

DH Group Project

Topic proposal

Our project revolves around (some of) the handcraft pieces being displayed in the **Museu Etnològic de Barcelona**. The perfect DH project would integrate each of the pieces registered in their [online catalog](#), but we unfortunately do not have the time or the tools to analyze them all. In consequence, we will only be focusing our study on **the pieces retrieved from Spain and the last colonial territories before the 1898 Disaster** (these are Cuba, the Philippines, Morocco, the Guam island and Equatorial Guinea).

The aims of the project are mainly three:

- a. explore the collection of the Museu Etnològic de Barcelona,
- b. identify the typology and material of the selected handcraft pieces, where were they retrieved from and who was their donor or seller,
- c. compare these categories and find out which handcraft types prevail, observe if the museum owns more pieces manufactured inside the national territory or in the colonial regions and lastly check which institutions have donated or sold these pieces.

Research questions

- Which is the most predominant handcraft typology in the Museu Etnològic de Barcelona? Which is the most common material being used in the selected pieces classified by country? Which is the most common provenance of the selected pieces?
- Is the Museu Etnològic de Barcelona displaying more handcraft pieces from colonial territories or national territories?
- Which number of institutions or individual sellers or donators have a clear relationship with colonial art collecting?

Our project, then, has two parts: the first one is the most ludic one, because we will be uncovering curiosities about these material cultures and comparing the data collected. The purpose is mainly educational, since our project is meant to be interactive and could be useful in art or history classrooms.

The second part constitutes the critical approach to the topic. This project is driven by the idea that European museums usually exhibit artworks of other countries and there's a subjacent connection between the colonial period, the economic and political power and the ownership of art and culture. Through the data analysis, we will demonstrate the previous point.

Methodology

1. We'll create a dataset manually, compiling data of the selected handcraft pieces retrieved from the museum's website (in an Excel file still in progress).
2. We'll make plots based on our dataset (using Python language and Matplotlib, Jonas' code from Colab).
3. We might also use Geopandas to generate a map of the world marking the origin of the pieces.
4. After the data analysis, we'll provide the answers to the research questions.
5. The whole project will be available on a Wordpress website; also the resources, the original database and the Colab code used to generate the plots will be public. Finally, we'll add a [4.0 Creative Commons license](#). If we're able, we'll upload everything on GitHub.
6. We might also put some related articles about the museum problem and encourage other students or researchers to continue the project (in fact one of the principles of Open Science).