

Bibliodiversity in subsidized translations: Women's writing and Argentina's PROSUR grants (2010-2022)

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ABSTRACT

In 2009, Argentina's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship launched Programa Sur (PROSUR), a translation subsidy programme, in order to promote Argentinian literature abroad. Since the interest in Argentinian women's writing is increasing transnationally, this article aims to consider the extent to which PROSUR supports and contributes to transnational bibliodiversity, more specifically to the presence of women's writing and gender equality in the literary sector. By analysing the discourse used by PROSUR, both online and in a personal interview, and by analysing the data on which publishing houses received grants for which authors, as well as works between 2010 and 2022, this article finds that PROSUR supports specific agents in the field that work to increase bibliodiversity, like independent publishers. Still, men's writing receives proportionally more grants than women's writing, although this gap has become smaller over the years, with women's writing surpassing men's in 2022. Moreover, the data also shows that a large number of applications are made for a small number of women who already had some visibility through national and international prizes, English translations, or film adaptations.

Keywords: women's writing, translation grants, Argentinian literature, bibliodiversity, women in translation

Bibliodiverziteteta subvencioniranih prevodov: literatura ženskih avtoric in argentinski program PROSUR (2010–2022)

IZVLEČEK

Leta 2009 je argentinsko Ministrstvo za zunanje zadeve, mednarodno trgovino in verstva uvedlo program subvencioniranja prevodov, Programa Sur (PROSUR), za promocijo argentinske literature v tujini. Ker v mednarodnem prostoru narašča zanimanje za literaturo argentinskih pisateljic, se prispevek osredotoča na vprašanje, v kolikšni meri PROSUR podpira transnacionalno bibliodiverziteteto, bolj natančno prisotnost literature, ki so jo napisale ženske avtorice, in spolno uravnoteženo zastopanost v literaturi, in prispeva k tej prisotnosti in spolni uravnoteženosti. Analiza diskurza, ki se uporablja v okviru programa PROSUR, tako v spletnem okolju kot v intervjujih v živo, in analiza podatkov o založbah, avtorjih in delih, ki so dobili subvencije PROSUR med letoma 2010 in 2022, pokažeta, da PROSUR podpira specifične akterje na tem področju, npr. neodvisne založnike, ki

delujejo v prid večje bibliodiverzitete. Kljub vsemu je več subvencij dodeljenih podpori avtorjev kot podpori avtoric, čeprav se z leti vrzel med spoloma manjša, pri čemer so leta 2022 avtorice prehitile avtorje. Podatki prav tako pokažejo, da je veliko število vlog vloženih za majhno število avtoric, ki so že dosegle večjo prepoznavnost kot prejemnice nacionalnih in mednarodnih nagrad, angleških prevodov ali filmskih adaptacij.

Ključne besede: literature ženskih avtoric, prevajalski projekti, argentinska literatura, bibliodiverziteteta, ženske v prevodu

1. Introduction

In 2009, Argentina's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship launched Programa Sur (PROSUR), a translation subsidy programme, in order to promote Argentinian literature abroad. Many Latin American countries, like Mexico, Chile, and Brazil, have such a programme, but the PROSUR initiative was a result of Argentina's presence as guest of honour at the 2010 Frankfurt Book Fair, which required the country to develop long-term plans to stimulate the translation of its literature (Szpilbarg 2017, 427). Since then, PROSUR has subsidized 1,708 translations into fifty languages with grants of up to 3,200 USD.¹ The lists of approved grants are available on the PROSUR website, which allows us to gain insight in how the subsidy programme contributes to the diversity of authors, works, and genres translated from Argentina.

Cultural diversity applied to the world of books is referred to as bibliodiversity, defined in the International Declaration of Independent Publishers as "a complex self-sustaining system of storytelling, writing, publishing and other kinds of production of oral and written literature" (International Alliance of Independent Publishers 2014, 4). Moreover, bibliodiversity is necessary to ensure "a thriving life of culture and a healthy eco-social system" (International Alliance of Independent Publishers 2014, 4). This definition underscores the societal dynamic behind literature as a system construed not only by authors and their thematic-stylistic concerns, but at least as much, if not more so, by editors, translators, publishers, public policy initiatives, and funding.

An important aspect of bibliodiversity is gender equality, as women writers have historically been discriminated against in the literary sector internationally, although they play a crucial role in diversifying and enriching the literary field (Gallego Cuiñas 2022, 77). The PROSUR initiative is a particularly valuable case study, given the public and academic interest in Argentina's contemporary women writers, whose

1 Up until 2022. The 2023 data was not available at the time of writing, because the grant applications were still being processed.

styles, genres, and themes of writing are fodder for celebration, literary criticism, and scholarship. When discussing the critical acclaim of women's writing in Argentina, it is important to consider the role of literary prizes, which consecrate literary prestige and give visibility to specific literary works (Gallego Cuiñas 2022, 5–6). If we look at contemporary novelists and short story authors like Claudia Piñeiro, Mariana Enríquez, and Samanta Schweblin, it seems that Argentinian, Latin American, and Spanish prizes led to foreign publishers' interest in translating the authors' work and, subsequently, prize-winning in translation. Claudia Piñeiro, for example, has won Argentinian prizes for her work (e.g., Premio Planeta Argentina and Premio Clarín de Novela), but also Latin American prizes (e.g., Premio Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz) before winning prizes in translation: she won the German LiBeraturpreis in 2010 and was an International Booker finalist in 2022 with *Elena Knows*, a novel that brings together crime fiction and abortion rights debate. Similarly, gothic horror writer Mariana Enríquez has mostly won prizes for her work in Spanish (as well as Spain-based prizes) before appearing on the International Booker shortlist. There are, however, many more women authors not yet as well-known to the larger transnational literary public, which may be due to the triple invisibility they are subjected to, which I will discuss later on in this article. Therefore, the aim of this article is to consider the extent to which PROSUR supports and contributes to transnational bibliodiversity, more specifically to the presence of women's writing and gender equality in the literary sector.

In what follows, I will summarize the previous scholarship on PROSUR and introduce the concept of triple invisibility, which marks the difficulties Argentinian women face in internationalizing their literary ambitions and publications. Subsequently, I will examine how in spite of these obstacles the status of some women writers is improving thanks to translation. Then I will discuss the status quo regarding bibliodiversity in Argentina and PROSUR's role in it, followed by descriptive data analysis of PROSUR data from the perspective of bibliodiversity and gender inequality in the literary field.

2. Previous research on subsidized *extraducción* in Argentina

The practice of *extraducción* (literary translation from Argentinian Spanish) increased by 35% after 2007, indicating that Argentina's position in the transnational literary field has changed significantly in recent decades (Añon 2014, 98–99). This increase is largely due to Argentina's presence as guest of honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair in 2010, which was attended by 7,539 exhibitors from 111 countries, along with 279,325 visitors over the course of five days (Dujovne and Sorá 2010, 2). This growth in visibility makes the question of gender even more pertinent, given that there are now more resources available to promote women's writing.

Daniela Szpilbarg studied the first PROSUR years (2010-2012) from a sociological perspective, analysing “the relationships between market, publishing and development of cultural policies”. Szpilbarg found that works chosen for translation are either part of the historical canon, or recent titles that have gained popularity through mass media like TV series. In spite of this corroboration of canonical works, PROSUR also contributes to the diversification of authors abroad (Szpilbarg 2017, 432). Camilla Cattarulla has studied PROSUR grants obtained by Italian publishing houses between 2010 and 2012 (Cattarulla 2012). As Szpilbarg’s article already indicated, there is a privileged relationship between PROSUR and Italian publishing. Cattarulla found that Italian publishing houses have made use of the programme to fund translations of literary works often related to political violence, dictatorship, and exile, but also more positive themes like migration and multicultural identity (Cattarulla 2012, 270–71). She concludes that the programme has stimulated an editorial interest in a Latin American reality that is not based on stereotypical representations (Cattarulla 2012, 271). Cecilia Noce also has focused on a specific translation flow, namely PROSUR’s limited yet valuable influence on East and Southeast Asia, arguing that the PROSUR programme should be continued and supplemented by other (private) initiatives in order to foster relations between literary markets in Asia and the rest of the world (Noce 2019).

As insightful as these studies have been for our comprehension of PROSUR’s relation to book markets outside of Argentina, many studies do not include data from the most recent years, which have been of vital importance for women’s writing in Argentina. In connection to this, none of the studies focused on the gender distribution of the approved PROSUR grants over the course of its existence, from 2009 until today. The analysis in this article hopes to contribute to bridging these temporal and gender gaps in the literature.

3. Triple invisibility

Argentinian women authors with international ambitions have to make a name for themselves within a system that still invisibilizes them on three levels, which are best considered in relation to each other. The first invisibility is caused by the secondary position of translation in the book market, especially in the Anglophone book market. Only around 3% of books published in English are translations (Anderson 2013; Heilbron 2010, 3). This number is exceptionally low in comparison to other European languages, which tend to devote a slightly higher percentage of their publications to translated literature. Johan Heilbron’s rule of thumb, at least for European literatures, is that the more peripheral the national language, the higher the share of translations

among published books: for French and German, between 12 and 18% of published books are translated; in Greece and Portugal the number of translations is almost one in three, and in the Netherlands the percentage of translation is 34% (with three out of four translations from English) (Heilbron 2010, 3–4).

Secondly, there is still an inequality when it comes to the publication of women writers. In the Anglophone book market it is estimated that only 26% of books published are authored by women (Anderson 2013). The present article focuses on *extraducción* into various languages, not just English, but the hegemonic position of English-language books and publishing houses has a substantial influence on the visibility of authors anywhere. Of course, gender as an isolated category does not suffice to investigate (biblio)diversity in cultural production. Gender is mostly valuable as an analytical tool when it is examined in combination with other factors such as class, race, and socioeconomic circumstances that influence one's position in society. In the case of the Argentinian literary field, interesting additions to the gender category are hegemonic positions of cultures, languages, and literatures, as well as notions of elitism and prestige. In other words, the secondary position of translation and the secondary position of women writers exacerbate inequality in the literary field, working against bibliodiversity.

The third invisibility has to do with the place these authors write from, namely Latin America. Although Spanish is a central language in international communication (De Swaan 2010, 57; Zlatnar Moe et al. 2019, 30), research has shown that when it comes to literature the number of Latin American authors read in Europe and North America in English translation is much lower, proportionally, than the other way around (Landers 1995, 254). Mapping the translation of books as a world-system, Heilbron found that more than 40% of published translations were translated from English while only one to three percent were translated from Spanish (which includes both Latin American and Iberian Spanish) (Heilbron 1999, 434). Although these numbers date from 1999 and the interplay between gender and translation of Latin American literature has not been studied in quantitative terms, the research mentioned in this section shows clearly that the odds are not in favour of Argentinian women who want to be read outside of Latin America.

The *extraducción* of Argentinian literature can be a way to map the fulfilment of the feminist potential of Argentinian women's writing, as "translation needs feminist activism as much as feminist activism needs translation" (Vassallo 2023, 14–15). General as this statement is, it can certainly not be applied to all kinds of feminist activism. Moreover, it would be a mistake to equate contemporary women's writing in Argentina with feminist literature. However, research in translation studies and the

sociology of translation can be considered a feminist practice, because in researching dissemination and translation flows it aims to uncover the deeply ingrained inequalities in the literary sector, while also looking for positive signs towards more equality.

4. Women's writing in Argentina, international recognition, and translation

In spite of the triple invisibility set out above, the phenomenon of contemporary Latin American and Argentinian women's writing has gained so much traction that scholars and readers alike have started to speak of a new "Boom" (Corroto 2017; Scherer 2021; Alonso Alonso 2019; Mackintosh 2022), in reference to the Boom from the 1960s and 1970s, which was male-dominated and characterized by a strong inclination towards magic realist narratives. Writers like Colombian Gabriel García Márquez, Argentinian Julio Cortázar, Peruvian Mario Vargas Llosa, and Mexican Carlos Fuentes became the main names associated with Latin American literature. Often these authors gained recognition through transnational publication contracts with publishing houses in Spain, but also in part thanks to translation into foreign languages. The work of contemporary Argentinian women authors often has a strong connection to feminist topics in the broad sense of the word, whether or not the authors in question refer to their own work as feminist: the literature they write depicts femicide, gender violence, intimate partner violence, sexual violence, the marginalization of sex workers or other types of gender inequality. We can thus speak of a certain thematic coincidence between the authors, although the authors themselves reject any common label (Lorenzo 2021).

Furthermore, we should acknowledge that there still is a discrepancy in terms of prominence between the old and the new Booms: even though these women authors are gaining popularity and recognition, there are no Nobel Prize winners among them as of yet, nor are they as synonymous with Latin American literature as Gabriel García Márquez is. Still, most years Latin American women are present on the long and short lists of international prizes, such as the International Booker Prize. Often, these Latin American women are Argentinian, what's more, the Argentinian titles tend to be the only titles translated from the Spanish among the nominees. Examples are novelist Ariana Harwicz with *Die, My Love* (International Booker Longlist 2018, translated by Sarah Moses and Carolina Orloff) and Samanta Schweblin's unsettling short story collection *Mouthful of Birds* (International Booker Shortlist 2019, translated by Megan McDowell). Schweblin and McDowell also appeared on the longlist in 2017 and the shortlist in 2020, when they were accompanied by Gabriela Cabezón Cámara with *The Adventures of China Irón* (translated by Iona Macintyre

and Fiona Mackintosh), which is a feminist rewriting of the nineteenth-century epic poem *El Gaucho Martín Fierro*. Mariana Enríquez was shortlisted in 2021 with the gothic horror stories of *The Dangers of Smoking in Bed* (translated by Megan McDowell) and Claudia Piñeiro in 2022 with *Elena Knows*. The International Booker nominations also lay bare the role of literary actors as well as book market politics: some of these works had already received Latin American prizes, such as *Pájaros en la boca* (translated as *A Mouthful of Birds*), which won the Premio de las Casas de las Américas in Cuba prior to publication. Interestingly, *Elena sabe* (translated as *Elena Knows*) won the LiBeraturpreis, a German prize for the best written by a woman in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East, in 2010, twelve years before the International Booker nomination. There was thus often already some kind of critical acclaim prior to submission for the International Booker. Moreover, works submitted to the International Booker have to comply with a number of conditions, such as already being published in the UK and Ireland. Moreover, self-published books are not eligible (The Booker Prizes 2023). In this way, the International Booker Prize favours those authors, works, and publishing houses who are already relatively established in the influential UK and Ireland book market.

Diego Lorenzo, coordinator of PROSUR, said that international prizes, along with film adaptations, are the biggest stimulating factor for other foreign publishing houses to submit an application for a PROSUR translation into a new language (Lorenzo 2023). This underscores the complex interplay between international recognition and translation: translation is a necessary condition to win an international prize, but translation is also often the result of such a prize. This interplay, in its turn, is evidence of how the dissemination of books functions according to the dynamics of an “eco-social system” (International Alliance of Independent Publishers 2014, 4).

5. Bibliodiversity in Argentina

Gallego Cuiñas has developed a scale to determine the degree of bibliodiversity in a certain context, which she applied to small and mid-size publishing houses in Latin America. Scholars like Gallego Cuiñas and Vassallo have argued that, as agents in the literary field, independent publishers play a crucial role in diversifying the sector and shaping its dynamics (Zlatnar Moe et al. 2019, 15). The PROSUR initiative draws attention to the fact that committees founding and organizing subsidy programmes are also such agents, who can thus have a hand in increasing bibliodiversity and shaping the literary field.

For her large-scale study on the behaviour and position of independent publishing houses and their symbolic capital, Gallego Cuiñas considered a range of factors, from

editorial lines to the publication of e-books (Gallego Cuiñas 2022, 93–159). In order to define the degree of bibliodiversity, she proposes four values that should be complied with (Gallego Cuiñas 2022, 92):

1. The publication of minor genres (as proposed by Deleuze and Guattari) and genres that are relatively unprofitable, like poetry, theatre, and essays. This should account for at least 30% of works published (Gallego Cuiñas 2022, 92).

2. The publication of works written by women should account for at least 40% of the total. This is a political act that shows commitment to equal and inclusive literary and editorial labour (Gallego Cuiñas 2022, 92).

3. The publication of new voices should account for at least 30%, because this contributes to making new aesthetics visible, next to authors who already have acquired symbolic capital and write according to what is in fashion (Gallego Cuiñas 2022, 93). However, this condition seems to ignore that debut writers can also be in vogue, for example because they were already public figures before they started writing, or because a debut work was highly successful.

4. The publication of translations should account for at least 30%, which shows commitment to cultural dialogue among languages (Gallego Cuiñas 2022, 93).

Gallego Cuiñas applied these values to the independent publishing scene in Argentina, which led to mixed conclusions: 75% of small publishers and 65% of mid-size publishers fulfil the condition of publishing at least 30% minor and unprofitable genres (Gallego Cuiñas 2022, 106), while 68% of small publishers and 65% of mid-size publishers publish at least 30% novice authors (Gallego Cuiñas 2022, 113), and unfortunately only 22% of small publishers and 35% of mid-size publishers publish 30% translations (Gallego Cuiñas 2022, 116). However, although they do not score well on the translation value, they are relatively gender equal: small publishers publish 47% women writers, and mid-size publishers 39% (Gallego Cuiñas 2022, 106). In total, 80% of the small publishers but only 65% of the mid-size publishers fulfil the condition of publishing at least 40% women writers (Gallego Cuiñas 2022, 111).

Gallego Cuiñas also looked at other practices of gender equality and inclusivity, and in that respect Argentinian publishing houses passed the test of egalitarian and inclusive politics with flying colours (Gallego Cuiñas 2022, 132–144). The vast majority of publishers include a gender focus in their editorial lines and have worked to close the gender gap in employment (Gallego Cuiñas 2022, 132–134). Moreover, more than half of the small and mid-size publishing houses work together with feminist associations (Gallego Cuiñas 2022, 137). In other words, the Argentinian independent publishing scene sets a good example for foreign publishing houses in this regard.

In a personal interview (Lorenzo 2023), Diego Lorenzo emphasized the role of independent publishers and stated that both he and many of the publishers he works with favour the term interdependent publishers, as they build and sustain networks together, with their own lines of communication and translation ideologies. The majority of the publishers applying for PROSUR grants are independent publishers, which means that they function according to a certain spirit of in(ter)dependence, rather than complying with a number of categories that define them as independent, like size. Lorenzo notes that these are the publishing houses that apply for grants in order to diversify their catalogue, striving to offer their readers a less commercial prospectus. Once again, different agents in the literary field, namely publishers, editors, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs enhance each other's work to improve bibliodiversity. In an Anglophone context, Lorenzo praised the role of Charco Press for its commitment to diverse catalogues. Charco Press, an Edinburgh-based publishing house focusing on Latin American literature in translation, launched its *2017 Bundle* catalogue with five books from Argentina, with work from two women, namely Ariana Harwicz and Gabriela Cabezón Cámara, and three men, namely Ricardo Romero, Luis Sagasti, and Jorge Consiglio (Charco Press 2017). The choice of five books from Argentina emphasizes that one country can offer a wide array of literary works, even when limited to a span of just seven years, since all five books were published between 2009 and 2016.

6. PROSUR and transnational dissemination of women's writing

The data analysed in this section is the data made available by PROSUR and includes the lists of grants awarded from 2010 to 2022. Due to the lack of a systematic overview of Argentinian *extraducción*, and a lack of complete translation databases in general, it is impossible to know whether the PROSUR lists provide an exhaustive overview of all the texts translated out of Argentina. However, Diego Lorenzo stated that even though he could not be completely certain, he believed that these lists are quasi-exhaustive, as the PROSUR decision committee almost never rejects applications and because most foreign publishing houses know of the programme's existence by now. Exceptions to this rule would be when two large publishing conglomerates sell translation rights to each other for amounts that are much higher than the average PROSUR grant (Lorenzo 2023). Following the logic of bibliodiversity as proposed by in(ter)dependent publishers as well as Helen Vassallo and Ana Gallego Cuiñas, such deals would be made on commercial and for-profit grounds, and not from a philosophy of diversity. In other words, even if the PROSUR data does not give an exhaustive overview of *extraducción* in Argentina, the database is still the most systematized index of that very phenomenon,

which is why the present study chooses for this database as a convenience sample. Other databases, such as the UNESCO Index Translationum, are incomplete, whereas the Translation Database from Open Letter Books and Three Percent only give an overview of translations in the US, as opposed to PROSUR, which shows a more comprehensive view of translation flows. Furthermore, the aim of this article is to map the role of a subsidy programme as an agent diversifying the book world, not to get an exhaustive overview of all books translated from Argentinian Spanish. In that sense it is also more useful than the incomplete and not very user-friendly UNESCO Index Translationum.

On the PROSUR website and regulation it says that they welcome texts of any genre, “by both classic and contemporary Argentine authors” (PROSUR Index). Indeed, the aim is “to foster the translation of culturally significant classic or contemporary literary works [...] which address topics that are representative of the national identity, as an effective means for international dissemination of the traditions, ideas and values of Argentina” (PROSUR Rules). This clearly underscores PROSUR’s interest in building a specific cultural and national image through *extraducción*. This is also illustrated by the fact that the work has to be written in Spanish, by a writer “who is an Argentine native or Argentine by naturalization, or who has been granted Argentine citizenship as a result of being the child of an Argentine parent” (PROSUR Rules).

When asked if the PROSUR committee also rejects applications, Lorenzo stated that PROSUR wants to offer support to as many publishing houses as possible, and refrain from making value judgments on the literary value of a work given that the programme is a public politics initiative. They do not select works based on quality, nor do they prioritize certain aesthetics. For these reasons, they only reject applications for translations of highly polemic authors. The only factor that significantly limits PROSUR is the budget, so they have a cap of 150 grants a year. If they really doubt the cultural or literary value of a work, they will usually still give a grant but not the full 3,200 USD, although a lower grant may also be due only to financial reasons (Lorenzo 2023).

While PROSUR gives grants for both classic and contemporary works, the top ten most translated authors contains a lot of twentieth-century writing:

1. Julio Cortázar (Boom novelist and short story writer, 1914-1984)
2. Jorge Luis Borges (pre-Boom author of short fiction and poetry, 1899-1986)
3. Roberto Arlt (author of novels, plays, and sketches, 1900-1942)
4. Ricardo Piglia (post-dictatorial novelist and hard-boiled fiction writer, 1941-2017)
5. Claudia Piñeiro (contemporary novelist and crime fiction writer, playwright, and screenwriter, 1960-...)

6. César Aira (contemporary novelist and translator, 1949-...)
7. Juan José Saer (novelist and essayist, 1937-2005)
8. Samanta Schweblin (contemporary novelist and short story writer, 1978-...)
9. Mariana Enríquez (contemporary novelist and journalist, 1973-...)
10. Adolfo Bioy Casares (pre-Boom novelist and short story writer, 1914-1999)

Not only does the top ten include seven men and three women, but all of these men also published (most of) their oeuvre in the twentieth century, as opposed to the women, who entered the book market after the change of the millennium. This suggests that the Argentinian literary field is not only defined by the dominance of male writers, but also by the popularity of twentieth-century literature. These two aspects are, of course, related: in the twentieth century, many more male writers had access to the profession of author in comparison to women, which may have to do with women's lower access to education at the time and, subsequently, the low percentage of women in higher education (Palermo 2006, 41), as opposed to the twenty-first century, when the majority of university students in Argentina are women (Kisilevsky and Veleza 2002, 35; Palermo 2006, 42). In other words, in the Argentinian literary field the temporal axis is actually linked to women's invisibility: this top ten suggests that it became easier for women to publish and be recognized as an author in the twenty-first century, which may be due to the range of activist and political initiatives of the past decades that have contributed to a more equal Argentina. Moreover, it also shows that, retrospectively, women authors are still being erased from literary history: not only did they have less chance of being published, but those who did publish have not obtained a prestigious place in the timeless canon of Argentinian literature.

The website states that the PROSUR programme was launched in 2009, but the first data available dates from 2010. This means that they started advertising the programme and accepting submissions for review in 2009 for which they paid the first grants in 2010. There is a separate list of grants per year, with the exception of 2015 and 2016, which appear as one year in the data. When this study was conducted in the summer of 2023, the latest available data was from 2022. The graphs that follow look at the division of applications for men's and women's writing. However, the graphs also include the label 'other', which comprises a number of categories: to refer to works written by at least one man and one woman,² or to works written under a pseudonym. An example of the latter is Sauli Lostal, an Argentinian author whose

2 All the authors in the PROSUR database self-identify as one of these two genders at the time of conducting this study.

identity has as not yet been discovered, although there are rumours that it might be the pen of a certain Luis A. Stallo, and the literary magazine *Letralia* at one point even implied that the author might be Borges, an assertion which *Letralia* quickly withdrew after criticism (Gayubas 2005). 'Other' also refers to works of which there is no information on the contributors available online except for the description 'autores varios [various authors]' in the PROSUR data. This is often the case for anthologies created for publication outside of Argentina. Together, the 'other' category accounts for 29 out of 1,708 grants or 1.7%.

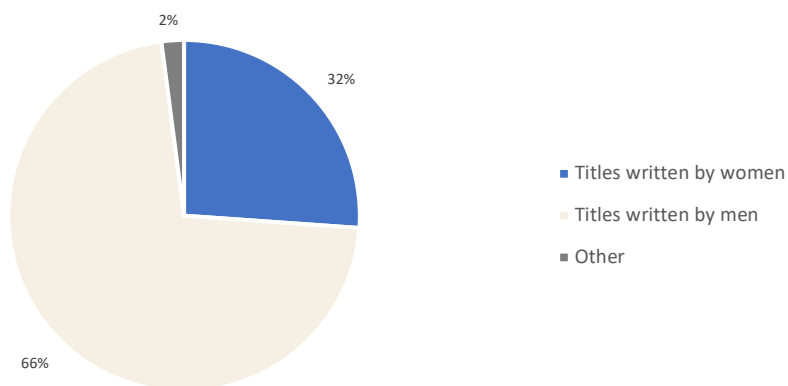


Figure 1: PROSUR grants 2010-2022.

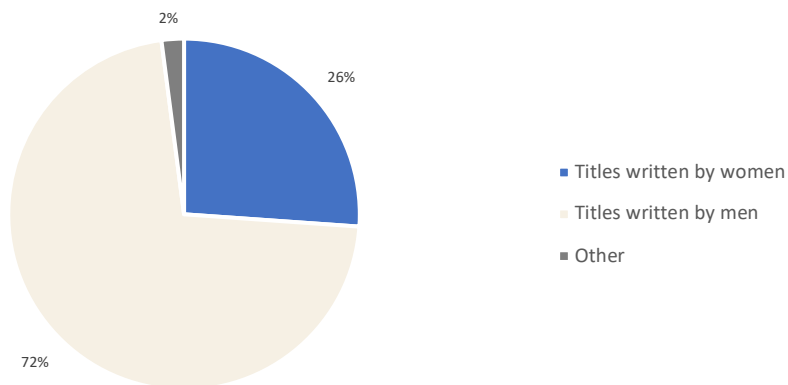


Figure 2: PROSUR grants 2010.

Out of 1,708 grants awarded between 2010 and 2022, 1,127 or 66% were awarded for works written by men, and 552 or 32% for works by women (Figure 1). This means

that the gender inequality has diminished slightly since the first year of the PROSUR programme, when the gender discrepancy was even larger, with 71.8% for men's writing, or 209 out of 291 grants (Figure 2).

A closer look at the evolution of the subsidies' gender distribution reveals that literature written by men has the upper hand until 2022. The coming years will reveal whether the increase in subsidies for women's writing in 2022 was an exception, or if this will become a lasting tendency as a result of sustained international editorial interest in Argentina's women authors (Figure 3).

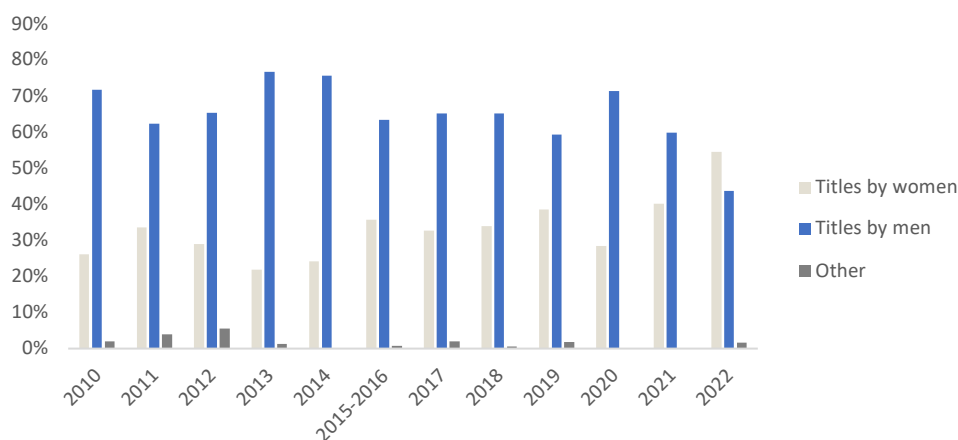


Figure 3: Evolution of gender distribution in PROSUR grants 2010-2022.

Figure 3 shows that PROSUR actually does not fulfil the bibliodiversity condition of publishing women, but there are signs of improvement: in 2021 and 2022, 40.1% and 54.6% of the PROSUR grants went to women's writing, respectively. In 2022, the grants for translations of titles written by women outnumbered the grants for men's writing for the first time. Out of 119 grants, 65 or 54% were for titles written by women, 52 grants or 44% were for those written by men, and 2% were for those written by 'other'. The grants were given to works by 43 different women authors, which means that for a few authors multiple grants were given. Among the authors whose work received two grants are twentieth-century authors like Silvia Molloy, Alejandra Pizarnik, Ana María Shua, Silvina Ocampo, and Luisa Valenzuela, and Hebe Uhart. Others are newer to the literary scene: Lucía Puenzo, Ana Basualdo, Mariana Travacio, Tamara Tenenbaum, and Mariana Sánchez. The authors whose work received three grants are mostly contemporary authors who published the majority of their works after the turn of the millennium: Samanta Schweblin (born 1978), Mariana Enríquez (born 1973), Ariana Harwicz (born

1977), and Claudia Piñeiro (born 1960), with one exception to the rule being Aurora Venturini (1922-2015).

If we look at target languages, we see that the most popular is Italian, with 322 titles or 18.9% of PROSUR grants. The rest of the top five consists of English (180 titles), French (171 titles), Portuguese (163 titles), and German (149 titles). Although English is not the target language to receive the most grants, its influence on the transnational literary field should not be underestimated, as not only native speakers of English but also many others read English translations, often because there is no (recent) translation available or accessible in their own, smaller language. Between 2010 and 2022, 180 titles were translated into English with PROSUR subsidies. As I already mentioned, the nominations of Argentinian women writers for prizes like the International Booker illustrate the Anglophone readership's appreciation of their writing, and the PROSUR data shows that their interest reaches beyond the fraction of the literature that makes it onto those prestigious lists. In other words, Figure 4 shows that these nominations are part of a larger tendency of recognizing and disseminating women's writing.

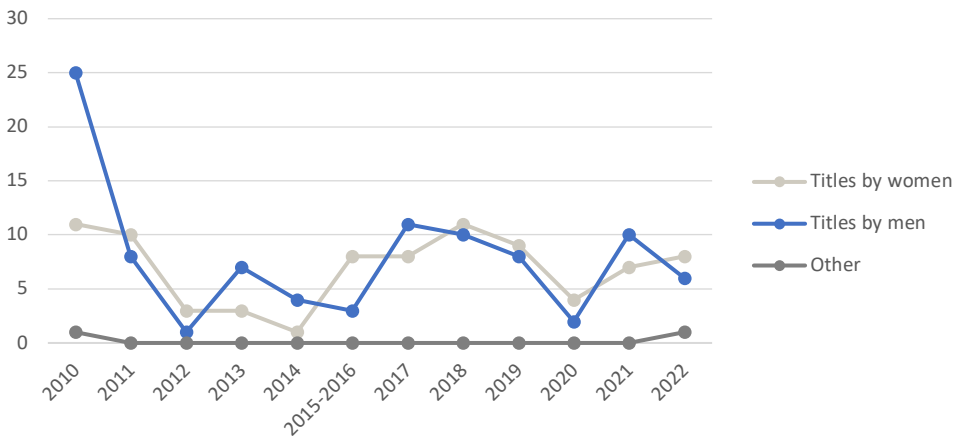


Figure 4: Grants for English translations of titles by women and titles by men.

English subsidized translations from Argentina do not exacerbate gender inequality in the transnational literary field. Excluding the first year (2010), subsidies for women's and men's writing are relatively balanced, as the subsidies are similar in quantity, with the higher number alternating between men's and women's writing most years. In 2022, when more women's titles were translated than men's overall, this was also the case for the translation into English.

The most popular target language is Italian, with 322 titles between 2010 and 2022. This is perhaps more surprising than having English in the top five, and it is unknown why Italian publishers submit so many PROSUR applications. There is no scholarship on the relation between the Italian book market and publishing translations as of yet, underscoring once again the need for more research on the sociology of translation, but there may be commercial reasons for this, or it may have to do with the privileged role of literature in Italian culture. It may also be due to a specific interest in foreign literature, or with the fact that a large number of Italians immigrated to Argentina, establishing a privileged relationship between the two countries.

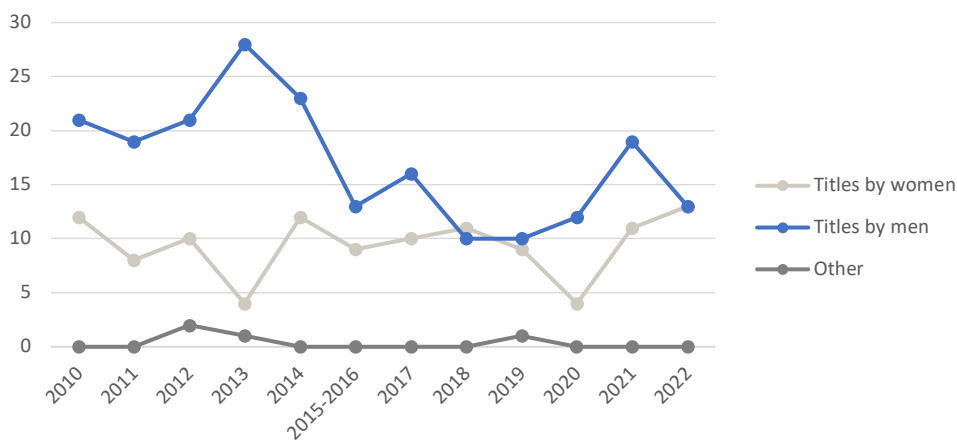


Figure 5: Grants for Italian translations of titles by women and titles by men.

As opposed to the relatively equal gender distribution among the English grants, the grants for Italian translations show a stark gender inequality. Overall, Italian publishing houses are clearly more likely to apply for men's writing than women's, with the exceptions of 2022 and 2018, when literature written by women received exactly the same and a slightly higher number of grants, respectively.

French publishing houses received 171 PROSUR grants between 2010 and 2022. Similar to Anglophone publishers' applications, the gender inequality is mostly visible at the start of the subsidy programme in 2010. Afterwards, men's writing remains more popular than women's writing, but the discrepancy diminishes, except in 2020 when no grants were awarded for French translations of women's writing. Moreover, in line with the general tendency, in 2022 women's writing received more grants than men's. The fourth language in the top five of languages to receive most grants is Portuguese, with 163 subsidized titles to date. Here, it is interesting to note that 83% of grants go to Brazilian publishers and only 17% to Portuguese publishing houses.

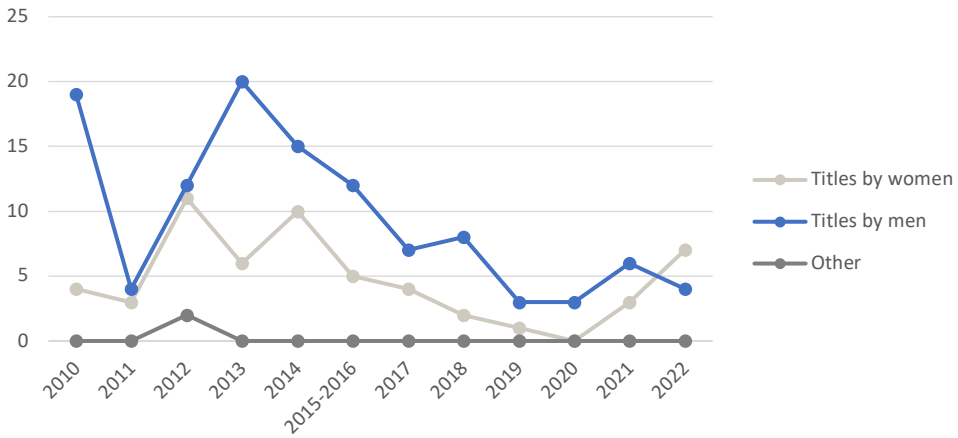


Figure 6: Grants for French translations of titles by women and titles by men.

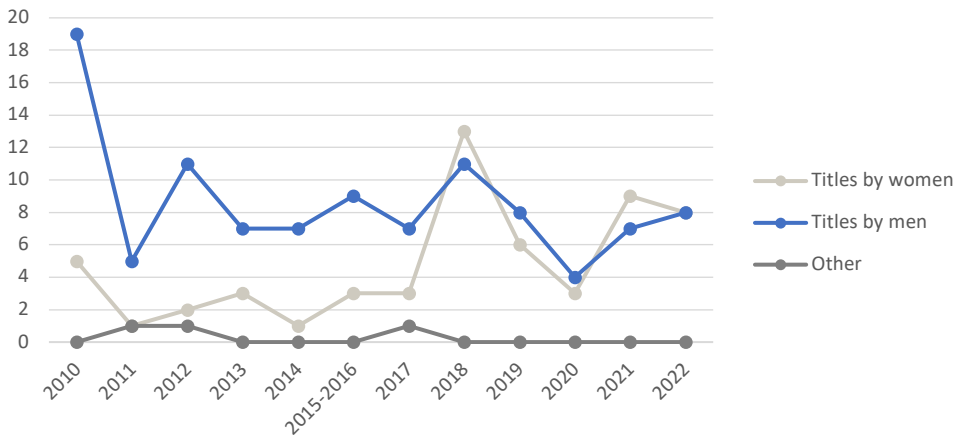


Figure 7: Grants for Portuguese translations of titles by women and titles by men.

The grants awarded to Lusophone publishing houses follow a tendency similar to the Italian for the first half decade: a big discrepancy in the first year, and a diminishing yet continuous inequality during the following years. However, in 2018, the Lusophone publishing houses are the first to favour women’s writing, together with the Italians, although men’s writing is more popular in the years after that. The years 2021 and 2022, however, show a positive tendency for women’s writing, in line with the other languages in the top five. The final language in the top five is German, with 149 PROSUR-subsidized titles between 2010 and 2022. However, 52% of all subsidies for German were awarded in 2010, the year that Argentina was guest of honour at the Frankfurter Book Fair. In other words, the number of awards

applied for and granted in 2010 is not representative of German publishers' interest in Argentinian literature.

In 2010, German publishers translated 51 titles written by men as opposed to 23 titles written by women. In the years after that, the numbers dropped significantly, with every year between one and seven grants for men's writing. In spite of such low numbers, men's writing continues to dominate (if only slightly) in the majority of years, with women's writing receiving between zero and six grants. However, in 2015-2016 and 2022 PROSUR gave an equal number of grants for works by both genders. In 2021, like the Lusophone translations, women's writing was translated more often, with three grants for women's writing as opposed to one for men's.

It is also interesting to look at the women writers for whom publishing houses submit most PROSUR applications and how this trend evolves over the years. Six authors have been translated more than ten times with help from PROSUR. Since 2010, foreign publishing houses have received 34 grants to translate Claudia Piñeiro, 21 for Samanta Schweblin, 19 for Mariana Enríquez, 14 for both Ana María Shua and Luisa Valenzuela, with between zero and three grants a year. Thirteen grants were given for Silvina Ocampo's work, ranging between zero and four a year.

Piñeiro is the only Argentinian woman writer PROSUR has received applications for every year without exception, even if some years the number of applications was higher than others. For example, in 2010 PROSUR awarded six grants to translate her work, whereas in 2021 they only awarded one. Still, the contrast with the most popular (pre-Boom or Boom) male writers remains stark: in 2010, PROSUR also awarded fourteen grants for Borges and seven for Cortázar. If we look at the most popular 'Piñeiro years', which are 2010 (six grants), 2012 (five grants) and 2015-16 (five grants), we see that the applications are for both new and older publications. In 2010, the first PROSUR year, there were four grants for *Las viudas de los jueves* (2005), which was made into a film in 2009 (and it also won the Premio Clarín de Novela in 2005). *Elena sabe* (2006) received two grants, whereas *Las grietas de Jara* (2009), her most recent publication at the time, received none. In 2012, on the other hand, three out of five grants were given for her 2011 publication *Betibú*, one for *Las grietas* and one for her debut novel *Tuya* (2005). In 2015-16, one grant went to her debut, two to *Las viudas* and two to *Una suerte pequeña*, which she published just that year in 2015. In 2022 all three Piñeiro grants were awarded for *Elena sabe*, a novel with feminist tendencies on motherhood, reproductive rights, and suicide, the English translation of which, by Frances Riddle, was shortlisted for the International Booker Prize in 2022. Moreover, in February 2022 Netflix announced that they would be shooting a film adaptation of the novel (Mango 2023). In this way *Las viudas* and *Elena sabe*

underscore Lorenzo's point that prizes and film adaptations increase interest in a work transnationally and lead to more translations (Lorenzo 2023).

The next most popular female author is Samanta Schweblin, who was translated with PROSUR subsidies in most of the years examined in this study. However, the interest in her work is far from stable, with six grants in 2019 and none the year after. In 2018 she published the novel *Kentukis*. That year, neither of the two PROSUR grants given for Schweblin's work was for *Kentukis*, although this is likely because it was published late in the year, when the PROSUR application round had already closed. However, while the 2019 English translation made it onto the International Booker longlist in 2020, this novel about technology and our obsession with online connection did not account for a high number of grants in 2019, as it only attracted the attention of Gallimard in France and Onufri Publishing in Albania. Schweblin's other 2019 grants went to a variety of other works: *Pájaros en la boca* (2009), *Distancia de rescate* (2014), and *Siete casas vacías* (2015).

Mariana Enríquez, who entered the literary field in 1995 with *Bajar es lo peor*, has been a fixture for PROSUR since the beginning, with anywhere between one and three grants most years. Nevertheless, in 2021 she was the second most popular PROSUR writer, with five grants, only surpassed by César Aira, with seven grants. This may be a result of Enríquez' place on the International Booker shortlist with *The Dangers of Smoking in Bed* the same year, a short story collection about violence, poverty, sexual transgressions, and the collective trauma of a country. However, only one application that year is for the translation of *Los peligros de fumar en la cama* (translated as *The Dangers*), into Hungarian. One grant went to Enríquez's other short story collection, *Las cosas que perdimos en el fuego*, and three to her novel *Nuestra parte de noche* (2019). The English translations of her popular works like *Los peligros de fumar en la cama* and *Nuestra parte de noche* are examples of translations that happened without PROSUR's financial support, as there is no account of grants for English translations of these works in the database. So even without including English translations, Enríquez remains one of PROSUR's most translated authors. Both English translations are published by the imprint Granta Books, a publishing house which publishes around 30 titles a year and has published 27 Nobel laureates (Granta). Like Faber & Faber, they are member of the UK Independence Alliance, an alliance "of UK publishers and their international partners who share a common vision of editorial excellence, original, diverse publishing, innovation in marketing and commercial success" (The Independent Alliance). So although they explicitly state they strive for independent publishing, they also cite commercial success as one of the pillars of their philosophy, which goes against the very idea of independent publishing for many scholars and

in(ter)dependent publishers alike (cf. Vassallo 2023; Gallego Cuiñas 2022). In other words, even if Granta considers themselves independent, they are vastly different from small-scale non-for-profit publishing houses and have much larger translation and marketing budgets thanks to bestselling authors (like multiple Nobel Prize winners), which may explain in part why they did not apply for a PROSUR grant.

7. Conclusion

The analysis has shown how PROSUR contributes to the promotion of women's writing and the international readership of these authors, in this way enhancing bibliodiversity in the transnational literary field. As mentioned previously, Argentinian publishers do well on the bibliodiversity scale, especially when it comes to women's writing. However, considering PROSUR's workings over the years, we see that on average only 32% of their grants go to women's writing. While this indicates PROSUR does not fulfil the bibliodiversity condition of publishing women, there are signs of improvement: in 2021 and 2022, 40.1% and 54.6% of the grants were given for women's writing, respectively. The target language that most uses PROSUR grants for bibliodiverse aims is English: although notorious for not publishing many translations, the gender disparity is much smaller among the applications from Anglophone publishing houses than from other languages, like Italian.

While PROSUR can encourage translations of contemporary women's writing when they receive applications for it, the responsibility lies with foreign publishing houses to actually submit those applications. In this way, PROSUR underscores the role of different, albeit interdependent, agents in the literary field: PROSUR can enable in(ter)dependent publishing houses to publish more Argentinian women writers, but only if those publishers are also committed to diversifying their catalogue. PROSUR also encourages bibliodiversity in a different way, namely through the Key Titles project, which also deserves the attention of those interested in the sociology of translation. PROSUR's "little brother" (Lorenzo 2023) is a catalogue displaying a selection of 25 to 28 literary works to increase bibliodiversity and showcase current tendencies in the Argentinian literary scene to foreign publishing houses.

As Diego Lorenzo stated, young women writers are now gaining traction. Indeed, all women authors in the PROSUR top ten started publishing after the millennium. What the top three most 'applied for' women authors have in common is not only their age but also the themes they write about, as their writing is often concerned with types of inequality: they frequently narrate gender inequality, but also socioeconomic vulnerability and racism. The fact that they are so popular in translation is indicative of

the transnational resonance of the social problems they narrate. The high proportion of PROSUR grants in 2021 and 2022 might have set the tone for further dissemination, but it is now up to PROSUR, book fairs, literary prizes, and publishers to foster this transnational interest across languages and cultures.

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