3.2 Non-traditional media for non-traditional skateboarders: cultural resistance and radical inclusion in The Skate Witches Zine

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✕ ~~Abstract~~

Following in the countercultural tradition of do-it-yourself (DIY), alternative media production, 'non-traditional' skateboarders—a broad category encompassing people of marginalized genders, races, and sexualities that have been historically underrepresented in the skateboarding industry and media—are increasingly using zines as both an outlet for creative expression and a mode of social critique and transformation. Perhaps no zine has been more successful in providing a platform of representation for non-traditional skateboarders than *The Skate Witches,* co-created in 2014 by two North American skaters: Kristin Ebeling and Shari White. Using the zine's thirteenth issue, published in October 2019, as a case study, this paper examines how *The Skate Witches* enacts radical inclusion through a contestation of the gender hierarchies produced and maintained by traditional skateboarding culture while fostering a sense of community and collective identity among their readers.

Keywords: skateboarding, zines, gender, DIY, inclusion.

1. Introduction

Over the past several years, increasing attention has been paid to the issues of equity and inclusion in skateboarding. Now more than ever, 'non-traditional skateboarders',—a term used to refer to a broad spectrum of marginalized gender, racial, and sexual identities that have been historically excluded from the dominant skateboarding industry and media—are carving space for themselves at all levels within the culture. They are organizing localized skate collectives on the streets and in skateparks, starting their commercial brands, climbing the professional ranks in contests, attaining elite sponsorships, and connecting virtually through social media networks. Like sci-fi fans, punks, and riot grrrls, they have also been creating zines as a participatory, do-it-yourself alternative to traditional media outlets.

Short for 'fanzines', zines are defined as "noncommercial, nonprofessional, small-circulation magazines which their creators produce, publish, and distribute by themselves" (Duncombe, 2014, p. 6). Free from the stringent regulations, deadlines, and corporate pressures of mainstream publications, zines are a forum through which their creators can explore radical, often counter-hegemonic ideas, engage in creative experimentation, and unapologetically assert their identities and interests. Just as zines afford agency in the formation of identity, they also do so in the formation of community networks. Zines provide a platform for their creators' own ideas and aesthetic sensibilities which remain unrepresented in traditional media, and their underground circulation fosters a network of like-minded people who identify with the content and expressive form of presentation (Duncombe, 2014; Piepmeier & Ziezler, 2009).

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Non-traditional skateboarders, in particular, have mobilized the zine medium as a form of representation and a tool for diversifying skate culture on their own terms, from M. Dabaddie's community-oriented queer skate zine, *Xem Skaters*, published out of Sweden, to professional skateboarder Cher Strauberry's punk-influenced perzine, *Diddley Squat Diaries*, to the Bay Area-based *Not Shit*, a lengthier zine made for weirdo girls, freaky boys, punks and rockers.[2] In addition to channeling the creativity and freedom inherent in the physical practice of skateboarding into writing and art, zines offer a space in which their makers can critique the male-centric focus of traditional skateboarding publications like *Thrasher Magazine* and explore strategies for disrupting the norms they produce. Several studies have already considered the ways in which the gender hierarchies embedded in skateboarding through their cultural and media products have relied, to some extent, on the subordination of the gender, racial, and sexual minorities who participate in them. That is, while 'heroic' masculine imagery dominates their advertisements, action shots, and features, non-traditional skaters are rarely seen at all. When they do appear, they often do so not as skilled practitioners of their sport but as passive, or sexualized objects used to promote products or for the visual pleasure of an assumed male readership (Borden, 2001; Beal & Weidman, 2003; Beal & Wilson, 2003; Wheaton, 2003; Brayton, 2005; Rinehart, 2005; Yochim, 2009).

Since the release of its first issue in 2014, *The Skate Witches* has become one of the most successful and far-reaching non-traditional skate zines. Created and edited by two North American skateboarders—Vancouver-based filmer and photographer Shari White and Kristin Ebeling, Executive Director of the Seattle-based nonprofit Skate Like A Girl—*The Skate Witches* is a submission-based zine containing a mix of written articles and features, interviews, playlists, handmade drawings, and photographs. Although it can be purchased online and shipped anywhere in the world for a small fee, the aesthetic of the zine is reminiscent of the traditional Xerox style favored for its affordability and ease of reproduction.

Using issue thirteen of *The Skate Witches*, published in October 2019, as a case study, this essay will examine how the zine enacts radical inclusion through its contestation of the dominant gender ideologies reproduced by skateboarding culture. Its black and white pages featuring almost exclusively non-traditional skaters, photographers, writers, and artists destabilize the norm even at first glance, but the zine does not exist entirely outside of traditional skate media and necessarily draws upon elements of the dominant culture—it engages directly with a shared body of knowledge and language, visual traditions, and DIY modes of production, for example. I would further suggest that the transformative potential of the zine comes not only from its resonance with non-traditional skateboarders but also from its modes of engagement with existing discourses of the interplay between individual expression and collective identification as well as a legacy of resistance that has been intrinsic to the formation of skate culture at large.

At times complying with and at others subverting dominant ideology and practices, the creators of *The Skate Witches* self-consciously enact multiple forms of resistance that mutually reinforce rather than undermine one another. Using an authorial voice that oscillates between serious and snarky, its creators experiment with the reversal of dominant masculinity to expose its inequity and prioritize the perspectives of non-traditional skaters. The zine plays host to a variety of complex and sometimes contradictory identity positions and seeks to explore, perhaps rather than resolve, the tensions of finding agency in marginalization.

1.1. Exploring the Origins of The Skate Witches

The Skate Witches borrows its name from Danny Plotnick's 1986 homonymous low-budget short film featuring a gang of female skateboarders who terrorize local skater boys in Ann Arbor, Michigan. "We're The Skate Witches and we don't take no crap from no one," the first of the leather-clad teens proclaims. "I'm the best female skateboarder in town," spits another, "and I'll fight anyone who begs to differ." Grainy Super 8 footage of the girls showing off their pet rats—a prerequisite for membership in their gang, viewers learn—interjects scenes of the trio asserting their dominance by shoving boys off their boards and stealing them. Satisfied with the damage they've caused, the Witches roll off on their newly acquired skateboards in the final scene to the sounds of The Faction's skate punk anthem 'Skate and Destroy'. It is worth noting that 'Skate and Destroy' is also the decades-old motto of *Thrasher Magazine,* embraced by skateboarders to reflect the anarchistic ethos of their culture as well as its dichotomy between creation (of a trick, an embodied performance, a mode of expression) and destruction (of boards, bodies, clothing, obstacles, and social conventions).

The Witches exude unapologetic confidence and blatantly disregard the contestation of their skills and toughness lodged by the local boys, but their behavior appears to be motivated, at least in part, by an underlying frustration with these challenges to their authenticity. This dynamic is evidenced most clearly by the penultimate scene in which a young man with unkempt hair and an oversized sweater vest stands in front of the camera holding a skateboard under his arm and asserts, "Those Skate Witches think they're real tough, but we're ready to rumble any time. To be quite frank, they're not even that good of skateboarders." He immediately walks out of the frame and is replaced by one of the Witches, who enters the camera's view just as he exits. Without a further word, she proceeds to push a different male skater to the ground and rides away on his board. The Witches' aggression, punk aesthetics, and even pet rats are not only provocative because they intentionally subvert acceptable standards of feminine behavior, but also because they push the boundaries of skater identity. The Witches' clumsiness on their boards as well as the absence of any tricks that might 'prove' their competence on the board suggests that ability is not central to their sense of belonging in the same way it is for the boys. To the chagrin of their male peers, the Witches boldly and visibly occupy space regardless of their skills.

In a 2018 interview with Ann Arbor-based blog *Damn Arbor,* Plotnick attributes the cult popularity of the two-minute film to its representation of the otherwise underrepresented category of women skateboarders. He recounts that the idea for the plot was sparked by the perceived hostility of the subculture towards women, which deterred one of the actresses from learning to skate herself. He says, "Skate culture was obviously big in the 1980s, but the documentation and the lore of that era probably features little in the way of women skaters. And any woman skating probably did get grief, just as Dana [Mendelssohn, 'the witch in the Misfits t-shirt'] surmised she would if she showed up in town with a board. The film was born out of Dana's frustration around the likelihood of being given grief for something she wanted to do" (Interview with Skate Witches director Danny Plotnick, 2018).

The creators of the *Skate Witches* zine recognized the continued lack of representation not just of women, but of the broader category of non-traditional skateboarders more than two decades after the film's release. Shari White describes how this fueled the creation of the zine, saying, "We encountered so much awkwardness in skateboarding—I think a lot of guys don't understand that. Instead of complaining and trying to operate within this subculture that we don't really fit into or feel totally comfortable in, we decided to make our own scene where we do feel totally comfortable. Even though it's not marketable or whatever we just really wanted to make an outlet" (Abada, 2017).

Plotnick's cult film reflects the essence of the zine in more ways than just its generative impetus. Like its cinematic namesake, *The Skate Witches* zine similarly draws upon the DIY, punk sensibilities of both skateboarding and the practice of zinemaking. Using an authorial voice that oscillates between serious and snarky, its creators experiment with the reversal of dominant masculinity to expose its inequity and prioritize the perspectives of non-traditional skateboarders. The zine plays host to a variety of complex, messy, and sometimes contradictory identity positions and seeks to explore, perhaps rather than resolve, the tensions of finding agency in marginalization.

2. Cultural Resistance & Radical Inclusion in The Skate Witches Zine

In October 2019, *The Skate Witches* published its thirteenth issue, featuring a photograph of Canadian skateboarder Breana Geering performing a crook bonk on a New York City ledge on the cover.[3] In addition to being the most practical location for capturing the trick, the low vantage point of the camera gives Geering a commanding presence and showcases her unique style. The suggestion of her fluid motion contrasts strikingly with the grit of the concrete under her wheels. The visual impact of the image is heightened by the simplicity of the surrounding design which lacks the dramatic cover lines that often clutter the front of traditional magazines. Instead, a black vignette ending just above Geering's head houses the title while the issue number sits in the bottom right corner in matching handwritten typeface.

Not only is the minimalism of the cover a departure from the conventional aesthetics of traditional

3. A crook bonk is a trick in which the skater lifts ('ollies') their board and angles it away from an obstacle ('crooked') to tap ('bonk') their front wheels and kicktail ('nose') against it.

publications, but so too is the subject of its main image. In May 2017, Vans and Birdhouse pro Lizzie Armanto became only the third non-traditional skateboarder to land an action cover of *Thrasher* in its 40 years in print. What's more, credit for capturing Geering's photo on zine's cover belongs to the zine's co-creator, Shari White. Far more than just a means of exposure for White's own photography, *The Skate Witches* serves a doubly important representational function, since women and gender non-conforming photographers and filmmakers are even more rarely featured in traditional skateboarding publications than those in front of it.

In the skateboarding world, being featured on the cover of a major magazine like *Thrasher* is widely considered to be a major achievement. Since the release of its first issue in 1981, *Thrasher*'s cover has been reserved for some of the biggest, most iconic moments in the history of the culture, like Jeremy Wray's massive 16-foot water tank gap ollie in November 1997 and Tyshawn Jones' ollie over the entrance to New York City's 33rd street subway station in January 2019. Skaters all over the world dream of seeing themselves memorialized among such legendary company, but this honor has only been bestowed upon a relatively select few—an overwhelming majority of whom have been men.

Considering the lack of diversity and the legacy of the cover as a dedicated space for showcasing innovation and dedication, the contributions of non-traditional skaters have been largely undervalued in this regard.

2.1. Commitment, Progress, and Allyship in the (Re)construction of Skater Identity

Each issue of *The Skate Witches* zine begins with an article by co-creator Kristin Ebeling in which she muses about her relationship to skateboarding and how her engagement with the culture has been shaped, in some ways, by her gender identity. Keeping with this theme, the opening piece of issue thirteen, 'What Are You Committed To', focuses on the qualities that define a skateboarder. As the title suggests, *commitment* is among the most important for Ebeling. This signals a rejection of cultural gatekeeping based on ability, which is often the impetus for justifying the lack of representation afforded to non-traditional skaters in dominant subcultural media. Ebeling finds ground in exposing the strengths and shortcomings of de-emphasized competition that skateboarders have used to position themselves against other sports, and thus hegemonic forms of masculinity. For her, affiliation itself is not a contest. In other words, one does not

become a skateboarder when they achieve a certain repertoire of tricks or skate a certain number of hours per week, but rather when they accept the inevitability of failure and make a concerted effort to improve despite it. The prioritization of commitment, passion, and dedication over ability as a marker of legitimate cultural membership is also reinforced by the visual content of the zine which will be analyzed further in the coming paragraphs.

The development of physical and mental fortitude is central to the cultural identity of skateboarders and informs their collective practices. "We inspire each other through a distinct type of relentless social pressure and support," Ebeling writes. "When we want to give up, our friends don't give up on us. They don't let us off the hook. They keep pushing us". Although each practitioner overcomes the barriers to conquering tricks in their own way and at their own pace, the shared thread of progress fundamentally shapes relations between skateboarders, manifesting most positively in encouragement and the 'free sharing of knowledge'. Maintenance of this reciprocally supportive relationship requires a conscious effort to curb comparisons between the perceived skill level of individual skateboarders as a measure of success, and instead, an acknowledgment of the enriching qualities and unique styles that each one brings to the group. Ebeling is making explicit what is otherwise assumed knowledge among skateboarders, exploring the ways in which it is applied in practice and considering how that application might be extended to other social arenas which are equally important to the development of inclusive communities as face-to-face, localized skate sessions.

Ebeling describes her steps for conquering a trick—first thinking through it mentally and envisioning herself performing it, then beginning the demanding process of trial and error until, with feedback and support from peers, she lands it—and considers their potential to transform skate culture more generally. "Imagine if our commitment to creating safer and more inclusive spaces mimicked our commitment to skateboarding. When we don't get it exactly right, we try harder next time. When our friends mess up, we don't shame them.". She continues, "When all else fails, we just keep trying because, well, quitting or cheating just isn't an option". It is clear that Ebeling is chiefly concerned with making skateboarding a less hostile space for non-traditional skateboarders, a group with which she identifies. If one conceptualizes the patriarchal power dynamic that produces inequity as oppressive and inescapable, the possibility of affecting meaningful change appears daunting at

best and impossible at worst. Ebeling makes the proposition feasible by speaking to her readership in a language they understand. She appeals to a skill set that they already possess and take pride in, suggesting that evolution is an incremental project that is not confined to the realm of self-improvement, and instead is most effective with an orientation towards the reciprocally supportive environment of a community.

In the final paragraphs of her essay, Ebeling introduces the concept of allyship which she defines as the use of "personal power and privilege to both step up for marginalized communities you don't identify with and have the knowledge to step back and give space when necessary.". Allyship is framed as an opportunity to practice commitment to the community through repeated action. In what can be understood as an extension of the physical practice of skateboarding, which relies on both a keen awareness of the body in space and highly intentional but often subtle movements—a flick, a pivot, the shifting of weight—to maintain control over the board and oneself, allyship similarly necessitates the fluid adaptation of behavior based on an awareness of one's physical and social environment. Much like being a skateboarder, being an ally means resisting complacency, breaking boundaries, and embracing learning as an ongoing pursuit.

As a physical record of Ebeling's personal thoughts and beliefs which she includes at the beginning of every issue, this column opens a candid dialog with herself as well as her readers. In making herself vulnerable to the same unsettling potential for missteps and contradictions inherent in her request to the community, Ebeling reinforces *The Skate Witches* as a space in which to candidly exchange a diversity of perspectives—including one's own as they grow and change. Alison Piepmeier (2008) argues that zines inherently lend themselves to this kind of vulnerability due to their informal and personal presentation as well as their materiality. While digital platforms like blogs and websites offer their creators the ability to retroactively editorialize and delete content, zines are a finite record of a particular point in time. By exploring these ideas in the zine, then, Ebeling signals an understanding that she is not an authority who has mastered the art of commitment, but rather that *The Skate Witches* serves as a useful forum for understanding what it means to take part in the process.

2.2. Representation and Cultural Legitimacy

The ideology of *The Skate Witches* zine also comes strongly into focus through its visual content. Photographs constitute the bulk of the zine: there are a total of 44 photos, 30 of which are action shots, appearing across 21 of its 24 pages (including the front and back covers). For anecdotal comparison, 13 photos of women can be found in the 225-page January 2020 issue of *Thrasher Magazine*. In the corner of an article on Ryan Sheckler, one woman appears in a small group photo from Taiwan's Jimi Skateshop; female musicians are seen in four photos from a feature on Death Match NYC; three women model apparel in the products spread; one woman models streetwear while a male skater performs a trick over her head in the Photograffiti section; three photos of legendary pro skater Elissa Steamer are included in the 'Baker 4 Ever' feature, and Fabiana Delfino receives a CCS welcome ad. Only two of these 13 photos are action shots, and both are of professional team riders.

The images in *The Skate Witches*, by contrast, feature exclusively non-traditional skaters performing a wide range of tricks, from Charlotte Hodges' Backside 5.0 grind on the second page, to Kristina McLean's kick turn on page six, to Ashley Rehfeld's polejam which occupies a spread across pages seventeen and eighteen. As is evidenced particularly by the inclusion of more foundational tricks like the kickturn, it is clear that effort and style are prioritized over ability in the curatorial criteria. The creators of the zine are shifting away from the privileging of the newest, most difficult tricks in major magazines and weakening the distinctions of status afforded to professionals promoted by the industry. Representation of a variety of experience levels is not only a more accurate portrayal of the reality of skate culture through the eyes of its curators, but it also supports a philosophy of skateboarding in which every trick you conquer is an achievement worthy of recognition because they indicate forward progress in overcoming physical and mental barriers.

For readers who have not yet mastered the depicted tricks, the photographs offer a possibility model which has the potential to inspire or strengthen a personal sense of commitment. Writing about the enduring subcultural legacy of the *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* video game franchise, sociologist Paul O'Connor succinctly sums up the importance of possibility models as "inherently philosophical and expansive" (O'Connor, 2020). He continues, "As soon as we learn that something can be done, it becomes a tangible reality. This is the same logic of

inclusion. When minorities and the marginalized are represented in media, they demonstrate the attainable" (O'Connor, 2020). From a more practical perspective, the images can also serve an instructive function similar to receiving advice from a friend on how they conceptualize a trick. Although the static form of photography is limiting in this regard, it can still be beneficial to see its mechanics performed by someone who looks like you, to gain insight into the best foot placement, position of the body in relation to the board, and angle of the board in relation to the obstacle.

It is also important to consider the significance of the settings that the photographs are captured in. Although presumably geographically diverse, they commonly showcase skateboarding in a street context. This poses an intentional contrast to skateparks and vert obstacles which have historically been considered the suitable arenas for women's skateboarding both on a professional and amateur level, in part due to what Matthew Atencio et *al.* (2009) call 'the distinction of risk'. In their study of skateboarding's gendered habituses, they observed that urban street skating was considered among participants to be the most rebellious, authentic, and dangerous form, whereas vert skating offered a level of protection in its intentional design and rules requiring the use of protective gear. In this dynamic, masculinity is positively associated with risk-taking behavior, which simultaneously elevates the subcultural value of street skating and naturalizes the lack of participation of women as the result of a biologically determined aversion to risk, rather than socialization or hostile sexism (Atencio et *al.*, 2009).

The Skate Witches takes non-traditional skateboarders outside of the confines of purpose-built skateparks and shows how they exercise their creativity through an engagement with the urban landscape. Much has been written about the ways in which street skateboarders' appropriation of space defies the logic of an urban environment optimized for the exchange of capital (Borden, 2001; Perrin, 2012; Glenney and Mull, 2018). Because the role of women has been traditionally relegated to the domestic realm, modern cities have been designed both by and for men to accommodate their patterns of movement, leisure, and commerce (Bondi, 2005; Gogh, 2016). Non-traditional street skateboarders, then, engage in a multilayered practice of resistance against the conventions of gendered behavior and the acceptable uses of urban space by and beyond their own subculture.

Not only do non-traditional skateboarders constitute the majority of photographic subjects, but the majority of photographers as well. In addition to Shari White, the issue also features the work of Norma Ibarra, Sarah Meurle, and Chantal Garcia. The ephemerality of the performance of skateboarding—the street variety in particular—makes photographers integral to the representation and preservation of the culture. Their work is also key to how we conceptualize its evolution. The collaboration between skaters and their photographers always has the opportunity to be mutually beneficial, as it allows both parties to showcase their individual styles, skills, and aesthetic sensibilities. I argue that the stakes of this creative partnership are heightened between non-traditional skaters and photographers, because they are often negotiating control over their image, and thus their marginalized status, with those who benefit from their subjugation.

In an interview with EyeEm, skate photographer Zorah Olivia describes her experience photographing the X Games, saying, "At that time, I was the only photographer out on the course with the female skaters. I couldn't understand why the photographers who were documenting the male athletes weren't interested in these women, all with amazing personalities and kicking ass on the course" (N/A, n.d.). There is often an understanding on the part of the artist—and a resultant sense of pressure—that capturing their subject has implications that extend beyond their own reputation. Olivia also speaks to this feeling: "Previously, there hadn't been a lot of exposure for the female competitors, as X Games hadn't fully televised the women's events, and so although I felt a lot of pressure, I also knew I was there for a reason. I didn't want it to be the last time I'd be around this community of women, and this was the motivation I needed to push myself as a photographer and make it happen" (n/a, n/p). Although photographers have the ability to shape the way their subjects are seen by the world, they are reliant on various channels of exposure. This is where traditional skateboarding media has failed both non-traditional skateboarders and photographers the most and is what makes *The Skate Witches* zine such a vital source of representation.

The patriarchal nature of power relations in skateboarding media has all but written female photographers and filmmakers out of its cultural history, with the lack of visibility and access forming a circular relationship of exclusion. Through the inclusion and proper attribution of multiple non-traditional photographers, *The Skate Witches* interrogates the role of traditional skate media in perpetuating the false narrative that women and nonbinary folks do not participate in the creative production of their culture, while simultaneously highlighting those who have persisted despite its observable consequences. The zine mobilizes the power of exposure to encourage the development of the scene, offering both established and emerging photographers a place within its participatory community as an alternative to traditional media outlets.

2.3. Subverting Gender Stereotypes in Skateboarding Media

I now wish to turn our attention towards the 'Boys on Boards' interview series, which appears on page 21 of the issue, as a final example of how *The Skate Witches* performs cultural resistance. This feature is where the zine most explicitly reverses the gender narrative perpetuated by dominant skate culture to reveal the more covert ways in which distinctions of legitimate cultural membership between men and women are normalized. In each column, a representative of the zine speaks to a male skateboarder about their connection to skateboarding and their experience in the industry in a traditional Q&A format. Canadian skateboarder Leon Chapdelaine introduced as "the next hottest piece of back bacon since Sluggo," is the subject of this issue's interview. It is immediately clear that the creators are responding, in part, to the objectification of women in skateboarding, wherein their value is determined by their physical appearance and sex appeal rather than their skills or individuality (Kilberth & Schwier, 2019; Atencio et *al*., 2009). The pervasive perception of women as sex objects reinforces the relationship between masculinity and authenticity and justifies acts of symbolic violence against women in other social and cultural arenas outside of the media (Atencio et *al*., 2009).

The rest of the interview demonstrates that even when they are designated as legitimate cultural participants, non-traditional skaters are still treated as an anomaly for pursuing skateboarding over other activities which are considered less conventionally masculine and have naturalized their perceived lack of participation (Beal, 2003; Atencio et *al*., 2009). Chapdelaine is asked, for example, "What *on earth* gave you the idea of becoming a skateboarder?" while another reads, "What is your biggest inspiration that keeps you skateboarding *as a man*?" (my emphasis). Kristin Ebeling notes that all the questions are "derived from mainstream interviews of female skateboarders," and that they "just changed the gender pronouns" (Abada, 2017, n/p). But the wording of the questions also reflects the true meaning that both the interview subject and the knowing audience of the zine would derive from them. In adopting a snarky tone and exaggerated language, the writers lift the thin veil of neutrality and highlight the patronizing nature of the questions.

A tension is evident between decentering the concept of gender as an essential category of identity and recognizing the tangible ways in which it influences social relationships. Examining the implications of the role reversal, where women hold the authority to ask questions of men—and thus shape their perceptions— can help to illuminate how this tension is produced and how it might be mitigated. Since skate media is dominated by men, interviews are conducted largely by men for an assumed male readership. There is no need for interviews with male subjects to focus on their experience of gender because not only are they the statistically and socially dominant group, but also because the interviewer and reader are already presumed to possess at least a baseline understanding of the male experience. This allows them to gain deeper insights into the inner workings of the subject, from their personality and tastes to their skating habits.

Male skateboarders are automatically understood as individuals in a gendered context, whereas women are often asked to speak as representatives of their gender as if they are a homogenous group. Alternatively, questions are posed in such a way that make the gender distinctions between male and female skateboarders appear universal and assumed. It is also clear that when speaking to female skateboarders, male interviewers operate on assumptions about the collective experience of women, which are not only the product of stereotypes that produce inequity, but also affirm them. This is most evident when the interviewer asks Chapdelaine, "Recently you've been incredibly brave out there on trips with your female counterparts like Breana [Geering], Una [Farrar], and Fabi [Delfino]. What's it like being the only dude in the van?" When gender-reversed, this question panders to gender stereotypes. It supposes that when women choose to skateboard, they are not only taking the physical risks that all skateboarders take, but that there is a second potentially unanticipated risk in stepping outside of a defined boundary of conventional feminine conduct to enter a male-dominated subcultural world. In answering, "I feel like I can be myself around them! […] I love rockin' with them and hope to do so again soon!" Chapdelaine undermines the validity of the purely gendered behavioral distinction that the interviewer has set up in the language of their question without explicitly challenging it.

'Boys on Boards' presents a social commentary on gender bias while simultaneously bringing to light the nature of the power relationship between interviewer and interviewee in the context of skateboarding media. In experimenting with a simple role reversal, its creators reveal how non-traditional skateboarders are covertly relegated to a subordinate cultural position. As they do elsewhere in the zine, they also highlight the ways in which these distinctions inform social relations on both an individual (micro) and institutional (macro) level. Purporting to acknowledge women as legitimate subcultural participants by making them the

subjects of interviews is a hollow gesture without a larger change in discourse. It is the responsibility of allies, then, to not only facilitate a greater diversity of voices on both sides of the equation, but to remain critical of how their language is informed by their cultural perspective. Subjecting men to the same shallow, biased lines of questioning that many people of marginalized genders in the industry have become accustomed to also gestures towards the inclusionary potential of disrupting the conventional demographic structure of mainstream publications and beginning to make space for non-traditional individuals at all levels within their organizations.

3. Conclusion

Like sci-fi fans, punks, and riot grrrls, skateboarders have made use of zines as a DIY alternative to traditional media. *The Skate Witches* zine is exemplary of the ways in which non-traditional skateboarders in particular have mobilized the medium as a tool in diversifying skate culture on their own terms. As resistors against the prevailing masculine norms of the culture, its collaborators enact radical inclusion by centering the representation of marginalized gender identities and asserting them as legitimate cultural practitioners. The zine serves as a record of non-traditional skateboarders occupying physical, virtual, and cultural space and subsequently interrogates the narrative of their lack of participation as part of the hidden machinations of sexist exclusion.

Although both the medium of the zine and the subjects of its content live in the shadows of their dominant counterparts, *The Skate Witches* zine does not purport to exist outside of or in sweeping opposition to skate culture. In fact, its creators use their peripheral perspective to their advantage in locating opportunities for effective localized resistance. The transformative potential of the zine lies in its engagement with the existing discourses of community and progress that underpin the collective identity of skateboarders. At the same time, its expressive style and use of personal narrative can be understood as a challenge to the essentializing categories of gender that produce hierarchies of exclusion. *The Skate Witches* ultimately urges its readers to extend the notions of commitment so integral to the individual practice of skateboarding to the evolution of its collective culture. It acknowledges that as a negotiation between people with their own unique perspectives, change itself is—much like skateboarding—a process of trial and error, but one in which the rewards can far outweigh the risks.

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3.3 'Viveiro was already hardcore': the relevance of the local scene and its territory in the constitution and development of the Resurrection Fest

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✕ ~~Abstract~~

Resurrection Fest is currently a large-format music festival which has been held since 2006 in Viveiro (Galicia), and whose line-ups have been comprised of musical genres such as metal, punk, hardcore or stoner, among others. But this has not always been the case: since its origins, its musical programming and organizational dynamics used to be of a smaller scope, being closely linked to the trans-local hardcore scene. The purpose of this communication is to analyse the relevance of Viveiro and its local scene in the constitution and development of Resurrection Fest. For this purpose, participant observation techniques, SWOT analyses and semi-structured interviews have been used, the latter relying on the use of the technique of sociological discourse analysis. This has allowed us to show an unknown intra-history about the origins of the festival, closely linked to the cultural practices of Do It Yourself and the trans-local connections of Viveiro's music scene.

Keywords: resurrection fest, hardcore, music scene, viveiro, territorial studies.

1. Introduction

The Resurrection Fest (also known as Resu) is a festival celebrated in Viveiro (Lugo, Galicia) since 2006 (Resurrection Fest, 2021). This festival includes a wide range of musical genres inserted in what could be called 'extreme music'. In its condition as a large format festival, it has been awarded as one of the best festivals on the national scene, and the repercussions have not been long in coming: its economic and tourist implications are visible in the town of Viveiro itself, as well as throughout Galicia (Fest Galicia, 2019).

However, if a retrospective analysis is carried out, it is possible to see how this situation has not always been the case. Throughout the 14 editions[2] that the festival has been held, the changes in the cultural programming have been more than palpable. And it is that through the structural analysis of the posters of all the editions that has been carried out in this research (Tarrío, 2019), when it has been possible to understand how the Resurrection Fest has undergone modifications in a myriad of issues: an increase in music stages, changes in the price of the tickets, the number of national and international bands, the composition of the headliners, as well as the number of hardcore bands.

In its origins, the Resurrection Fest was born with a strong local base, closely linked to the hardcore musical sub-genre, as well as other musical sub-styles derived from it. Specifically, the initial organization was made up of a local hardcore crew[3], a fact that highlights the link between musical communities and the creation of collective identities (Ulusoy & Schembri, 2018). Furthermore, it is from these collective identities that affective communities also emerge, where the experiences of identification and intersubjective participation go beyond normalized social ethics (Driver & Bennet, 2015). Therefore, it is tremendously interesting to know the implications of musical experiences and communities in shaping identities -both individual and collective-.

The initial research in which this communication takes part was focused on understanding how the cultural transformations of the Resurrection Fest affected the identity construction of the people attending. In this research, in addition to the previously mentioned structural analysis, participant observation, semi-structured interviews, as well as the SWOT technique have been applied (as information gathering techniques). And it has been from the semi-structured interviews where it has been possible to verify how the story that has been told about the organization (as a 'myth'), left behind many other processes and agents that have been relevant for the development of the Resurrection Fest.

2. Narratives and myths

Through the different speeches that have been the result of the semi-structured interviews, it has been possible to understand some intra-historical narratives about the Resurrection Fest. And although it is true that a multitude of content blocks have been explored, for this communication it has been relevant to extract the information obtained regarding the organization, about the town of Viveiro (not only as a geographical setting, but also as the set of all those relationships that are drawn between the autochthonous population and those attending the festival), as well as the evaluations about the municipal institution.

Thus, once all the information has been analysed, it has been possible to detect two central narratives closely related to the origin of the festival, and whose discourses have made it possible to deconstruct or reinforce those mythical discourses that have been told since the beginning of the festival's history. Next, the narratives of 'the dream that comes true' will be exposed, as well as the legend of 'Melchor Roel'.

2.1. The dream that comes true

The first main narrative detected focuses on the description of the origin of the festival itself. And, according to the press[4], the story of Resurrection Fest begins with the determination of two young boys who have the dream of seeing their favourite band (the New Yorkers Sick of it all) in their town. For this, they had the permission and help of the municipal corporation, which gave the go-ahead to their idea.

In addition, this narrative has an 'input': the tenacity of these two young people. Consequently, the origin of the first edition of the Resu is the result of the cancellation of the Viveiro Summer Fest. This was scheduled to be held in August, but due to medical problems of one of the members of Sick of it all, it was cancelled. It will be three months later (in November, specifically), and with two more bands added to the line-up (Walls of Jericho and Anal Hard) when the first edition of Resurrection Fest is held.

The development and growth of the festival is explained in this narrative through the 'good work' of the organization, which has been able to develop the large-format festival that it is today. Therefore, this shows a clear representation of the myth of the 'self-made man', attributing the success to these two people, their great capacity for resilience and their perseverance and dedicated work.

It will be from the in-depth interviews and more specifically of those interviewed who belong to the town of Viveiro (since they perform the role of inhabitant, in addition to that of assistant) when this 'myth' begins to be deconstructed. Although all the people interviewed residing in Viveiro have contradicted this main narrative, below is a small extract - by way of example - that accounts for processes and actors that had not previously appeared in the narrative:

3. Crews can be defined as "a group of friends who hang out and regularly go to hardcore shows together", as well as "specific groups who go to shows and hang out together, but also may make claims to specific locales" (Purchla, 2011, p. 202).

4. As a representative example, it can be consulted Balseiro (2015, July 14).

It looks like it was something dropped from the sky, right? (…) No, no, dude. This has had more to do with a collective effort, with a history and with a cultural substrate, and with a person who put his popularity above this (…); there had to be a determined political bet for a person to be [forward]. This is not the result of the know-how of two people, nor of five. It is a whole set of things that have to do with the decision, a firm people's commitment for a model of cultural expression and with this event (Interviewed 14).

Through this extract, two key elements are argued that contrast and complement the mythical narrative talked about the organization: the history and the cultural substratum that exists prior to the festival - and that has made its realization possible -, as well as the existence of a political figure who has shown commitment and support in the creation and development of the festival. This person who is mentioned latently is Melchor Roel, a prominent political figure in the town of Viveiro and mayor at the time that the Resurrection Fest began to develop. Melchor Roel will be the central axis around which the next narrative will revolve.

However, before concluding this small point, it should be noted that in 2020 the Resurrection Fest organization posted a documentary on the net where its history was summarized. In this, and contrary to what had been told since its inception, part of the original mythical narrative is deconstructed, since the organizers who talk there include various social and political agents that, at the beginning, had been left out of the history. In addition, indirectly, the existence of a consistent music scene in the town of Viveiro, and which has a strong connection with Asturias, is described.

2.2. The legend of Melchor Roel

As previously mentioned, Melchor Roel was the mayor of Viveiro who allowed the celebration of the Resurrection Fest, providing help and financing for the development of the Resurrection Fest. His figure has emerged as an icon for some of the attendees, who relegate much of the weight of the festival's success to his person:

"Melchor was an absolutely basic pillar. Without Melchor there would have been absolutely nothing" (Interviewed 1)

In 2013, Melchor passed away, and two key moments occurred that have reified the importance of his person. The first is the celebration of two editions of the Melfest, a festival held in his honour, and whose money raised has been donated to charitable causes. The second of the key moments has been the double commemoration made by the band Madball, dedicating an emotional speech, and hanging a banner at their concert of the 2016 edition, and dedicating a small extract from the video clip DNA, where the band showed a photo with him (Nuclear Blast, 2014).

Although the figure of Melchor has been ignored by the discourse that has permeated the media (and that relegates the importance to the two young people who carried out the festival), the mythical conception of this politician has crossed strictly local limits, and has finally remained as a figure of reference in the public imaginary, where people who have not known him personally, have an opinion about him:

"Seeing how people talk about Melchor, I think he was a good guy. I see that people are very grateful [to him] … The organization and everyone. Even Madball"

(Interviewed 5)

3. The hardcore scene of Viveiro

Once the two main narratives that have described the history of the festival have been exposed, it is necessary to talk about the Viveiro scene, since it has played a key role in the origin of the Resurrection Fest. More specifically, if we go into the main narrative in depth, the two young people who had been part of the creation and definition of the festival were members of a hardcore band from Viveiro called Twenty Fighters. This band, created in 2003 and which participated in the first edition of the festival, also has as a relevant aspect the fact that its members were part of the Old Navy Port Crew. Considering the above about the crew, it can be seen that this is a community that transcends beyond individual identities. In addition, its connection with the hardcore movement allows us to affirm that we are facing a very specific collective and territorial identification mode: and perhaps the most important thing is that Old Navy Port Crew were not alone, since several more crews flourished in Viveiro, and among them, one strictly related to skate culture.

Trying to describe the origin of the hardcore bands in Viveiro, through one of the speeches of the interviewed people it has been possible to understand that already in the mid-1990s there was a pioneer band in the town, Hopeless Reason - and that later, it will change its name and will become known as Shoot Again -:

> *I think the concerts started when we were still in high school. They were made at Christmas (…) and began to be performed in 1995-96 with bands already at a level. Groups from Viveiro, notably, were Hopeless Reason and then others from Asturias. And then there was something like a 'twinning' and we went to Asturias, they came here (…). From there, groups were already coming (…) (Interviewed 14)*

This band - pioneer in the locality - helped to configure a primal scene on which the Twenty Fighters were influenced. In addition, it is possible to see the appearance of Shoot Again in two of the editions of Resurrection Fest (2008 and 2010), although in the first of these they did not get to play.

Returning to what has been said about the relationship between Viveiro and Asturias, it is possible to trace a clear relationship in the late 1990s and early 2000s. This information is also corroborated in the documentary itself issued by the Resurrection Fest, where Nefta - a member of the Asturian band Sound of Silence - claims to have previously participated in concerts in Viveiro:

> *I already know the town of Viveiro from the previous festivals that were held before the Resurrection Fest, where I was present there with some friendly bands. Also, for performing in small venues in the centre of town with one of my bands and since then I made a lot of friends with people from there in town. (Nefta in Resurrection Fest, 2020, n/p)*

Through this statement it is possible to understand that the Resurrection has not been an unusual event, but that it has been developing progressively and organically. And although it is true that the relationships had not had such a media impact, the synergies can already be seen in the first edition of the local festival Viveirock, held in 2001. The aforementioned Shoot Again, *Yacam* (another local band that after their dissolution they will give rise to another well-known Viveiro project, Rain Is Art), *Krápulas* (a punk-rock band also from the municipality) and the Asturian band *Posession*[5].

4. Conclusions

To conclude and standing as one of the central questions of this research, it has been possible to verify that there has been an intergenerational process regarding the hardcore movement in the town of Viveiro. This fact allows us to affirm that the Resurrection Fest has been the result of the evolution of agents and processes that had previously occurred in the locality.

A clear reflection of the intergenerational component can be seen in the fact that, a decade prior to the celebration of Resurrection Fest, some pioneering bands already existed, as well as the first synergies with Asturias were beginning to emerge. Therefore, we can speak of the existence of a trans-local network where people of various age groups were involved, and that has allowed feedback between communities and their cultural production.

5. For further information, it can be consulted in Viveiro (2001).

Another aspect that should be mentioned is the importance of local administration since it has contributed to the origin and development of the Resurrection Fest. And although it has not been the first time that the municipal administration has given the go-ahead to the youth to hold events, in this case, both the funding and the institutional support went a step further. When referring to the local government, it is necessary to mention the role played by Melchor Roel, whose figure has been praised in a large part of the speeches of the people interviewed.

Finally, it should also be mentioned that the discourse of the organization has been partially modified since the launch of the documentary. Thanks to this, it has been possible to validate some of the information that had been obtained only through the interviews, and that seemed to be hidden in the narratives related to the festival.

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