an inquisitive tone may be discouraging. It would be nice to receive an offer of guidance and collaboration



by researchers in gender studies, more often than a hostile look as if we were trying to intrude into their sacred space. Only by partnering up with experts, can we familiarise ourselves with methods and tools to carry out our research in a way that meets adequate scientific standards.

From which follows the second challenge: **credibility**. You can't improvise gender research. Just like you shouldn't improvise any type of research outside your domain of expertise. And in my estimation, there is a risk that the implementation of gender-focus will be inappropriately carried out due to lack of expert validation. Not only do we need methods and tools, but specific indicators, ways to handle ethical issues, and ultimately the knowledge to reintegrate of all the data into the discourse of gender studies, where it can be appropriately framed into the big narratives.

And speaking of experts, another challenge is precisely that of educating oneself on gender, from policies to definitions to the reality of gender groups in different parts of the world. For one, it is not always clear what people mean by 'gender'. Is it just women? Transgender people? Others? The paragraph in the guide for applicants of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie reads "gender issues" without disambiguating the expression (see Fig. 1). By extending my domain-specific literature and by connecting with new people involved in gender studies and gender policies, I came to the realisation that the concept of gender inherently includes every 'colour' on

the 'spectrum', and that everyone struggling to some degree with acceptance, personal fulfilment, career advancement, due to issues related to gender should be considered. Just like so should men – it is very important not to fall into the opposite extreme, and exclude or penalise men. And this despite the fact that, especially at a first glance, the literature appears so compartmentalised that one can gather a large collection of works on "gender" by only focussing on women.

The literature that focuses on 'everyone else' is not obvious to find at first. Evidence of this trend is everywhere. For example let's take a quick look at the binary definition of 'gender balance' of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)⁵: "Human resources and equal participation of women and men in all areas of work, projects or programmes." Only after reading [2], it became clear to me that the correct way to frame the whole matter is in terms of "*gender and human rights*".

What I will not consider as challenges in this specific context are (1) the resistance by peers whose personal opinion happens to be that gender doesn't matter, even if their comments may in fact be an obstacle to our work in day-to-day research; I go by the directions of the EU where the fact that gender matters is a well documented fact; and (2) the fact that adding the concern of gender to our research is time consuming, especially considering that it is strictly not *necessary*. The same has been said about Open Science and the resistance from researchers to document and package their data for sharing [12]. The social usefulness

5.5 Gender Issues

Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions pay particular attention to gender balance. In line with the European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers¹⁰, all Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions proposals are encouraged to take appropriate measures to facilitate mobility and counter-act gender-related barriers to it. Equal opportunities are to be ensured, both at the level of supported researchers and that of decision-making/supervision. In research activities where human beings are involved as subjects or end-users, gender differences may exist. In these cases the gender dimension in the research content¹¹ has to be addressed as an integral part of the proposal to ensure the highest level of scientific quality.

As training researchers on gender issues serves the policy objectives of Horizon 2020 and is necessary for the implementation of research and innovation actions, applicants are encouraged to include such activity in their proposals, as appropriate.

¹⁰ Commission recommendation of 11 March 2005 on the European Charter for Researchers and on a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, C(2005) 576 of 11.3.2005.

¹¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/news/%E2%80%9Cgendered-innovations-how-gender-analysis-contributes-research%E2%80%9D>.

Fig. 1. Excerpt from page 18 of the Guide for applicants of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowships 2014.



of both gender-focus and Open Science and the *added value* that they bring to our research should be understood, and therefore the effort required to achieve it justified and worth it.

4 The DaphNet project

DaphNet is a research project focused on interactive art. More specifically, it is concerned with the preservation and the documentation of interactive installation art, where digital technology plays an important role. Both digital technology and interaction challenge the current archiving practices, normally based on homogeneous categories of documents with limited capacity to represent complex relations among documents across different categories [3].

One of the steps needed to properly describe and store the information about the artwork is the definition of an 'ontology for interaction', i.e. a formal representation of the entities involved in the interaction as well as of the modes in which the interaction happens. DaphNet is a two year project (2017- 2019) and received funding from the EC through the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions (H2020-MSCA-IF-2015). It is individual funding, so I am both the coordinator and the Principal Investigator of the action; I conduct my research at IPEM (Institute for Psychoacoustics and Electronic Music) at the Department of Art History, Musicology and Theatre Studies, of Ghent University in Belgium.

4.1 During the preparation of the project

I started writing this project in May 2014. I had developed an awareness about gender issues in the years prior, but it is only with this application that I decided to be active about it in my research. I did so mainly because the guidelines for applicants were explicitly encouraging the implementation of gender balance and training on gender (Fig.

1). A couple of minutes were also reserved for gender issues in every info session I had participated in. I decided to fully embrace the challenge, and I started to: (1) educate myself with domain-specific literature; (2) reach out to experts; (3) build the research topic for my application around the concept of gender. I was moving from the assumption that the implementation of gender related concepts and activities shouldn't be improvised – and I had little experience on the subject then – and on the contrary it should be informed by existing policies and case studies, and always be monitored by experts.

Before proceeding, it may be noted that in the guide for applicants in 2017 this paragraph in Fig. 1 was moved to page five of the H2020 WP 2016-2017 Part 3, and replaced with a very short note directly in the application template. Gender keeps being mentioned on page 14 of the H2020 WP 2016-2017 Part 1 (bold in the text):

All applicants are invited to explore whether and how the **gender dimension in research content** is relevant to their research, including where appropriate specific studies and training. In addition, **gender equality** is promoted in all parts of Horizon 2020 including gender balance at all levels of personnel involved in projects. Gender equality issues are also reinforced in the Excellent Science parts of the Horizon 2020 Work Programme dedicated to the ERC and MSCA.

In order to acquire the domain specific vocabulary, in preparation for the project application I collected and processed a number of official reports linked in the documentation accompanying the Marie Skłodowska-Curie call [4,2,5,1,6] (Fig. 2), and I have participated in the annual conference organised by the Italian Association Women



Fig. 2. Official reports used in the preparation of the H2020-MSCA-IF-2015 application.



and Science on 12 to 14 November 2014 in Trento, Italy. My attention was attracted by the definition of gender mainstreaming, “an innovative concept, encompassing much more than ‘traditional’ equal opportunities policy”: according to the Council of Europe, gender mainstreaming may be described as “the (re) organization, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies, at all levels and at all stages by the actors normally involved in policy making” [4, p.10].

What was appealing to me, was the deep and systemic understanding of the gender problem. However, the level of abstraction of this concept was too much for my circumstance: my goal was to implement specific activities in the project application, I couldn’t attack the problem directly at the policy level. Fortunately, the report breaks down gender mainstreaming in four steps [4, p.12]:

- 1. Getting organized.** The central focus in this first step is on implementation and organization, on building awareness and ownership.
- 2. Learning about gender differences.** The aim of the second step is to describe gender inequality with regard to participation, resources, norms and values and rights, and to evaluate trends without policy intervention.
- 3. Assessing the policy impact.** The third step is to analyse the potential gender impact of the policy with reference to participation, resources, norms and values and rights.
- 4. Redesigning policy.** The fourth step is to identify ways in which the policy could be redesigned to promote gender equality.

It appeared clear that my research could be useful within the second step: monitoring, observation, data collection, “without policy intervention” but preliminary and preparatory to it. At this stage, I was still trying to build the research topic around gender. The project was taking shape around interactive installation art, and I wished to limit my attention to art works produced by women artists. The words “women artists” (so not “gender”) featured in the title and was prominent in the abstract. This was also the time when I reached out to experts in person. I wanted to meet with them and discuss the ideas that I had developed while reading the literature and receive feedback on the project topic. I contacted several people both at the institution where I

was then affiliated (University of Padua, Italy) and the institution with which I was applying for the funding (Ghent University, Belgium). These experts were all women. My experience with them is that I have received strong support and positive feedback from those who were members of University boards for gender balance and equal opportunities – mainly bodies that monitor the situation within the institution and produce periodic reports – but who were otherwise researchers in other domains. From those who were actually professors in Departments of Gender Studies, I have perceived more resistance and a harsher criticism. I was disappointed at first, because I thought that they would welcome an outsider trying to connect with their research field. In retrospect, I think their resistance was a useful lesson for me, because it stimulated me to analyse the reasons and the ways in which I was approaching gender. By attaching gender to basically every aspect of my research, I was amplifying the arbitrariness of this choice too much. The introduction of attention to gender can often be accused of arbitrariness, but sometimes it is defensible and sometimes less so. In my case I was standing in a weak position. So, I found myself reducing the presence of gender throughout my application and limited it to very concrete actions like:

- making sure that at least 40% of the participants involved in the experiments are women;
- assigning a priority to women’s works in the selection of art works for the experiments.

These actions were the direct reflection of existing policies, there was nothing new and nothing specific to my project. I asked myself what else I could do *while* conducting my research, and I was able to add these two points:

- collecting quantitative data and statistics from the cultural institutions involved in my project and the members of the project network;
- monitoring significant indicators with focused questions in interviews, life stories and questionnaires.

The definitive title for the project turned out to be “Dynamic preservation of interactive art: The next frontier of multimedia cultural heritage” (acronym DaphNet) and the paragraph that was mainly addressing gender in the application read:

According to the definition of **gender mainstreaming** [4], gender analysis is cross-integrated at macro, meso and micro levels throughout this project cycle. An extensive study on the representation of women in the world of the arts (as artists, curators, promoters, etc.) is currently missing. By carrying out my research on interactive installations, I intend to address the problem by: (1) collecting quantitative data and statistics from the cultural institutions involved in my project and the members of the project network; (2) monitoring significant **indicators** with focused questions in interviews, life stories and questionnaires. In addition, (3) I will make sure that **at least 40%** of the participants involved in the experiments are women; and (4) in the selection of artworks, I will assign a priority to women's works – granted that the characteristics of the installations meet the requirements of the study. In all these activities, I will be aided by **experts** in the field, whom I have already contacted personally and whom have agreed to give their contribution (names and affiliations on the project website).⁶

In addition, I embraced the call's invitation to pursue formal training on gender:

Training on gender issues. In order to build the background functional to my own gender-related activities, I will take at least one of the courses offered by the Centre for Gender Studies at Ghent University (in English)⁷.

4.2 Between the evaluation and the start date of the project

The notification of the proposal evaluation was delivered in January 2016. My project started in February 2017. So, I almost had a full year during which I knew that I would go on and be a Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellow but wasn't one yet. During this transition time, where I was in-between jobs and I relocated to a new country, I felt motivated to keep being open to opportunities to learn more and engage with gender related activities. In particular, I was very happy when I was contacted by the EC about being interviewed in a video that was being produced precisely on how to implement gender related activities in project applications. I felt it would be interesting to share my experience because I had actually done systematic work and was aware of what I had learnt as well as of what the limits of the situation were. It struck me that my contact person motivated the choice of my profile



Fig. 3. Screenshot from the video **Understanding gender dimension for MSCA projects**.

because I was one of the very few, if not the only one, to my understanding, to implement gender in her proposal, and of course to be successful in the evaluation that year. That was proof to me that implementing gender was not so straightforward, and at the same time I felt proud of having attacked the matter with method and determination. What struck me next is that in the phone calls that preceded the interview, I was asked direct questions such as “how does implementing gender contributes to the results of your own research”. And while I was trying to explain that the core problem precisely lies in the difficulty to justify and implement gender in gender non-related research, I had the impression that even my solution was being questioned. I found this approach both alarming and confusing: were we on the same team, standing for the same cause, or were they trying to find a weak spot in how I dealt with gender in my project?

The interview was taped during the EuroScience Open Forum (ESOF) Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions satellite event “Research and Society”, at the University of Manchester on July 29th, 2016 (Fig. 3). The video features experts from several European universities.

It was published on the channel of the EU Science & Innovation⁸ on November 10th, 2016, with the title “Understanding gender dimension for MSCA projects”. It has been viewed 5,046 times as of April 11th, 2019. The video description reads:

Are you an MSCA fellow or considering applying to an MSCA grant? Then check if the gender dimension is applicable to your research field! Gender dimension is not about the ratio of women and men in your research project, it's about your research content. This video will explain you what gender dimension in research is about and give you examples of how it can be integrated within your research project and improve the quality of your research.



Interestingly, this description focuses on the implementation of gender in the research content, leaving it out for the members of the research team which are included in the H2020 definition provided in Sec. 1. The video reports a few interesting research cases where the relevance of gender was not obvious in the beginning but tired out to be key once framed in a different perspective. As for my contribution, I think I stayed on the safe side without going into the details of my project and my implementation, advising aspirant applicants to read the literature and learn and think for themselves how they can make a useful contribution to the cause. The underlying message is that gender should not be seen as a momentary trend that needs to be forced into project applications to gain more points in the evaluation, because this would ultimately do more damage than good to the cause. It's really important to learn to think differently and strip back the reality we're used to of the gender neutral (which mostly means male oriented) veil that stands between us and a more liveable place for all people.

The video has only received one comment: "A video plagued with gender stereotypes and generalizations, encouraging gender perspectives before even asking the question 'Is gender the most relevant variable?' What about the 'sleep perspective'? How are night owls affected by different projects?". The "most relevant variable" in what context? But what strikes the most is again the attack on the arbitrariness of gender: why gender and not sleep patterns? It is a legitimate question in a way. Thinking of gender as "*gender and human rights*" (Sec. 3) would points us, in my opinion, to the correct answer. But the comment has received no answers (two years later).

The ESOF Conference featured a session where experts explained "why integrating gender (within your team or your research project) can make a difference to the quality of your research" (quoted from the conference program). During the Q&A of that session, I asked a question echoed by another member in the audience: we were both turning to the experts (i.e. professors in gender studies departments) to receive guidance and tools on how to include gender in gender non-related research. Our rationale was that nobody was better than them could develop tools for researchers in other disciplines to use and would be happy to start collaborations. We can educate ourselves to the best of our capabilities, but the experts should remain

the authority for the assessment of our results. I found the answers not very informative, if not disappointing to my scientist ears ("be creative" was one I won't forget). Sadly, the discussion was feeding the impression that all this attention to gender was just an intrusion of feminism in academia: why promote such an important topic in all research areas if no methods, rigorous approaches or shared goals can be outlined? I believe that it was under the same impression that another young woman conducting research in physics or engineering asked if her application would be penalised for not including gender. Of course, this shouldn't be the case, but her concern reflected where the conversation in the room was going: unclear goals, absence of methods, but a fierce support of the ideology. Ultimately, without a *credible* approach, all the talk about gender in science will backfire and nullify even the valuable advancements made so far.

4.3 After the start date of the project

During the project, I actively tried to find opportunities to keep educating myself and staying up to date on the topic. For example, I followed the webinar "Collecting Data About Gender Identity: Importance, Current Practices, and Exploring International Best Practices" organised by the Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law, and found it very informative. It clarified some ideas, such as the identification of transgender and gender minority people in large surveys; the "science of measurement"; guidance for researchers and advocates. The webinar was streamed on June 22nd, 2017 and I learnt about it through the Center for Sexology and Gender at the University Hospital in Ghent with whom I had established a connection during the first months of my project. They pointed me to more literature that might help me structure the questionnaires delivered during my experiments better, for example [7,8]. "Media and gender" and "Seminary Gender History" are some of the other seminars organised by the Doctoral School at Ghent University⁹. I have learnt that the "Beleidscel Diversiteit en Gender" (Policy center for diversity and gender) at Ghent University¹⁰ offers a remarkable variety of services, information and is very sensitive to the well-being of students. I sensed a general trend in European universities to be very open to new policies that would increase the well-being of gender minorities and the spirit of acceptance behind this trend is uplifting. However, they were not aware of the controversy on gender neutral pronouns that

has received sensational mediatic attention in Canada since late 2016 and ended with an amendment to the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Criminal Code in 2017. The awareness of gender minority identities, rights and needs is so young in the Old World that there is little question about inclusive policies. However, Canada and the United States of America could be an eye opener for potential controversies that lie ahead: it is to the benefit of everyone that such tensions should be avoided in the future. Hence a cautious approach to the subject matter seems desirable, and from my perspective this calls even more for scientific methods in gender non-related studies at every level of data design, collection and analysis. Some of those who opposed the bill in Canada partially backed up their position by claiming that several statements in the legislative text were in open contrast with well-established scientific literature. Solid knowledge must be at the core of policy design and decision making, and without a scientific approach to gendered analysis in non-gender related field there is a high risk of polluting the waters and ultimately damaging those who would benefit the most from these studies in the first place. I keep myself up to date on the social and political discourse around this complex matter in order to maximise my ability to reflect and respect gender minorities in my future experiments (on interactive art) and at the same time to minimise the chance that I distort or misrepresent them. I am trying to express this intention to expand the woman-only perspective into an all-encompassing idea of gender in a new grant application (H2020-MSCA-IF-2019, submission deadline September 11th, 2019). The awareness that makes many researchers and groups embrace all the colours on the gender spectrum from a starting position mainly focussed on women is not only characteristic of my personal path but for example is reflected by the Working Group for Gender Equality for Mobile Researchers in Science (GEMS) of the Marie Curie Alumni Association (MCAA), which I have joined in 2017, that has recently changed its name in Working Group for Gender Equality and Diversity for Mobile Researchers in Science (keeping the same acronym GEMS). Needs and requests from the people included in this now larger pool may vary, but the bottom line is that all of them are people and, as I mentioned in Sec. 3, the right way to frame the issue is by associating gender and human rights.

During the first months of the project, I have worked on the data collected during an exploratory study on interactive art involving

a sound installation for collaborative music making called "BilliArT" by artist Tim Vets [9]. In line with the ideas I have expressed so far, I have tried to identify useful ways to implement gender in the experiment, discarding those possibilities that were not backed up by the literature I had come across in my training. The options were eventually reduced to two: (1) respect of gender non-binary self-identification in the section for personal information in the questionnaire, and (2) observation of eventual relevant patterns across the rest of the data collected, without a theory a priori and without looking for something specific. Point 1 relates to the policies for inclusion and well-being of all the gender minorities. Once the (legitimate) existence of these groups is recognised, forcing a binary choice for gender is a conceptual contradiction and a practical act of disrespect, just as it would be for a choice regarding the race limited to two races, or not allowing interracial identities, or going about the matter hypocritically with "Caucasian" and "other". The webinar mentioned above and [8] have been precious sources to develop my awareness on how to formulate the choices in the questionnaire. Point 2 does not require much effort at design time, but can take up as much time as one is willing to give at analysis time, depending on how far and how deep the search is pushed. The fact that this data collection can be performed at a virtual zero cost goes to its advantage. It is hard to make a case on why it should not be performed. The researcher can then proceed to only analyse the data of their interest, or try to see if there are noticeable differences between sexes or genders – and also if there are no differences between them, which might be just as interesting depending on the context. This type of action qualifies as "monitoring", and it is desirable as expressed in Sec. 2. In my case, the data were collected via questionnaire, oral interview, audio and video recordings, and the data log of the tracking system involved in the installation setup. The questions that the users were asked addressed different aspects of the installation likability, usability and design, besides general background information including their familiarity with the technology involved and their degree of formal musical training. The video recording and the log data were quantitative references for the duration of the game and complex parameters like the Quantity of Motion (QoM, see [10]). Every single data set can be measured or compared in function of gender. For example word clouds were built with the description of the participants mood before and after the experiment [11]. The lessons

learnt from this exploratory study include the fact that (1) a great number of interesting questions about gender can be asked once clean data have been collected, and this is a much unexplored trend in gender non-related fields; and (2) that the step of analysis would benefit from, if not require, the supervision and collaboration of an expert in gender studies, for the assessment of the results and ultimately for their integration in the research field where they ought to be best exploited and repurposed in the future.

5 Conclusions

In this article, I have presented my experience and the problems I encountered in trying to implement gender analysis in gender non-related research. In particular, I explained my motivation and the steps I have taken from the beginning to educate myself, connect with experts, and achieve a degree of competence that would allow me to carry out this task in a *credible* way with *useful* results. With this account I wish to contribute to the conversation in a field where I have received no formal academic training, and I encourage the experts to collect contributions like mine and [help us] develop flexible tools to borrow and use in our research fields. I see my commitment to the gender dimension as an organic effort to bring back the human factor in research as well as in every other aspect of life, in the belief that in the long term it will bring a revolutionary positive change in society, and that in the short term it can accelerate the healing process that many women and gender minorities are still going through and that holds them back from developing a full personal and professional life.

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¹ General Motors in the media this year: www.fortune.com/2017/01/10/barra-gwc-detroit (last visited 2019-04-11).

² Girls Who Code project: www.girlswhocode.com (last visited 2019-04-11).

³ Cyberwayfinder: www.cyberwayfinder.com (last visited 2019-04-11).

⁴ ESOF Conference: www.manchester2016.esof.eu/en/the-programme/event-information/quotas-the-right-answer.

html (last visited on 2019-04-11).

⁵ European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE): www.eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1148 (last visited on 2019-04-11)

⁶ Project website: www.daphnet.federicabressan.com/ (page last visited on 2017-09-30).

⁷ Centre for Gender Studies at UGent: www.cgs.ugent.be/en/courses (page last visited on 2017-09-30).

⁸ Understanding gender dimension for MSCA projects: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hq4eWo30RfY (last visited on 2019-04-11)

⁹ Doctoral Schools at Ghent University: www.ugent.be/doctoralschools/en (last visited on 2019-04-11).

¹⁰ Beleidscel Diversiteiten Gender: www.ugent.be/nl/univgent/waarvoor-staat-ugent/diversiteit-en-gender (last visited on 2019-04-11)

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