



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND ROCK: ANOTHER WAY TO STUDY THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD ECONOMY

RELAÇÕES INTERNACIONAIS E ROCK: OUTRA FORMA DE ESTUDAR A ECONOMIA MUNDIAL CONTEMPORÂNEA

RELACIONES INTERNACIONALES Y ROCK: OTRA MANERA DE ESTUDIAR LA ECONOMÍA MUNDIAL CONTEMPORÂNEA

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ABSTRACT

University students in degree programs that analyze the world economy are not usually very enthusiastic about studying contemporary economic history. However, the teaching and learning system facilitates the use of active methodologies, both in lectures and especially in practical sessions, which encourage greater student participation. In this academic context, it is possible to connect the purely economic content of the subject with a topic that is highly attractive to students: popular music, through its most universal expression of the last seventy years: rock music. This article shows the evolution of the rock phenomenon within the international context of the so-called Third Industrial Revolution. The objective is to demonstrate the appeal that linking an element of protest and social discontent, such as that found in rock, with the most relevant events and elements that have defined the international economic order since the Second World War can generate among students.

Keywords: Contemporary World Economy. International Relations. Globalization. Popular Music. Rock.

RESUMO

Os estudantes universitários de cursos de graduação que analisam a economia mundial geralmente não demonstram grande entusiasmo pelo estudo da história econômica contemporânea. No entanto, o sistema de ensino e aprendizagem facilita o uso de metodologias ativas, tanto em aulas teóricas quanto, principalmente, em aulas práticas, que incentivam uma maior participação dos alunos. Nesse contexto acadêmico, é possível conectar o conteúdo puramente econômico da disciplina com um tema de grande apelo para os estudantes: a música popular, por meio de sua expressão mais universal dos últimos setenta anos: o rock. Este artigo apresenta a evolução do fenômeno do rock no contexto internacional da chamada Terceira Revolução Industrial. O objetivo é demonstrar o apelo que pode ser gerado entre os estudantes ao se associar um elemento de protesto e descontentamento social, como o encontrado no rock, aos elementos mais relevantes que definiram a ordem econômica internacional desde a Segunda Guerra Mundial.

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Palavras-chave: Economia Mundial Contemporânea. Relações Internacionais. Globalização. Música Popular. Rock.

RESUMEN

El alumnado universitario de Grados en los que se analiza la economía mundial no suele mostrarse muy entusiasmado a la hora de abordar el estudio de la historia económica contemporánea. Sin embargo, el sistema de enseñanza-aprendizaje facilita que, tanto en las clases magistrales como especialmente en las prácticas, se utilicen metodologías activas que favorecen una mayor participación de los estudiantes. En ese contexto académico es posible relacionar el contenido puramente económico de la materia con una temática que resulta muy atractiva para el alumnado como es la música popular, por medio de su expresión más universal de los últimos setenta años: el rock. El presente artículo muestra la evolución del fenómeno rock en el contexto internacional de la denominada Tercera Revolución Industrial. El objetivo consiste en demostrar la atracción que puede generar al alumnado la vinculación de un elemento de protesta y descontento social como el que tiene el rock con los hechos y elementos más relevantes que han definido el orden económico internacional desde la Segunda Guerra Mundial.

Palabras clave: Economía Mundial Contemporánea. Relaciones Internacionales. Globalización. Música Popular. Rock.



1 INTRODUCTION

When we talk about contemporary economics, we usually refer to the period known as Industrialization or Industrial Revolution. Its most recent stage, starting with World War II (WWII), is the Third Industrial Revolution. During the meeting, it has been shown that economic events influence the development of international society, in all its areas, including a socio-cultural phenomenon such as popular music. Precisely, its most contemporary and universal expression, rock, serves as a tool for studying the evolution of the world economy in that period, as it is a reflection of the events of an economic nature that determined it.

Rock is thus an attractive element for students of university degrees in which the world economy is analysed. It is true that, in order to make the study of economic history more interesting, different materials have been used, among which the link between literature and this discipline stands out (Allende, 2008). However, the association of a purely academic content with a subject that seduces students even more, such as music, is an effective tool to help them in the study of economics (Tinari & Khandke, 2000: 254).

Rock is "the product of specific political and economic conditions: Keynesian Welfare State, consumer society, progressivity in the development of citizens' rights" (Serbia, 2018: 23). In other words, it was born within the new international economic order and has developed during the aforementioned Third Industrial Revolution. Thus, it can be said that "rock is the foundation for understanding recent history and current events", as well as that "it has been the soundtrack of several changing eras, it describes the world as it is and how young people would like it to be" (Assante, 2008: 8). Moreover, "since the mid-twentieth century, massive social changes have been accompanied by a multitude of people making popular music and many millions more listening to it, dancing to it, living their lives through it" (Ward and Delgado, 2018: 322). In this way, the use of rock (the lyrics of the songs, the vicissitudes of their protagonists, the evolution of the bands, always in a specific historical-economic context) facilitates the use of active methodologies that promote greater participation in class by the students.

Following this approach, a practical experience was launched in the Bachelor's Degree in Business Management at the University of the Basque Country (UPV-EHU), specifically, in the subject Contemporary Economics. This article presents the analysis that has allowed the development of the theoretical and practical content of this subject



to comply with the approach exposed. In this way, the relationship between the configuration of the contemporary world in terms of the prevailing international economic order and the evolution of the rock phenomenon is studied, especially as an element of expression of discontent with the consequences of this model, to which society and mainly young people have resorted. In this sense and in a general way, it can be said that the analysis carried out is both descriptive and explanatory, as well as retrospective, since it analyzes the phenomenon in its context from its origins to the present, paralleling, on the one hand, the most relevant historical events from the establishment of the new international economic order after the Second World War to the period of double crisis caused by the Great Recession and the Holocaust. the Covid-19 pandemic and, on the other, the fundamental milestones of rock since its birth and during its development in that period. At the same time, the research is mainly qualitative; in the case of contemporary economic history, it has been based on the sources of previously published and updated works (Velarde, Allende, & García, 2007; Allende & García, 2010; García, 2011 and 2014), while the sources around popular music and the rock phenomenon are the writings of specialized doctrine. After this analysis, we include a brief reference to the practical experience developed and the results and conclusions obtained.

2 ROCK AS A TOOL FOR STUDYING THE NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER

2.1 BIRTH AND EXPANSION: 1950S AND 1960S

At the end of the Second World War, on October 24, 1945, the Charter of the United Nations entered into force, creating a multilateral system of cooperation to maintain world peace. However, the greatest power of influence in international relations remained in the hands of the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Both superpowers tried to delimit the international scenario in order to control the maximum number of countries and extend the model that each defended (capitalism versus communism), which provoked a continuous indirect confrontation known as the Cold War.

Even before the end of the war, in July 1944, the United Nations International Financial Conference took place in Bretton Woods (New Hampshire, United States), in which the participating countries considered how the world economy would develop after the war. The thesis defended by the Americans, consisting of liberalizing world trade and



promoting it through a new international monetary system, with a solid and stable exchange rate based on the dollar, triumphed. To this end, Bretton Woods laid the foundations for the bodies that would regulate international economic relations within the United Nations system: the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (later the World Bank), created that same year, and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, launched in 1948.

In this context, in the first half of the 1950s, rock was born in the United States. Although there is no unanimity when it comes to setting a date, the following two are taken as guidelines (Sierra i Fabra, 2003: 9): April 12, 1954, the day on which Bill Haley recorded *Rock Around the Clock* and July 5, 1954, the date on which Elvis Presley recorded *That's All Right* in a small studio in Memphis. The truth is that the term *rock and roll* was previously used by rhythm and blues singers to refer to the sexual act, identified as the rhythm to dance to said music, and its origin is in the nautical field, as it refers to the forward and backward movements (rock) and to the sides (roll) of a boat. Rock as such had emerged in the early fifties by the combination of different elements, a mixture of white music (country & western and folk) and, especially, black music (rhythm & blues, boggie woogie and swing). In 1952 Cleveland disc jockey Alan Feed began to use the term *rock and roll* to refer to the songs of the new musical phenomenon, something that other famous broadcasters such as Waxie Maxie in Washington, Hunter Hancock in Los Angeles or Porky Chedwick in Pittsburgh also did, and its use became widespread in 1953.

It was not only a new musical style but much more, because "although it is true that rock is often spoken of as a musical genre, it is more useful to approach the matter by considering it a musical culture in a broader sense" (Keightley, 2006: 156). Music not only has connections with socio-political and cultural issues but is also linked to aesthetic sensibilities and generational affections (Bennett & Rogers, 2016: 37-59), and from its beginnings rock demonstrated this. In this respect, American youth at the time were a post-war generation, the children of those who won World War II. They enjoyed the *American way of life*, while living in a situation of uncertainty and even fear under the threat posed by the Cold War and nuclear weapons. Young people "no longer wanted to listen to the usual songs, which only talked about topics that were comfortable for the established society, because they felt disillusioned" (Vázquez, 2019: 3). They turned to rock because "they did not only want to join a society



of consumers but also wanted to propose solutions to an extremely traditional and socially and economically unequal society" (Stornaiolo, 2019: 35).

Cinema, through Marlon Brando in *The Wilde One* and James Dean, icon of rebellious youth "without a cause", had shown them that they did not have to limit themselves to letting themselves be carried away between puberty and adulthood; "they wanted their own symbols of prestige, their own language and, for the first time in history, they did not want to be like their parents" (Assante, 2008: 12). It was precisely cinema that favoured the success of rock by using it as a soundtrack and "made that music instantly identifiable and famous" (Méndez, 2004: 36). Rock strengthened that attitude of protest against the established rules that was expressed in cinema.

When Elvis Presley recorded his demo in July 1954, there were already artists who composed and performed rock and roll such as Bill Haley, Jerry Lee Lewis, Chuck Berry, Roy Orbison, Little Richard, Buddy Holly, Carl Perkins, Bo Diddley, Gene Vincent or Fats Domino. However, thanks to his personality, his voice and his charisma, Elvis personified the break with popular music in force until then and surpassed the cultural sphere by being the image of the transgression of the traditions and values prevailing in a society as conservative as the American one in the mid-fifties. His cocky attitude in front of the television cameras – by then a common element in American homes – his humble origins and his recourse to the music of the marginalized of society, earned him the sympathy of young people who, like him, wanted to change their lives and the world. Elvis personified rock that "freed young people from the constant harassment to which tradition subjected them" and "its echo reached all corners of the planet" (Sánchez, 2012: 17).

The generalization of rock coincided with the development of capitalist economic miracles. The Western countries, once recovered from the economic consequences of the Second World War, enjoyed a period of strong and stable economic growth from 1950 onwards that lasted until 1973. The average annual rates of increase in GDP were around 5%, inflation was contained at around 4% and the unemployment rate did not exceed 3%. The implementation of Keynesianism, mainly in Europe, was crucial. Indeed, the existence of left-wing governments in many Western countries facilitated the application of the ideas of the British economist J. M. Keynes. In this way, state interventionism in the economy increased, through the promotion of public enterprise and even through nationalizations of companies; new public spending policies were promoted; and even the public deficit was assumed to achieve full employment. Likewise, the so-called welfare



state was structured, with the State assuming the general coverage of the health, educational or retirement expenses of its citizens. Other reasons that also contributed to economic development were the low price of raw materials and fuels, the technological advances of the Third Industrial Revolution, a high rate of sustained investment, an improvement in the company's management systems and in the allocation of resources, as well as a period of consensus and agreement in the field of labor relations.

However, from another perspective, the increase in income brought with it an increase in consumption (in principle, positive for economic growth) and the generalization in Western countries of the mass market model for standardized durable goods (private cars, white goods and brown goods) previously existing in the United States. This was facilitated by the development of marketing and propaganda, both graphic and radio and television. The *American way of life* was internationalized, generalizing in capitalist countries, and with it went rock.

Indeed, the commercial explosion of rock took place in 1956, with the conversion of Elvis Presley into a mass phenomenon that went beyond the borders of the United States and reached Europe. The gateway was the United Kingdom, where rock immediately caught on and local figures such as Lonnie Donegan, Tommy Steele or Cliff Richard began to emerge (with the Drifters first and with the Shadows later). Starting from these two rock metropolises, it is evident that rock has spread and imposed itself in non-English-speaking cultures through *pop-rockization* in phases similar to those in which rock in general has evolved (Regev, 2013: 106), although the general trend has been marked by Anglo-Saxon artists (Egan, 2009: 12). as will be seen in the examples we offer throughout this text. In different European countries, rock was introduced rapidly, adapting to music styles and social norms, and with attempts by the respective local music industries to create their own versions, as happened, for example, in France, Italy and Germany (Kouvarou, 2015).

In these initial years, all the artists mentioned, black and white, had an overwhelming success among the youth. When the fight against racial segregation took shape in the United States, rock broke down the barriers between black and white because "it managed to get black music out of the *ghetto* by becoming a favorite of young people of all races" (Méndez, 2004: 27). Unlike the musical genres prior to 1950, each of which had its corresponding audience model "according to an infinity of patterns, including racial, with rock there was a progressive elimination of these barriers that led to



its universality as a cultural reference" (De la Fuente, 2007: 119). It was the reflection of a phenomenon that was spreading like a new religion among young people around the world, whose dogma consisted of the dismantling of authority and the established order. For this reason, the authorities of the superpowers confronted in the Cold War coincided in seeing a danger in rock, since in the United States it was considered "a communist conspiracy destined to contaminate the healthy American youth" and in the Soviet Union "a malevolent resource of the Yankees to contaminate the healthy communist youth" (Sierra i Fabra, 2003: 29).

Young people flocked to the concerts of their idols and to the stores to buy their records. In this way, young people came into existence economically speaking, which meant that those who thought of doing business found their opportunity. The record industry made rock its "flagship product," controlling both artists and fans. Thus, the phenomenon of *screen stars* emerged, created by the most conservative companies and stations in order to combat the rebellious spirit of rock but using its form and image and promoting the *American way of life*. It was an action taken advantage of by the authorities to exercise a certain social control, especially of the youth, and thus "the mobilization of resources by the elites to appropriate a subcultural mass movement is observed" (Cepeda, 2009: 93). It should also not be forgotten that "the songs of the rebels and the disadvantaged always pose a threat and therefore have to be purified or reinterpreted" (Gioia, 2020: 15), which is why the aforementioned *screen stars* were used, copies of Elvis Presley created to star in insipid films whose soundtracks they performed, with songs that used the rhythm of rock to express lyrics that obviated the internal problems of the United States, such as racism or the witch hunts of McCarthyism, and international ones, such as those derived from the Cold War.

In the early 1960s, the subversive spirit of rock lost strength, with a second generation clearly influenced by *screen stars*. The unease over the Cuban missile crisis (which almost broke out into a new world war) and the beginning of the sending of troops to Vietnam were barely reflected. In addition, several figures disappeared, some temporarily, such as Chuck Berry or Jerry Lee Lewis, fleeing from the attacks received from puritanism and conservatism, and others definitively, such as Buddy Holly or Ritchie Valens, who died in accidents.

As rock languished in the United States, rhythm and blues artists added soul and funk to their songs, achieving a fresh and upbeat result. All of them came from the same



record label, the historic Motown, such as The Supremes, The Marvellettes, The Temptations, Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder, James Brown or Aretha Franklin. On the other hand, the rebellious nature was maintained in folk singers such as Peet Seeger, Woody Guthrie, Joan Baez or Bob Dylan. The latter chose to electrify his music and gave rock a new impetus. Others followed that path such as Simon & Garfunkel and Neil Young's Buffalo Springfield.

Unlike what was happening in North America, Europe "was ready for this cultural revolution", so that "wild and sinful rock and roll would be reborn in England" (Stornaiolo, 2019: 26), recovering its initial philosophy, both in attitude and sound. In addition to The Beatles and The Rolling Stones, groups such as The Animals, The Kinks, The Hollies, The Zombies, The Small Faces and The Who emerged. British bands made rock continue to be the vehicle for expressing the experiences and problems of youth. The success of the Beatles was overwhelming from the beginning, especially among the new generations who left aside the most classic rock, so that "the pop market had become almost an exclusive preserve for teenagers" (Frith, 2006: 143). However, the Rolling Stones, closer to rhythm and blues, were a harsh response to the Beatlemania that came from marginalization, which made them worthy of the image of bad boys, very attractive also among young people.

Between 1964 and 1968 there were exciting stylistic changes. In the same way that the creative dialogue between black and white musicians had driven the birth of rock'n'roll in the 50s, the sounds from the United States and the United Kingdom were interwoven, consolidating rock (which lost the suffix "'n'roll") and its universal success (Keitghtley, 2006: 163-166). Rock continued to expand around the world, mixing with a multitude of musical and cultural expressions. In addition, in Western countries the segment of the population under 25 years of age already accounted for a high percentage of the total population, so that young people enjoyed unprecedented social visibility and economic power, favoring the music industry to turn music with an anti-mass vocation into a massively successful product.

From 1965 onwards, psychedelia took over the stages and acid rock gave sound to the hippie movement that had been born in San Francisco and that "gave rise to an alternative generation that practiced utopia for a few years" (Assante, 2008: 20). From this era were Jimmy Hendrix, The Big Brothers with Janis Joplin, The Doors, The Jefferson Airplane, or The Grateful Dead. It was the great moment of sex, drugs and



rock'n'roll, as well as *peace and love*. The first generation born after the Second World War was in their twenties and wondered how such barbarity was possible at a time when numerous armed conflicts were taking place as a result of the Cold War and in the context of the decolonization process. Critical thinking became widespread by which young people, once again, came to the conclusion that they did not want a future like the one their parents had had. All this "turned the sixties into a mythical decade: the time of rebellion, the decade of protests and dreams" (Méndez, 2004: 104).

It is not surprising that this context favoured the organisation of large festivals, whose message was a resounding no to wars. In June 1967, the Monterey festival took place in California, which was a massive demand for peace in the face of the armed conflicts that existed in the world, as a result of the Cold War, and initiated the movements against the Vietnam War. From then on, the festivals became massive, both in terms of audience and participating musicians. In August 1968 the Isle of Wight festival took place in the United Kingdom (which had two more editions) and a year later, in August 1969, the legend of Woodstock arrived in New York.

Rock-protest, imbued with hippy and psychedelia, reached its zenith, being the reflection of the most relevant events of the moment (extolling some and denouncing others): the Prague Spring, the French May, the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Bob Kennedy, the intensification of the Vietnam War, the national liberation movements in developing countries, etc. Rock became the mouthpiece of the counterculture, exhibiting *anti-establishment* values on radio and in concerts, encouraging the population to think independently and adopt values contrary to those they had been imbued with in childhood (Mitchell, 2005: 8).

Rock was successful all over the world and spread mainly to Western countries. In countries with dictatorships, such as Spain, Greece or Portugal, it had to face censorship, although local groups proliferated. In communist countries, rock was strengthened as a countercultural movement that had to suffer the obstacles of the authorities, who considered it a capitalist danger. In Africa, the last throes of colonialism and wars (for independence or as a result of the Cold War and the interests of the former metropolises) did not leave much room for musical leisure. In Latin America, corruption in democracies, dictatorships – in many cases driven by the United States – and internal conflicts prevented rock from becoming widely widespread. In those countries where relatively stable economic growth was achieved (Brazil, Mexico, Uruguay, Argentina or Chile), it



was possible to create bands that enjoyed some success. At first, they had to face "an official nationalism of the autochthonous", creating "a legacy far from the established musical and cultural traditionalism" (Garibaldo and Bahena, 2015: 196). Subsequently, the protest or social song became widespread as a response to the discontent of the population, which was censored by governments and especially made young people the object of repression. As a consequence, "rock will envelop the youth, allowing them to unite to defend themselves and rebel against any attempt at submission, forming a new identity that had as its main characteristic a more liberal and revolutionary thought" (Robayo, 2015: 59).

2.2 CRISIS AND RECOVERY: 1970S AND 1980S

From the end of the 1960s until 1973, the reasons and causes that would explode the harsh crisis of the seventies were accumulating. Paradoxically, the long and constant period of high productivity and profits, which led to greater consumption capacity for the population, increased demand to a point where it ended up putting upward pressure on prices. At the same time, the price of raw materials (fuel and energy), which had remained cheap until the late 1960s, also began to rise. These raw materials came from developing countries, some of which had begun industrialization processes that were generating some competition in some sectors for North America and Europe. It should be remembered that a large part of the industrial development of these countries took place through foreign investment from developed Western countries, which took advantage of cheap labor, tax advantages and scarce labor and environmental regulation in the textile, steel, shipbuilding or mining sectors.

The system faltered in 1971 when Nixon suspended the convertibility of the dollar, taking out of the system the currency that was the foundation of the entire system of international payments and letting it float in the markets. The Vietnam War had generated a significant deficit in the United States, which was financed with an increase in the amount of dollars to pay the powerful American arms industry. The dollars issued went to the countries that had assets in that currency, which began to protest because they were receiving the inflationary pressure generated in the United States. As a result, the dollar was devalued by 15% and, since most of the world's large companies had dollar reserves and assets, they were all affected. In October 1973,



the entire Bretton Woods system broke down when, as a result of the Yom Kippur War, the countries of the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries decided to act against the West by reducing oil production by 25% and increasing prices by 400%.

The economic crisis erupted and its consequences were immediately felt: corporate profits fell or disappeared and investment rates fell, business closures, unemployment rates above 20% in many countries (with 40% youth unemployment), runaway inflation, uncontrolled price increases (even leading to stagflation), etc. The attitude of the authorities was passive because a temporary crisis was expected and as it dragged on it became much more difficult to adopt adjustment measures that would hit citizens hard.

Prior to the outbreak of the crisis, the beginning of the decade had been a very creative period in rock, which marked the zenith of its history, "a time without possible parallel, the end of a staircase that then seemed to have no end. Ideas, sensations, sounds, everything was possible and everything was" (Sierra i Fabra, 2003: 194). And this despite bad news such as the breakup of the Beatles and the deaths of figures such as Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin in 1970 and Jim Morrison a year later. As far as styles are concerned, it was the great moment of progressive rock with bands like Jethro Tull, Pink Floyd, Genesis, King Crimson, Supertramp or Yes. At the same time, bands like Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple, Judas Priest or Black Sabbath hardened the sound, creating hard-rock as a prelude to heavy (and even punk, as happened with bands like MC5). Others opted for an intimate pop-rock, such as soloists Carole King, Joni Mitchell or James Taylor. In the United States, country-rock gained strength with The Eagles and Credence Clearwater Revival and southern rock with Lynyrd Skynyrd and Allman Brothers Band. Reggae came from Jamaica, with Jimmy Cliff, Peter Tosh or the great Bob Marley and the Wailers. Glam-rock had its moment of glory with David Bowie, The New York Dolls or Roxy Music.

When the record industry was at its peak, turning out for the first time to be more profitable than film and television, the crisis broke out, which affected rock in various ways. Citizens began to have less money for leisure, so fewer records were bought and concerts were attended to a lesser extent. Prices rose because the raw material for the production of vinyl and cassettes had become more expensive. In



addition, after the great creative moment at the beginning of the decade, a lack of new ideas became widespread, so record companies began to rely only on their great artists, without betting on new bands. To the widespread disappointment at the lack of political achievements that were expected from the revolution that rock was promoting in the late sixties, was added the fact that many rock musicians had grown fed up with the revolution, promoting a shift in emphasis from a radical genre to one based on entertainment. who became docile and apathetic towards politics (Mitchell, 2005: 16). In this way, young people ceased to identify with the figure of the rocker, far from the common people and the hard daily life of ordinary young people, who had to resign themselves to seeing every week on television news about the continuous rise in prices and the closure of factories; "they no longer even had that old rock, protest and slum, to avoid, with creative energy, illiteracy and the lack of perspectives" (Méndez, 2004: 143).

The good news for rock came from outside the United States. On the one hand, Jamaican reggae, which at its warm pace united a message of clear social and revolutionary content. On the other hand, new proposals emerged from the United Kingdom with interesting figures such as Queen or Mike Olfield. The entry of this country into the European Communities served to flow new ideas in the old continent and numerous bands used it as a bridge to international success. This was the case with the Dutch Shacking Blue and Focus, the Germans Tangerine Dream and Can or the Swedes Blue Suede and Abba. The latter were the pinnacle of *Europop* (Frith, 2006: 138).

In the United Kingdom, a short-lived genre would emerge but fundamental for the recovery of the original spirit of rock: punk. At the end of 1976 the British youth, dissatisfied and without references, concluded that there was no future for them. *No Future* was the motto of a protest movement without rules that musically returned to the simplism of the original rock (guitar, bass, drums) but with a very rough sound and very direct and offensive lyrics. "Far beyond the immediate uproar it caused, we can thank punk for awakening consciences" (Assante, 2008: 40). In addition, punk highlighted and made its own the DIY (*do it yourself*) movement, a concept that expresses the possibility of creating, repairing or modifying things without the need to go to an expert or professional (Bennett, 2018: 133). The charismatic band was the Sex Pistols, although there were others such as The Damn, Generation X



or The Misfits. In the United States, some bands adopted this attitude, such as The Ramones, and artists such as Lou Reed or Iggy Pop approached it.

Punk, as such, died before the end of the decade due to the attitude of the big record companies. Since young people asked for punk, they signed and created many bands sweetening their message (in the style of what had happened with *screen stars* in the United States) so the reason for punk's existence disappeared. The bands that survived evolved into other trends such as The Clash, The Jam, The Specials or Madness. Once punk was overcome, groups emerged in the United Kingdom that were mainly looking for quality, such as The Pretenders, The Police or Dire Straits.

In the United States, another escape route was developed in the face of the harshness of the crisis and its consequences. People went to the discotheques of the big cities, because "they wanted to go out, have fun, forget about daily hardships, unemployment, poorly paid work or an uncertain future", which gave rise to disco *sound* (Allende, 2007: 114). Its representatives were, among others, Donna Summer, Earth-Wind & Fire, Bonney M, Kool & the Gang, Village People or The Jackson Five.

The importance of festivals was maintained, but the crisis and the international context meant that they had specific objectives. Examples include the *No Nukes* festival in New York in September 1979 to denounce nuclear disasters and demand respect for the environment, and the Kampuchea festival, organized by Paul McCartney and held in London in December 1979 to protest the massacres of dictator Pol Pot and to help Cambodian refugees in Thailand.

Meanwhile, in other regions of the planet, rock was persecuted and repressed and even banned. This was the case in different Latin American countries and, as a consequence, "only young people from the upper classes and some from the middle class, mostly university students, could consume" rock, which "caused it to be seen as an elitist mode of art." It would not be until the eighties when rock "ceased to be simply an alien cultural expression associated with wealthy classes to become that which expressed the most unjust economic realities of the region" (Garibaldi and Bahena, 2015: 199, 201).

In 1978, faced with the second onslaught of the crisis, with a new rise in the price of oil, countries decided to adopt harsh reaction measures. The first were the governments of Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom and Ronald Reagan in



the United States, which resorted to the formula of financial orthodoxy based on a drastic cut in public spending. Keynesianism was abandoned and neoliberalism was chosen: limiting public spending by reducing the presence of the State in economic activity to a minimum, even in sectors vital to the population such as health or education, replacing it with the private sector, which was facilitated by privatising public companies and making labour relations more flexible (low wages and cheap dismissals). Along with this, interest rates and taxes were raised and the welfare state was called into question. Citizens had to suffer the serious consequences of the crisis, as well as the harsh measures to overcome it.

All Western countries followed, to a greater or lesser extent, the path initiated by the United Kingdom and the United States. Even those with left-wing governments, and all those who turned to the International Monetary Fund for financial aid, whether industrialized or developing, had to comply with neoliberal measures to receive aid. Thus, during the second half of the 1980s, economic growth returned, with the recovery of the main magnitudes: a fall in inflation, a reduction in the deficit, a recovery in the investment rate, an increase in industrial production and corporate profits, and growth in foreign trade. However, although employment recovered, there was no return to the low unemployment rates of the 1950s and 1960s. Neoliberalism ended up demonstrating that it is possible to grow economically and improve macroeconomic data, but with considerable unemployment rates.

The implementation of neoliberalism in the early eighties coincided with several tragic news in the world of rock, such as the death of John Lennon and Bob Marley, as well as the dissolution of Led Zeppelin (due to the death of its drummer John Bonham). However, both because it was a reflection of the population's eagerness to forget about the crisis and the harsh measures to face it, and because of the possibilities that would arise when it began to be overcome, the 1980s were characterized by a wide diversity of styles and genres, some of which seemed to come out of the very definition of the rock phenomenon. In addition, the recording industry turned to television (the most striking channel being MTV, Music Television) to promote different musical styles, which meant giving more relevance to the image. Thus, it happened that "mediocre artists gained fame thanks to very careful videos, while more talented singers had to make an effort to promote their music" (Bergamini, 2006: 52). Moreover, the music video "was used in



terms of trivialization" and "ended up becoming a political weapon of control" (De la Fuente, 2007: 129).

In North America, several solo rockers who performed at the front of excellent bands with a very guitar-like sound became icons of the American working class, such as Bruce Springsteen, Tom Petty or John Cougar Mellencamp. There were also those with a more commercial touch such as Huey Lewis or Bryan Adams. Along with them, soloists and members of successful bands in the seventies consolidated solo careers and were included in Adult *Oriented Rock*: Stevie Nicks (Fleetwood Mac), Don Henley (The Eagles), Robert Plant (Led Zeppelin), Phil Collins (Genesis), Steve Winwood (Traffic), Sting (The Police), Tina Turner, etc.

As a development of hard rock came what for many was the salvation of rock: heavy, which to a certain extent became since then the reference in terms of rock sound. From its inception, two currents were distinguished. On the one hand, the rock-heavy developed by hard-rock bands already successful in the seventies such as ACDC, Scorpions, Kiss or Aerosmith, to which new groups such as Whitesnake, Deff Leppard, The Cult, Bon Jovi, Guns'n'Roses or Europe were added. On the other, heavy-metal, with bands such as Van Halen, Iron Maiden, Motorhead, Helloween or Manowar. In part, hard rock absorbed the contestative nature of punk in a way that became "an attack by young people, both artists and audiences, on the laws of harmony. With him they mocked bourgeois behavior" (Bergamini, 2006: 44).

Pop expanded its stylistic frontiers, ranging from guitar pop-rock to the most electronic sound. Among those who reinforced the presence of keyboards and technological sound (techno-pop) are Yazoo, Pet Shop Boys, OMD, Human League or Depeche Mode. With a melodic and commercial tone, but of quality, there were Spandau Ballet, Duran Duran, Wham and mega stars such as Michael Jackson, Prince and Madonna. With a greater presence of guitars and social commitment in their lyrics, bands such as U2, Simple Minds, Manic Street Preachers or Talking Heads achieved success. And within what was called *New Wave* were included groups from post-punk such as Eurythmics, The Cars, The Go-Go's or Men at Work, and all those that were included in *indie* or alternative rock, many of them cult bands that ended up achieving international success such as The Smiths, The Cure, B-52's, as well as bands with a high social and political commitment, such as REM, Nick Cave & The Bad Sees or Midnight Oil.

As a new style, rap emerged, further away in sound from rock but which, as a



means of protest to denounce the marginal situation of the black American population, maintained the rebellious spirit of rock. The first superstars of this style were Run-DMC, LL Cool J or KRS-One. Some artists were very commercial like MC Hammer or Vanilla Ice, others reflected a greater commitment like Public Enemy or De la Soul. On the other hand, *world music was internationalized*. It was non-Anglo-Saxon music with roots, which was promoted in the middle of the decade by artists such as Peter Gabriel and Paul Simon with stars such as Yossou N'Dour or Khaled. Some reached bestsellers such as the South African Jhonny Clegg and the French of Maghreb origin Mano Negra.

The 1980s were marked by festivals and joint activities by artists and bands on humanitarian issues. With the aim of raising money to deal with famines in Africa, the albums *Band Aid* in 1983 and *USA for Africa* in 1984 stood out. In July 1985, the Live Aid festival took place in the cities of London and Philadelphia, the proceeds of which went to the fight against poverty in the most needy countries. During 1988, the international tour *Human Rights Now!*, in support of Amnesty International. Taking into account the recipients of the messages launched, it can be seen that the rock of the eighties, unlike what happened in the previous decade, "did not try to put an end to traditional institutions but simply to improve them" (Bergamini, 2006: 57).

2.3 GLOBALIZATION AND THE NEW CRISIS: THE 1990S AND THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

The 1990s began with the end of the Cold War and the fall of the communist bloc, which left capitalism as the dominant economic model in a context of growing interdependence between countries, a phenomenon known as globalization. In the economic sphere, this phenomenon is characterized by the integration of national economies into a world market economy where modes of production and capital movements are configured on a planetary scale and in which multinational companies play a relevant role.

In 1995, surpassing and expanding the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the World Trade Organization was created to promote not only the liberalization of trade in goods, but also in services and ideas. In this way, the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank were established as the leaders of the world economy in the context of globalization. There is no doubt that the activity of these organizations will have successful results because throughout the decade the Western



countries will enter a path of constant growth, including most of those from the former communist bloc and many developing countries. Likewise, new dynamic poles of growth will emerge, such as Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, and other emerging economies. However, the recommendations of these organizations to countries with economic problems will consist of a series of measures practically identical to those that neoliberalism had put in place in the previous decade to get out of the crisis, very costly for less developed countries to comply with.

On the other hand, let us remember that neoliberalism, although it managed to overcome the consequences of the crisis of the 1970s, had not managed to reduce unemployment to previous low levels. To address this, since 1990 there has been a commitment to new and flexible forms of employment, such as part-time contracts, apprenticeship contracts or the reduction of working hours. As a result, despite the fact that macroeconomic data showed evident economic growth, the labour market continued to be the unfinished business of neoliberal globalisation, with growing job insecurity that was strongly contested by trade unions.

In this situation, it is not surprising that among the styles and currents that emerged in rock since the early 1990s, grunge stands out. Born in Seattle, he was the music of Generation X, the generation of dissatisfaction and the new post-war (that of the Cold War). Grunge was equivalent to the rock of the origins (guitar, drums and bass), combining the power of heavy metal and the fierceness of punk, with an attitude of indifference and isolation that dazzled the youngest. "Their songs stood out for their gloomy and hopeless atmospheres and their stories of failure and paranoia, so common among the young generations of the time" (Bergamini, 2006: 60), which leads to consider that the movement "sought a pleading expression of attention" on the part of young people (Méndez, 2004: 172). His defiance of current cultural norms, although he showed no intention of revealing himself, and his rejection of rock associated with luxury that prevailed in the eighties led him to success. The reference band was Nirvana and for many grunge lasted as long as the group lasted, as happened with punk and the Sex Pistols. Other great bands were Alice in Chains, Soundgarden, Stone Temple Pilots and Pearl Jam. As happened with punk, the big industry swallowed up the authenticity of grunge, reducing it "to a superficial aesthetic with which to sell products that did not call into question the system", for which "political content or social commentary was understood as frivolous and banished" (Gil, 2004: 14).



In the second half of the decade, the styles closest to the original rock (from pop-rock to heavy) recovered the ground that had been gained by other styles further away from it (melodic pop, rap, electronic pop, purely commercial groups for younger fans). From the United Kingdom, a guitar-driven pop-rock triumphed that reinvented that of the sixties and became known as Britpop, a denomination "important enough to generate a history of its own" (Sierra i Fabra, 2003: 387), with bands such as Oasis, Blur, Supergrass, Pulp, The Verve, Radiohead, Manic Street Preachers or the Irish The Cramberries. At the same time, a multitude of bands were born that rescued terms such as "new rock", "alternative rock" or "garage rock". Thus, within alternative rock we can mention Alanis Morissette, Hootie & the Blowfish, Counting Crows, Matchbox Twenty, The Wallflowers, Silverchair or P.J. Harvey. With a harder sound Red Hot Chilli Peppers, Green Day, Offspring or Marilyn Manson. From heavy-metal, the speed of the songs was increased and Trash Metal appeared, with bands such as Metallica, Slayer, Anthrax or Megadeth. Others mixed heavy-metal with different styles such as hip-hop, grunge, alternative rock and funk, giving rise to nu-metal or new-metal, with groups such as Korn, Limp Bizkit, Linkin Park, Deftones or Evanescence.

At the end of the 1990s, the recording industry was an economic giant: in 1999 it had a worldwide turnover of 38,000 million dollars (in comparison, the value of the entire US industrial sector was 15,000 million dollars) and 3,800 million CDs, cassettes and minidisks were sold worldwide (Frith, Straw and Street, 2006: 13). Among the different styles, one of the most profitable was commercial pop for teenagers, with figures such as the Spice Girls, Britney Spears, Back Street Boys, Christina Aguilera, N'Sync and other solo artists and clone groups. All of them created by the record companies themselves and boosted in the media with gigantic marketing campaigns. "Boy and girl bands functioned as a brand with different lines of consumption (clothing and accessories, especially) that were sold with the essential hook of sex" (Gil, 2004: 15). Something similar was done, although with a higher quality and with a view to a more adult audience, with melodic pop stars such as Celine Dion, Mariah Carey or Whitney Houston. In general, these are artists who moved away from rock, both in sound and attitude, with compositions that dealt with banal themes. Perhaps part of the reason for their success was precisely that, as their music served to disconnect from the day to day, which reassured the authorities, by keeping young people (and the not so young) entertained and away from important topics.



Already in the new century, two events took place, both in 2001, with a great symbolic charge that would reinforce neoliberal globalization. On the one hand, China's entry into the World Trade Organization, which, after years of spectacular progress with its market socialism, was fully incorporated into the international market, implying that there is no alternative to capitalism. On the other hand, the advance of fundamentalist terrorism. With the attacks of 11-S, the fight against global terrorism and national defence took priority over the global agenda, placing security above even human rights and notoriously influencing economic decisions, mainly when determining the destination of aid funds to developing countries.

The truth is that, as had been happening since the mid-nineties, world wealth continued to grow until 2008, and this was demonstrated by the different macroeconomic magnitudes. However, even if they were good, the data did not reach the growth rate of Keynesian capitalism of the 1950s and 1960s. Indeed, the annual average growth rate of world GDP had been 5% between 1950 and 1973, while between 1980 and 2007 it was 2.8%. On the other hand, the increase in the volume of international trade (measured by exports) between 1950 and 1973 was 8.3% per year; After falling to 2.6% until 1980, it increased to 5.9% until 2007. The only magnitude that has grown since 1990 is foreign direct investment, benefiting from the greater technological facilities inherent in globalization, although it is also true that this has favored the expansion of capital flows, not only financial but especially speculative (World Bank, 2019 and International Monetary Fund, 2019). In addition, the distribution of wealth became more unequal, because while the most advanced and industrialized developing countries (the emerging economies) managed to cling to the path of growth, the less developed countries worsened their situation, so that at the beginning of the twenty-first century they were poorer than in 1990. It was contradictory that at the height of globalization, a phenomenon that should favor the opening of markets while also boosting the growth of developing countries, most of the least developed countries had their export capacity reduced to levels of twenty years ago.

The 21st century began with a new crisis in the music industry. On this occasion it was not the result of a lack of ideas as it was an economic crisis, caused by piracy. The "top manta" and free file-sharing Internet portals (such as Napster, the most famous before it was shut down), made it easy to access the songs of solo artists and bands, even before the albums were on sale. Although piracy could be explained as a trade



dispute between the United States and Southeast Asia (Thailand, Singapore, and China, where most of the illegal copies of CDs emerged from in the late 1990s), it can also be seen as a break with the "overly simplistic view of (Anglo-American) rock imperialism." not only because "the global music industry is no longer only American" but especially because piracy "is a problem that affects local recordings above all" (Frith, 1999: 15).

Paradoxically, record companies are going to counteract the effects of piracy thanks to the promotion of leisure by the authorities. Indeed, the consequences on the population of acts of international fundamentalist terrorism – mainly 9/11 in New York in 2001, but also others such as 11-M in Madrid in 2004 or 7-J in London in 2005 – will provoke a sense of panic that will be appeased by reinforcing the products for distraction offered through cinema, television and music. "Curiously, in times of war, leisure and entertainment seem to increase to balance the feeling of fear and instability resulting from the dangers that surround us" (Sierra i Fabra, 2003: 405).

In the musical field, it will be seen how numerous soloists and groups, most of them in the field of more commercial pop, will be promoted on the radio stations and on the Internet with a view to strengthening the entertainment of citizens, especially the youngest. Record companies will create new genres and styles, determining what type of genre corresponds to each market, once again turning music into a commodity (Frith, 2014: 148). The use of mass media by record companies will give them great benefits despite generating products of popularity based on a specific audience. An obvious example is "the creation of a specific music market for children and pre-adolescents through thematic television channels, film premieres and specialized magazines that advertise the same icons" (Goialde, 2013: 8), such as Hannah Montana, Jonas Brothers, Selena Gomez or One Direction. Another example is provided by indie-rock, identified in the eighties with the anti-system notion of rock in its origins and which has become a label, "an advertising claim, a product created to sell itself and create profits" (Criado, 2014: 4).

However, interesting figures in different styles will also emerge. In pop-rock, groups such as Maroon 5, Coldplay, Keane or Snow Patrol stand out for their elegant sound. In hard rock The Darkness, Airbourne, Audioslave or The Answer. Taking up musical and aesthetic elements from the late seventies and mixing alternative rock with postpunk, original rock resurfaces with groups such as The Strokes, The White Stripes, Kings of Leon or Jet; some even with electronic touches, such as The Killers, Franz



Ferdinand or The Bravery. In the United States, rap and hip hop maintain their fiefdom with artists such as Eminem, Jay Z, Nelly or Black Eyes Peas. And within the more commercial sound, artists who are committed to quality stand out, such as Beyoncé, Alicia Keys, Nelly Furtado or Robbie Williams. There will be a multitude of styles and genres that from the year 2000 will regain strength, demonstrating that they survive the passage of time. Examples include doom metal, death metal, ska, classic punk, seventies funk, indie pop, rockabilly, swing, eighties electrobeat "and dozens of other styles that still persist within fan networks and institutions that guarantee their survival" (Straw, 2006: 107). In some of them, such as anarcho-punk, gothic-punk and hardcore, it is possible to find the principles of the DIY movement driven by punk (Bennett, 2018: 134)

The same will happen with festivals. They are beginning to proliferate everywhere as a way to compensate for the lower income from record sales. On the one hand, the live concerts of the consecrated bands will become gigantic shows, on the other, festivals will be organized where soloists and veteran groups will share the bill with new artists to attract audiences of all ages. Some of them will also serve to denounce the serious problems and injustices that affect humanity and the world. The relevance of Live Aid 8, held in July 2005, twenty years after the original festival, in different cities of the countries that make up the G8, with the aim of calling for the cancellation of foreign debt from developing countries, should be highlighted. Also that of Earth Live, held in July 2007 in ten different cities of the most relevant developed and emerging countries, with the aim of raising awareness among the population about the consequences of climate change, pressuring countries to act against this phenomenon and making a clear commitment to renewable energies.

In 2008, a financial crisis broke out in the United States that ended up being global. The famous subprime mortgages, the star product of the greed of the banking sector, generated a liquidity problem that affected the economic activity of all sectors in most Western countries. The response of neoliberal globalization consisted of public administrations assuming the debts of financial institutions by injecting funds from central banks into private banks and socializing their debts (which have not been fully collected). The measures adopted to get out of the crisis have constituted a new copy of the neoliberalism of the eighties, being classified by the authorities as adjustment measures, although among the citizens the expression cuts (especially in social spending) became generalized.



As in previous situations, the impulse of leisure to discourage society was the general characteristic in most countries. The consequence in the musical field was the promotion of the most commercial pop with bland content, which was promoted during the crisis and, paradoxically, even more strongly during the exit from it. There are those who consider that "a new era has begun, that of the cut-and-whistle" in which the strategies of the record industry "are set based on statistical numbers; what sounds like it works is promoted" (Sánchez, 2012: 31) and tend to "increase the importance of marketing (selling at any price) over artistic departments" (Gil, 2004: 16). The most obvious example is reggaeton, along with perreo/twerking dance, in which the banal goes to the extreme of regressing in the defense of equality between the sexes and in the fight for social rights. Added to this is the fact that we are facing the "manifestation of a society fascinated by fame and wealth, by fast leisure and the postmodern idea of anything goes" (Gil, 2004: 16). As you can see, Rob Hirst's statement at the ceremony for which Midnight Oil was inducted into the Australian Hall of Fame was even stronger, in the sense that although protest rock is still written, the record industry ignores it because it is hypnotized by get-famous-fast TV shows.

However, it is possible to find in rock a non-conformist attitude, which shows that "music can challenge social norms and create alarm among defenders of the status quo" (Gioia, 2020: 13). And this is clearly seen in bands and artists who have been established for decades but also in others whose activity is more recent, while this attitude arises from the different styles and genres that are included in what is considered rock: in the hardest sound (from hard/heavy-rock to trash-metal), in the most secluded and least guitar-driven (rap, hip-hop, reggae), even in the theoretically more commercial sounds (pop, funky, disco). Thus, we can find a movement of social protest and collective action that emerged from heavy-rock in Ecuador (González, 2004), a protest movement in favor of freedom of expression linked to rap musicians in Guinea-Bissau (De Barros, 2012), a movement in favor of the empowerment of women and the denunciation of gender violence in Mexico (Cerrillo, 2021), or the movement that denounced Donald Trump's neoliberal policies, as well as his xenophobic messages, bringing together American (both Anglo-Saxon and Hispanic) and Latin American artists and bands (Hormaechea, 2018). In the face of so much diversity, it is stated that "today there is not a single rock, but a multitude, which meets and intermingles, young languages that intersect and old sounds that do not disappear, but in fact return with renewed energy" (Assante, 2008: 52).



On the other hand, the way of consuming music has changed, resorting to MP3 format or music applications such as Spotify or iTunes, which encourages young people to consume individual songs. In this way, "the integral discourse that the album constructed, which included additional elements such as cover, photos, text, and which favored going further, including the group and its context, is broken" (Del Amo, Letamendia eta Diaux, 2016: 21), which sometimes prevents reaching the component of denunciation or protest, of social content, that the artist in question would like to make known. From another point of view, however, it is necessary to underline the opportunity that the entertainment industry is offering to young people and teenagers, for whom the vast majority of famous artists and bands of the last fifty years are unknown. Indeed, the most successful musical video games among young people are making it possible for many of these bands, mainly in styles such as hard rock and heavy rock, to gain new followers (Herschmann, 2011: 308).

3 PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE: RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

The subject Contemporary Economics of the Bachelor's Degree in Business Management of the University of the Basque Country (UPV-EHU) analyses economic history from the First Industrial Revolution to the present day, investigating the historical evolution and the current situation of the world economy. This allows students to immerse themselves in the analysis of the different economic systems and the international context in which companies operate. The objectives of the subject consist of: interpreting the most relevant economic phenomena in their political-social context; study the reasons for economic prosperity and depression to understand the current economic situation; and to critically reflect on the different economic models in order to compare the advantages and disadvantages of each one in their implementation. The skills that students acquire with this subject are the following: to know and critically interpret the formation of the structures and processes of the contemporary economy; to appreciate and prepare for the dynamic and agile assimilation of current and future economic information and events; and to obtain cognitive, instrumental and emotional skills for individual and team work. In addition, transversal skills of the Degree are worked on, such as oral and written communication, the use of information and communication technologies, critical thinking and teamwork.

The use of rock makes it possible to develop the teaching of the subject in which



the fulfillment of the objectives of the same and the acquisition of the corresponding skills by the students is facilitated. In this way, as far as the master classes are concerned, the relationship between the recent evolution of the world economy and the development of the rock phenomenon is shown, as has been shown with the previous analysis. Thanks to this, students become aware that throughout the period studied, technological progress has been fundamental for the development of the different economic sectors. This is evident in the more traditional sectors such as the steel industry (mini-steel mills) or the chemical sector (the generalization of different types of plastics and artificial fibers). While those that have become the leading sectors stand out, such as robotics (and the consequences of its application in previously existing sectors), the audiovisual sector (from satellite television, then cable and then digital, to advances in video and high-fidelity sound), telecommunications (from advances in telephony, first wireless, then mobile, even fiber optics and the internet) and, of course, computing.

In this way, the students conclude that rock goes beyond music and that it is an eminently social and cultural phenomenon, which implies that as such it is recognized and defined in the circumstances of society and time in which it has had to live. Rock was born and has grown mainly in the West, within a free market economic system, being, therefore, part of the capitalist world, and within it it has evolved until today. Thus, we have gone from buying vinyl records to downloading songs from the Internet to the mobile phone, from concerts with sound equipment of very low quality to gigantic and multitudinous shows that are covered by the media around the world and that attendees show live on their social networks. Students are aware that without a large part of the technological advances in sectors such as audiovisual, telecommunications and computer science analysed in class, there would not have been a mass production of popular music, nor a massive presence of it in the media, nor would it have been massively consumed (Jones, 1992: 1).

On the other hand, practical exercises are carried out for students to delve into the dynamics of relating economic events with the different styles, artists and bands that are included in the rock phenomenon and to observe in greater detail the relationship between them and, especially, the influence of the former on the latter, thus consolidating the knowledge already acquired. Thus, in the case of the fifties, sixties and seventies, videos are presented in class to analyse the relationship between the song, the artist/band or the style on display and the economic context. With some initial examples,



the teachers show the objective of the exercise and then, with new examples, debate is encouraged in small groups and in a general way in the classroom. In the case of the eighties and nineties, the same procedure is followed but the group discussion must lead to the preparation of a brief report and its presentation in the classroom. Finally, as far as the 21st century is concerned, each student makes the individual report by choosing a song by the artist or band of their liking, putting it in relation to the economic event to which the composition refers or has influenced it, the artist or the band.

As can be seen, this type of exercise makes it possible to develop the transversal competences of the Degree in terms of teamwork, written and oral communication, critical reflection and social commitment. At the same time, the use of information and communication technologies is widespread, both in the development of classes and for the work to be carried out by students, especially in relation to consultation and obtaining information, document management, preparation of reports and presentation of the same.

The study of the subject Contemporary Economics allows students to conclude that previous experiences make it possible to adopt similar decisions – those that have led to positive results – in future situations that are also similar, always with an adaptation to the specific characteristics of each time and place. That is, to learn from the past and provide a certain dose of innovation. And given that rock continues to offer young people "ideals of protest, justice, equality and pacification in a globalized world" (Vázquez, 2019: 13), the study of the international economy together with the analysis of the parallel evolution of the rock phenomenon favors minds that are more open to exploring alternatives in the professional future, and to innovate in the business and economic spheres. It is not in vain that young people identify with musical figures who have never "fed on terrifyingly conservative ideas", but, on the contrary, have shown "a vocation for progress, a kind of anarchic feeling to improve things" (Ruiz, 2006: 9).

This academic experience was launched in 2019 and is turning out to be really positive. During the academic years in which it has been possible to develop the activity described, the objective has been fully fulfilled. In this way, we highlight that the general participation of students in the classroom has been much more active, as well as within the groups created to carry out the different specific exercises. In addition, relevant additional results have been achieved, such as better grades and even greater attendance at classes, both lectures and practical classes.



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