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ERASMUS MUNDUS
INTERNATIONAL MASTER

**Children's Literature,
Media & Culture**

The Relationship Between the Publishing Industry and Literary Prizes in Mexican Children's Literature: A Case Study of the SM Awards El Barco de Vapor and Gran Angular (2008-2021)

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To my parents and my brother: Thank you for helping me make my dreams come true.

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SUMMARY

The present study focuses on prizing children's literature in Mexico and the relationship that it has with the publishing industry. I used the SM Awards Barco de Vapor and Gran Angular as case studies to explore this relationship. Through descriptive statistical analysis and thematic analysis, I aimed to explore the characteristics of a children's literature award that is initiated and controlled by a publisher. In particular, I wanted to 1) explore who is represented in the judging panels, and the elements that might shape their criteria for selection (e.g. education, professional career, etcetera); 2) examine the role of the publishing industry in the selection of the jury; 3) explore the implicit criteria that judges might use to evaluate children's literature; and 4) explore to what extent the criteria for selection are shaped by the involvement of the publishing industry. I used a mixed-methods approach to have a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. Through the quantitative and qualitative data I could observe that Ediciones SM has significant power in the prizing process. The research also indicated that there is some diversity in the type of judges selected, as well as their criteria for selection.

RESUMEN

El presente estudio se enfoca en la premiación de literatura infantil y juvenil en México y la relación que ésta tiene con la industria editorial. Usé los Premios SM Barco de Vapor y Gran Angular como casos de estudio para explorar esta relación. A través del análisis estadístico descriptivo y el análisis temático, me propuse explorar las características de un premio de literatura infantil que es iniciado y controlado por una editorial. En particular, quería 1) explorar quién está representado en los paneles de jueces y los elementos que podrían dar forma a sus criterios de selección (por ejemplo, educación, carrera profesional, etcétera); 2) examinar el papel de la industria editorial en la selección del jurado; 3) explorar los criterios implícitos que los jueces pueden usar para evaluar la literatura infantil; y 4) explorar en qué medida los criterios de selección están determinados por la participación de la industria editorial. Utilicé un enfoque de métodos mixtos para tener una comprensión más profunda del fenómeno. A través de los datos cuantitativos y cualitativos pude observar que Ediciones SM tiene un poder significativo en el proceso de premiación. La investigación también indicó que existe cierta diversidad en el tipo de jueces seleccionados, así como en sus criterios de selección.

CONTENTS

TABLE OF FIGURES

INTRODUCTION

Mexican children's literature did not consolidate until the last decades of the 20th century (Arizpe 2004), and it was not until the beginning of the 21st century that it had its 'boom' in which the quantity and quality of literature publications for children and young people increased considerably (Holguin and Huchín 2019). In this period of almost forty years, promoting in the genre increased, favouring the creation of specialized publishers and encouraging more and more authors and illustrators to take children's literature as the center and origin of their literary careers. Thus, by having a group of writers and illustrators dedicated to this literature, supported by an increasingly larger publishing industry and a growing public interested in consuming these works, the perfect environment is presented for the flourishing of the LIJ in Mexico, beginning a period boom and consolidation. However, it seems that this interest in LIJ in Mexico has been kept away from classrooms and universities (Guadarrama in Hind 2020). This research aims to contribute to the scholarly discourse about children's literature in Mexico.

Prizing is core to children's literature (Kidd and Thomas 2017). However, "studies on awards in literature for children and adolescents have largely focused on content analyses of award winners rather than on the awards themselves" (Jokota 2011, p.471) This study will try to address this gap by researching the process of selection involved in the awards. The research will focus on children's literature awards as part of the wider field of children's literature in Mexico. It will particularly explore the intricate relationships between the publishing industry and children's literature awards in Mexico and how this relationship shapes the process of selecting the award-winning books.

The scope of this research is limited to the selection process. I will not explore the award winners, or the impact that winning the award has on the author's career or the children's literature field in general.

I used the SM Awards Barco de Vapor and Gran Angular as case studies to explore this relationship. These awards were chosen as they are one of the awards that has been active for the longest time and because during this time they have acquired significant prestige, becoming one of the most prestigious awards in the children's literature field in the Spanish-speaking world.

Through descriptive statistical analysis and thematic analysis I aimed to explore the characteristics of a children's literature award that is initiated and controlled by a publisher. Specifically, I wanted to 1) explore who is represented in the judging panels, and the elements that might shape their criteria for selection (e.g. education, professional career, etcetera); 2) examine the role of the publishing industry in the selection of the jury; 3) explore the implicit criteria that judges might use to evaluate children's literature; and 4) explore to what extent the criteria for selection are shaped by the involvement of the publishing industry.

The first four chapters of this study try to contextualize the research. Chapters 1 and 2 focus on the history of Mexican children's literature and the history of the SM Awards. After this chapter I focus on the theory about prizing culture in children's literature. In chapter 4, I present the methodology used for this research.

Chapter 5 includes the quantitative analysis section of this research. In this chapter I explore the characteristics of the judges by analysing their biographical data. In this section my main goal is to present who is represented in the SM Awards and how the judges are connected. The data showed in this chapter could also be useful as a way to observe the lived experiences that shape the *habitus* of the judges, as well as their position in the field (their capital).

Chapter 6 presents the thematic analysis of the data gathered through semi-structured interviews with nine people that are former judges of the awards. This method allowed me to inquire about their perceptions of children's literature, and better understand the implicit and subjective criteria that might define the type of books for children that they select.

After this, I present a conclusion in which I summarize my main findings, answer the research questions, and explore some of the potential further research that can be done about this topic.

CHAPTER 1: CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN MEXICO

As stated in the introduction, children's literature in Mexico is a recent phenomenon that did not start until the last decades of the 20th century (Donnet and Murray 1999; Rey 2004; Arizpe 2004; Arizpe 2007a; Dehesa 2014; Holguín y Huchín 2019). Before the 1980s there were hardly any books for children except for textbooks (Arizpe 2007a, p.5), and very few authors were dedicated to writing specifically for children (Rey 2004). The few publications for children during this period were mainly created by educationalists and usually written with didactic and moralizing intentions and a highly paternalistic tone (Arizpe 2004). Children's literature was frequently subordinated to educational purposes and to a system of values, with which literary quality passed into the background, adding to the long-maintained perception that it was an unprofitable product for publishers (Helguera and Huchín 2019). We can say, in summary, that during this period, children's literature was nothing more than a writing exercise to put a message across.

In 1921 the Secretary of Public Education [Secretaría de Educación Pública, SEP] was created, and José Vasconcelos was appointed as secretary of this government agency. The efforts of Vasconcelos to make art, education, and culture available for all Mexicans had as a result the beginning of the cultural dissemination and support of children's literature (Donnet and Murray 1999). However, Vasconcelos privileged European authors and 'the classics' instead of promoting the work of Mexican authors, so there was not an increase in the production of new texts or an improvement in the quality of Mexican children's literature. The few authors who benefited from the efforts of the SEP, were creating texts where literary quality was subordinated to the content (Dehesa 2014).

Even if the interest in children's literature started by Vasconcelos in the 1920s did not produce a radical change in the field, we cannot disassociate the role of the State when laying down the conditions that led to the development of children's literature in Mexico. Particularly during the last years of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, the government promoted educational policies that would eventually lead to a transformation in the way children's literature was conceived and that resulted in the consolidation of the industry (Holguín and Huchín 2019). Children's literature during this period was still considered a pedagogical tool, but the interest during these years helped create the conditions for writing, editing, printing, and circulating books for young people to become important. The governments of Gustavo Díaz Ordaz (1964-1970), Luis Echeverría (1970-1976) and José López Portillo (1976-1982) made a large investment in education and promoted initiatives that introduced greater

dynamism into the pedagogical field and produced an environment that was appropriate to increase interest in children's literature.

In 1979 the Asociación Mexicana para el Fomento del Libro Infantil y Juvenil A.C. [Mexican Association for the Promotion of Children's and Youth Books A.C.] was created with the goal of promoting children's literature in the country. One year after its foundation, the association joined the International Board of Books for Young People (IBBY), positioning itself as one of the most important institutions for the promotion, dissemination, and study of children's literature in Mexico (Rey 2004). The creation of this association contributed to the development of Mexican children's literature through some of their initiatives and events. This organization was not alone, as the government kept promoting children's literature, but it was one of the main institutions that supported the consolidation and growth of this type of literature in Mexico.

Two years after the foundation of IBBY Mexico (1981), the first International Children's and Young Adult Book Fair [Feria Internacional del Libro Infantil y Juvenil, FILIJ] is held. This event was organized with the support of the SEP and constitutes a watershed in the history of children's literature in the country (Arizpe 2007a). The FILIJ marks a before and after in the creation and promotion of children's literature in Mexico (Dehesa 2014; Córdoba 2021). It has also been considered the point where production was activated, and people could see that there was a growing interest in these texts (Guadarrama in Hind 2020). The FILIJ brought together for the first time both professionals involved in the field of children's literature (publishers, booksellers, distributors, librarians, teachers, academics...) and people who were not specialists (such as parents) with the common goal of "raising the quality and quantity of publications that circulate in the Mexican market" (Holguín and Huchín, p.32). This indicated a crucial change in Mexican children's literature by expanding the circle of those who made it possible. According to Dehesa (2014), thanks to this event: 1) childhood ideas began to change so that children began to be seen as more than passive receptors of the texts, 2) the market for children's literature diversified and grew as publishers had a place to promote their books and buy/sell rights, and 3) writing for children started to become a professional trade that required as many artistic and narrative skills than writing for adults and thus should be considered seriously.

With the FILIJ, a period of great growth in the children's literature publishing industry in Mexico also begins. As Arizpe mentions, by 1986 (only 5 years after the fair) the publishers specialising in children's literature grew from two to eight, and an extra eleven added this type

of literature to their catalogues (Arizpe 2007a, p.6). This shows the speed with which changes were observed in the landscape of children's literature in Mexico. The Book Fair initiates the economic awakening of an increasingly larger market and shows publishers that it is worth investing in the genre. This growth in the publishing industry did not only translate into an increase in the diversity of books being published and the number of authors that started to write for children, but also in the quality of texts (Holguín and Huchin 2019).

Another fundamental moment in this decade was the birth of the Programa Rincones de Lectura [Reading Corners Program] -also known as Libros del Rincón [Corner Books]- in 1986. This program "contributed significantly to the increase in sales of children's literature, and its national reach meant for several generations access to works of great literary quality" (Quezada 2021). Libros del Rincón aimed to give children access to texts that were not included in the school plans and to diversify titles, authors, genres, formats, and themes of children's literature in Mexico (Holguín and Huchín 2019). To achieve this goal, the SEP, through the Undersecretary of Culture, began to edit and publish a "wide range of attractive but cheap books, that were well-made and significant" (Salaberria 1995, p.50). These texts would be given to schools and could be read by children in their leisure time. This program strongly promoted the publishing industry, since almost half of the books published were co-editions with national and international publishing houses (Salaberria 1995). This also created the need for specialized Mexican publishers and authors who could respond to the demands of the State. As mentioned by Francisco Hinojosa, "suddenly those responsible for the Libros del Rincón began to assign tasks to Mexican writers to cover the required variety" (in Holguín and Huchín 2019).

Similar to what happened with the FILIJ, the impulse given by the program to publishers and the field of children's literature in general allowed for an increase in the number of books and in the quality of the texts. The program wanted to create readers that enjoyed literature and that were capable of dealing confidently and naturally with texts of various kinds and formats (Salaberria 1995). To achieve this goal, it was sought that the books had a great variety both in form and content. As part of the program, books of all shapes and sizes were published, allowing for greater diversity in the reading materials for children. In addition, these books no longer had a didactic purpose, so the authors had greater freedom to create books where the aesthetic function prevailed over the pedagogical inclination. In the words of Marta Acevedo, the first strategy of the program was "to present reading for pleasure as opposed to compulsory reading, a dialogue between the student and the author" (in Salaberria 1995). In

these ideas, a great change is observed with respect to the conceptions that were held about children's literature. Finally, it was not seen as something strictly linked to learning, but to entertainment.

These last years of the 20th century also saw the creation of several awards for children's literature, such as the Juan de la Cabada award for children's short stories (1977) given by the National Council for the Culture and the Arts (CONACULTA) and the government of Campeche, the Antoniorrobles award (1981-1999) given by IBBY-México, the FILIJ Award for short stories also awarded by IBBY-México (1993-1999), the A la Orilla del Viento award for picturebooks (1993) given by the Fund of Economic Culture (FCE), and the SM Awards (Barco de Vapor and Gran Angular) given by Ediciones SM since 1996. These awards represent a great incentive for authors (Rey 2004) and they also contribute to the professionalization and the increase in the quantity and quality of authors who only write for children (Dehesa 2014). This awards have such an impact that some of the most solid authors of children's and youth literature, such as Mónica B. Brozon, Jaime Alfonso Sandoval, Javier Malpica, or Vivian Mansour, became known thanks to these awards (Holguín and Huchín 2019).

In 2002, the SEP, through the General Directorate of Educational Materials (DGME), officially launched one of the most important programs for Mexican children's literature: the National Reading Program (Programa Nacional de Lectura, PNL). The PNL was a continuation of the Reading Corners Program and its objective, according to former president Vicente Fox, was "to move from a literate Mexico to a reading Mexico" (La Jornada). In other words, instead of focusing on teaching children how to read, this program aimed to create readers and strengthen reading habits in young people. To achieve this purpose, two of the most important actions undertaken by the PNL were the establishment and consolidation of school and classroom libraries and the diversification and strengthening of bibliographic collections through the selection, production and distribution of materials in various formats, genres, themes and authors (SEP, p.6). Thus, the government started to buy thousands of books each year from national and international publishers to create these classroom libraries and continually increase the collection.

The PNL had an elevated budget assigned, which allowed for the government to buy a large number of books. In the words of Juana Inés Dehesa, this created a period of prosperity in the industry as "publishing books for children and young people in Mexico overnight became an 'almost' profitable business" (Dehesa 2014, p.28). All this led to the arrival of foreign

publishing houses to Mexico, and to the emergence of new writers and illustrators, as well as the creation of small independent publishing houses, with which "the scene of books for children and young people was filled with new, risky and innovative proposals since the work of large publishers and consolidated companies was added to that of small companies" (Dehesa 2014, p.30).

Perla Holguín and Eduardo Huchín (2019) establish the 'Boom' of Mexican children's literature around the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century. During this time, Mexican authors like Veronica Murguía and Antonio Malpica started to win international awards for children's literature for the first time, which shows that "children's writers are now recognized as such, both at home and abroad" (Arizpe 2004, p.3). Similarly, Mexican publishing houses started to be recognized internationally for their innovation, creativity, and the quality of their editorial choices. For example, there have been several Mexican publishers that have won the Bologna Prize for Best Children's Publisher of the Year (BOP) at the Bologna Children's Book Fair, such as Petra Ediciones (2014), Editorial Tecolote (2018), Alboroto Ediciones (2020), and Ediciones El Naranjo (2022). After decades of children's literature being subordinated to didactic purposes and being considered as a 'minor' form of literature, the 21st century has been a fortunate time for the field when it comes to literary quality, critical recognition, and consolidation of the market (Holguín and Huchín 2019).

After the 1980s, and more specifically after the turn of the century, children as readers have been taken more seriously (Holguín and Huchín 2019). They are now considered active and intelligent readers that deserve high-quality texts and that can contribute to the text (Arizpe 2004; Dehesa 2014). In the words of Evelyn Arizpe, after 1995 "writers began to prioritize entertainment rather than instruction and, more importantly, the adult's narrator's voice looked to address the child reader rather than to please an adult audience" (2007b, p,29). However, the fledgling market of children's literature in Mexico has run into many difficulties to stay afloat, with most publishers only aspiring not to go bankrupt (Dehesa 2014, p.27). Furthermore, the whole field of children's literature in Mexico is still closely tied to the government and its educational and cultural policies. The Mexican government has had great power in determining what childhood is and what children's literature should be (Holguín and Huchín 2019), so governmental changes can greatly affect the field and risk the progress that has been made. As an example, in 2020 the government decided to cancel the FILIJ, in part due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but also because of great budget cuts for the children's literature areas that started in 2019 and a lack of interest from the government agencies in charge of organizing the event

(@AplausoNo 2020; Avedaño 2020; La Razón 2020; Córdoba 2021). As of 2022, the FILIJ has not returned and, as mentioned by acclaimed author Verónica Murguía, "it was as if they cut a tree while it was just starting to bloom" (in Córdoba 2021).

Now more than ever before, children in Mexico have access to high-quality literature created specifically for them. This literature is now more diverse, complex, and liberated from the didactic tone that characterized it for generations. There are still struggles and there are still aspects that can be improved, but it is a good start.

CHAPTER 2: THE SM AWARDS IN MEXICO

In 1937 in Spain, Ediciones SM was founded "from the initiative of a group of Marianist teachers to publish their notes and teaching manuals as pedagogical tools for their students" (Grupo SM n.p). SM comes from Saint Mary, but the official name of the publisher is just SM. In the mid-1990s the Mexican government started to create co-editions with private publishing houses, which allowed for foreign publishers to enter the Mexican market. Ediciones SM seized this opportunity and in 1995 they open their headquarters in Mexico and start producing books for Mexican children. Ediciones SM is mainly specialized in the publication of educational materials, but they also have a catalogue of children's and youth literature and books. Nonetheless, their perspective is very much focused on education, as can be observed by their slogan "la educación nos mueve" [we are moved by education]. Today, Ediciones SM has a presence in nine countries throughout Spain and Latin America.

Ediciones SM is what is called a 'prescription' publisher. This refers to a sales strategy commonly used by children's literature publishers in Mexico in which their products are distributed not only through bookstores, but also through the promotion and marketing in schools through promoters or vendors. According to Ruiz Luque, "the process can be summed up as follows: a publisher's promoter or salesperson visits a school and offers the catalogue to teachers, librarians and administrators, with particular emphasis on disseminating novelties. When a purchase of this type is made, according to publishing jargon, a book is said to have been 'adopted'" (2019, p.47). Thus, their books are mainly aimed at schools and their catalogue -even if it is literary- will respond to the needs of the educational environment. This type of publisher is referred to as a 'prescription' publisher as the teachers 'prescribe' students to buy the book because it will be used in class.

In 1997 Ediciones SM Spain founded the Fundación SM [SM Foundation] "with the idea of sharing the profits obtained from editorial work and giving value to education and educators" (Fundación SM n.p.). The profits of business activity of all the countries in which Ediciones SM are present are destined to Fundación SM so they can promote art, culture and literature. This institution also arrived in Mexico in 1995. A year after its foundation, Fundación SM created the Barco de Vapor (hereafter BV) and Gran Angular (hereafter GA) awards in Spain, which took the names from two collections of the publishing house. Barco de Vapor is their collection aimed at children ages 6-12, and Gran Angular is aimed at teenagers and young adults aged 13 or older. These awards were created in order "to promote the creation

of a literature for children and young people that encourages a love of reading and transmits, with literary quality, human, social and cultural values that help build a better world" (Fundación SM n.p.).

The SM Awards arrived in Mexico in 1996. They were organized by Fundación SM, Ediciones SM, the Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes (Conaculta) [National Council for the Arts and Culture], and the Dirección General de Publicaciones (DGP) [General Directorate of Publications]. They were one of the first children's literature awards for novels and long stories. In 2018, due to changes in the government, the collaboration with Conaculta and the DGP stopped. However, since 2019 they established a strategic alliance with the Fundación para las Letras Mexicanas (FLM) [Mexican Foundation for Literature]. That same year, they began to receive support from the Guadalajara International Book Fair, where the awarding ceremony has been held ever since. As can be seen, there are several institutions involved in the organization of the award, each one of them with different goals and values.

Unlike awards like the Newbery Medal, where the prize for the winner is a medal that has mainly symbolic value, in the SM Awards the prize is "a single and indivisible prize of $300,000.00 (Three hundred thousand Mexican pesos 00/100 M.N.) *as an advance of the royalties for the publication of the work*" (Foundation n.p. My emphasis). The texts sent to participate in the SM Awards must be unpublished, because, as can be seen from the previous statement, the prize is the publication of the text by Ediciones SM. According to the criteria, the author must have "the full availability of the rights of exploitation" as "the acceptance of the prizes by the authors of the winning works entails the transfer to SM of the publishing rights, under the conditions of the contract of according to SM's copyright policies" (Premios SM n.p.).

CHAPTER 3: PRIZING CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Prizing is "understanding, affirming, and promoting the value of books, whether aesthetic, moral, educational, economic, or some combination of thereof" (Kidd 2017, p.1). It "presents itself to us today as perhaps the most ubiquitous feature of cultural life, touching every corner of the cultural universe", while at the same time remaining "a strange practice insomuch as we continue to be discomforted by "a conception of art as a contest or competition" (English 2005, p.2). In the context of the publishing industry, awards are fundamental in the publishing world (Squires 2013) as they have "promoted writing and also contributed to mid-term canon formation" (Squires 2007, p.2). They also have a key function in reshaping notions of literary value and taste (Squires 2007).

Most conceptions around prizing culture and awards build upon the ideas of Pierre Bourdieu and James F. English. Bourdieu's theories about capital and *habitus* are particularly relevant for the study of awards. The *habitus* is defined as "the system of dispositions of a person or a group" (Herman and Vervaeck 2017, p.607). The *habitus* is a system of dispositions shaped by our past experiences that are systematically ordered and that help shape our present and future (Maton 2012). Any practice, is the result of an interplay between the habitus and the *field,* which can be defined as "a social space in which interactions, transactions and events occur" (Thomson 2012, p.65). Practices also depend on one's position in this field, that is, their capital (Maton 2012). Capital is not only understood in the economic sense, but it is used "to designate anything that resisters as an asset, and can be put profitably to work, in one or another domain of human endeavour" (English 2005, p.9). For the study of literary awards, symbolic and cultural capital are important.

James English introduced the concept of capital intraconversion into the conversations about prizing. He explains that prizes "are the single best instrument for negotiating transactions between cultural and economic, cultural and social, or cultural and political capital -which is to say that they are our most effective institutional agents of *capital intraconversion"* (English 2005, p.10). He also explored how prizes create other prizes in what he called the 'logic of proliferation' and introduced the concept of 'journalistic capital' by explaining how gossip and scandal can benefit an award and is now central to the prizing environment (English 2005).

However, these authors were not preoccupied by children's literature. Children's literature awards began in 1921 in the United States when Frederic G. Melcher and the

American Library Association created the Newbery Medal. In 1935 their British counterpart appeared in the form of the Carniege medal. To this day these awards have become "points of origin, ongoing standards, and incitements to discourse" (Kidd and Thomas 2017).

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

This chapter will outline the research methodology that was employed to explore the interaction between the publishing industry and the children's literature prizes in the Mexican context. A mixed-methods approach was chosen to carry out the research as it allowed for a multi-faceted and more complete understanding of the researched phenomena (Kong 2019). Combining qualitative and quantitative analysis provided a way to use different types of data to describe in more depth how the relationships between the prizing and the publishing industry can shape the prizing process. The way descriptive statistics and thematic analysis were used are described in-depth in this chapter. The different methodological decisions, including the ontological and epistemological considerations, the research setting and participants, the methods and procedure of data collection, the way the data was analysed, the ethical considerations of the research, and the limitations of the study are the components of this chapter.

Research questions

According to English (2005), arrangements where the donor or presenter of the prize insists openly on any economic recompense in return, "deflate the prestige of the award and remove it to the sphere of contractual marketing agreements" (p.7). In other words, these contractual awards are scarcely distinguishable from ordinary transactions of sale, and thus their symbolic value "is attenuated by the explicitness of [their] commercial purpose" (English 2005, p.127). Nonetheless, in the context of Mexican children's literature, most children's literature prizes involve an explicit contractual element in which the author must sell the rights of their manuscript as part of the prize. This is due to the involvement of publishers as sponsors and organizers of the awards. If we followed English's theory, this situation would result in the awards not having as much symbolic value as other awards that are not linked to an economic agreement. However, awards such as Barco de Vapor and Gran Angular that fit into this "contractual awards" category are recognized as "the most important in their category in Latin America" (Aristegui Noticias 2015). This presents an interesting case in which symbolic, cultural and economic capitals interact in a different way than usual.

Considering what I have outlined as a starting point, I wanted to explore the way the publishing industry is involved in the children's literature prizes in Mexico. I was particularly interested in understanding how this relationship could potentially shape the selection process in order to fit the criteria of the publisher. As outlined in the introduction of this study, the main

research questions that guided this research were: 1) how does the relationship between the publishing industry and the literary prizes in Mexican children's literature shape the prizing process?; and 2) how does the relationship between children's literature awards and the publishing industry in Mexico affect the selection process? Additionally, the following five secondary objectives allowed me to further focus the research:

1. Explore who is represented in the judging panels, and the elements that might shape their criteria for selection (e.g. education, professional career, etcetera).
2. Examine the role of the publishing industry in the selection of the jury.
3. Explore the implicit criteria that judges might use to evaluate children's literature.
4. Explore to what extent the criteria for selection are shaped by the involvement of the publishing industry.

Logic of Inquiry

In order to answer the research questions and achieve the research goals, a mixed-methods approach was selected because this approach allows the researcher to "arrive at a more comprehensive account of the area of enquiry in which [they] are interested if both qualitative and quantitative research are employed" (Bryman 2016, p.641). According to Bryman (2016) and Cresswell and Creswell (2018), a mixed-methods research involves combining quantitative and qualitative research within a single project; it is combining the analysis of words and numbers to gain a deeper understanding beyond the information that could be acquired by either the quantitative or qualitative data alone.

Unlike other mixed methods studies in which the qualitative and qualitative analysis are done sequentially so that one builds upon the other, this research was divided into two distinct phases, following the phase design style proposed by Flick in which "quantitative and qualitative methods are applied separately, one after the other" (2020, p.184). This approach allowed me to explore the objective characteristics of the judges that might help us understand who is represented, such as demographic information, as well as the subjective ideas of literature and the lived experiences of the judges.

Prizing is a "complex phenomenon with many facets and consequences" (Kidd and Thomas 2017, p.4), so to study the totality of it would be an almost impossible undertaking within the limits of a study like this one. A case study is an in-depth analysis of "a unit of human activity embedded in the real world; which can only be studied or understood in context; which exists in the here and now; and that merges in with its context so that precise boundaries

are difficult to draw" (Gillham 2000, p.1). This research strategy not only allows for a precise and focused description of a case but also requires the use of multiple sources of evidence and multiple data collection procedures (Gillham 2000; Creswell and Creswell 2018). This strategy fits with the mixed methods approach that was selected and allowed to further reduce the scope of analysis so that it could be a feasible process.

The SM awards -Barco de Vapor and Gran Angular- are one of the children's literature awards in Mexico where a publisher is involved in the prizing process. As explained in previous chapters, the SM awards are organized by SM Ediciones, and they are in charge of many of the decisions that shape the prize. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the SM awards have become one of the most prestigious awards in the children's literature field in the Spanish-speaking world. Furthermore, they are not only one of the first children's literature awards in Mexico, but they are among the ones that have been active the longest. For these reasons, these awards were selected as the case for the research. Focusing on only one award as a case study allows for a more detailed understanding of the way the prizing and the publishing industry work together in the context of Mexican children's literature.

It was decided to limit the time frame to 2008 to 2021 as these are the years where the winners have been published on the official web page of the awards. It also represents half of the years that the award has been in Mexico (1996-2022). Finally, it is also a time frame that allows us to observe the changes that happen when there are different agents involved. As it was explained in the second chapter, in 2018 the National Council for Culture and Arts (CONACULTA) stopped being involved in the awards, so having a time frame that considers this change can shed light on the changes that happened after this.

Finally, I decided to focus on one agent involved in the prizing process: the judges. As mentioned in the literature review, judges play a key role in the functioning of awards. Exploring who the judges are and their thoughts on children's literature and childhood can help us better understand the way this award works and the implicit criteria used when selecting books. In summary, my case consists of the judges that participated in the SM awards in Mexico during the years 2008-2021.

Methods

The first phase of the research consisted of a descriptive quantitative analysis. A significant advantage of using statistical analysis is that it allows us to observe the bigger picture and allow the researcher to "detect numerical and visual patterns in data that are not

immediately apparent" (Abbot 2016, p.16). In the words of Simon Eliot, when the study aims to understand broad trends through an extensive period, it can be more useful to see the forest and not a host of trees that would not allow us to observe if certain information is representative or not (2002, p.285). This approach worked to observe the objective information and describe the characteristics of the judges.

The goal of this section was to explore who is represented in the judging panels and how this might affect the awarding process. Additionally, it was also important to consider the role of the publishing industry in the selection of the jury that selects the winning books. Furthermore, the data collected from this analysis could also give us more information about the elements that shape the judge's habitus, their social and cultural capital, and the experiences that might shape their criteria for selection. In order to achieve these goals, I asked these questions to guide my analysis and define the data that would be collected:

1. What percentage of the judges is connected to the editorial? (Either before, during, or after they are judges)
2. What is their academic background?
3. What has been their professional career? Has this career been focused on working with/for children?
4. What groups are represented? How are they distributed?
5. What are the demographic characteristics of the judges?

After the statistical analysis was made, I proceeded to carry out the qualitative section of the research. One of the aims of this research is to provide insights into how judges perceive children's literature to select "the best book". Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the method of data collection as they are ideally suited to exploring perceptions, understandings, and constructions of things that participants have some kind of personal stake in, as well as for acquiring rich and detailed data about individual experiences and perspectives (Braun and Clarke 2013). In semi-structured interviews, the researcher has an interview guide (mine can be found in Appendix x) with open questions to be covered. This method allows for more flexibility than a structured interview as "the interviewer usually has some latitude to ask further questions in response to what are seen as significant replies" (Bryman 2016, p.201) and the participant "has a great deal of leeway in how to reply" (Bryman 2016, p.468). This meant that I was able to gain a deeper understanding and avoid restricting my understanding of the phenomena.

Samples

As mentioned before, the SM awards have been active since 1996. Each year there are 5 judges for Barco de Vapor and 5 judges for Gran Angular. So, to this date (2022) there have been 260 judges participating in the SM awards. However, as this study has a time frame of 13 years (2008-2021), the population for the research consists of only 130 judges.

At first, it was planned to use the strategy of complete collection during the quantitative phase of the research, which means that "all cases of a population are included in the study" (Flick 2020, p.139). Nonetheless, it was soon very clear that this would not be possible due to the lack of information available. During preliminary research, I tried to find the names of all the judges that have been part of the SM awards during the time frame of this study to begin thinking about how to approach the analysis. However, I found that there is little to no publicly available information about certain years, which meant that I would not be able to use those years in my study. This lack of access to resources meant that it would be more complex (or even impossible) to apply a more systematic strategy of sampling.

Thus, it was decided that a convenient sample would be used for the descriptive statistical analysis, which has been defined as a type of sampling that happens when the researcher selects those cases that are the easiest to access under given conditions (Flick 2020, p.146). Using this approach, the sample was generated by creating a list of all the judges that could be found through online research. To build this sample, I first looked for the press releases in which they announce the winners, as they often mention in these documents who were the judges. If a press release was not found, I then tried to find the information in newspaper articles, blog posts, or other online sources that included a list of all the judges for a particular year. After this research, I found information for 9 years: 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2020, and 2021. The 90 judges from this list would become the sample that I worked with for the quantitative analysis.
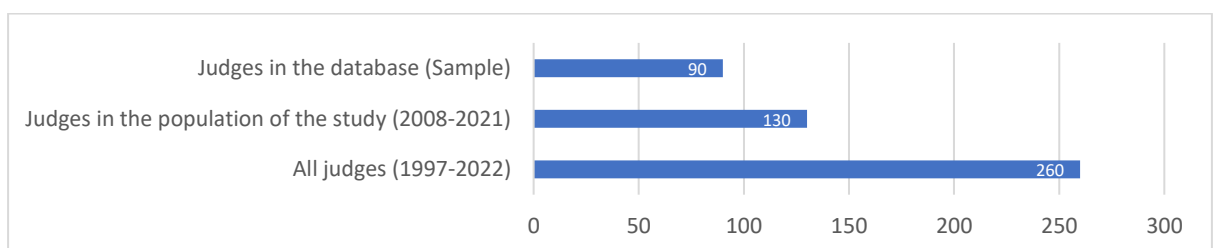
In the case of the qualitative analysis, I created the sample by building upon the one created for the quantitative phase of the research, as this was the only information available about who has been part of the jury during the designated time frame. I used a mixture of convenient sampling and quota sampling to select 9 judges from the 90 that constitute the sample in the database. In quota sampling, the researcher defines specific features by which participants should be characterized and then defines quotas for each of these features (Flick 2020). For this research, four categories were defined for the judges –author, publisher, expert, and representative– and two interviewees per category would be selected. These categories were taken from the way judges are labelled in some of the press releases from the award (SM) and the number was chosen following Braun and Clarke's guide that specifies that between two and ten interviews are sufficient for a small project (2013). An additional judge was selected to represent Fundación SM, as it was important to include the perspectives of all the agents involved. The sample is also considered convenient as the judges were selected due to their accessibility, as many judges did not have contact information publicly available. Participants were recruited by contacting them via email or through their social media.

Data collection

After the sample was defined, the data collection stage began. For the quantitative analysis, a database was created. The statistical data is thus based on the development and analysis of a corpus that includes information about the judges. The information that was included in this database was gathered through digital epitextual sources (e.g. publisher and author websites, author interviews, social media profiles, news articles, etc). Priority was given to sources where the judges self-identify such as social media or their personal websites.

The database included the next categories:

- Gender: When it comes to gender, I wanted to observe if there is a disparity in the selection between different genders. Following the methodology used by the ROAR project (2017), I relied on the self-definition of the judges, searching for information that could let me know how they identified (e.g. a tweet or Facebook post where they use certain pronouns). When I could not find a source that allowed me to learn how they self-identified, I used their name and the way they present themselves, as well as digital tools such as genderize.io. As will be explained in more detail in the analysis section of this study, I did not find information that allowed me to identify any author

as non-binary. For this reason, I only divided the authors into two groups: men and women.

- Age: Through a statistical analysis of the ages of those involved in the selection process, I wanted to explore what generations are controlling the children's literature field. Some judges did not mention their age in any source, so their age was estimated by considering the year in which they started their bachelor's degree as most people in Mexico start when they are 18 years old (Excelsior).

- Academic Background: Here I focused on the academic level that the judges have achieved. I classified the judges according to the highest degree they have achieved (bachelor's, master's, PhD). A limitation of this section is that it could not be possible to indicate if, for example, a person has more than one degree within the same level.

- Studies: related to the last category, this one is about the type of degree they have gotten. This is also the highest degree that they have achieved. In this category, I labelled each judge according to the field of the degree. For example, if they have a PhD in Mexican History, I entered the data as "History".

- University where they studied their bachelor's degree: It was decided to include this category as it can allow us to understand their cultural capital, habitus, and social capital. As most judges have a bachelor´s degree, I decided to work with this information and not with the highest degree as it would allow me to better observe where they acquired the foundation for their career.

- Professional career: The data was divided into four categories: author, publishing, scholar, and expert. This refers to the group they belong to within the judging panel and is related to their professional career. These labels also refer to the type of stakeholders that the judges represent. The category was identified according to their career by looking at what area they have been most active in. The author is self-defining. Publishing is all the people that work within the publishing industry. Scholars are all the people that are dedicated to doing research and work in academia. Expert is the label that the SM award gives to the judges that have the skills and knowledge to judge the manuscripts and select a winner, but that are not part of any of the other categories mentioned. For example: mediators, reviewers, literary critics, cultural managers, cultural promoters, etc. Although it can be said that all the categories can be considered "experts" this label was selected because it is the one used by the SM awards.

- Type of career: in this section, I gathered information about the type of work the judges have been doing throughout their professional careers and divided the data into three categories: child-centred, adult-centred, and mixed. A child-centred career focuses on work with/for children such as education, reading promotion with children, children's literature research, etc. An adult-centred career does not focus on work with young people, such as journalism in media aimed at adults, writing books for an adult audience, or a literature scholar that specializes in texts that are not aimed at children, amongst others. When a person had both types of careers, the label mixed was used. This shows either several career changes or that they do not focus on one audience.

- Link with SM: this category was used to identify the relationships between the judges and Ediciones SM. I especially wanted to observe if they were directly related to the publisher before being judges, while they participated in the award, or after they were judges. For the purposes of this research, I considered that there was a relationship with the publisher when the judge was contractually and economically involved with the company, either as an employee, as a freelance consultant, or a winner of the awards, etcetera.

In all of these categories, where no information was found the label N/D (not determined) was applied.

As mentioned before, in the case of the qualitative analysis the data collection method chosen was semi-structured interviews. I followed the steps and advice for this method provided by Bryman in his book *Social Research Methods* (2016). The interviews took place via Zoom and were conducted following the interview guide provided in appendix 2. The questions posed focused on obtaining information about the criteria that judges use to select books, as well as the prizing process, and their general ideas about children's literature and childhood. The characteristics of a semi-structured interview allowed me to gain deeper knowledge about these topics by asking follow-up questions where necessary (e.g. where a judge just mentioned "I choose books that are well written" I was able to ask what they consider a 'well written' book) or even new questions that allowed the participant to talk about their experiences and viewpoints. Video and audio of the interviews were recorded with the previous consent of the participants to facilitate the analysis process. The interviews lasted between 45 minutes and an hour. After the interviews, I transcribed the data according to the transcription notation system created by Braun and Clarke (2013).

As part of the transcription process, I de-identified the interviews by using pseudonyms for the interviewees and omitting any information that could lead to their identification. This was made to protect the confidentiality of the interviewees. The pseudonyms used were the most popular names for men and women in Mexico according to the last census.

Data analysis

The quantitative analysis was analysed using descriptive statistics. The software used for the analysis was Microsoft Excel, which was also the program used to create the database. As most of the variables were categorical and nominal, that is, "observations that can take a value that is not able to be organised in a logical sequence" (Australian Bureau of Statistics n.d.), descriptive statistics were employed to get a better understanding of the data acquired (Agresti 2018). The analysis focused on finding the mean and the correlations between data.

I used thematic analysis (TA) to analyse the interviews and followed the steps for this method that were described by Braun and Clarke (2013, 2017, 2022). According to these authors "at a very basic level, TA is a method for developing, analysing and interpreting patterns across a qualitative dataset, which involves systematic processes of data coding to develop themes" (2022, p.4). I took an inductive approach to thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2013), so instead of creating themes and developing my analysis from an existing theory, I generated my analysis from the bottom up. The flexibility provided by TA is one of its main strengths (Braun and Clarke 2013) and it was why I chose it, as it would be useful in a study such as this where there are not a lot of previous studies about the topic.

The first step in the analysis was to become familiar with the data, which was made by listening to the interviews multiple times and during the process of transcribing them. After that, I generated initial codes related to my research questions and I identified key sentences and words. As a third step I started gathering the codes into initial themes. For these themes, I always had my research questions in mind, but I also kept an open mind to observe if interesting themes emerged from the data. The next stage in the process was to review these themes. Finally, I defined the themes and named them, while also searching for quotes in the transcripts that would represent each theme. NVivo 12, a software that assists in the analysis of qualitative data, was used to analyse the data.

Limitations

As mentioned before, this study was not meant to be extensive or exhaustive. I had to focus the research on a small case due to the time constraints and the resources available for the research. Furthermore, I also had to consider the limitations that come from doing the research from another country. During the time that I was doing this project I was living in Aarhus, Denmark, so the only way I could access information and contact people was through the internet.

One of the main issues that I encountered throughout the project was the lack of information available to the public. Documents like the press releases were sometimes difficult to obtain, and there were instances where they had very limited information about the prizing process. For example, the press release for 2021 only mentions who were the winners, but there is no information about the criteria for selection or the judges (Fundación SM 2021). On top of this issue, there were instances where I had the names for the judges, but there was no biographical information about them online, or the information was not enough for me to confirm that they had been part of the SM awards. The lack of information was enhanced by the fact that a lot of documents are controlled by the publisher and confidential, such as the judges' minutes. I attempted to access this information by contacting the publisher through several paths, but I did not receive any replies, so I had to rely on the publicly available information that I could consult online.

Closely related to this lack of information about some of the judges, I also encountered issues when I tried to contact the judges. There were instances where I had all the biographical information, but no way to contact them online. A vast number of the judges do not post their contact information (email, phone number, etcetera) online, and some others have the option to send messages through social media disabled, so it was almost impossible to reach them. Due to this situation, the number of judges that I could contact and ask if they wanted to be a part of the research was more limited.

Even when I had a way to contact some of the judges, the fact that I do not have a certain social capital also affected my ability to contact certain judges. For example, some of the interviews were acquired when I mentioned that I have been a student of Prof. Evelyn Arizpe, as she is well recognized and respected in the field of children's literature in Mexico. Most of the judges that I contacted were kind and agreed to the interview without knowing me,

but I did realize that there were others that were harder to reach due to my lack of social capital in the field of children's literature in Mexico.

Braun and Clarke (2013) recommend going beyond the "usual suspects" when creating the sample for analysis. However, the aforementioned constraints limited my access to hidden populations and I had to rely on a convenient sample of people who I could contact and have an online interview with. In the conclusion of this study, I will explore in more depth some of the "Researchable Issues Related to Children's Literature Awards" (Yokota 2011, p.472) and ground the conversation in the context of Mexican children's literature.

Ethical considerations

This project was submitted for approval to the ethics committee of the University of Glasgow. The interviews only started after obtaining this approval and all the ethics rules of the University were followed.

CHAPTER 5: WHO IS SELECTING CHILDREN'S LITERATURE AWARDS? QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE SM AWARDS JUDGES

Who is selecting the books that will be published as winners of the SM awards? This chapter will focus on the judges: the people that have the task of reading through the manuscripts, that choose 'the best book', and that make awards possible. The statistical analysis that will be presented in the following pages shows evidence to support different discussions about the judging panels in children's literature awards in Mexico.

As mentioned in the methodology chapter of this study, there have been a total of 260 judges in the 26 years that the SM awards have been active in Mexico. Each year, Editorial SM, Fundación SM, and the partner organization select ten judges –five for Barco de Vapor and five for Gran Angular– that they deem to have the skills and knowledge necessary to choose the best manuscript. The selection of judges, therefore, depends on the ideas and goals of each institution and will reflect the way they think about children's literature. The selection of the judges will also depend on the symbolic, cultural, and social capital that they can bring to the award (De Nooy 1988, English 2008, Kiguru 2016). Exploring who is being selected will also give us more information about the ideologies behind these awards and the implicit biases that might play a part in the selection process.

When talking about children's literature and children's literature prizing, it is key to remember that children's literature is created and controlled by adults. In the words of Jacqueline Rose, "children's fiction sets up a world in which the adult comes first (author, maker, giver) and the child comes after (reader, product, receiver)" (Rose 1993, p.58). This sets up an environment in which there is a power struggle between the child reader and the adult gatekeeper. Awards are just one of the ways in which adults strengthen their power, as they are usually the ones making all the decisions and taking full control of the process. Throughout this chapter, I will explore the characteristics of the people in these positions of power to better understand their role in the awarding process. These characteristics can also help us observe who is represented in the judging panels and how this might affect the selection of manuscripts. Finally, as the main goal of this study is to explore the relationships between the publishing industry and the awards in children's literature in Mexico, I will also produce statistical information that presents how these relationships work.

Gender

Issues of gender disparity and lack of gender diversity in the publishing industry have been widely discussed by many authors throughout the years (Squires 2007; ROAR 2017; Pearson et al. 2019; Ramdarshan Bold 2021; Harvey and Lamond 2022; The VIDA count). There have also been several studies about gender diversity in award-winning books (Demoor et al. 2008; Griffith 2015; Marsden 2019) in which scholars have studied the gender distribution of authors or characters in these books to observe who is represented. These studies focus on the results of the awarding process, showing what the books that have been selected show about gender diversity in children's literature. However, "there is little insight into the inner workings of administrative and decision-making processes of book awards" (Marsden and Squires 2019, p.14) which includes the people involved in the selection process. Squires has commented on the gender disparities in the publishing sector and how they might come from structural inequality and discrimination (in ROAR 2017), so in this study, I wanted to explore the gender dynamics within the group of judges to observe if there is also disparity in this field.

As mentioned before, the figures were determined wherever possible using biographical information on the author from online publicly accessible sources to record their gender. Where I could not find this information through any online biographical sources, I used genderize.io to assign a probability value of gender to a name. This method was selected following the ROAR project (2017).

Out of the 90 judges that are the sample for this study, 57 (63%) are women and 33 (37%) are men. Through the data that I could access, I could not identify any non-binary judges. This does not mean necessarily that there have not been any non-binary judges, but that I could not find evidence that any judge self-identifies as such. These first results show the prevalence of women judges. This can be a reflection of the idea that "children's literature is most certainly primarily an activity of women" (Nodelman 1988, p.32). This means that usually in children's literature women are generally more represented due to the patriarchal idea that the spheres of childhood should be controlled by women as they are perceived as being responsible for their care and upbringing. For this reason, it is common that "the field of children's literature is one in which women have at least a numerical majority in the control of children's books" (Nielsen 19, p.920). This can be further observed in how the men and women judges are distributed within the awards.

As it has been mentioned, Barco de Vapor is the SM Awards category for young children (six to twelve years old), while the Gran Angular Award is given to texts aimed at young people aged 13 or older. As can be seen in charts 1, 2, and 3, most of the men judges have been in Gran Angular, while women judges have been in charge of selecting the winners for the Barco de Vapor award. There have even been years – such as 2009 and 2016 – where there are no women judges in the Gran Angular Award. Even in years when the number of men and women judges is almost the same, we can still observe this trend of women judges being selected to choose books for younger readers, e.g. 2010. Further research would be needed to observe if these differences have an impact on the types of books selected. It would be interesting to explore the differences between books selected for Barco de Vapor and the ones for Gran Angular, especially when it comes to gender representation. Would Barco de Vapor be more diverse when it comes to representations of girl/women characters? Are there any differences in the girl/women characters in the books? Do Gran Angular books have more characteristics that we relate to 'adult' literature?
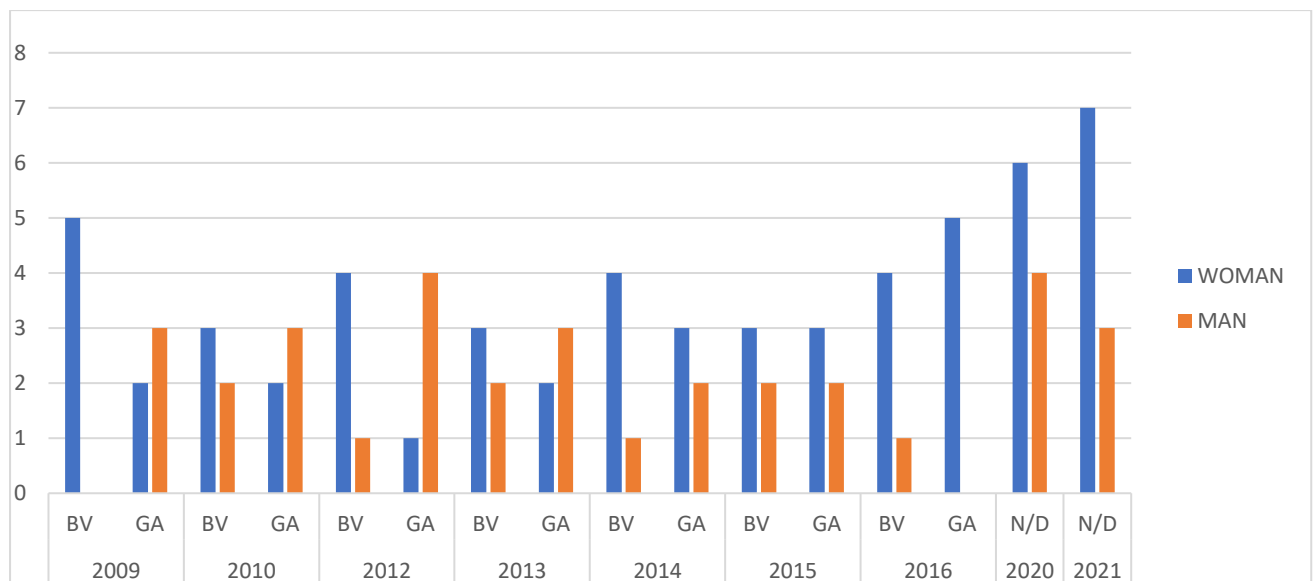
Figure 1: Female and male judges per year and per award

As I mentioned in the methodology section of this study, I used the label N/D (not defined) when I could not find any information about the judges or the category I was analysing. In Figure 1 we can observe that 2020 and 2021 all the judges are included in the N/D category when it comes to the awards they participated in (Barco de Vapor or Gran Angular). This is because in the press release, they only mentioned the name for all ten judges, without specifying the awards.
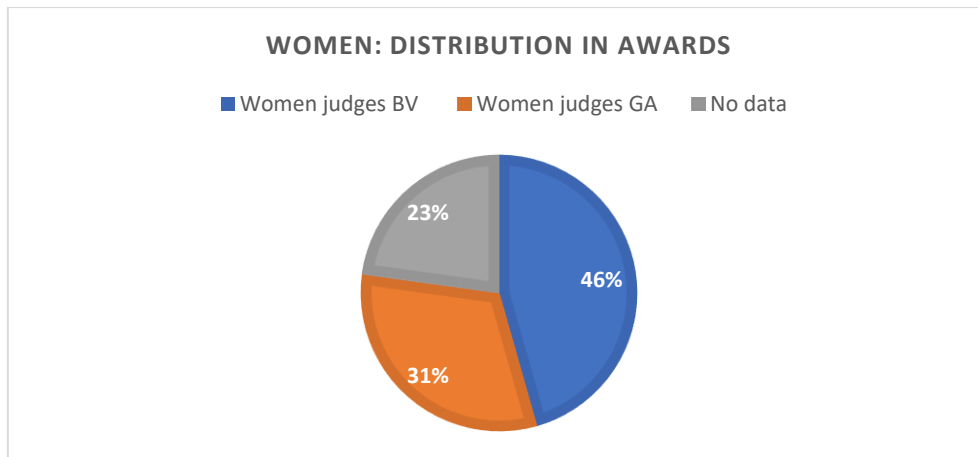
Figure 2: Women's distribution in awards
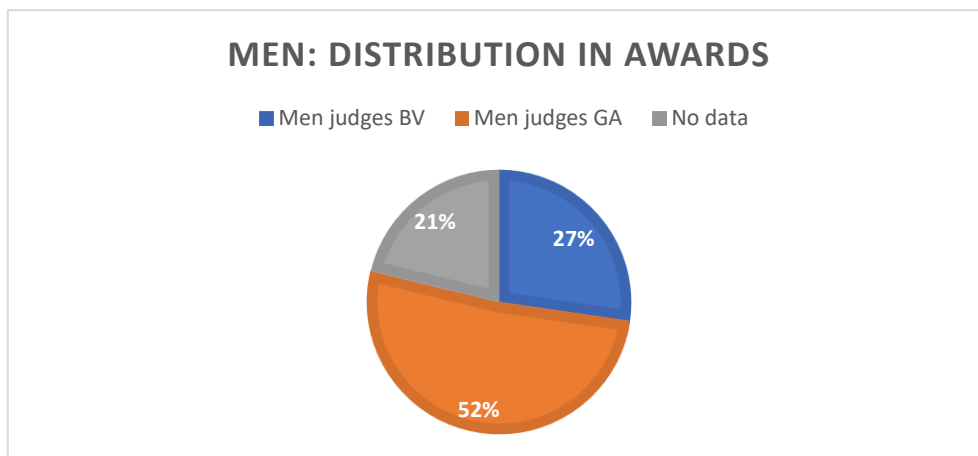
Figure 3: Men's distribution in awards

During the analysis, the judges were divided into 4 categories, depending on their professional careers: author, expert, publishing, and scholar. These categories have been explained in detail in the methodology section of this research and will be analysed later in this chapter. However, I was interested to observe if there were any relationships between these categories and the gender of the judges. When analysing the data, we can observe that there is almost equal gender representation in the category of authors. Out of the sample, 18% are women authors (16 judges), and 20% are men authors (18 judges). On the other hand, the publishing category has the biggest gap between women and men judges, as 18% of the women judges work in publishing against just 4% of men judges. These results suggest that women are thought to be better as gatekeepers – intermediaries between the children and the texts – while men are recognized as creators. In figure 5 we can also observe that there is more diversity in the careers of woman judges, while men judges are predominantly authors.
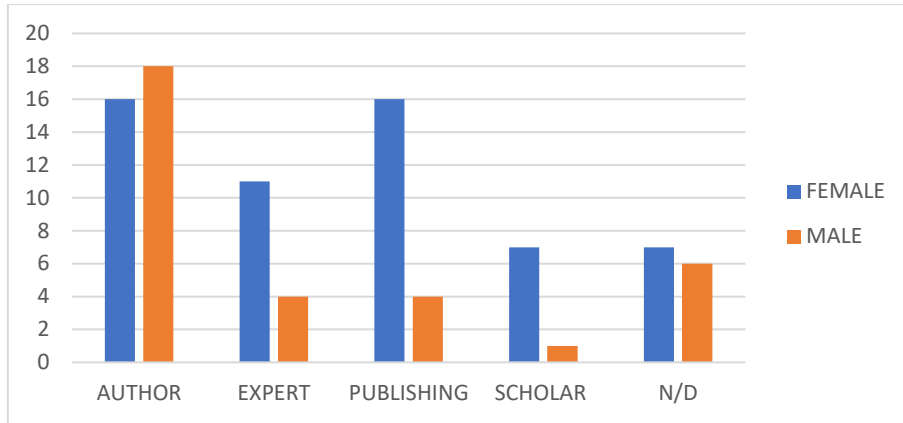
Figure 4: Gender distribution per career category
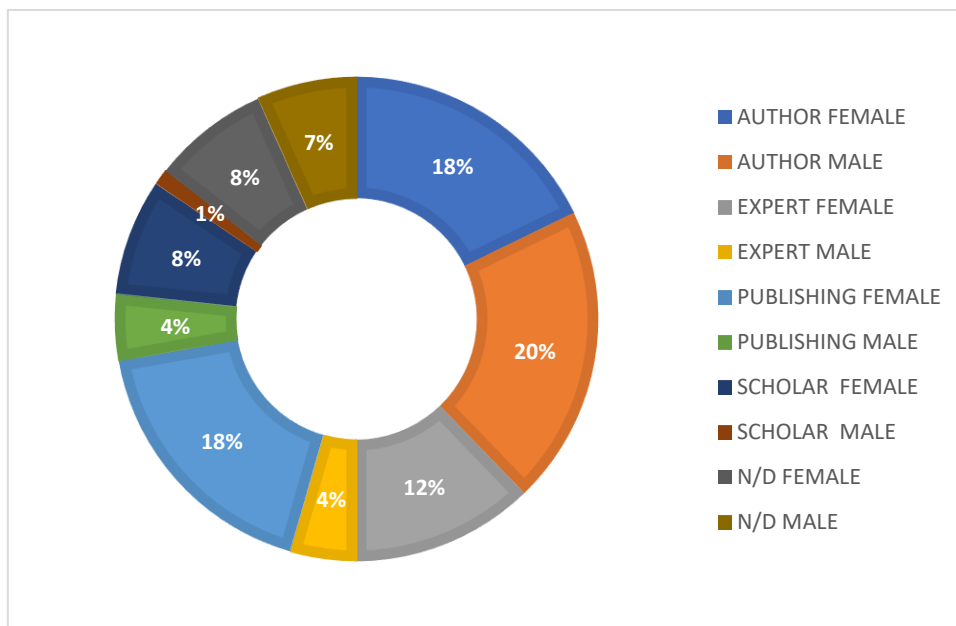
Figure 5: Gender distribution per career category. Percentages in the sample.

According to their professional trajectory, judges were also divided according to the type of work they realized. There were three categories: child-centred, adult-centred, and mixed. From the data in charts 6 and 7, it is apparent that there is a higher percentage of women judges that have a child-centred career, while in the case of men judges the percentages are more balanced. Even if we would add the 21% of men judges that do not have data due to the lack of information to the child-centred percentage (40%), it would still be lower than the women (61% vs 72%). This further shows the aforementioned claim that women are perceived as contained within the world of childhood and as the main gatekeepers of children's literature.
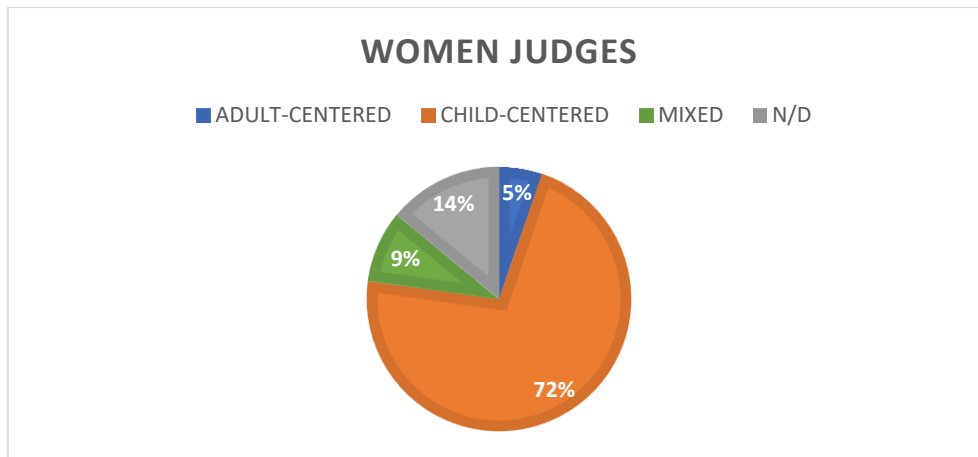
Figure 6: Female judges type of career
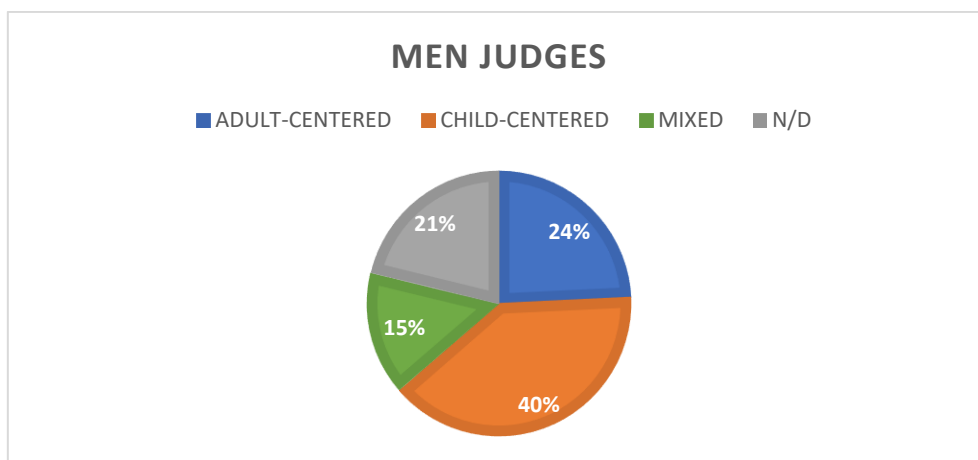
Figure 7: Male judges type of career

Overall, the data shows that there are more female judges in the SM awards. These women are usually selected to participate in the award aimed at young children, which matches their career, as most of them have a child-centred career. When we observe the overall percentages, there is not a big difference between male authors and female authors. However, once we compare how the careers are distributed in each gender, the data shows that most of the men chosen to be judges come from the author category. As can be seen from charts 8 and 9, female judges are mainly authors (28%) and part of the publishing industry (28%), but overall, the distribution is more regular. Thus, these results point to the idea that men participate more in children's literature (or are more recognized) as creators, and not so much as other types of gatekeepers. This data could confirm Hind's observations on Mexican children's literature, as she explains that

Perhaps it would not be an exaggeration to say that among the authors of children's literature in Mexico, unlike other spaces, men and women are seen as equals. [...] Regarding the most notable academic work, it seems that women dominate the small field of academic specialists of Mexican children's literature (2020, p.2)
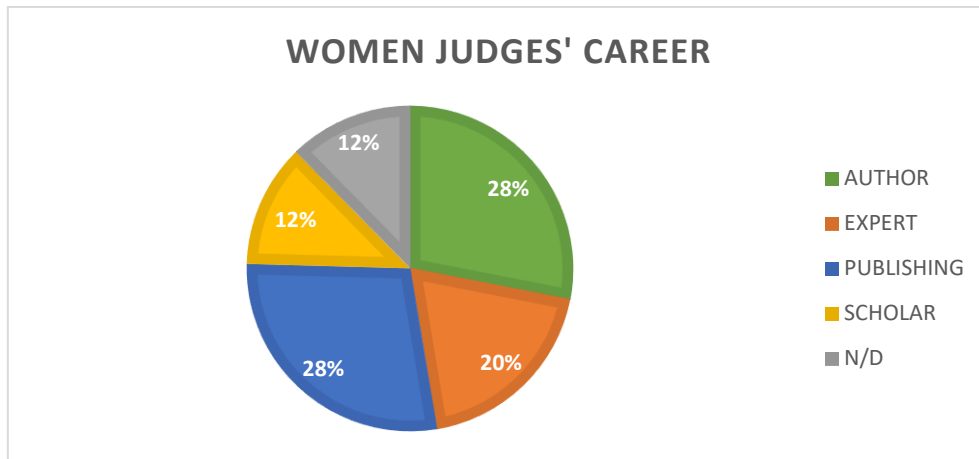
Figure 8: Female judges' careers
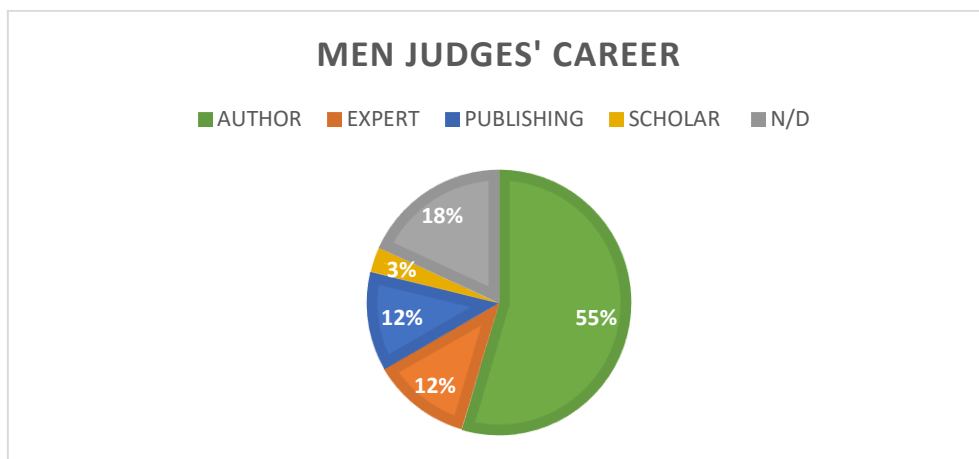
Figure 9: Male judges' careers

Age

After gender, another demographic that I was interested in was age. This data can show the generations that are in control of the children's literature field. As each generation has different perspectives about childhood and literature, observing this information would be useful to better understand the ideologies behind the selection of the books. Out of the 90 judges that form the sample, I could only find the age of 63. This was one of the most complex categories to research, as a great number of judges leave this information out of their

biographies. Some ages were calculated by researching the year in which they started their undergraduate degree, as most people in Mexico start this academic stage at 18 years old (Laredo Argumosa 2020). As can be seen in charts 10 and 11 most judges are between 40 and 50 years old. However, in the scatter chart (chart 12) we can observe that the age cluster is between 40 and 70 years old. The youngest judge is 37 years old, and the oldest judge is 80 years old.

In the first chapter, I explain how the development of children's literature in Mexico officially starts in the late twentieth century (Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes 2004) and that it had its boom in the 1980s. The data obtained from the research shows that most of the judges were born before the boom in Mexican children's literature, which means that they did not have a lot of access to children's literature as "before 1981 it was difficult to find children's literature that was produced in Mexico and most Mexican writers avoided dedicating themselves to this genre that was appreciated as minor" (Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes 2004, p.7). The judges very likely started reading Mexican children's literature when they were adults, and before that, they might have had access to foreign children's literature in a reduced amount. This will be explored in more detail with the qualitative analysis, as some judges that were interviewed mentioned this aspect of their history as readers. This is important as it is something that very likely shaped their habitus and their cultural capital.

Furthermore, it was in the 1960s that institutions started to address children's rights, health, education, and general well-being and childhood started to become "a central target audience for […] producers of popular culture and consumer goods" (Ford 2019, p.2). The Cold War period can be said to be the period of the construction of modern childhood in Mexico. Moreover, in a wider global perspective, it is not until the 1990s that perceptions of childhood started to change in order to consider children as social and cultural beings (Brembeck et al. 2004). Consequently, the judges that selected the winning books during the period that is being studied may have a different perception of what childhood is.
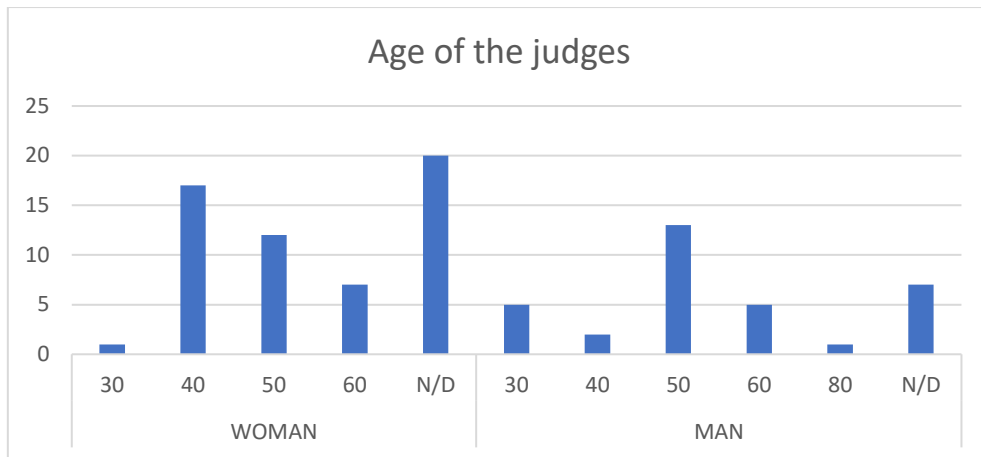
Figure 10: Age of the judges. Divided by gender
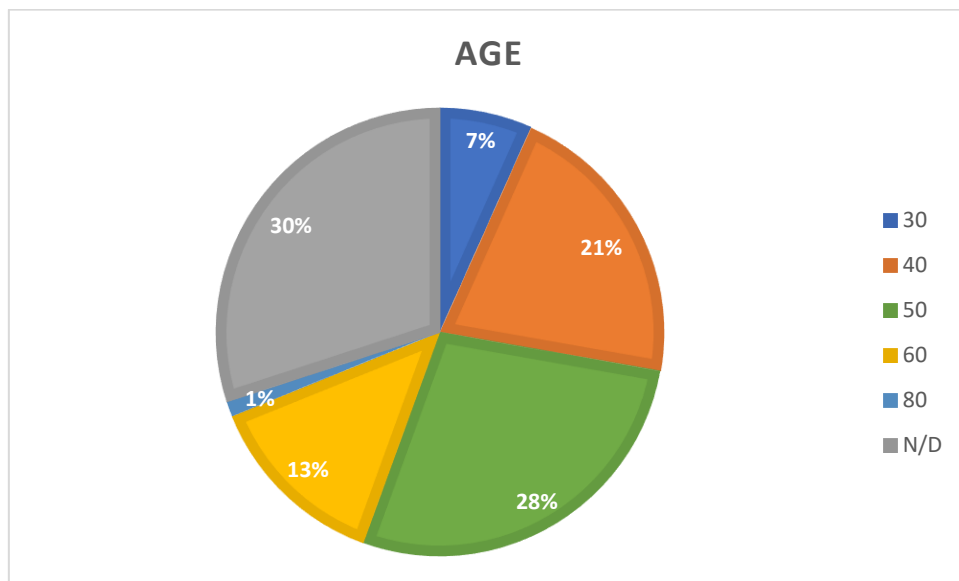
Figure 11: Age of the judges. Percentages of the sample
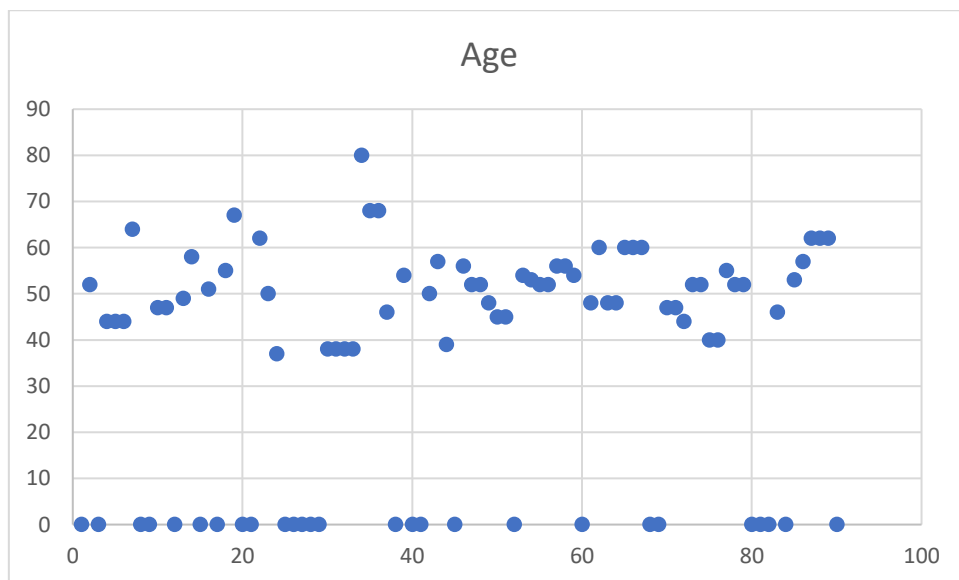
Figure 12: Age of the judges. Dispersion

32

Academic Background and education

According to Bourdieu, although the formation of habitus takes place initially within the family, it is education where it assumes an institutionalized form (Moore 2012). As explained by Moore, "the institutionalized form of capital (formal education), to varying degrees for different groups, attempts to inculcate (to make embodied) a habitus" (2012, p.103). Thus, exploring the academic trajectory of the judges might allow us to examine the dispositions and attitudes that might shape their logic of selection. Moreover, understanding the places where judges have generated and acquired their cultural capital and habitus might also allow us to observe who can have access to this field.

The first element that I analysed was the level of formal education that the judges have achieved. There were three main categories: Bachelor's degree, Master's degree, and PhD. The category 'other' was added for judges who did not fit these criteria because I could not find information about them attending higher education. There were only two cases of judges who did not receive any higher education: one self-identifies as a 'self-taught' author and the other received a diploma in creative writing.

As can be observed in chart 13, more than half of the judges (52%) have a bachelor's degree as their highest degree of formal education. Only 21.6% of Mexicans above 15 years old have a higher education degree (INEGI 2020). If we consider that at least 79% of the judges have one, we can observe that they belong to a privileged section of the Mexican population that had access to this social space. Thus, they do not represent most Mexicans. This is even more relevant if we consider that in 2019 only 0.1% of the population between the ages of 25 and 64 in Mexico had a doctorate and only 2% had a master's degree (OECD 2019), while in the sample of judges more than 25% of judges have a postgraduate degree. In the words of Compton-Lilly "the acquisition of cultural capital takes time, and people who can prolong the acquisition process (i.e., through long-term educational opportunities) have an advantage in that they can accumulate substantial amounts of capital prior to seeking their place in the socio-economic system" (2009, p.4).
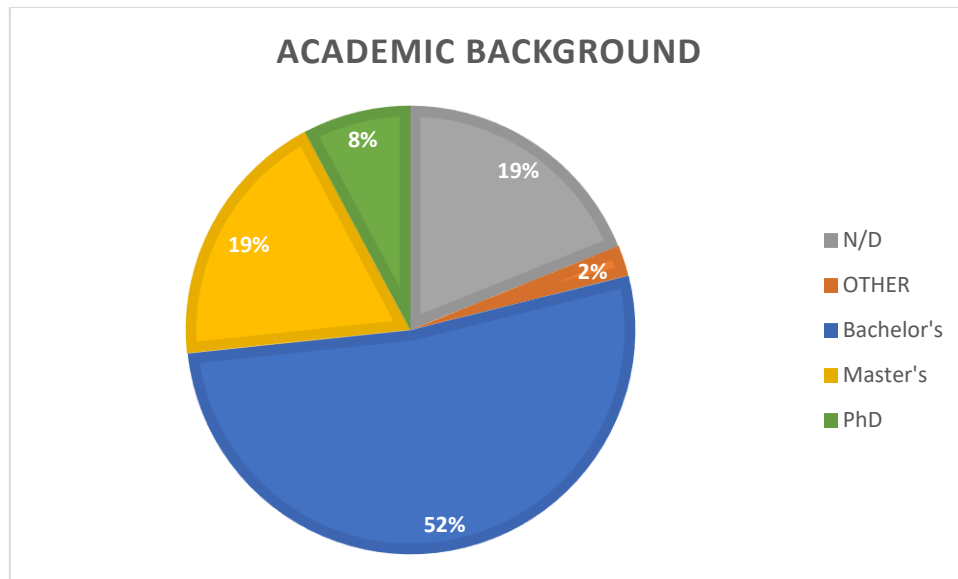
Figure 13: Academic background of the judges

After this analysis, I proceeded to examine the types of degrees that the judges had studied. The results can be found in Table 14. This data corresponds to the highest and most recent degree of the judge, so a limitation is that we cannot observe if a person has multiple degrees or what they studied in each one. Further research can be done on these topics to expand our knowledge on the topic.

Studies	Other	Bachelor's	Master's	PhD	Grand Total
Anthropology		1			1
Business			1		1
Children's Literature			10		10
Cinema		1			1
Communications		9			9
Computer Science		1			1
Cultural policies and Management			1		1
Graphic Design		1			1
History		5	1		6
Illustration	1				1
Industrial Design		2			2
International Relationships		2			2

Journalism		4			4
Law		1			1
Literature	1	11	2	6	20
N/D					17
Pedagogy		2			2
Philosophy		1			1
Physics		1			1
Psychology		6			6
Visual Arts			2		2
Grand Total	**2**	**47**	**17**	**7**	**90**

Figure 14: Studies

Through this analysis, we can observe that most of the judges have a literature background, with 22% that studied literature (Latino American, Modern, Hispano-American, English, etcetera) and an extra 11% that specialized in children's literature. It is also interesting that children's literature is the degree most represented amongst judges with a master's degree, which might show the importance given to judges that are specialized in the field in an academic way. There is also a significant number of judges that studied communications (10%), psychology (7%), and history (7%). In general, most of the degrees are related to the field of arts and humanities. Judges that did not study a degree related to arts and humanities are usually authors that decided to change careers, as is the case of the judge that studied Computer Science.

This data can show the type of knowledge that is common amongst the judges and the shared beliefs that they might have. For example, as they mostly come from arts, humanities and social sciences degrees, the judges might all share a more interpretivist epistemological position and a constructionist ontological perspective (Bryman 2016). In other words, the judges might have a common idea that social phenomena are constructions in a constant state of revision that are produced through social interaction. People from literature degrees might also share common knowledge about the genre conventions and 'rules' of certain types of literary texts, and even a certain approach in terms of how to analyse them.

However, although literature degrees are almost always represented in the judging panels, if we observe the distribution per year (Table 15), we can say that there is no degree that is more represented in each judging panel. Thus, there might a great diversity of different perspectives in each panel.

Studies per year per award	N/D	OTHER	Bachelor's	Master's	PhD	Grand Total
Barco de Vapor	**8**	**2**	**19**	**4**	**2**	**35**
2009	**2**		**1**	**2**		**5**
Children's Literature				2		2
N/D	2					2
Journalism			1			1
2010	**2**	**1**	**2**			**5**
Illustration		1				1
Literature			1			1
N/D	2					2
Psychology			1			1
2012	**1**		**2**	**1**	**1**	**5**
Physics			1			1
Children's Literature				1		1
Literature					1	1
N/D	1					1
Psychology			1			1
2013	**1**		**4**			**5**
Anthropology			1			1
Communications			1			1
History			1			1
N/D	1					1
Psychology			1			1
2014		**1**	**4**			**5**
Communications			2			2
Literature		1				1
Journalism			1			1
Psychology			1			1
2015			**3**	**1**	**1**	**5**
Literature			1		1	2
Pedagogy			1			1
Cultural policies and Management				1		1
International Relationships			1			1

2016	**2**		**3**			**5**
Communications			1			1
Literature			1			1
N/D	2					2
International relationships		1			1	
GA	**4**		**20**	**8**	**3**	**35**
2009	**2**		**3**			**5**
Cinema			1			1
Graphic Design			1			1
Industrial Design			1			1
N/D	2					2
2010	**1**		**4**			**5**
Computer Sciences			1			1
Communications			2			2
Literature			1			1
N/D	1					1
2012			**4**	**1**		**5**
Communications			1			1
Philosophy			1			1
History			1			1
Literature			1	1		2
2013			**2**		**3**	**5**
Literature			2		3	5
2014			**3**	**2**		**5**
Visual Arts				1		1
Communications			1			1
History			2			2
Children's Literature				1		1
2015	**1**		**2**	**2**		**5**
Industrial Design			1			1
Children's Literature				1		1
Literature			1	1		2
N/D	1					1
2016			**2**	**3**		**5**

Business				1		1
History			1			1
Children's Literature				2		2
Literature			1			1
N/D	**5**		**8**	**5**	**2**	**20**
2020	**2**		**5**	**3**		**10**
Visual Arts				1		1
Communications			1			1
Law			1			1
Children's Literature				2		2
Literature			2			2
N/D	2					2
Psychology			1			1
2021	**3**		**3**	**2**	**2**	**10**
Education					1	1
History				1		1
Children's Literature				1		1
Literature					1	1
N/D	3					3
Journalism			2			2
Psychology			1			1
Grand Total	**17**	**2**	**47**	**17**	**7**	**90**

Figure 15: Studies per year

To further understand the social spaces where judges acquired their dispositions and what their position in the field might be, it was important for me to also explore where they had studied. Even if two judges have studied the same thing, if they studied them in different institutions there is a possibility that they might have learnt different approaches and acquired different knowledge. For example, in the degree in Hispanic Literature in the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) students must take six subjects that specialize in literary theory starting in the first semester (Facultad de Filosofía y Letras n.d.), while in the same degree in Tecnológico de Monterrey they are required to take three and these subjects do not start until the third semester (Tecnológico de Monterrey n.d.). Exploring where the judges

studied their degrees also showed the social spaces that they inhabited and might even show what social capital they might have acquired by attending these institutions.

For this purpose, I searched information on where they had studied for their bachelor's degree. As I mentioned in the methodology chapter, I chose to start working with the bachelor's degree and not with the highest degree as I had been doing with the previous two categories. It is usually in a bachelor's degree where people specialize in a particular field and gain knowledge and skills that are particular to their discipline. Thus, I wanted to explore this first stage of specialization. Furthermore, as almost all judges have a bachelor's degree this allowed me to have criteria that would help me see commonalities and patterns across the data.

The value that appears the most in this data set is the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), which means that most of the judges went to this university for their degree. From the 90 judges that form the sample, 45 (50%) attended this university for their Bachelor's degree (Table 16). Each year there are at least two judges that have studied in this university and there are even years -such as 2013- where all the judges for one of the awards studied in the UNAM (table 17). The second most prevalent university is the Universidad Iberoamericana (commonly known as IBERO), a private university founded and directed by the Society of Jesus (Jesuits). However, they are only an 8,8% of the sample.

University Bachelor's degree	
Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla	1
Escuela Nacional de Artes Cinematográficas UNAM	1
Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia	1
Universidad Iberoamericana	8
N/D	19
University of Pádova	1
Self-taught	1
Sociedad General de Escritores de México	1
Tecnológico de Monterrey	1
Universidad Internacional de las Américas	1
Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México	45
Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana	4
Université catholique de Louvain	2
Universidad de Guadalajara	1
Universidad de las Américas-Puebla	1

Universidad de Sonora	1
Universidad Panamericana	1
Grand Total	**90**

Figure 16: University Bachelor's Degree

2013	BV	GA
Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia	1	
N/D	1	
UNAM	1	5
Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana	1	
Université catholique de Louvain	1	

Figure 17: University Bachelor's degree year 2013

After this, I analysed the university where they studied for their highest and most recent degree. The data still shows that a relative majority of the judges studied in the UNAM (40%), followed by the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana (7,7%) and the Universidad Iberoamericana (7,7%). Something that we can also observe from this data is that there is a considerable percentage of judges that studied their master's degree outside of Mexico (47% of the judges with a master's degree). This is notable as their life experience is going to be different from those judges that have not studied abroad. Additionally, studying outside of Mexico could have given them the access to resources and social capital that would be more difficult to obtain in Mexico.

Furthermore, we can observe that the education of the judges is primarily concentrated in Mexico City (Figure 20), which either means that they had been living there before starting their bachelor's degree, or they moved there to study and thus had to change their habitus to fit into that environment as "people can adapt their habitus to accommodate new situations" (Compton-Lilly 2009, p.5). Studying and living in Mexico City might also have given them more cultural capital, as in this city there can be easier access to arts and culture. For example, Mexico City has the highest number of museums, theatres, and libraries in the whole country (Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes 2008).

As mentioned by Hind, "the concentration of talent in the capital means that in addition to the country's largest publishers and bookstores, most of children's literature most celebrated creators also reside there" (2020, p.3). However, the data shows that it is not only the creators that reside in Mexico City, but also most of the gatekeepers of children's literature in Mexico.

University	Judges per University
Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla	1
Centro Universitario de Estudios Cinematográficos	1
Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia	1
ISDI	1
N/D	19
Simmons College	2
Sociedad General de Escritores de México	1
Universidad Internacional de las Américas	1
Universidad Autónoma de Aguascalientes	1
Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona	2
Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana	7
Université catholique de Louvain	2
Universidad Complutense de Madrid	1
Universidad de Castilla la Mancha	2
Universidad de Guadalajara	1
Universidad de Salamanca	1
Universidad de Sonora	1
University of Warwick	1
Universidad de Zaragoza	1
Universidad Iberoamericana	7
Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México	36
Grand Total	**90**

Figure 18: University of highest degree

Location	Bachelor's	Master's	N/D	OTHER	PhD	Grand Total
Aguascalientes					1	1
Belgium	2					2
Guadalajara	1					1
Mexico City	42	8		1	4	55
N/D	1		17	1		19
Puebla	1					1
Sonora		1				1

Spain		5		2		7
United Kingdom		1				1
United States		2				2
Grand Total	**47**	**17**	**17**	**2**	**7**	**90**
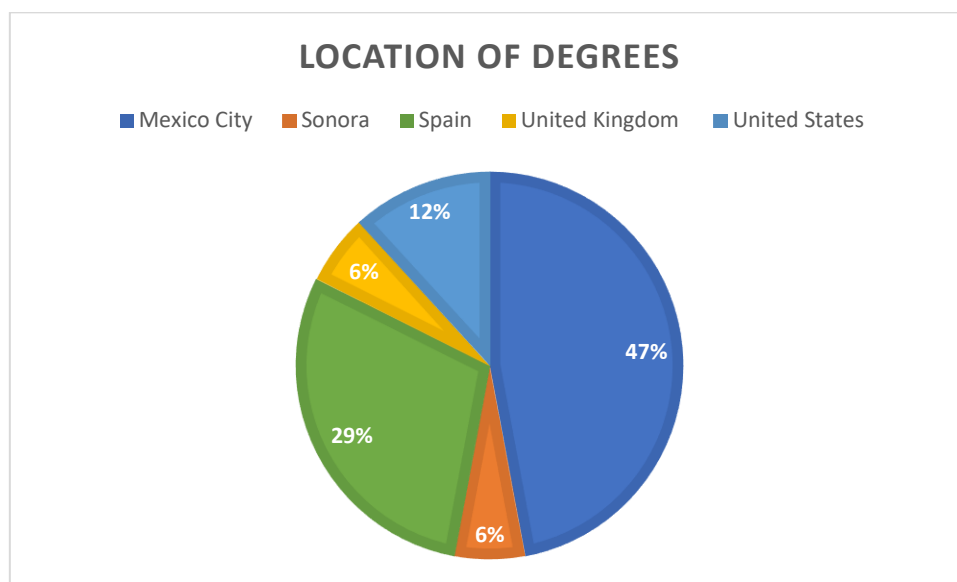
Career

The life experiences of the judges are not limited to their academic background, but also to the work they have been doing in their professional career. Their work also provides certain knowledge and skills that might have been used to select the books for the award. This professional background might also let us observe how involved they have been with children's literature and childhood before being judges, and the type of career that might make someone eligible to participate in the selection process of the awards.

The first division that I did was between the types of careers that the judges have had. During my initial research, I observed that judges could be grouped into four general categories according to their professional trajectories. In other words, according to the different types of jobs that they have had throughout their career. I observed that judges were either part of the publishing industry, scholars, authors, or 'experts' in children's literature. This last category refers to those judges that have had a very diverse career or that do not fit into the other categories, for example, those judges that have been mediators or freelance consultants. This does not mean that the other judges are not 'experts' in the field. This data was collected by researching their professional experience in online sources. The professional networking and

career development platform LinkedIn was particularly useful for this section of the analysis, as I could observe the jobs that the judges consider most relevant to their careers, as well as how they self-identify professionally. When this option was not available, I searched their personal web pages or databases such as the Enciclopedia de Literatura Mexicana (elem.mx) where their career is described.

Figure 21: Professional career

In general, the category that is most represented in the sample is that of authors. 38% of the judges in the sample fit into this category as they have dedicated most of their professional careers to writing books. On the other hand, scholars are the most underrepresented, with only 9% of the judges fitting into this category. The lack of scholars in the judging panels might be due to the fact that "among the academy specialized in Mexican literature, it is possible to hear the statement 'I'm not interested in children's books'" (Hind 2020, p.2). This sentiment was echoed by Laura Guerrero Guadarrama in an interview, where she mentions that for her it has been difficult for her to position herself as a scholar and to be taken seriously within the field of academia (Guerrero Guadarrama in Hind 2020). Thus, we can observe that children's literature in Mexico might still be suffering from an inferior status within the literary polysystem (Shavit 1986), especially in academia.

The publishing category is the second biggest, with 22% of the judges belonging to this group. This does not necessarily mean that 22% of the judges represent Ediciones SM, an element that will be explored in more detail later in this chapter. At this point I just want to comment that the data might show that people that work in the publishing industry are regarded as having the expertise and authority required to be part of this prestigious award. The fact that they are the second largest category might also be the result of the way children's literature in

Mexico has developed: first books were published and then the gatekeepers started to formalize, giving more time for publishers to establish themselves as authorities in the field. For example, Daniel Goldin -the editor that created the "A la Orilla del Viento" collection in the FCE- is regarded as one of the main authorities and pioneers in Mexican children's literature. Finally, the involvement of publishers in the awards could also be related to the way they are organized. As this award is controlled by a publishing house (Ediciones SM) we could argue that their social capital is closely related to the field of publishing sometimes more than with academia or other groups of gatekeepers, so when deciding who to select they might turn to the people who they know in the publishing industry.
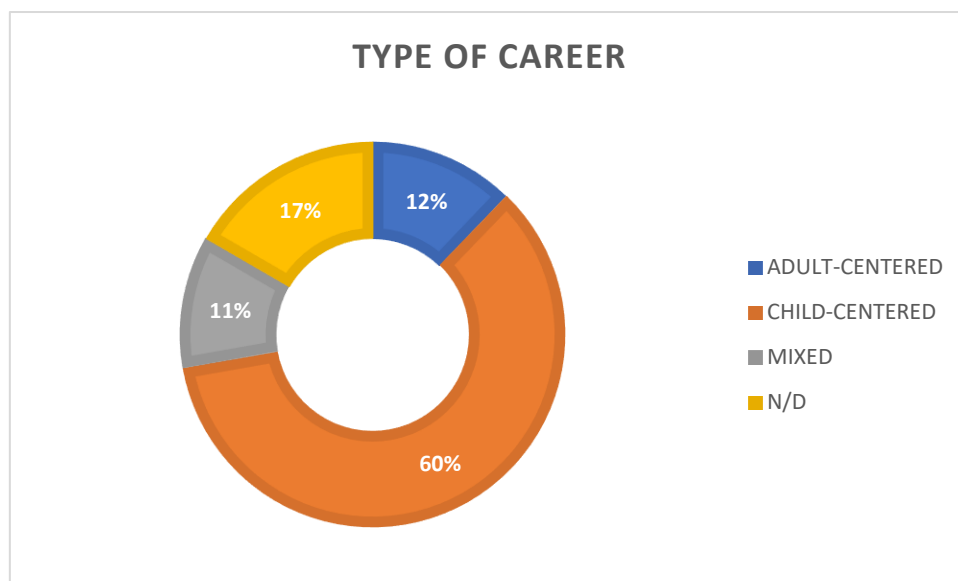
Figure 22: Type of career

After obtaining the data about their career, I was interested to observe if throughout their career they had worked with/for children as this might affect their perceptions of children's literature and the types of books they select. As can be seen in Figure 22, the majority of judges have had a child-centred career, either working directly with children, producing content aimed at children or in an area that is dedicated to working with children. Only 12% of judges have an adult-centred career, which might indicate that there is an interest for choosing judges that have knowledge about children. The data shows that the professional career category with the most judges that have an adult-centred career is the category of author (Figure 23). This might indicate that when it comes to authors, even if they do not have the experience of writing children's literature, they are considered as having what is necessary to select the winning books. Nonetheless, the authors that have an adult-centred career still are a minority compared to child-centred authors.

Figure 23: Type of career. Divided per professional trajectory

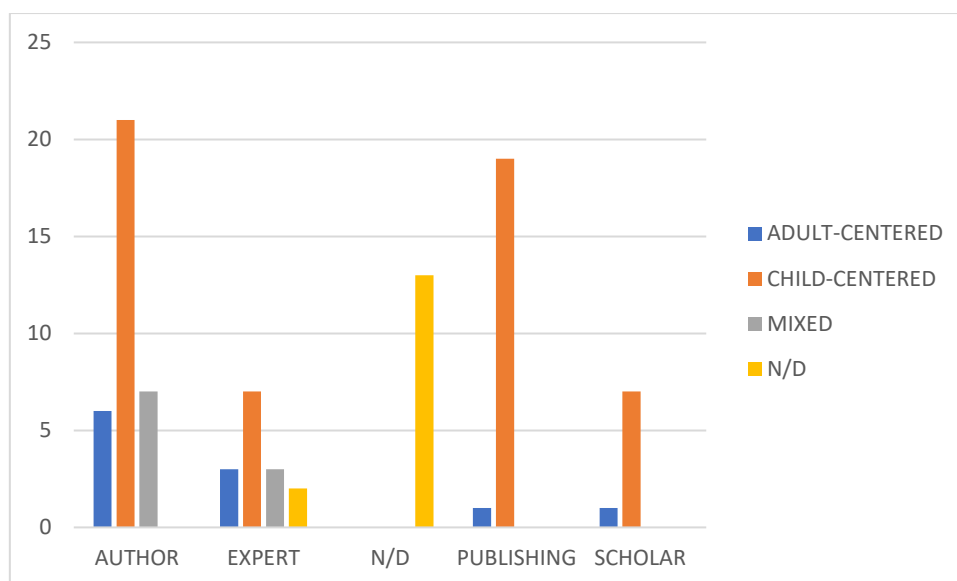Another interesting aspect that the data shows is that adult-centred judges were mainly included in the first years of the timeframe of this study. As can be observed in table 24, after 2014 there is a decrease in the number of judges that have adult-centred careers. According to James English, "the prestige of a prize is reciprocally dependent on the prestige of its judges" (2008, p.122). If we consider that, as I mentioned before, children's literature has been considered as inferior in the literary polysystem, in the first years of the award they might have had to resort to people with stature in the general field of literature, arts and culture in order to increase the stature of the award and of the field of children's literature as a whole. This was likely done through the social capital of the organizing institutions. This might also come back to what we have already discussed of the recent interest in children's literature in a more professional sense. If there were no people dedicated to children's literature or children's culture, they would have to ask people from outside the field to fill the gaps and support the selection process.

Career	ADULT-CENTERED	CHILD-CENTERED	MIXED	N/D	Grand Total
2009	1	4	1	4	**10**
AUTHOR		2	1		3
N/D				4	4
PUBLISHING	1	2			3
2010	1	6	1	2	**10**

AUTHOR	1	4	1		6
N/D				2	2
PUBLISHING		2			2
2012	**2**	**6**	**1**	**1**	**10**
AUTHOR	1	2	1		4
EXPERT	1	1			2
N/D				1	1
PUBLISHING		1			1
SCHOLAR		2			2
2013	**5**	**4**	**1**		**10**
AUTHOR	2	1	1		4
EXPERT	2	1			3
PUBLISHING		2			2
SCHOLAR	1				1
2014		**10**			**10**
AUTHOR		5			5
PUBLISHING		4			4
SCHOLAR		1			1
2015		**6**	**3**	**1**	**10**
AUTHOR		1	2		3
EXPERT		3	1		4
N/D				1	1
PUBLISHING		2			2
2016		**6**	**2**	**2**	**10**
AUTHOR		2			2
EXPERT		2	2	1	5
N/D				1	1
PUBLISHING		2			2
2020	**2**	**6**		**2**	**10**
AUTHOR	2	3			5
N/D				2	2
PUBLISHING		2			2
SCHOLAR		1			1
2021		**6**	**1**	**3**	**10**
AUTHOR		1	1		2

EXPERT				1	1
N/D				2	2
PUBLISHING		2			2
SCHOLAR		3			3
Grand Total	**11**	**54**	**10**	**15**	**90**

Figure 24: Type of career and professional trajectory per year

In a previous section of this chapter, I explored how there was a clear gender division between child-centred careers and adult-centred careers, with most adult-centred judges being men. I also explored how men judges are usually selected to evaluate the manuscripts for the Gran Angular Award, which is given to Young Adult novels. The data from the analysis of the type of career also shows that most adult-centred judges were part of the Gran Angular Award (seven judges in Gran Angular against only two in Barco de Vapor). We might then conclude that judges selected from outside the children's literature field are usually men authors with adult-centred careers.
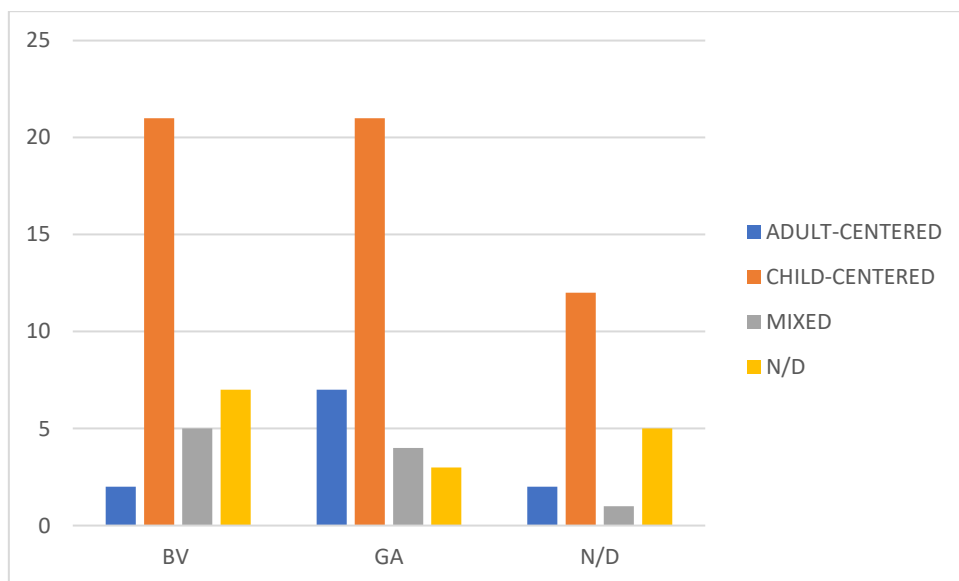

Figure 25: Type of career and awards (BV vs GA)
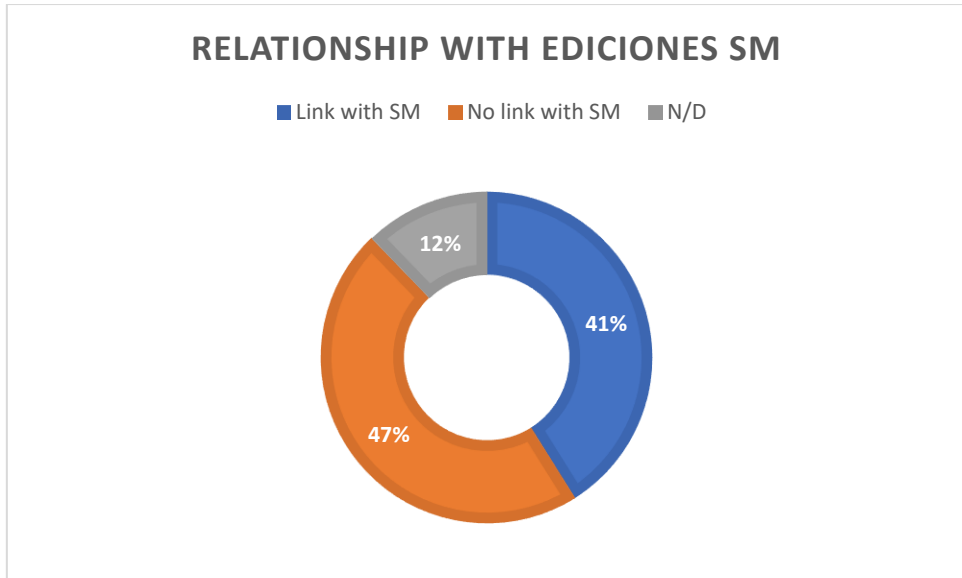
Relationship with Ediciones SM

So far I have been exploring the different characteristics that define the judges of the SM Awards as a group, without considering what institution they represent or how they might

be related to the institutions that organize the awards. In this last section of the chapter, I will analyse the different ways in which the judges might be related to the publishing industry, and more specifically, to the publisher that oversees the awards. This was a complex step in my analysis as I had to decide what would be considered a 'relationship' with the publisher. In the end, I decided that any economic transaction with the publisher or any type of employment contract would be the criteria to decide if they have had a relationship with Ediciones SM. This could be, for example, as an employee, as a freelance consultant, or as a previous winner of the SM awards.

The data collection followed a similar process than the last section. I searched possible connections by observing the professional career of the judges and the projects that they have done. While in the previous analysis I focused on the type of career, for this section I paid particular attention to the place where they worked.

The data collected showed that around 41% of the judges in the sample have a connection with Ediciones SM. 47% are independent from the publisher or I could not find enough information to say that they have had a relationship with Ediciones SM (Chart 26). According to Sofia and Santiago (pseudonyms) -two editors that I interviewed, who represented Ediciones SM in the judging panels and participated in the organization of the awards- only two people from the publishing house are selected per year to take part as judges (one for Barco de Vapor and one for Gran Angular). This means that each year there are at least two judges that might represent the ideas and goals of the company as they have a direct connection to the publisher.

However, these are only the people who work for Ediciones SM at the time of the award, so it does not consider previous employees or authors that have won the awards. These people also have a connection to the publisher and thus they might share the same ideas and values. When we consider people who had any previous connection with the publisher, we observe that there are always at least three people in the jury who have a relationship with Ediciones SM. There are even years, such as 2014, where there are more people who have a link with the publisher than independent judges (Table 27).

Figure 26: Relationship with Ediciones SM
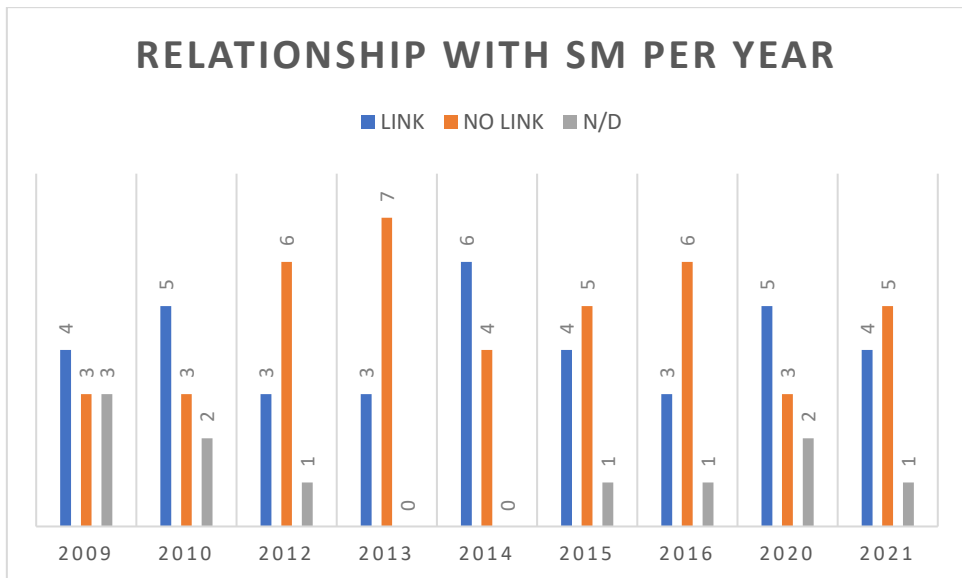
Figure 27: Relationship with Ediciones SM per year

The next step was to observe if this connection was during their period as judges or before. From the 41% of judges that had a relationship with Ediciones SM, 24% had it before they were judges and 17% while they were judges. Once we analyze the data per year, it becomes clear that the percentage of judges that have a direct relationship with the publisher while they are judges are the two representatives that were mentioned by the interviewees (Figure 29). Thus, although there is a considerable percentage of people who have had at a certain point an economic contractual relationship with Ediciones SM, there is only one person per award each year that directly represents the publisher and that is still 'controlled' by this institution in the sense that they are working in the company.
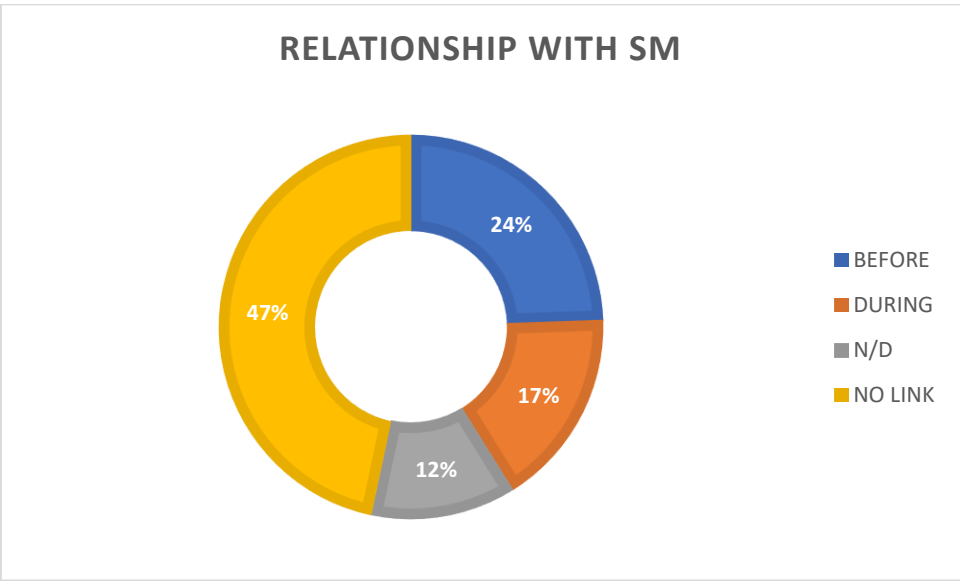
Figure 28: Relationship with SM. Before, during, no link

Row Labels	Count of Link with SM
2009	**10**
BEFORE	2
DURING	2
N/D	3
NO LINK	3
2010	**10**
BEFORE	4
DURING	1
N/D	2
NO LINK	3
2012	**10**
BEFORE	1
DURING	2
N/D	1
NO LINK	6
2013	**10**
BEFORE	2
DURING	1

NO LINK	7
2014	**10**
BEFORE	4
DURING	2
NO LINK	4
2015	**10**
BEFORE	2
DURING	2
N/D	1
NO LINK	5
2016	**10**
BEFORE	2
DURING	1
N/D	1
NO LINK	6
2020	**10**
BEFORE	3
DURING	2
N/D	2
NO LINK	3
2021	**10**
BEFORE	2
DURING	2
N/D	1
NO LINK	5
Grand Total	**90**

Figure 29: relationship with SM per year. Before, during, no link

If only two judges per year directly represent the publisher, then what is the relationship that other judges have? Chart 30 shows that 47% of the judges that belong to the category of author (17,7% of the total sample) had a relationship with Ediciones SM before being judges. This relationship is usually that the judge won one of the SM Awards and was later invited to participate in the prizing process. Sofía also mentioned in the interview that this is a conscious decision, that they prefer to invite authors that have previously won one of the SM awards because "in this way there are no longer even conflicts of interest. Everything is like very

objective". As authors can only win the award once, choosing an author that has already won also guarantees that there is no way that the author would select their own manuscript.

Although these authors are not employees of the publisher, the fact that they have been selected as winners previously might indicate that the way they conceive children's literature fits with the ideas and habitus of the publisher. Thus, selecting people that have already been recognized as eligible to enter the publisher's catalogue might perpetuate the same criteria for selection and promote similar types of texts. Furthermore, having authors that have won the award as judges can also increase the prestige of the prize. As it has been mentioned before, "in the context of the literary field, the prestige of the bodies or positions within an institution and the authority of the experts occupying this position, are expected to be related" (De Nooy 1988, p.532). In this case, there is an interesting cycle in which an author is given certain prestige by winning one of the SM awards, and then that prestige is used by the award to increase their status.
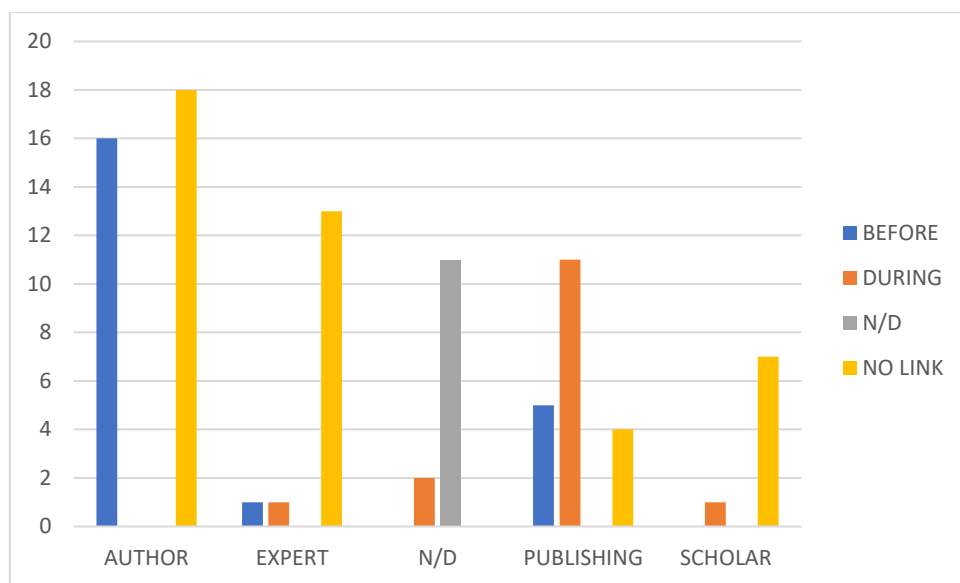
Figure 30: Professional career and link with SM

The categories of expert and scholar are the ones that have the least relationships with the publisher. Only one expert and one scholar had a relationship with Ediciones SM. María José, a judge in the category of scholar, mentioned in her interview that for her, not being related to the publisher is important as "it gives [her] independence and the possibility to give my honest opinion". This does not mean that judges with a relationship with Ediciones SM are

puppets controlled by the company, but not having any link with them might give experts and scholars the opportunity to express a different opinion and become a counterweight in the selection process.

Conclusion

Judges in the SM Awards are mainly woman that were born between 1985 and 1942. These women are usually selected to participate in the award aimed at young children, which matches their career, as most of them have a child-centred career. Almost all judges have a higher-education degree (bachelor's, master's, or PhD), which could indicate a high level of cultural capital. Furthermore, most of the judges studied in Mexico City at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. As most of the judges share a professional and academic background, it is likely that they will share similar dispositions and attitudes that could in turn shape how they judge the manuscripts. There is no representation from non-binary judges, judges from outside Mexico City, or judges that have no formal education (e.g. a judge that might have only studied until secondary school but could have a lot of experience working as a mediator). Further research could explore, for example, the sexuality of the judges to observe if there is representation of non-heterosexual judges. It would also be important to explore the ethnicity and social class of the judges to observe if they are all white Mexicans from the upper or middle-class.

When it comes to the relationships with Ediciones SM, data showed that there is a considerable number of judges that have a relationship with the publisher. This relationship is usually indirect, but it might still show that the publisher has a certain power in the whole prizing process. The data also allow us to see some of the mechanisms that the publisher uses to increase the prestige of the award, such as including judges that have already won the award, judges that specialize in children's literature on an academic level (e.g. having a master's degree in children's literature), or including judges from outside the children's literature field to legitimize the award.

CHAPTER 6: WHAT IS GOOD CHILDREN'S LITERATURE? THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS WITH THE JUDGES OF THE SM AWARDS

The quantitative analysis chapter of this study presented data that allowed me to understand who the judges of the SM Awards are. Through the analysis, I observed that the judges are mostly women, that they usually work in child-centred careers as authors, and that a plurality of them are in their 40s and 50s. The majority of the judges studied in Mexico City at the UNAM, one of the largest and most prestigious universities in Latin America (Gaceta UNAM 2019). Almost all of them have a bachelor's degree, and a large number studied Literature - sometimes with a specialization in children's literature. Finally, the data showed that many judges that are authors or that have a career in publishing have had a connection with the publisher -either indirectly as previous winners of the award or directly as employees of the company-, while judges that are considered 'experts' in the field (scholars, mediators, cultural promotors, etcetera) are independent and do not have a financial link with the company.

Although this data gives us a lot of information about the judges and might help us understand their *habitus*, capital, and position in the field, it does not allow us to understand more subjective and individual perspectives about children's literature and childhood. To further explore their *habitus* and *doxa*, the unwritten 'rules of the game' (Maton 2012) that might shape the selection process and the whole awarding process in general, it was important for me to talk directly with some of the judges and ask them about their perceptions. According to their web page, the awards were created "with the goal to create high-quality children's books" (Fundación SM n.d.). However, what does high-quality mean? As explained by Eliasen, Hovden, and Prytz, quality is not a stable, well-defined, and objective criterion as "what in a given context is referred to as quality is thus always debatable, whether 'quality' refers to how successfully a standard is met, whether the standard itself is appropriate in the given context, or finally, whether the values that inform the standard are acceptable or shared" (2018, p.12). Furthermore, quality depends on the context and is eminently social (Eliasen et al. 2018).

If quality is not a universal concept with which we can judge a text, what are the implicit and explicit rules and criteria that the jury follows to select the winner manuscripts in the SM Awards? Moreover, as the publishing industry is a key player in the context in which the awards are developed, how does this aspect shape the selection process? In order to answer these questions, I interviewed nine judges using a semi-structured interview method that would allow

me to have an open conversation about what they consider 'high-quality' literature. I was also interested in their perspectives on children's literature in general.

Criteria for selecting books: What is a good children's book?

During the interviews, one of the main questions that I asked the judges was 'what do you consider a good book for children?'. I also asked the opposite question, 'what are the elements that you think make children's literature bad?', as sometimes is easier to identify what you consider as having bad quality. The study identified five different themes within the criteria that judges use to select books. These themes were developed using an inductive bottom-up approach in which I clustered together codes that have a pattern of shared meaning organised around a central concept (Braun and Clarke 2022).

By familiarizing myself with the data and the codes I observed that the criteria for selection could be grouped according to the approaches to literature that the judges have. In other words, they respond to the way judges conceive literature, what it *is* and what it *is for*. My first division was informed by Hough's theories on literary criticism (1966) where they identify two types of literary theory: a formal theory that sees literature as an autonomous realm in which the only law is the proper perfection of the work itself, and a moral/social theory that sees literature as a contributory part of total human activity. In other words, they create a division between literature as exclusively aesthetic and literature as part of the human experience. However, after dividing my codes according to these categories, I observed that within the moral/social theory there were sub-groups that talked about the specific functions or values behind the criteria.

The study then found five themes that could help us explore the criteria or approaches that people involved in the selection process of the SM Awards could use to judge the manuscripts and choose a winner. These included: 1) a book-centred approach where the main consideration is the aesthetic value and 'art for art's sake'; 2) an adult-centred approach, where the judges consider children's literature as having also adult readers and part of the wider literary polysystem; 3) a child-centred approach in which judges mention the importance of children's literature to be adapted for its audience; 4) a socially-centred approach to literature in which the focus is on literature as part of the human experience; and 5) a publisher centred approach where the criteria are informed by the rules and goals of the publishing house (in this case Ediciones SM).
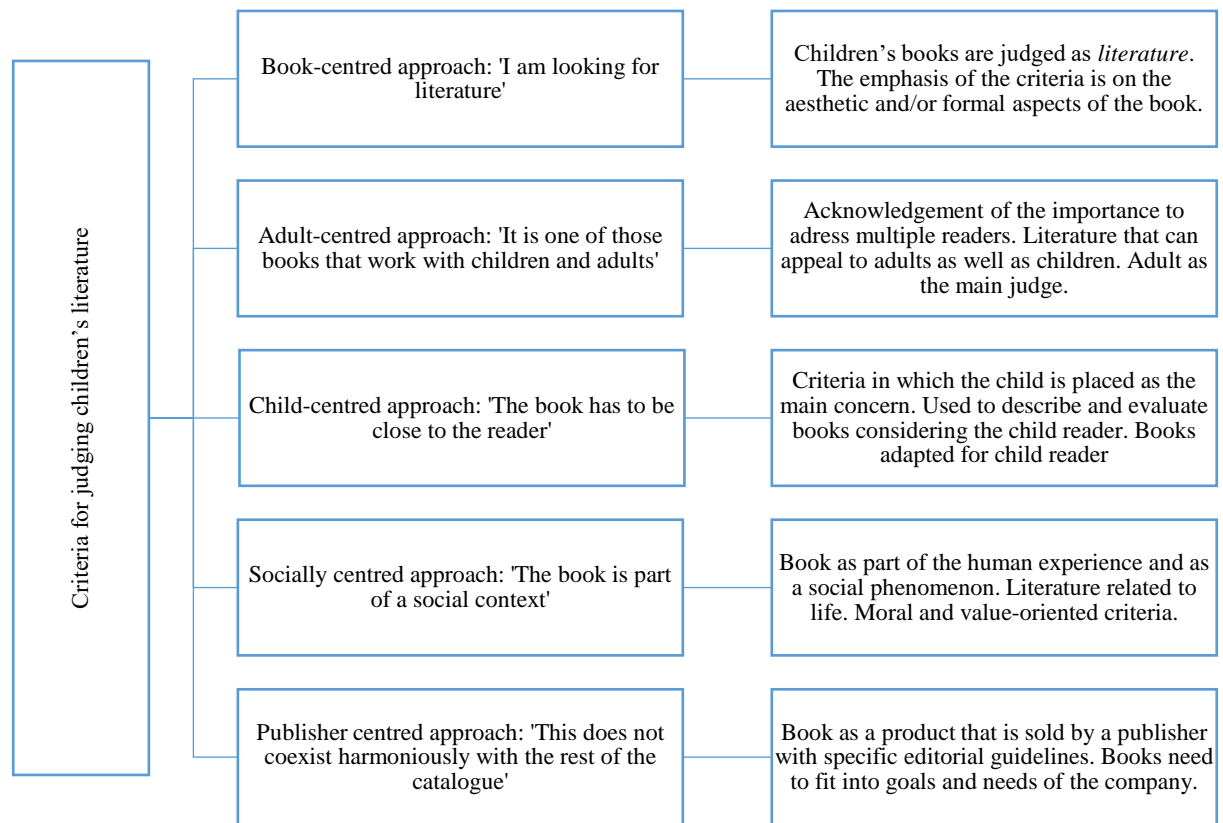
Figure 31: Themes. Criteria for selection

'What do I look for in children's literature? Literature'. Book-centred approach to the selection of children's literature.

As I described in the history of Mexican children's literature section of this study, one of the big changes after the first FILIJ was that the perception of children's literature moved away from considering children's literature as a pedagogical tool with overtly edifying intentions. According to this previous perspective, the main criteria to select and judge books for children were their moral and educational contents, thus putting at the forefront the didactic function of the texts. However, after the 1980s this perception started to slowly change, and the aesthetic potential of children's literature started to become the central point for judging these texts.

For Ximena this seems to be a fundamental aspect of selecting children's literature. Speaking about the things that she considers when judging a manuscript, she expressed: "*So what do I look for in children's and youth literature? Literature. In other words, I want it to be an authentic work, one that has an aesthetic function*". Here we can observe the predominance given to the aesthetic aspect of literature and that she is leaving behind any consideration for

what literature could teach the child reader. This is a synchronic view of literary quality (Van den Bossche 2015) in which the focus is only on the aesthetic qualities and the textual factors. According to Townsend, this is a 'purist' position for judging children's literature that is based on the "acceptance of literary experience as having value in itself for the general enrichment of life, over and above any virtue that may be claimed for it as a means to a nonliterary end" (1974, p.93).

This rejection of the subordination of children's literature to any nonliterary or nonaesthetic function was prevalent among judges, particularly when asked what they do *not* like to encounter in children's literature. Valentina explained:

> *I think that the most important thing is not wanting to use children's books to teach something, those texts are completely left out. Things such as teaching or teaching values or morals are left out of this... at least out of this catalogue, of this contest, and for me, it is out of any book, of the whole field. I put aside any book that wants to teach something to a child when its function is literary. Obviously, there are mediums for that, but literature is not one of them.*

Similarly, Sofía tells the story of a manuscript that she read titled "You have to Obey" about a group of children who had to pay attention to their teachers because their teachers had a soul and felt bad when they were disobeyed. She laments that these texts are still being written and states that "*that is bad literature... well, I wouldn't even call it literature, bad manuscripts*". For her, the worst types of books for children are those that she labels as 'instructing and moralizing'.

Closely related to this, there seems to be a prevalent idea that the aesthetic elements should never be subordinated to a topic. So, they are not only moving away from texts that aim to teach something to children, but also from those books in which the theme is more important than the way it is written or from texts that lack multiple readings. As expressed by Mateo:

> *There is a tendency lately to write about things. For example, I want to write a story about bullying, or I want to write a story about teenage pregnancy. So the spotlight is on the theme. You also realize that everything surrounds that theme and that the characters revolve around that theme. It is a monothematic book, there is no complexity in the characters, and in a few words, it becomes a lesson, a sermon on something. And that [....] completely forgets the literary aspect of the work. It's not that you can't talk*

about issues -in fact, it's necessary to talk about bullying, teenage pregnancy, whatever you tell me-, but it has to be collateral

These findings indicate that judges in the SM Awards are constantly fighting against the 'pedagogical stepmother', a term coined by Teresa Colomer (2011) to designate the didactic impulses in children's literature that distance the texts from the literary experience to "seek the utilities that can be obtained from the book to educate better" (Díaz Rönner, 20). Instead, judges focus on the way the book is written, searching for texts that are, "well written". What a 'well written' text means is also subjective and changes from judge to judge, but in general, it refers to textual characteristics and formal conventions such as having well-developed characters or having a well-structured plot. According to Bittner and Superle, it is common in major awards to apply formalist modes of literary criticism in which "meritorious works are defined by their aesthetic qualities: they display a complex relationship between content and form and exhibit unity among parts of the whole" (2017, p.74).

According to this new perspective, the main aspects are the aesthetic language and a well-developed narrative. These criteria usually follow a formalist approach to literary criticism and do not pay attention to the implied child reader. As mentioned by Regina, "*in terms of quality, it should start from the same. A good book for adults has to be great, otherwise no one will read it. A good children's book has to have the same principle*". This approach to selecting books is also close to Adruetto's idea of a 'literature without adjectives' (2008), as the elements outside the text (such as the reader) come in a second position. For Andruetto:

> "What there may be of "for children" or "for young people" in a work must be secondary [...] because the core of a text capable of pleasing children or young readers does not come so much from its adaptability to a recipient but above all its quality, and because when we talk about writing on any subject or genre, the noun is always more important than the adjective. Of everything that has to do with writing, the specificity of the addressee is the first thing that requires an alert look, because it is precisely there where moral, political and market reasons most easily nest (2008 n.p).

However, the judges also mentioned how difficult it is to run away from the didactic purpose in children's literature. Mateo, for example, mentioned that he believes that "*the secret is to find a fair balance between not everything being humour and mockery and not everything being a lesson*" as there is always going to be a desire from adults to share certain knowledge to children. Santiago, similarly, commented that he looks for a balance between synchronic

criteria and the didactic function of children's literature because of the context in which these texts are consumed. He expressed:

> *It is a balance. To find out what its literary merit is per se and also to keep in mind and in view that we are part of a weighty educational discourse aimed at teachers and parents and that there are certain things that they think a book should have.*

So, although judges might try to escape the 'pedagogical stepmother', the social standards and values placed in children's literature throughout the years have created a context in which it is still necessary to be slightly concerned about what literature could/should teach children. This might not always be acknowledged by judges, as it might be an unconscious criterion. Furthermore, the focus on the aesthetic aspects does not deny the possibility for the judges to consider other extra-textual criteria to select the texts as it is possible to hold a formal theory and to also consider a moral theory as a subordinate factor (Hough 1966).

'It is one of those books that work with children and adults': adult-centred approach

This theme is related to the previous one in that judging children's literature should be the same as judging a book written with an adult audience in mind. They support the idea of 'literature without adjectives', but instead of highlighting textual elements such as the language, structure, characters, or narration, they focus on the capacity of children's and young adult literature to appeal to multiple audiences. This idea has been part of the debates in the children's literature field for a long time, as some critics have shared the idea that children's literature should not be judged with different criteria from literature 'for adults'. In a statement often quoted, C.S. Lewis stated that he was "almost inclined to set it up as a canon that a children's story which is enjoyed only by children is a bad children's story" (Lewis in Hunt 2009, p.21). Thus, there is an idea that adults should also feel welcome in children's literature, and that books that are only appreciated by children do not have the same quality as those with multiple addressees.

When asked about the characteristics he looks for in a good children's book, Santiago said:

> *I would summarize it in "Literature that children can read". I mean, if it's a good book for children, it's also a good book for you to read, for me to read. Regardless of whether we are interested in this stuff [children's literature] as readers, a good children's book can be read when you are thirty, forty, fifty, or sixty years old.*

This idea was also mentioned by Mateo, who explained: *"I've always believed that a good book works well with adults, but a good children's book has to work well with both adults and children"*. Furthermore, he highlighted that he believes that "*adults should not feel* sobajados *[humiliated, underappreciated, mistreated] when they read children's literature*". This does not necessarily mean that the text cannot make fun of adults, or have fun at their expense, but that the narrative and discourse are not patronizing or underappreciating the capabilities of the reader.

As we can observe in Santiago´s comment, for some judges that follow this approach, children's literature does not exist as a separate category. Cervera called this approach 'liberal theory' and explained that from this perspective "there is no more than a literature that, at most, can be divided into good and bad. [...] In this only literature, the child will search and find products that they like and that suit them" (1989, p.160).

However, there is a more nuanced perspective that accepts there is a multiplicity of readers without forgetting that the child reader is the main intended audience. For this second group of judges, it is important that adults can also read and enjoy children´s literature, but the child will always come first. Maria Jose commented: "*I believe that good children's literature works at any level[...] The problem is when the adult reader is privileged*"

Another aspect that contributes to this approach to children's literature is that some of the judges do not think of a child (either real or imaginary) when selecting texts, but rather focus on their tastes, knowledge and interests as adults. For example, when I asked Regina if she thinks about what children might like when judging a book, she commented: "*I am an adult who knows very well, or thinks she knows because I have spent many years in children's and youth literature, what are the coordinates that a story should have, what are the ingredients*". Similarly, Mateo explained: "*I think that first as an adult you have to love it, you have to like the story*". Thus, we can observe that there is an idea that the adult has more knowledge of what 'good' literature is, and, thus, the most important opinion is that of the adult.

'The book must always be within the reach of the one to whom it is addressed': Child-centred approach

The 'liberal theory' approach to children's literature criticism was not the only one that could be observed through the interviews. Neither was the idea that adults' taste should be the measuring rod for children's texts. While explaining the goals of the SM Awards, one judge

highlighted that "*these awards are for the children and young people of this time. [Authors should] understand that it is a literary prize for the reader. It is not about THE novel that is well written by or for THE author. It has a very particular purpose there*". Unlike previous themes, in this one the main focus is on the child reader. According to this perspective, "the *real* children's books are the ones read *only* by children -ones that do *not* have anything to say to adults, and which are not, therefore, subject to adult judgements" (Hunt 2009, p.21. Emphasis in the original). Furthermore, the good books for children are those where the authors "understand that they must find ways of making the complexity of human experience manageable for young readers who are inexperienced both as readers and as people" (Watson in Arizpe 2007a, p.9) but "without loss of meaning, significance, or dignity" (Wall in Arizpe 2007b, p.30). In other words, this different perspective aims to promote literature where the narrator takes the child's experience into account to facilitate their involvement or access to the text.

This perspective was mainly mentioned when discussing the way certain themes or subjects should be addressed in children's literature. For example, Sofia mentioned that for her it is important that the treatment of the subject is suitable for children. She further explained:

> *I am not referring to a certain vocabulary, but to the world of the child and how the child is seeing this world. When I was a little girl, I used to watch the Baby Muppets and there was the nanny. The only thing you could always see were her little legs with her striped tights. It is that. Because they were showing you how a baby sees the world and the only thing the baby sees are those little legs. So, you have to talk to them like that.*

This example shows how she considers that texts for children should be written from a child's perspective, that literature reflects the lived experience of children and that there is an adaptation of the subjects to fit into the way a child sees the world around them. Similarly, when talking about selecting books about complex subjects such as war, Ximena mentioned:

> *It is not the subject that is going to prevent me from selecting a book, it is the treatment with which the book is written. A treatment that takes the child's concerns into account, that responds to what they are searching for in different stages of growth, and that in some way is thinking about that interlocutor, thinking about what they would be questioning (Ximena)*

Regina also shared this perspective, as she commented that:

the tone in children's literature is very important and is different from literature in general. When I approach a child, I take great care of the tone in which I am going to speak to him. It cannot be a tone that is patronizing. It also can't be a tone too high that the child doesn't understand me. It cannot be a very old tone, very archaic, very with adjectives that are not even used at the time because the child is not going to get close to that type of text. So, I have to be very close to my reader.

Regina's comment also allows us to observe that this perspective places great importance on children being able to 'get close to the text'. That is, to feel identified with the book, and to appeal to their needs and desires. For this reason, they might promote books where there is a first-person narrator, and that present contemporary topics that affect children and teenagers, as well as a langue and narrative structure and style that are accessible for the child reader. For example, the judge might not select a book that has a structure that they feel is 'too complex' for a child reader. These judges are highly aware that children do not have the same experience as adults, thus they avoid books where there is "*too much content that requires having lived more years in the world for its enjoyment*".

Camila was an interesting case in this perspective. She has been a mediator for a long time and she has not studied children's literature on an academic level. She mentioned that all she knows about children's literature she has learnt from talking with different gatekeepers and, more importantly, with children, teenagers, and young adults. One of the most intriguing comments she made was that *"even the form wasn't as important to [her] as what [she] thought could reach the audience".* In other words, she placed more weight on the reader's reception than on the more formal aspects of literature. Furthermore, she mentioned that when she selects a text she tries not to think on what she likes, but on texts that she thinks will appeal the readers. She explained that she selected the manuscript that she would defend during the deliberation because she thought that "*it was a text that I said "they're going to love this" because it has the elements that I know they're going to like".*

Camila's example also shows something that I observed during the interviews: some judges that have ample experience working with children are more likely to consider them when selecting manuscripts. For example, Valentina commented that ever since she became a mother and has spent time reading with her child, her perspective about children's literature

has changed and now when selecting books for children she considers if her child would enjoy it. She explained:

> *The truth is that I am now very biased because I am a mother. I have a six-year-old boy and everything I thought about children's books does not work anymore [laughs]. Well... of course it does. But I realize things with him... Now I think about children's books, and I think of my experience as a mother as well, not only the professional part but my experience as a mother and as a mediator with a child of six years to whom I read every night.*

In summary, this perspective considers "suitability for the child, popularity with the child, relevance for the child" (Townsend 1974).

'Cuentos diversos para niños perversos' [Diverse stories for wicked children]: Socially-oriented approach to judging children's literature

According to the moral/social theory for literary criticism, literature is a social phenomenon that is related to life and reflects a scheme of moral, social, and cultural values that exist outside of the text (Hough 1966). That is, these are criteria that have to do with extraliterary values and ideas about children's literature and childhood.

The aspect that stood out in this theme was the idea that children's literature should be suitable for catholic middle-class private schools. As mentioned before, Ediciones SM is a prescriptive publisher whose primary distribution avenue is private schools. Although they did not consider this as a primary criterion for selection, some judges made comments that show they are aware of the potential market of the books and what this audience expects in terms of values, topics, and treatment of certain themes. More than thinking about what the schools might want, the comments are related to the things they *do not* want or allow. For example, Maria Jose mentions:

> *Many times you think "Oops, Misses[1] are not going to like this book". And you have to say "This book has these problems. There are three crazy nuns in this book, so let's see how that goes with the Catholic schools, and here there is a relationship of people of the same sex, here there are conversations about gender" that is all that is going to*

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[1] Term commonly used for female teachers in private schools.

happen. [...] I would sit on the jury and say, "this is a great book, but it's going to get you in trouble".

Although the judges also mentioned that there have been awards where the winning book has had controversial elements such as masturbation, teenage pregnancy, and drugs, they also recognized that these books are the ones that usually end up being forgotten and receiving less attention. I must emphasize that these are the subjective perspectives of the judges and that objective data about these claims should be gathered to explore if the publisher does not promote certain books. However, I think it is important to mention these ideas as it allows us to observe what the judges think about how the field works.

Another element that Maria Jose mentioned is that for her it is important that for children's literature to be subversive in the sense that books for children can promote a change in the way society is structured. She explains:

[I like] subversion, the possibility of completely imagining other worlds and imagining other orders in that world. Other ways of organizing yourself, other spaces of conjunction between beings. I think that would be the most important thing for me. The enormous subversive capacity that children's and youth literature has, above all. How it subverts the theme of power.

Finally, Ximena also mentioned that an element that might be considered when selecting a book is the socio-political context. She narrates how there was a text that she really liked because of its sense of humour, however

The fact is that it was a text that had a protagonist who was kidnapped and at that time there were many kidnappings in the country, so I think that it was not chosen because the subject was incorrect at that time.

The judges also mentioned the importance of selecting diverse texts that would allow children to observe other realities. They mentioned how they are bored of always receiving texts that talk about a white-middle-class protagonist with a traditional heteronormative family.

This does not coexist harmoniously with the rest of the catalogue: Publishing-centred approach

This theme was created after observing that there were criteria that were directly related to the involvement of a publisher in the prizing process. Before starting this research, one of

my hypotheses was that the economic goals of Ediciones SM would greatly influence the selection process. However, through the interviews with the judges, especially those who work(ed) in the publishing house, I learnt that Ediciones SM does not consider the award-winning books as titles that will "have a long sales life and become part of a backlist that will sustain the company for years to come" (Smith and Ramdarshan 2018, p.106). They would be happy if this happens, but it is not their main goal when organizing the awards.

Nonetheless, the book that is selected as winner, still has to be published in one of their collections. As mentioned by Sofia, "*in the end, the prizes are called El Barco de Vapor and Gran Angular, which means that they go towards an editorial line*". Furthermore, in terms of symbolic value, these awards are highly valuable for the publisher. In the words of Maria Jose: "*it does reflect in some way what the publisher bets for, [...] it is not another simple title that they publish and that can go well or badly for them, it is THE title that SM decides "we bet on this, this represents us, and this is important"*. Similarly, Ximena commented: "*it seems to me that there is not this search for it to be a work that is going to sell a lot, that it is very popular, but rather that it represents the artistic quality that the publisher wants to communicate*". Thus, although they will not select the books taking into account economic goals, they will most likely take into account the values and ideas of the company.

Furthermore, the fact that they need to fit into a collection will shape the type of books that can be selected. For example, a judge that represented Ediciones SM and that was an editor for the company mentioned:

> *if a text came to me about a hard topic -let's say about the mistreatment of children- that is treated a bit harshly, I couldn't accept it even if I knew that I could soften them with illustration, because I couldn't get it into the collection and therefore would not be sold.*

These criteria are not only about the content of the books but also their format. For example, according to the award announcement, the manuscripts submitted for the Barco de Vapor Award should be between 40 and 200 pages, while for Gran Angular it must be between 120 and 250 pages (SM 2022).

However, the influence of the publisher is not direct in the sense that they tell judges what manuscript to select. It is a more subtle way of shaping the selection process. This is mainly done through the screening or pre-selection of the manuscripts. In 2016 more than 45 manuscripts were received by the organizers. This is a considerable number of texts that the

judges would have to go through in a very short period of time before selecting a winner, so preliminary judges have been used to reduce the number of manuscripts for a much quicker and easier evaluation by the judges. For the SM Awards, the people at Ediciones SM are in charge of selecting these preliminary judges that will write evaluative reports about all the manuscripts. These reports are then reviewed by one of the editors of Ediciones SM who will select around five manuscripts that will be sent to the judges.

English explains about this process of pre-selection that "these preliminary, behind-the-scenes judges can thus exercise a more definitive power of decision than the judges that are part of the public face of the prize. And they represent a more direct extension of the administrator´s power since the process of their selection if largely free both of procedural niceties and of the constraint of public scrutiny" (2005, p.135). Through this pre-selection process, Ediciones SM can select books that match their criteria. This was acknowledged by Maria Jose, who expressed:

Because there is a pre-selection, I imagine that if they already let [the manuscript] arrive [to the hands of the judges], then it is not a book that is going to cause them major problems. That is, it is not a book where they say "I hope it doesn't win because it could get us into trouble" They don't let it get so far, period.

In summary, through subtle methods, the publisher might shape the selection process so that the award-winning book that they will publish can fit into their catalogues and be sold and promoted through their usual ways of distribution (in this case, private schools). The judges also seem aware of the type of books that Ediciones SM publishes, so they might unconsciously take into account how much a manuscript would fit into their collections.

Conclusion

Through this analysis it can be observed that there are diverse positions about what constitutes a children's book that has 'high-quality'. Although most judges showed a predisposition for more formal aesthetic criteria, we could also see that there are other elements that are taken into account such as the relationship with the reader and the values it reflects. Through the interviews with the judges I could also show that the involvement of Ediciones SM can affect the selection process and the criteria that are used to choose the award-winning books. This is mainly seen in the context the books are distributed because of the publisher, and the editorial criteria that they use in each collection.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

The aim of this research was to explore the relationships between the children's literature publishing industry and children's literature prizing culture in Mexico. I used the SM Awards (Barco de Vapor and Gran Angular) as case studies for this research. Through statistical descriptive analysis of quantitative biographical data and thematic analysis of data obtained through semi-structured interviews with nine former judges of the awards I aimed to answer the following questions:

1) What are the criteria that the judges consider during the prizing process?

Through the thematic analysis of the interviews, I observed that the criteria for selection are very diverse. Five main themes were identified, each one of which represent a theory for literary criticism of children's literature. The types of criteria for selection are: 1) book-centred criteria, in which the aesthetic and textual characteristics of the texts are the main focus; 2) Adult-centred criteria, that refers to ideas about children's literature in which adult-readers are prioritized; 3) Child-centred criteria, where the child reader is prioritized; 4) socially centred criteria, in which the book is seen as part of human experience; and 5) publisher oriented criteria, that refers to the criteria for selection that respond to the involvement of the publisher in the prizing process. There is no consensus on one approach, and they even co-exist within the same judge as they are not mutually exclusive.

2) To what extent are the criteria for selection shaped by the involvement of the publishing industry?

Ediciones SM has a lot of power in the prizing process of the SM Awards. Even though they are not the only institution that organizes the awards, they play a key role in most of the steps before and after the winner is selected. They participate in the selection of the judges. They select the preliminary judges and guide them through the pre-selection process. After the preliminary judges create their evaluative reports, it is an editor from Ediciones SM who choses which manuscripts will go to the judges, and finally, they are present as judges during the deliberations. Even if they do not explicitly tell judges what manuscript to select, maintaining the illusion that they are the ones choosing, they use subtle methods through the entire process to guarantee the winning book can fit into their collections.

3) Who is represented in the jury?

Junko Jokota explains that "award decisions are made by a group-consensus process and human factors and relations enter into such situations" (2011, p.469) For this reason it was important to explore who are these people selecting the awards. Through the descriptive statistical analysis I could observe that judges in the SM Awards are mainly woman that were born between 1985 and 1942. These women are usually selected to participate in the award aimed at young children, which matches their career, as most of them have a child-centred career. Almost all judges have a higher-education degree (bachelor's, master's, or PhD), which could indicate a high level of cultural capital. Furthermore, most of the judges studied in Mexico City at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. As most of the judges share a professional and academic background, it is likely that they will share similar dispositions and attitudes that could in turn shape how they judge the manuscripts. There is no representation from non-binary judges, judges from outside Mexico City, or judges that have no formal education (e.g. a judge that might have only studied until secondary school but could have a lot of experience working as a mediator).

4) What is the role of the publishing industry in the selection of the jury?

Also through the quantitative analysis I could prove that Ediciones SM has a certain amount of power in the jury. Data showed that there is a considerable number of judges that have a relationship with the publisher. This relationship is usually indirect, but it might still show that the publisher has a certain power in the whole prizing process. The data also allow us to see some of the mechanisms that the publisher uses to increase the prestige of the award, such as including judges that have already won the award, judges that specialize in children's literature on an academic level (e.g. having a master's degree in children's literature), or including judges from outside the children's literature field to legitimize the award.

Further research

This research was not meant to be exhaustive and explore all the different elements that come into play in the prizing process. This was a first step in the study of the relationships between children's literature awards in Mexico and the publishing industry, but further research is needed to better understand this phenomenon. As there are multiple awards that have similar relationships, it would be interesting to observe if the results from this study apply to other awards.

I focused on the first part of the prizing process: the selection of a winner. However, further research could be done in other stages of the process. For example, an interesting study could compare if the judges' comments about children's literature are actually reflected in the books that have won the SM Awards.

Empirical studies could also be conducted in order to understand how are the selected books received by children, so that we can explore if the criteria are actually useful for selecting texts that will appeal to children and young adults.

As mentioned before, due to the limits of this research I could not delve into intersectional issues such as sexuality and race. This research would improve the way we understand representation in Mexican children's literature.

Finally, as children's literature awards have an impact in the canonization processes (Kummerling-Meibauer 2017), research could be done about the impact of awards in the reception of the books (sales and critical reception), as well as the literary careers of the winners.

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APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview protocol

Research title: The Relationship Between the Publishing Industry and Literary Prizes in Mexican Children's Literature: A Case Study of the SM Awards El Barco de Vapor and Gran Angular (2008-2021)

Researcher: Roxana Aguilar Rivera

Supervisor: Dr. Melanie Ramdarshan Bold

Basic information about the interview

Name of the participant:	
Name of the interviewer:	
Date and time of the interview:	
File name of the transcription:	
File name of the recording:	

Introduction:

- Introduce interviewer.
- Introduce research.
- Explain what the purpose of the research is.
- Explain the structure of the interview.
- Confirm consent to the interview and to the recording.

Good morning/evening/afternoon. My name is Roxana Aguilar Rivera, student of the Erasmus Mundus International Master in Children's Literature Media and Culture from the University of Glasgow, Aarhus and Tilburg. Thank you for accepting to participate in this interview.

The purpose of this research aims to explore how the relationship between the publishing industry and the literary prizes in Mexico shape the prizing process and influence the type of books that are selected as winners. This research will generate insights into the criteria used to select the books, as well as the people who are represented throughout the process.

The interview will consist of x questions in which we will talk about your experience as a judge of the SM Awards. I will ask questions about the prizing process, the criteria for selection, and the relationships between different people involved in the process.

Before we start the interview, I would like to know if you have any questions. I would also like to confirm that you consent to have this interview recorded.

Questions:

1. Could you tell me a bit about yourself? (age, gender, education)
2. Could you tell me about your experience as a judge for the SM awards?
3. What criteria was used to judge the manuscripts?
4. Did you have any guidance from the organizers? (SM or the FLM)

5. What do you consider a "good book"?
6. Did you compare the manuscripts with other books that were popular at the time?
7. How do you interpret "good literary quality"?
8. Was it important that the books taught something? Do you prefer books that have a message?
9. What are some books that you consider as having high literary quality?sd

Closing instructions:

- Thank interviewee for their time.
- Assure participant about confidentiality.
- Ask if they have any questions.
- Inform that they will have access to the results.

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research. I would like to remind you that all the data gathered from this interview will be treated with confidentiality. Once the research is published, I will inform you so that you can have access to it if you so desire. Do you have any questions about the interview, your data, or the research?