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Mental Disorders, Violence, and Criminality Under the Lens of Spanish Punk Songs:

Depictions of Contexts, Motivations, and Consequences

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### Abstract

The general public's perceptions, dispositions, and attitudes toward people suffering from mental health conditions rest mostly on media and cultural depictions. Similarly, the media are among the principal agents in the dissemination (and generation) of concepts and conceptions related to criminality. Previous research in different cultural and media formats highlights the misleading associations between mental illness and violence, crime, unpredictable behavior, and social incompetence. This article addresses some elements composing the subcultural portrayals of crime and violence related to mental disorders. Specifically, through the content analysis of 190 Spanish punk song lyrics, we aimed to get insight into the portrayals of crimes linked to psychiatric conditions, focusing on the depicted contexts, motivations, and consequences. Despite that psychotic disorders are modestly involved in violent criminal behavior, the media and the cultural industry have historically exploited and amplified this association. The interdiscursive realm of art has contributed to perpetuating the narratives that combine crime, violence, and mental illness. These elements were present in the analyzed songs, just as portrayals of crime and social deviance serving provocation and punk identity. Finally, the lyrics showed reflections on the social contexts of crime and its presentation by the media.

*Keywords:* mental disorders, crime, violence, psychiatry, content analysis

## Introduction

The social construction of reality rests substantially on the mass media, which shape our worldview and values (Kellner, 1995; Pollak & Kubrin, 2007). Therefore, the dispositions and attitudes of the general public toward psychiatric treatments and persons suffering from mental health conditions may be influenced by the discourses reproduced at the societal level, primarily through the media (news, television, film, video, and Internet services) (Granello & Pauley, 2000). On the other hand, the media are among the principal agents in the dissemination (and generation) of concepts and conceptions related to criminality (Dowler, Fleming & Muzzatti, 2006; Duwe, 2005; Pollak & Kubrin, 2007; Surette, 2015). Thus, some criminological concepts have been derived from cultural constructs stemming mainly from the mass media (e.g., copycat crime or serial killer). Public interest in violent crime is widely recognized (Bentham, 2015; Gibson, 2006). Murder narratives are notably present in films, TV shows, and the mass press. Music has been no stranger to such an influence. As for the field at issue, previous research identified references to criminality or violence as one of the main themes in punk songs with allusions to the terms "mad"; "madness"; or other related colloquial terms (Pavez, Saura & Marset, 2021a, 2021b).

Different media and cultural products amplify the associations between mental health problems and violence or criminality (Camp et al., 2010; Stout, Villegas & Jennings, 2004; Wagner et al., 1999; Wahl & Kaye, 1992) that are far from psychiatric research, therefore promoting misperceptions in the general public. Without ignoring that people with severe mental disorders are at higher risk for violent behavior than the general population (Bennett et al., 2011; Eronen, Tiihonen & Hakola, 1996; Schanda et al., 2004; Silverstein et al., 2015; Taylor & Kalebic, 2018; Thornicroft, 2020), it is noteworthy that the contribution of psychotic disorders to homicides is limited (Taylor & Kalebic, 2018), and the higher risk is related to substance abuse (Fazel et al., 2009; Whiting et al., 2022). Additionally, large population-based studies have shown only a modest relationship between violence and psychoses (Fazel & Grann, 2006; Talevi et al., 2020), while other authors argue that it is much more likely that people with severe mental disorders will be victims of violence rather than the perpetrators (Knoll & Annas, 2016; Talevi et al., 2020).

The study of the products of popular culture provides information about common ideas present in the social imaginary regarding crime and mental health problems. The public character of the data is one advantage of this type of study since it facilitates the accessibility, contrast and replication of findings. In addition, the fact that artistic productions persist over time enables access to information that could not be gathered through other qualitative research designs. In this way, the products of popular culture could be seen as "cultural fossils," which can be "traced back" to the historical time in which they were produced (Pavez et al., 2017). Therefore, artistic and cultural productions can be a vehicle for understanding prevalent ideas regarding mental illness, psychiatry, and crime in a specific time and place.

## Current Study

The accessible and ubiquitous nature of the music, which, in addition to its communicational dimension, makes it an appropriate way for accessing popular beliefs about mental health conditions. Moreover, the role of music in defining normative contexts and the relevance of songs as discursive practices has been stressed in previous studies (Barros & Jorge, 2011; Forbes, no date; Pavez, 2017; Pavez et al., 2017). The practices associated with popular music serve as a vehicle for the expression of the ideas and identities of collectives, allowing approaching specific populations to understand their ways of living and understanding the world.

The study of punk music offers several advantages as a model for addressing subcultural depictions in the field of psychiatry (Pavez, Saura & Marset, 2021a), including i) Spanish punk's trajectory runs concurrently with the Psychiatric Reform in Spain and the subsequent development of community mental health models; ii) explicit contents of Spanish punk songs are closer to the ordinary people's perceptions (daily and spontaneous vocabulary) and enhance concordance between independent codifiers; iii) punk subculture's sensitivity to

marginalized groups (including the mentally ill); iv) demographics (traditionally, punk has been considered a musical genre mostly connected to adolescents or young adults, a period of greater frequency of consumption of illicit substances and the onset of psychotic symptoms or other mental health complaints) (Grant et al., 2016; Haro et al., 2006; Kirkbride et al., 2017).

Regarding *punk*, O'Connor (2016) argues that attempting a definition is as artificial as it is misleading, given the heterogeneity of its manifestations. The great diversity within the punk scene has been acknowledged in academic literature (Ambrosch, 2018; Cisar & Koubek, 2012), despite which some defining features have been outlined. For example, Ambrosch (2018) asserts that *punk* can be defined as “a broadly counterhegemonic sociocultural movement in which musical-lyrical expression has a central role” (p.40). Thus, punk is a part of, as well as a counter-project to, popular culture, cultivating social dissidence and cultural transgression. Punk is defined by opposition to capitalist society, its dominant culture, and ideology (Ambrosch, 2018). Therefore, it is recognized as a counter-hegemonic identity, albeit diverse and internally inconsistent, which makes an absolute definition of punk elusive (Ambrosch, 2018). Punk message(s) co-evolve with social, cultural, political and economic developments. Thus, the diversity of punk expressions in different countries will rest on the social and material conditions of musical production and, regarding themes and influences, on the peculiarities of the dominant culture and the socio-political situation of each region at a specific historical moment.

British and American punk were adapted to suit local particularities in Spain and Latin America. Hispanic punks recreated the subculture, improvising, imagining and constructing it from their own perspective. The Spanish punk forefront was a far cry from the presumed proletarian roots of the British punk scene. In Spain, the punk vanguards were made up of young people from the upper and upper-middle classes, later giving way to exponents from less privileged social groups, similar to what happened in Chile (Canales, 2017), Mexico (López, 2013) or Colombia (Restrepo, 2005). In addition, the absence of a clearly differentiated youth culture in Spain, the tension between expectation, disillusionment and possibilism of the Spanish transition to democracy after almost 40 years of Francoist dictatorship, and the immaturity of the media and the political structures created were one of the main differences with their Anglo-Saxon counterparts (Fouce, 2004).

This paper outlines some elements composing the portrayals of crime and violence related to mental disorders in Spanish punk music. Specifically, through the lens of Spanish punk, we aim to describe the subcultural depictions of the motivations for crimes linked to psychiatric conditions, their causes, consequences, and contexts.

## Methodology

We employed a descriptive and inferential approach through the technique of content analysis. This strategy was appropriate to our research question since it allowed the data to emerge from the text (Arbeláez & Onrubia, 2014; Bryman, 2015). Content analysis is the research strategy most frequently identified in works on mental health representations in music (Pavez et al., 2017). This type of analysis is appropriate for our objective due to its accessibility, flexibility, systematization and consequent replicability.

## Sample

Purposive sampling led to an inclusive list of 257 Spanish punk bands, examining their recordings between 1981 and 2010. The sampling process included reviewing the documentary, bibliographic (Alfonso & Bocos, 2007; Alfonso et al., 2002; Babas, 2011), and internet sources (*La Fonoteca*, 2019; *Maneras de vivir*, 2018; *MusicaPunk.net*, 2013). Different subgenres of punk music were included (oi! & street punk; punk; hardcore-punk; punk-rock; ska-punk; and after punk). Exclusion criteria were: musicalized poems, covers, instrumental songs, and songs in a language other than Spanish. Repeated songs were considered only once (the first version).

## Data Collection

From November 2020 to December 2020, two independent codifiers examined song lyrics related to psychiatry, looking for references to violence, aggression, crime, or imprisonment. The process allowed identifying 208 pieces. An initial approach to the data revealed that 18 songs alluded to content unrelated to our aims and the rest of the sample (including references to mental health problems in imprisonment or comparisons between the psychiatric hospital and jail) and therefore were excluded. All 190 songs finally included were analyzed, reaching thematic saturation. The data selection and collection process is summarized in Appendix 1. Each entire song worked as the context unit, containing one or more references. "References" were the units of analysis and consisted of the phrases or sentences contained in a song. At a quantitative level, duplicated references (e.g., refrain or chorus) were counted once.

## Coding

Coding was carried out along with data collection. The nature of the research inquiry required the data themselves to model the emergent codes. As a first approximation, *in vivo* coding was used. Additionally, open codification allowed the incorporation of new themes as they emerged from the text. Thus, categories arose from the data and were refined subsequently by iteration. As many codes as possible were recorded exhaustively. The process finished when no new data emerged that was novel or significant to the object of study. Finally, redundant or similar codes were condensed. The process was piloted on a subset of data until achieving satisfactory codes. The iterative nature of the process served to enhance methodological integrity. For the same purpose, two independent coders were involved. Cases of discrepancy were solved through discussion between the authors.

## Results

### Contexts of violent and criminal behavior

In Spanish punk songs with references to psychiatry or mental disorders, the contexts of crime and violence were marked by allusions to the social milieu in which such behaviors are inscribed. In this sense, descriptions of poor living or working conditions became relevant, particularly in references to familicide (all of them in the context of murder-suicide) or filicide, gender-based violence, mass murder in the workplace, and violence in general (Table 1).

Table 1. Examples of the social contexts of violent and criminal behavior in Spanish punk songs with references to psychiatry or mental disorders.

Verbatim	Category	Song Title	Musical Group	Year
<i>“A poor salary you can supplicate for, a place in the factory making glass eyes (...) His whole appearance has changed, and his mind begins to work. He refuses to submit himself to anyone. He wants to kill. He is now an antisocial being”</i>	Living or working conditions	Antisocial	Interterror	1985
<i>“You never had a chance, nothing to make you feel good, and now they look at you as a criminal”</i>	Lack of opportunities	Un día más [One day more]	Vómito	1987
<i>“It's just that if I wasn't somewhat drug-dependent, I wouldn't do these kinds of things, and I would be very decent (...) Easy, buddy, it's the society that is guilty”</i>	Substance use as a social problem	La Sociedad es la culpable [Society is the culprit]	Siniestro Total	1990
<i>“As a child, her stepfather beat and raped her” (from a song about drug use and dealing)</i>	Child maltreatment and abuse	Carol Anne	Mentes Enfermas	2005
<i>“The Government gave weapons to his hands” (from a song about school shooting)</i>	Access to weapons and mass murder	Fuego y miedo [Fire and fear]	SKA-P	2008

Other associations to the social contexts of crime and violent behavior included descriptions of child maltreatment and abuse, lack of opportunities, and substance use as a social problem with implications on criminal behavior (Table 1). Similarly, the song "*Cleptomanía*" [Kleptomania] (Odio, 1981) is a good example of the associations between social contexts and psychiatric entities, portraying kleptomania as a "social-rooted dangerous disease." In addition, access to weapons was connected to mass murders, particularly school shootings, emphasizing the policies regarding possession of firearms (Table 1). Descriptions of police violence were mainly relevant in songs related to substance use. Other specific contexts in songs related to substance use included police controls, police corruption, road safety, and drug use policies. Distrust toward authorities was equally reflected in the songs, mainly in those with references to gender-based violence:

*She denounced him four times, and nobody believed her ("La vida en un puño" [Life in a fist], Sikarios, 2003);*

*The sentence did not lock him up and everything remains the same ("Abuso" [Abuse], Kaótico, 2006).*

Furthermore, in an example related to sex crimes:

*A mad rapist is on the loose and the gentlemen of order and the law, drawing lots to see who pays the next round in the bar ("Soñando angelitos" [Dreaming with little angels], Ostiaputa, 1997).*

It was also possible to identify references to aspects of social deviance linked to subcultural identities (punk and skinhead, being particularly noticeable in the latter). This sphere was related to violent behavior (including vandalism), provocation, civil disobedience, confrontation, contempt and defiance of authority, as well as references to the otherness proper of the punk subculture: *"We are crooked heads... the police beat us. We are conflictive minds, their worst nightmares"* (*"Cabezas torcidas"* [Crooked heads], El trono de Judas, 1998).

### Perspectives of Violent and Criminal Behavior in Spanish Punk Songs

#### *The Biomedical Perspective*

Some references echoed health and biological aspects present in the cultural repertoire. First, criminality and violence as social complications of substance use (predominantly descriptions of robbery in people with heroin dependence). Secondly, the notion of a biological basis for behavioral deviations (*"My neurons are changing, nobody knows why"*. *Club de fans* [Fan Club], Dementes, 1997), or—more generally—allusions to the brain or the mind to locate the origin of the problem (a non-exhaustive list of examples can be found in Table 2). Furthermore, there was a tendency to portray heroin use as a disease, avoiding the old moralizing approach to addictions (the terms "degenerated" or "vicious" were reserved for the description of perpetrators of sexual crimes in the analyzed songs).

Table 2. References to “mind and brain” in Spanish Punk songs depicting homicidal behavior.

Verbatim	Song Title	Musical Group	Year
<i>His <b>mind</b> starts to work (...) He wants to kill</i>	Antisocial	Interterror	1985
<i>Your <b>mind</b> is no longer yours. You are going out of the ordinary</i>	Hasta el final [Until the end]	Subterranean Kids	1986
<i>Terror emanates from deranged <b>brains</b></i>	George Oswel	Segismundo Toxicómano	1998
<i>A voice inside of my <b>brain</b> pushes me to kill</i>	Esta noche tengo una misión [Tonight I have a mission]	Los Webeloss	2002
<i>It steals my <b>mind</b> and forces me to kill</i>	La muñeca [The Doll]	Kánzer d'Eskroto	2007

#### *Media Accounts of Violence*

Regarding violent behavior, songs provided insight into the justifications for violence and the moral dimension of its presentation in media. Thus, some lyrics expressed criticism of a sort of violence that appears as justified in media accounts (and never is called "violence") since it serves "order" and the persistence of the status quo. On the opposite, "the violence," that is exercised by those who question or challenge the prevailing social order: *"As I'm not on the good side, they will call my indignation violence... it is so the beats are for me"* (*"Quinta criminal," La Polla*, 1996). In this way, the song proposes an ideological dimension for constructing the discourses of violence in the media. In addition, song lyrics expressed how the labelling of

deviant behavior as "illness" may serve to perpetuate the social order ("*I will defend myself, I am not the sick one*") and the role of mass media in achieving it: "*I'm another violent, I'm a sick man, thanks to the press I'm a criminal*" ("*Quinta criminal*," *La Polla*, 1996).

Similarly, other references alluded to the power of the media in shaping public opinion, and the acknowledgement of the associations between mental illness and violence in the popular imaginary. For example, "*you will be the paranoid who mercilessly kills defenceless old women while they are praying*" ("*Hablar por hablar*" [Talk for the sake of it], *Segismundo Toxicómano*, 2005). Thus, the treatment of violence and crime in the press and the labelling of the violent as (mentally) ill was not an isolated reference. In 1984, the band *Bahía de Kotxinos* portrayed the easy and prompt association that the mass media establishes between violence, crime, and mental illness: "*the newspapers will say that is a mentally disturbed person, they will never know my identity. I'm going to blow up the train*" ("*Voy a volar el tren de Santurce a Bilbao*" [I will blow up the Santurce-Bilbao train]).

Nevertheless, not everything is wrong with the media; its role in the visibility of several social and health problems (e.g., gender-based violence) is also described: "*Meanwhile, I think that I watched this on TV, my mother suffers from abuse...*" ("*Cuando Jony agarró la tostadora*" [When Johnny grabbed the toaster], *Kasparrata*, 2001). In this example, television provides the speaker with a name (abuse) for recognizing and become aware of a problem; and, thereby, challenge the normalization of gender-based violence.

### *Stigma and Trivialization*

If we talk about stigmatizing representations, the song by Kortatu "*Revolta en el frenopático*" [Revolt in Insane Asylum] (1985) cannot be ignored. This light-hearted piece describes a murder in a psychiatric asylum. The victim is portrayed as lynched by the inmates due to a disagreement regarding a game. It expresses the presupposed links between irrationality, psychosis, violence, and criminality, promoting a stigmatizing view of people affected by a psychotic disorder. Intertextuality is relevant in this song since it is based on the comic stripes "Don Vito & Co," by Javier Montesol. Don Vito, the main character, is an anarchist confined in a mental institution after the Spanish Civil War. The action takes place, especially in the first period of the comic, in an asylum as a metaphor for the dictatorial confinement in Francoist Spain.

The trivialization of homicide was most notorious in provocative songs in which the motive argued for the crime was enjoyment ("kill for fun"). In other, the emphasis was on the lack of any reason for it: "*I killed my dealer, don't know why*" ("*Inocente culpable*" [Guilty Innocent], by Macarrada, 2006); "*I don't know why, maybe for fun*" ("*No lo vi venir*" [Never saw it coming], by Cerebros Expressados, 2010). In such references, the lack of any apparent reason suggests loss of control as a causal factor: "*I'm out of control, somebody will pay it*" ("*Inocente culpable*" [Guilty Innocent], by Macarrada, 2006). According to the narratives, the causes for the loss of control were varied: substance use, "heat of passion," or mental health conditions.

## Dynamics and Motivations of Violent and Criminal Behavior in Light of Spanish Punk Songs

### *Copycat*

From a social-psychological perspective, descriptions of the copycat effect and social learning (according to Bandura's theory, 1977) in fictional (e.g., films) and nonfictional media (e.g., mass press), and live models, were relevant in our sample as subtle causal attributions, linked mainly to descriptions of mass murder. As examples:

*Whose fault was so much horror? Perhaps the war or the TV. Days and nights of TV-addiction, something burns inside him. Fifteen dead in the sex shop, he went straight in with a Kalashnikov (Video killer, Decibelios, 1989).*



*Images educate, ignorance pushes us, and the devil is our new king. I stab my partner, my children and my mom, then I try to commit suicide and die going to the hospital. They despise me at school, I take a rifle and two pistols, and I prepare a massacre that makes world news... (Repito lo que veo [I repeat what I see], Gatillazo, 2008).*

*Who educated his alienated mind? He always dreamed of being on the big screen. To be the best at shooting a firearm, like his action hero (...) He drew his gun on his way to school, imagining with utter contempt the submission of the dead bodies lying around (...) Fire! Like in the old saloon of a fetid cowboy film. Fear! From the television, you have been educated to live in fear, Charlton Heston and his derangement (...) (Fuego y Miedo [Fire and Fear], SKA-P, 2008).*

*At last he is on the front page of the news, and others like him are thinking of following in his footsteps (regarding school shootings) (Nadie [Nobody], by Soziedad Alkohólíka, 2008).*

Thus, songs depicted a relationship between media and mass murder (and, to a lesser extent, other violent crimes). It is consistent with the findings in surviving mass shooters that suggest a notable influence from previous similar events with extensive media coverage (Mullen, 2004).

### *Coping*

Some references showed coping with distressing emotional states as motivations for crime or violence: *"venting out your inner hate" ("Hasta el final" [Until the end], Subterranean Kids, 1986), "venting out your frustration" ("Fuera de control" [Out of control], Ni por favor ni ostias, 2010).*

### *Narcissism*

Narcissistic dynamics appeared as psychological motivations for crime, mainly in serial or mass murder references. It became evident, on the one hand, in depictions of the pursuit of fame and recognition: *"to know that you have been the author of the murder and now you are praised in a legendary book" ("George Oswel", Segismundo Toxicómano, 1998);* on the other hand, in portrayals suggesting the need for control and power over the victim: domination and dynamics of power-submission. The song *"Nadie" [Nobody] (Soziedad Alkohólíka, 2008)* contains good examples of narcissistic dynamics in mass murders: *"he wants his chance to never be Nobody again (...) Remember him well. Now Nobody is someone you already know. He is finally on the front page of the news."* Otherwise, the need for power and the narratives of omnipotence are reflected in allusions to pyromania through the use of the terms: "immortality," "legacy," "a sign for posterity" (*"Piromanía," [Pyromania] MG15, 2004*). Some references in this song even suggested a messianic dimension: *"through the fire, a pathway to salvation," "the redeeming fire burns."*

### *Fanaticism*

Fanaticism was another psychological dimension depicted. It was contained in a song with references to the Manson family's crimes: *"("George Oswel" by Segismundo Toxicómano, 1998)*. In this case, the offences could be grouped into diverse typologies according to the emphasis of different authors; e.g., murder motivated by loyalty (Fox & Levin, 1998), disciple-type killer (Holmes & Holmes, 1994), or cult murder if we attend to the setting of the crime (Douglas *et al.*, 2006). However, the term chosen by the musicians was "fanaticism." Fanaticism is a concept developed by Taylor (1991), which has been proposed as useful in the study of terrorist behavior (Schuurman & Taylor, 2018). "Normal" and "fanatic" are on the same behavioral continuum; however,

the fanatical behavior encompasses some qualities among which it is possible to highlight: restricted (ideologically biased) and simplified worldview, loss of critical judgment (and resistance to facts or interpretations that challenges their convictions), and tolerance for inconsistency or incompatibility in the beliefs held (Schuurman & Taylor, 2018).

### *Motivations*

In our dataset, motivations varied according to the type of crime and its context. The motives most frequently reported were related to the satisfaction of needs derived from substance misuse (i.e., drug craving or avoiding withdrawal symptoms). This kind of transgression is denominated "acquisitive offences" by Lammers et al. (2014), who underline that most substance users are not criminals. In our sample, these types of crimes (mainly thefts) were primarily around heroin and, secondarily, "drugs" in general (others not specified). In second place (and excluding sexual crimes per se) appeared sexual motivations, with descriptions of sexual excitement linked to cannibalism, paraphilias (sodomasochism, sadism, necrophilia, fetishism), and lust murder: *"I wet my knife and wet my pants"* ("Barby," *La Polla Records*, 1992).

Descriptions of revenge-motivated crimes (in homicides or attempted homicides) were also frequent, although to a lesser extent. These types of depictions contemplated revenge as a form of taking justice into one's own hands. Mainly in cases of sexual crimes or gender-based violence, in which the victim her/himself (or her/his close ones) becomes the victimizer (mostly homicide). Another example (light-hearted song) showed homicide as a form of revenge against an exploitative employer: *"I burn you today as you have burned me out"* ("Señor juez" [Your Honour], by Gatillazo, 2008).

### Consequences of Crime

Allusions to the consequences of crime were present in only 22 references. Most of them (N=14) were nonspecific mentions of "problems with the law or the police," all related to substance use. Within the specific descriptions, imprisonment appeared in 6 cases (3 of them related to substance use and the other 3 to homicide), stay in a reformatory in one depiction of social deviance and violence, and the death penalty in one reference to lust murder. The portrayal of reformatory showed it as a place to learn how to be more violent. The description of the death penalty is striking, given that it is not considered for civilians since 1978 in Spain (the song was released in 2004), which suggests the remarkable influence of foreign contexts in the conformation of social imaginaries about serial murder.

### Discussion

Punk narratives contain portrayals of crime that are constructed around different non-exclusive sources whose contributions vary between compositions. Among those sources, mass media are relevant since the contents learned from and transmitted mainly through the press, films, and television provide factual and fictional content (intertextuality). On the other hand, composers' intuition and the direct experience or the vicarious learning in the immediate milieu are additional elements contributing to this process. Additionally, a given image's dramatic, aesthetic, or artistic potential is relevant for the lyrical-musical contents. In general, the aesthetic and musical aspects of punk contain allusions to mental illness and violence that seem related to its subcultural identity, defined by the opposition ("madness" against "sanity," "noise" against "music," "chaos" against "order"); the same for lyrics of social deviance, crime, aggression, or mental health problems.

In Spanish punk lyrics, we found a predilection for violent crimes and frequent allusions to the perpetrator as mentally disturbed, as would be expected in the general population, based on the data from previous media studies (Bentham, 2015; Dowler, Fleming & Muzzatti, 2006; Pollak & Kubrin, 2007). The weight of social dynamics within the contexts of crime and violence was not an unexpected finding. On the one

hand, punk music has a criticizing and socially rooted focus, and, on the other hand, there is a predominantly social perspective within the humanities and the arts.

Regarding the contexts of mass murder (principally school shootings), songs emphasized issues related to firearms possession policies. This idea is in line with some authors who have addressed the subject. For example, in his analysis of the Port Arthur Massacre, Ian Sale (2008) cites Ozanne-Smith et al. (2004) to emphasize that one of the most relevant and remediable circumstances surrounding the crime was the regulation of firearm ownership. For his part, Lankford (2016) argues that the global distribution of mass shootings can be partially attributed to cross-national differences in gun availability, finding no relationship of this phenomenon to countries' suicide or homicide rates. Other topics in our sample that coincided with previous research on mass murder included fragile self-image, narcissism, revenge fantasies, isolation, ostracism by peers (Knoll & Annas, 2016), and paranoid dynamics (Knoll & Annas, 2016; Knoll & Meloy, 2014). Other common findings among mass shooters, but not relevant in our sample, are familial dysfunction and social marginalization (Newman *et al.*, 2005).

On the other hand, the tension between drugs and law within the musical manifestations of the punk subculture became apparent in the analyzed material. Thus, descriptions of police violence were found almost exclusively in songs related to substance use. Jun, De-Vylder & Fedina (2020) state that police violence is frequently reported by people with mental health problems. Based on mediation analysis, the authors suggest that people with severe mental disorders are more likely than the general population to be victimized by the police, regardless of their involvement in criminal behavior (Jun, De-Vylder & Fedina, 2020). Regarding the media, songs from different periods (1984, 1996, 2005) reflected how mass media often make easy and prompt associations between violence and mental illness. Unfortunately, this draws attention to how stigmatizing depictions of mental health problems remain present in some media. It is consistent with the use of expressions such as "mentally unstable" or "mentally ill" in early news media coverage after violent crimes (e.g., mass murder), even in the absence of definitive information (Knoll & Annas, 2016).

As for the motivations for homicide, serial murder, and mass murder in our sample, the following were prominent: power, revenge, and sexual. Power and revenge are in line with the typology of Fox & Levin (1998) that applies to both serial and mass killing. Other motivations described by these authors were also present in our sample: loyalty (one reference to crimes of the Manson family, three references to murder-suicide) and terror (different allusions to terrorist attacks). Likewise, crimes for profit were often related to "acquisitive offences" (in terms of Lammers et al., 2014) in heroin users. Unlike other drugs (i.e., cannabis), a critical view of heroin was noteworthy in our sample (negative effects and social consequences). Heroin dependence was predominantly depicted as a "social disease", and heroin users as "ill" or victims.

Revitch & Schlesinger's motivational spectrum of homicide encompasses external (sociogenic or environmental) and internal (psychogenic) factors (Schlesinger, 1998). The former is evident in the drug-related crimes previously described. The latter became manifest in our sample in depictions of sexual motivations related to serial murder. The revenge-motivated crimes in our dataset included both portrayals of behaviors resulting from internal impulses (emotional states) and others in response to social factors. The depictions found in Spanish punk songs are close to forensic studies that report the predominance of sexual motivation in serial murder, whereas, in single homicide, offenders kill most often out of anger (Kraemer, Lord & Heilbrun, 2004).

Finally, the depiction of narcissistic dynamics was present in song lyrics related to mass murder, serial killing and other violent crimes. The links between murder and narcissism have been widely explored in forensic research. In 1974, Miller & Looney described the dehumanization of the victims as a risk factor for murder recidivism in adolescents, linking dehumanization with narcissistic psychopathology. Meloy (1988) has highlighted the combination of narcissism, sadism, and aggression in particularly severe cases of murder. Additionally, humiliation and narcissistic wounding have been related to crimes directly (McCarthy, 1978; Stone, 1989). Finally, pathological omnipotence (Lowenstein, 1992) or pathological grandiosity (Pollock, 1995) in response to rejection and humiliation, the same as the need for power and control (Holmes & DeBurger, 1988), are nuclear in the descriptions of serial and mass murder; just as in some songs of our sample. On the

other hand, the theatrical nature of mass murder, its public and dramatic character, and the need of the perpetrators to leave a message (often in video, writings, social networks, and others), seem to speak of using Neuman's (2012) words, "a need for recognition from an audience" (p. 2). This dimension was also represented in the examples of our sample.

### *Practical Implications*

Like any artistic manifestation, popular songs are both a reflection and an inspiration of the ideas present in the general population. The study of popular beliefs regarding mental health problems and psychiatric treatments is relevant not only in academic and clinical settings but also in the field of health policies. Possible policy recommendations are beyond the scope of this paper, being an open area for future research; however, it is important to remark that the media are essential in creating opinions in the general population. Therefore, media can be as valuable in disseminating educational content as they can be harmful in biased and sensationalist reporting that promotes the stigmatization of people suffering from mental health conditions. From a medical point of view, stigma and discrimination are among the main barriers to seeking treatment (Jorm, 2000; Lipczynska, 2005; Philo & Secker, 1999; Satcher, 2000). The relationship between crime, violence and mental illness is probably the most obvious example of stigmatization in mental health.

### *Strengths and Limitations of the Study*

Our study adds to the research findings in other cultural artefacts. It fills a knowledge gap in a poorly explored area: the popular representations of crime and violence associated with mental health conditions. Although our analysis was not focused on musical aspects, listening to songs added precision to the qualitative assessments, which, added to the large volume of data analyzed, constitutes one of the strengths of this study compared to others that only address lyrics transcripts. The article describes some relevant themes in the portrayals of the causes, dynamics, motivations, and consequences of crime and violence associated with mental illness. However, it should be noted that the descriptive nature of this work did not consider the interpretation of findings from a specific theoretical framework or the construction of a theory that emerged from the data itself. In addition, some factors, such as content production and reception, remain open to future developments since they are beyond the scope of representation studies (Klin & Lemish, 2008). The specificity of the analyzed subculture claims to be cautious in generalizing our findings; however, some elements may be universal, encouraging future comparative studies with other populations and other musical genres. Finally, future research from the perspective of cultural criminology could offer new perspectives to our findings. Additionally, media reception studies can enlighten the implications of the exposure to the content depicted in this study.

### Conclusion

Although psychotic disorders are modestly involved in violent criminal behavior, the media and the cultural industry have historically exploited and amplified the association. Despite a positive trend in the press coverage of psychiatric conditions in recent years, the intertextual references in the interdiscursive realm of art have contributed to perpetuating the narratives that combine crime, violence, and mental illness. These elements were present in our findings, just as portrayals of crime serving provocation and punk identity (otherness), e.g., in references to "killing for fun." However, behind the punk provocation lies its denouncing character: can punk songs be regarded as stigmatizing subcultural representations or (self-)disclosure of stigmatizing conditions and experiences in Society? On the one hand, it has already been mentioned how some lyrics reproduced stigmatizing contents already present in other cultural media and how identification with violence or mental illness plays a role in punk otherness, thus supporting the subcultural identity. Nevertheless, the analyzed lyrics also encourage reflection on the social contexts of crime and its treatment in the media. On the other hand,

Spanish punk songs provided observations strikingly close to the available empirical data on the causes and motivations of crime. The discussed aspects highlight the relevance of a dialogue between art, culture, media, criminology, and psychiatry and encourage advances in this field through future comparative studies with other kinds of music, populations, or cultural manifestations.

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### Appendix 1

Selection and collection of 190 Spanish punk songs (1981-2010) with references to criminal and violent behavior related to mental disorders/psychiatry.

