

## Unravelling migration media coverage: How migrants and immigration were portrayed in Spain during the refugee crisis (2015-2018)<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** Immigration emerges as a relevant topic in the analysis of media coverage. This case of study identifies that the media coverage adopted a more predominantly political frame rather than a social or human frame. Also, there were significant differences between the presence of migrant and non-migrant news sources, while non-migrant speakers were not judgmental regarding migration. Likewise, news framing influences the selection of news coverage. The political frame over-represented the political actors and international institutions and under-represented migrants. Nevertheless, when it comes to the human-interest angle, migrants are the most common sources. Our results contribute to the literature regarding the description of the issue of immigration focused on the information sources.

**Keywords:** migration, refugees, media coverage, framing, news sources.

### [es] Descifrando la migración en la cobertura mediática: ¿cómo fueron descritos los inmigrantes y la inmigración en España durante la crisis migratoria (2015-2018)?

**Resumen.** La inmigración es un tema relevante en el análisis de contenidos periodísticos. Este caso de estudio señala que en la cobertura mediática suele predominar el frame político sobre el marco social o humano. Además, existieron diferencias significativas entre la presencia de fuentes migrantes y no migrantes, aunque las fuentes no migrantes no fueron un altavoz crítico con la migración. Cuando la migración se cubre desde lo político, los actores políticos e instituciones internacionales están sobrerrepresentados mientras que los migrantes aparecen infrarrepresentados. Por el contrario, cuando el marco es el interés humano, los migrantes son las fuentes más recurridas. Los resultados contribuyen a la literatura existente al analizar la inmigración con énfasis en las fuentes informativas.

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**Palabras clave:** migrantes; refugiados; cobertura mediática; framing; fuentes.

**Sumario:** 1. Introduction. 2. Objectives, research questions, and hypothesis. 3. Theoretical background. 4. Media coverage of the migration in Spain. 5. Methodology. 5.1. Sample. 5.2. Variables and reliability. 6. Findings. 6.1. News coverage and migrant and non-migrant speakers. 6.2. Non-migrant speakers' tone and migration point of view. 6.3. Main actor, genre, and topic area. 6.4. Origin of migration and news media coverage. 7. Final remarks and conclusions. References.

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## 1. Introduction

During the last years, immigration has been a main topic of discussion in European countries. The magnitude in the flow of immigration during the migration crisis of 2015-2018 figures speaks for itself: 2.5 million people requested asylum in member countries of the European Union in 2015 and 2016. In this period, Frontex, a European Union border surveillance agency, intercepted 2.3 million people who were trying to cross the border illegally (European Parliament, 2019).

In 2017, the EU countries received 712,000 applications of asylum; and in 2018, 638,000. In fact, the European Parliament defined the crisis as the worst migration crisis to occur post-Second World War era (European Parliament, 2017).

Immigration became an essential public policy both on a European and on a national level for each of its 27 country members. The crisis of refugees and immigrants, arriving primarily from the Middle East and Africa, generated internal strains that, among other actions, led to the suspension of the Schengen area and fractures between Eastern and Western Europe, as well as between the North and South.

In this study, we address the immigration phenomenon from the standpoint of media content study through quantitative methods of content analysis, dealing with media coverage about immigration; media is one of the main channels through which citizens inform themselves about public topics. Regarding immigration, media has an essential mediating role when it comes to interpreting reality as recognized sources of information (Brosius et al., 2019) and they are mediators between facts and public opinion (Eberl et al., 2018; Harteveld et al., 2018). The typical analytical characteristics of the news framing theory foster processes of “cognitive channelling” (Igartua-Perosanz et al., 2007), from which discourses (Pajnik, 2018) and mental imaginaries arise that define and interpret “immigration” and “immigrants”. Brosius et al. (2019) showed the existing relation between media coverage on immigration with the trust toward the European organizations during the refugees' crisis and the migration crisis to state that the European citizens were dissatisfied with the way the European Union managed the crisis. This is in line with Rodríguez-Pérez's conclusions (2017) about the negative connotations in the media coverage in Spain as regards the procedural legitimacy of the European Union. For their part, Harteveld et al. (2018) showed that during the refugees' crisis, the media attention increased the Euroscepticism.

This paper will proceed as follows. In the first section, the objectives, research questions, and hypothesis are presented. In the second section, the framing theory is explained as theoretical background and the state of art, regarding the treatment and valence (or tone) of the media coverage in Spain for immigration matters. In the third section, the methodological procedure is explained, and the results are presented in the fourth section. The implications of these findings are summarized at the end of the paper.

## 2. Objectives, research questions, and hypothesis

This paper studies the media coverage in Spain during several immigration flows between the years 2015 and 2018 to know the topic area used when covering the migration flow and the refugees' crisis that reached Europe. Speaking about migration in media implies analyzing content that under-represents migrants. First, this study intends to identify the media coverage process in Spain during the migration crisis to analyze the role of the news sources and their tone regarding immigration and to know how immigrants were represented and how political actors depicted the issue of immigration.

Specifically, the aim is to know the thematic area from which media speak about immigration. Second, this study focuses on the main actors of the information with the purpose of knowing the sources used in the coverage, especially the migrant sources. Third, this study examines the differences in media treatment

regarding the origin of the immigrants. Following this approach, research questions and hypotheses were composed. The research questions are as follows:

- RQ1: How visible are migrants/is migration in the Spanish media coverage and which migrants play a role in the news?
- RQ2: How are migrants and immigration portrayed in the Spanish media coverage?
- RQ3: How are migration and political reactions on migration evaluated in the Spanish media coverage?

The hypotheses are presented as follows:

- H1: The media coverage on migration was predominantly focused on the political frame rather than on the social frame and the implications of such migration for people.
- H2: There were differences in the news coverage when including migrant and non-migrant sources.
- H3: News sources (non-migrant speakers) adopted a negative tone about the migration flow in news coverage.
- H4: The emergence of actors (politicians, migrants, or organizations) is conditioned by the journalistic genre and the topic area.
- H5: There are differences in the informative treatment regarding the origin of the migrants and/or their ethnic origin.

### 3. Theoretical background

Bateson (1993) defined the frame as the reality frame that makes people stop before some aspects and dismiss others. This is about a process that occurs on three levels: referential, meta-linguistic, and meta-communicative. Goffman (2006), for his part, described the frame (context of reality) and the scheme (mental structure) as terms that simultaneously explain and are useful to refer to the definition of the situation.

According to Tuchman (1978), the frame creates different views of reality and thus lays the foundation for plurality. In this process, journalists are responsible for organizing the information to create news. The informative process is defined as the method of gathering, selecting, and spreading information linked to each media outlet. Flexibility and indexability, as components of the events transformation in informative circumstances are two essential elements within this category. Along the years, the framing theory has developed different approaches and methods of analysis, such as content analysis (Entman, 1991; 1993); proposal named media package whose core is a central organizing idea for making sense of relevant events (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989), based on keywords, a common language, metaphors, key phrases, and so on, or on photographs and illustrative material (Tankard, 2001); and, lastly, methods focused on the functions. Tankard (2001) defined framing as the process of information selection, since the different frames are found on titles, subtitles, headers, and pictures. Entman (1993) considers the frame as the selection of the reality through an interpretation that journalists themselves create about the happenings in the world to highlight the reality for their audience. Reese (2001) defines the concept as a structure of knowledge subject to certain interests, which means that power relationships explain the frames (Carrasco & Semova, 2014; Rodríguez & Semova, 2014).

Consequently, media play a key role in the shaping of public opinion by focusing on the events and topics that are presented, not only in their opinion pieces but also in the news. The concept of frame has gained wide acceptance in this field, providing new paths in the analysis of media reports. Particularly, Gitlin (1980) highlights that media frames are unavoidable and enable journalists to process large amounts of information quickly and routinely.

In the media, the arguments, with which social realities are defined through the frames, are as important as the issues that are published. Hence, journalistic frames are, for movement theorists, a recurring theme of analysis (Sádaba-Garraza, 2001). Thorbjørnsrud (2015) defends that media coverage has the power to influence public opinion, foster the creation of popular movements, and shape the political environment related to immigration. In her analysis of the framing theory, the author proposes a hybrid methodology that combines ethnographic methods with the quantitative analysis of news and survey contents that measure the perception by the audience. It is focused on the following aspects: (1) narrative voices and arguments that are predominant in the main media coverage on irregular immigration; (2) strategies of message positioning in mass media; and (3) the perception and attitudes of the public regarding the coverage of the irregular immigration topic in media. The political environment that surrounds the immigration topic is still an important matter of interest for the analysis of framing (Freeman et al., 2013; King & Wood, 2001).

More authors have been focusing on the problem of why the media ignores the various complex aspects related to the topic of migration (Benson, 2013; Horsti, 2007; Suro, 2011; Triandafyllidou, 2010). The narrative coverage follows the perspective of a narrative of “illegality,” centered on the initiatives and arguments of the main political formations and governments (Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008; Greenberg & Hier, 2001; Horsti,

2007; Sei-hill et al., 2011; Suro, 2011). The topic of deportations is another matter of interest for the media and the audience (Ellermann, 2006; Ihlen & Thorbjørnsrud, 2014; Jørgensen & Meret, 2012). At the same time, it is evident that there is little interest in the personal stories of migrants, who, in most cases, lack a voice.

The study of the media effects keeps accumulating interesting theoretical and methodological perspectives. In their framing theory of the political agenda, Dekker and Scholten (2017) apply a qualitative comparative analysis design when they analyze different events related to the immigration policies, trying to define if the dominant framing agrees or disagrees. There is no doubt that media effects on the political agenda are not a linear process, but instead they imply complex causal interactions with feedback effects and multiple contingencies (Boydston, 2013; Dekker & Scholten, 2017; Wolfe et al., 2013).

For Dekker and Scholten (2017), the most important matter is still the following: under what conditions can the media coverage be associated with changes in the political agenda? In seeking an answer, Dekker and Scholten (2017) lay emphasis on the starting point for most of the analyses:

First, in a human-interest frame in favor of immigration, immigrants and refugees are portrayed as victims who require compassion and help (d'Haenens & De Lange, 2001; Van Gorp, 2006). Second, the threat frame portrays immigration as an inherently negative phenomenon in which immigrants are perceived as a threat to receiving countries (Horsti, 2003), and immigration is framed as irreconcilable with the host society (Baker & McEnery, 2005).

Third, the economic frame discusses immigration and asylum in terms of economic losses or gains for receiving countries of immigration (d'Haenens & De Lange, 2001). There is attention on immigration putting welfare state arrangements under pressure and on the economic gains of immigration (often distinguishing between "wanted" and "unwanted" forms of migration).

Last, the managerialist frame approaches immigration as a depoliticized governance challenge, focusing on how to best cope with the consequences of immigration beyond discussing whether this is a wanted phenomenon (Benson, 2013; d'Haenens & De Lange, 2001; El Refaie, 2001; Horsti, 2003; Snow & Robert D. Benford, 1992; Van Gorp, 2006; Vliegthart, 2007).

Regarding contradictory discussions about economic

losses and gains of immigration the idea is that there are different types of issue frames that may vary because of different values or beliefs, as in frame amplification, or they may introduce new ways of looking at an issue, as in frame transformation. So, the media can frame logically equivalent information in different ways which entails a positive or negative presentation of the same information (Haynes et al., 2016).

#### 4. Media coverage of the migration in Spain.

Immigration has emerged in the public agenda as one of the main problems of the country according to the barometer time series of public opinion of the Spanish Sociological Research Center (*Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas*; CIS) (Rodríguez-Díaz & Mena-Montes, 2008). Considering this climate of opinions, the academy has sought answers with the purpose of detecting factors that have an influence on the perception of the problem and the formation of opinion, with the media being the usual object of study. Research focused on the Spanish media presents similarities with findings in international studies.

The Spanish media coverage has associated immigration with social-related problems in an informative narrative where news highlight the difficulties and/or problems regarding immigration, such as border control, use of small boats for illegal immigration, or deportation, predominate (Igartua-Perosanz & Muñiz-Muriel 2004; Rodríguez-Díaz & Mena-Montes, 2008), with the media coverage being particularly negative about it. Furthermore, the image of open boats (or small canoes) shows as the reflection of the immigrant's invasion threat (Pérez-Parra, 2006); immigrants that try to enter Spain by jumping the fence are portrayed as wild and dangerous (Martínez-Lirola, 2017). Moreover, the news media resort to either using military similes, metaphors, and semantics (Chakour & Portillo-Fernández, 2018) when informing the citizens about the immigration topic or using negative stereotypes that interpret immigration through terms such as invasion, flooding, and threats instead of interpreting them as a contribution to the economy, demographics, or cultural diversity (Van Dijk, 2007). In other words, the media emphasize the problematization of immigration (Martínez-Lirola, 2017) instead of linking immigration with human rights (Martínez-Lirola, 2020). Oller-Alonso et al. (2021) express this approach is relevant to fight against hate speeches.

Recent studies focus on the perceptions of Spanish journalists, who regret the abundance of stereotypes, the lack of context, and the absence of the migrants' voices in the journalism coverage (Oller-Alonso et al., 2021). Migrant journalism has to include migrant voices in the news coverage (Barranquero, 2021), but studies observe a lack in the inclusion of migrant voices (Arévalo-Salinas et al., 2021; Oller-Alonso et al., 2021). Nevertheless, Selves-Almela and Arcos-Urrutia (2021) found journalists perceive a feeble improvement regarding the use of language and a commitment to explain the context.

Media framing indicates that the Spanish media have approached immigration as a problem that organizations must solve (Igartua-Perosanz & Muñiz-Muriel, 2004). Precisely, the analysis of the two most influencing newspapers in Spain (*El País* and *El Mundo*) during the summer of 2005, the period wherein the critical point of immigration was reached and was viewed as a problem by citizens, showed immigration as a national political problem (Rodríguez-Díaz & Mena-Montes, 2008). Usually, immigration is presented as being related to crime the most pre-eminent and sensationalist television coverage (Igartua-Perosanz et al., 2007), or it is associated with a threat toward national identity or perceived as a labor threat (Checa-Olmos & Arjona-Garrido, 2011). In the same manner, the immigrant's origin marks a gap when treating the immigration topic, since the ethnic or geographic origin determines the frame, associating, for example, African immigration with the border control and the irregular entrance to the country, while Latin-American immigration is presented as an integration example (Igartua-Perosanz & Muñiz-Muriel, 2004).

## 5. Methodology

The research is based on content analysis as a quantitative research method to examine the media coverage, a technique widely used both in news framing studies and in the media treatment of immigration. The analysis of the sample derived from the selection of two Spanish newspapers with the printed and online versions, and divergent editorial viewpoints: *El País* and *La Razón*. According to Hallin and Mancini's model (2004), Spain has a polarized pluralist media system. Consequently, we want to capture the migration news coverage from this perspective.

### 5.1. Sample

The sample analysis consisted of 216 articles ( $n = 216$ ) extracted from both printed and online formats during the period between 2015 and 2018. Letters to the editor and advertising contents were excluded from the sample.

The study was part of a larger comparative effort with data from 17 countries (see disclosure statement). Data was collected during six natural weeks that were determined in a pre-study designed to find weeks with a significant increase of relevant coverage (see Figure 1 and 2; for further details see Fengler & Kreutler, 2020, pp. 15-17). Therefore, the analysis period included the following dates: in 2015 (from August 31<sup>st</sup> to September 6<sup>th</sup>, and from November 9<sup>th</sup> to November 15<sup>th</sup>); in 2016 (from January 4<sup>th</sup> to January 10<sup>th</sup>); in 2017 (from October 9<sup>th</sup> to October 15<sup>th</sup>, and from December 11<sup>th</sup> to December 17<sup>th</sup>); and in 2018 (from February 19<sup>th</sup> to February 25<sup>th</sup>) (see Figure 3). The selection of such periods is deemed valid since the media behavior in Spain was similar to the one presented in the European environment.

Figure 1.  
Selected media coverage in eight European countries  
(August 2015–January 2016). Accumulated  $n = 3187$

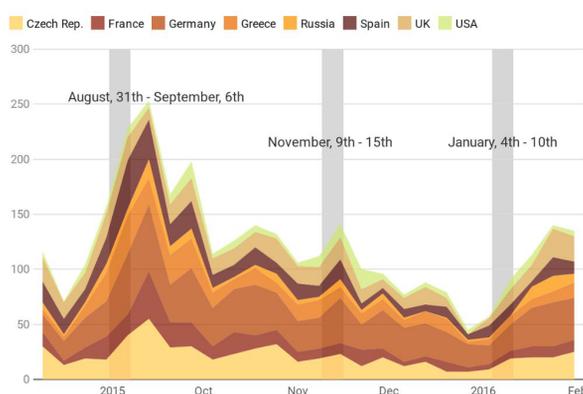
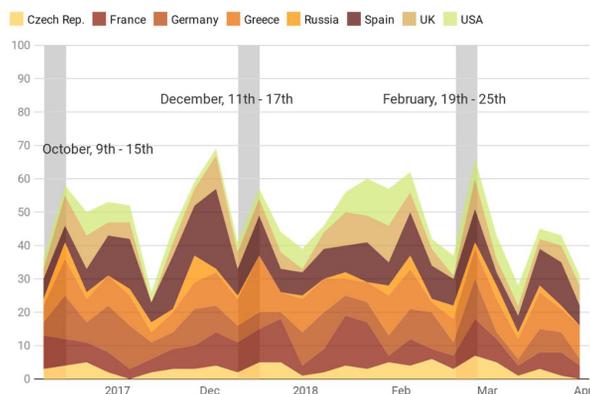


Figure 2.  
Selected media coverage in eight European countries  
(October 2017–March 2018). Accumulated  $n = 1245$



Source: Prepared by the authors

In the first stage of selection and identification of news, we looked for news containing the words “migra-” (migración, migrante, inmigrantes, inmigración, inmigrante, emigración, migratorio), “refugi-” (refugio, refugiado) and “asil-” (asilo, asilado) to highlight the news content related to the object of study. This search revealed 216 units of analysis: 103 in *La Razón* and 113 in *El País*.

## 5.2. Variables and reliability

Second, with the aim of performing the codification of the selected units of analysis, a codebook was created to determine the variables, which are as follows: control variable (the media, the date, the length, and the journalistic genre were considered); variables on the migration movement (origin of the migrants, geographic route of such migration, and the motivation were assessed); immigration news frames (topic area selected in the news coverage); and variables related to the actors (their views regarding immigration, and the involvement of migrants was measured).

The codebook was jointly developed and tested by 15 coders in the participating countries to guarantee reproducibility, arguably the most important interpretation of reliability in content analysis. Given the fact that the study relied on a great number of researchers with different mother tongues and from different countries, the intercoder reliability test was made by considering English as the common language over a sample of 30 pieces of information published by *The Irish Times*. Following Krippendorff's proposal and ensuring at least similar interpretations by other scholars (as represented by different coders), the variables required a value of  $\alpha \geq .800$ . If  $\alpha \geq .667$ , the analysis is regarded as a minimum at least for tentative conclusions. Krippendorff's  $\alpha$  was .999 for length; .721 for genre; .71 for type; .699 for origin; .735 for direction; .685 for focus; .783 for number of migrants; and .899 for number of migrants quoted. The results for other items are not accurate enough and are treated as exploratory results: topic is .576; main actor is .598; and number of non-migrant actors is .501. Motivation as an issue was problematic with a non-reliability test  $\alpha = .28$ , which could be traced to differences mainly in the use of the residual category.

Figure 3.  
Publication of news articles



Source: Prepared by the authors

## 6. Findings

According to the analysis of the results, this research aims at analyzing in the way these two Spanish newspapers represented the migration flow during the migrant and refugee crisis 2015–2018. From the total of analyzed units ( $n = 216$ ), 47.7% ( $n = 103$ ) were published by *La Razón* and 52.3% ( $n = 113$ ) by *El País*. Their behavior regarding the informative production in the time interval analyzed was similar.

Once the units of analysis were categorized based on the journalistic genre, it was observed that the media coverage was primarily composed of factual genres (news, articles, reports), representing 82.9% of the content. The non-factual genres (opinion, interview, and photo-news) represented 15.8%. The behavior of both media when providing media coverage on topics related to immigration was similar, and the majority of the content was categorized under the factual genre rather than the non-factual genres.

Regarding the core news framing, the political debate prevails in both media being the topic with greater importance (46.76%). It reaches 50.4% in *El País* while it reaches 42.7% in *La Razón*. Therefore, H1 is ratified. News frames focused on migrants (personal stories, reactions against them, problems, support...) categorized 34.72% of the content. Thirdly, other type of content represented 18.52%.

### 6.1. News coverage and migrant and non-migrant speakers

By analyzing the sample on which the main actor (one per news content) of the information is based, it was observed that 44.4% of the main actors were politicians (38.94% in *El País* and 50.49% in *La Razón*), followed by migrants who constituted 26.39% of the main actors (24.78% in *El País* and 28.16% in *La Razón*), International Institutions such as the European Union leaders took the third place representing 16.67% (23.01% in *El País* and 9.71% in *La Razón*). 12.5% of the main actors were neither politicians nor migrants.

The presence of migrants in the media coverage was, on average, of 0.56; although statements of only 40% of those migrants were shown. The average of non-migrant sources was of 2.06. Statistically (through

parametric and non-parametric tests), it was proved that in the media coverage, there were in fact differences in the number of appearances between the migrant and non-migrant sources (Student's t-test  $p < .0001$ ;  $\alpha = .05$ ). Additionally, given that the analysis showed atypical values, the range test with sign tests of Wilcoxon was performed for confirming that there were statistically significant differences and that such were not due to outliers. The test showed that in 146 cases (67.59%), the presence of non-migrant speakers was greater compared with the individual migrants. In 16 cases (7.40%), the presence of non-migrant speakers was lower compared with the one of individual migrants. In 56 cases (25.92%), both were equally represented. The value of  $p (< .0001)$  was lower than the value of  $\alpha (.05)$ ; thus, it statistically significant differences in the number of appearances between the migrant and non-migrant sources were observed. In conclusion, H2 is ratified.

In the pieces of information where a person of migrant background is the main actor ( $n = 57$ ), the average appearances of the migrant sources increased to 1.19. On its part, the percentage of migrants associated with a statement increased to 64.7%. In pieces of information where refugee is expressed as the main immigration motivation ( $n = 79$ ), the presence of people of migrant backgrounds is of 0.87 and only 23.2% were quoted.

Focused on the news framing of migrants' situation and their personal stories ( $n = 38$ ), the average is of 1.23 migrants that appear as references, of which 70.21% appear with one statement in the text. The testimony of migrants is perceived as a factor to provide journalistic stories with a human-interest appeal.

Additionally, we do not find differences between the two media (*El País* and *La Razón*) regarding with the presence/absence of migrants in news contents ( $p = .897$ ;  $\alpha = .05$ ;  $\chi^2 = .016$ ), neither regarding with the inclusion/exclusion of migrants quoted ( $p = .289$ ;  $\alpha = .05$ ;  $\chi^2 = 1.122$ ) or non-migrant statements ( $p = .388$ ;  $\alpha = .05$ ;  $\chi^2 = .745$ ).

## 6.2. Non-migrant speakers' tone and migration point of view

The presence of non-migrant speakers exceeded the presence of migrant sources by a great margin. The average of references to non-migrant sources included in the coverage was of 3.7 to 1 regarding the presence of migrants. From the total, the neutral positions of non-migrant speakers as regards the migration were of 49.9%; followed by those who defended migrants (33.9%), and those who exhibited negative views toward them represented 16.2%. Therefore, H3 is rejected.

Such perspectives toward immigrants (of defense, neutral, and of rejection), analyzed based on the main news frame (topic area of the content), show that the negative viewpoints were more frequent when the topic was related to the political debate (21.07%). Nevertheless, the analysis reveals the views defending immigrants reached 38.43% over the 27.01% of defending views released in contents focused on migrants.

## 6.3. Main actor, genre, and topic area

To prove H4, we performed Pearson's chi-squared test to measure the level of (in)dependence among certain variables. It is observed that the variables genre and topic area do not show a relation among themselves and have independent behaviors ( $p = .768$ ;  $\alpha = .05$ ;  $\chi^2 = 0.525$ ) as well as the topic area and the motivation for the migration ( $p = .705$ ;  $\alpha = .05$ ;  $\chi^2 = 2.16$ ).

Moreover, our findings show a dependence among the category's motivation and genre, main actor and genre, and topic area and main actor. We confirm H4 and explain these statistical significations as follows (details can be found at appendix I).

Firstly, we observe that both the general migration framing and the protected migration framing behave differently in function of the journalistic genre. Chi square test ( $p < .01$ ;  $\alpha = .05$ ;  $\chi^2 = 9.03$ ), performed with Bonferroni correction, show an over-representation of general migration framing in factual genres (2.70;  $Z = 2.63$ ) and an under-representation in non-factual genres (-2.70;  $Z = 2.63$ ). On the other hand, the protected framing is the opposite: meanwhile is under-represented in factual genres (-2.80;  $Z = 2.63$ ) and over-represented in non-factual genres (2.80;  $Z = 2.63$ ).

Secondly, the chi square test applied shows statistical significance ( $p < .001$ ;  $\alpha = .05$ ;  $\chi^2 = 10.964$ ) to affirm that the representation of International Institutions as a main actor differs from the other actors (politicians, migrants, and others). Through adjusted residuals we notice international institutions were under-represented in the factual genres (-3.31;  $Z = -2.73$ ) and an over-representation in the non-factual genres (3.31;  $Z = 2.73$ ).

Thirdly, the chi square test features a statistical significance among the overall topic area and the main actors ( $p < .0001$ ;  $\alpha = .05$ ;  $\chi^2 = 81.78$ ). The causes of signification emerge from multiple perspectives. Political actors, as expected, obtained an over-representation when the topic area was "political debate" (5.79;  $Z = 2.68$ ) as well as the "international institutions" (3.72;  $Z = 2.68$ ). In contrast, the appearance of the migrant as the main actor presented an expected behavior. When the informative topic was framed in the political debate, the migrant was under-represented (-6.69;  $Z = -2.68$ ); however, when the informative frame addressed the migrant situation, an over-representation was obtained (5.90;  $Z = 2.68$ ). Both political actors (-4.12;  $Z = -2.68$ ) and international institutions (-2.87;  $Z = -2.68$ ) have fewer cases than expected when the news frame focuses on migrants' issues. Finally, the category others (neither migrants nor politics) obtained a higher percentage (3.17;  $Z = 2.68$ ) than the global of the sample in other topics.

#### 6.4. Origin of migration and news media coverage

Apart from that, by means of the analysis of variance (ANOVA), no statistical significant differences were observed when examining the five averages of the categories (Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe, and Mixed) of the variable origin of migration in the variables length ( $p = .177$ ;  $\alpha = .05$ ), individual migrant sources ( $p = .632$ ;  $\alpha = .05$ ) and non-migrant speakers ( $p = .899$ ;  $\alpha = .05$ ). However, it is specified that the average of the articles' extension was higher when the origin of the immigration was Latin America and Asia. The average of migrant sources used in the informative coverage was higher when the origin of the immigration was Asia ( $M=1.03$ ;  $SD=1.98$ ) and Latin America ( $M=.86$ ;  $SD=1.75$ ). Among the non-migrant sources, their presence was higher when they spoke about migration movements from Asia ( $M=2.34$ ;  $SD=2.13$ ) or they were "mixed" ( $M=2.06$ ;  $SD=2.47$ ). Therefore, it is observed that the journalistic resource of the sources of information is higher when the information referred to migration movements from Asia ( $M = 3.37$ ;  $SD=2.74$ ) than from Latin-American ( $M=2.78$ ;  $SD=2.32$ ) and Africa ( $M = 2.59$ ;  $SD=2.13$ ). When the journalistic information contemplated migrations with a mixed origin ( $M = 2.41$ ;  $SD=4.03$ ), the presence of sources was lower than the presence in the three aforementioned categories. Therefore, H5 cannot be ratified and must be nuanced.

#### 7. Final remarks and conclusions

The relevance of this study finds its justification in the analysis of the media coverage regarding a large migration flow within a socio-political context of great tribulation in Spain and Europe. This research analyzed the media coverage in Spain during six weeks between the years 2015 and 2018 to know from which thematic area media speak about migrants and refugees. Particularly, we focused on the news sources as an essential voice for the journalism practice and their role played in the news coverage building news frames. Our sample consisted of 216 news articles published by two well-recognized Spanish media (*El País* and *La Razón*) that maintain two divergent editorial viewpoints.

Mediatization of migration and refugee discourses exerted an influence on political communication during the refugee crisis in Europe between 2015 and 2018 (Krzyzanowski et al., 2018). The academic literature shows the mediated sphere adopted different frames enhancing the importance of the media role shaping interpretations to accept or refuse the arrival of migrants, that means, cognitive effects on the audience. The purpose of this research does not focus on framing effects on audiences but analysing how news media covered the refugee crisis and how often migrants do have a presence and a voice in news content.

As the reader notices, one of the main drivers to build a news frame states in the definition of these citizens as migrants, refugees or asylum seekers because the explanation of the issue in terms of causes, consequences and moral evaluation differs significantly. Therefore, each concept frames the issue in economic terms, legal statements, or in humanitarian deserving patterns (Holzberg et al., 2018). Both media and political discourses in Europe increased the scepticism to migrants making more prone the legal and security frames (Krzyzanowski et al., 2018), even in Germany where the accepting practices were turned over to the economic frame (Vollmer & Karakayali, 2018). Moreover, the issue context matters due to the proximity to the hot borders, the perception as a hosting country, and the national identity public opinion (Triandafyllidou, 2018).

The interrelation of agendas happens within the migration topic. Negative news coverage towards the migration is positively correlated to anti-immigration attitudes reinforcing societal stereotypes and anti-immigration political views (Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2009). Focused on the Spanish context, several remarks arise from the analysis. First, although the media coverage in Spain has traditionally a negative perspective as regards the treatment of immigration both from the viewpoint of the content analysis and in the citizens' perception regarding the image the media transmits about immigration, we evidence in this study that the non-migrant sources did not express such negativity. The two analyzed news media resorted to the factual genres to cover such migration flow from a political debate frame in contrast to other frames more focused on the situation or the human-interest stories of migrants. If the human-interest frame was adopted, a higher presence of migrants quoted in the news content coverage was noted. Additionally, if the political debate was the prominent news framing, the migrant, as an actor, was under-represented in the news coverage.

Secondly, the neutral or defending positions of non-migrant speakers as regards the migration were greater than those statements that exhibited negative migration points of views. Particularly, the negative viewpoints were more frequent when the frame was related to the political debate.

Thirdly, this research contributes by empirically analyzing the use of migrant and non-migrant sources, quantitatively proving the existence of statistically significant differences. Moreover, it is proved that migrants, in most of the cases, lack a voice. Only when, in the chosen frame, the human-interest frame prevails, the migrant sources acquire relevance in the information. It is also shown that the journalistic treatment was different based on whether the source was migrant or non-migrant. The main informative topic area was framed in the political debate, which over-represented the political actors and international institutions and under-represented migrants. On the contrary, when the frame was linked to the human-interest angle (focused

on the situation of migrants, personal stories about migrants, among others), the journalists resorted to migrants as informative sources from which they could gather information. Spreading these voices, media contribute to the recognition of the human rights of the immigrant population. Additionally, the editorial orientation of media outlets appears without effects regarding the inclusion or absence of migrants in the news content as well as their quotation.

To sum up and notwithstanding certain limitations, this research article contributes to the literature on the impact of immigration news coverage, to the extent that the results contribute to the literature from several perspectives. First, this article delves into the description of the migration phenomenon from the media with the focus on the sources of information, both migrant and non-migrant. Second, by means of the content study through quantitative methods of content analysis, (in)dependence relationships among core variables in the practice of journalism of news-making are shown, such as the selection of the journalistic genre, topic area, main actor, and news sources.

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## Appendix I

### Schemes of a contingency table and the seeking of significance statistics.

We use the Chi-squared test to perform our analysis to confirm or refute our hypothesis. Based on the news content coverage and the data collected in the codebook, we applied this statistical test to know if there were statistically significant differences between certain categories. Below we inserted the results for motivation and journalistic genre, main actor and journalistic genre, and main actor and topic area.

Motivation\*Genre

		Journalistic genre	
		Factual genres	Non-factual genres
Motivation			
General migration	Count	87	9
	Expected count	79,556	16,444
	Adjusted residuals	2,706	-2,706
Protected migration	Count	58	21
	Expected count	65,468	13,532
	Adjusted residuals	-2,800	2,800
Others	Count	34	7
	Expected count	33,977	7,023
	Adjusted residuals	0,011	-0,011
		$\alpha = .05$ Nº test = 6 Adjusted significance level = .008 Z = +/- 2.638	

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	v = 1 $\chi^2 = 9.03$																																	

Main actor\*Genre

Main actor		Journalistic genre	
		Factual genres	Non-factual genres
Political	Count	84	12
	Expected court	79,556	16,444
	Adjusted residuals	1,62	-1,62
International institutions	Count	23	13
	Expected court	29,833	6,167
	Adjusted residuals	-3,31	3,31
Migrants	Count	49	8
	Expected court	47,236	9,764
	Adjusted residuals	0,72	-0,72
Others	Count	23	4
	Expected court	22,375	4,625
	Adjusted residuals	0,34	-0,34
		$\alpha = .05$ Nº test = 8 Adjusted significance level = .006 Z = +/- 2.734	

	Factual genres	Non factual genres		Factual genres	Non factual genres
Political	*		Political	NO	
International Institutions					
Migrants					
Others				v = 2 $\chi^2 = .133$	
	v = 3 $\chi^2 = 11.07$		International Institutions	***	
			Political, Migrants + Others		

Topic area \* Main actor

Topic area		Main actors			
		Politicians	International	Migrants	Others
Political debate	Count	66	27	5	
	Expected count	44,889	16,833	26,653	12,627
	Adjusted residuals	5,794	3,720	-6,700	-3,900
Focused on migrants	Count	19	5	38	1
	Expected count	33,333	12,500	19,792	9,375
	Adjusted residuals	-4,123	-2,876	5,904	1,500
Others	Count	11	4	14	1
	Expected count	17,778	6,667	10,556	5,000
	Adjusted residuals	-2,389	-1,253	1,369	3,100

$\alpha = .05$

Nº test = 12

Adjusted significance level = .004

	Political	Int Institut Collective	Migrants	Others
Other	***			
Focused on migrants				
Political debate				
	v = 6 $\chi^2 = 81.788$			

	Political	Int Institut Collective	Migrants
Focused on migrants	***		
Political debate			
	v = 2 $\chi^2 = 61.449$		

	Political	Int Institut Collective
Focused on migrants	NO	
Political debate		
	v = 1 $\chi^2 = 0.645$	

	Political + Int Institut	Migrants
Focused on migrants	***	
Political debate		
	v = 1 $\chi^2 = 61.003$	