


Football, politics, and identity: The language of confrontation in the journalistic coverage of sports in Spain


Lizandro Angulo Rincón

Universidad del Tolima ✉ 

Antonia Moreno Cano

Universidad de Mondragón ✉ 

Miren Gutiérrez Almazor

Universidad de Mondragón ✉ 

<https://dx.doi.org/10.5209/esmp.101826>

Received: March 25, 2025 • Accepted: September 3, 2025

Abstract. El clásico (the classic) is the name given to any football match between rival clubs FC Barcelona and Real Madrid. It is a global event full of drama that reflects sporting rivalry, politics, and identity. This article analyses the treatment of 2090 journalistic pieces covering 34 clásicos published by leading sports newspapers *Marca* and *Mundo Deportivo* from the 2003-2004 season to the 2020-2021 season. We use content analysis and the framing theory to capture when journalistic biases link sports with politics and identity. Concretely, we search for signs of language that might fuel conflict. The results indicate that the dominant frame presents matches from an athletic and competitive point of view. However, there is also a significant number of journalistic pieces in which confrontation arises from national identity issues and political strife around the Catalan question. Sometimes, war-like language is used to describe football. This is a relevant issue since several studies point to a connection between conflict around sports and physical, psychological, and symbolic violence outside the stadium. The study concludes that sports journalism relies on a limited set of sources and spectacular reporting.

Keywords. Football, sports journalism, information, identity, content analysis.

ES Fútbol, política e identidad: El lenguaje de la confrontación en la cobertura periodística del deporte en España

Resumen. El clásico es el nombre que se le da a cualquier partido de fútbol entre los clubes rivales FC Barcelona y Real Madrid. Se trata de un evento global lleno de dramatismo que refleja rivalidad deportiva, política e identidad. Este artículo analiza el tratamiento de 2090 piezas periodísticas que cubren 34 clásicos, publicadas por los diarios deportivos *Marca* y *Mundo Deportivo* desde la temporada 2003-2004 hasta la 2020-2021. Utilizamos el análisis de contenido y la teoría del encuadre para identificar cuándo los sesgos periodísticos vinculan el deporte con la política y la identidad. En concreto, buscamos signos de un lenguaje que pueda alimentar el conflicto. Los resultados indican que el marco dominante presenta los partidos desde una perspectiva atlética y competitiva. Sin embargo, también existe un número significativo de piezas periodísticas en las que la confrontación surge de cuestiones de identidad nacional y de la disputa política en torno a la cuestión catalana. En ocasiones, se emplea un lenguaje bélico para describir el fútbol. Este es un asunto relevante, dado que varios estudios señalan una conexión entre el conflicto en torno al deporte y la violencia física, psicológica y simbólica fuera del estadio. El estudio concluye que el periodismo deportivo se apoya en un conjunto limitado de fuentes y en la espectacularización de la información.

Palabras clave. Fútbol, periodismo deportivo, información, identidad, análisis de contenido.

How to cite: Angulo-Rincón, L., Moreno-Cano, A., & Gutiérrez-Almazor, M. (2025). Football, politics, and identity: The language of confrontation in the journalistic coverage of sports in Spain. *Estudios sobre el Mensaje Periodístico*, 31(4), 865-879. <https://dx.doi.org/10.5209/esmp.101826>

1. Introduction

Soccer is a sport that helps channel peoples' differences in a regulated environment to prevent athletic confrontation from leading to violence. It is a way for regions and countries to hate each other without the consequences of fighting against each other. But could it be that, sometimes, the hostility between soccer fans brews by mixing sports with politics? Is conflict fuelled by the aggressive language employed in sports news? This article examines how leading sports newspapers *Marca* and *Mundo Deportivo* cover football matches between FC Barcelona (Barça) and Real Madrid. It aims to identify cues in the stories that use political tensions and display visual and antagonistic discursive strategies. These matches are popularly known as *el clásico* (the classic).

El clásico is a significant subject for Communication and Sport researchers because of its massive reach. It gathers hundreds of millions of viewers worldwide. The match also has political symbolism: FC Barcelona represents the aspirations of many Catalan nationalists, while Real Madrid embodies Spanish centralism. *El clásico* embeds historical, political, cultural, and sporting dimensions that have defined a "Real Madrid-FC Barcelona axis" (O'Brien, 2013, p. 321). It is a "post-modern excess of consumption, celebrating the conflicts between [coaches José] Mourinho and [Pep] Guardiola, [players Cristiano] Ronaldo and [Lionel] Messi, Barcelona, and Madrid, Catalonia and Spain" (O'Brien, 2013, p. 315).

This article combines politics, identity, and sports journalism studies to identify traces of confrontation in sports stories. We use 'soccer' as a synonym of football for variety's sake.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Soccer and politics

Although there were efforts to separate athletic activity from politics, both maintain a close relationship. The exceptional power of sports to summon, galvanize, and connect people through a shared fondness for physical activity has been employed for different political purposes. However, this connection is often denied. In the prologue of *Los cuerpos del poder*, Josep Ramoneda argues that, while everybody accepts the political utility of sports, many assure that sports are foreign to politics (Suárez, 2015). Soccer offers drama, intense emotions, and a combination of sport and theatre which makes it useful as a political tool.

One example is sports diplomacy, which can serve to advance foreign policy goals (Murray, 2020). Qatar Foundation has employed FC Barcelona for country branding (Ginesta & De San Eugenio, 2013), and Catalonia has used sports to expand its international reach (Xifra, 2009). *The Geopolitical Economy of Sport* (Chadwick *et al.*, 2023) explores the intersections between sports, money, power, politics, and state in different situations, including the current war in Ukraine and Barcelona's branding efforts through football. At a smaller scale, for instance, Guardiola—manager of Manchester City and former Barça captain (1997-2001)—has been an unofficial

Catalan ambassador, opening a Twitter account in Catalan for Manchester City and speaking in favour of the cause (I. T., 2021). Fans can also be place ambassadors, as in the case of another Spanish team, Girona FC, whose supporters promote their regional identity (Ginesta & De San Eugenio, 2022).

Sports and politics also coexist in public language in two ways. First, politicians use sports terms to imply that there are attacks, defences, tactics, low blows, corners, victories, and defeats in political contests. This way, political life is trivialized with these metaphors so that people see the actions of politicians as a game. And second, soccer reporting is a particular journalistic genre, full of metaphors and terms imported from politics, geometry, war, religion, and fauna (Murube, 2015). For Billings *et al.* (2017) metaphors work at a deep level, influencing our worldviews. This way, sports reporting produces images, beliefs, and collective identities around the nation (González Ramallal, 2014). Politics, sports, and media often work together to cultivate collective identities. However, mediated language can be used to fuel conflict, as Seijbelet *al.* (2002) observe happening in antisemitic or philo-semitic discourses about Dutch professional men's football on Twitter.

Jarvie (2016, p. 286) was the first to note the emergence of identity politics in sports. He argued that "all identity politics involve a search for community, a quest for belonging and recognition". These identity aspirations are often shared among group members. They try to answer questions about who they are, who they can trust, and who is with them (Jarvie, 2016). Namely, soccer permeates spheres beyond the game, contributing to building collective identities.

Ismer (2011) looks at the process of constructing national identity through the creation of symbols and the embodiment of shared meanings in the media coverage of the FIFA World Cups 2006 and 1974. He notes that, first, the debate on nationalism "should not ignore the crucial role of emotions in the process of embodying the imagined community of the nation"; and second, the "rituals of community", such as the FIFA Football World Cups, provide "an important frame for experiencing collective emotions and thus create feelings of belonging to the nation" (Ismer, 2011, pp. 548).

How news media channel these ideas is also essential to forging perceptions about teams, players, and competitions. Suárez (2015) argues that the stadium heroes become a reference of the first order, capable of legitimizing a dictator or provoking a social mirage like the one radiating from the multiethnic French team that won the 1998 World Cup. The success of sports entertainment depends on the attention offered to attractive icons, their star statuses, and legendary rivalries. This is the case of the antagonism between Lionel Messi (FC Barcelona, from 2003 to 2021) and Cristiano Ronaldo (Real Madrid, from 2009 to 2018) (García del Barrio *et al.*, 2019).

Here we argue that, over the years, *el clásico*—a ritual of community—has played a role in building Spanish and Catalan national identities, supported by media, and examine whether that nationalist sentiment has been employed by two newspapers to fuel conflict.

Table 1. El clásico audiences in Spain (2003-2021).

Date	TV channel	Stadium	TV type	Audiences	Results
19/4/2003	Autonómicas La 2	Santiago Bernabéu	open	7405000	1-1
6/12/2003	Autonómicas	Camp Nou	open	8 329 000	1-2
25/4/2004	Digital+	Santiago Bernabéu	paid		1-2
20/11/2004	TVE / TV3	Camp Nou	open	9 290 000	3-0
10/4/2005	Digital +	Santiago Bernabéu	paid		4-2
19/11/2005	Digital +	Santiago Bernabéu	paid		0-3
2/4/2006	Autonómicas	Camp Nou	open	6 429 000	1-1
22/10/2006	Digital +	Santiago Bernabéu	paid	4 547 000	2-0
10/3/2007	Sexta	Camp Nou	open	7 251 000	3-3
23/12/2007	Digital+	Camp Nou	paid		0-1
7/5/2008	Telecinco	Santiago Bernabéu	open	9264000	4-1
13/12/2008	Sexta	Camp Nou	open	8 739 000	2-0
2/5/2009	Digital +	Santiago Bernabéu	paid		2-6
29/11/2009	Gol TV/Digital+	Camp Nou	paid		1-0
10/4/2010	Sexta/TV3	Santiago Bernabéu	open	11 096 000	0-2
29/11/2010	Gol TV/Digital+	Camp Nou	paid		5-0
16/4/2011	Sexta/TV3	Santiago Bernabéu	open	11 123 000	1-1
10/12/2011		Santiago Bernabéu			1-3
21/04/2012	Gol TV	Camp Nou	paid	1062000	1-2
7/10/2012	Canal+Liga	Camp Nou	paid	1 517 000	2-2
2/03/2013	Canal+1	Santiago Bernabéu	paid	1 016 000	2-1
26/10/2013		Camp Nou			2-1
23/03/2014	Canal+1	Santiago Bernabéu	paid	1 693 000	3-4
25/10/2014	Canal+Liga	Santiago Bernabéu	paid	1266000	3-1
22/03/2015	Canal+1	Camp Nou	paid	1693000	2-1
21/11/2015	Canal+Liga	Santiago Bernabéu	paid	1213000	0-4
2/04/2016	Movistar	Camp Nou	paid	1151000	1-2
3/12/2016	Bein Liga	Camp Nou	paid	2214000	1-1
23/04/2017	Movistar	Santiago Bernabéu	paid	2981000	2-3
23/12/2017	Bein Liga	Santiago Bernabéu	paid	2 265 000	0-3
6/05/2018	Movistar	Camp Nou	paid	2357000	2-2
28/10/2018	Bein Liga	Camp Nou	paid	2 692 000	5-1
2/03/2019	Movistar	Santiago Bernabéu	paid	2 453 000	0-1
18/12/2019	La Liga por Movistar+	Camp Nou	paid	2432000	0-0
1/03/2020	La Liga por Movistar+	Santiago Bernabéu	paid	2 610 000	2-0
24/10/2020	La Liga por Movistar+	Camp Nou	paid	1 541 000	1-3
10/04/2021	La Liga por Movistar+	Santiago Bernabéu	paid	1 834 000	2-1

Source: Own elaboration.

2.2. Soccer, identities, and politics in Spain

The background for this analysis is the so-called “Catalan question”. In 2019, the Spanish supreme court tried 12 Catalan leaders accused of rebellion, sedition, and misuse of public funds over their roles in the failed attempt for independence in 2017. Nine were cleared of rebellion but convicted of the lesser charges (BBC, 2019). For many in Spain, while Real Madrid –based in the Spanish capital– signifies the centrality of the state, FC Barcelona represents the aspirations of a separate Catalan state (Vinicius, 2020).

The case of soccer is paradigmatic due to its capacity to unite and simultaneously separate groups around the idea of the nation. Football connects people with diverse sociocultural origins, and, at the same time, regroups the others in symbolic spaces of identity, us and others. Nationalism and football are characterized by the ‘emotional burden’ and passion that people invest in defending their symbols and beliefs (González Ramallal, 2014, p. 345).

In Spain, national identity and football are intertwined. For example, Bilbao’s Athletic Club cultivates the idea that it is an independent Basque team and engages only Basque players. In contrast, FC Barcelona, in 2018, was the Spanish team with

the most foreign footballers (Rojo & Pecker, 2018). However, FC Barcelona —whose slogan is “more than a club”— has managed to promote an aura of Catalanism (Poqui, 2017). The desire of many Catalans to become independent turns their team’s triumphs into political victories, while defeats become frustrations (Colomé, 1999).

This situation started in the sixties. In 1969, the number 386 of the anti-Francoist magazine *Triunfo* published a cover showing the shield of the Barcelona Football Club and celebrated Catalan writer Manuel Vázquez Montalbán’s catchphrase “Beyond football. ¡Barça! ¡Barça! ¡Barça!”. To explain Catalanism and the relationship between Barça and Catalonia, Vázquez Montalbán began his article by describing fans entering their stadium, Camp Nou, wearing Catalan symbols and badges displaying “Parleucatalà” (*La Vanguardia*, 2019). FC Barcelona was the only legal institution maintaining the link between citizens and the idea of a self-governing Catalonia. Likewise, the club adopted Catalan culture. It made it a vehicle for the integration of immigrants, as happened with its founder, Swiss Joan Gamper. When soccer lacked interest due to its political instrumentalization, Vázquez Montalbán offered a critical history of Spanish football by considering its political, cultural, and social dimensions when civil liberties were constrained (Osúa, 2019). In the mid-seventies, the decline of dictator Francisco Franco and the return of Catalan president Josep Tarradellas from exile crystallized this connection (Poqui, 2017). In the nineties, this association was forged by the victory of the Catalan team in national and international competitions by the so-called dream team —directed by the Dutchman Johan Cruyff—. In the 21st century, the Pep team—in honour of his coach Pep Guardiola— would capture the imagination of many nationalists.

Meanwhile, Real Madrid, with the sporting achievements obtained in the European Cups of the 1950s —exceeding the triumphs of sporting icons such as Manuel Santana in tennis and Federico Bahamontes in cycling— became dictator Franco’s best ambassador (Simón, 2015). In this context, Franco’s propaganda labelled Real Madrid as the regime’s team, representing a prosperous Spain (González Ramallal, 2014). In Spain, soccer is very popular and there are thousands of clubs in different categories; however, only Real Madrid managed to represent Spanishness, becoming the Spanish miracle’s herald and disseminating a form of banal nationalism (González Ramallal, 2014).

The motto that summarizes the Franco regime’s ideology was “One, Great and Free”, which refers to an indivisible Spain. Although Spain today is split into autonomic regions with a great degree of independence, the idea of a united Spain is still part of conservative parties’ ideological foundations. Many people associate leftist voters with FC Barcelona and rightist voters with Real Madrid (Rojas & Guerrero, 2021). Thus, Real Madrid —epitomizing Spanish nationalism— and FC Barcelona —representing Catalan nationalism— are on a collision course.

Meanwhile, any *clásicos* confronting FC Barcelona and Real Madrid attract massive global television audiences. According to Montaña (2021), they mustered an audience of 650 million

international viewers in the 2020-2021 season in 185 countries, much higher than any other sporting events, such as the Super Bowl final in the United States, with about 98,4 million viewers. Audiences in Spain are substantial, too, as Table 1 shows.

Audience volume depends greatly on whether the match was broadcasted on open or paid TV. However, on open television, maximum audiences can be observed from 2008 until 2011. Meanwhile, although comparatively much smaller, from 2017 to 2020, record audiences were registered on paid television. Nationalism even interfered with *el clásico* once. In 2019, a match in Barcelona between FC Barcelona and Real Madrid planned for October —the month in which the 2017 frustrated independence referendum took place—, was cancelled due to demonstrations.

2.3. The role of news media in connecting soccer, national identities, and politics

In Spain, sports journalism concentrates on soccer because the criterion for selecting newsworthy journalistic topics depends on a market’s logic (Angulo & Moreno, 2016; Rojas, 2015). Due to the popularity of televised football and this country’s diverse cultures, this space is essential for the (re)production of discourses around race and ethnicity (Longas & Van Sterkenburg, 2022). Soccer creates more common emotional identities than other sports due to the media’s power to disseminate its symbolic attributes, including flags, shields, logos, anthems, and history. The media act as transmitters of symbols and as agents that recreate, reinterpret, and update the identity of the clubs according to variations in the social, political, economic, and cultural context (González Ramallal, 2014).

Nationalism is about fitting in a group; newspapers make their publics feel connected, boosting their sense of belonging. Media, sports, and nationalistic sentiment can be coupled, generating “multi-layered sympathies” (Schep, 2023, p. 21). Similarly, Spanish and Catalan nationalism has taken advantage of club symbols and soccer rivalry to strengthen the link between soccer and politics via journalism. For this reason, the matches between Real Madrid and FC Barcelona are often narrated as a reflection of the conflict between Catalan independentists versus the Spanish nationalists defending Spain’s unity (Rojas & Guerrero, 2021). A study of media coverage by *Marca*, *As*, *Sport*, *Mundo Deportivo*, and the sports sections of *La Vanguardia* and *El País* concluded the high level of politicization of sports information in 2017 coincides with the most relevant milestones of the Catalan independence movement, known in Catalan as *El Procés* (Rojas & Guerrero, 2021). That year, for example, 15,16% of the journalistic pieces published by *Mundo Deportivo* and 16,77% of the articles published by *Marca* allude to politics (Rojas & Guerrero, 2021).

Sports journalism has been undervalued compared to other journalistic specialties because it relies on dubious sources, does not separate information from opinion, and is attentive to superficial aspects. Because of these flaws, it has been pejoratively called “the newsroom toy department” (Rowe, 2007). Sports-themed media have also been

accused of not keeping their distance from their sources, and their journalists of behaving more like fans than professionals. Although Rojas (2011) highlights the virtues of sports journalism, such as format innovation and creative use of language, he also notes two deficiencies. First, sports journalism often employs theatrics and prioritizes emotions over information. Second, it sometimes incites violence by using war-like language, violent images, and controversial testimonies to create tension. González Ramallal (2014) talks about trench journalism promoted by journalists and pseudo-journalists who do not hide their affinity for one or another club, losing their informative neutrality and professionalism.

Instead of exploring the use of soccer as a political tool or the meddling of politics in sports, this article explores the coverage of soccer matches between FC Barcelona and Real Madrid to identify how journalist language about soccer is used to incite political strife.

3. Methodology

The quantitative approach and a descriptive scope are used to investigate how the information about the Spanish soccer classic between FC Barcelona and Real Madrid is produced. The quantitative approach defines and measures variables accurately in probabilistic samples to generalize the results, while the descriptive scope seeks to know the properties of the object of study in detail (Toro & Parra, 2010).

The method applied to a sample of printed newspapers published by *Marca* and *Mundo Deportivo* is content analysis. This method develops procedures to encode aspects of the textual, auditory, or visual material, analyses them, and makes inferences according to the hypotheses and research questions of the study (Schutt, 2019). Due to its quantitative nature, it allows replication and subjection to validity and reliability tests (White & Marsh, 2006).

The work presented here is based on framing theories. Content analysis is employed here to identify news stories' frames (McQuail, 2000). Framing refers to communication strategies designed to influence the importance placed on the topics of the public agenda, typically through the repetition of concepts and terms (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). The study of framing strategies focuses on how news media sway people and establish a news hierarchy. The media's bias on issues often drives framing effects. That is, framing strategies determine what issues are currently considered the most important. The basis of framing theory is that the media focus on specific events and then places them within a field of meaning (Benford & Snow, 2000). The frame influences people's choices about processing that information and how that information should be interpreted. Frames are abstractions that arrange or structure message meaning (Scheufele, 2000).

The analytical framework shown in Table 2 is the product of a preliminary review of the pieces studied here. It is based on what Hernández *et al.* (2014) called *emerging categories* or *inductive categories* (Bryman & Teevan, 2005), and a review of the literature on sports journalism, communication, and identity studies (Angulo, 2015; Rojas, 2011; Rojas & Guerrero, 2021). These categories are obtained

through open coding of the journalistic pieces under study to rank, refine, and define them operationally.

The following scoring system was created to identify the level of emotionality in the studied pieces (see Table 3). The scale arises from analysing the constituent elements of an informative unit: the photograph/infographic, the sources' testimony, the headline, and the characteristics and focus of the text. This set of elements is complemented and quantified (scoring scale see Table 4) based on phrases that suggest identity confrontation and journalistic sensationalism and supplement the codification process.

Photography/infographics have a lower score (0.5) than the other categories because they do not always accompany or support the text in a journalistic piece.

From a preliminary examination of the articles, we have inductively identified three main frames: a) the neutral frame, presenting matches from an athletic or competitive point of view without connecting it with nationalistic or political ideas; b) the confrontational or aggressive frame, where nationalistic emotions are aroused based on national identity issues and political strife around the Catalan question, and war-like language is used to speak of football; and c), the reconciliatory frame, when the journalistic piece focuses on seeking the understanding, appealing to concepts of sportsmanship and fraternity.

The two Spanish newspapers, *Marca* and *Mundo Deportivo*, were chosen because they base their business model on the coverage of soccer, besides car racing, cycling, and basketball, among others. It is widely accepted that *Marca* is associated with Real Madrid, while *Mundo Deportivo* supports FC Barcelona, representing the historical rivalry of the two. However, there are differences. *Marca* has online franchises in Colombia, Chile, Mexico, and the United States. Meanwhile, *Mundo Deportivo's* main market is Spain, and offers a version for Spanish speakers in the United States.

Another selection criterion is that according to the Association for Media Research, *Marca* and *Mundo Deportivo* are widely read newspapers in Spain. If we combine print and digital readership, *Marca* leads this segment with 2% penetration in 2021, and *Mundo Deportivo* with 0.6%, ranked 8th, only behind the Madrid-based AS Deportes (Association for Media Research, 2022).

Furthermore, *Marca* and *Mundo Deportivo* are media outlets that have typically been studied from different theoretical and methodological perspectives. Three studies analyze the evolution of the roles played by female journalists in the production of articles in both media outlets during the 2010, 2014, 2018, and 2022 editions of the Men's World Cup, concluding that female journalists play an almost invisible role in the production of news pieces (Faedo, 2023; Faedo *et al.*, 2022, 2024). Gómez-Corell *et al.* (2017) analyze the front pages of the four most widely read sports newspapers in Spain (*Marca*, *As*, *Mundo Deportivo*, and *Sport*) over five years (2010-2015) to identify gender stereotypes in journalistic production. They conclude that sport exists by, for, and about men.

For this article, the journalistic pieces on the Spanish soccer classics are analysed. We gather the pieces published one day after the match when

Table 2. Analytical framework including categories, variables, and frames.

Category	Variables	Frame
Headlines	Appellative Creative Indirect quote Mixed quote, in-text Declarative Expressive Informative Informative explanatory	Neutral/competitive Confrontational/aggressive Reconciliatory
Journalistic genre	Articles Short stories Letters to the editor Opinion pieces Features, editorials Interviews Photo news Infographics News stories Other Reports Vignettes/caricatures	Opinion Interpretation Information
Focus of piece	Football and identity Football, rivalry, and competition Football and confrontation Football and the economy Football and celebrities Football and data and precision journalism Football and politics Football and reconciliation Football and health	Neutral/competitive Confrontational/aggressive Reconciliatory
Language	Language of war Language of sportsmanship Language of neutrality Language of competition Language of nationalism Language of racism Language that increases the differences Language that highlights the skills of the winner Language that highlights the loser's mistakes Language that remembers the past Semiological/artistic language	Neutral/competitive Confrontational/aggressive Reconciliatory
Photography	Caricature Photo of the protagonist's face Photo shows attacks against the referee Photo shows aggression between fans Photo shows aggression between the coaches Photo shows aggression between the players Photo shows the competitive moments of the match Photo shows how the goal happened Photo shows patriotic symbols Photo does not apply Other Photo proposes coexistence and reconciliation Defeat/victory faces No photograph No relevance	Neutral/competitive Confrontational/aggressive Reconciliatory
Infographic	Shows how the goal happened Shows the tactical system of the teams Shows statistics and/or qualitative assessments Shows match timeline Does not apply No infographic	

Source: Own elaboration.

the emotions of the fans and reporters emerge depending on who wins or loses. The sample covers 37 games from 2003-2004 to 2020-2021, played within the Spanish professional soccer league. Matches from other competitions, such as the Champion League or the *Copa del Rey* are not included, not to underestimate the importance of the Spanish League Championship for both teams. It is worth remembering that only two clubs, Valencia and Atlético de Madrid, have won titles this century; the rest have

been shared between FC Barcelona –11 titles– and Real Madrid –eight titles– (Angulo, 2024).

An intercoding reliability test was conducted, involving two independent coders and one of the article's authors, to code a sample of the newspapers' content to ensure scientific consistency. For this, Holsti's (1969) reliability formula was used. Reliability = $3M / (N1 + N2 + N3)$. Here, M is the number of coding decisions in which the coders agreed (in this case, 56); N is the number of codings performed by

each of the coders (20 each, resulting in 60 pieces coded); and N1 refers to the author, while N2 and N3 refer to the two independent coders. The three coders agreed on 56 of the codings (56/60 = 0.93). According to international literature (Bryman & Teevan, 2005; Weerakkody, 2009; Wimmer & Dominick, 1996), if there is a coincidence equal to or greater than 0.9%, the operational definitions of the category system and coding process are reliable. The two coders were hired by the Vice-Rector for Research at the University of Tolima, Colombia. They are independent researchers with expertise in content analysis whose permission was given to use their coding decisions. The coding of the journalistic pieces was carried out using Excel (Microsoft).

4. Results

Of the 37 games played from 2003-2004 to 2020-2021, Real Madrid won seven at Santiago Bernabéu (Madrid) and five at Camp Nou (Barcelona). FC Barcelona won ten at the Santiago Bernabéu and seven at Camp Nou. There were two draws at the Santiago Bernabéu, and six draws at Camp Nou.

Marca (N = 1.049 or 50.3%) published more journalistic pieces about the football classics than *Mundo Deportivo* (N = 1.035 or 49.7%). Although from 2003 to 2011, *Mundo Deportivo* outnumbered *Marca*, the latter broke that trend in 2012, 2013, and 2015, and 2019, 2020, and 2021. It is worth noting that the difference in favour of *Marca* in 2019 stands out since it publishes seventy news stories on the classic and *Mundo Deportivo*, only 36.

Marca and *Mundo Deportivo* show an equal distribution of appellative, declarative, quoted, and informative headlines (see Figure 1). However, *Marca* opts for more appealing headlines (14.4%). Although

the appellative headlines are numerous in *Mundo Deportivo* (12.5%), declarative statements are even more frequent (14.6%). It is worth noting that the two newspapers do not stand out for creative titles (*Mundo Deportivo*, 0.7%; and *Marca*, 0.8%).

An example of an appellative headline is the one that appears on the first page of *Marca* on March 11, 2007: “*Baño al Barça*”. Bathroom, in Spanish football slang, implies that Real Madrid was far superior to FC Barcelona.

Mundo Deportivo and *Marca* use the informative (news story type), interpretive (feature), and opinion (opinion piece or commentary) genres to narrate the incidents of the Spanish football classics. Alcoba (2010) highlights the use of the feature and the opinion piece in sports journalism because they are genres that allow the reporter to make judgments, take sides, and describe the high points of the match.

In *Mundo Deportivo*, news stories are 13.2% of the total—including articles, short stories, and letters to the editor, among others—, features 11.4%, and opinion pieces 8.1%. In *Marca*, news stories are 13.3% of the total, features 11.8%, and op-eds 9.6%.

For example, the feature published in *Mundo Deportivo* on March 3, 2019, page 2, which describes FC Barcelona’s triumph over Real Madrid at the Santiago Bernabéu stadium, using a sensational headline: “*Rematan al Madrid*” (They finish off Madrid). The predominant themes are football and competition, although they appear more in *Mundo Deportivo* (42.3%) than in *Marca* (39.4%).

We next analyse the contents of the stories. The main themes identified are identity; rivalry and competition; confrontation; the economy; celebrities; data and precision journalism; politics; reconciliation, and health. These are distributed, as seen in Figure 3.

Table 3. Scoring system.

Photography/ infographic	Combines nationalist/independence symbols with incidents during the match	0.5
	Shows confrontation between players/managers/coaches/fans	0.5
Sources’ testimony	Someone claims/offends race, identity, territory, or nationality issues	1
	Someone emphasizes the opponent’s flaws	1
	Someone talks in terms of good and bad	1
Journalistic piece’ frame	The journalist passes judgments about race, identity, territory, or nationality	1
	The journalist passes judgments to discredit the opposing team’s sportsmanship	1
	The journalist recalls the past to highlight differences beyond sports	1
Language’s characteristics	War-like	1
	Highlighting sporting and cultural differences between regions and clubs	1
Titles	Sensational, showcasing cultural differences between regions	1
Maximum score		10

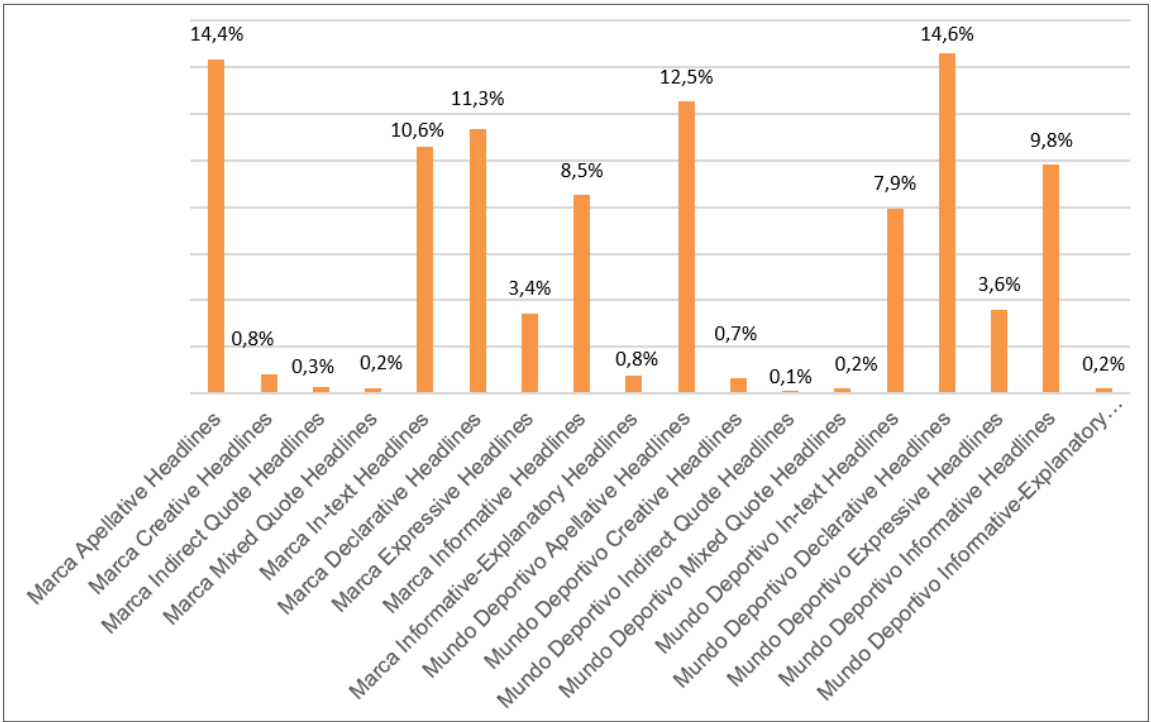
Source: Own elaboration.

Table 4. Scoring scale.

Scoring	Maximum emotionality	From 8 to 10
	High emotionality	From 6 to 7.9
	Medium emotionality	From 4 to 5.9
	Low emotionality	From 2 to 3.9
	Minimum emotionality	From 0 to 1.9

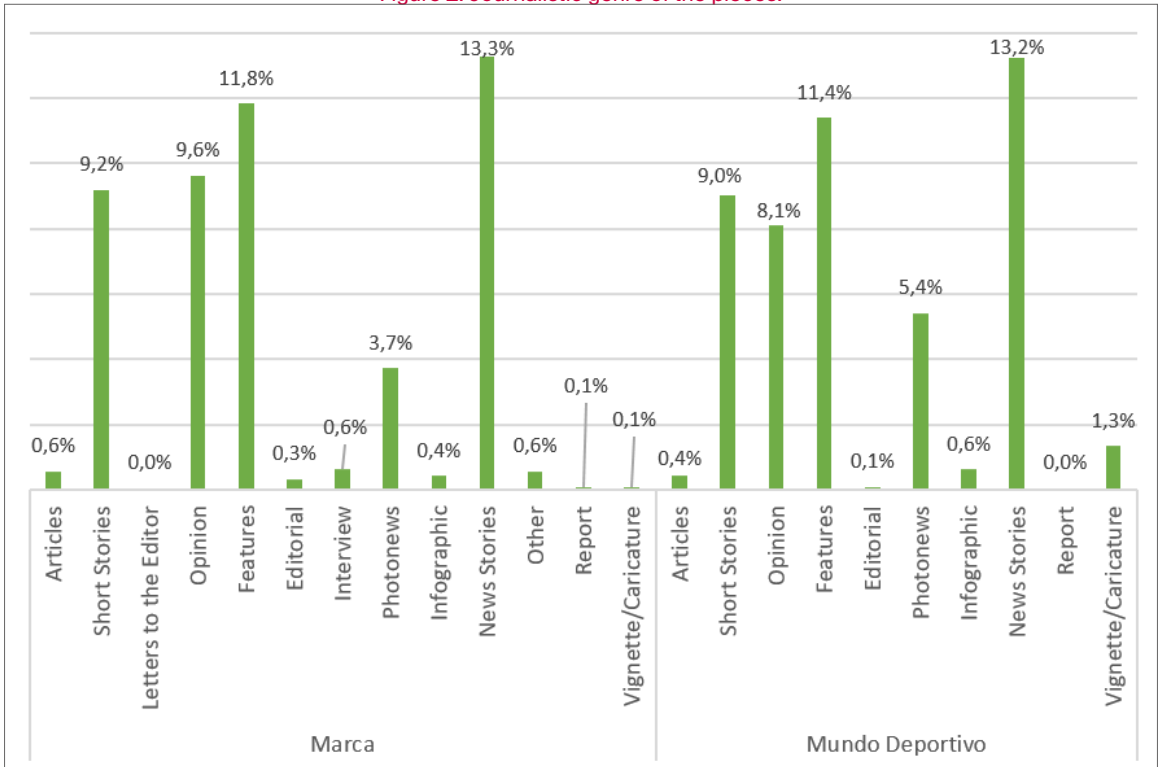
Source: Own elaboration.

Figure 1. Type of headlines in the journalistic pieces of the result of the Spanish soccer classic.



Source: Own elaboration.

Figure 2. Journalistic genre of the pieces.

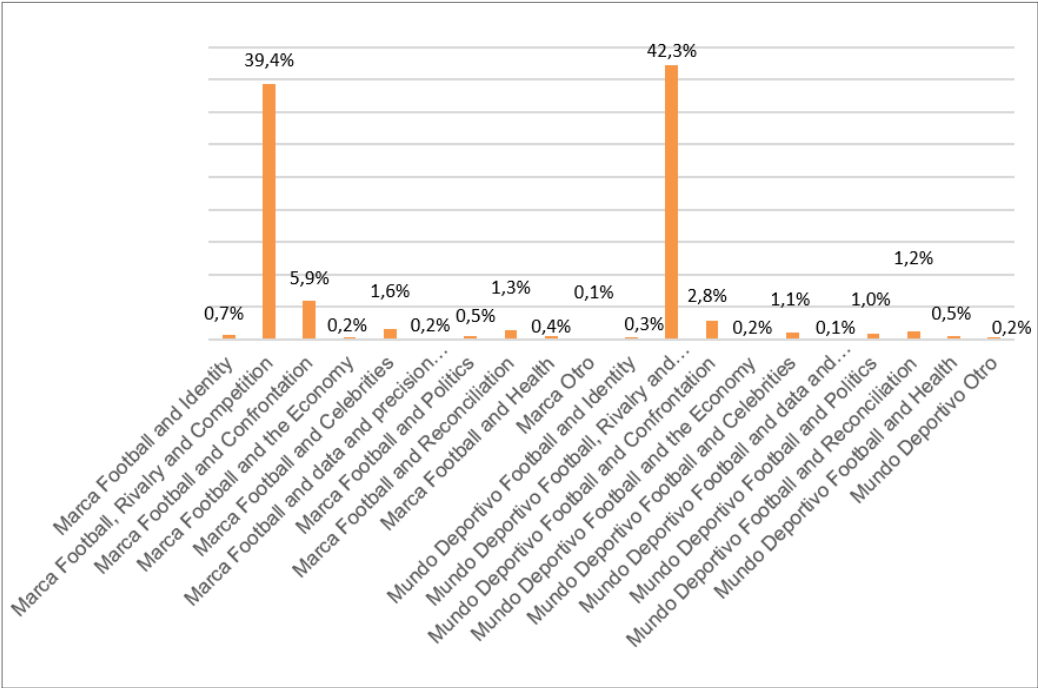


Source: Own elaboration.

This thematic lens captures emotions, strategies, and tactics during the matches, the decisions of the technical directors, and the results. It allows us to connect the thematic contents with the frames. Connecting identities, rivalry, and confrontation with football tend to be used more in confrontational and aggressive frames. From this point of view, *Marca* maintains a higher confrontational approach

(5.9%) than *Mundo Deportivo* (2.8%). This category includes offensive statements, accusations of lack of sportsmanship, allusions to physical and symbolic attacks, and, occasionally, references to national identity as an excuse to exacerbate political differences (*Marca*, 0.7%; *Mundo Deportivo*, 0.3%). One example of the latter is the journalistic piece published on April 26, 2004, on pages 4 and 5 of *Mundo*

Figure 3. Thematic focus of the journalistic piece.



Source: Own elaboration.

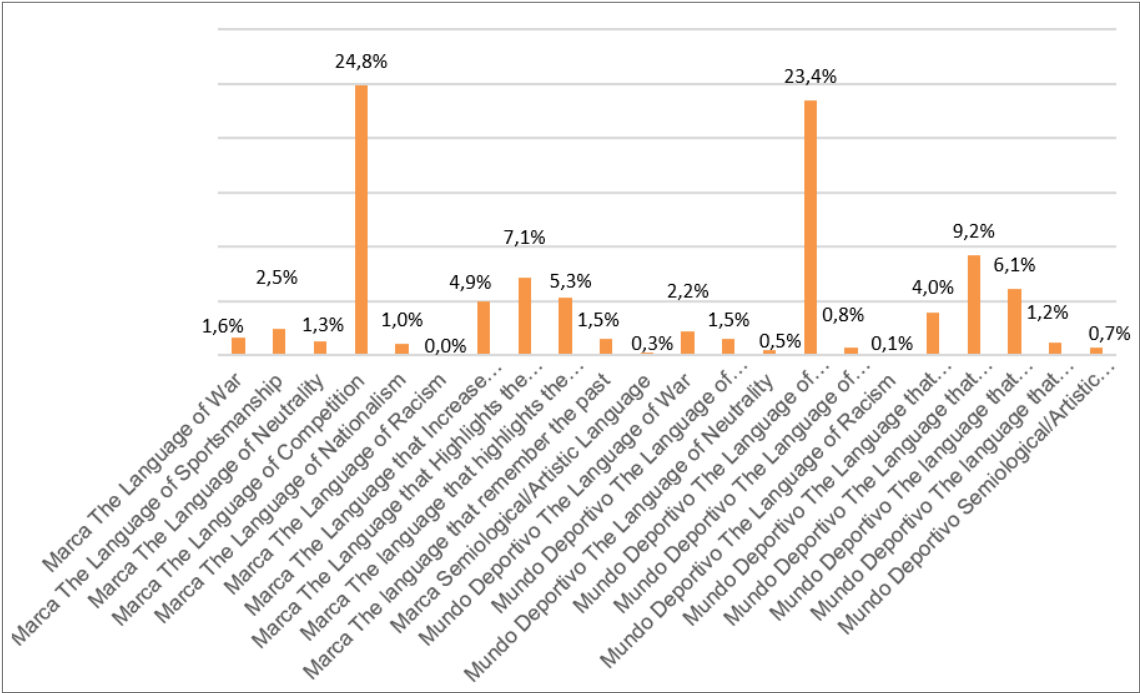
Deportivo, in which Catalanism is highlighted as a sign of identity. One of its paragraphs says:

Pero Ronaldinho, generoso y conocedor del Barça, sabía que debía compartir el liderazgo. Sabía que Puyol debía destacar como el más destacado, porque el alma catalana es única, porque la siente y es grande, porque no solo hay fuerza, sino también Calidad. (But Ronaldinho, who is generous and understands what Barça is, knew that he had to share the

leadership. He knew that Puyol had to stand out as the most outstanding because the Catalan soul is unique because he feels it and it is big, because there is not only strength but also quality). (*Mundo Deportivo*, April 26, 2004)

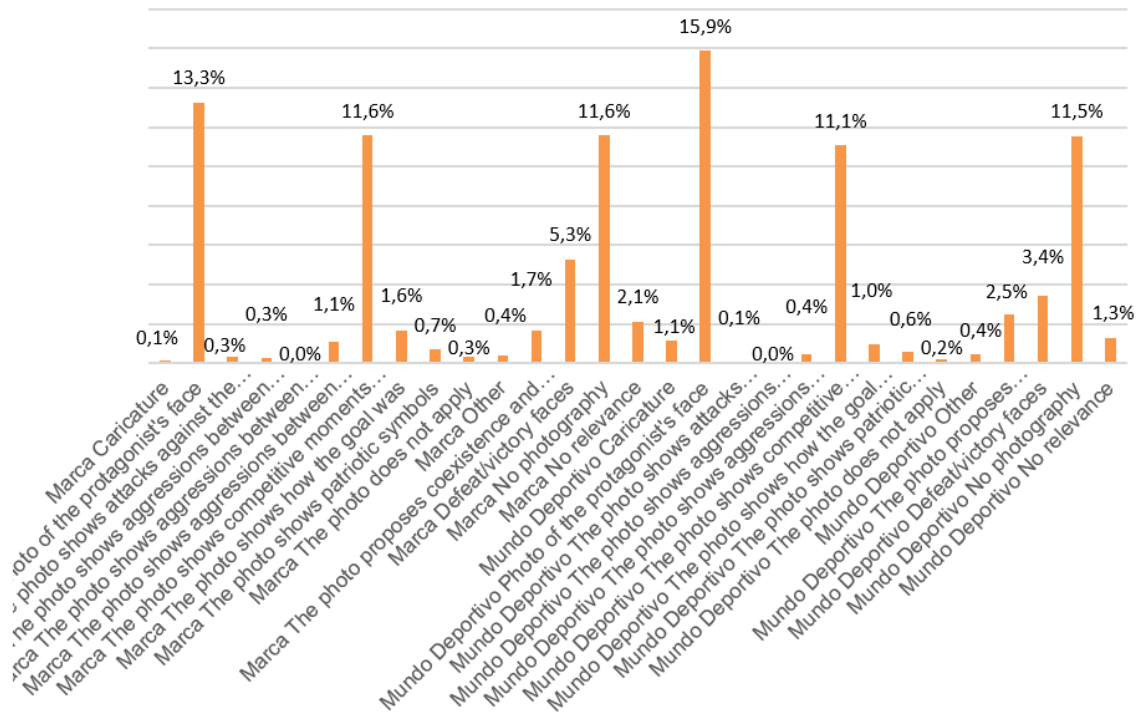
The predominant language is that of the competition (see Figure 4). *Marca* (24.8%) and *Mundo Deportivo* (23.4%) talk about relevant matches and tactical systems, and venture explanations of the final scores. The language of war –the aggressive

Figure 4. Language of the journalistic pieces.



Source: Own elaboration.

Figure 5. Illustration types.



Source: Own elaboration.

frame— is more frequent in *Mundo Deportivo* (2.2%) than in *Marca* (1.6%).

The aggressive speech can be found in the journalistic piece entitled “El Barça toma Madrid” (Barça conquers Madrid), published by *Mundo Deportivo* on April 26, 2004, page 2, where phrases such as “the league was blown up”, “the funeral of the famous galaxy”, and “needed a *banderilla* of fire”, are found to talk about FC Barcelona’s victory over Real Madrid. Another example of language that heightens differences is the headline on the front page of *Marca*: “Tramposos: frieron a láser a CR9 y Pepe” (Cheaters: CR9 and Pepe were laser-fried) on November 30, 2009.

The language of sportsmanship is more frequent in both, but more so in *Marca* (4.7%) than in *Mundo Deportivo* (2.5%). A case of sportsmanship that resorts to a pun is the *Marca* article dated October 8, 2012, page 26, entitled “The Camp Nou was independent”. This article highlights ironically how most Barça followers watched the match peacefully in Camp Nou instead of shouting slogans in favour of Catalan independence.

Graphic reporting is a regular resource in both, mainly to show the faces of the winners and losers and the incidents of the Spanish classics. The protagonists of the matches are photographed in *Mundo Deportivo* (15.9%) more than in *Marca* (13.3%), and the competitive incidences of the match appear in 11.1% of the contents in *Mundo Deportivo* and 11.6% in *Marca* (see Figure 5).

The images related to nationalism and symbols have minimum percentages: *Marca* (0.7%) and *Mundo Deportivo* (0.6%). It is worth mentioning the photo published in *Marca*, page 10 of November 21, 2004, in which fans say that “Catalonia is not Spain” (in English). This story, entitled “This banner should have been removed”, says the then-president of

Barcelona Fútbol Club, Joan Laporta, should have confiscated the separatist poster. This match was played at Camp Nou, and FC Barcelona defeated Real Madrid 3-0.

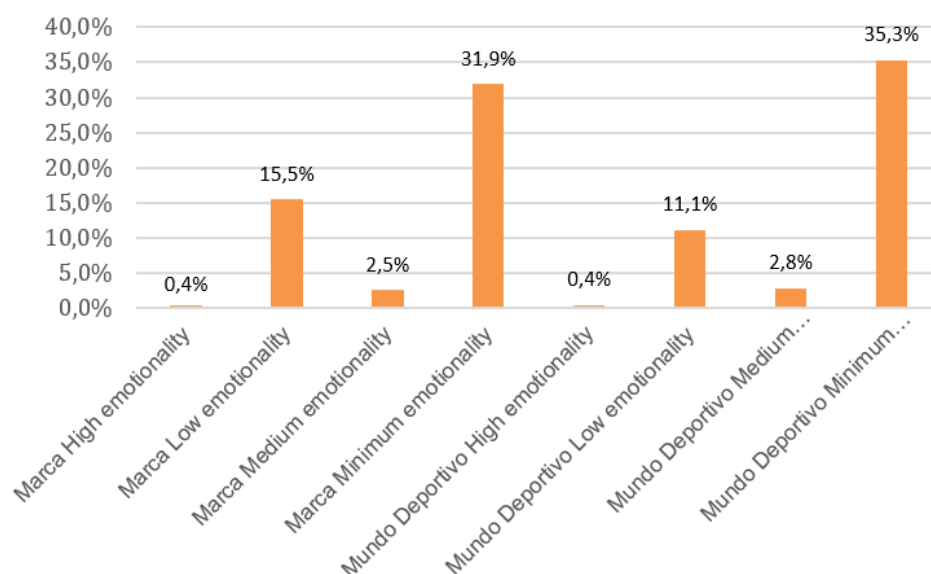
Infographics are a frequent resource, to supplement the match's start, showing tactical systems, and quantitative and qualitative assessments of the players, among other information. In some circumstances, photomontages describe how the goal was produced. The most common infographic in the two newspapers is one that shows statistics or qualitative evaluations (*Mundo Deportivo*, 4.1%; and *Marca*, 3.5%) or the tactical system of the teams (*Marca*, 1.5%; and *Mundo Deportivo*, 1.6%). This example shows the tactical approach of the teams in *Mundo Deportivo* on March 3, 2029, page 2.

A total of 30.7% (N = 812) of the journalistic pieces of *Mundo Deportivo* and 26.7% (N = 706) of those published by *Marca* do not have a source providing statements about the sporting event.

Only a few sources have significant percentages in *Mundo Deportivo*, such as the testimonies of soccer players/athletes (8.1%, N = 214), managers/clubs (3.2%, N = 85), coaches (2.5%, N = 66), and fans (2.5%, N = 65). *Marca* maintains a trend with similar and dissimilar values in some sources: soccer players/athletes (8.5%, N = 224), club representatives (1.6%, N = 43), coaches (5.9%, N = 157), and fans (2.8%, N = 75). Both newspapers infrequently consult other sources linked to the political, educational, and cultural fields (*Mundo Deportivo*, 0.2%, N = 6), academics (*Marca*, 0.4%, N = 10), government representatives (*Mundo Deportivo*, 0.1%, N = 2, and *Marca*, 0.1%, N = 3), and opposition leaders (*Marca*, 0.6%, N = 16).

The emotionality levels in each journalistic piece are based on a combination of quantified variables

Figure 6. Emotionality of journalistic pieces.



Source: Own elaboration.

(see Figure 6). This measurement includes the picture's characteristics, the tone of the sources' testimonies, the story's framing, the language, and the title's style, which can go from minimal to maximum emotionality (see Tables 3 and 4). Minimum emotionality—a neutral frame—prevails in *Marca* (in 31.9% of the pieces) and *Mundo Deportivo* (35.3%). Low emotionality appears in 15.5% of the pieces *Marca* published and 11.1% by *Mundo Deportivo*. Low emotionality refers to reporting without resorting to demonstrative, confrontational, or nationalist expressions. However, some journalistic pieces show a high emotionality because of their photographs, testimonies, approach, language, or headlines, which relish the followers' rivalries or tackle political and cultural differences. For example, the story published in *Marca* on November 30, 2009, page 16, entitled "Guerra sucia" (Dirty war), encourages hatred among the fans.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

This analysis brings to the surface interesting traits of Spanish soccer reporting. It does so by processing data from eighteen years of reporting during an exceptional period—in which both Spanish football's golden age and the Catalan *procés* arose—; it analyses the political language in sports and searches for aggressive language and confrontational frames in the journalistic pieces examined.

A salient component in the journalistic pieces of the coverage is the significant use of appellative and sensationalist headlines (*Mundo Deportivo*, 12.5%; *Marca*, 14.4%), adding excitement, surprise, and conflict to the stories. This propensity might have to do not only with political aims but also with commercial goals. Rojas Torrijos (2011) points out that, in Spain, the specialized sports press replaced the generalist Spanish tabloids in sports reporting because the latter could not consolidate their business model and disappeared. Meanwhile, the specialized press thrives in sensationalism. In our study, we observe this sensationalism is channelled

typically in journalistic genres such as the feature (*Marca*, 11.8%; *Mundo Deportivo*, 11.4%) or the opinion piece (*Mundo Deportivo*, 8.1%; and *Marca*, 9.6%). In this type of piece, journalists have the license to take sides and show their preferences. This practice amounts to trench journalism or scarf journalism (González Ramallal, 2014). Although the news story is a genre that prevails (*Mundo Deportivo*, 13.2%; *Marca*, 13.3%), at times, it is difficult to code it as "informative" because there is a tendency to combine it with other genres that allow more room for commentary. This is a questionable practice in independent journalism.

The most common frame in these journalistic pieces is the competition (*Marca* 24.8% y *Mundo Deportivo* 23.4%), and sportsmanship/reconciliatory (*Marca*, 4.7%; *Mundo Deportivo*, 2.5%). However, a relatively significant percentage of the stories (*Marca*, 5.9%; *Mundo Deportivo*, 2.8%) is identified as promoting confrontation or highlighting political and identity aspects in the context of the Catalan question. In these stories, war-like language seems to be employed to inflame spirits. This type of story can be harmful and encourage physical, psychological, and symbolic aggression (Bryant & Zillmann, 1983; Coakley, 1988). The riots in Barcelona in 2015 are an example (ABC, 2015). The use of the language of war, a confrontational approach, and the utilization of emotional messages, in a context of declining social, economic, and political conditions, can reactivate conflict that was previously dormant, paraphrasing Escola de Cultura de Pau (Navarro et al., 2022).

Finally, the study offers a view into the general state of sports reporting by capturing the tendency to rely on a limited pool of sources and the preference for spectacular information. Due to the desire to monetize coverage, journalistic pieces are characterized by the reiteration of superfluous descriptions, bland detail, and high-sounding language that discredit sports reporting (Rojas, 2015). One aspect contributing to this negative perception is the scarcity of sources. There are no sources in 30.7% of the articles published by *Mundo Deportivo* and 26.7% in

Marca in the same period. When references are included in the piece, often, they are not independent sources, but soccer players, managers, coaches, or fans. This result corroborates other previous studies. Ramón (2017) argues that broadening the variety and quantity of information sources would provide more context and improve sports journalism as a genre. Occasionally, the papers studied venture into the untrodden path. *Mundo Deportivo* talks sporadically with politicians (0.2%, N = 6) and government representatives (0.1%, N = 2), while *Marca* does so with academics (0.4%, N = 10) and opposition representatives (0.6%, N = 16). However, this is not frequent.

We have collected the terms and visual cues published about el clásico and analysed them to identify charged language promoting political strife. The extraordinary period from which we have extracted the data encompasses the leading two football teams ascending to stardom (2003-2004) to their decay as nationalist icons (2020-2021). As discerned ten years ago, today FC Barcelona and Real Madrid no longer embody Catalanism and Spanishness quite so impeccably; their main characters have since retired or moved on to foreign clubs, and the Catalan cause languishes. Although it is not a diachronic analysis, our investigation captures some of the unique moments in this period by linking the employment of confrontational/aggressive frames with political troubles. For example, three stories that employ charged language coincide with crucial political moments. “El Barça toma Madrid” (Barça takes Madrid) was published after the general elections of March 14 and before the European Parliament Elections of June 2004, while “Rematan al Madrid” (Madrid is put down) and “Guerra sucia” (Dirty war) appeared during the court hearings against the leaders of the Catalan independence process in 2019. The independentist process expanded from 2010 until 2018; from 2017 to 2019, when the trials against the Catalan leaders ensued, political tension between Spanish centralism and Catalan independentism was at its highest. Significantly, our analysis shows that 7% of the pieces published by *Marca* and 3.5% by *Mundo Deportivo* employed confrontational frames during that period. Although only *Mundo Deportivo* refers directly to nationalism (0.3% of its contents), both newspapers display war-like language in 1.3% of their stories. Likewise, audiences increased from 2017 to 2020 (as Table 1 shows.). Here we agree with Rojas and Guerrero (2021) that during the Catalan independence

process, *Mundo Deportivo* and *Marca* have seen an increase in charged expressions attempting to politicize information about el clásico. In both media outlets, we read overlapping phrases that, amidst many descriptions of the competition itself, attempt to instigate opposed positions among fans of both clubs regarding the Catalan independence process.

The power of soccer to seduce audiences is undeniable; the proof is the abundance of journalistic pieces about the Spanish soccer classics between FC Barcelona and Real Madrid, which gather 480 million television viewers in 185 countries (Montaño, 2021). Print media also offers intense coverage. The appetite for sports resulted in the sports-only press, which is immensely popular. In our study, *Marca* published 1049 news pieces covering these competitions from the 2003-2004 season to the 2020-2021 season, while *Mundo Deportivo* published 1035 stories during the same time. When these leading sports papers use emotional and war-like language and confrontational frames promoting political conflict, it is worth noting.

This analysis is limited to not tapping into *Marca* and *Mundo Deportivo* journalists' perceptions about their journalistic organizations and the conditions of their jobs (e.g., professional training, regional identity). Thus, an approach for future research could be interviewing journalists themselves. Examining the tone and direction of the journalistic pieces of the Spanish football classics from the sociolinguistic perspective and using critical discourse analysis, emphasizing the discourse of emotions, as proposed by Gutiérrez and Plantin (2010), seems like an interesting venue to explore. Other limitations are that the study focuses solely on content analysis from two sports newspapers (*Marca* and *Mundo Deportivo*), which may restrict the representativeness of the results; the sample is limited to league matches between 2003 and 2021, excluding other relevant tournaments; and, finally, the study does not address in depth the impact that media coverage can have on audiences.

6. Funding and Support

This research was funded by the Vice-Rector for Research at the University of Tolima, through the project *Sports Journalism in the Colombian and Spanish Football Classic*, code 470130516.

7. Authors' Contribution

Conceptualization	Ideas; formulation or evolution of the overarching research goals and aims.	Authors 1, 2 and 3
Data Curation	Management activities to annotate (produce metadata), clean data, and maintain research data (including software code, where necessary for interpreting the data itself) for initial use and later reuse.	Authors 1 and 3
Formal Analysis	Application of statistical, mathematical, computational, or other formal techniques to analyze or synthesize study data.	Authors 1 and 3
Funding Acquisition	Acquisition of financial support for the project leading to this publication.	Authors 1
Investigation	Conducting research and investigation process, specifically performing experiments, or data/evidence collection.	Authors 1, 2 and 3
Methodology	Development or design of methodology; creation of models.	Authors 1, 2 and 3
Project Administration	Management and coordination responsibility for the planning and execution of the research activity.	Authors 1

Resources	Provision of study materials, reagents, materials, patients, laboratory samples, animals, instrumentation, computing resources, or other analysis tools.	Autor 1 y 2
Software	Programming, software development; designing computer programs; implementation of the computer code and supporting algorithms; testing of existing code components.	Authors 1, 2 and 3
Supervision	Oversight and leadership responsibility for the planning and execution of the research activity, including mentorship external to the core team.	Authors 1
Validation	Verification, whether as part of the activity or separately, of the overall replicability/reproducibility of results/experiments and other research outputs.	Authors 1, 2 and 3
Visualization	Preparation, creation, and/or presentation of the published work, specifically visualization/presentation of the data.	Authors 1, 2 and 3
Writing – Original Draft	Preparation, creation, and/or presentation of the published work, specifically writing the initial draft (including substantive translation).	Authors 1 and 3
Writing – Review & Editing	Preparation, creation, and/or presentation of the published work by the original research group members, specifically critical review, commentary, or revision –including pre– or post-publication stages.	Authors 1, 2 and 3

8. Statement on the use of artificial intelligence

The author declares that generative artificial intelligence was not used in the writing or editing of this article.

9. References

- ABC. (2015, May 19). Pelea entre Aficionados de Real Madrid y Barça. ABC. <https://www.abc.es/deportes/futbol/20150518/abci-pelea-aficionados-barcelona-madrid-201505181940.html>
- Alcoba, A. (2010). *Periodismo Deportivo*. Síntesis.
- Angulo, L., & Moreno, A. (2016). Periodismo deportivo: El fútbol es el rey. *Revista Luciérnaga-Comunicación*, 8(16), 10-26. <https://doi.org/10.33571/revistaluciernaga.v8n16a2>
- Angulo, L. (2015). Análisis, en perspectiva, de los contenidos deportivos de noticias uno: ¿un camino hacia la calidad informativa en televisión? *Fonseca, Journal of Communication*, (10), 167-202. <https://revistas.usal.es/cuatro/index.php/2172-9077/article/view/12915/13288>.
- Angulo, S. (2024, April 20). *Fútbol y hegemonía*. Agon&Areté. <https://agonyarete.com/futbol-y-hegemonia/>
- Asociación para la Investigación de los Medios de Comunicación (AIMC). (2022). *Marco general de los medios en España*. AIMC.
- La Vanguardia (2019, October 27). Barça: Más Allá del Fútbol. *La Vanguardia*. <https://www.lavanguardia.com/deportes/20191027/471211202331/barca-mas-alla-del-futbol.html>
- Benford, R. D., & Snow, D. A. (2000). Framing processes and social movements: An overview and assessment. *Annual review of sociology*, 26(1), 611-639. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.26.1.611>
- Billings, A., Butterworth, M., & Turman P. (2017). *Communication and Sport. Surveying the field*. Sage Publications Inc.
- Bryant, J., & Zillmann, D. (1983). Sports violence and the media. In *Sports violence* (pp. 195-211). Springer New York. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4612-5530-7_12
- Bryman, A., & Teevan, J. J. (2005). *Social research methods*. Oxford University Press.
- Calzada, E. (2012, January 18). Audiencias TV clásicos Real Madrid vs FC Barcelona 2000-2011. *Primetimesports.Com*. <https://es.slideshare.net/slideshow/audiencias-tv-clasicos-real-madrid-vs-fc-barcelona-20002011-esteve-calzada-11133040/11133040>
- BBC (2019, October 18). Catalonia's bid for independence from Spain explained. BBC. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-29478415>
- Chadwick, S., Widdop, P., & Goldman M. (2023). *The Geopolitical Economy of Sport*. Routledge.
- Coakley, J. (1988). Media coverage of sports and violent behavior: An elusive connection. *CurrentPsychology*, 7, 322-330. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02686629>
- Colomé, G. (1999). *Fútbol y Pasiones Políticas. Conflictos e identidades en Cataluña*. Debate.
- Faedo, N. I. (2023). El papel de las mujeres en la producción de piezas periodísticas: análisis de *Mundo Deportivo* y *Marca* durante Qatar 2022. *Obra Digital*, 24, 93-104. <https://doi.org/10.25029/od.2023.388.24>
- Faedo, N. I., Corrius, M., & Ginesta, X. (2024). Are Women Sports Journalists in Spain Truly Progressing or Facing “Pseudo-Progress”? *Journalism and Media*, 5(3), 1211-1227. <https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia5030077>
- Faedo, N. I., Ginesta, X., & Corrius, M. (2022). ¿Evolución o involución? Análisis de los roles de las mujeres periodistas deportivas en la producción informativa de *Mundo Deportivo* y *Marca*. *RAEIC, Revista de La Asociación Española de Investigación de La Comunicación*, 9(18), 182–206. <https://doi.org/10.24137/raeic.9.18.1>
- García del Barrio, P., Becerra, N., & Aubert, J. S. (2019). Rivalidades en las competiciones deportivas y en el escaparate mediático mundial. *Journal of Sports Economics & Management*, 9, 185-201. http://sportsem.uv.es/j_sports_and_em/index.php/JSEM/article/view/171

- Ginesta, X., & de San Eugenio, J. (2013). The use of football as a country branding strategy. Case study: Qatar and the Catalan sports press. *Communication & Sport*, 2(3), 225-241. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2167479513486886>
- Ginesta, X., & de San Eugenio, J. (2023). Football fans as place ambassadors: analysing the interactions between Girona FC and its fan clubs after its purchase by City Football Group (CFG). *Soccer & Society*, 24(2), 258-272. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14660970.2022.2069752>
- GómezColell, E., MedinaBravo, P., & Ramon, X. (2017). The invisible presence of women athletes in the Spanish sports press. Analysis of the front pages of *Marca*, *As*, *Mundo Deportivo* and *Sport* (2010-2015). *Estudios sobre el Mensaje Periodístico*, 23(2), 793-810. <https://doi.org/10.5209/ESMP.58016>
- González Ramallal, M. E. (2014). Prensa deportiva e identidad nacional: España en el Mundial de fútbol de Sudáfrica 2010. *Política y Sociedad*, 51(2), 337-366. https://doi.org/10.5209/rev_POSO.2014.v51.n2.43077
- Gutiérrez, S. & Plantin, C. (2010). 'Argumentar por Medio de las Emociones'. *Comunicación y Política*, 24, 41-69. <https://versionojs.xoc.uam.mx/index.php/version/article/view/375>
- Hernández, R., Fernández, C., & Baptista, P. (2014). *Metodología de la investigación* (Vol. 6). Mc Graw-Hill.
- Holsti, O. (1969). *Content Analysis for the social sciences and humanities*. Longman Higher Education Ed.
- I. T. (2021, May 12). El Independentismo de Guardiola se Instala en el City: Celebran el Título de la Premier en Catalán. *La Razón*. <https://www.larazon.es/deportes/20210512/n4gtfbzkbjby7gibhjt2gowqlu.html>
- Ismer, S. (2011). Embodying the nation: football, 1 emotions and the construction of collective identity. *Nationalities Papers*, 39(4), 547-565. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00905992.2011.582864>
- Jarvie, G. (2006). *Sport, Culture, and Society: An Introduction*. Routledge.
- Longas Luque, C., & Van Sterkenburg, J. (2022). Exploring discourses about race/ethnicity in a Spanish TV football program. *Communication & Sport*, 10(6), 1113-1133. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2167479520971768>
- McCombs, M. E., & Shaw, D. L. (1972). The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36(2), 176-187. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2747787>
- McQuail, D., (2000). *Introducción a la teoría de la comunicación de masas*. Paidós.
- Montaño, P. (2021, October 16). ¿Cuál es el clásico entre Barcelona y Real Madrid con más Audiencia de la Historia? *As*. <https://as.com/futbol/primera/cual-es-el-clasico-entre-barcelona-y-real-madrid-con-mas-audiencia-de-la-historia-n/>
- Mora, A. (2022, March 21). Estos son los Clásicos entre el Real Madrid y el FC Barcelona más Seguidos de la Última Década. *Marketingdirecto.com*. <https://www.marketingdirecto.com/digital-general/digital/clasicos-real-madrid-fc-barcelona-mas-vistos>
- Murray, S. (2020, October 27). Sports Diplomacy: History, Theory, and Practice. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies*. Retrieved 29 Sep. 2025, from <https://oxfordre.com/internationalstudies/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.001.0001/acrefore-9780190846626-e-542>
- Murube, J. M. (2015). *El Lenguaje del Fútbol*. [Trabajo de Fin del Doble Grado, Universidad Pontificia Comillas].
- Navarro, I., Royo, J., Urgell, J., Urrutia, P., Vilellas, A., & Vilellas, M. (2023). *¡Alerta 2022! Informe sobre Conflictos, Derechos Humanos y Construcción de Paz*. Icaria. <https://repositorio.comillas.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11531/6098/TFG001404.pdf?sequence=1>
- O'Brien, J. (2013). El Clásico and the demise of tradition in Spanish club football: perspectives on shifting patterns of cultural identity. *Soccer & Society*, 14(3), 315-330. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14660970.2013.801263>
- Osúa, J. (2019). *Vásquez Montalbán: Fútbol y Política*. Base.
- Poqui, J. (2017, October 1). El Barça y el Catalanismo, a través de la Historia. *Mundo Deportivo*. <https://www.mundodeportivo.com/futbol/fc-barcelona/20171001/431682416804/el-barca-y-el-catalanismo-a-traves-de-la-historia.html>
- Ramón, X. (2017). Ética y periodismo deportivo: disfunciones deontológicas y recomendaciones para una cobertura responsable. In J. L. Rojas Torrijos (Ed.), *Periodismo deportivo de manual* (pp. 233-254). Tirant humanidades.
- Rojas Torrijos, J. L. (2011). *Periodismo deportivo de calidad: propuesta de un modelo de libro de estilo panhispánico para informadores deportivos*. Fragua.
- Rojas Torrijos, J. L. (2015). La creciente banalización de los contenidos deportivos. *Cuadernos de periodistas: revista de la Asociación de la Prensa de Madrid*, 31, 48-56. <https://idus.us.es/handle/11441/68349>
- Rojas Torrijos J. L., & Guerrero Caballero M. (2021). ¿Un periodismo deportivo apolítico?: Estudio de las referencias al 'procés' catalán en la prensa deportiva digital en España. *Estudios sobre el Mensaje Periodístico*, 27(3), 947-960. <https://doi.org/10.5209/esmp.72554>
- Rojo, L. F., & Pecker, D. (2018, September 22). Los Futbolistas Españoles Cotizan a la Baja en el Barcelona. *Marca*. <https://www.marca.com/futbol/barcelona/2018/09/22/5ba538d9268e3e2f1e8b45d9.html>
- Rowe, D. (2007). Sports journalism: Still the toy department of the news media? *Journalism*, 8(4), 385-405. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884907078657>
- Schep, C. (2023). Fueling nationalism: social and cultural media frames in French and British newspaper coverage of Formula 1 racing, 1981-1985. *National Identities*, 25(1), 21-34. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14608944.2021.2013186>
- Scheufele, D. A. (2000). Agenda-setting, priming, and framing revisited: Another look at cognitive effects of political communication. *Mass communication & society*, 3(2-3), 297-316. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327825MCS0323_07

- Schutt, R. K. (2019). *Investigating the social world: The process and practice of research*. Sage publications.
- Seijbel, J., van Sterkenburg, J., & Oonk, G. (2022). Expressing rivalry online: antisemitic rhetoric among Dutch football supporters on Twitter. *Soccer & Society*, 23(8), 834-848. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14660970.2022.2109800>
- Simón, J. A. (2015). La diplomacia del balón: deporte y Relaciones Internacionales durante el Franquismo. A diplomacia da bola: esporte e Relações Internacionais durante o Franquismo. *História e Cultura*, 4(1), 165-189. <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=6077222>
- Suárez, O. (2015). *Los Cuerpos del Poder: Deporte, Política y Cultura*. Córner.
- Toro, I. D., & Parra, R. (2010). *Fundamentos Epistemológicos de la Investigación Cualitativa/cuantitativa*. Fondo Editorial Universidad Eafit.
- Vinicius Ferreira, D. (2020, July 31). Entrevista a Josep Maria Solé, i Sabaté, *Ludopédio*. <https://ludopedio.org.br/entrevista/josep-maria-sole-i-sabate/>
- Weerakkody, N. (2009). *Research Methods for Media and Communication*. Oxford University Press.
- White, M. D., & Marsh, E. E. (2006). Content Analysis: A Flexible Methodology. *Library Trends*, 55(1), 22-45. <https://doi.org/10.1353/lib.2006.0053>
- Wimmer, R., & Dominick, J. (1996). *La Investigación Científica de los Medios de Comunicación. Una Introducción a sus Métodos*. Bosch.
- Xifra, J. (2009). Building sport countries' overseas identity and reputation: A case study of public paradiplomacy. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 53(4), 504-515.

Lizandro Angulo Rincón. Professor and researcher at the University of Tolima, and PhD in Communication from the University of the Basque Country. He has carried out postdoctoral research on specialized journalism at Pompeu Fabra University and at the Olympic Studies Centre of the Autonomous University of Barcelona. His academic interests include community television, transmedia production, and the field of communication and sport. He has authored books, published articles in indexed and non-indexed journals, and presented papers at international journalism and communication conferences. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8954-4116>

Antonia Moreno Cano. PhD in Communication and a researcher at the University of Deusto. She has carried out research stays in Colombia and Spain, funded by predoctoral and postdoctoral fellowships from the Basque Government and Ikerbasque. Her career combines scientific communication, strategic marketing, and the social appropriation of knowledge. She has published 34 scientific articles, 23 of them in JCR and Scopus-indexed journals (17 in Q1–Q2 and 6 in Q3–Q4), along with others in recognized databases such as FECYT, ERIHPLUS, Latindex, and MIAR. She is also the author of 18 book chapters (7 in SPI Q1 publishers), has coordinated two international conferences, and participated in national and international research projects. Her work focuses on communication, gender, sustainability, and digital ecosystems. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5231-785X>

Miren Gutiérrez Almazor. Professor and researcher at the University of Deusto, specialized in communication and digital activism. Her academic work focuses on the intersection of technologies, disinformation, and gender. She has led and participated in international projects on platform economy, algorithms, and digital resistance. She is the author of books—including *Data Activism and Social Change*—and numerous scholarly articles in high-impact journals, and collaborates in international research networks on communication and social justice. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1527-3434>