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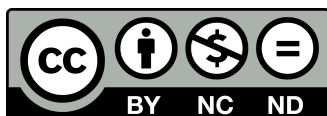
Bachelor Thesis

“The transmediality of Formula 1: analysis of its
consequences from a female audience viewpoint
and their engagement and influence in a globalised
media event”

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Getafe, June 2025



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ABSTRACT

The following work focuses on testing the established hypothesis that the transformation of Formula 1 into a transmedia universe has had a significant impact on female audiences. For this, a literature review was conducted, combined with qualitative and quantitative methodologies, including interviews and surveys. The results were positive, with the majority of activities requiring participation being predominantly performed by women. This, in turn, has led to a change in the structure of the universe, with other initiatives initiated and the expansion of the sport taking place.

Keywords: Formula 1, transmedia, audiences, women

RESUMEN

El siguiente trabajo se centra en comprobar la hipótesis establecida de que la transformación de la Fórmula 1 en un universo transmedia ha tenido mucho impacto en las audiencias femeninas. Para ello se ha llevado a cabo el método de la revisión de literatura ligado a metodologías cualitativas y cuantitativas que incluyen entrevistas y encuestas. El resultado ha sido positivo, con la mayoría de las actividades que demandan participación siendo mayoritariamente ejercidas por mujeres, lo que ha llevado a su vez un cambio en la estructura del universo, con otras iniciativas iniciadas y dando lugar a la expansión del deporte.

Palabras clave: Fórmula 1, transmedia, audiencias, mujeres

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INTRODUCTION AND JUSTIFICATION

Female audiences in sports have increased considerably in recent years, as a consequence of the changing media landscape and the transmedia consolidation of products that include sporting events. This comprises, among others, Formula One, which is considered as the pinnacle of motorsports. According to Heath Foster (2024) in *Beyond the Finish Line: An Analysis of Formula 1 Qualifying and Points Systems on Worldwide Audience Engagement*, it “dominates the hierarchy of professional racing as the pinnacle of speed, driver, talent and engineering. The multi-billion-dollar industry, with hundreds of millions of unique viewers, is partially dependent on the public’s perception of competitiveness during the racing season” (p. 1). A season usually consists of twenty-something races: in the case of 2025, a total of 24. The whole race weekend, on the other hand, receives the name of Grand Prix, deriving from the French.

Figure 1

Calendar for the 2025 season of Formula 1



The image is a graphic calendar for the 2025 Formula 1 season. It features the F1 logo at the top left and the text "2025 CALENDAR" in large white letters. Below this, there are two columns of race information. Each race is represented by a red box with a white flag icon, a number (R1 to R24), and the race details. A small note at the top right says "RACE ON SATURDAY". A purple box at the bottom right indicates a "SAT RACE".

Race Number	Date	Country	Circuit
R1	14-16 MAR	Australia	Melbourne
R2	21-23 MAR	China	Shanghai
R3	04-06 APR	Japan	Suzuka
R4	11-13 APR	Bahrain	Sakhir
R5	18-20 APR	Saudi Arabia	Jeddah
R6	02-04 MAY	USA	Miami
R7	16-18 MAY	Italy	Imola
R8	23-25 MAY	Monaco	Monaco
R9	30 MAY-01 JUN	Spain	Barcelona
R10	17-19 JUN	Canada	Montreal
R11	27-29 JUN	Austria	Spiegelberg
R12	04-06 JUL	United Kingdom	Silverstone
R13	25-27 JUL	Belgium	SPA
R14	01-03 AUG	Hungary	Budapest
R15	23-31 AUG	Netherlands	Zandvoort
R16	05-07 SEP	Italy	Monza
R17	19-21 SEP	Azerbaijan	Baku
R18	03-05 OCT	Singapore	Singapore
R19	17-19 OCT	USA	Austin
R20	24-26 OCT	Mexico	Mexico City
R21	07-09 NOV	Brazil	Sao Paulo
R22	20-22 NOV	USA	Las Vegas
R23	28-30 NOV	Qatar	Lusail
R24	05-07 DEC	Abu Dhabi	Yas Marina

Source: F1 Instagram page

The standard structure followed is simple: three practice sessions distributed between the first two days, where different setups are analyzed and where the car is prepared; a qualifying session on Saturday, which establishes the starting grid for the race by attempting to set the fastest lap; and the race on Sunday, which becomes the main event of a Grand Prix and is the decisive moment in scoring points and climbing in the Championships (if we leave aside Sprint weekends). Regarding the latter, there are two ongoing competitions all season: the Constructors Championship and the Drivers Championship. In the first, all 10 current teams (from 2026 the number is set to change, with new teams entering the field) compete to take first place, while the 20 drivers that constitute those teams also compete to get crowned World Champion.

Similar to other mainstream sports, like could be the case of football, broadcasting plays a huge role in its expansion. Journalist Will Buxton (2024), with decades of experience in the sector, talks about the coverage of these events in his book *Grand Prix: An Illustrated History of Formula 1*:

One of Formula 1's biggest responsibilities is creating a live global television feed of every race weekend. Formula 1 negotiates broadcast deals with networks around the world along with their accreditation. Formula 1 also started its own digital television network F1 TV, in the late 2010s, and alongside this there is a comprehensive digital division that creates one of the world's fastest-growing and most-followed sources of sports digital and social media content (Buxton, 2024).

This needs to be linked with the transmedia aspect coined by Henry Jenkins in 2003, allowing to maintain the experience but also expand it. The topic is further discussed in the theoretical frame of the following work and its initial analysis, but although television remains as the primary medium where the races are covered and transmitted to the audiences, “individuals, including well-known professionals, amateur athletes, and fans use social media platforms to enhance their personalized and sometimes marginalized approaches to sports, including female perspectives” (Sandvoss & Ball, 2018; Toffoeletti et al., 2019).

It is the statement provided above the one used to conduct the study presented to the reader. According to Garry Whannel (2002) in *Reading the sports media audience*, “of the 40 percent of women recorded amongst the typical sports audience, we have very

little evidence as to the proportion of them who are active and selective viewers” (p. 221). This percentage is also accomplished in Formula 1: at the end of the 2024 season a study by Nielsen Sports was released, showing the data regarding audience. The results included a mention of the huge growth of the sport’s viewership in recent years, achieving a total of 750 million viewers and becoming the most popular sport annually. Additionally, they argue that “the core growth area for fans is coming from the female demographic. Women now comprise 41% of the total fan base for Formula 1, with 16-24-year-old demo the fastest growing age sector” (Brown, 2024).

Therefore, Whannel’s introductory point is proven, yet no data is shown regarding the engagement with the sport itself, with the only extracted statistics making possible the reference to the attendance to a Grand Prix. Yet many variables should be considered in that scenario, and the study of the segregation of the attendees would not be a representation of the reality and the actual involvement of the viewers in F1, but rather a matter of economy and status. Because of this, there is an emphasis on exploring the engagement of the female audience in the transmedia ecosystem of Formula 1, moving beyond the traditional passive spectatorship to the active participatory culture characteristic of current times:

The concept of the active audience, so controversial two decades ago, is now taken for granted by everyone involved in and around the media industry. New technologies are enabling average consumers to achieve, annotate, appropriate and recirculate media content. Powerful institutions and practices are being redefined by a growing recognition of what is to be gained through fostering—or at least tolerating—participatory culture (Jenkins, 2006, p.1).

The justification of the topic comes from the lack of research studies that actually show the role taken by women in the consolidation and expansion of Formula 1, in a context where the feminist theories take a turn in the current timeline that is unfortunately still characterized by the experience of struggles and stereotypes in society. An article written by Katelyn Esmonde (2018), *‘That’s Not the Only Reason I’m Watching the Game’: Women’s (Hetero)Sexual Desire and Sports Fandom* deals with some of these issues. In the introduction, and deriving from the research of diverse papers, she

explains how “despite their growing cultural and economic presence¹, scholars have noted the stereotypical assumptions women sports fans routinely experience” (Esmonde, 2018, p. 498). There, she focuses on the ‘heterosexuality’ of female audiences in watching men in sports, which is a topic that remains presumed yet is only applied to female audiences regarding male sports and not male audiences in regards to female sports. Other notions such as the inclusion of ‘dumber’ approaches or the lack of full understanding of the sport are clear representations of the drawbacks society keeps on experiencing, where feminist theories enter the scene in order to attack degrading ideas like those.

By conducting a survey and analyzing some of the characteristics, the presence of the female audiences is highlighted and represented, and also the reality behind those. With most of the changes deriving majorly from recent years with aspects like the adaptation to a transmedia universe, the analysis focuses on sustaining how the activity of these female audiences, that comes predominantly from transformations like the one mentioned, remains crucial in the preservation and extension of a major and global sport like Formula 1.

Alongside this, there is a personal interest materialized in the thesis: as part of the female audience myself, I see it necessary to discuss the topic and contact with other women to not only have my point of view and theoretical references, but to also be able to make an actual analysis that involves this gender. The female perspective and our contribution through a transmedia proposal makes the sport each time more accessible and global, and attracts audiences that may vary from the ones decades earlier. This work, therefore, is destined to the motorsports viewers, especially to the followers of Formula 1. Whether a professional, an aspiring one or simply a viewer or fanatic, the research covers without exclusion the different responses provided. As part of the Communications and Media investigations, it deals with the topic beyond the simple inclusion of gender inside the sport but also from a point of view that has yet to be studied in depth.

¹ This has further been explained by Esmonde as “women make up increasingly large proportions of fan bases of the most popular spectator sports in (...) and are recognized as a viable marketing segment” (Esmonde, K., 2018, p. 498)

DELIMITATION OF THE OBJECT OF STUDY

The research question covered focuses on the consequences from a female viewpoint perspective of the transmediality adopted by Formula 1, related to technological and sociocultural changes.

The analysis of these audiences is done after developing an extraction of the survey results completed in April 2025. The questionnaire provided to the masses is directed to both men and women in order to establish a comparative, as the hypothesis sustained below considers the female gender as more proactive than the male one. On the other hand, it does not exclude any race, age nor profession, meaning it covers a huge range of people involved in the motorsport category. However, it should be noted that most of the respondents remain to be young audiences from 18 to 30 years old, as they are the main users interacting and engaging with others. This reiterates in the interviews, with different profiles yet similar ages. Social media therefore plays a huge role, hence the focus on recent years, with the transmedia term only being coined in 2003.

With Formula 1 constituted as a global media event and with a continued growth and impact, the analysis attempts to be a veridic and varied source while also offering a generalized audience response. Despite this, the sample of people included in this research does not constitute for the entirety of the population, so bear in mind that small variations can be established.

On the other hand, be aware that this study does not focus on an analysis of the presence of women competing in the industry, although mentions to the Formula 1 Academy thanks to recent changes can be useful when dealing with related topics. Still, this isn't the focus of the research, nor other women gaining a place in the industry. Despite being important, there are already other papers that focus on the growing inclusion and the role of women in motorsports, be it from an optimistic or pessimistic point of view.

The analysis, therefore, relies strictly on the audience part, but seeing them as active agents in the transmedia context. This, furthermore, can have its own consequences and impact, which can include what has been mentioned in the previous paragraph. Covering a big variety of countries and backgrounds, this work aims to be a referential point for future research.

HYPOTHESIS AND OBJECTIVES

Hypothesis

The transmediality of Formula 1 in recent years has not only caused changes regarding its form but also in regards to the way the sport is consumed. It is a reality that women's audience has now increased considerably, and viewers have become active. It is also true that in what is now a more equal audience, there is a predominance of women involved in the interaction and engagement with the Formula 1 community, further expanding what is already a very popular sport.

To prove this hypothesis, the starting point takes into consideration the pinnacle of motorsports as a whole transmedia universe itself, to then follow up with several questions in order to provide an answer for the consequences this phenomenon has had. This is done by reading into Henry Jenkins or Carlos A. Scolari's ideas to establish the relationship between the transmedia character and the growth of female audiences.

Objectives

The main objective of this work is:

- To analyse and highlight the existence of the female audiences in Formula 1, debating their role in shaping the expansion of the motorsport category.

In order to achieve this, there are several questions that need to be addressed in the following study:

- What can be said about the media reception of the sport and its segregation in gender?
- What are the common traits, habits and struggles female audiences share inside the Formula 1 community?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Culture Industry and Mass Media Theory

The antecedents of the topics discussed in this work come from the early 20th Century, with the concept of culture industry being coined by the Frankfurt School. This, also known as the Institute of Social Research, was founded by a series of Marxist theorists in the year 1923, with their ideas becoming very influential and being discussed and reused by other authors over the decades:

Some of its core issues involve the critique of modernities and of capitalist society, the definition of social emancipation and the perceived pathologies of society. Critical theory provides a specific interpretation of Marxist philosophy and reinterprets some of its central economic and political notions such as commodification, reification, fetishization and critique of mass culture (Corradetti, 2017, p. 1).

Some of the authors that can be found behind those ideas include critical theorists from the first generation, like Theodor Adorno (1903-1969) or Max Horkheimer (1895-1973), who developed the idea of culture industry in the 1930s. In their book *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, published in 1947, there's a chapter dedicated solely to the idea of culture industry, where the authors make a critique of it by expressing that "culture is no longer a relatively autonomous realm of meaning (that might aim, at its best, at beauty, freedom and truth) or source of critical awareness, but is thoroughly commodified by the 'distraction factories' of the culture industry" (Celikates & Flynn, 2023). In other words, cultural products become standardized and popular, and are subjected to a profit-system that searches on simply providing entertainment to the masses. However, "not only the standardized mode of production of the culture industry makes the individual illusory in its products. Individuals are tolerated only as far as their wholehearted identity with the universal is beyond question (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1947, p. 124). This reinforces some values like consumerism or mainstream content, with the 'commercialization' of culture being easily attributed to sports, as analysed by Selami Özsoy in his paper *Sport and Sport Media as a Culture Industry Product* (2018). He covers the concept of the Frankfurt School, talking about how "sport is the first area in which capitalism can deepen its hold on society and renew it" and how "by being transmitted to the masses via the media, sports are now a part of this shallow culture"

(Özsoy, 2018, p. 179). Formula 1, considered as one of the elite sports, if not the most, poses important questions regarding its consideration as a culture industry. As Adorno and Horkheimer argue, “masses have become objects that are shaped by culture, not the ones creating culture” (Özsoy, 2018, p. 180). Although true, the expansion of F1 as an expensive and global entertaining experience can also raise several questions involving its transmedia nature, to the point of possibly challenging the original notions established by the Frankfurt School.

To moreover expand the topic, the idea of mass media has been mentioned several times. Authors like Peter Sorlin dedicate entire books to discuss this, as done in *Mass-Media*, published for the first time in 1994. Despite an initial introduction that establishes an imprecise definition, he too defines the antecedents of Marxism as a relevant point in media studies, and talks about the concept of mass media as an awkward expression present in our everyday lives. However, the importance of it is not as focused on its actual meaning but rather on the preconceived notions it has in society:

For many of us, the most salient feature of modern industry is mass production, which means cheap and short-lived items desired by the multitudes. I do not need to point out that the word ‘mass’ has come to have strong negative connotations, linked as it often is to other terms to which it adds a depreciative nuance. ‘Mass art’ attempts to please the majority and ignores the refinement of ‘pure’ art (Sorlin, 1994, p. 2).

As he explains, “the media are the means by which information or entertainment are diffused” (Sorlin, 1994), and the existence of a medium is necessarily linked to the existence of both a transmitter and a receiver. However, he also says that “it is helpful to emphasize the fact that what is known as ‘the media’ includes a large variety of components and that the study of the media must not follow the oversimplified scheme: sender/medium/destination” (Sorlin, 1994, p. 3). Thus, sports constitute a whole global experience, or at least the one analysed in the following study does. Taking into consideration the expansion of Formula 1 from an initially niche sport to what can be considered a ‘mainstream’ one, the concept of mass media plays a huge role. Many are the studies that focus on the relation between this term and sports, as the coverage of these events has suffered changes while still having an impact on society, something that has increased in the last years. A paper written by Ika Novitaria Marani, Rhewindinar, Heni Widyaningsih, Eva Jualianti, Ari Subarkah and Mansur Jauhari

focuses on the performance of the athletes thanks to the influence of mass media, establishing some affirmations prior to this:

Media plays an important role in relation to sports. This can be seen by the increasing public interest in sports over the last two decades due to the development and increasing influence of the media (...). Sports have been presented, represented in different ways by the media, where the media in turn are always subject to a form of regulation (2022, p. 94).

They also establish a clear relation between mass media and sport as “both seek to reach people as spectators, fans and consumers” (Marani, Rhewindinar, Widyaningsih, Jualianti, Subarkah & Jauhari, 2022, p. 94), which is something that Nazemi and Khoshemehr discuss in *Media and its impact on sports* (2012). Taking the category of Formula 1 as reference, diverse is the media used, capturing the masses not only by television broadcasts but also by the use of Internet, radio, newspapers or magazines. Although focused on offering an enjoyable experience as a sporting event, Sorlin’s previous declaration enters the field: the diffusion between information and entertainment can also happen in an event that has its core on entertainment. If not, think about the diverse media and the individual roles they have: by broadcasting, sharing diverse content and informing about the Formula 1 universe itself, a whole community is built. The remaining question is analysing this production and consumption aspect in regards to the female perspective and participation, bringing us again to the audience or user aspect in a transmedia narrative that has become a whole spectacle itself.

Society of the Spectacle

Guy Debord’s *Society of the Spectacle* was published in the year 1967, talking about modern society, representation and its illusionary image. He also argues that “the spectacle’s form and content are identically the total justification of the existing system’s conditions and goals” (Debord, 1967, p. 6), bringing back the ideas of capitalism and consumerism by which our society is characterized:

The spectacle cannot be abstractly contrasted to concrete social activity. Each side of such a duality is itself divided. The spectacle that falsifies reality is nevertheless a real product of that reality. Conversely, real life is materially invaded by the contemplation of the spectacle, and ends up absorbing it and

aligning itself with it. Objective reality is present on both sides. Each of these seemingly fixed concepts has no other basis than its transformation into its opposite: reality emerges within the spectacle, and the spectacle is real (Debord, 1967, p. 8).

The whole book deals with the origins, characteristics and implications of the spectacle, being established as “the visual reflection of the ruling economic order” (Debord, 1967, p. 14). André Richelieu’s article *Strategic Sport Marketing in the Society of the Spectacle*, which can be found in the compilation book *Strategic Brand Management In and Through Sport*, considers these sport organizations: “the representation of reality seems to have gained precedence over reality. In the society of the spectacle, entertainment has become the experience. Accordingly, sport organizations must increasingly provide added value to their fans’ brand experience” (Richelieu, 2024, p.744). He also mentions the concept of ‘spontainment’, and addresses the strategic marketing and the adaptation of the sports to this reality. As mentioned, it is possible to talk about the process of elite sports including Formula 1 becoming a product for the masses and also a spectacle. Taking into consideration studies like the one shown, the idea of enhancing the fanatics' experience is something that gains a lot of importance nowadays, while many practices try to magnify and make out of this category something big, already having its origins decades ago. Questions arise following the concepts of reality established by Debord: are the narrative and world of Formula 1 modified according to the sport’s interests, or are they shown the way they are? Here important agents enter the scene, those involved not only in the broadcasting of the races but also of the production of other content, drawing from the idea of reaching big audiences.

Audience Reception Studies

When referring to the ‘masses’ that the previous authors mention, we deal with the term of *audience*. Many have discussed this subject over the years, like Denis McQuail (1997) in his book *Audience Analysis*, stating that “the word ‘audience’ has long been familiar as the collective term for the ‘receivers’ in the simple sequential model of the mass communication process that was deployed by pioneers in the field of media research”

(p. 1). Other authors like Ross and Nightingale (2003) also pick up this idea in their book *Media and Audiences: New Perspectives*, going a bit further:

In media studies, the audience is mostly used as a way of talking about people, either as groups or as individuals. It is used to refer to large groups of people (...) seen as having little connection with each other, other than an interest in the event they are attending or witnessing.

They also address another definition, more tied to the socio-cultural aspect:

Members of these 'groups' bring certain shared interpretative perspectives to their engagement with media and so are perhaps better described as formations rather than masses. Such formations are shaped by pre-existing social and cultural histories and conditions, and sometimes also by a sense of shared interests that incline them to repeatedly use particular media vehicles.

The relationship between the sociocultural positioning and the shaping of these groups is something that has been studied for decades, with Shaun Moores proposing a plurality of the audiences already back in 1993, after stating that “the audience is not a homogenous group that is easily identifiable for observation and analysis” (Awan, 2008, p. 29), and he establishes the existence of “disparate groups categorised according to their reception of various media and/or by their social and cultural positioning” (Awan, 2008, p. 29). Additionally, the term of audiences has implied several confrontations over the decades, and different postures have been taken. Some authors manifest that they are not something real, while others sustain that there is a part of ‘reality’ in them, differentiating clearly between the discursive fiction of the audiences in the media industry as opposed to the “social reality that remains a legitimate object of study” (Awan, 2008, p. 30), as Ien Ang’s (1991) maintains in *Desperately Seeking the Audience*. Ross and Nightingale (2003) identify five key elements of media events to further develop audience research studies (Awan, 2008, p.30): “the audience participants as individuals, the audience activities of the participants in the media event, the media time/space of the event, the media power relations that structure the event, and the mediatized information with which people engage” (Ross & Nightingale, 2003, p. 7). Dealing with the uses and gratifications, they establish that media is used to “satisfy psychological and social needs” (Awan, 2008, p. 33) with the types being additionally classified by Denis McQuail, Jay Blumler and J.R. Brown in 1972: diversion (escape and entertainment); personal relationship needs (social interaction); personal identity needs (character identification and value reinforcement); and surveillance needs

(information accumulation): “thus, the uses and gratifications approach accommodated an understanding of audience members as active agents within a social network rather than fragmented individuals within a monolithic mass” (Abercrombie, 1996, p. 141). Ien Ang (1982) also talks about the theory of pleasure when discussing the TV show Dallas:

A person enjoys watching it, or otherwise, in some way or other. Experiencing pleasure is not a conscious, directed activity (although one can strive for it), but something that ‘happens’, something which comes over the viewer according to his or her feelings. The experience is diffuse, bound to time and context, heterogeneous: so much is going on in the viewer’s head (p. 83).

James Lull’s study in this uses and gratification framework is significant as his work focuses “on viewing context and interpersonal dynamics within the family, rather than the individual viewers” (Awan, 2008, p. 42), something that David Morley agrees with as both express how “viewing is dictated by, and reflects, power relationships within the family” (Awan, 2008, p. 42).

The mentioned approaches are important tools to later relate them to the sports category, a connection that Ross and Nightingale initially pick up by putting the example of major sports stadiums as a place where audiences gather at the same time to watch a game both on the field and on the big screen (2003). In the present work, the stadiums are substituted by the tracks, characteristic of Formula 1 and spanning kilometres of fast and thrilling racing. Tobias Olsson and Dino Viscovi (2006) published their article *Who Watches What and Why? The Media Sport Audience*:

At the centre of the analysis lies the media sport audience, for it is the driving force behind the exorbitant prices and the intense competition for sport content. For broadcasters, the media sport audience directly translates into an increase in ratings and therewith in advertising revenues (p. 43).

The research conducted hereunder takes this into consideration, questioning the relation between the audiences and Formula 1. As a primal part into the success, globalisation and glamorization of the motorsport category, it opens up the debate of the root of its consumption, the nature and the uses it follows. This is something that has been discussed in previous studies too from a broader perspective of culture industry: “it would be naïve to suppose that the marketing practices of the commercial culture industry have no effect whatsoever on the involvement of the viewers” (Ang, 1982, p.

15). But not only that, as another reason why this involvement occurs is “because viewers are enabled to participate in the ‘world’ of the serial” (p. 28). On the other hand, the author also deals with the passiveness of the subjects and the role of women audiences.

Thus, the audience autonomy analyzed by Philip M. Napoli (2011) in *Audience Evolution: New Technologies and the Transformation of Media Audiences* is considered, referring to “how contemporary characteristics of the media environment, ranging from interactivity to mobility to on-demand functionality to the increased capacity for user-generated content, all serve to enhance the extent to which audiences have control over the process of media consumption” (Napoli, 2011, p. 8). He also talks about the “various dimensions of participation, appreciation and feedback that are now expressed in very public forms online that are accessible to and are being readily accessed and analyzed by, both commercial and academic audience researchers” (Napoli, 2011, p. 9). The ‘word of mouth’ existing for ages takes also special relevance, and the following paper will see how the relationship between friends, family or other known people talking about Formula 1 can influence them, besides the seen and said on social media by unknown groups.

Additionally, and by following reports like the one published by Nielsen Sports at the end of 2024, it is possible to get an insight into audience data, divided by aspects like age or gender. Trying to refute the idea of Formula 1 as a male dominated sport, the extraction of ideas of authors like Walter Gantz and Lawrence A. Wenner (*Men, women, and sports: Audience experiences and effects*, 1991) or Henk Erik Meier, Bernd Strauss and Dennis Riedl (*Feminization of sport audiences and fans? Evidence from the German men’s national soccer team*, 2017) become relevant for this study.

Feminist Media Theory and Cultural Capital

This brings us to the next point: as mentioned, articles like the last ones greatly introduce the segmentation of society and the gendered perceptions of sports’ viewing: “sport and sport consumption represent highly gendered spheres” (Meier, Strauss & Riedl, 2017, p. 712). This is a main topic addressed in the following thesis, but first it is

important to understand the antecedents and relationships that will be established with this idea, trying to challenge it.

A compilation of Frankfurt School's critiques are relevant to explore topics like the feminist media theory, that authors like Linda Steiner (2014) address in *The Handbook of Media and Mass Communication Theory*:

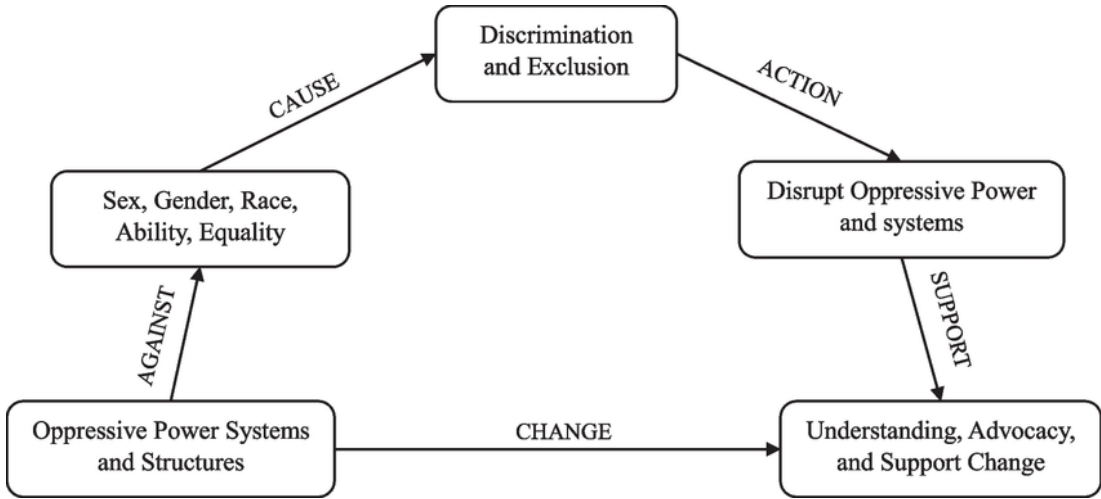
Feminist media theory takes gender seriously –as a factor that structures identity and experiences– without assuming permanent or static gender differences. An assumption that long dominated feminist media theory was this: if women controlled media production, content would be different and better.

These studies rely heavily on the feminist theory itself, applying “philosophies, concepts and logics articulating feminist principles and concepts to media processes such as hiring, production and distributions; to patterns of representation in news and entertainment across platforms; and to reception” (Steiner, 2014, p. 359) and are “increasingly explicit about the importance of international and multidisciplinary work seriously addressing media convergence and globalization” (Steiner, 2014, p. 359). This has its birth in marxism and socialism, with the “origins of feminist theory being found in the 18th century with the growth in the 1970s’ and 1980s’ equality movement”, according to Jo Ann Arinder. Engels’ work in 1884 is considered by Burton (1985) as a relevant starting point to explain and discuss the theory: “the origin of the family and commentaries on it were central texts to the feminist movement in its early years because of the felt need to understand the origins and subsequent development of the subordination of the female sex” (Burton, 1985, p. 2). Elizabeth Grosz, in her article *The Untimeliness of Feminist Theory* (as part of the *Taking Turns* section in *NORA–Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research*, Vol. 18, No. 1) deals with the topic in an extended view, considering the future and different cosmological and ontological elements. She questions and presents some assumptions on the struggles presented, after introducing the purpose of the existence of the theory treated:

Feminist theory emerged through a recognition of the inadequacy of existing models to explain women’s positions in the past and their potential for change in the present and future. Its primary focus has always been empirical and concrete, theorizing about how and why events, practices, knowledges, texts are forms of expression of patriarchal power relations (Grosz, 2010, p. 49).

In recent studies, authors like Rosemary Lucy Hill and Kim Allen (2021) have discussed feminism theories and the term ‘patriarchy’ in a contextualization of digital culture, already present with the publication of *‘Smash the patriarchy’: the changing meanings and work of ‘patriarchy’ online*. There, their objective was to present the different implications of using complicated terms like ‘feminism’ or ‘patriarchy’, and they highlighted “how humour operates in spaces of online feminist sociality, as memes function as a *lingua franca* among those who see the value in, and necessity for, feminism. The community-forming potential of patriarchy memes, however, extends beyond pro-feminist communities” (Hill & Allen, 2021, p. 177).

Figure 2
Feminist theory model adapted from Hill and Allen (2021)



Source: A Systematic Review Using Feminist Perspectives on the Factors Affecting Girls’ Participation in STEM Subjects (2024) . Retrieved from:
https://www.researchgate.net/figure/The-feminist-theory-model-adapted-from-Hill-and-Allen-2021_fig1_380594140

Hereby, the present study aims to take all the feminist and the feminist media theories in a scene ruled by the presumption of Formula 1 as a male dominated sport. In a period of general growth characterized by digital culture and constant transformations in the media landscape, the views on female audiences and their engagement in Formula 1 becomes a primal point, with offensive and repetitive male responses being acquired by

women in a humorous way connecting them with others, while segregating them from the opposite gender, as reasoned by Hill and Allen (2021).

On the other hand, Pierre Bordieu's idea of cultural capital becomes relevant in this context. In his chapter "The Forms of Capital" (1986, p. 241-58) inside *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, he talks about economic theories and the different types of capital:

Cultural capital can exist in three forms: in the embodied state, i.e., in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; in the objectified state, in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.), which are the trace or realization of theories or critiques of these theories, problematics, etc.; and in the institutionalized state, a form of objectification which must be set apart because (...) it confers entirely original properties on the cultural capital which is presumed to guarantee.

He then proceeds to provide an explanation for each of them, beginning with the accumulation of cultural capital in the embodied state: "in the form of what is called culture, cultivation, Bildung presupposes a process of embodiment, incorporation, which, insofar as it implies a labor of inculcation and assimilation, costs time, time which must be invested personally by the investor" (Bordieu, 1986). In the objectified state, we find objects and media that can be transmitted and appropriate in both a materialistic and a symbolic form. Lastly, the institutionalized state takes the form of academic qualifications, constituting a key difference between agents. Although perhaps a distant matter, cultural capital needs to be addressed from a gendered and domestic point of view to later be applied to sports, something that professor Alan Warde does in his article *Cultural capital and the place of sport*, published in 2011. While Ausra Maslauskaitė (2021) talks about the segregation between daughters and sons, exemplifying the differences regarding attitude, responsibility and work, she also takes the word of McCoy, Byrne and Banks in *Gender, 'concerted cultivation' and unequal achievement in primary education*, arguing that "gender expectations shape children's out-of-school activities as well: girls are much more involved in organized cultural activities than boys, while the gender gap in sports activities is not as large" (2012). Warde's starting point, on the other hand, comes precisely from the importance of gender when discussing sports, be it either their practice or their streaming, considering some elements that embody cultural capital:

While showing that all these factors matter², gender is the most important source of differentiation, though this is more the case for sport than for exercise per se. In addition, it is shown that educational qualification is particularly important in predicting participation in exercise, whereas occupational class makes more difference to the choice of sport, whether playing or watching (Warde, 2011, p. 107).

This takes special interest when studying a sport that has been harsher with the female gender throughout its history, following the idea that “women have always been subjected to and condemned by men’s will; their choices and power have been limited by men’s authority and domination in patriarchal societies due to their gender” (Kouchaki, Shababi & Sistani, 2020, p. 1). Anne Ross-Smith and Kate Huppatz (2010) talk about the many receptions that Bordieu’s ideas have had in *Management, Women and Gender Capital*, from a viewpoint of the feminist side, while Suzanne Laberge does an “integration of the gender distinction with the concept of cultural capital” (1995, p. 132) in *Toward an Integration of Gender into Bordieu’s Concept of Cultural Capital*, establishing the relation between both theories considered in this subpart, primordial in the present work. How do these concepts appear in regards to the motorsport category? What can we consider about the female audiences and their struggles and behaviour? Does the cultural capital mean anything in this case, and do we need to consider gendered segregation?

Transmedia Storytelling and Intertextuality in Global Culture

All the previous aspects need to be tied to the starting point of considering Formula 1 inside a transmedia context. This term, which was coined by Henry Jenkins in an article published in *Technology Review* in the year 2003, is used to explain the changing media landscape, and throughout the years his ideas have been collected and discussed by other authors like Carlos A. Scolari in his book *Transmedia Narratives: When every medium counts*: “Las NT son una particular forma narrativa que se expande a través de diferentes sistemas de significación (verbal, icónico, audiovisual, interactivo, etc.) y medios (cine, cómic, televisión, videojuegos, teatro, etc.)” [Transmedia storytelling is a

² Maslauskaitė’s article “teases out the patterns of participation and taste in the area of *Cultural Capital and Social Exclusion*, examining differentiation by class, gender, education, ethnic and age groups in particular” (2021).

particular narrative form that spans different systems of meaning (verbal, iconic, audiovisual, interactive, etc.) and media (cinema, comics, television, video games, theatre, etc.)] (Scolari, 2013, p. 24).

This is related to the technological advances and the new convergence era that characterizes our society nowadays, with even more changes occurring since the consolidation of Jenkins' ideas. Through transmedia stories, "el relato se expande" [narrative is expanded] and "esta dispersión textual que encuentra en lo narrativo su hilo conductor (...) es una de las más importantes fuentes de complejidad de la cultura de masas contemporánea" [this textual dispersion that finds its common thread in narrative is one of the most important sources of complexity in contemporary mass culture] (Scolari, 2013, p. 25). He explores the different characteristics of transmedia products, focusing on the characters, audience or production and financing, among other things. Something relevant although lacking in research studies is the presence of transmedia subjects outside of fiction, despite Scolari dedicating a whole chapter to discuss the topic in the journalistic field. Moreover, according to Henry Jenkins, transmedia stories are further characterized by the cooperation of the users in the product's expansion process, something that will be discussed in this study regarding Formula 1. In an interview conducted by Scolari, Jenkins talks about the relationship between transmedia and multimedia as well: "hace que los contenidos sean más accesibles a una audiencia general que a veces no tiene los recursos o competencias para unir todas las piezas" [it makes content more accessible to a general audience that sometimes lacks the resources or skills to put all the pieces together] (Scolari, 2013, p. 35), making allusion to its downside too. In Formula 1, we can define the broadcasting of the races as the central part, yet the availability of other resources and information that deal with them can make those not necessary in its entirety for the audience. Different factors, theories and agents are considered to establish their importance inside a transmedia context:

Los medios son la variable menos importante de la ecuación. Para mí lo esencial es que en la obra exista una intertextualidad radical –o sea, que las diferentes partes estén conectadas entre sí de algún modo–, lo cual tiene que ver con el concepto de multimodalidad y el hecho de ser diseñado para una cultura en red [Media is the least important variable in the equation. For me the essential thing is that the work has radical intertextuality –that is, that the different parts are connected to each other in some way– which has to do with the concept of

multimodality and the fact that it is designed for a networked culture] (Scolari, 2013, p. 34).

The term, coined by Julia Kristeva in 1966, acquires a special interest when discussing transmedia. *Re-enunciating media intertextuality in the age of global media discourse* by Mehita Iqani (2009) summarises the concept of intertextuality as “a way of describing both the connected multiplicity of texts and meanings and the experiences of reading and writing texts within a social situation in which there exists a complex multiplicity of texts” (p. 5). That means seeing texts not only as isolated products but also in relation with others, and it has also been applied to media production. We can consider this aspect by taking a look at the general scope of sport events. How do all the media used in F1 become autonomous as part of its transmedia nature? And how do we relate each of the texts to the others? By discussing this, other authors have gone even further in the subject:

David Marshall propone el concepto de mercancía intertextual y lo coloca en el centro de las actuales estrategias de las industrias culturales para captar a las nuevas audiencias. Las estrategias de promoción de los productos mediáticos se han ido haciendo cada vez más complejas, incluyendo el placer de la anticipación, el suministro de información de *background* y otras maniobras que profundizan la inversión afectiva y cognitiva de la audiencia en el producto cultural [David Marshall proposes the concept of intertextual commodity and places it at the heart of the cultural industries’ current strategies for attracting new audiences. Promotion strategies for media products have become increasingly complex, including the pleasure of anticipation, the provision of background information, and other maneuvers that deepen the audience’s affective and cognitive investment in the cultural product] (Scolari, 2013, p. 26).

It is this investment that remains key in the production of culture, with a debate that has started thanks to the critical theories carried on by the Frankfurt School at the time. And it needs to be taken even more ahead in time, as we live in a period of globalization. Diana Crane talks about it in the first chapter of *Global Culture. Media, Arts, Policy and Globalization*: “cultural globalization— as opposed to economic, political, or technological globalization— refers to the transmission or diffusion across national borders of various forms of media and the arts” (Crane, 2016, p. 1).

The following thesis considers Formula 1 as a media event and therefore very present in the cultural landscape of society. It takes all the presented theories into account, with the final audience perspective and engagement as the destination point. But before doing so, it is necessary to categorize this sport as a transmedia object, carrying on the analysis in the first place of the agents involved in the creation of the universe.

METHODOLOGY

Throughout the elaboration of the following work, I made use of several methods. The first step included a literature review, which consisted in explaining the different theories established overall by several authors. I went from the most general topics to the most specific ones, searching for articles, journals and books that attempted to establish some relevant connections. My interest remained in seeing some of these keywords or theories adapted to the world of Formula 1, which was not something written about as much. However, I also found this to be an advantage, and I did make use of many resources linking theories to other sports or talking about them in a broader sense.

Once I finished this part and, having established a hypothesis at the beginning of my thesis, I had to search for a good idea to prove my point. In the end, I decided the best was to have a mixed approach that involved both a qualitative and a quantitative method. This was due to the lack of resources that could back up my theories, with the literature review only being helpful in the first part. To be able to sustain my point, I spent a few weeks working on a survey. As I had seen many people in the past do, I realized it was a good way of having a compilation of responses that revolved around the specific topics I wanted to deal with. The data collected would be an important way of showing first hand if my conclusions were correct or, on the contrary, a bit distorted from reality.

After elaborating a few drafts and trying out different websites for data collection, I ended up publishing the survey on Microsoft, in both English and Spanish. There, I made use of the different tools assigned, proposing different types of questions

including: *choice, text, ranking or likert*. I had my mind put on a very specific set of questions that would get me the data I needed, but the most difficult part was not making a way too extended survey. The final draft was published the 15th of April and it included a total of 42 questions, although in many cases this amount would get reduced by a few (depending on what they had replied before), and the total time to take it consisted of an average of 14 minutes. The content for each of the questions asked can be found in *Annex*, and the survey was 3 pages long as I divided it by different sections. The first one included demographic characteristics, while the second one dealt with building the F1 spectators' profile. The third one, and the longest, included questions that would deal with the transmediality and focus on the involvement and interaction of the F1 audiences that were answering.

It is also important to note the fact that, although the final work is focused on female audiences and in an analysis of their role inside the Formula 1 community, I made the survey available for everyone. In the first section mentioned, questions like the respondent's gender, age, country and area of work or studies allowed me to have social segregations and establish a comparison, to further prove my point. In the end, I had a total of 181 people fill out the survey, accomplishing my target of 150-200 responses.

Regarding the reach of the tool, and in an attempt to get this high number of responses, I took advantage of the different social media platforms. I first sent the survey to some friends, colleagues and other acquaintances via Whatsapp, and I was lucky to have a good start (I also previously had some testing ground to make sure everything was okay). Most of the respondents I got from there were male spectators and fanatics, but the situation changed once I made use of the other social platforms. By publishing the survey on other mediums like Instagram, Linkedin and especially Tik Tok, I was able to reach diverse backgrounds, including a lot of women that proved their proactiveness inside the community. However, the quantity of people was also limited at some point by the lack of a bigger social media presence.

On the other hand, there were several interviews done. At the beginning of the survey there was an introduction that concluded the following way: *If you'd be willing to have a one-on-one chat to get more extended responses as well please send me an email or contact me on Instagram. Thank you and have a great day!* To my surprise, several

people reached out to me, the majority of them women. The following step of the process involved the selection of 4 people that fit different profiles, to discuss with them the topic and dig deeper into their responses. The meetings all took place between the 17th and the 28th of April, and were done via Microsoft Teams and Google Meets. With a duration between 40 minutes and 1 hour, the structure followed differed on the survey results for each. The survey didn't need for emails or names to be put, ensuring the complete anonymity of the participants, which was also an incentive that urged them to be sincere. Their responses were also not able to be changed after its finalization nor were the respondents allowed to take the survey for a second time. The interviewees, on the other hand, also were to remain anonymous, although some of their demographic information was used in the study presented in order to establish a comparison and analyse other possible factors and influences. The lack of a fixed structure and the amount of time spent and questions asked, plus the non agreement to record from some of the interviewees make the compilation of all the material impossible. However, there can be found a summary of each of the participants' demographics, key aspects treated and conclusions drawn.

Table 1

Interviewees' data

	Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3	Interviewee 4
Studies	First year university student of Electronic Engineering	Third year university student of Law and Economics	Third year university student of Arts	First year university student of Business
Information	From Guadalajara Chose her degree based on her love for	From Gran Canaria	From Barcelona Motorsports photographer, simracing	From Madrid Content creator on TikTok

	F1		driver and artist	
Longevity	3-5 years	10-20 years	10-20 years	1-3 years
Topics/ideas	The most engagement and involvement lies on defending other females on platforms like X Her uncles transmitted their passion for motorsport to her, despite her parents working in related things (cars) Has watched all documentaries of DAZN Main content consumed: Instagram the teams' and	Not considering himself a F1 fan but rather a motorsports one Doesn't like the Spanish commentarists A lot of international content mainly: English and German, but also some Spanish Thinks the circuits in the United States are badly chosen but he argues the amount is good Liberty	More active during the active part of the F1 season Likes F1 Academy for seeing women on track Hasn't watched <i>Drive to Survive</i> Has watched a lot of documentaries of DAZN and some of Netflix 3 years taking photographs on track Most used app is X: a lot of variety. On Instagram	Several videos have gone viral negatively Decided to create a F1 account during the summer break to get to know other fans and fill the void of not having any races Thinks owning an account has helped her in things like public speaking as well A lot of critiques, but she says the positives are always better: calls cowards

	drivers' post; on Tik Tok videos of content creators and highlights. Also memes on the platforms. Content mostly in Spanish Thinks that there is a lot of mediatization and 3 circuits in the United States is a lot F1 Academy as a segregating initiative Has Hollister F1 merch	Media's objective in getting new people has worked, but there is a lot of fakeness and people need to know that He says he doesn't think the sport will be ruined: if you're not interested in any of the transmedia contents just don't watch it F1 Academy seen as more of a marketing tool	more official accounts and on TikTok edits, highlights and other videos. Mostly content on English and French rather than Spanish Has experienced a lot of discrimination in the sector Votes sometimes in polls like favourite driver of the day, thinks the option of none should also be available	many people who comment with a blank photo and don't reply after the first time Content on TikTok: edits, videos talking about other creators, technical videos and highlights. On Instagram reels, funny things and posts of Grand Prix Doesn't trust the people on Internet selling their merch
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Source: Most important information and highlights drawn from the interviews done

These parts (the survey and interviews) took the most time, and after closing the survey at the end of April, the process of compilation of the information was next. For this, the intention was to make use of a simple and free tool, which was something hard to find. That is the reason why Excel ended up being the selected option, although it also implied a higher amount of time spent. In a first filter, the results were separated

depending on the gender, to establish what was the majority of results from the male population and to then compare it to the majority of results from the female side. After this, there was a further analysis done that focused on each of the other demographic variables as well as an individual examination of the answers for the different questions asked. Once all of this was extracted, the redaction of the results and what was considered important was to be done. The data collected had to then be linked to the literature review done, and previous theories of authors helped to link the results besides presenting them objectively.

A major drawback and limitation of the thesis, therefore, was its reach. Despite collecting a huge amount of responses, it is true that the hypothesis formulated was able to be seen but not in a level as high as expected. On the other hand, the near 200 people that completed the survey, despite being reliable sources, do still not account for the majority of the population. Therefore, the conclusions extracted may slightly differ depending on the range of people asked, but it is impossible to ever have the specific numbers or responses to some of the questions. Thus, this paper aims to be a guide for these topics and attempts to show a reality, which is still subjected to small changes and even more research.

FIELD WORK

Contextual Framework

Despite extensive research on transmedia storytelling as well as in the role of women in sports, there remains a significant void that has yet to be analyzed in media studies. Thus, the final thesis presented aims to fill the lack of attention to the growing connection between both aspects mentioned, in a constantly changing media landscape.

Will Buxton's book *Grand Prix: An Illustrated History of Formula 1* mentions briefly some international broadcasting information, joined by audience and territory data. This allows to show the magnitude and expansion of the category, which has been further analysed by other authors like Wood and Burkhalter (2023, pp. 43-59), who in their

article *A formula for success: How Formula One racing embraced digital and social media to engage fans*, deal with the sport's adaptation to the transmedia storytelling:

To meet the needs of existing fans, Liberty developed a strategy that involved providing more detailed information about the sport through podcasts, enhanced Youtube videos and F1 TV streaming services. For younger fans new to the sport, Liberty created a number of initiatives across different platforms, including the Netflix docuseries *Drive to Survive*, an esports game, encouraging fans to vote for their favourite *Driver of the Day* and promoting race-specific hashtags on social media. Liberty also recognised the importance and power of social media and the need for involvement at all levels of the sport – association, team, driver and sports member – to keep fans engaged year-round (Wood & Burkhalter, 2023, pp. 43).

Thanks to the analysis of different data and to studying the fans of the category, the authors also highlighted the engagement in the community throughout the use of different social media platforms.

My work takes into consideration all of the mentioned transmedia initiatives, analysing the frequency in which the audiences make use of them. Although Wood and Burkhalter's article isn't the only one to deal with fans in the digital media landscape, there is a significant lack of papers that do so regarding Formula 1, with the predominance of works involving other sports or broader themes. This includes articles like *Sports events in a transmedia landscape* (Frandsen, Olesen & Orhauge, 2023), that talks about the social network platforms. As said, digital developments "point to a need for further discussion of the sport event as a media event" (Hepp & Couldry, 2010). The authors also talk broadly about television broadcasting, with the mention of live sports streaming platforms like DAZN or Amazon Prime, two of the most popular ones. In this section, they also include Danilo Callea's analysis of the Italian public service broadcaster, Rai. Although not as relevant for studying in my paper, the broadcasting aspects have still been important in tracking the experience and habits of the surveyed people. Frandsen additionally explains the adaptation of sports events in the digital environment, with the need to "be understood as a more diverse range of events, where audiences engage in new sports and in new converging practices that can be termed 'participatory liveness'" (2022). Although they do not deal at any point with Formula 1, focusing instead on football and the Tour of France, the importance of social media as

an extension of the narratives and place of interaction between the community is something that can easily be applied to this sport as well.

As seen, both articles deal with the topic of audiences, although their approaches differ a lot. Another paper that also takes relevance in this aspect is the one published by Daam Van Reeth (2024): *Understanding TV audiences for sport events*. While his viewpoint constitutes a more economic one, emphasizing the success of the sport, he reports the audience size for live sports broadcasting and questions the interest presented by these spectators. Once again, in spite of not being directly related to Formula 1, it is something that can easily be applied to the category.

The following thesis takes up this idea of general audiences that appears reflected repeatedly. With the consolidation of the pinnacle of motorsport as a global media event, the industry has witnessed a change in its form. This has had its consequences in the transformation of Formula One into a spectacle, as explained by works like the chapter of *A glamorous and high-tech global spectacle of speed. Formula One motor racing as mediated, global and corporate spectacle*, inside *Sports Events, Society and Culture*. In it, Damion Sturm (2014) talks about the commercialism and the prestige that the category acquires. He mentions Debord's theory of commodity spectacle, as Formula One "provides a dazzling and spectacular display of sport as a corporatised media spectacle through its extravagance and excess" (pf. 68), before digging deeper into its globalisation.

In this process of expansion, the category has seen a growth of its female audience, which is something that constitutes a very criticized topic. Although unfortunately there is a lack of papers that deal with women from an analytical perspective of spectatorship, there are still studies that draw compelling conclusions, like the one of Anne Llamas Mayoral (2022) titled *Female Fans in Formula 1: A Qualitative Study of Spanish Female Fans' Behaviours, Attitudes and Motivations towards F1 and its Consumption through Twitter*. Her motivation for analysing the fan experience of these communities lies in the evolution of Formula One as "a sport with a remarkable increase in digital engagement" in which "women are one of their main target audiences" (Llamas, 2022). However, the study focuses on other aspects, concreting only in the one social platform mentioned and selecting a specific group of people, not allowing for the establishment

of a general conclusion. As she argues herself, the research done is not enough, but “F1 female fans are ‘authentic’ fans who should be taken into consideration by sports, media and fan studies in addition to sports organizations and fellow fans” (Llamas, 2022). All of the author’s ideas, additionally, drive from previous ones like Pope’s or Toffoletti’s, who talk about the gendered segregation of the fandom communities and the traditional assumptions behind this. The beliefs include inauthentic motives, less commitment and the view of women as companions of the male spectators inside a household. There’s a continuous reiteration of putting into question women’s motivations, “whereas men’s motives are rarely queried even if they have a basic understanding and a passing interest in the sport. This is because males automatically fit the criteria for male fandom just by default by being men” (Toffoletti, 2019). In this context, “the activities of white, male, heterosexual individuals have been established as the standard figure in many sports settings and situations, depicting the typical sport fan” (Llamas, 2023, p. 11). However, Pope “suggests that new female fans have been also attracted to sports due to a change of media coverage of sport and its well-known athletes toward a form of modern ‘soap opera’ – commonly linked to female fans” (Llamas, 2023, p. 13). This is something that Ien Ang (1982) already expressed in *Watching Dallas: Soap Opera and the Melodramatic Imagination*.

On the other hand, despite the lack of other papers that deal with this topic in more extension, there are many others that also extract interesting data by focusing on the female gender. The most common studies include the involvement of women by their acquisition of jobs in motorsport or by getting behind the wheel. *The Formula 1 Race as a Phenomenon. Aspects of masculinity and modernity*, published by Ann-Helen Sund (2005, pp. 69-84), covers a handful of interviews done personally. Thanks to this, the author was able to compile the most relevant information and divide it into several points. Following this, she dedicated a whole page to talk about masculinity and gender:

All F1 drivers are men and most of the interviewees think that a majority of those interested in the sport, that is, the audience and the TV viewers, are men. All the informants also regarded F1 as a masculine sport, in that “traditional” male ideals and characteristics are expressed in it. However, not everybody thought that these ideals and characteristics are specifically male today. All informants were positively inclined to the idea that women will in the future enter the sport as drivers (Sund, p. 72).

This has been more developed in other articles like *Hitting the barriers – Women in Formula 1 and W series racing*, included in the *European Journal of Women's Studies*, where Olivia R. Howe (2022) criticizes Formula 1 for its exclusion of women, as she navigates through the different historical and current attitudes that are conceived. Assumed physical and mental inferiority, sexualisation, representation and money are some of the key factors that impede women from being part of the category. On the other side, Howe also talks about the repercussions that the existence of the W Series could have in society and inside the industry.

Lastly, other articles carry on with the misconceptions of women being conceived as an inferior being or with less knowledge, as analysed also by Pope and Toffoletti, but this time translated to the physical and working field. Angie Jazmin López Rojas studies the role of women inside TV sports journalism, drawing the conclusions that it is a growing sphere for this gender and each time there have been more consolidated and accepted as veridic sources. However, statements done by previous authors like Fernández or Barboza are reiterated in her work as well: “Aunque ya la gente se esté acostumbrando al hecho de que las mujeres sí saben de deportes, las periodistas deportivas siempre se van a encontrar con el prejuicio y la duda” [Although people are already getting used to the fact that women do know about sports, female sports journalists will always encounter prejudice and doubt] (Fernández, 2015, p. 29). In spite of this, Barboza talks about positive changes:

La inserción de la mujer y el rol que desempeñó no solo ayudó a atraer mayor audiencia, sino también a romper algunos estereotipos asignados anteriormente en las salas de redacción de los diferentes medios nacionales deportivos, que sea aceptada la presencia de la mujer en los medios de comunicación y todo ámbito que esté relacionado al fútbol profesional [The inclusion of women and the role they played not only helped attract a larger audience, but also helped break some stereotypes previously assigned in the newsrooms of the different national sports media, so that the presence of women in the media and all areas related to professional football is accepted] (Barboza, 2016, p.77).

The stereotypes and misconceptions that these authors deal with are still part of the reality that the female gender encounters, despite small changes in the last decades. As seen, there are many papers that cover these issues and similar topics from a variety of

perspectives, although most of them still refer to sports in general or are centered around the study of other specific ones. This paper takes those and aims to cover more extensively gaps that are still in need of being researched.

Survey and Interviews Analysis: Compilation of Audience Data

Taking a look at the data collected between the 15th and the 30th of April, there were a total of 181 responses, reaching the target proposed. Of this total, 59% (107 respondents) were women, while 39% (71 respondents) were men. On the other hand, a low 2% (3 respondents) chose not to say their gender. The predominant ages of the respondents were also placed between 18 and 24 years old, with their highest level of education being either high school or a bachelor’s degree. Besides this, the country of origin was very diverse, with 76 of the respondents being from Spain but all the remaining responses coming from a total of 35 different countries (Albania, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, England, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Lebanon, Malaysia, Netherlands, Norway, Palestine, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Scotland, Slovenia, South Africa, Switzerland, United States, Venezuela and Wales).

Figure 3
Gender percentages survey



Source: Microsoft Teams, drawn from the survey made

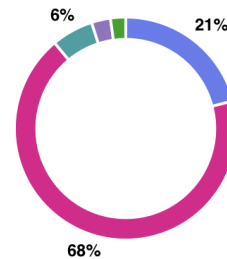
Figure 4

Age percentages survey

2. How old are you?

[More details](#)

● Under 18	38
● 18-24	123
● 25-34	11
● 35-44	5
● Over 45	4



Source: Microsoft Teams, drawn from the survey made

On the other hand, the interviewees selected were placed in the majority age group, from 18 to 24 years, and each of them was from a different part of Spain. 75% of the respondents in this case (3) were women, while only one male showed interest in taking part in a more extended conversation around the topic.

➤ Defining and comparing the demographics of spectatorship

Taking a further look at the data presented, in first place it is essential to define the female spectatorship in demographic terms, in comparison to the male one. Retrieving the results of the survey, from the 107 women that responded, the majority still continued to be between the ages of 18 and 24 years, with a total of 72 respondents (67,29%) included in this age range. On the other hand, 29 women (27,1%) were under 18 years old, 4 (3,74%) comprised the ages between 25 and 34 years and there was 1 respondent (0,9345%) for the ages between 35 to 44 and for over 45 years old (0,9345%). Calculating the percentage, there are small differences between both genders: in the case of the male audience, it could be considered as older. Despite an initial similarity with women regarding a majority of spectatorship between the ages of 18 and 24 years (a 67,6% in the case of men), there were 7 male respondents (9,86%) between 25 and 34 years, 4 (5,63%) between 35 and 44 years and 3 respondents (4,225%) over the age of 45. On the contrary, only 9 of the men (12,68%) who took part in the survey were under the age of 18. While the different age groups continue to be

placed in the same order for both genders, it is evident that the male community has higher percentages for the older ages.

This is further enhanced by the cultural capital, with more than half of the women signaling high school as their highest level of education (56%), while only 25,35% of men marked this. In their case, the predominant option was the bachelor's degree, recompiling a total of 57,8% (in the case of women, 34,6%), and with a majority of engineering students or graduates (45%), in contrast to the female audience (10,3%), where there was a predominance of social studies (37,4%), including diverse degrees like marketing and business, media and communications, or law. Following this, there were also more females in the humanities (9,3%) and arts sector (3,7%), as opposed to the only one male who put drama as his field of work/study. The rest of the percentages for the female audiences covered other fields, implying a higher variety than the male community.

Lastly, from the 42% of respondents from Spain, 57,9% of them were men while a 41% were women (the rest didn't specify their gender). This just shows the diffusion of the survey to more women outside, or as well those who were willing to help out with something related with Formula 1. Taking a view at both the survey and interviews, we can classify the average female spectator as young, either finishing high school or currently in university, and with direct access to Internet and social media platforms.

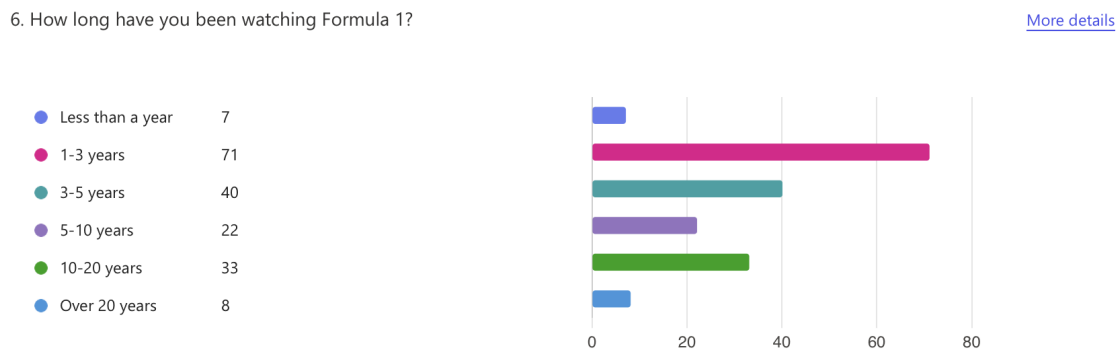
➤ **Viewing habits, origins and frequency: audience influence and F1 expansion**

To further consolidate the profile of this community, it is necessary to take a look at the origins of the activity of watching Formula 1, and to consider the seriousness towards it. With transmediality being something of recent ages, it is no wonder that most of the female audience comes precisely from the last seasons, having seen this increase to up to 41% of the audience being female nowadays, as reported by Nielsen Sports. Thus, when asked the amount of time they have been watching the sport, the majority of respondents answered 1 to 3 years (39,2%), with 81,7% of this percentage being women. It is important to note that besides this option, there were more women respondents for less than a year (57,1% of the total 3,9%) and for 3 to 5 years (62,5% of the 22% total), which still comprise recent times. On the other hand, more male

spectators answered 5 to 10 years (59% men against 41% inside the total of 12,2%) and 10 to 20 years (66,6% of the 18,2% total), while only one woman assured to have been watching Formula 1 for over 20 years (12,5% of the total of 4,4%).

Figure 5

Quantity of people and how long they have been watching F1



Source: Microsoft Teams, drawn from the survey made

Following the ideas of previously mentioned authors like Wood and Burkhalter or Llamas Mayoral, many have been the transmedia impulses to expand the universe of Formula 1, reaching younger audiences (as seen with the majority of 18 to 24 year olds) but also appealing to mainly women. Thus, of their 107 responses, 44 included social media platforms as their cause of getting into the sport. This constitutes huge numbers, as 41,1% of the female audience that completed the survey would most likely not be following Formula 1 nowadays if it weren't for the expansion of the sport through the different media and the initiatives taken by Liberty, as many claim they were also surrounded by family and friends who loved the sport, but only got into it thanks to 'social media' or 'Netflix'. Although this has also been the case for some of the male spectators, the percentage is considerably lower: only 11,3%. Discussing this with interviewee 4, she reinforced the idea of more women following non-official social media content. Her background was interesting enough as she has a TikTok account dedicated to Formula 1 with over 3000 followers, and a total of 1.5 million likes on her videos. Asking her demographic data about it, she gave the following numbers: a total of 74% of her followers were women, while 26% were men. On the other hand, remarking what has been said before, a majority of 62% comprises the ages between 18 and 24:

Yo he hablado con chicas que empezaron a ver la Fórmula 1 porque les salió un vídeo en TikTok que les explicaba algo, y dijeron voy a empezar a mirar (...). Que obviamente está lo típico que te pones a verlo por tu padre, por tu amigo, por Fernando Alonso o lo que sea, pero que también la gente se está metiendo a verlo por redes sociales, que les ha salido algo que les ha interesado [I've spoken to girls who started watching Formula 1 because a video in Tiktok that explained something appeared for them, and they decided to start watching it (...). Obviously, there's the typical thing where you start watching it because of your father, your friend, Fernando Alonso, or whatever, but people are also starting to watch it because of social media, because something has come up that interests them] (Interviewee 4, 2025).

However, as stated, it is still very typical to get into the sport due to relationships with other people who already follow the sport. Of the 181 respondents, 132 (73%) claimed to have family or friends who watched the sport when they were little, although 19 of them (14,4%), including 2 men, did not properly follow the sport before social media content or the Netflix documentary *Drive to Survive*. On the other hand, a total of 34 people (18,8%) did not have any relationship with the sport prior to social media, a tool that has expanded the sport inside new households. Inside this percentage, a predominance of women is once again found (27).

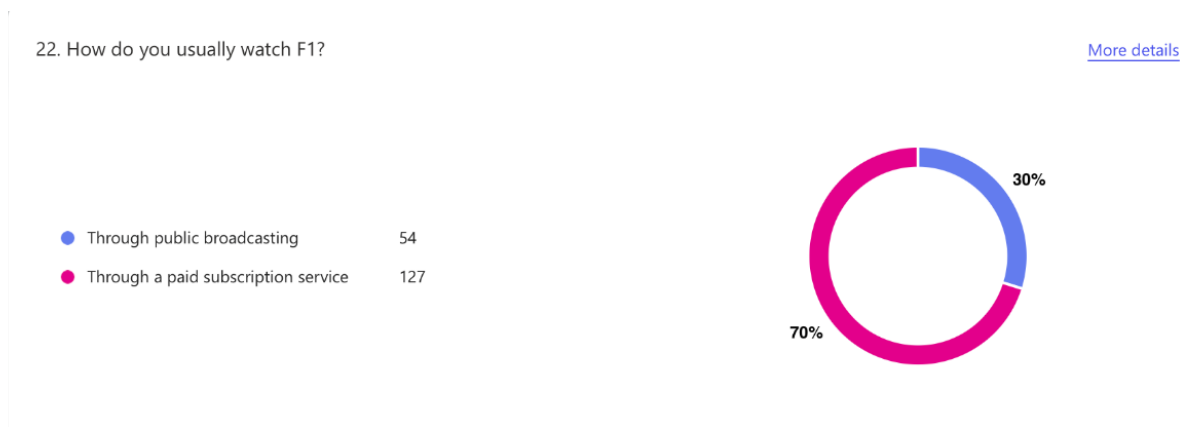
The rest of the situations involved being invited to a Grand Prix or a race track and switching through the different TV channels to end up bumping into Formula 1. The latter aspect focused on the broadcasting of the sport is something that was also asked in questions 22 and 23, as many of the countries that used to offer the sport via public channels do not do that anymore. Thus, 70% of the 181 respondents claimed to follow the sport via a paid subscription service, this percentage being constituted by the 65,42% of women that responded and 78,9% of the men surveyed. Of the platforms used, DAZN was the predominant choice, with 34,3% of the women that marked paying for Formula 1 broadcasting choosing this service, a number that is doubled by the male respondents (78,9% of the 56 men who use a paid subscription medium). However, it is uncertain how many of the surveyed people pay exclusively for DAZN and how many have the platform included in their Movistar+ plan, as has been mentioned by some but not specified by all. On the other hand, the paid service of Sky Sports in all its regions remains superior by the female gender (19 women vs. 8 men), same as with F1 TV

(although this platform does not offer live racing for many countries, Spain included, which constitutes the origin of the majority of male respondents), having 16 women against 5 men:

Yo empecé viendo motos más que coches. Y después me metí con la Fórmula 1 con mi padre cuando estaba en abierto, y cuando dejó de estar en abierto lo intenté seguir un par de años más pero al final lo acabé dejando [I started watching motorcycles more than cars. And then I got into Formula 1 with my dad when it was on free-to-air channels, and when it stopped being, I tried to follow it for a couple more years but in the end I dropped it] (Interviewee 2, 2025).

Figure 6

Percentages on access to F1 broadcasting



Source: Microsoft Teams, drawn from the survey made

The statement provided is a reality for many, with some taking a break from the sport with the transition from public to paid service, while others have taken breaks during moments of dominance of certain drivers and the fading of others, qualifying these periods as ‘boring’:

Sí que es verdad que cuando era pequeña yo, nadie... Bueno, aquí sí que miramos la Fórmula 1 porque Fernando Alonso estaba en su prime y ganaba campeonatos. Pero una vez se apagó ese hombre un poquito, aquí dejó de ser importante la Fórmula 1. Es más, antes daban en televisión pública todas las carreras, y ahora te tienes que entregar para verlas porque DAZN ha comprado todos los derechos [It's true that when I was little, nobody... well, here we did

watch Formula 1 because Fernando Alonso was in his prime and winning championships. But once that man faded away a little, Formula 1 stopped being important here. In fact, all the races used to be broadcast on public television, and now you have to pay to watch them because DAZN has bought all the rights] (Interviewee 3, 2025).

On the other hand, three of the interviewees stated their relationship with motorsports in general, with interviewee 2 being one of the very few people surveyed to not consider themselves as strict ‘fans’ of F1 (6,7%) (tied with the responses between women and men): “A mí me gustan las carreras. La Fórmula 1 la veo porque al final es una carrera más” [I like racing. I watch Formula 1 because, in the end, it's just one more race] (Interviewee 2, 2025). Of the 12 remaining people, 5 men marked the option of not considering themselves as fans, the same amount of women, as the rest preferred not to reveal their gender.

Figure 7

Percentages on identifying as a F1 fan

13. Would you consider yourself a fan of F1?

[More details](#)



Source: Microsoft Teams, drawn from the survey made

Following the habits of consumption, 71 of the people surveyed claimed that watching Formula 1 is considered as either a family (51, out of which 33 are women) or a friendly activity (20, out of which 12 are women), including the people who started watching thanks to social media but have also influenced others. However, some people specified it depends on the race and their availability, as it can sometimes change. The case of interviewee 2, for instance, fit into the traditional case of his watching activity having the roots in it being a family activity:

Llevo 15 años viendo la Fórmula 1... ósea, yo empecé porque mi padre era el que veía las cosas, y mi padre veía la Fórmula 1 y motos (...) Entonces... y a partir de allí empecé ya con mi padre, me acuerdo... A partir de 2009 más o menos es cuando empiezo a tener unos primeros recuerdos de F1, entonces yo no sé cuando empecé a verla, pero sé que los primeros recuerdos que tengo son de 2009, de la temporada esa [I've been watching Formula 1 for 15 years... I mean, I started because my father was the one who watched things, and he watched Formula 1 and motorcycles (...) So... and from there I started with my father, I remember... from 2009 onwards or so is when I started to have my first memories of F1, so I don't know when I started to watch it, but I know that the first memories I have are from 2009, from that season] (Interviewee 2, 2025).

However, this has evolved into something that also a lot of people stated as usual nowadays: "Mi padre si le pongo la carrera ahora se la ve, pero él no busca ni cuando hay Gran Premio ni nada... y entonces yo que llevo 3 años fuera por la universidad..." [If I put the race on for my father, he will watch it, but he doesn't even search when there's a Grand Prix or anything... and then me that I've been away for 3 years because of university...] (Interviewee 2, 2025). Interviewee 3 also said something similar when talking about her experience at the Barcelona Grand Prix in Montmeló, to where she's gone for 3 consecutive years, aiming to make it a fourth one this year:

Mi madre cuando era joven... Ella iba a ver la Fórmula 1 y las motos siempre que podía, entonces conoció a mi padre. Eso era con 20 añitos o así, entonces conoció a mi padre y mi padre era una ruina entera. Por eso no pudo ir más a las carreras hasta que yo tuve 18 años, que fue la primera vez y la última que hemos ido juntas, que yo le compré una entrada para que viniera conmigo y fuimos a ver la Fórmula 1 juntas. Eso sí, ella no vive en Barcelona, vive en nuestro pueblo que está en la frontera con Francia, entonces le queda mucho más lejos, se agobia más, es mayor... le gustó, sí, pero le costó más disfrutarlo como podría disfrutarlo yo, porque al final no me cansé de estar dando vueltas por el circuito [My mother, when she was young... She would go to watch Formula 1 and the motorcycles whenever she could, and that's when she met my father. That was when she was 20 or so, when she met my father, and my father was a complete wreck. That's why she couldn't go to the races again until I was 18, which was the first and last time we went together. I bought her a ticket to come with me, and we went to see Formula 1 together. Of course, she doesn't live in

Barcelona, she lives in our town on the border with France, so it's much further away, she gets more stressed, she's older... She liked it, yes, but it was harder for her to enjoy it as I could have, because in the end, I didn't get tired of going around the circuit] (Interviewee 3, 2025).

In relation to this, she talked about her watching activity at home experiencing changes as well, with it alternating between being an activity 'just for her' and a family one including her mother, the one who got her into Formula 1 in her family (as opposed to most responses that said it was the paternal figure). Other responses in the survey included more examples of this alternance, stating it depends on the moment of the year, the race itself, etc. This could also be linked to the ages previously mentioned, with the majority of the surveyed people comprising the ages of 18 to 24, with many of them being away for university and having to change habits.

Figure 8

Percentages on the nature of the watching activity

11. How do you usually watch Formula 1?

[More details](#)



Source: Microsoft Teams, drawn from the survey made

When also asked about the frequency, 25 men (35,2%) assured to 'watch every single race, no matter the timezone', in contrast to 52 women (48,6%). On the contrary, more surveyed men claimed to 'watch only the highlights' (5,6% of men vs. 0,93% of women). This gives an indication that of the respondents, women are more involved than men when it comes to watching Formula 1. However, it does not refute the idea of using social media as a complementary source of information, with the same amount of women and men claiming to 'follow some races but following highlights and social

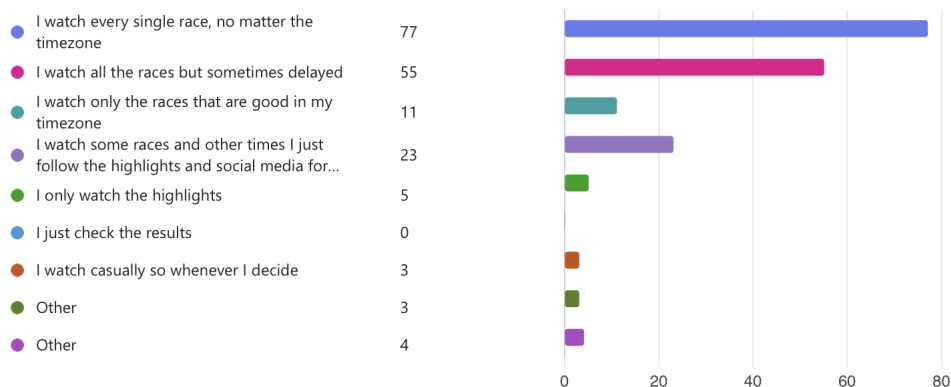
media for the rest’, making reference in most occasions to the inability of watching due to specific circumstances.

Figure 9

Quantity of people and their frequency of watching F1

8. With what frequency do you watch F1 and how much?

[More details](#)



Source: Microsoft Teams, drawn from the survey made

➤ **Passive and active subjects: transmedia extension and audience’s role**

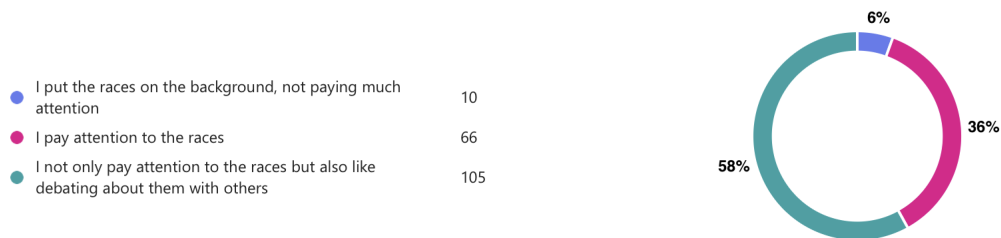
With many people, more concretely women getting into the sport precisely because of social media, there is a need to focus on the subjects that consume Formula 1 and participate in its expansion to the masses. Following the conclusion of women being more involved than men in the sport, question 10 aimed to focus further on this aspect. Thus, when asked about their level of engagement when watching Formula 1, 35 of the men surveyed said they like to ‘watch the sport and also debate with others about it’, this percentage being higher for the female respondents (64,5%). On the contrary, 7% of the men claimed to ‘put the races on the background’, not being very involved in the broadcasting. For women, this only constituted 3,7%. In between these options, the rest claimed to simply ‘pay attention to the races’, not going further than that (43,7% of the male respondents and 31,8% of the females surveyed).

Figure 10

Percentages on the involvement when watching

10. How involved are you when watching Formula 1?

[More details](#)



Source: Microsoft Teams, drawn from the survey made

As it has already been stated, the percentage of people not to consider themselves as fans is quite low (6,6%), as most of the respondents follow regularly the sport. In spite of this, it is interesting to notice how 80% of the men who claimed to ‘put the races on the background, not paying much attention’ assured to be fans, yet the opposite was the case for women. Of the ones who marked the same option, 75% claimed that they were not fans of the sport. This could further indicate that the involvement for male fans is not the same as female ones, and even that when the latter genre gets into something (be it a show, a celebrity, or a sport as here) they become real passionate about it:

Esta es mi segunda temporada viendo la Fórmula 1. Empecé el año pasado y me obsesioné súper rápido... de típico, no sé si te pasa, que de repente coges un tema y hasta que no lo exprimes no te quedas agusto. Pues me pasó eso, y lo veía todo... [This is my second season watching Formula 1. I started last year and I got obsessed really fast... the typical thing, I don’t know if it happens to you, that suddenly you pick a topic and until you really get into it, you don’t feel at ease. Well, that’s what happened to me, and I would watch everything...] (Interviewee 4, 2025).

The topic of going from passive to active subjects is something characteristic of transmediality, and the survey attempted to show this by extracting some data. Thus, with more than half of the respondents assuring to ‘not only watch the races but also debate about them’ (58%), they search for other people or spaces that allow for discussion:

En Twitter cuando es fin de semana de carreras, suelo buscar el hashtag de F1 y me meto allí, y así te puedes enterar un poquito más de que piensa la gente sobre algo que ha pasado en la carrera, o qué creen que va a pasar, etc. (...) Y yo lo que hago es eso también un poco, si veo que hay algo en la carrera que creo que es increíble, lo comento en Twitter y también comentando sobre lo que los otros están diciendo [On Twitter when it's race weekend, I search for the F1 hashtag and go there, and you can also find out a little more about what other people think about something that has happened in the race, what they think is going to happen, etc. (...) And what I do is that a bit too, if I see that there is something in the race that I think is incredible, I will comment on Twitter and also on what the others are saying] (Interviewee 3, 2025).

This platform was also chosen by 48 of the respondents (26,5%) as the first choice for 'consuming F1 content outside of the own broadcasting', becoming the third platform overall of the ones proposed, that ended up constituting the following order: Instagram, Tiktok, Youtube, Twitter (now X), F1 app, Netflix (or others), Discord and lastly LinkedIn (*figure 11* shows a table with all the percentages, including the total of respondents).

Figure 11

Platforms used for F1 content consumption

24. Order the following platforms **from the one you use the most** to consume F1 content outside of the own broadcasting **to the one you consume the least** for this: [More details](#)



Source: Microsoft Teams, drawn from the survey made

As expected, the choice of platforms also varied depending on the gender, with 39,4% of the male respondents placing Twitter as first option, in contrast to the 18,7% of women. On the other hand, Instagram was a very popular choice among both genders,

with 33,8% of the men surveyed putting it as the first platform for consuming content, and being the most chosen option for women, with a total of 37,4%. Tiktok constituted the second platform overall, with 34,6% of women claiming it as the most used medium, while for male respondents this wasn't the preference (5,6%). Interviewee 2 even replied by saying he didn't have the platform, so there was no possibility he could place it as any option other than last.

Table 2

Relation between the different platforms and the preference of use



1st opt.	36%	23,8%	5,5%	26,5%	7,7%	0,6%	-	-
2nd opt.	34,8%	31,5%	13,8%	7,2%	9,4%	-	1,7%	1,7%
3rd opt.	16%	17,1%	20,4%	10,5%	21%	8,3%	2,8%	3,9%
4th opt.	6%	8,8%	27%	9,9%	19,3%	15%	6,6%	7,2%
5th opt.	2,2%	5%	18,2%	11%	16%	33,1%	6,6%	7,7%
6th opt.	1,6%	3,9%	10,5%	22,7%	9,4%	23,2%	22,7%	6%
7th opt.	2,2%	2,8%	3,3%	7,2%	9,9%	14,9%	33,7%	26%
8th	1,1%	7,2%	1,1%	5%	7,2%	5%	26%	47,5%

opt.								
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Source: Survey done, extracting the results myself

But the use wasn't the only aspect questioned. As the development of technologies and digital culture has transformed the universe of Formula 1 in a transmedia product, among many others, it is important to notice how many of the followers of the sport have become active subjects. As stated by interviewee 3 above, she follows the activity of tweeting and replying to others' comments, establishing a connection in a mutual space. "Sí, yo tuiteo demasiado. Más de lo que debería, entonces... a mí me ha llegado de todo, porque como voy a cuentas de inglés, tuiteo, les respondo... después a españoles y a latinoamericanos también" [Yes, I tweet too much. More than I should, so... I've gotten all kinds of things, because I go to English accounts, tweet, reply to them... then also to Spaniards and Latin Americans too], stated interviewee 2 as well, highlighting the struggles in the platform and its character, with X known for being a very violent platform. It is in this context that interviewee 1 also had a lot to say:

Si alguien pregunta algo y yo les puedo contestar, no me importa responder... A lo mejor las veces que más contesto es si veo que una chica dice algo y de repente se le echan encima, allí creo que es cuando más salgo y contesto en modo de defensa [If someone asks something and I can answer them, I don't mind answering... Maybe the times I answer the most is if I see a girl say something and suddenly someone jumps on her, that's when I think I come out and answer the most in defensive mode] (Interviewee 1, 2025).

To better explain the activity of the surveyed people, we first need to take into account how many of them happen to be in the community built around the sport. Thus, the majority had a positive response, but a high percentage of the respondents (28,7%) claimed not to be in the F1 community on any platform.

Figure 12

Percentages on being part of the F1 community

14. Are you in the F1 community/fandom online? (Can be just one platform)

[More details](#)



Source: Microsoft Teams, drawn from the survey made

Inside this percentage, 30 men were the ones who said not to be in the F1 community, constituting almost half of the male responses (42,3%), while on the other hand only 22 women assured not to be part of the fandom (20,6,2%). This is another demonstration of the high proportion of women that are involved in the sport. Yet as seen, many are the ones who get involved by posting or contributing to the fandom, and not only being mere observants. Despite most of the surveyed people answering no to have a fan page of Formula 1 (84%), there are still many of them who interact with their personal accounts, for instance, or others (32,6%).

Figure 13

Percentages on owning a F1 fan page

27. Do you have a fan page of F1?

[More details](#)



Source: Microsoft Teams, drawn from the survey made

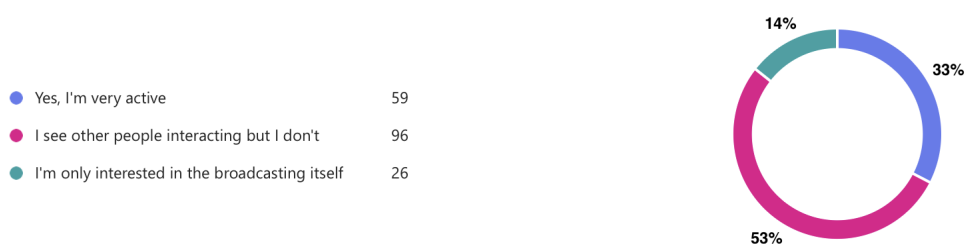
Of the ones who claim to be active, there is again a higher percentage of women (38,3% of the female respondents and 24,9% of the male ones), something that gets repeated for the fan page as well (20,6% of the female respondents have one, while only 9,9% of the men do).

Figure 14

Percentages on the interaction activity

25. Do you usually interact with others in the F1 community?

[More details](#)



Source: Microsoft Teams, drawn from the survey made

Thus, it is important to consider their contribution to the community. Interviewee 4, owning a TikTok account herself, talked about the gender of the accounts she's encountered during her journey as a Formula 1 content creator for almost a year now:

Mira que he buscado y tengo bastantes mutuals pero creo que solo conozco a 5 personas que sean chicos (...) Vale, hay gente que ve la Fórmula 1 y sube algo de vez en cuando pero cuentas dedicadas a la F1 que hablan del tema y todo...

muchas más chicas que chicos, y hay chicos, sí, conozco a algunos que han sido invitados a algunos eventos y cosas así, pero es que se pueden contar con los dedos de una mano [I've searched and I have quite a few mutuals³ but I think I know only 5 people who are boys (...)] Okay, there are people who watch Formula 1 and upload something from time to time but accounts dedicated to F1 that talk about the topic and everything... many more girls than boys, and there are boys, yes, I do know some that have been invited to some events and stuff like that, but it is true that they can be counted on the fingers of one hand] (Interviewee 4, 2025).

This becomes more evident when being asked about the different activities they do as fans of Formula 1: while everyone claimed to watch most of the sport's broadcasting, be it the practice sessions, the qualifying, the race or later highlights, the response was not as high for other activities.

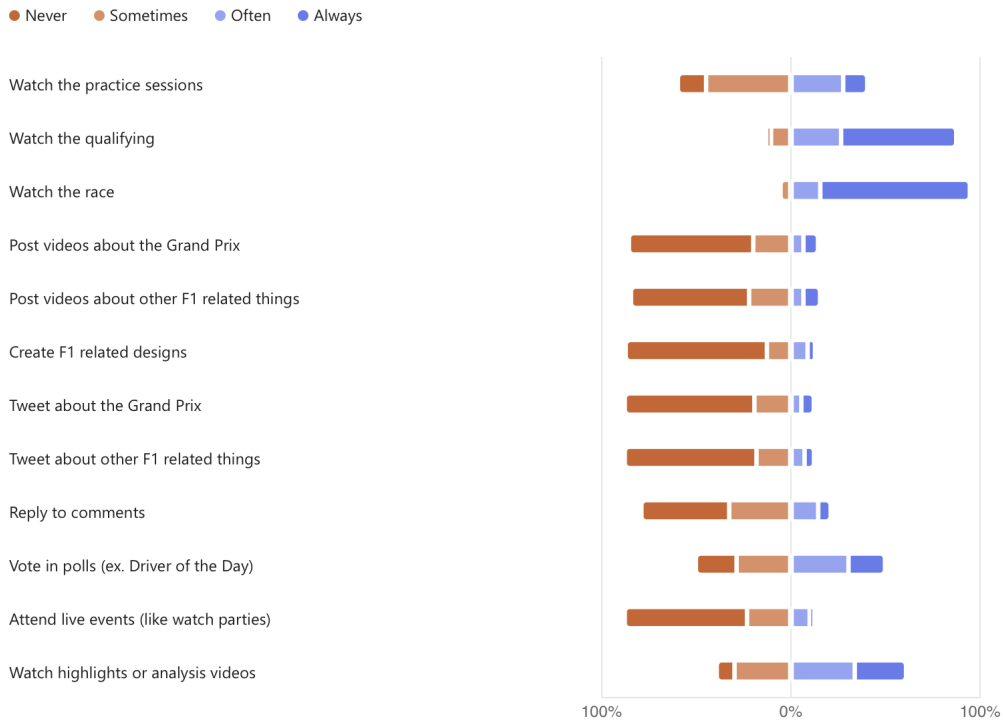
Figure 15

Percentages on the different activities done

³ “Users who follow each other on a social media platform, forming a mutual connection or friendship” (Later, n.d.) Retrieved from <https://later.com/social-media-glossary/moots/#:~:text=Mutuals%20are%20users%20who%20follow,or%20a%20close%2Dknit%20community>.

28. How much do you do each of the following things?

[More details](#)



Source: Microsoft Teams, drawn from the survey made

Simple actions like voting in polls did still obtain high percentages (88,8% of the women and 62% of the men surveyed), though, while the activity of ‘creating F1 related designs’ was the least marked one, with 74,6% of the respondents admitting to never doing this. If we take a closer look, though, we’ll notice that this leaves 44 people out of the 181 following this activity at least sometimes, and this is not a low number. However, only 18,2% of this proportion is constituted by men, showing the huge contrast between both genders.

Table 3

Frequency of each of the activities done

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
Watch the practice sessions	14,9%	44,8%	27,6%	12,7%

Watch the qualifying	2,2%	10,5%	26,5%	60,8%
Watch the race	-	5,5%	15,5%	79%
Post videos about the Grand Prix	65,7%	19,9%	6,6%	7,7%
Post videos about other F1 related things	62,4%	22,1%	6,6%	8,8%
Create F1 related designs	74,6%	12,7%	8,8%	3,9%
Tweet about the Grand Prix	68,5%	19,3%	5,5%	6,6%
Tweet about other F1 related things	69,6%	18,2%	7,2%	5%
Reply to comments	46,4%	32,6%	14,4%	6,6%
Vote in polls (ex. Driver of the Day)	21,5%	28,7%	30,4%	19,3%
Attend live events (ex. watch parties)	64,6%	23,2%	9,9%	2,2%

Watch highlights or analysis videos	9,4%	29,8%	33,7%	27,1%
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Source: Survey done, extracting the results myself

The same happens with videos, with 34,3% of the respondents saying they post videos about the Grand Prix, no matter the frequency. Of this percentage, 32,3% are men, this number being doubled by women (66,1%). Regarding the videos about other F1 related things there's even more activity: a total of 37,6% of people do this. Of them, 33,8% are men, while 64,7% are women. While the activity is more balanced with others, like tweeting about F1 related things (40% men), it is evident that the more 'creative' side remains predominantly shown by women:

Como mi lado de Twitter es más de arte, porque al final soy artista, veo que la gran mayoría de gente que hace diseños, que hace fanarts, que se mueve un poquito en este ámbito son todo mujeres, que son normalmente además bastante jóvenes. Mujeres jóvenes artistas que se dedican pues a diseñar merchandising o a hacer stickers, eso es un poquito lo que más veo yo en redes sociales [Since my Twitter side is more about art, because I'm an artist, after all, I see that the majority of people who create designs, fan art, and who move around a bit in this field are all women, and they're usually also quite young. Young female artists who design merchandising or make stickers, that's a bit of what I see mostly on social media] (Interviewee 3, 2025).

Inside the videos or designs we find a variety of options: interviewee 4 talked about the content she usually posts, mentioning her switch from Spanish to English and the journey of her account in the year she's had it:

Yo al principio subía sobretodo trends con audios que se hacían virales, pero que yo pensaba cosas relacionadas con la Fórmula 1. Sigo haciendo eso pero ahora también subo vídeos a veces hablando, y dando mi opinión también siempre con música detrás, sin que sea algo para que se haga viral. Como al principio lo que buscas es empezar y ganar muchos seguidores rápido obviamente tienes que estar más focalizado en el tema de cosas que sean virales, pero ahora que ya estoy con una comunidad y tal pues subo cosas más personales para que me

conozcan más a mí, y lo que pienso y opino yo más que cosas que vayan a tener visualizaciones [At first I mostly posted trends with audios that would go viral, but I thought about things related with Formula 1. I still do that but now I also post videos talking, giving my opinion also always with music behind, without it being something made for going viral. Since at first you're looking to start and gain a lot of followers quickly, you obviously have to be more focused on things that go viral. But now that I have a community I upload more personal things so people know me better and what I think and believe, more than things that will get views] (Interviewee 4, 2025).

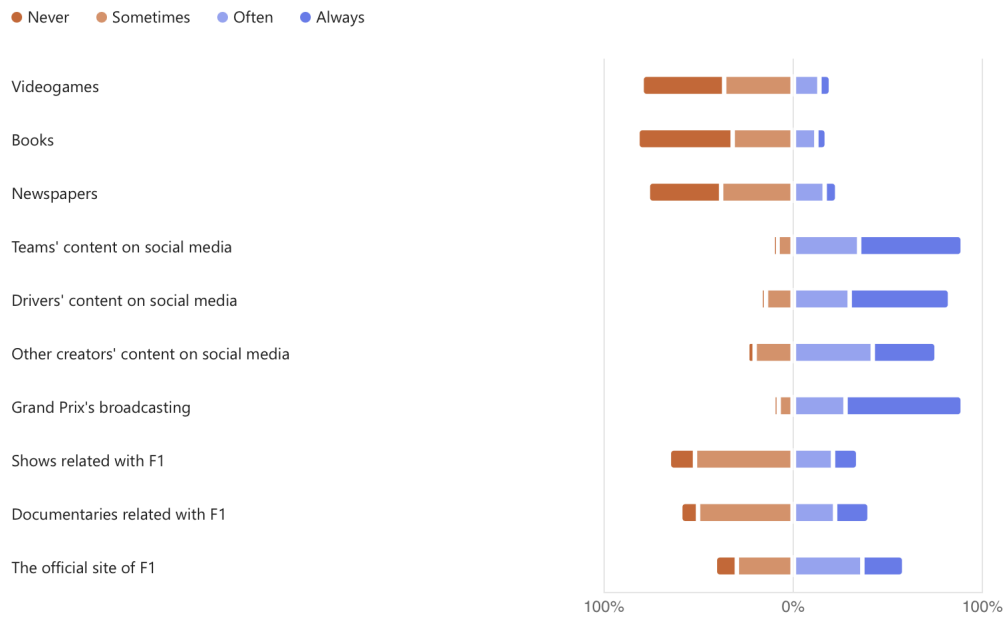
She also talked about the frequency of posting, with several videos daily, and dedicating roughly at least 3 hours each day between brainstorming, recording, editing and replying to comments. Interviewee 3 also talked about her activity, taking many weekly hours as well:

Soy más activa obviamente cuando es temporada activa de F1 y normalmente me centro en dibujar a los pilotos y hago retratos... si hay algún momento de la carrera de algo que me parece interesante puede que también lo pinte pero suele estar centrado en pilotos sobretodo (...) He subido a Tiktok algún proceso de arte de haciendo estas pinturas también, y además soy piloto de simracing con Red Bull entonces a veces hago directos donde repasamos circuitos, analizamos estrategias y cosas así [I am obviously more active when it is an active F1 season and I normally focus on drawing the drivers and I do portraits... if there's a moment in the race of something that seems interesting to me, I may also paint it but it's usually focused on drivers mainly (...) I've posted some art processes of doing these paintings on TikTok as well, and I'm also a simracing driver with Red Bull so sometimes I do live streams where we review circuits, analyze strategies and things like that] (Interviewee 3, 2025).

Following the previously mentioned idea of the last interviewee, she stated how many young girls have gotten into the sport because of videos that have appeared to them on social media. She later argued how it's always the female gender behind them, so it's empowering to see women influencing other women and welcoming them in a sport that has been characterized for ages as masculine. This was further reinforced in questions 18 to 20, where many people described the female fandom as 'supportive', 'passionate', 'growing', 'creative' and 'proactive', among others. "The presence of the female fandom on social media has made it easier for girls who enjoy the sport as they relate to

21. How often do you consume the following products of F1?

[More details](#)



Source: Microsoft Teams, drawn from the survey made

Table 4

Consumption of different content and media

	Never		Sometimes		Often		Always	
	♂	♀	♂	♀	♂	♀	♂	♀
Videogames	21,1%	57,9%	46,5%	29,9%	21,1%	9,3%	11,3%	2,8%
Books	66,2%	39,3%	22,5%	38,3%	8,5%	15%	2,8%	7,5%
Newspapers	45%	35,5%	33,8%	41,1%	15,5%	15,9%	5,6%	7,5%
Teams' content on social media	5,6%	-	15,5%	2,8%	40,8%	30,8%	38%	66,4%
Drivers'	5,6%	-	29,6%	4,7%	29,6%	29,9%	35,2%	65,4%

content on social media								
Other creators' content on social media	7%	0,9%	31%	13,1%	35,2%	46,7%	26,8%	39,3%
Grand Prix's broadcasting	4,2%	1,9%	8,5%	7,5%	33,8%	21,5%	53,5%	69,2%
Shows related with F1	26,8%	5,6%	50,7%	51,4%	15,5%	25,2%	7%	17,8%
Documentaries related with F1	9,9%	8,4%	50,7%	49,5%	23,9%	21,5%	15,5%	20,6%
The official site of F1	19,7%	5,6%	38%	25,2%	29,6%	40,2%	12,7%	29%

Source: Survey done, extracting the results myself

As can be seen in *table 4*, these include only some of the options and generalize specific types of content, inside which we can make further distinctions. However, it is possible to notice how much of the 'new content' or the one which is more linked to social media and the transmediality experienced in the last year is more consumed by women: this is the case for teams', drivers' or other content creators' content, but also of shows related with Formula 1. The official site is also more used by women, with 40,2% claiming to use it often, while even the own broadcasting has been marked by more women as watched frequently, with a higher percentage of men marking it as a 'never-done activity':

Ver a las escuderías tan involucradas también, porque han cogido muchísima más presencia ahora en redes sociales y se les nota que quieren intentar llegar a más gente. A mí me parece súper guay lo que están haciendo Racing Bulls con Lawson y Hadjar. Me parecen vídeos muy focalizados en hacerse virales, como son todos los audios más trending o más virales, los veo muy enfocados en llegar a más gente y sobretodo a más chicas, porque encima son TikToks que les saldrían más a chicas, no a chicos [It's also nice to see the teams so involved, because they've gained a lot more presence on social media now, and you can tell they want to reach more people. I think what Racing Bulls is doing with Lawson and Hadjar is super cool. I think the videos are very focused on going viral, since all the most trending or viral audios are. I see them as very focused on reaching more people, especially more girls, because they're TikToks that would be more suitable for girls, not boys] (Interviewee 4)

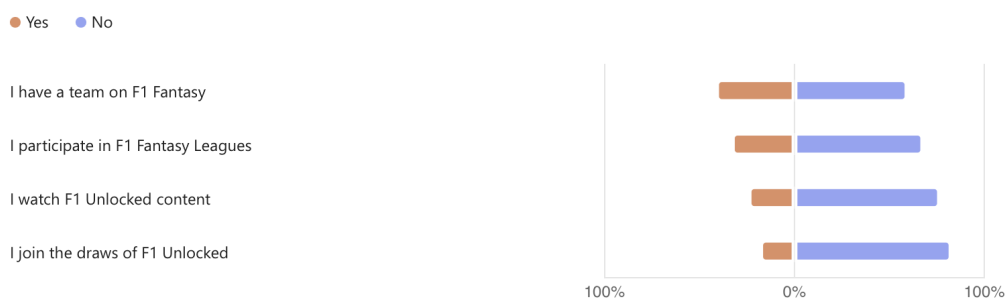
“Todos los nuevos medios han ayudado a que nos introdujeramos en el deporte” [All new media have helped us to get into the sport], were Interviewee 1's words when talking about the mediatization of Formula 1. Besides the different media, there's the attempts of interacting with the audience as well, carrying out different initiatives like developing F1 Fantasy or F1 Unlocked. Once again, the percentages have been higher between the women surveyed, with the most carried out activity being having a team on F1 Fantasy (50,5% of the female respondents, in opposition to the 26,8% of male ones) while the lowest frequented activity constituted joining the draws of F1 Unlocked (23,4% of the females surveyed vs 9,9% of males).

Figure 18

Activity on joining the F1 app initiatives

29. What about F1 Fantasy and Unlocked? Specify if you do the following things or not:

[More details](#)



Source: Microsoft Teams, drawn from the survey made

Additionally, many are the ones who claim that Liberty Media's objective of attracting younger and new audiences has been accomplished with *Drive to Survive*, which has been used as derogatory in many cases thanks to its narrative and dramatization, something admitted even by the audiences who have followed and continue to follow this product:

Mi primera carrera fue Bahrein 2024, entonces claro, yo sentía que me faltaba un poco de contexto. Sabía que no iba a aprender todo en un documental porque obviamente sé hasta dónde alcanza y está hecho más bien casi como una telenovela, porque es literalmente chisme, pero pensé que estaba bien para saber, y me sirvió un poco para conocer a los pilotos y ver en qué equipos habían estado antes... pero luego obviamente se te hace un poco corto si de verdad te gusta el deporte, por lo que luego yo ya empecé a documentarme más [My first race was Bahrain 2024, so of course, I felt like I was lacking a bit of context. I knew I wasn't going to learn everything in a documentary because obviously I know how far it goes and it's made more like a soap opera, because it's literally gossip, but I thought it was good to know, and it helped me get to know the drivers a bit and see in what teams they'd been before... but then it obviously feels short if you really like the sport, so then I started to do more research] (Interviewee 4, 2025).

Becoming a starting point for many inside the audiences, it is important to notice how many of them keep on actually following the sport. Although the hyper mediatization of these practices has often been criticized, it has also been supported by others:

Hay mucha gente que se olvida de que ahora estamos viviendo en un mundo que es cambio constante y que necesitamos estimulación todo el rato para

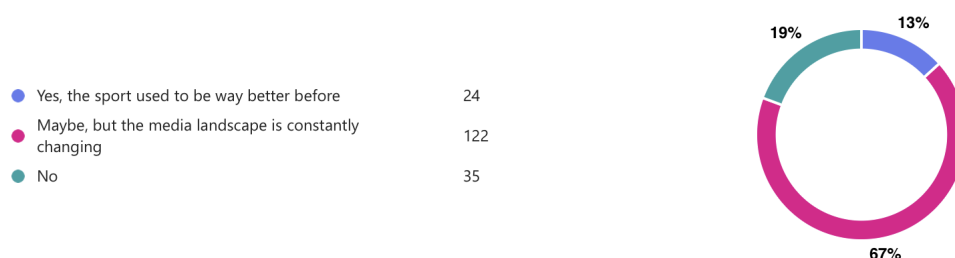
mantenernos enganchados, que mucha culpa la tienen las redes pero es el mundo en el que estamos viviendo. Como no cambie el deporte, el deporte se termina. Si no se adapta al mundo en el que estamos viviendo y se queda en una cosa que no tiene casi representación mediática o no tiene presencia en redes sociales, al final no lo va a conocer nadie, y con lo caro que es, se termina [There are many people who forget that nowadays we live in a world that is constant change and that we need stimulation all the time to stay engaged, that much of the blame lies on social media but it's the world we're living in. If the sport doesn't change, the sport is over. If it doesn't get adapted to the world we're living in and it remains as something that has almost no media representation or presence on social media, in the end no one will know about it, and with how expensive it is, it's over] (Interviewee 4, 2025).

Figure 19

Percentages on the ruin of the sport

41. Do you think magnifying the sport and fictionalizing it has ruined it?

[More details](#)



Source: Microsoft Teams, drawn from the survey made

Argued by others, the majority (67,4%) of the respondents said that the magnification and fictionalization of Formula 1 could be considered as a way for ruining the sport, but that ‘the media landscape is constantly changing’. On the other hand, more people claimed directly that it wasn’t being ruined (19,3%). Following the obvious case of *Drive to Survive* that has been mentioned before, 27,1% of the women claimed to have watched all seasons, in contrast to 19,7% of men. On the other hand, 45% of men have watched some, being this percentage a bit higher by the female respondents (58,9%).

Finally, 14% of women admit they haven't watched the docuseries nor are planning on watching it, while this grows to 35,2% of the men:

Si el objetivo es atraer a más gente, imagínate que de 10 personas que ven la serie, 8 se interesan. Y de esas 8, al final 3 se quedan porque les gusta la acción en pista y todo lo que tiene que ver. Pues son 3 personas nuevas que no hubiesen llegado de otra manera, entonces a mí no me parece mal porque acaba atrayendo a nueva gente, que es lo que buscaba Liberty Media al hacer la serie, pero sí hay que tener en cuenta que el producto que se vende no es más que una película [If the goal is to attract more people, imagine that out of 10 people who watch the show, 8 are interested. And of those 8, 3 end up staying because they like the action on track and everything that goes with it. Well, that's 3 new people that wouldn't have arrived otherwise, so I don't think it's a bad thing because it ends up attracting new people, which is what Liberty Media was looking for when making the series. But you have to keep in mind that the product that is sold is nothing more than a movie] (Interviewee 2, 2025).

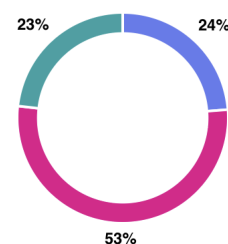
Figure 20

Percentages on following Drive to Survive

37. Do you follow **Drive to Survive**?

[More details](#)

● Yes, I've watched all the seasons	43
● I've watched some	96
● No, and I'm not planning on watching it	42



Source: Microsoft Teams, drawn from the survey made

Therefore, despite many of the people claiming they love to watch things related to F1, be it shows, documentaries or movies, many claim their enjoyment is limited by the actual knowledge they have of the sport, being aware that these products don't represent

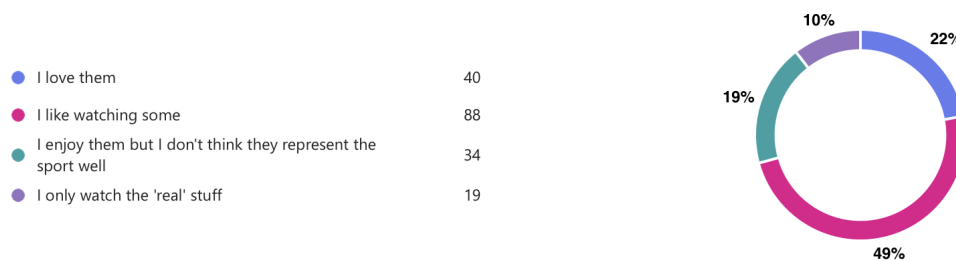
the sport well, although many claimed to watch some quite accurate and technical ones, like the ones included in DAZN.

Figure 21

Percentages on watching F1 related things

38. Do you like watching F1 related things? (movies, shows, documentaries...)

[More details](#)



Source: Microsoft Teams, drawn from the survey made

➤ **Struggles and stereotypes in a changing media landscape**

The growing number of female audiences in Formula 1 has been accompanied by many struggles and stereotypes that, despite slowly fading, still persist in society nowadays. When asked to describe the male fandom of Formula 1, the most common word was ‘toxic’, while others that were also often repeated included ‘judgmental’, ‘aggressive’ and ‘misogynistic’:

Los chicos saltan a la mínima, se creen que si eres fan es porque estás idealizando el deporte o porque seguramente has visto los edits que hacen (...) Yo estas Navidades fui de casa rural con unos amigos, y uno empezó a hablar de la Fórmula 1 y de fútbol, y como a mí me gustan pues respondí. Obviamente no me tomaron enserio, diciendo que solo sabía quién era Fernando Alonso y ya está. Ya estoy acostumbrada y hay veces que te da igual pero otras te cabrean mucho y pues empiezas a rebatir, y en mi caso tengo poca paciencia... [The boys jump at the slightest thing, they think that if you're a fan it's because you're idealizing the sport or because you've probably seen the edits they do (...)] This Christmas I went to a rural house with some friends, and one of them started talking about Formula 1 and football, and since I like them, I responded.

Obviously they didn't take me seriously, saying that I only knew who Fernando Alonso was and that's it. I'm used to it now, and sometimes you don't care, but other times they really piss you off and you start to argue, and in my case, I have little patience...] (Interviewee 1, 2025).

A lot of responses also associated female fans with the previously mentioned *Drive to Survive* and with the 'good-looking drivers', undermining their presence in the Formula 1 community. Interviewee 4 recently went under a situation where a video of hers got viral and she had nearly 500 comments of mainly men attacking her:

No sé a qué público llegó, pero fue horroroso. Es que encima a veces estoy acostumbrada a lo típico, sabes, el machirulo de turno que pierde su tiempo comentando, pues vale. Pero la cosa es que todos los comentarios que veía eran así, era muy fuerte [I don't know what audience it reached, but it was awful. It's just that sometimes I'm used to the typical, you know, the macho guy who wastes his time commenting, right. But the thing is, all the comments that I would see were like that, it was really heavy] (Interviewee 4, 2025).

She also said how guys would always criticize no matter what, and she associates this with the idea of them feeling threatened, of what has been known as 'their sport' being taken away from them.

Figure 22

Percentages on dealing with ugly comments

15. Have you ever had to deal with ugly comments from other F1 viewers/fans?

[More details](#)



Source: Microsoft Teams, drawn from the survey made

Question 15 aimed to know more about this, with 45,3% of the people saying they have dealt with ugly comments from other viewers. Although a high response of 33,8% of the male respondents assured to have been in that situation, all of them claimed these

comments had nothing to do with their gender, or that they didn't know. On the contrary, more than half of the female respondents (52,3%) had been in the same scenario, but in their case, 82,1% of these responses said they were caused by their gender. Some of the many comments that were put as examples included: "But do you know what pole is?", "zero wheel knowledge", "name the world champion from 2001", "Do you know what DRS is? You just like F1 because of the drivers", "typical DTS (*Drive to Survive*) fan behavior". This goes back to the ideas established by Pope and Toffoletti, that continue to be present despite the passing of the years.

Figure 23

Percentages on the nature of the ugly comments

16. If yes, have they been related to your gender?

[More details](#)



Source: Microsoft Teams, drawn from the survey made

Although this is constantly seen, unfortunately, good transmedia narratives like the Netflix docuseries try to be taken down by many, degrading the women who watch them or assuming these fans have gotten into the sport thanks to it and therefore their opinions are not valid. While nowadays and each day more, many initiatives are pushed to try and be more inclusive not only on track but also with their audiences, there is still a long way to go, and many men continue to feel superior when watching or discussing Formula 1. Interviewee 3 talked about this, being a person involved in motorsports as well as from the professional side of view: she mentioned several occasions in which she felt uncomfortable, with men also making gross comments about the female drivers of Formula 1 Academy, and she explained how she felt undermined when finding the best spots for taking photographs as an aspiring motorsports photographer, doing better than the men. This also happened in her simracing series:

Yo cuando corría sola sin las chicas de Red Bull que ahora vamos siempre juntas... mi coche es rosa porque me gusta el rosa, no puedo evitarlo. Y el icono es una mujer, porque te dan pocas opciones de mujeres, aunque luego hay como 80 iconos de hombre (...) Sí que me ha pasado de adelantar a alguien, y si te adelanta alguien no pasa nada, pero es el coche rosa de la piloto femenina... y volantazo contra el muro [When I would race along without the Red Bull girls, that we now always go together... my car is pink because I like pink, I can't help it. And the icon is a woman, because they don't give you many options for women, although then there are like 80 icons for men (...) Yes, it has happened to me that I have overtaken someone, and if someone overtakes you it's okay, but if it's the pink car of the female driver, and a swerve into the wall] (Interviewee 3, 2025).

Despite the high number of people agreeing that “throughout the years there are more and more women that follow the sport” (Surveyed person 1, 2025) they also stated how the male presence continues to be major:

There definitely have been changes simply because of the amount of female fans that have entered the sport over the last ~5 years but it's still very hard to be taken seriously as a female fan. (...) Only 10 or so years ago it was pretty much considered a sport for middle aged men and everyone in it acted like it too. With the influx of female fans, F1 has started catering more towards a female audience and the aforementioned middle aged men are angry about it and will say that women are ‘ruining the sport’ instead of enjoying the fact that their favourite sport is gaining popularity (Surveyed person 149, 2025)

Talking about the masculinisation of the sport and the female fanbase, some said how they focus on other things instead: “I think it can be toxic if you only focus on the negatives. It's not easy navigating this sport as a woman, but I try my best to ignore the negative parts and enjoy the positives this community has” (Surveyed person 154, 2025). On the other hand, there was some mention of the F1 Academy and the acceptance of this toxicity in the community thanks to the magnitude of the sport:

With F1 being so popular there will always be an element of toxicity especially in regards to social media, which can be extremely toxic in terms of representation for the drivers. But with the growing female fanbase, I think it adds such a positivity to the sport and not talking about female social media influencers who have no interest in F1, I mean actual female fans/influencers

and also the female drivers from the F1 Academy who genuinely enjoy the sport” (Surveyed person 155, 2025).

Finally, the struggles of women need to be highlighted also from the industrial perspective, as interviewee 3 stated:

Al final Susie Wolff nunca va a ser la directora de... o la jefa de... siempre va a ser la mujer de Toto Wolff. Y mires donde mires, artículo que leas, la palabra ‘la mujer de’ siempre va a salir en algún sitio. Y cuando hablan de él, nunca van a decir el marido de, porque él es el señor Toto Wolff. [In the end, Susie Wolff will never be the director of... or the boss of... she will always be the wife of Toto Wolff. And no matter where you look, no matter which article you read, the word ‘the women of’ will always appear. And when they talk about him, they will never say ‘the husband of’ because he is Mr. Toto Wolff”] (Interviewee 3, 2025).

➤ **Translation to the physical field: circuits, spectacle and women’s involvement in the industry**

Following the statements from before, interviewee 3’s profile is highlighted for having been a Simracing driver for a few years already:

Hace un par de años que entré en la primera carrera oficial y ahora estoy con varias chicas... es que Red Bull es muy proactivo en el sentido de fomentar el pilotaje entre mujeres y tienen toda una comunidad respaldada por un sponsor que tienen y donde hacen ligas de iRacing de F1. Cada año tienen su liga de Fórmula 1 online y cada mes o así hacemos un par de carreras que ponen en directo en Twitch, lo que está bastante bien para dar un poco de visibilidad. (...) Somos unas cuantas, ahora más, porque quieren hacer un equipo femenino de iRacing para competir en eSports y sí que han metido muchas más ahora con esta [It’s been a couple of years since I entered my first official race and now I’m with several girls... Red Bull is very proactive in the sense of encouraging driving among women and they have an entire community supported by some sponsor they have and where they hold F1 iRacing leagues. Every year they have their online Formula 1 league and every month or so we do a couple of races that they broadcast live on Twitch, which is quite good to give a bit of

visibility (...) There are a few of us, now more, because they want to create a female iRacing team to compete in eSport and it's true that they have included many more now with this one] (Interviewee 3, 2025).

These, among others, are initiatives clearly consequence of the transmedia character and the integration of the new and female audiences, including the change of content posted by the teams themselves (as stated before with the case of Racing Bulls, for instance). However, the biggest example we can see is the creation of the Formula 1 Academy, with the first edition taking place in the year 2023:

A mí la Fórmula 1 Academy me gusta solo por el hecho de que puedo ver mujeres en pista. Porque yo cuando hay algo en el Circuito de Barcelona en Montmeló me queda a 1 hora, soy miembro entonces yo voy y lo veo, sea cualquier cosa. Y me cuesta mucho ver a mujeres en la pista. Veo algunas cuando hacen prototipos o Le Mans que sí que hay alguna chica, pero cuando son competiciones de Gran Premio grandes no hay ninguna en pista, más que había una que creo que era Sofía que estaba en la Fórmula 3 el año pasado, que a esa sí que la vi, pero ya no está, por ejemplo. Entonces el tener una categoría en la que pueda haber mujeres en pista me gusta, pero también veo esto de que al final la Fórmula 1 Academy es otro techo de cristal, porque se quedan allí y no pueden aspirar a nada más. Quien gana se va a la Fórmula 4 Regional y te quedas allí tirado porque nadie sube de la Fórmula 4. Entonces me gusta, sí, porque las puedo ver correr y puedo ver cómo ellas se esfuerzan y su día a día como pilotos, pero al final es otra caja donde las metes para que no puedan llegar más alto de alguna forma [I like the Formula 1 Academy simply because I can see women on track. Because when there's something on the Circuit of Barcelona in Montmeló, I'm one hour away. I'm a member, so I go and see it, whatever it is. And it's very hard for me to see women on track. I see some when they have prototypes or at Le Mans, where there are some women, but when it's the big Grand Prix competitions, there aren't any on track. There was one, I think Sofia, that was in Formula 3 last year. Her, I did see her, but she's no longer there, for example. So I like having a category in which there can be women on track, but I also see that in the end, Formula 1 Academy is another glass ceiling, because they stay there and can't aspire to anything more. Whoever wins goes to the Regional Formula 4 and you're left there stranded because no one moves up from Formula 4. So I like it, yes, because I can see

them race and I can see how they strive and their day-to-day life as drivers, but in the end it's another box where you put them in so that they can't go higher in any way] (Interviewee 3, 2025).

Interviewee 2 also expressed his thoughts on the matter, assuring that it's good to see women racing, but that he doesn't think the category made is worth anything, and that changes should be made from the lower category of karting:

No puedes intentar saltarte toda la estructura del karting si quieres de verdad que haya mujeres en motorsport en general, ya no te estoy hablando de meter a una en la F1, ya que hay solo 20 coches. Hace un tiempo leí una reflexión de [Motorsport.es](https://www.motorsport.es) que decía que la diferencia entre chicas y chicos en el karting era de 13% chicas y 87% de chicos. Si hay esa diferencia es probabilidad: solo van a subir los mejores y la gente con dinero. Si quieres que vayan apareciendo más mujeres al final lo que tienes que hacer es meter a chicas en el karting y hacer que se interesen. Si tú te interesas por el deporte a los 25 años da igual quien seas que no vas a llegar, entonces hay que empezar desde pequeño [You can't try to bypass the entire karting structure if you truly want women in motorsport in general, I'm not even talking about getting into F1, since there are only 20 cars. A while ago I read a reflection on [Motorsport.es](https://www.motorsport.es) that said that the difference between girls and boys in karting was 13% girls and 87% boys. If that difference exists, it's probability: only the best and people with money will make it to the top. If you want more women to appear, in the end, what you have to do is get girls into karting and get them interested. If you become interested in the sport at 25, it doesn't matter who you are, you're not going to make it, so you have to start young] (Interviewee 2, 2025).

In spite of this, interviewee 1 stated how this can lead to a further segregation between men and women, creating separated categories for each of them. And while many claim that the Formula 1 cars are made for men, this is also something that has been argued by many female fans: "No me puedes decir que los coches no están preparados para las mujeres. Eso es una excusa muy barata que te han dado y te la has creído y adaptado a tu pensamiento" [You can't tell me that cars aren't designed for women. That's a cheap excuse they've given you, and you've bought it and adapted it to your way of thinking] (Interviewee 3, 2025).

On the other hand, besides the progress already expressed inside the motorsport industry itself, there's also the marketing behind it. This way, a subject that comes into focus nowadays is the presence of social media figures on different Grand Prix. The answer of all the surveyed people was negative, with them stating the importance of the racing itself and not the focus on these figures, or inviting people who don't know anything about the sport:

Yo entiendo que obviamente a los influencers de F1 fuera del mundo de TikTok de F1 no los conoce nadie, y no te digo que les invites, pero por lo menos invita a gente a los garajes o invitados por sponsors o lo que sea como se invita en otro deporte. Al baloncesto va mucha gente famosa también, pero no están allí solo por el show, por el evento o porque es una cosa de ricos. Y luego no veo el sentido de que la Fórmula 1 suba quien ha ido al Gran Premio, porque es literalmente para eso, para que se note que es un deporte guay [I understand that obviously no one knows the F1 influencers outside of the world of F1 Tiktok, and I'm not telling you to invite them, but at least invite people to the garages or invited by sponsors or whatever, like they do in other sports. A lot of famous people go to basketball too, but they're not there just for the show, for the event or because it's a thing for rich people. And then I don't see the point in posting who's gone to the Grand Prix, because it's literally for that, to show that it's a cool sport] (Interviewee 4, 2025).

This situation is mostly seen, however, in the races that take place in the United States. The question of favorite and least favorite track on the F1 calendar was asked at the end of the survey precisely to notice the pattern of the audience in relation to the behavior presented towards certain circuits. Although the answers were very varied, many had one track in common: Las Vegas. With Formula 1 turning into a spectacle, a show delivered to the growing masses, circuits like this one present themselves as nothing more than that, or precisely created because of the conceptions that places like this hold. However, the further extended comments differed quite a lot: "Un circuito urbano que no tiene nada" [An urban circuit that has nothing] (Interviewee 2, 2025), were some of the arguments. But although this was often criticized, not all had something bad to say about the mediatic aspect that joins this circuit, per instance:

Yo tengo una opinión rara de Las Vegas, porque me encantan todos los eventos que hacen para los fans, porque hacen muchísimos meet and greets y eventos en general, y me parece súper guay eso para conectar con los fans. (...) Pero sí que

me parece que hay más sitios... es que hay sitios chulísimos en Estados Unidos donde se podría o construir un circuito o usar uno que ya esté construido, pero que se note que sea de verdad por amor al deporte y por interés a la carrera, a que sea una buena carrera, que pasen cosas y que la gente se lo pase bien, no solo que disfruten en sí lo que es el espectáculo de la Fórmula 1, que es el conocer a los pilotos, que me parece fenomenal que hagan todos los meet and greets, pero se podrían hacer en todos los demás sitios, donde sí que se nota que hay pasión por el deporte, que se hace porque de verdad gusta, y no por la moda de la Fórmula 1 o todos los fans nuevos que puede coger [I have a weird opinion of Las Vegas, because I love all the events they do for the fans, because they do a lot of meet and greets and events in general, and I think it's really cool to connect with the fans (...)] But it's true that I think there are more places... there are really cool places in the United States where they could build a circuit or use one that's already built, but where it's clear that it's truly out of love for the sport and interest in the race, that it's a good race, that things happen and that people have a good time, not just that they enjoy the spectacle of Formula 1 itself, which is meeting the drivers, which I think is great with doing all the meet and greets, but this could be done in all other places where you can see the passion for the sport and that's it's done because people really like it, and not because of the Formula 1 trend or all the new fans it can attract] (Interviewee 4, 2025)

CONCLUSION

Having taken into account the different questions and answers to the survey and the inputs drawn from the interviews, the hypothesis established at the beginning of the work has been proven to be right. This claimed that the female audiences had grown and become very active, with a predominance of this gender being involved in the Formula 1 community.

Although it is necessary to reiterate that the surveyed people do not constitute the majority of the population and that changes can occur on a larger scale, it is still a reference that needs to be taken into account in present and future studies. Thus, the

study shown has aimed to contribute to a field that continues to lack a lot of information. The purpose has been to link the transmediality with the growth of the female audiences of a sport that has yet to be further analyzed in this regard. Considering the sport as a cultural industry and taking into account aspects and theories like the audience reception or the feminist studies, the analysis was further possible thanks to the completion of a survey and several interviews. All of this data only confirmed the statement of the huge increase in the last years of women that follow Formula 1. Besides, and answering to the hypothesis, a big percentage of this number has been drawn from transmedia initiatives linked with the technological developments in the media landscape. This way, many are the new formats and products related to Formula 1 that have been created in the last decade, most of them mainly consumed by women as well. These include the docuseries *Drive to Survive* or the F1 app with interactive tools like the Fantasy Game or voting Driver of the Day. On the other hand, the integration of new female audiences and the attempt of pleasing those and reaching even more has allowed for changes and adaptations inside the own media of Formula 1, like the content posted by the teams, as stated in the example of Racing Bulls.

By building these positive or inviting spaces for women, more women carry out the activities that involve engagement, creativity or proactivity in general. These are some of the descriptions given from the surveyed people when defining the female audiences, and as seen, this gender showed high percentages of posting videos, doing design or carrying out other activities that most of the men didn't do.

But it's also important to note the consequences and nature of all of this: throughout the study it has also been possible to reply to the other two additional questions raised at the beginning, and that are important to understand the actual context and to glance into the future with a transformative mindset. With that, the growing numbers of the Formula 1 category have come to balance quite a lot the percentages of the global female and male audience, although this is still considered to be a 'masculine' sport, and the segregation between both genders is still evident in the way of connecting with others and consuming the sport. Thus, the struggles continue to be existent, as stated by previous authors and checked with most of the surveyed people and interviewees. The many technological changes and transmedia solutions for the adaptation of Formula 1 to the current media landscape have also resulted in a degradation for many of the new

audiences that have come into contact with the sport, and have helped in keeping it alive. Having seen, many are the claims of 'dts fans' in a degrading way, or the assumption of the female viewers due to the physical appearance of the drivers. Their actual knowledge of the sport also comes into question, yet their involvement has been proved to be higher than the one of male audiences, who are not questioned but rather respected from starters.

On the other hand, inside the industry there are constant changes that attempt to make Formula 1 more accessible and inclusive each time, having reviewed some of the biggest initiatives like Formula 1 Academy, despite the controversy of opinions. The aspirations of working in the industry and the progressive appearance of women with jobs in motorsports is also transforming the masculine nature of the sport established from the beginning. Therefore, it's important to keep in mind that we are surrounded by constant changes that will keep on demanding being analyzed, and while this has often been criticised by many, it has also been understood by others. With this, the actual work establishes a first breaking point, tying the concepts previously discussed and linking the activity of the female audiences with a sport like this one, a consequence of the adaptation of the universe of Formula 1 to the transmediality. However, the topic of hyper mediatization is still something to continue to be more seen, and although some of the first symptoms have been presented, future studies will need to carry up from this point on.

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ANNEX

Survey followed for the final thesis and answered by a total of 181 people

1. *What's your gender?*

- ☐ Man
- ☐ Woman
- ☐ Prefer not to say

2. *How old are you?*

- ☐ Under 18
- ☐ 18-24
- ☐ 25-34
- ☐ 35-44
- ☐ Over 45

3. *Where are you from?*

4. *What's your highest level of education?*

- ☐ Primary School
- ☐ High School
- ☐ Bachelor's Degree
- ☐ Master's Degree
- ☐ Doctorate Degree

5. *What's your field of work (or area of studies)*

6. *How long have you been watching Formula 1?*

- ☐ Less than a year
- ☐ 1-3 years
- ☐ 3-5 years
- ☐ 5-10 years

- ☐ 10-20 years
- ☐ Over 20 years

7. *How did you start watching Formula 1? (parents/friends, social media, etc.)*

8. *With what frequency do you watch F1 and how much?*

- ☐ I watch every single race, no matter the timezone
- ☐ I watch all the races but sometimes delayed
- ☐ I watch only the races that are good in my timezone
- ☐ I watch some races and other times I just follow the highlights and social media for the rest
- ☐ I only watch the highlights
- ☐ I just check the results
- ☐ I watch casually so whenever I decide
- ☐ Other

9. *Specify if other:*

10. *How involved are you when watching F1?*

- ☐ I put the races on the background, not paying much attention
- ☐ I pay attention to the races
- ☐ I not only pay attention to the races but also like debating about them with others

11. *How do you usually watch Formula 1?*

- ☐ I just watch by myself
- ☐ I watch Formula 1 with my friends
- ☐ I watch Formula 1 as a family activity
- ☐ Other

12. *Specify if other:*

13. *Would you consider yourself a fan of F1?*

14. Are you in the F1 community/fandom online? (Can be just one platform)

☐ Yes

☐ No

15. Have you ever had to deal with ugly comments from other F1 viewers/fans?

☐ Yes

☐ No

16. If yes, have they been related to your gender?

☐ Yes

☐ Maybe

☐ No

17. In relation to the previous questions (if yes), can you state some examples?

18. Describe the female fandom of F1 in one or two words:

19. Describe the male fandom of F1 in one or two words:

20. Do you think the F1 community is toxic and the sport continues to be very masculinized or have you noticed some changes?

21. How often do you consume the following products of F1?

☐ Videogames

☐ Books

☐ Newspapers

☐ Teams' content on social media

☐ Drivers' content on social media

☐ Other creators' content on social media

☐ Grand Prix's broadcasting

☐ Shows related with F1

☐ Documentaries related with F1

- ☐ The official site of F1

Options to mark: Never / Sometimes / Often / Always

22. *How do you usually watch F1?*

- ☐ Through public broadcasting
☐ Through a paid subscription service

23. *Specify in what channel or paid service:*

24. *Order the following platforms from the one you use the most to consume F1 content outside of the own broadcasting to the one you consume the least for this:*

- ☐ Instagram
☐ Tiktok
☐ Twitter
☐ Youtube
☐ F1 app
☐ Netflix (or others)
☐ Discord
☐ LinkedIn

25. *Do you usually interact with others in the F1 community?*

- ☐ Yes, I'm very active
☐ I see other people interacting but I don't
☐ I'm only interested in the broadcasting itself

26. *In case you interact, with what gender is it usually?*

- ☐ Women
☐ Men
☐ Equal / Haven't noticed

27. *Do you have a fan page of F1?*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

28. *How much do you do each of the following things?*

- ☐ Watch the practice sessions
- ☐ Watch the qualifying
- ☐ Watch the race
- ☐ Post videos about the Grand Prix
- ☐ Post videos about other F1 related things
- ☐ Create F1 related designs
- ☐ Tweet about the Grand Prix
- ☐ Tweet about other F1 related things
- ☐ Reply to comments
- ☐ Vote in polls (ex. Driver of the Day)
- ☐ Attend live events (like watch parties)
- ☐ Watch highlights or analysis videos

Options to mark: Never / Sometimes / Often / Always

29. *What about F1 Fantasy and F1 Unlocked? Specify if you do the following things or not:*

- ☐ I have a team on F1 Fantasy
- ☐ I participate in F1 Fantasy Leagues
- ☐ I watch F1 Unlocked content
- ☐ I join the draws of F1 Unlocked

Options to mark: Yes / No

30. *If you've made someone follow F1, say who (friends, family, strangers on the Internet, etc.)*

31. *Do you want to work in F1?*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ I don't care
- ☐ No

32. *Have you ever attended a Grand Prix?*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I'm going this year

33. *If you've marked yes or I'm going this year, please specify to which one/s:*

34. *What's your favorite and least favorite race track of the calendar and why (history, team affinity, thrill, etc.)*

35. *Have you ever been invited to an F1 related event?*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

36. *Is drama an important factor for you to follow F1?*

- ☐ I only care about the drama ontrack
- ☐ Outside drama and gossips are important to keep me invested in the sport
- ☐ I don't care
- ☐ No

37. *Do you follow Drive to Survive?*

- ☐ Yes, I've watched all the seasons
- ☐ I've watched some
- ☐ No, and I'm not planning on watching it

38. *Do you like watching F1 related things? (movies, shows, documentaries...)*

- ☐ I love them
- ☐ I like watching some

- ☐ I enjoy them but I don't think they represent the sport well
- ☐ I only watch the 'real' stuff

39. *Do you think this 'fictionalization' of the category has helped attract new viewers?*

- ☐ Definitely / It is my case
- ☐ I think so
- ☐ I don't know / No

40. *If you've marked it is my case please elaborate:*

41. *Do you think magnifying the sport and fictionalizing it has ruined it?*

- ☐ Yes, the sport used to be way better before
- ☐ Maybe, but the media landscape is constantly changing
- ☐ No

42. *Have you ever bought merchandising of F1? Select all that apply:*

- ☐ Yes, official of F1 in general
- ☐ Yes, official of a particular driver/team
- ☐ I've bought non official merchandising
- ☐ No