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Educational Innovation and Service-Learning in Philosophy and Social Anthropology

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Feminist and LGBTQI+ Memories in Movement

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Abstract

This article explores a service-learning initiative that combines a gender perspective and social memory to enrich both the academic experience and civic engagement of higher education students. The project, “Memorias Feministas e LGBTQI+ en Movimento,” involved students and faculty from the Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, Spain, in collaboration with the Centro de Documentación en Igualdade e Feminismos del Consello da Cultura Galega. By critically analyzing the feminist–queer archive held by this institution, the project aimed to recover and reinterpret marginalized historical narratives and challenge dominant stories that erase the contributions of women and sexual dissidence. Key activities included training sessions, critical analysis, academic research, and public outreach through presentations and social media. Evaluations through focus groups, observations, and rubrics demonstrated significant advancements in students’ critical thinking, research skills, and ethical awareness. The project also spotlighted the importance of feminist and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, plus (LGBTQI+) movements, illustrating how service-learning can foster educational innovation and promote social justice and inclusive citizenship.

Keywords: *educational innovation, gender perspective, LGBTQI+, service-learning, social memory*

Memorias feministas y LGBTQI+ en movimiento

innovación educativa y aprendizaje-servicio en Filosofía y Antropología Social

Enrique Latorre-Ruiz, Diego Allen-Perkins, y Guadalupe Jiménez-Esquinas

Resumen

Este artículo analiza una iniciativa de aprendizaje-servicio que combina una perspectiva de género y la memoria social para enriquecer tanto la experiencia académica como el compromiso cívico de los estudiantes de educación superior. El proyecto, titulado «Memorias Feministas e LGBTQI+ en Movimento», contó con la participación de estudiantes y profesoras de la Universidad de Santiago de Compostela (España), en colaboración con el Centro de Documentación en Igualdade e Feminismos del Consello da Cultura Galega. Mediante el análisis crítico del archivo feminista-queer que conserva esta institución, el proyecto tuvo como objetivo recuperar y reinterpretar narrativas históricas tradicionalmente silenciadas, así como cuestionar las historias dominantes que tienden a borrar las contribuciones de las mujeres y las disidencias sexuales. Las actividades principales incluyeron sesiones de formación, análisis crítico, investigación académica y divulgación pública a través de presentaciones y difusión en redes sociales. Las evaluaciones realizadas mediante grupos focales, observaciones y rúbricas demostraron avances significativos en el pensamiento crítico, las habilidades de investigación y el compromiso ético de los estudiantes. El proyecto también puso de relieve la importancia de los movimientos feministas y LGBTQI+, ilustrando cómo el aprendizaje-servicio puede fomentar la innovación educativa, promover la justicia social y la ciudadanía inclusiva.

Palabras clave: *innovación educativa; perspectiva de género; LGBTQI+; aprendizaje-servicio; memoria social*

Introduction

Service-learning, with its ability to link academic learning with social action, offers a valuable pedagogical approach for exploring and questioning the dynamics of exclusion and power that underlie the production of knowledge and social relations. In this sense, service-learning not only fosters academic and civic competencies but also provides opportunities to integrate critical perspectives that challenge dominant narratives (Cipolle, 2004; Rosenberger, 2000).

This educational approach, rooted in experiential learning, combines academic development with civic engagement by integrating service activities that address specific community needs (Asiyah Adam & Mohamed, 2024; Lin et al., 2024; Wahab, 2024). Crucially, it is this integration of direct engagement with critical reflection that transforms service-learning into a powerful pedagogical strategy. Unlike mere volunteerism or internships, service-learning deliberately promotes a deeper understanding of course content and a broadened appreciation of the discipline by prompting students to analyze the systemic issues underpinning community challenges. This distinctive, balanced connection between academic rigor and community service endows service-learning with significant potential to directly challenge traditional power structures and foster critical consciousness (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995; Ferrari & Chapman, 1999; Furco, 1996). Critical service-learning frameworks further develop this transformative potential by centering power analysis and systemic change rather than charity (Mitchell, 2008), while decolonizing approaches challenge extractive university-community relationships by positioning communities as knowledge holders (Santiago-Ortiz, 2019). These critical and decolonizing orientations inform the pedagogical foundation of our project, as discussed in the following sections.

In recent years, service-learning has become increasingly relevant in higher education due to its ability to respond to the demands of a university education that transcends the strictly technical aspects. Several studies have demonstrated that service-learning strengthens academic learning and enhances transversal competencies such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and intercultural communication (Meyer et al., 2016; Rutti et al., 2016; Yorio & Ye, 2012). By connecting classrooms with real-world problems, this methodology fosters greater student involvement while developing their commitment to social justice and their understanding of their role as agents of social change (Olberding & Hacker, 2016).

Beyond these general competencies, service-learning provides a particularly valuable lens for examining the hegemonic forms of knowledge construction that have historically ignored or marginalized the contributions of certain groups. One of the key perspectives is that of gender, which illuminates the structural and symbolic inequalities affecting women and sexual dissidence, while emphasizing their historical contributions to social change. The androcentrism embedded in these hegemonic narratives has resulted in the systematic exclusion and erasure of subaltern subjects—particularly women and sexual and gender dissidences—from disciplinary canons and dominant patriarchal frameworks (Jiménez-Esquinas, 2025; Troncoso Pérez & Piper Shafir, 2015; Valcuende Del Río et al., 2023).

Given the systematic exclusion of marginalized voices from academic canons, social memory plays a critical role by offering a space to recover and reframe the histories of groups excluded from dominant narratives. Social memory can be understood as a continuous process of interpreting the past in the present, shaped by relations of legitimacy, authority, and power, with tangible effects—both symbolic and material—on the construction of realities (Jiménez-Esquinas, 2021; Troncoso Pérez & Piper Shafir, 2015). Memories act as a cultural mechanism that strengthens (or weakens) the sense of belonging of individuals, groups, or collectives to the political community (Jelin, 2001). For women and sexual dissidence, social memory provides a means to challenge heroic, individualistic, and abstract narratives by focusing on everyday practices and collective strategies. These narratives underscore the interconnectedness of various social struggles, highlighting the points where feminist and LGBTQI+ movements have converged.

The purpose of this article is to present the design, development, and evaluation of an interdisciplinary service-learning project implemented in the fields of philosophy and social anthropology. This project aimed to explore the potential of the gender perspective and social memory as critical tools to highlight the contributions of women and sexual dissidence to the construction of an inclusive democratic citizenship.

The project, entitled “Memorias feministas e LGBTQI+ en movimiento” (Feminist and LGBTQI+ Memories in Movement), was carried out with first-year philosophy students at the Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, Spain. Through an interdisciplinary collaboration across three courses—*Introduction to Political Philosophy, Semiotics, and Anthropology and Philosophy of Gender*—and with the support of the Centro de Documentación en Igualdade e Feminismos (CDIF) of the Consello da Cultura Galega (CCG; Center for Documentation on Equality and Feminisms of the Council of Galician Culture), the project provided students access to historical and contemporary archives of feminist and queer social movements.

The service-learning project was structured in three phases: (a) an initial training stage introducing students to the CDIF’s documentary collections, (b) a collaborative process of analysis and academic production in small groups, and (c) a final phase focused on the dissemination and transfer of knowledge through public presentations and social media content. In addition to gaining academic and methodological skills, students fostered civic and ethical engagement by analyzing social struggles and historical narratives and by participating socially and politically through their connection to social movements, activism, and both historical and current realities (Sotelino Losada et al., 2016).

Service-Learning, Gender and Social Memory in Higher Education

Higher education currently faces significant challenges, including growing demands for graduate employability and practical skills (Bridgstock, 2009), increasing pressure to demonstrate social relevance and community engagement (Saltmarsh et al., 2009), and the need to prepare students for complex global issues such as inequality, climate change, and social justice (UNESCO, 2017). These challenges encompass both the integral preparation of students and the need to respond to broader social demands. In this context, the implementation of service-learning projects has gained special relevance, as these types of strategies respond to educational needs and generate a direct impact on the communities they are aimed at, integrating the social action component with academic learning (Bawole, 2024; Lau et al., 2021).

To address these challenges, service-learning is an educational methodology that allows students to put theoretical knowledge into practice in real situations while acquiring transversal competencies such as empathy, critical thinking, and teamwork (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995). As Meyer et al. (2016) note, this process of structured critical reflection facilitates a deeper understanding of curricular content, while developing practical skills and a more engaged vision of the role of academic institutions in social transformation. Furthermore, service-learning strengthens the relationship between universities and communities, generating a bidirectional impact: on the one hand, it involves the groups with which it engages in the educational process; on the other hand, it enriches students’ educational experiences (Geller et al., 2016).

Despite these potential benefits, it is crucial to acknowledge that service-learning practices can inadvertently reproduce colonial patterns of knowledge production if not approached critically. As Smith (2012) argues in her seminal work on decolonizing methodologies, Western academic institutions have historically extracted knowledge from marginalized communities while maintaining hierarchical relationships that privilege academic over experiential knowledge. This critique extends to service-learning contexts, where universities may position themselves as knowledge providers rather than colearners, potentially perpetuating the very power imbalances they seek to address (Santiago-Ortiz, 2019).

These decolonial critiques highlight the idealized notion of university–community partnerships that often obscures the inherent tensions and competing interests that characterize these relationships. Universities operate within academic calendars and institutional priorities that may conflict with community timelines and urgent needs (Sandy & Holland, 2006). While universities seek measurable learning outcomes and publishable research, communities may prioritize immediate problem-solving and long-term capacity building (Stoecker & Tryon, 2009). In addition, resource disparities create power imbalances where universities control funding, research agendas, and knowledge dissemination, potentially

positioning communities as passive recipients rather than equal partners (Butin, 2010). These frictions are not necessarily obstacles to overcome but rather productive tensions that can inform more honest and equitable service-learning practices when explicitly acknowledged and addressed.

Recognizing these critical considerations, the literature indicates that service-learning has significantly expanded across various academic disciplines, particularly in the social sciences, medicine, and education (Salam et al., 2017). As new disciplines and contexts are explored, this methodology offers opportunities to integrate critical approaches that challenge and enrich traditional pedagogical practices. In this regard, service-learning not only involves collaboration between academic institutions and communities but also provides a platform to incorporate perspectives that foster more inclusive education, attuned to structural inequalities (Compare & Albanesi, 2023; Otten et al., 2022).

One of the most significant approaches emerging in this context is the gender perspective, which broadens the educational framework and enhances the inclusivity of learning experiences (Kayyali, 2024; Suwarni et al., 2024). Integrating a gender perspective into higher education is essential for challenging dominant historical narratives and highlighting the contributions of women and sexual dissidence to knowledge production. This critical lens reshapes pedagogical practices by encouraging analyses that interrogate power structures, sexism, and the inequalities that persist across various contexts (Troncoso Pérez & Piper Shafir, 2015). By adopting gender theory as a pedagogical tool, educators can facilitate analyses that promote inclusive citizenship, where the rights and contributions of historically marginalized groups are recognized and valued (Jiménez-Esquinas, 2025).

Considering gender theory's pedagogical potential, historical memory complements this approach by not only recovering the struggles of marginalized groups but also providing a foundation for understanding how these contributions have been erased or distorted by official historical narratives (Currie & Paris, 2018; Schultze-Kraft, 2022; Suárez, 2021; Švara & Virloget, 2024). From this perspective, "counter-memories" and subaltern narratives play a fundamental role in education, as they question hegemonic historical accounts and construct new, inclusive narratives that represent all subjugated sectors of society, such as women or Indigenous peoples, traditionally excluded from history (Braidotti, 2020). As Jelin (2001) notes, recovering subjugated memories is an act of resistance that strengthens democracy and citizen participation.

Building on this understanding of memory as resistance, it is important to note that feminist and LGBTQI+ movements have developed significant critiques of traditional rights-based approaches, arguing that formal legal recognition often fails to address deeper structural inequalities and may even co-opt radical movements into existing systems of power (Brown, 1995; Duggan, 2003). These movements emphasize that memory work and historical recovery must go beyond seeking inclusion within dominant frameworks to fundamentally questioning and reimagining the structures of power themselves. This critique is particularly relevant for service-learning projects, as it challenges educators and students to move beyond liberal notions of inclusion toward more radical approaches that center the voices and epistemologies of marginalized communities as sources of knowledge rather than objects of study.

The convergence of service-learning, the gender perspective, and historical memory creates a unique space for critical reflection. This interdisciplinary approach enables students to engage with the contemporary struggles of feminist and LGBTQI+ movements while understanding the broader social transformations these struggles have driven throughout history. By applying the gender perspective to service-learning projects, students not only reflect on the realities of the communities they engage with but also develop sensitivity to structural problems of inequality and discrimination (Troncoso Pérez & Piper Shafir, 2015). Moreover, the inclusion of historical memory in these projects brings the feminist and queer struggles of past eras to light, establishing a meaningful connection between past and present. Through this process, students learn to integrate academic knowledge with contemporary social issues, developing a commitment to challenging systemic inequalities and supporting community-led initiatives for social change. This approach prepares them to become critically conscious citizens who understand their responsibility to work in solidarity with marginalized communities rather than simply on their behalf (Vera et al., 2019).

Methodology

Research Question and Design

This study examines how service-learning methodology enhances students' acquisition of interdisciplinary competencies, ethical-civic engagement, and critical analysis skills through engagement with archival materials on feminist and LGBTQI+ social memory.

This project emerged from a dual methodological and political imperative: to reconstruct the stories silenced by hegemonic and patriarchal historical narratives. As a central axis, the project sought to historicize the struggles of women and sexual dissidence through an intersectional lens, making their contributions to social and civic rights visible while connecting them to contemporary debates and challenges within social movements.

This approach enabled students to critically analyze social transformations within feminist and LGBTQI+ movements, linking the past to the present, the global to the local, the canonical to the subaltern, and the theoretical to the practical. Thus, the project emphasized reconstructing narratives obscured by hegemonic histories, particularly those associated with feminist and LGBTQI+ contributions to achieving social and civic rights.

Within this project, civic responsibility is operationally defined as students' developing capacity to (a) critically interrogate how dominant historical narratives have systematically excluded marginalized voices, particularly those of women and LGBTQI+ individuals; (b) recognize the ongoing relevance of feminist and queer struggles for contemporary social justice issues; (c) understand their role as active knowledge cocreators rather than passive recipients of academic content; and (d) commit to making academic knowledge accessible and relevant to broader communities through public engagement. This definition emerges from our understanding that civic responsibility in the context of social memory work requires not only historical awareness but also a commitment to challenging existing power structures and contributing to more inclusive forms of citizenship.

This research study used qualitative methods with multiple data sources to examine student learning outcomes. Rather than focusing solely on whether social movements achieve formal rights, the project emphasized the intrinsic value of activist work and its contributions to social transformation, addressing critiques within social movement scholarship that question rights-based frameworks (Brown, 1995; Duggan, 2003).

The disciplines of philosophy and social anthropology served as the main components of this service-learning experience. In this project, philosophy was approached from a perspective of political philosophy and social critique, using semiotic and discourse analysis tools to uncover the power structures embedded in historical narratives. Social anthropology was applied through a critical and ethnographic lens, enabling students to conduct interviews and analyze testimonies as cultural artifacts, contextualizing individual experiences within broader social systems of power and memory.

Context and Community Partnership

The project "Memorias feministas e LGBTQI+ en movimiento" was implemented at the University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain, between February and July 2024, in partnership with the CDIF of the CCG.

The CCG is a statutory body of the Autonomous Community of Galicia, with an advisory and consultative role, whose purpose is to promote, disseminate, advise on, and preserve the cultural heritage of the Galician people. As part of its functions, it established the CDIF in 2005, a section specializing in preserving and disseminating materials related to feminist and queer movements in Galicia, Spain. This center provided access to a vast collection of materials, including pamphlets, posters, photographs, biographies, documents, and archival objects. These resources formed the material basis for student analysis

and reflection, enriching their understanding of the historical dynamics and contemporary trajectories of these social movements.¹

The choice of Galician feminist and LGBTQI+ movements as the focus of this project responds to their significant but often overlooked contributions to Spanish social transformation. Galicia has a rich history of feminist organizing, including early women's associations that emerged during the democratic transition in the late 1970s and pioneering LGBTQI+ activism that established some of Spain's first Pride celebrations in the 1980s. The CDIF archive documents these movements' evolution from clandestine resistance during the Franco dictatorship to their institutionalization in democratic Spain, capturing both moments of radical activism and processes of negotiation with state power. This historical trajectory makes Galician movements particularly valuable for analyzing the tensions between grassroots organizing and institutional recognition that characterize contemporary feminist and LGBTQI+ politics. Moreover, the specifically Galician context allows students to examine how global movements adapt to local cultural, linguistic, and political contexts, challenging universalist assumptions about feminist and queer organizing.

The collaboration with CDIF involved consultation on organizational and logistical aspects, including scheduling, sample selection, and educational talks for visiting students. CDIF technical staff engaged directly with students during site visits, facilitating dialogue between academic and community knowledge systems. However, it is important to acknowledge that community partners were not involved in the initial project design, representing a limitation in participatory methodology that we address in detail in our discussion.

Participants

The project involved 82 first-year philosophy students (aged 18–23, predominantly 18 years old) enrolled in three interconnected courses: *Anthropology and Philosophy of Gender*, *Introduction to Political Philosophy*, and *Semiotics*.

The student body consisted of 48 men and 37 women according to official binary classification,² with no international students but some students of migrant background, primarily from Latin America. Students came from diverse regions across Galicia, reflecting the autonomous community's territorial disparities between urban coastal areas and rural inland regions.³ This geographic diversity enriched classroom discussions as students brought varied perspectives on memory, heritage, and feminist and LGBTQI+ activism based on their different relationships with rural traditions, urban activist spaces, and intergenerational narratives.

The project was supervised by five faculty instructors and carried out at both CDIF facilities and the Faculty of Philosophy.

¹ Archives must be understood as devices for knowledge creation and instruments of social mobilization—not merely as tools for preservation (Stoler, 2008). As Assmann and Czaplicka (1995) note, these types of institutional initiatives have a powerful function: while they often select narratives, elements, events, and materials from hegemonic sectors, they also serve as spaces of contention where counternarratives, memories, and the archives of social movements find a place, shaped by the values and social conscience of the institutions themselves. In the hands of activists and self-organized educational communities, archives can become tools for collective action that encourage political participation (Vera et. al., 2019). Thus, a technology originally designed for social and identity control has transformed into an instrument for contesting established power structures (Appadurai, 2003).

² Official university enrollment data uses binary gender classification, which does not capture the estimated 5–6 students who identify as nonbinary. These limitations in institutional data collection reflect structural issues in higher education regarding gender diversity recognition.

³ Galicia's sociolinguistic landscape varies significantly between predominantly bilingual/Spanish-speaking coastal urban areas and rural regions where Galician remains more prevalent in daily life. These linguistic differences intersect with socioeconomic and territorial inequalities that shaped students' diverse lived experiences and relationships with cultural memory.

Project Implementation

The project was structured into three main phases.

Phase 1: Approach and Preliminary Training

During this phase, students received theoretical and methodological preparation, which included training sessions conducted by CDIF staff. These sessions covered key aspects such as the available documentary resources and the dynamics of cataloging and preserving historical materials. In addition, 2-hour guided tours of the CDIF facilities allowed students to dialogue with institutional staff and familiarize themselves with the materials and understand, firsthand, how they reflect power relations within the history of social movements. Students accessed additional materials through CDIF's online platform and continued communication via email.

Phase 2: Analysis and Academic Production

Working in small groups, students analyzed feminist–queer archival materials using interdisciplinary approaches:

- Semiotics: deconstruction of meaningful structures in historical materials (Berger, 2018; Chandler, 2022).
- Anthropology and Philosophy of Gender: data triangulation including ethnographic interviews and observation (Díaz de Rada, 2011).
- Political Philosophy: analysis of ethical–political implications connected to contemporary citizenship debates.

Students conducted ethnographic interviews with individuals from their immediate contexts (mothers, grandmothers, sisters, neighbors, etc.). This approach intentionally decentered interviews from women who typically receive recognition for occupying positions of power, focusing instead on everyday feminist practices and resistance strategies. While this methodological choice provided insights into quotidian feminist experiences, we acknowledge that it potentially excluded other relevant voices that could have enriched the project.

The triangulation requirement—combining archival analysis with ethnographic interviews—served as the primary assignment generating critical thinking, forcing students to connect historical materials with contemporary lived experiences.

Phase 3: Knowledge Transfer

In the final phase, the project results were shared with the community through classroom exhibitions, social media publications, and participation in public events. This phase aimed to disseminate the lessons learned and make visible the historical and contemporary struggles of women and sexual dissidence as well as their recognition.

Data Collection and Analysis

Various methods were employed to evaluate the project's impact.

Focus Groups

Two focus groups with students were conducted during the project. The first was held in the intermediate stage, during the analysis and academic production phase. Its aim was to assess the variety of materials available to the students and their suitability for semiotic and ethnographic interpretation. The feedback obtained helped refine the selection of materials for subsequent visits to the CDIF. The second focus group evaluated the overall scope of the project and the extent to which the objectives were met. Key issues discussed included the acquisition of competencies, the students' ethical and civic engagement, and new dissemination channels to enhance the transfer of results.

Systematic Observation

Instructors monitored the learning process continuously, evaluating the students' participation in the different phases of the project, their capacity to integrate theoretical and practical knowledge, and their involvement in dissemination and public communication activities. The observation guides were divided into two categories: observation at the CDIF and observation of the students' public presentations.

Observation Guide at the CDIF. Key items

- Interaction with the feminist–queer archive: Students were assessed on their aptitude for identifying, classifying, and analyzing relevant materials, as well as their formulation of critical questions about the documented narratives.
- Application of theoretical concepts to practical analysis: This included evaluating how students incorporated ideas related to gender, social memory, and hegemonic exclusion during archival work.
- Collaboration and teamwork: The dynamics among students were monitored during group tasks such as material selection, analysis, and the creation of shared interpretations.

Observation Guide for Student Presentations. Key items

- Active participation and formulation of questions: The extent to which students engaged in discussions, raised questions, or offered reflections on the topics presented.
- Skill in relating theory to contemporary social challenges: The observation focused on how students connected the lecture content to current issues, such as gender justice and historical memory, during debates or interventions.

Assessment Rubrics

Final products were evaluated using rubrics. These included academic presentations, social media publications, and participation in public events. These outputs were assessed for students' proficiency in synthesizing their learning and transferring it to the community. These rubrics are included in Annex I.

Project Development

The project was structured into three interconnected phases: (a) approach and preliminary training, (b) analysis and academic production, and (c) knowledge transfer. These stages not only guided students' activities but also provided a comprehensive educational experience that integrated theoretical learning, applied research, and civic engagement.

Phase 1: Approach and Preliminary Training

The initial phase introduced students to the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological foundations necessary to engage with issues and materials related to feminist and queer memories. This groundwork was crucial for equipping participants with the critical and contextual tools required for the subsequent phases of the project.

Introduction to CDIF's Work and Guided Tours

The project began with training sessions led by Carme Adán Villamarín, philosopher and director of the CDIF, and Mariám Mariño Costales, anthropologist at the same institution. These sessions familiarized students with the CDIF's mission, particularly its strategies for cataloging and preserving materials related to feminist and LGBTQI+ struggles in Galicia. Students were introduced to resources in the documentary collections, including pamphlets, posters, stickers, photographs, biographies, and other historical objects and documents.

Subsequently, three guided visits to the CDIF facilities were organized. These visits allowed students to explore, handle, and engage directly with the archival materials from the *Memorias en movimiento* (Memories in movement) and *Álbum de mulleres* (Women's album) collections (Consello da Cultura Galega, 2023, 2024, 2025). This direct interaction fostered critical reflections on heritage-making processes and the inherent power dynamics in constructing historical memory. In addition, these materials offered a tangible and visual journey through various media (e.g., fabric banners, plastic signs, and handwritten and typed pamphlets). The exploration highlighted the evolving strategies, approaches, slogans, and objectives of feminist and LGBTQI+ movements, demonstrating how these were activated or deactivated over time. Crucially, this phase illuminated their pivotal role in achieving diverse social rights, including sexual and reproductive rights, civil rights, labor rights, economic rights, and identity rights.

Seminars by Experts in Feminist and Queer Memory

To enhance the initial training, seminars were organized with external researchers who shared methodological and conceptual insights. Vanessa Avila Costa, archaeologist and anthropologist from the University of Pelotas (Brazil), presented the seminar "Women's Work at the Rheingantz Factory: Memories of Women Textile Workers." She emphasized the importance of recovering women workers' memories through the triangulation of documentary sources, materials, and biographical interviews (Thiesen & Avila Costa, 2023). Daniela Ferrández Pérez, historian at the University of Santiago de Compostela, conducted the seminar "Sources for the Study of the History of Sexual Dissidence in Galicia." She shared her expertise in analyzing historical sources and reconstructing marginalized queer narratives within the Galician context (Ferrández Pérez, 2025). These seminars enriched the students' understanding of applied research methodologies and helped them develop essential analytical and methodological competencies for engaging with feminist and queer memory.

Phase 2: Analysis and Academic Production

During this stage, students engaged in critical analysis and academic production based on the CDIF materials. Their work revolved around cross-cutting reflection questions designed to integrate the themes of the three subjects involved:

- What is collected and what is omitted from the archives?
- Who are the usual protagonists of these narratives?
- What is the relationship between narrative, heritage, culture, and power?
- What are the connections between global and local struggles, and between past and present?

Working in Small Groups with Archival Materials

Students were organized into small groups, with each group selecting one or two materials from the archive for in-depth analysis. These documents and artifacts, such as posters or meeting minutes, served as focal points for addressing the reflection questions. This group work encouraged students to examine the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion in archival practices, critically analyze the historical figures centered in the narratives, and explore the significance of social movements in achieving rights.

Methodological Triangulation: Semiotic Analysis, Ethnographic Interviews, and Analytical Categories

The analysis was conducted using methodological triangulation, combining diverse techniques for a holistic understanding:

- Semiotic analysis: In *Semiotics*, students examined the symbolic elements of the selected materials, focusing on their structures, meanings, and intertextual and pragmatic relationships.
- Ethnographic interviews: In *Anthropology and Philosophy of Gender*, students complemented their analyses by conducting ethnographic interviews with people in their close social circles. These interviews bridged the historical claims of feminist and queer movements with contemporary experiences and perspectives, offering nuanced and embodied insights into current struggles.

Building on the semiotic and ethnographic approaches, students collaboratively developed analytical categories to synthesize their findings. This process resulted in critical interpretations that integrated documentary and empirical evidence.

This phase's interdisciplinary nature provided students with a comprehensive understanding of feminist and queer memoirs, linking symbolic analysis to broader social and political contexts.

Phase 3: Knowledge Transfer

The final phase focused on presenting and disseminating the project's findings in both academic and public spaces. This phase not only solidified students' learning but also amplified the visibility of subaltern memories, fostering societal dialogue on gender, memory, and power.

Classroom Presentations and Social Media Engagement

In the course's final weeks, groups presented their findings in the classroom, detailing their methodologies, key discoveries, and skills gained. These presentations included collective discussions, enabling peer learning and deeper reflection.

To extend the project's impact, students used social media platforms, such as Instagram, to share their research findings. Through the official project account (@memoriasenmovimiento) and group-specific accounts, students posted summaries of their work and reflections. These posts facilitated engagement with a broader audience, promoting awareness of feminist and queer memoirs.

Participation in Conferences and Public Events

The project had a notable presence in academic forums, with its results presented at the IV International Congress on Teaching Innovation and the II Xornada Interuniversitaria Galega de Innovación Docente. At these events, the teaching team and students shared the methodologies employed and the project's impact on participants' academic growth and personal development. The project also received recognition in the XV Edition of the Awards for Introducing the Gender Perspective in Teaching and Research, awarded by the Office of Gender Equality (USC).

Results

This section outlines the main outcomes of the project, categorized into three areas: (a) acquired competencies, (c) impact on ethical and civic engagement, and (c) contributions to educational innovation and social transfer.

Acquired Competencies

A key strength of the project was the development of advanced methodological and critical skills in analyzing historical and social narratives. Students gained theoretical expertise in tackling complex concepts such as androcentrism, intersectionality, and subaltern memories. They also honed their ability to apply these theories in real-world contexts through the analysis of documentary materials.

On a practical level, participants utilized interdisciplinary tools ranging from semiotic analysis to ethnographic methods. These approaches enabled them to engage rigorously with CDIF collections, interrogating the dynamics of power in the construction of social memory and critically assessing how dominant narratives marginalize certain voices and experiences.

The specific social memories that emerged as particularly relevant through student analysis included the experiences of Galician rural women during the Franco dictatorship (1939–1975), the hidden histories of domestic workers and their struggle for labor rights, the systematic workplace abuse faced by women in the canning industry, and the pioneering experiences of the first women to exercise divorce rights in post-Franco Spain. Students also recovered memories of migrant women's experiences, particularly focusing on a Peruvian woman who emigrated to Spain in the 1980s and explored LGBTQI+ experiences in rural

contexts. For instance, one student group focused their analysis on “systematic abuse relations towards women in the workplace,” combining archival materials from the CDIF with ethnographic interviews to examine how “abuse is so frequent in industry, specifically in the canning sector.” As noted, another group analyzed the trajectory of rural Galician women, interviewing an 84-year-old woman born in rural Galicia in 1939 to understand how women’s roles evolved throughout the 20th century.

In addition, the project bolstered cross-disciplinary abilities such as teamwork, effective communication, project coordination, and the use of digital technologies for analysis and dissemination. The experience provided students with a robust understanding of the interplay between theory and practice, fostering meaningful and lasting learning.

Impact on Ethical and Civic Engagement

The project inspired profound reflection on the contributions of feminist and queer movements to the fight for social and civil rights, linking historical struggles to contemporary challenges. Through activities such as analyzing historical materials and engaging with CDIF experts, students cultivated a heightened awareness of social justice, equity, and diversity issues.

Evidence of this heightened ethical and civic awareness can be seen in students’ research objectives, which consistently emphasize social justice goals. For example, students articulated objectives such as “giving visibility to immigrant women,” “manifesting gender inequality and discrimination in the shellfish sector,” and “illustrating the challenges and obstacles that women were forced to overcome when deciding to divorce their spouses during the Spanish transition.” One group specifically aimed to “analyze and make known the abuses that are so frequent in industry,” while another sought to “give an account of the situation of domestic workers from a historical perspective, comparing their previous reality with the current one.” Projects focused on domestic workers, rural women, industrial workers, and divorced women in post-Franco Spain reflect students’ commitment to recovering subaltern memories. Particularly noteworthy is their approach to sensitive topics: one group investigating gender violence stated their objective to “approach a real case of gender violence told in first person by a victim,” demonstrating both ethical awareness and commitment to survivor-centered narratives. The focus on LGBTQI+ rural experiences, examining “lesbianism in rural environments,” evidences students’ commitment to intersectional analysis and visibility for multiply marginalized identities.

This ethical and civic consciousness was further strengthened by connecting classroom learning with social realities. Participants were encouraged to interrogate power structures through guided reflection questions such as “What is collected, and what is omitted from the archives?” and “Who are the usual protagonists of these narratives?” These questions prompted critical analysis visible in their project formulations: students questioned why certain voices (rural women, domestic workers, migrant women) were absent from dominant historical narratives and positioned their research as corrective intervention. Focus group data revealed that students recognized how subaltern memories serve as tools for social transformation, with participants reporting increased understanding of how “official history” systematically excludes women’s contributions. In this regard, by analyzing marginalized narratives and actively contributing to their visibility, students participated in public outreach activities that reinforced their sense of social responsibility and commitment to equity.

Contributions to Educational Innovation and Social Transfer

From an educational perspective, the project exemplified innovation by adopting a service-learning model within an interdisciplinary framework that connected philosophy and social anthropology with social movements. This approach facilitated the examination of multifaceted issues such as historical memory, gender, and sexuality, enriching both the analytical process and the proposed solutions.

Collaboration with the CDIF was instrumental in achieving the project’s social transfer goals. By engaging with original materials such as pamphlets, photographs, and biographies, students directly connected with the memories of feminist and queer movements in Galicia. This work resulted in academic

and cultural outputs shared through public presentations, social media posts, and community discussions, expanding the project's impact beyond the university setting.

The community impact of this project is evidenced through the specific memories recovered and made visible through student work. The CDIF benefited from having 16 different research projects that documented and analyzed previously underexplored aspects of their archival collections, creating new interpretive frameworks for understanding Galician feminist and LGBTQI+ histories. Students' work addressed concrete community needs by recovering testimonies from aging populations (such as interviews with women in their 70s and 80s who lived through the Franco dictatorship), documenting contemporary struggles (including current workplace discrimination and migrant experiences), and creating accessible content through social media that expanded public awareness of these archived materials. This reciprocal relationship ensured that academic analysis contributed directly to the CDIF's mission of preserving and disseminating feminist and queer memories in Galicia.

Discussion

This project shows how service-learning methodologies can transform higher education by integrating theory, practice, and social action. Numerous studies on educational innovation emphasize the capacity of service-learning to cultivate critical and ethical competencies in students while creating positive impacts on the community (Celio et al., 2011; Furco, 2003). This section reflects on the lessons learned, areas for improvement, and the replicability potential of this initiative, offering an evaluation of its outcomes.

Lessons Learned

A significant accomplishment of the project was its success in connecting academic learning with community needs. CDIF's primary need was to expand the interpretive frameworks surrounding their archival collections and make these materials more accessible to broader publics. Student research directly addressed these needs by producing 16 different analytical perspectives on previously underexplored materials, ranging from industrial workplace abuse to rural LGBTQI+ experiences. According to Eyler and Giles (1999), learning achieves greater relevance when students engage with real-world problems. The integration of tools such as semiotic analysis and ethnographic interviews not only equipped students with practical skills but also fostered a nuanced understanding of the construction of memory narratives. Students' objectives, such as "analyzing systematic abuse relations towards women in the workplace" and "giving testimony of women's situation in the domestic sphere," show their engagement with critical questions about power, exclusion, and historical silencing. These methodologies encouraged reflection on key questions such as the identification of protagonists in archives and the privileging or marginalization of certain narratives. These findings resonate with insights from Moss and Thomas (2021) about the dual role of archives in perpetuating or challenging power structures.

Student work products also provide concrete evidence of intersectional analysis skills. The research topics chosen by students reveal understanding of how multiple systems of oppression intersect in women's lives. Projects examining migrant women's experiences explicitly aimed to "give visibility to immigrant women," while those focusing on domestic workers sought to "bear witness to women's situation in the domestic sphere" and document their social and economic rights. Moreover, students demonstrated temporal analytical skills, with several projects comparing previous and current situations, indicating their ability to understand historical processes and social change.

This interdisciplinary approach, combining philosophy and social anthropology, significantly enriched the educational experience. Research in interdisciplinary innovation in higher education highlights that merging disciplines promotes creativity, critical thinking, and the ability to address complex problems (Scott & White, 2024; Wang, 2024; Wu et al., 2024). In this project, the intersection of philosophical and anthropological perspectives enabled students to analyze feminist and queer memoirs through a comprehensive and multifaceted lens.

In addition, the collaboration with the CDIF proved invaluable. As Ismail (2024) argues, partnerships with external institutions enhance hands-on learning opportunities and bolster students' professional skills.

Engaging with experts in the preservation of feminist and queer histories provided students with direct insights into the power dynamics underlying processes of heritage making and visibility.

Limitations and Suggestions for Improvement

Despite its overall success, the project faced certain challenges that offer valuable lessons for future endeavors. One notable limitation was the timing and planning of external activities such as visits and seminars. Consolidating such activities during critical periods of the semester created scheduling pressures. This aligns with observations by Rona Karasik (2005) regarding the logistical complexities of implementing service-learning projects. Future iterations could benefit from more distributed planning across the semester to alleviate workload intensity for both students and faculty, as the concentrated scheduling of site visits and expert seminars created time management challenges during critical assessment periods.

Beyond these logistical challenges, the collaboration between the CDIF and the university revealed deeper structural tensions that point to broader questions about the nature of partnerships between academic institutions and community-based entities. While service-learning is often framed as a mutually beneficial model, this case highlights the uneven distribution of institutional resources and time. Students' engagement, although valuable, placed additional demands on a center already working at capacity, exposing a common friction in service-learning practices: the assumption that community partners are readily available and equipped to absorb the pedagogical needs of the university. This calls for a more critical stance toward the ethics and logistics of such collaborations. Furthermore, the experience underscored a deeper issue: the limited accessibility of archives to the broader public. As nonexhibitionary and often understaffed spaces, many archives are structurally inaccessible to those outside academic or bureaucratic circuits. This tension complicates the idea of "opening up" archives through service-learning without simultaneously addressing the systemic conditions that keep them closed. It prompts a reflection on how universities can contribute not only to the visibility of such spaces but also to their transformation into genuinely public infrastructures of memory and knowledge.

As a result of the joint reflection with CDIF staff, several guidelines were proposed to enhance the sustainability of future collaborations. These included limiting the number of participating student groups to ensure support aligned with the center's capacity and prioritizing the use of already-digitized materials to reduce the impact on ongoing conservation and cataloging efforts. In addition, greater emphasis was placed on early-stage planning of the projects, with clearly defined timelines for engagement with the archive and the establishment of stable communication channels among all stakeholders. These measures aim to consolidate a viable collaboration model that reinforces both the pedagogical value of service-learning and the CDIF's archival mission.

Another area for improvement is the inclusion of voices from activists and community members. Integrating these perspectives would enhance the experiential and contemporary relevance of the analysis, in line with Butin's (2010) recommendations on incorporating community insights into service-learning projects.

In addition, the use of advanced digital tools could be expanded to enhance both analysis and dissemination. Technologies such as interactive narratives could significantly broaden the project's reach and accessibility, as suggested by research on digital innovation in education (Greenhow et al., 2009). Moreover, recent studies, such as those by Culcasi et al. (2023), advocate for e-service-learning models that facilitate interactions among students, institutions, and communities through digital platforms. These tools could streamline collaboration and amplify the visibility of project outcomes to a wider audience within and beyond academia.

Replicability Potential

The project's success highlights its potential for replication in a variety of educational settings, including those in the humanities as well as technical and scientific disciplines. Adaptability of the service-learning methodology, as emphasized by Bringle and Hatcher (1996), enables its application to a wide range of social issues. This model could be particularly impactful in initiatives focused on amplifying the subaltern

narratives of Indigenous communities, migrants, or racialized groups. By addressing silenced histories and connecting past events to contemporary challenges, such projects would extend the value of service-learning to diverse contexts.

The interdisciplinary foundation of the project also underscores its applicability to environments that require collaboration across multiple fields. Repko et al. (2020) suggest that interdisciplinarity fosters a deeper understanding of complex phenomena, reinforcing the importance of integrating varied perspectives. This approach is well-suited to initiatives that aim to tackle multifaceted social, historical, or cultural issues.

Conclusions

The project “Memorias feministas e LGBTQI+ en movimiento” has demonstrated its value as an educational initiative that fostered students’ development of intersectional analytical skills and ethical commitments to recovering marginalized historical narratives. As evidenced through focus groups, systematic observation, and assessment rubrics, students demonstrated measurable growth in critical thinking, research methodologies, and their ability to connect historical struggles to contemporary social justice issues.

The interdisciplinary collaboration between philosophy and social anthropology, alongside the partnership with CDIF, enabled students to develop competencies that individual disciplinary classes could not provide: the ability to combine semiotic analysis of visual materials with ethnographic interviewing techniques and to connect philosophical concepts of citizenship with anthropological understanding of social movements. This resulted in comprehensive analytical frameworks that allowed students to recover previously silenced voices—specifically rural women’s experiences during the Franco dictatorship, domestic workers’ struggles, and LGBTQI+ experiences in rural contexts.

The project’s emphasis on subaltern memories underscores the importance of archives as tools for social transformation, while acknowledging that archival silences themselves reflect power structures requiring ongoing critical interrogation. Students’ research directly addressed CDIF’s need to expand interpretive frameworks around their collections, producing 16 different analytical perspectives on previously underexplored materials and creating accessible content that expanded public awareness of these archived histories.

However, several limitations point toward areas for improvement in future iterations. The project’s design remained predominantly faculty driven, with community partners not involved in shaping research objectives or evaluation processes. The focus on students’ immediate social circles for ethnographic interviews, while methodologically sound for examining everyday feminist practices, limited the representativeness of recovered memories. In addition, concentrated scheduling of site visits during critical assessment periods created time management challenges.

Future iterations should more systematically involve community partners in the initial design phase, expand beyond social media dissemination to develop sustained mechanisms for community impact, and incorporate broader community voices to enhance the scope of recovered memories. Despite these limitations, the project’s overall success affirms its potential as a replicable model for other educational contexts. By emphasizing interdisciplinary collaboration, community engagement, and critical reflection, the project exemplifies how service-learning can transform higher education, equipping students with the tools to contribute meaningfully to a more inclusive and equitable society.

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Annex I

Table 1.

Rubric for the Service-Learning Assignment

Evaluation criteria	Indicators				
	Bad	Poor	Average	Good	Brilliant
Objectives and methodology	<p>Two or more of the following items are not detailed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Objectives of the work. 2) Methodology followed. 3) Categories of analysis. 4) Description of the materials used. 5) Presentation and justification of the informant. <p>The objectives and methodology are plagiarized.</p>	<p>The objectives of the work and the methodology followed are detailed.</p> <p>One of the following items is not detailed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Categories of analysis. 2) Description of the materials used. 3) -Presentation and justification of the informant. 	<p>The objectives of the work and the methodology are detailed.</p> <p>The categories of analysis are clearly specified.</p> <p>Describe the materials used: format, documentary background, etc.</p> <p>The selected materials are named, without describing their categories.</p> <p>The main biographical information of the informant is presented without justifying her selection.</p>	<p>The objectives of the work and the methodology are detailed.</p> <p>The categories of analysis are clearly specified.</p> <p>Describe the materials used; format, documentary background, etc.</p> <p>The fundamental biographical information of the informant is presented without justifying her selection.</p>	<p>The objectives of the work and the methodology are detailed.</p> <p>The categories of analysis are clearly specified.</p> <p>Describe the materials used: format, documentary background, etc.</p> <p>The fundamental biographical information of the informant is presented, and the selection is justified on the basis of the materials used.</p>
	0	0.75	1.5	2.25	3
Accuracy of interview questions	<p>Less than half of the questions follow a logical order or do not answer the problem studied. The questions are plagiarized.</p>	<p>Half of the questions follow a logical order and are written clearly and briefly, avoiding ambiguities, vague terms, or questions that induce answers.</p>	<p>70% of the questions follow a logical order and are written clearly and briefly, avoiding ambiguities, vague terms, or questions that induce answers.</p>	<p>90% of the questions follow a logical order and are written clearly and briefly, avoiding ambiguities, vague terms, or questions that induce answers.</p>	<p>All the questions follow a logical order and are written clearly and briefly, avoiding ambiguities, vague terms, or questions that induce answers.</p>
	0	0.25	0.5	0.75	1

Collection of empirical material	The analysis is only based on CDIF documents or only based on an interview.	The analysis uses different empirical materials: CDIF documents, interview, publications in social networks, etc.	The analysis uses different empirical materials: CDIF documents, interview, publications in social networks, etc.	The analysis uses different empirical materials: CDIF documents, interview, publications in social networks, etc.	The analysis uses different empirical materials: CDIF documents, interview, publications in social networks, etc.
	The analysis does not include extracts from the interview transcription or does not include photographs of the material.	The analysis does not include extracts from the interview transcription or photographs of the materials.	The analysis includes photographs of the materials but not excerpts from the interview transcription.	The analysis includes extracts from the interview transcription but not photographs of the materials.	The analysis presents different records: extracts from the interview transcription, photographs of the materials, reflections, etc.
Analysis of materials according to categories	0	0.5	1	1.5	2
	Works in an independent way each one of the materials, without linking them to the categories of analysis or to the theoretical contents of the subject. The analysis is plagiarized.	Works independently on each one of the materials, without linking them to the categories of analysis.	Works independently on each one of the materials, even though it links them to the categories of analysis.	Connects the analyzed materials to each other and links them to the categories of analysis, but not to the theoretical contents of the material.	Clearly connects the analyzed materials to each other and links them to the theoretical contents of the subject and to the categories of analysis.
0		0.75	1.5	2.25	3
Poor		Average		Good	
Bibliographic resources	The work does not include bibliographic references. The work is plagiarized.		The work includes one bibliographic reference.		The work includes at least two correctly referenced bibliographic resources.
	0		0.25		0.5
Does not meet the criteria			Meet the criteria		
Formal aspect	The work does not include all the requested slides.			The work includes all the requested slides.	
	0			0.2	
	Does not include the table of contents of the interview.			Include the table of contents of the interview	
	0			0.15	
	Do not include screenshots of the two publications on Instagram.			Include screenshots of the two posts on Instagram.	
0			0.15		

Table 2.*Rubric for Oral Presentation*

Evaluation criteria	Indicators	
	Does not meet the criteria	Meet the criteria
Formal aspect	The work does not meet the formal criteria: it does not include all the requested slides and the index of contents of the interview and the screenshot of the two publications on Instagram, and it exceeds the established presentation time.	The presentation meets the formal criteria: it includes all the requested slides, index of contents of the interview, screenshot of the two publications on Instagram, and is within the established presentation time.
	0	1
Objectives and methodology	Bad	Average
	The objectives of the work and the methodology followed are not detailed, the categories of analysis are not specified, and the selection of materials is not justified. The objectives and methodology are plagiarized.	The objectives of the work and the methodology followed are fully detailed. One of the following elements is not included: categories of analysis and justification of the selection of materials.
Objectives and methodology	0	1
	2	
Material analysis	Bad	Good
	The analysis is plagiarized.	Each of the materials is worked independently.
Material analysis	0	1
	2	
Bibliographic resources	The presentation does not include bibliographic references.	The presentation includes one bibliographic reference.
	The work is plagiarized.	The presentation cites at least two correctly referenced bibliographic resources.
Bibliographic resources	0	1
	2	
Group work and consensus	One or two of the group members intervene most of the time.	The time of intervention of the members is unevenly distributed.
	0	1
Group work and consensus	2	
Use of audiovisual resources and presentation originality	The presentation does not include audiovisual resources other than the bibliographic resources cited.	The presentation includes an audiovisual resource different from the bibliographic resources cited.
	0	0.5
		1