

Women and flamenco in the construction of the identity of the Andalusian people.

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Introduction.

This article examines the cultural identity that flamenco shapes for Spanish society as a form of socialization and expression of the Andalusian people, understanding flamenco as a musical genre that holds the history of our community.

This bibliographic analysis leads us to differentiate the sexist connotations under the discriminatory perspective of gender that make up the first appearances of women in flamenco, despite the fact that flamenco is one of the first sectors of employability where the female gender can develop within the world of work in our society.

Following this study, we find the need to highlight the role of women in flamenco to shape the image of Andalusian women and the symbols of identity that have been rooted in the image of Spanish and Mediterranean women, all of them coming from this musical style, taking it to its bibliographic analysis.

Once the study has been carried out from the aforementioned perspectives, we focus on presenting life histories as a tool or way of shaping and proposing an analysis of the experiences that have shaped the history of women in flamenco and in Andalusia.

With all this we highlight not only the bibliographical study and pedagogical character of this study, but the need to attend to sociological and anthropological studies to be able to analyze flamenco from an educational perspective anchored to the social and anthropological studies of gender, culture and identity to understand the historical conformation that shapes this art as Intangible Heritage of Humanity.

The ultimate purpose of this study is to present this review as a sample of the value of life stories as a research tool to not only contribute to the education of adults, but to shape and investigate the shaping of our history, being flamenco a genre investigated by scholars mainly from the sociological

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and anthropological perspective, trying to show how through pedagogy and education we can contribute to the historical shaping of this art.

Finally, we have closed this work by providing some conclusions focused on new sources of research that, as we have developed it, have been appearing as possible new hypotheses. We highlight important aspects in the development of our program design and raise research questions that can serve as future sources of research and new projects.

Methodology.

To carry out our study we used the PRISMA research Methodology in order to develop a meta-analysis of the available work on our research topic. Although this Methodology according to Hutton et al (2016) is mostly used in experimental sciences and health, it can also be applied to educational research. Thus, following the recommendations of Alexander (2020) in the Review of Educational Research to adapt systematic reviews to works in education, we followed the following steps for the analysis of the available information:

1. Study a relevant issue.
2. Manage questions to solve the thematic.
3. Propose effective parameters for the search.
4. Indicate criteria for inclusion and exclusion of research.
5. Consolidate and present main findings.
6. Interpret and reflect on critical issues encountered.

Following Cooper's (2010) approach to carry out the synthesis of research and the elements established to carry out systematic reviews and systematic review (PRISMA, 2009) we established the Methodological framework and presentation procedures for the current review. In order to respond to the initial approach of this review, to know the importance of the flamenco woman in the construction of the identity of the Andalusian people. A search was carried out, and studies relevant to the research were selected on the basis of various preset criteria, data were extracted and proceeded to analysis and discussion. Studies were included in both English and Spanish, using as databases Dialnet, Jstor, Google Scholar, SCOPUS and WOS, the fame catalogue of the University of Seville. The following inclusion and exclusion criteria were established:

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Inclusion criteria:

- Language of publication: English and Spanish.
- Phenomenon of interest: Women's identity and flamenco.
- Population: Women
- They answer the research question.
- Empirical and non-empirical data.

Exclusion criteria:

- Title not in line with the research question
- Vague summary
- Year of publication prior to 2000
- Duplicate items.
- They do not answer the research question.

As shown in the inclusion and exclusion criteria, articles that met the criteria and were considered relevant after an initial review were included. Following this, those selected were reviewed in depth and eligibility was decided by reading the full texts. Studies that provided current information on the research topic: the influence of flamenco on the construction of women's identity were included. Two searches were carried out, the first one of studies in Spanish and the second one in English, so that the language of publication was also a criterion for inclusion or exclusion, as well as the population under study, from whose selection the main contributions and results were extracted as detailed below, always following the PRISMA scheme:

Identification > Screening > Suitability > Inclusion

Flamenco as a sign of identity of the Andalusian people.

There are many characteristics that define flamenco as popular music and identity of the Andalusian culture, in fact, a series of aspects are needed to shape this identity as belonging to a certain group.

Since we find the first cultural manifestations until the flamenco genre crystallized in the mid-nineteenth century, the Andalusian people have been using popular music as an indispensable element of socialization and communication, becoming a characteristic element not only of Andalusian culture, but an indispensable element of identity.

Understanding flamenco as a musical genre with a social and identity character, Jaime Hormigos Ruiz, in his article on the Sociology of music,

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situates music as an element that responds to the social needs of a given context, as an expression of the feelings of a people, anchoring this concept to the idea of sociability:

We start from the idea that music has been endowed from the beginning with an inherent charge of sociability, it is an expression of inner life, expression of feelings, but in turn requires from those who listen to it, receptivity and knowledge of the style in question, as well as knowledge of the society in which it is created, since each musical work is a set of signs, invented during the execution and dictated by the needs of the social context. (2012, p. 76)

Isidoro Moreno defines in the book *Andalucía: una cultura y una economía para la vida*, written together with Manuel Delgado Cabeza, that the cultural identity of a people (its ethnicity as anthropologists call it) supposes the existence of a history and a shared memory, placing the axis of the existence of a people in its cultural identity. (2013, pp. 36-37)

Identity is defined by Olga Lucia Molano in her article *Cultural Identity, a concept that evolves* as "the sense of belonging to a community, to a social sector, to a specific reference group. This collectivity can usually be geographically located, but not necessarily". (2007, p.73)

As Fernando C. Ruíz Morales tells us in his article "Artistic expressions in the current Andalusian identity" "to speak today of "Andalusian identity" is considered as an anachronism or as nonsense by the defenders of the most homogenizing facet of globalization, who indicate that we are in a world where identities are diluted" (2012, p.209).

Cristina Cruces in her book *Antropología y flamenco, Más allá de la música (II)*, among the different levels of identity that it reflects, flamenco constitutes a globalizing expression of the society in which it is born, develops and is performed (2003, p. 33).

Cristina Cruces in the Acts of the XXIV Congress of Flamenco Art stated that:

flamenco is a musical and oral complex that is unique to Andalusian culture and one of its most outstanding signs of identity. It constitutes a manifestation of the history of the Andalusian population sectors that only wrote their own annals with the lyricism and tragedy of the jondo. It has as protagonist of its production, diffusion and practice the

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popular classes, and is attributable to situations of marginalization and social isolation, coming to be avoided, repressed or, at least, ignored and opposed for a long time to the "official Andalusia", although it has penetrated even the highest social strata. (1996, p.27)

In contrast to these assumptions by Cruces, Gerhard Steingress raises the question of "to what extent socio-cultural integration in Andalusia is based on identification with flamenco. Although it seems clear that the majority of the population considers it as a consistent element of the Andalusian cultural system, this does not necessarily mean that they identify with it or that they consider it as a "marker" of their identity as Andalusians. Appreciating and consuming only indicate habits related to a possible identification". (Steingress,2002, p.57)

Gender roles in flamenco.

The strong division between the masculine and the feminine is clearly evident in the history of Mediterranean culture. The hierarchical world in terms of the space of women and men in society frames the obvious inequality that has marked the history of Andalusian and Mediterranean culture and is still reflected in our society, and more specifically in the popular art that characterizes this Andalusian region, flamenco.

From the beginning we can see how in Fernando de Triana's book, the women who sang and danced were of lower class, even exploited to support the family economically, and conditioned by marriage to continue or not in the artistic world, even returning with their widowhood. A more recent example can be seen in 'Rito y geografía del cante flamenco', in the interview and life journey of *Tía Anica la Piriñaca*.

But despite the fact that women have always been present in both public and artistic flamenco as well as in private parties, the roles were clearly marked in one or the other sphere, as well as the concepts clearly differentiated by the sexing of biased models of the feminine and the masculine in flamenco, a concept that Cristina Cruces exposes in her article "De cintura para arriba" (From the waist up).

At the beginning of the century, despite the notable influence and evolution of the guitar, flamenco began to experience changes in the field of dance. The influence of the technique and presence of women like Carmen Amaya, have restructured the canon of the feminine and flamenco.

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In this way we can observe the arrival of a generation of bailaoras and bailaores who now singularize unisex flamenco dance [p.26]. "The greatest renovation [...] that took place in this sense was led by Carmen Amaya [...], who often dressed as a man, with trousers and a short jacket (Cruces, 2003, p.17).

The presence of women in flamenco dance has its justification in the division of the social construction of our culture according to the canons established for both women and men. In flamenco, the feminine, anchored to the dance, has been relegated to the social construction of "being a woman", separating the man from it; just as it separates the feminine from the composition or interpretation of its lyrics, leaving them framed only to examples such as the songs of *plañideras*, *nanas* or *panaderas*, subject to motherhood and domesticity that sustains the feminine identity.

This is what Cristina Cruces tells us in her research studies (2003 - 2005), where she exposes the existence of "*a division of the musical execution by reason of sex*", as well as she sustains this division in the concept of "*historical sexuation of flamenco*": "*the historical sexuation of flamenco*". She sustains this division in the concept of "*historical sexuation of flamenco*":

Both in their interpretation and practice and in the social relations and professional trajectories to which their active participation in the commercial world has given rise, through the readings of nature and complementarity, codified in "the normative", established on forms of participation and masculine and feminine different aesthetics, considering both as their own and legitimated but each one "in their own way", as if they were mutually necessary halves that are mutually reinforced: the one is the counterpoint and of exact fit in the other. (Flemish women, ethnicity, education and employment in the face of the new professional challenges, 2003-2005, p. 9)

This study affirms that there is a sexual division based on hierarchization, the concept of woman linked to the body builder continues despite the updated changes in gender models and that equality in the relations between the sexes and the power acquired by some women are linked to the expansion of industry and the Flemish market.

If something has been clear so far is that in order to study flamenco it is necessary to understand that it is a music that responds to the living conditions and the geographical and cultural context of the 19th century in

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which it was born. Women in the 19th century are a reflection of what this popular art tells us about them, but we have to rationalise the situation. As Cristina Cruces exposes us in "Towards a revision of the concept "new flamenco" in the magazine *La intelectualización del arte*, in Seville (2012) "The flamenco genre had been built from signs of identity clearly geo-referenced and anchored in the imaginaries of family, ethnicity and territory".

Beginning by affirming this dichotomy in terms of the structuring of the feminine and the masculine in flamenco dance, Cristina Cruces and Assumpta Sabuco in their research on *Flamenco Women* expose the conformation of the world with respect to the genotypical dimension of sex and the social construction through cultural codes associated with sexed phenomena, generating a strong division between the functions attributed to the masculine and the feminine:

Gender thus culturally constitutes men and women, and this generates processes of exclusion or inclusion of one or the other in different areas of social life. Moreover, as gender is so closely linked to the genotypical dimension of sex, one of the most notable consequences that societies tend to acquilate in their codes of understanding of the world is the naturalization of social practices: to understand that certain types of behaviors have to do with nature and thus convert into sexed phenomena what in reality are culturized expressions. (Cruces and Sabuco, 2003 – 2005, p.9)

This dichotomy of masculine and feminine is clearly evident in our society if we look at the history of Mediterranean culture and the role that women have played in our history. The hierarchical world in terms of the space of women and men in society frames the evident inequality that has sealed the history of Andalusian and Mediterranean culture and is still reflected in our society, and more specifically in that popular art that characterizes the Andalusian region: flamenco.

Cruces Roldán, Sabuco i Cantó and López Martínez in their article *Tener arte. Estrategia de desarrollo profesional de las mujeres flamencas* exposes the strong dominant character of the masculine in the artistic world of flamenco, leaving women relegated to certain specific canons that must be fulfilled in the social position that belongs to them:

In fact, the artistic world of flamenco has always been characterised by a strong masculinisation of power: the power of management and the

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power of the fans, mostly male throughout history. On the other hand, the position of women has basically occupied two areas and two very limited ones. Firstly, that of transmission: they were the ones in charge of training and testing the skills of sons and daughters at home, of being the depositaries of the know-how collected in flamenco as a way of life, as a culture. (...) secondly, in flamenco, women have fundamentally played the role of bailaora (female dancer)? Women are associated with dance (2005, p. 310).

The presence of women in flamenco dance has its justification in the division of the social construction of our culture according to the canons established for both women and men. The feminine associated with the home, motherhood and care of basic needs, dependence on men for subsistence, and numerous characteristics that make women dependent on the masculine, is represented by the exhibition of a flamenco dance. In order for a bailaora (a characteristic range of the feminine) to be able to perform her dances, she needs the presence of a guitarist, most of whom are men, to be able to do so. This dependence that we were talking about before is still immersed in the patterns of flamenco, where even in the 21st century, women have not managed to occupy that profile associated with the masculine, and in order to dance, they need and depend directly on the presence of a guitarist, until now associated with the masculine.

Flamenco guitar playing and the dominance of the guitar as an extra-corporal element brings with it a marginalization of the female gender that has created a great void for women in this field. In principle, we must understand the dominant character of the guitar, and from there understand the link with the male model. Cristina Cruces (2003) in *"De cintura para arriba"* exposes some of the emic conformations imposed by society for the conformation of the female guitarist:

The dominant reading of the discourses emic poured by the flamencos themselves is also naturalistic when it comes to explaining the non-existence of women guitarists in flamenco, in a technical and sexed key: "the flamenco guitar is hard", "you have to have a lot of strength to press and a lot of speed for the picado", "the woman cannot strum like a man", and "women do not have the long fingers that are needed to work the whole neck, and the chords, and the transpositions...." ... the key is to

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be sought in how a musical instrument has been transfigured into an instrument of power. (2003, p.22)

To continue with the models of differentiation in flamenco dance, it is important to expose the differences in terms of technique and movement to capture the associations that are exposed in terms of the body as lines of artistic expression and social constructor. Cristina Cruces (2003) in her article "*de cintura para arriba*" talks about the distinction between the feminine and the masculine in terms of the conformation of flamenco dance in the following way:

Two are the criteria that have defined the generalized canons of flamenco dance: the naturalization of the abilities of men and women, and the application of the criterion of hypercorporeity as a determinant category of feminine activity. In both aspects, which will occupy the bulk of our intervention, masculine and feminine attributes, possibilities and limits have traditionally appeared as non-transferable: the "women's ways of doing" and the "men's ways of doing" have functioned as independent and contractive images of representation and form part of the habitus of a large proportion of performers. Even more: on the basis of their sexual content, these images have come to define social aspects and facets of flamenco in which women can be, and others for which they are rejected. (2003, p.4)

The differences in the movement are a reflection of what is allowed and what is forbidden, being the permissiveness a characteristic subject to the masculine as a social reflection, being the movements of women restricted to social constructions. Continuation of the previous article by Cristina Cruces (2003):

... whose representatives insist that the "duty to be" of women dancers is to "dance from the waist up", with arm exercises and soft twists, and not - as it would correspond to men, who dance "from the waist down" - with excessive foot exercises. What is "allowed" and "forbidden" for women and men is written through the body and movements, which thus act not only as kinesic actions, but as texts through which to read social constructions. (2003, p.6)

Although it is true contextualized the above, that men and women respond to different patterns in the Andalusian culture and in the flamenco genre, but the conformation of their dances has undergone important changes with the

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evolution of dance in the 21st century that have deconstructed this classification of technical and social models as characteristics of the masculine or feminine, however, the conformation of masculine flamenco dance by Vicente Escudero, who in his Decalogue of 1951 records the linearity of the masculine pattern in terms of movement lines of dance, to observe this evolution, which no longer represent the avant-garde dance models present in our society. Women's dance is subject to softness, curvature, decoration, as opposed to the male dance model, subject to strength, precision and sobriety.

If we ignore the fact that these characteristics belong to flamenco dance, we can see how they reflect the role that men and women occupied in society, where the feminine canon represents vulnerable aspects in the face of the characteristics of rudeness and precision that are attributed to the masculine.

The evolution of dance and the struggle of women for equality with men in our society have meant the deconstruction of these patterns. In fact, we know of flamenco dancers who have broken with this conformation, from what is attributed to Trinidad Cuenca or Salud Rodríguez, who turned their zapateado into their seal of identity, as well as their clothing and invention of dances inspired by the world of bullfighting. Their tendency towards masculinity was the main characteristic in the development of their dances.

In the 20th century we highlight the figure of Carmen Amaya, noted for her strength and precision, without forgetting the arrival of the 21st century with personalities such as Rocío Molina or Israel Galván, where the composition of flamenco dance has deconstructed all the patterns of conformation of the dance in terms of the feminine and the masculine. The influence of the technique and presence of women like Carmen Amaya, have restructured the canon of the feminine and in turn flamenco.

In this way we can observe the arrival of a generation of bailaoras and bailaores who now single out unisex flamenco dance (Cruces, 2003, p. 26).

The greatest renovation [...] that took place in this sense was led by Carmen Amaya [...] who often dressed as a man, with trousers and a short jacket” (Cruces, 2003, p. 17).

Conformation of the image of the Andalusian woman and the Manila shawl as an example of "flamenco".

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A reflection of the situation described above occurs with the dance accessories associated with flamenco, with special mention of the Manila shawl, which has formed a symbol of identity for the image of Andalusian women, this being of a cultural richness that hides more for its meaning than for its origin. With this we refer to the first two jobs of women in our Andalusian region: tabacaleras and bailaoras, both images associated with the Manila shawl as an indispensable complement. This symbol has endured in Andalusia years later, whose history and evolution makes a clear reference to the development associated with women in our society. In the first stay, this accessory was used to cover (hide) the body of these women, where the woman dancer made use of it as a symbol of liberation.

To see the symbolic importance of this element, we go back to the history of the singing cafés, where the Manila shawl wrapped around the body of the artists is a sign of identity of this group of women, as reflected in a quote from Cruces (2016):

The bailaoras are those women of gypsy race, who dance like gypsies and who wear the shawl in the gypsy way in the singing cafés. It will matter little if some of them wear a homemade, sober and buttoned dressing gown because, making Martínez's statement our own, the fundamental thing will be the gesture and the bearing of the person who wears it (Martínez, 1999, p. 37; quoted in Cruces, 2016, p.314).

We can see how the importance falls on the shawl as a symbol of "flamenco". It is not the clothing as a material object or garment, but what it meant in the eyes of others to see a woman with a reilado shawl; it belongs to the construction of identity of a collective of women who made up the shows of the singing cafés of the time.

This could be justified on the grounds that "the popular was recognised in flamenco through "lo gitano", and "lo flamenco" became recognisable basically through this identification, with both adjectives functioning as synonyms in popular semantics" (Cruces, 2016, p.312).

But the term flamenco anchored to gender and the construction of women's identity has different social visions, in which the shawl has been an indispensable characteristic in her conformation as a flamenco woman. Genesis García in her article "Antropología cultural de la bailaora honda como sujeto de libertad" tells us:

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... that flamenco implies freedom in two ways: socially, because flamenco and flamenca are the subjects of flamenco life, free and marginal; musically, because flamencos sang and danced freely the Spanish genre, outside the official stages, outside the world of rules and academies. (2019, p.71)

For Génesis García, the bailaoras were an example of the freedoms associated with Hispanic women, situating the clothing as a symbol of oppression with which the female dancer became dominant, converting them into objects of liberation:

Throughout this whole process, from the rollo to the café cantante, from theré back to the rollo and suddenly the avant-garde scene, the flamenco dancer would hopefully prove to be the ultimate symbolic expression of the power and freedom of the Hispanic woman. Because it is she who, during this time, perfects the impulse to get into the psychologically and physically oppressive clothes of women's submission, and, handling them in the service of luck, turning them into an element of liberation. And, dressing androgynously, she puts on the trousers of her freedom when she wants to, as Pilar López herself pondered about Carmen Amaya, the captain, the bailaora whom we can take as a reference for everything we have been attributing to the Hispanic woman as a subject of freedom. (2019, p. 85)

We can observe this by analyzing how the woman was getting rid of her shawl rooted in the feeling of hiding the silhouette of the woman under this garment, becoming the owner of it, dominating, detaching it from her shoulders and making this complement, so associated with submission, participate in her dance, commanding its flight as a cry for freedom.

On the other hand, there are others who still associate the clothing in flamenco dance as an oppressive and conditioning object of gender, which prevents women from developing their dances in the same way as men. But in no manual does it seem to be written that the use of a shawl, trousers or any other accessory is essential to perform the dance, quite the contrary. The woman took control of everything associated with the feminine, using it to their interest, and being free to say where, when and how to use each of them. In fact, some of them are in disuse, and on the other hand, others have broken the barriers of sexuation associated with gender and clothing in flamenco dance.

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With these references, we want to face the flamenco woman as a fundamental construct in the identity and historical construction of the Andalusian woman.

Life stories as a training tool for adult education in flamenco women and the historical shaping of flamenco.

Numerous studies advocate the research and pedagogical use of life stories and autobiographical works to promote and contribute to the education and training of adults. In accordance with the need to address the training of adult women in Andalusian society and, more specifically in flamenco, we intend to demonstrate with this literature review how we can make use of this analytical tool with a dual purpose that favors the development of our society: firstly, it allows us to use the narratives to shape the experiences and historical analysis of the female gender subject to different premises and with the possibility of offering comparative analysis with other social demographic realities that concern the formation and identity of Andalusian women; secondly, it allows us to promote the education of this group through the reflective analysis in the first person, allowing us to make a critical reflection on the experiences and situations that have occurred in their lives from the memory and expression in the first person.

Drawing on Monteagudo's words, described in her article on Life Stories and Theories of Education: Bridging the Gap:

Life histories can favour a good articulation between critical reflexivity - in the line of authors such as Dewey (1989) and Freire (1996) - and the subjective and emotional dimension founded on the work on time, memory and recollection. (2007, p.100)

Following the lines of this author, we must not forget the possibility of favouring with this instrument the discussion and opening of work groups where empathy and tolerance are the fundamental pillars of the same, allowing us to make them participate in the comparative study between what we have lived and what the globalized world currently offers us:

"They confront the subject with his conflicts and favour a positive resolution of them, in the perspective of what Ricoeur has called a happy memory. They are a way of access to experiential, subjective, affective and rememorative pedagogical work. They promote a dynamic of openness, deep communication and collaboration, enable the

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expression of feelings, while sensitizing the subject to the feelings of others, increasing empathy and tolerance.” (2007, p.94)

With these autobiographical stories, we can confront the negationist currents of thought on the importance of highlighting the value and importance of recognizing the discrimination that the female gender has lived in the history of flamenco and thus verify the liberating and indispensable action that the flamenco woman has exercised in shaping the role of women in Andalusian society, not only during the course of history, but to shape the pillars that have led to the situation of Andalusian women today, ranging from the shaping of their own image against other cultures, such as culture and behavior that make up our society today.

Reflecting on some of the chapters of the documentary series "Ritos y geografía del flamenco" we stop to analyse certain connotations of oppression in terms of gender exposed in the chapter referring to the life of Tía Anica la Piriñaca, where we highlight her relegation from this profession when she married her husband.

Taking this situation as an example and highlighting the value of life stories to reconstruct the history of flamenco and the Andalusian people in terms of gender differentiation, the aim is to demonstrate the importance of this data collection tool for this group to make a constructive and subjective vision of their own autobiography.

Conclusions

The woman, flamenco dancer and referent of our Spanish society, carries a struggle from within, through a musical genre that sometimes reveals ideas associated with a retrograde world that do not correspond to the need and object of expression of the dancers, who have been pursuing and breaking gender patterns since ancient times in the areas of flamenco where they have been given the ability to express themselves: flamenco dance.

After this bibliographical review, the following conclusions can be drawn as an object of reflection:

- Flamenco is part of the identity of the Andalusian people as an inseparable object, taking into consideration the proclamation by UNESCO of Flamenco as Intangible Heritage of Humanity on November 16, 2010.

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- The influence of the flamenco woman is present in the regional dresses and costumes of Spanish women, used in popular festivities and socialization rituals. This is associated with the image that foreigners have of Spanish women, subject to a canon of beauty linked to women's accessories in flamenco. We must not forget that flamenco women's clothing has generated symbols of identity in Andalusian society, as we have explained above, with elements such as the fan, the castanets, the flowers in the hair, the Manila shawls... etc.
- Women in flamenco, with their life stories, are able to build the history of women throughout the years, which we can corroborate with the documentaries of "Rito y geografía del cante flamenco" broadcasted on Radio Televisión Española as we have mentioned in our bibliographical review.
- Life stories contribute to critical action on the autobiographies of those who narrate their lives in the first person.

That is why, as a prospective study, we will continue this line of research using life stories as a pedagogical Methodology in the double aspect that we mentioned in the previous text, carrying out an investigation where we can use the autobiographical stories of flamenco women to shape or verify historical aspects linked to the evolution of women and contribute to the formation of flamenco women in adulthood.

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