Abstract:

This article explores 'downward celebrity migration', i.e., when a celebrity enters a field that is less legitimate than their field of origin. It does so by studying the case of Lucía Etxebarría, a Spanish literary celebrity who participated in a celebrity reality TV show (Campamento de Verano ['Summer Camp']) in 2013. Using Bourdieu's concepts of field and capital, this paper analyzes the ambiguous hierarchical position that Etxebarría occupied in the programme and how she was evaluated according to the specific rules of reality TV: authenticity, ordinariness, performance and submission to the programme's authority. Etxebarría's presence in the programme stirred up a heated debate about social, cultural and fame hierarchies, and she became the target of attacks that tried to undermine her symbolic capital through personal humiliation.

Keywords: Bourdieu, celebrity, celebrity capital, celebrity migration, cultural capital, field theory, literary celebrity, Lucía Etxebarría, reality TV, symbolic capital

Introduction

What was the writer doing among D-list celebrities (...) and dubious personalities? (La Vanguardia, 2013).

On 16 July 2013, Lucía Etxebarría, a well-known Spanish writer who had authored several top-selling books (Amor, curiosidad, prozac y dudas, Beatriz y los cuerpos celestes) and won some of the most important Spanish literary prizes (Planeta, Nadal, Primavera) joined Campamento de Verano [CdV] ('Summer Camp', La Fábrica de la Tele/Telecinco, 2013), a celebrity reality TV
show similar to *I'm a Celebrity... Get Me out of Here!* (Granada Television/ITV, 2002-present). *CdV* was set in a ‘summer camp’ in Sierra de Gredos (Madrid, Spain), and 12 celebrities had to live together, compete in physical challenges and nominate each other for eviction. Each week, a ‘jury’ made of three reality TV ‘experts’ decided who would leave the programme. Because it featured minor D-List celebrities, was broadcast in the summer season and had numerous production flaws, *CdV* was undoubtedly a low-budget reality TV show. It would also become a controversial programme that stirred up numerous complaints and even faced a boycott by advertisers (Biosca, 2013).

Etxebarria was presented as a ‘surprise guest’ by the programme, and both the quality press (La Vanguardia, 2013; El Periódico, 2013; Cortés, 2013) and the audience commenting on the show in the social media expressed their shock at her participation. The news articles covering the story also highlighted why Etxebarria joined the show: she owed €200,000 to the Spanish Tax Office (‘Hacienda’), as she declared both on the programme and in an open letter published on her Facebook page (Etxebarria, 2013a).

Etxebarria quickly became the main ‘character’ of the show, occupying most of its airtime. Her participation in *CdV* was portrayed as embroiled by conflict, as the programme devoted a lot of time showing footage of her being continuously yelled at and spoken to with contempt, while she alternatively cried and fought back. Starting on July 19, she also was shown repeatedly asking to leave the programme, until she finally quit on July 25. Etxebarria’s ambiguous hierarchical position within the programme was at the core of these conflicts.

Etxebarria’s participation in *CdV* should be understood as a *migration* from the literary field to the field of reality TV. The concept of ‘celebrity field migration’ refers to a process through which some individuals can use their celebrity status, which involves certain economic, symbolic and social capital, to enter other social fields (Driessens, 2013b: 648–649). This is a phenomenon that has received some academic attention in the last few years (Driessens, 2013a, 2013b; Giles, 2015; Arthurs and Shaw, 2016), mainly focusing on celebrities entering a field that ‘require[s] a higher degree of involvement or knowledge’ (Driessens, 2013b: 649), such as migrations from pop to classical music (Giles, 2015) or from entertainment to politics (Arthurs and Shaw, 2016). These analyses help us to understand how celebrity operates across fields in a celebritized society -i.e., under what conditions a celebrity can enter another field and achieve a legitimate position within it (Driessens, 2013b)- as well as how particular fields work (i.e., their rules of entry, functioning and hierarchization).

Through the analysis of Lucía Etxebarria’s participation in a reality TV show, this article seeks to contribute to the study of celebrity migration. Specifically, this case study will allow us to better understand ‘downward’ celebrity migration (i.e., a celebrity’s move from one field to a less ‘legitimate’ field) and the risks that it may entail for their status.
Celebrity and field theory

This article's theoretical framework draws on Bourdieu's field theory (Bourdieu, 1993; Benson, 1998; Couldry, 2003a). As Benson explains, 'Bourdieu sees society as differentiated into a number of semi-autonomous fields (e.g., fields of politics, economics, religion, cultural production, etc.) governed by their own "rules of the game" and offering their own particular economy of exchange and reward' (Benson, 1998: 464). Each field is structured around two poles or principles of hierarchization (Bourdieu, 1993: 37–43): the autonomous pole, which refers to the 'specific principles of evaluation of practices and works' (Bourdieu, 1993: 163) and specific capitals involved in the field; and the heteronomous pole, which refers to the forces external to the field (i.e., the influence of economic or political criteria). Thus, for example, in the literary field, 'the heteronomous principle of hierarchization (...) is success, as measured by indices such as book sales (...). The autonomous principle of hierarchization (...) is degree-specific consecration (literary or artistic prestige)' (Bourdieu, 1993: 38). This also means that the field of cultural production is structured upon a logic of 'reversed economy', in which 'commercial' (i.e., the fast accrual of economic capital) is equated with low recognition and low cultural and symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1993: 74–86, 97–101, 164).

Consequently, a field can be viewed as a hierarchized system of positions in which actors and works are placed according to the specific capital accrued by them (Bourdieu, 1993: 30). Bourdieu differentiates between four forms of capital: economic capital, cultural capital (academic qualifications, cultural goods, knowledge and taste [Bourdieu, 1997: 47]), social capital ('possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition' [Bourdieu, 1997: 51]) and symbolic capital (prestige, authority and having a 'known, recognized name' [Bourdieu, 1993: 75]).

Due to the centrality of the media in social life, we are experiencing a process by which society and culture are being celebritized, which means that status and value are linked to media visibility (Driessens, 2013b; Couldry, 2003a). Celebrity is 'a quality or status characterized by a capacity to attract attention generating some (...) benefit from the fact of being well-known' (van Krieken, 2012: 10). It also 'describes a type of value that can be articulated through an individual and celebrated publicly as important and significant' (Marshall, 1997: 7). Celebrity has an ambiguous relationship with symbolic capital: it is related to attention and visibility, as well as to merit, achievement or talent (Marshall, 1997). Nevertheless, there are always two explanations of celebrity in competition: as the product of (media) manufacture and as a consequence of talent and work (Gamson, 1994: 15-54) or, in Rojek's classification, between 'attributed' celebrity -'the result of the concentrated representation of an individual as noteworthy or exceptional by cultural intermediaries'- and 'achieved' celebrity -derived from the individual’s perceived accomplishments (Rojek, 2001: 17-18). This leads to the necessity of better defining the relationship between celebrity and symbolic capital.
Driessens has argued that celebrity should be viewed as a specific form of capital different from symbolic capital: while the former refers to recognizability (‘accumulated media visibility through recurrent media representation’), the latter refers to recognition (Driessens, 2013a: 553). This is a useful distinction that helps us better understand the difference between what is perceived as ‘deserved’ and ‘undeserved’ celebrity. Moreover, while celebrity can work across fields and help some individuals to pass (migrate) from one field to another, symbolic capital is not always convertible. This means that celebrities who migrate from one field to another usually have their position contested because they do not have the specific capital that the new field requires, such as cultural capital in the form of education (Driessens, 2013b; Giles, 2015). Thus, the analysis of celebrity migration is a perfect opportunity to study the boundaries of a field and its rules of evaluation and hierarchization.

Method

The main aim of this paper is to critically discuss downward celebrity migration through a case study: the Spanish writer Lucía Etxebarria’s participation in a reality TV show (CdV). To fulfil this aim, I analysed a sample that includes CdV’s episodes as well as the circulation of discourses around the programme in other media, such as television programmes (Sálvame Deluxe), newspaper articles, online comments in social media and texts published by Etxebarria in the press and her blog. This broad range of materials was qualitatively analyzed to answer the following research questions:

a) How was Etxebarria’s entry into CdV portrayed and discursively constructed by the programme, the media and audience comments?

b) What status was Etxebarria attributed within the programme? How were her celebrity, economic, cultural and symbolic capitals constructed, recognized and negotiated within the programme and in the discourses about the programme? In other words, how was the convertibility of these capitals from the literary field to reality TV discursively constructed?

c) How and with what criteria was Etxebarria judged as a contestant? How were these criteria constructed through discourse?

Both audiovisual (camera, editing, music, sound) and verbal elements were analysed to identify repeated motifs and discourses regarding the portrayal and evaluation of Etxebarria’s participation in CdV.

As stated above, this research draws on celebrity studies and field theory, especially the work by Driessens (2013a, 2013b) and Giles (2015) on celebrity migration. In this context, reality TV should be considered a semi-autonomous sub-field within the media which has its specific forms of capital and rules to evaluate its actors and specialists. The (sub-)field of reality TV is situated
in a dominated position within the field of cultural production, since it ‘is seen as a dumbed-down media form with a low entry threshold for participants’ (Kavka, 2012: 145). Its (‘mass’) audience and its closeness to the heteronomous pole (it is a genre subjected to significant economic pressures) even further reinforce its dominated position. Thus, even if reality TV also produces celebrity, ‘its diminished cultural value rubs off on participants’ claims to fame’ (Kavka, 2012: 145, see also Palmer, 2005, and Holmes, 2004). Our analysis will focus on the rules of entry, the functioning and hierarchization of the (sub-)field of reality TV, the capitals at play and the convertibility of capitals between the literary field and reality TV.

Moreover, this research also draws on reality TV scholarship to analyse how Etxebarria’s behaviour was judged against the ‘rules’ of the genre and how these rules were negotiated and constructed through these debates. Thus, concepts such as authenticity, ordinariness, emotional sincerity and performance (Holmes, 2004, Kavka, 2012; Biressi and Nunn, 2005; Hill, 2004; 2005) have guided the analysis of Etxebarria’s evaluation and portrayal as a contestant.

A 'controversial' writer: Lucía Etxebarria and the Spanish literary field

Several scholars have analyzed Etxebarria’s position within the Spanish literary field (Henseler, 2003: 109–126, 2005, 2006; Bermúdez, 2008; Moreno, 2014). Although the analysis of Etxebarria as a literary celebrity is beyond the scope of this paper, it is important to consider this previous research to better understand her migration to reality TV.

Etxebarria occupies ‘a conflictive and ambiguous place in the Spanish literary landscape’ (Bermúdez, 2008: 95). A member of the so-called ‘Generation X’, her first novels (published in the late nineties) became instant commercial successes. Her books, focused on female characters that did not conform to traditional gender roles, garnered her a loyal female audience, and both her success as writer and her constant media presence made her a literary celebrity. She was also awarded several literary prizes, which amplified her public visibility: Premio Nadal for Beatriz y los cuerpos celestes (1998), Premio Primavera for De todo lo visible y lo invisible (2001) and Premio Planeta for Un milagro en equilibrio (2004).³

Nevertheless, Spanish literary critics did not appreciate her literary style, seeing it as facile, commercial and too influenced by popular culture (Henseler, 2003, 2005, 2006; Moreno, 2014). Etxebarria was perceived by critics as a ‘material writer, supposedly more interested in her income and the large number of readers than in the literary quality of her work’ (Henseler, 2005: 507) and as someone who had actively contributed to the commodification and mediatization of her public persona. Thus, as a literary celebrity she is at the centre of the tensions between the autonomous and heteronomous pole of the literary field, between ‘economic success and cultural prestige’ (Ohlsson et al., 2014: 35, see also Braun, 2016; Holmes, 2016; Moran, 2000).
Etxebarria has openly challenged her position within the Spanish literary field, using her media appearances, essays and novels to 'expose the (discriminatory) practices and politics of the publishing industries' (Henseler, 2003: 109) and express 'a criticism of the field of cultural production as a highly hierarchized space in which those that hold more symbolic power exercise violence over those devoid of it' (Moreno, 2014: 49). Despite her attempts to be perceived as a legitimate and 'serious' writer (Bermúdez, 2008; Moreno, 2014), her belligerent and vocal attitude against critics, her visible (and eccentric) public persona, as well as several scandals in which she has been involved (from nude photos to accusations of plagiarism) have made her a 'controversial' writer (Ross, 2016: 80-81).

Lucía Etxebarria in a reality show! Downward celebrity migration

Although Etxebarria had had a continuous presence in the Spanish media, her joining CdV was represented as a transgression. Etxebarria's arrival was staged as a surprise, highlighting the unusual fact of a writer on a reality TV show. Minutes before being announced to the audience, Joaquin Prat, the host of CdV, talked about a 'surprise contestant': 'A hint: she is a personality that is very much related to the world of culture, no less. And you’re probably thinking "what a paradox!"' (CdV, 16 July). Interestingly, this comment positioned reality TV outside the field of cultural production, highlighting the perceived opposition between the literary field and the (sub-)field of reality TV.

The same day Etxebarria joined the programme, she published an open letter on her Facebook page explaining 'why I have done such a crazy thing' (Etxebarria, 2013a). In this letter, she discussed whether her participation in the reality show could be viewed as a form of debasing herself and whether it could result in a diminishment of her status as a writer:

I know that this is going to cause me a lot of problems. And a lot of attacks. Yes, I know that I’m going to a trashy and sensationalist TV programme, to a programme that I have criticized millions of times. (...) I know that it seems unworthy of me (Etxebarria, 2013a).

After quitting the show, she further reflected on this in an opinion column in which she equated her experience to that of people who had lost their (middle-class) jobs as architects and designers as a consequence of the economic crisis and had been forced to take working-class jobs, such as doormen, caretakers or cleaning ladies (Etxebarria, 2013b). Thus, this article pointed to the existence of 'homologies between the fundamental opposition which gives the field [of cultural production] its structure and the oppositions structuring the field of power and the field of class relations' (Bourdieu, 1993: 44). In other words, reality television was equated with the working class, since both occupy a similar position within their fields. It is because of these homologies that 'field migration is also a social migration' (Giles, 2015: 542). Similarly, Etxebarria portrayed her participation in CdV as a 'downward migration' equivalent to downward social mobility.
In addition, appearing on 
CdV entailed a second risk to Etxebarria's status as a literary celebrity. Celebrity reality TV is usually connected to a loss of celebrity capital and other related capitals such as economic capital: 'Celebrity reality TV is often peopled by faces who have experienced a decline in auratic status, names jostling for the chance to relaunch or reinvent their personae' (Holmes, 2006: 47), as well as 'proto-celebrities' who are 'on the fringes of fame who might be seeking to gain wider recognition and acceptance as fully-fledged celebrities' (Deller, 2016: 377). Thus, participating in a celebrity reality TV programme can be perceived as a sign of not being a 'proper celebrity'. On 
CdV, Etxebarria was casted with D-Listers with low celebrity and symbolic capital: proto-celebrities who had achieved a certain degree of celebrity capital by participating in other reality TV shows (Gaby, Jeyko, Pedre, Esteban, Olvido Hormigos, Montalvo) or being relatives of other celebrities (Jacobo Ostos, Modesto and Carmen Bazán). This furthered the image of a downward move.

Finally, Etxebarria's explanation of her presence on 
CdV in terms of economic need emphasized the idea of downward social mobility even further. As the winner of the most valuable literary prize in Spain, Etxebarria's claim that participating in a reality TV show was the only possible 'solution to her problems' was portrayed in Twitter comments as a proof of her loss of status within the literary field (and subsequent loss of economic capital): 'How sad to have a Planeta Prize and end up there' (@maykycs, 16 July). In addition, there were comments that pointed to the idea that 'downward migrations are more intrinsically risky in terms of alienating the original audience' (Giles, 2015: 541), especially in the case of a reality TV show, a genre usually defined as Trash TV and linked to 'undeserving' celebrities with a short lifespan and low symbolic capital (Biressi and Nunn, 2005; Palmer, 2005; Tyler and Bennett, 2010): 'Oh Luci... Not only won't you have enough money to pay the Tax Office, but nobody is going to publish a book by you anymore' (@JavierFP82, 16 July).

Having seen how Etxebarria's participation in a reality TV show was portrayed as a downward (and shocking) migration, the following sections will focus on how the writer's hierarchical position within the programme and the convertibility of her celebrity, cultural and symbolic capitals in the (sub-)field of reality TV were discussed and discursively constructed.

**Celebrity hierarchies and conflicts**

Celebrity reality TV is usually self-conscious about fame and its hierarchies. As Holmes argued regarding *Celebrity Big Brother*, it 'explicitly acknowledged the existence of fame hierarchies, and more significantly, their ability to create conflict and tension' (Holmes, 2009, para. 17). Yet at the same time, 'it couldn’t care less about these hierarchies, and by throwing everyone in together, it rather disregards meritocratic perceptions of fame' (Holmes, 2009, para. 18). As we shall see, Etxebarria functioned within the programme as a character that activated such tensions.
The programme's discourse regarding Etxebarria's status was ambiguous. The host and two of the three jury members portrayed her as an unequivocally deserving celebrity, setting her apart from the other contestants. For example, Joaquín Prat constantly called Etxebarria 'the Planeta Prize winner' or 'the writer', reminding the audience of her 'achieved celebrity' and her original field, thus reinforcing meritocratic definitions of celebrity. Belén Rodríguez, one of the members of the jury, also defended her superior 'status' within the game by stating: 'Her game-mates don't understand that she has nothing to do with them. When she says "I'm not famous for sleeping with anybody" she's absolutely right. She's famous because she is a writer' (CdV, 22 July). It is worth noting that there was not a single mention of Etxebarria's conflictive place in the Spanish literary field. CdV's host and jury never questioned her cultural and symbolic capital, reaffirming the dominant position of the literary field over the (sub-)field of reality TV.

Nevertheless, when Etxebarria arrived at the 'summer camp', not all the contestants knew who she was. This was highlighted several times by CdV's hosts, who also directly asked each contestant if they knew who she was. In celebrity reality TV, 'which celebrities are recognized by which other celebrities upon their entrance into a show reveals much about how different hierarchies of fame work' (Deller, 2016: 385). Thus, by not being recognized by four of CdV's contestants, Etxebarria's celebrity capital was seemingly questioned, as was its mobility and convertibility from one field to another. However, this situation was portrayed by the hosts as evidence of the contestants' lack of cultural capital and was used to ridicule them, not Etxebarria:

Joaquín Prat: Lucía Etxebarria, Planeta Prize winner, a world-famous writer, with several books made into films. I'm saying this for the ones that do not know who she is, including Esteban (...) Maybe he thinks that she is a former contestant from the first season of Big Brother (CdV, 16 July).

Here, the opposition between being a literary celebrity and being a reality TV celebrity (the category of most of the other contestants) is emphasized, as is the different value of their celebrity and symbolic capital within the field of cultural production. Thus, the 'theme' of inequality was introduced in these first few minutes of the programme, which would later frame the way the conflicts that arose between the writer, the contestants and the programme itself were portrayed.

Contestants grasped onto the 'theme' of inequality and privilege to frame their increasing grudges against Etxebarria. For example, on 22 July Etxebarria was interviewed live by Joaquín Prat, who tried to convince her not to quit the game. When the other contestants learned that, they tried to interrupt the interview and yelled at the production crew:

Gaby: Is she live?

Jeyko: This woman can do whatever she wants and I can't? This woman is not going to put me down in front of the whole country! (...
Gaby: I can't put up with the fact that this lady can do whatever she wants. [Whenever she asks,] the production crew comes down here, the directing crew comes down here...
(CdV, 22 July)

In this sequence, Gaby and Jeyko framed their performance of outrage as a reaction to what they argued was an unfair advantage: the fact that Etxebarria was granted more camera time (which could increase her celebrity capital) and the opportunity to explain herself on her own terms. What is relevant here is not whether they really thought that Etxebarria had privileges but that they constructed their performance as if they did. On 25 July, another contestant (Karmele Marchante) claimed that the contestants resented the writer for having received special treatment from the production team:

She [Lucía Etxebarria] talked about the money she was paid so everybody would know it and to create a negative atmosphere. You can't do that! (...) She had privileges. (...) We found out that she was given permission to write an article for La Vanguardia every 15 days (CdV, 25 July).

It is significant that Marchante mentioned the money Etxebarria earned from her participation in the programme: the writer's participation fee (see note 4) marked her as the contestant with the most celebrity capital (or at least with the highest exchange rate from celebrity to economic capital), even though at first her recognisability was questioned by the other contestants.

**Capitals and rules of reality TV**

One key feature of reality TV is the centrality of speculation on and judgement of the contestants’ behaviours in relation to both their acceptability (Hill, 2005: 108-134; Skeggs and Wood, 2011) and their authenticity and sincerity (Hill, 2004, 2005: 57-78; Kavka, 2012: 92-96; Ellis, 2009). Contestants are expected to be spontaneous, show emotional sincerity and reveal their true self through confession and by being subjected to surveillance (Dovey, 2000; Couldry, 2003b: 101–126; Andrejevic, 2004: 95-116; Biressi and Nunn, 2005: 108–117). Nevertheless, sincerity and authenticity are cultural categories that must be negotiated with the artificiality of reality TV’s settings and rules (Hill, 2004, 2005). In celebrity reality TV, ‘the authenticity of the show is marked by the supposed provision of insights into the hidden “real” aspect of celebrity personality’ (Biressi and Nunn, 2005: 147), although the balance between authenticity and performance is even more precarious, since maintaining a public persona is a key factor in celebrities’ image (Holmes, 2006).

In CdV, Etxebarria’s behaviour and reactions were judged in terms of authenticity and emotional sincerity. Other contestants accused Etxebarria of being ‘fake and a schemer’ (Gaby, CdV, 22.07), of acting differently both in front of the cameras and when they were not filming, of stirring up conflicts and provoking aggressive behaviour in her fellow contestants to gain a prominent role in the programme’s narrative as the victim of their attacks. She was also accused by fellow
contestants, commentators (‘From the Planeta to the Oscars’, Hernández, 2013a) and the press (‘Nobody believes Lucía Etxebarria’s drama’, Espí, 2013) of exaggerating her emotional reactions to win the audience’s favour. The programme itself also heightened the suspicion about Etxebarria’s ‘insincerity’ through the questions that framed the debates held in the studio (‘Etxebarria: Sensitive sufferer or accomplished schemer?’, CdV, 22 July) and the way events were narrated: Etxebarria’s emotional reactions were depicted using close-ups and dramatic music without inserting them into a coherent narrative that would explain their causes. If contestants’ emotions must be displayed according to socially accepted codes to be recognized as sincere and authentic (Ellis, 2009: 110), the spectacularized and decontextualized way in which Etxebarria was depicted by CdV made this difficult.

But at the same time, she was applauded for being a good ‘player’ and generating debate: ‘Lucía is providing great moments and striking videos’ (Belén Rodríguez, CdV, 18 July); ‘As a viewer of this reality show, Lucía quitting would make me angry because she’s a big component of the programme’ (Mila Ximénez, CdV, 22 July). She was even hailed (not without irony) as ‘the absolute star’ of the programme by a well-known television critic (Monegal, 2013, see also Martín, 2013). These claims explicitly revealed that the contestants were expected to both be emotionally sincere (Holmes, 2004, Ellis, 2009) and engage in a performance to make the programme entertaining (Kilborn, 2003; Hill, 2004, 2005: 57-78), which shows the complex relationship between these two elements.

Etxebarria further complicated this by defending her emotional sincerity, while also arguing that reality TV was an artificial genre and the other contestants were fake. She claimed that ‘here we are all actors, all of us earn a weekly wage’ and that ‘half of the arguments were not real’ because her fellow contestants were trying to gain camera time by attacking her. Yet at the same time, she argued that these fights had real effects on her, causing her distress and anxiety (CdV, 25 July). Thus, she claimed that being subjected to an extreme (but contrived) situation was precisely what prompted her real emotions (Hirdman, 2011).

Accusations of being fake were interlinked with accusations of pretentiousness. Both Etxebarria’s suffering and her refusal to follow some of the programme’s rules (she was shown not wanting to sleep in the cabin that she was assigned and repeatedly asking to leave the programme) were framed as evidence of the writer’s sense of entitlement and superiority, since she refused to just endure the conditions of reality TV work (Skeggs and Wood, 2012: position 4572-4598): ‘We are here to accept the rules and this woman has not accepted any rule’ (Esteban, CdV, 25 July). Thus, Etxebarria was portrayed as failing at being ‘ordinary’ (Holmes, 2004; Biressi and Nunn, 2005). This ‘anti-pretension’ critique [Skeggs, 2004: 114-116], rooted in an anti-elitist discourse, was also constructed upon the homologies between the field of cultural production and class relations (Bourdieu, 1993: 44): as a ‘representative’ of the legitimate culture, she was bound to fail at being judged as ordinary (since ordinariness is usually associated with the working class [Skeggs, 2004; Skeggs and Wood, 2011: 1; Biressi and Nunn, 2005]). Therefore, Etxebarria was
portrayed as either 'too sensitive', which also marked her as 'privileged' ('This is not the Ritz'), or as 'fake', since everyone else was able to endure the programme.

The programme also devoted a considerable amount of time showing and discussing Etxebarría’s statements asserting her cultural and symbolic capital in response to the other contestants’ attacks: ‘[talking to the camera] In my life, darling, I have sold 200,000 books, ok? [And now I have to fight] against eight [people]?’ (CdV, 22 July); ‘[talking to the camera] Besides having her breasts augmented, this girl [Gaby] has done nothing in her life. (...) What am I doing wasting energy with a useless person?’ (CdV, 25 July); 'Look, when I was 23 [Gaby’s age] I had two degrees and a PhD. I wasn’t famous for sleeping with anybody' (CdV, 22 July). These comments, which fostered traditional (and gendered [Mendick et al., 2015: 168-174]) definitions of work and talent upon which the difference between ‘deserved’ and ‘undeserved’ celebrity is built, were used by the programme to further the accusations of pretentiousness and create a debate about whether Etxebarría’s cultural and symbolical capital were relevant in a reality TV show and whether she should be evaluated according to other criteria. This debate was mainly built around a dichotomy between having cultural capital (academic qualifications and knowledge) and being well-mannered and getting along with other people. Several commentators argued that the latter, not the former, should be valued in the programme:

Bárbara Rey [former actress and contestant in celebrity reality TV shows]: She believes that she is superior to other people because she is a writer and she is good at writing, but this is not all that matters in life. There are people that may not have the knowledge and cultural level that she does, but they may be a better person (...) and have more respect for other people than she does (CdV, 22 July).

As the conflict between Etxebarría and her programme-mates increased, the debates focused on whether the writer 'knew how to live with other people', whether she 'had a difficult character' and whether she 'looked down at her fellow contestants or tried to fit in' (CdV, 22 July, Sálvame Deluxe, 19 July). Likewise, the other contestants used this argument against Etxebarría: 'She shows off that she has written 15 books and has two degrees, but manners... none at all!' (Esteban, CdV, 25 July). By defending ‘popular’ qualities that Etxebarría allegedly lacked as a representative of Spain’s intellectual elite, the programme challenged her symbolic capital and the meritocratic definitions of celebrity that she embodied, while offering ‘fantasies of populist empowerment’ (Kavka, 2012: 164).

These attacks against Etxebarría were a form of 'levelling through humiliation' connected to a 'desire for equality' (Cross and Littler, 2010: 397). In other words, the programme symbolically 'punished' the writer for breaking the rules of celebrity reality TV: being ‘ordinary’ and denying social and cultural hierarchies (Holmes, 2004; Biressi and Nunn, 2005; Deller, 2016). Interestingly, contestants and commentators also repeatedly claimed that Etxebarría was now 'one of them', since they were all on the same programme: 'If you are so smart, why are you here [on the programme]?' (Gaby, CdV, 22 July), 'They have all joined the programme for one reason
or another, and here they are all equal’ (Mila Ximénez [CdV commentator], CdV, 22 July). Thus, she was accused of both not being ordinary enough and at the same time of being ‘just like everyone else’ (Holmes, 2006: 50-55). In addition, Etxebarria’s ‘successful’ participation in CdV (in terms of accruing media attention) led to a discussion about her real ‘cultural capital’ regarding reality TV:

Mila Ximénez: She knows more about television than she has let on. [She has watched] a lot more reality TV than she says she has (...) and she is acting up because she knows that the more she acts up, the longer she’ll last [in the programme].

Nagore Robles [former contestant of Big Brother and reality TV celebrity]: She asked me a lot of things [about reality TV] because she had no idea (...) She doesn't know anything about television. (Sálvame Deluxe, 19 July)

Since intellectuals in Spain tend to openly reject popular culture (Wheeler, 2016: 362) and reality TV in particular, ‘proving’ that Etxebarria knew the rules and codes of reality shows was a way to lower her status by questioning her distinction (Bourdieu, 1984). This argument also furthered the accusations of pretentiousness (Biressi and Nunn, 2005: 151-152), depicting her as someone who wanted to appear ‘superior’ but was actually just like us.

Aftermath: Madness and scandal

On July 25, Etxebarria finally left the programme, which was a breach of contract (STS 4671/2017). This moment marked a turning point in how Etxebarria was depicted. As stated above, the debates around her had been centred on whether she was faking or exaggerating her emotions and whether she was being pretentious. From this moment on, she was accused of being ‘mad’. References to mental illness were uttered by the other contestants, one of the jury members (Hernández) and even the programme’s intertitles (‘Etxebarria breaks down live’). Moreover, the narrative of the programme, focusing on her emotional reactions while concealing why she could not leave or why she would not sleep in the cabin she was assigned, also spurred the creation of the ‘madness’ frame. These accusations were fully fleshed out in an interview with Etxebarria on Sálvame Deluxe (26 July), a celebrity gossip programme produced by the same company as CdV (La Fábrica de la Tele). In this interview, she was attacked mercilessly by all the interviewers, who reiterated some of the arguments that had already emerged during her stint on the programme but particularly emphasized Etxebarria’s alleged ‘mental problems’.

There was clearly a gendered dimension in the portrayal of Etxebarria as a ‘mad woman’: ‘Madness has long been associated with femininity’, as women are ‘more prone to be labelled as “hysterical” or “maladjusted”’ (Meyer et al., 2011: 218, see also Lavis, 2005: 160-161). Celebrity culture has also contributed to this through its fascination with ‘out of control’ female celebrities (Negra and Holmes, 2008). Media portrayals of female ‘madness’ serve to reinforce cultural
definitions of normality by delegitimizing and controlling women that question gender and social norms (Bell, 2008). Etxebarria’s refusal to accept and endure the programme’s conditions and submit to its authority, as well as her complaints of being harassed by the other contestants (and the programme tolerating the attacks), were contained through these accusations of mental instability and depression.

Interestingly, in the literary field, ‘madness’ has been linked with creativity and genius (Harper, 2006: 312-315; Lavis, 2005). Although this definition of genius is usually reserved for male artists (Lavis, 2005: 160), Etxebarria had also constructed her public persona as a writer through complex references to mental illness: on the one hand, by disclosing that when she was young she had been subjected to psychiatric evaluations as an attempt to contain her refusal to conform to social norms, and on the other hand, by presenting her literary work as a form of ‘therapy’ (Fernández, 2005: 353-387). Thus, references to ‘maladjustment’, which in the literary field are related to romantic notions of authorship and can help to construct the image of authors as creative geniuses, were used in the (sub-)field of reality TV to negatively judge and discredit Etxebarria (for example, Etxebarria’s autobiographical essay *La letra futura* was used as proof of these accusations [Sálvame Deluxe, 26 July; Hernández 2013b]).

After this interview, a long confrontation began between Etxebarria and La Fábrica de la Tele. For example, on August 3 an alleged friend of Etxebarria’s accused her of being a bad mother, having poor hygiene and being mentally unstable on Sálvame Deluxe. These accusations portrayed Etxebarria failing as a *woman* and fostered the distinction between cultural and ‘popular’ capital.6

Etxebarria responded to these attacks in opinion columns, blog posts and interviews. While in the past she had constructed her celebrity persona upon controversy and her challenging of the rules of the literary field, this time she did the same with the (sub-)field of reality TV. Thus, the writer exposed the behind-the-scenes workings of the programme and denounced its constructed nature: ‘the production crew continuously stirred up conflict: if conflict did not arise naturally, it was created’ (Etxebarria, 2013d). She also accused reality TV of promoting bullying and aggressive behaviours and challenged the idea that contestants must endure any situation created by the programme and accept the programme’s authority (Couldry, 2008) (Etxebarria, 2013c, 2013d, 2013e).

Nevertheless, the vitriolic responses of CdV and Sálvame Deluxe to Etxebarria’s allegations showed the difficulties and perils of challenging media power: being subjected to scandal (i.e., unwanted media visibility) and surveillance (in the form of paparazzi), a process through which visibility becomes disempowering (Brighenti, 2007: 336) and can damage a celebrity’s public image and symbolic capital.
Conclusions

Drawing on Bourdieu’s concepts of field and capital, this article contributes to gaining a better understanding of ‘downward’ field migration (i.e., when a celebrity enters a field that is less ‘legitimate’ than their original field), the tensions and debates that it can stir up and the perils this entails for celebrities: from being perceived as someone who is experiencing a loss in status and symbolic capital (which can lead to an actual decrease in their recognition) to becoming the centre of media scandals. Downward migration can put a celebrity in an impossible situation, in which being ‘successful’ in the new field can bring about a loss of respect in their field of origin (as showed by the ironic comments on Etxebarria being ‘the star’ of CdV).

While Kavka (2012) argued that several reality television formats work well with other entertainment industries and that ‘rather than being a springboard into media celebrity, reality TV is now instrumental in sustaining the field of media celebrity itself’ (Kavka, 2012: 172), this case study shows the limits of this alliance between reality TV and ‘multi-media celebrity’ (Kavka, 2012: 173). Although the literary field is also subjected to a process of celebritization (Driessens, 2013b), even if Etxebarria had partaken in this process by regularly appearing on television programmes, participating in a reality TV show like CdV was perceived as too much of a leap. Moreover, they are two fields with rules of hierarchization which are too different, which hinders the convertibility of capitals between them.

In this context, the debates about Etxebarria’s participation in CdV should be understood as an expression of a conflict involving cultural hierarchies. Because of the homologies between the field of cultural production and the field of class relations, they were also a representation of a conflict concerning social hierarchies. Thus, although Etxebarria had a contested place within the literary field, in the (sub-)field of reality TV she was portrayed as a representative of ‘legitimate’ culture, meritocratic values and traditional definitions of ‘achieved’ fame. As such, she was the target of anti-elitist discourses that expressed (and exploited) anxieties regarding social and cultural inequalities. Trying to prove that Etxebarria was ‘no different from us’, denying the relevance of cultural capital in favour of ‘popular capitals’ such as being ‘well-mannered’, and humiliating her through personal attacks were all ways of challenging the cultural and social hierarchies embodied by the writer, but through an ‘individualized’ (and cruel) discourse that avoided structural explanations of (and solutions to) inequality.

Finally, this article also makes a contribution to celebrity studies by analyzing a Spanish case. Celebrity studies have focused their attention mainly on Anglo-American celebrities, while other geographies remain understudied. Several scholars have urged that the geographic scope of this field of study be broadened (Ohlsson, et al., 2014: 36) not only to identify how ‘local celebrity cultures differ from the dominant Anglo-American model’, but also to ‘shed light on the validity of our findings in other contexts’ (Driessens, 2013b: 654). Thus, this article shows that the analysis of local celebrities can help to shed light on how celebrity works similarly across different Western countries.
Notes

1 The corpus analyzed for this article included: a) CdV episodes narrating Etxebarria’s participation in the programme (Telecinco, 16, 18, 22, 25, 29 July, 9, 12 September 2013); b) News articles covering this topic published in La Vanguardia, ABC, El País, El Periódico, El Mundo (July-September 2013); c) Sálvame Deluxe (Telecinco, 19, 26 July 2013): debates on CdV and an interview with Lucía Etxebarria; d) Twitter comments using the hashtags suggested by CdV: #lucilalia (16 July 2016); #lahuidadelucia (22 July 2013); #laverdadelucia (25 July 2013); e) Opinion columns and blog posts written by Etxebarria published in La Vanguardia and Allegramag (July-September 2013).

2 Etxebarria’s work’s alliance with feminism is controversial. On the one hand, her novels openly denounce the limitations of traditional gender norms, and she has publicly exposed the gender inequality of the literary field (Henseler, 2005). On the other hand, her work has been identified as postfeminist by some scholars, as it favours an upper-middle class subjectivity and fails to ‘create wholly contestatory characters’ (Ryan, 2016: 40). Moreover, it has also been argued that ‘the structure of the story intimates the impossibility of change within the current system’ (Ross, 2016: 81).

3 Nadal and Primavera are prestigious literary prizes, while Premio Planeta is more commercial. The latter is also one of the most valuable literary awards in the world, since the winner earns €601,000.

4 CdV’s winner would earn €30,000 for themselves (not for a charity). Contestants also earned an undisclosed weekly fee: Etxebarria’s contract specified that she would earn €8,000 per week and €700 per programme if she was eliminated. Moreover, contestants faced a penalty of €15,000 if they voluntarily left the programme (STS 4671/2017: 4, 7).

5 Etxebarria’s appearance on this programme was part of an agreement to avoid the monetary penalty for leaving CdV voluntarily (STS 4671/2017: 7).

6 Etxebarria sued Mediaset, Telecinco’s parent company, for damages to her reputation and privacy through this interview. She recently won the case, and Mediaset was sentenced to pay her €50,000 (STS 4671/2017). Moreover, the ruling publicized the confidential monetary details of Etxebarria’s participation in CdV and Sálvame Deluxe.

References


Spain. Tribunal Supremo [Supreme Court] (Civil Courtroom, 1st Section). Sentence no. 4671/2017, 19 December.

