



## 2nd Newsnet Seminar

# *News, Networks and Users in the Hybrid Media System*

**Bilbao, November 16th, 2021**



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**Simón Peña-Fernández &  
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(Eds.)



Universidad  
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2<sup>nd</sup> Newsnet Seminar (Bilbao, November 16th, 2021)

# **NEWS, NETWORKS AND USERS IN THE HYBRID MEDIA SYSTEM**

2nd SEMINAR REPORT

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## Preface

During the last few months, the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated issues have monopolized the debate on the media and social networks. Thus, the news actors in the hybrid media system have incorporated the fight against the infodemic and disinformation as another priority in a society that has demanded constant and reliable information in multiple formats and media.

In this liquid ecosystem, data flows rapidly between different platforms, while mobile devices and multi-media formats allow information to arrive in multiple forms adapted to all types of audiences.

But in this environment in which borders are increasingly blurred, the need for citizens to receive up-to-date and truthful information on issues of high social impact is superimposed on the dynamics of social media, which can contribute to feeding back discourses that promote polarization. The information saturation typical of an information ecosystem in which information actors and sources multiply has, therefore, as a paradoxical reverse, the increased risk of misinformation.

In this context, this report includes the main contributions made by the researchers of the project *News, networks and users in the Hybrid Media System* (RTI2018-095775-B-C41/42/44) in the 2nd Newsnet Seminar, which was held in Bilbao on November 16, 2021.

The main objective of this coordinated project, financed by the Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities, is to analyze not only the way in which audiences interact with news, but also the way in which it is created and distributed by of the heterogeneous actors that make up the hybrid media system.

The authors want to thank all the people and institutions that have made this project possible with their help.

Simón Peña-Fernández  
Koldobika Meso-Ayerdi  
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# **The Salience of Inequality in Spanish Cybermedia. A Longitudinal Content Analysys in a Pandemic Year: March 2020 – February 2021**

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## **Introduction**

From March 2020 most countries started to impose restrictions to stop the spread of coronavirus (Solís-Lerici, March 23, 2020). International organizations have reported the increase in inequality as one of the main effects of the pandemic in the world (Oxfam, April 9, 2020; United Nations, March 25, 2021) as well as Spain (Oxfam, June 23, 2020; Ocaña, 2020).

The increase in child poverty (Aldeas Infantiles, 31 July 2020), educational or gender gaps (Nogueira, 12 March 2020; Fundación Internacional y para Iberoamérica de Administración y Políticas Públicas 26 August 2020) have been consolidated in a context in which income inequality has increased due to job insecurity (Sánchez-Silva, 15 March 2020).



## **State of the art**

When dealing with the treatment of inequality in the media, it is necessary to take into account how the media agendas are composed and how the issues dealt within these agendas behave. Thus, these issues have a life cycle in media agendas, from the alarming discovery of the event to the decline in attention to the issue, after an initial phase of enthusiasm that is mitigated by the costs associated with resolving the conflict (Downs, 1972, pp. 39-40). This research aims to understand how inequality, understood as the disparity whereby some people have access to certain standards of living and others do not (Ray, 1998, p. 170), has been presented in the media as its link to the pandemic and to what extent inequality maintains media attention, in an ecosystem in which even though the number of media outlets has grown exponentially and audiences have almost infinite options for news consumption (Meikle & Eden, 2011; Boczkowski & Anderson, 2017), their limited attention span continues to generate competition between the issues that make up the agenda (Green-Pedersen & Mortensen, 2010).

The research guiding this paper is broken down into two:

RQ1.1 What is the salience given to the relationship between inequality and coronavirus in the analysis of cyber-media?

RQ1.2 How does the coverage of inequality develop regarding the authorship of the information, the journalistic function and the spaces of publication?

## **Methodology**

This research develops a quantitative content analysis (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 17) that allows us to measure the salience of the inequality agenda of the Spanish cybermedia and the news coverage in the context of the coronavirus pandemic.

The media chosen for the analysis are abc.es, elconfidencial.com, eldiario.es, elmundo.es, elpais.com and lavanguardia.com. The units of analysis are all publications between March 2020 and 28 February 2021<sup>1</sup>, where the concepts of inequality and coronavirus are linked (N=2727). This allows us to work with the entire population to study media salience, understood from a unidimensional perspective, as the number of news items published (Dearing and Rogers, 1996).

Subsequently, we work with a stratified probability sample (n=958), according to the weight of each media outlet in the population as a whole, analyzing media coverage in depth according to the following variables: the authorship of the product ( $\alpha^2 = 0.962$ ), the media space where the story is located ( $\alpha = 0.896$ ) and the journalistic function from which the text is developed ( $\alpha = 0.919$ ).

## Results

The salience varies over the period March 2020 - February 2021 and, in turn, varies in each of the media analyzed. On a general level, it can be seen that the topic grew until reaching its maximum salience in the month of May 2020 (Mmay20=92.5) in practically all media. From that moment onwards, after a not so pronounced drop in the month of June (Mjun20=49.7), during the summer period, the importance given by the media continued to fall (Mjul-Aug20=20.1), until a slight upturn occurred between September and October of the same year (Msep-Oct-20=35.5). From then onwards, the media reduced their interest again, maintaining a similar level of attention until February 2021 (Mnov20-Feb21=26.2). However, it can be observed that the salience given to the issue

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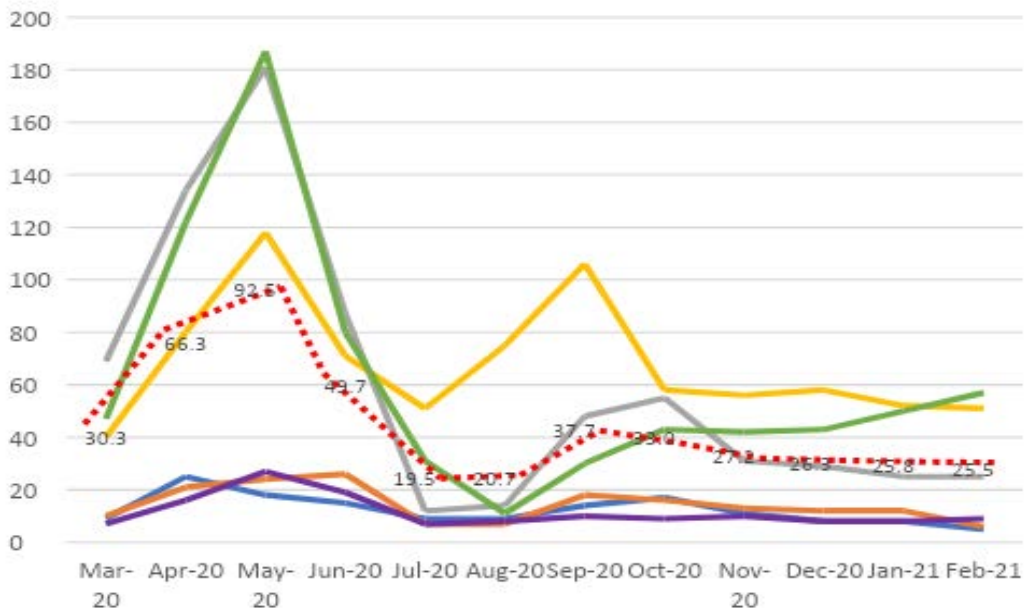
<sup>1</sup> For the configuration of the population, an advanced Google search was performed based on the terms "inequality" and "coronavirus". Subsequently, coders manually checked whether the use of these terms was coincidental or causal, eliminating from the population those publications where the relationship between the two was not direct.

<sup>2</sup> The Krippendorff Alpha index is used to measure the agreement between coders, as it is applicable in coding processes carried out by two or more observers; and in variables with different

varies, depending on the cyber-media. On the one hand, elpais.com (N=816), lavanguardia.com (N=743) and eldiario.es (N=710) give greater salience to the issue. Elconfidencial.com (N=172), abc.es (N=148) and elmundo.es (N=138), the salience of the topic is much lower.

As for the evolution of the salience given over the months, several cyber-media shows an evolution that differs from the general dynamics. In the cases of abc.es and elmundo.es, their fall from November 2020 onwards is more pronounced than the average, standing at values similar to or lower than the fall in July and August 2020. In the case of elconfidencial.com, the maximum values are delayed until June 2020 with a more drastic drop than average in February 2021. For its part, elpais.com experiences the same peaks in media attention but does not show such a sharp drop during the months of July and August 2020. Finally, eldiario.es and lavanguardia.com behaviour is in line with the average for all cyber-media.

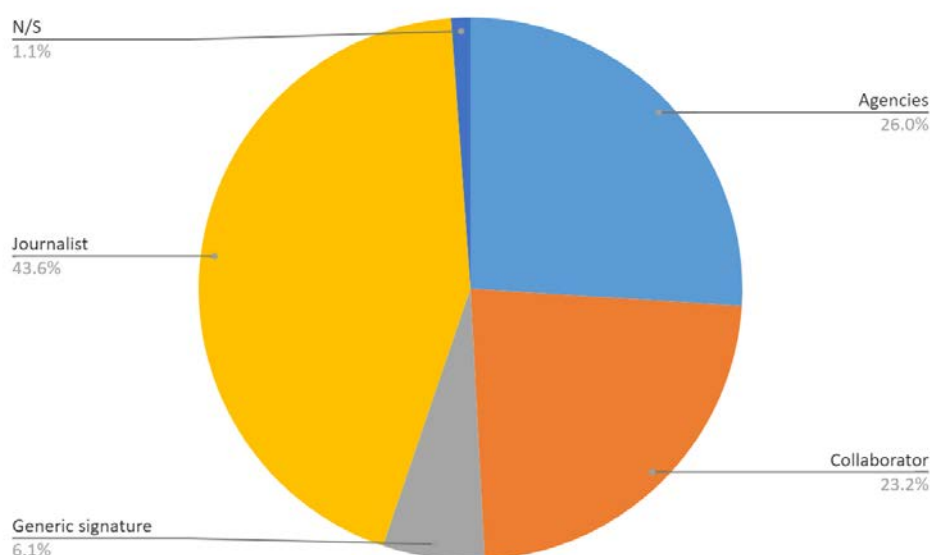
Figure 1. Treatment of inequality in the online media: March 2020-February 2021 (N=2727)



Source: The authors

When analysing who is the creator of the text, where the issue of inequality is addressed, it is observed that in 23.2% of the cases, the author of the text is not a journalist but a collaborator from outside the media. In the rest of the cases, journalists are the creators of the journalistic products, but only 43.6% of the cases are the texts written by journalists from the media. In 26% of the cases, the signature corresponds to journalists from the agencies supplying the information.

Figure 2. Authorship of published texts on inequality

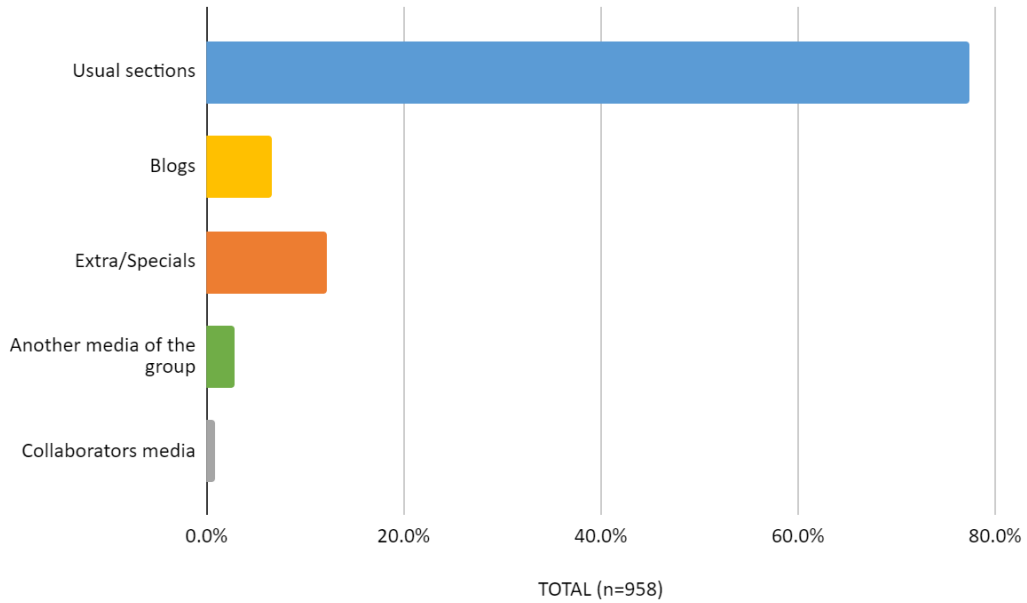


Source: The authors

As for the location of the journalistic products, these are usually developed in the traditional sections of the cybermedia (77.3%), although the subject also jumps to supplements or special sections (12.2%) and blogs (6.7%). The use of products from other publications of the media group (2.8%) and collaborating media (0.9%) is much lower.

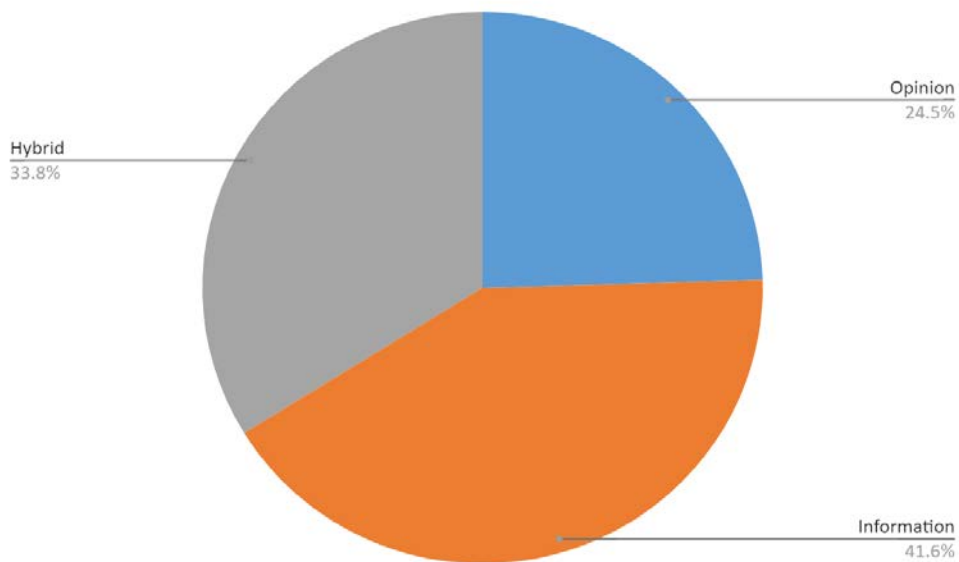
Finally, regarding the purpose of the text published in the cybermedia, there is a slight dominance of informative text, 41.6%, developed in news format; compared to interpretative text, 33.8%, which take the structure of interviews, reports and chronicles; and opinion text, 24.5%, which include editorials, columns and opinion articles.

Figure 3. Location of published texts on inequality



Source: The authors

Figure 4. Journalistic role of published texts on inequality

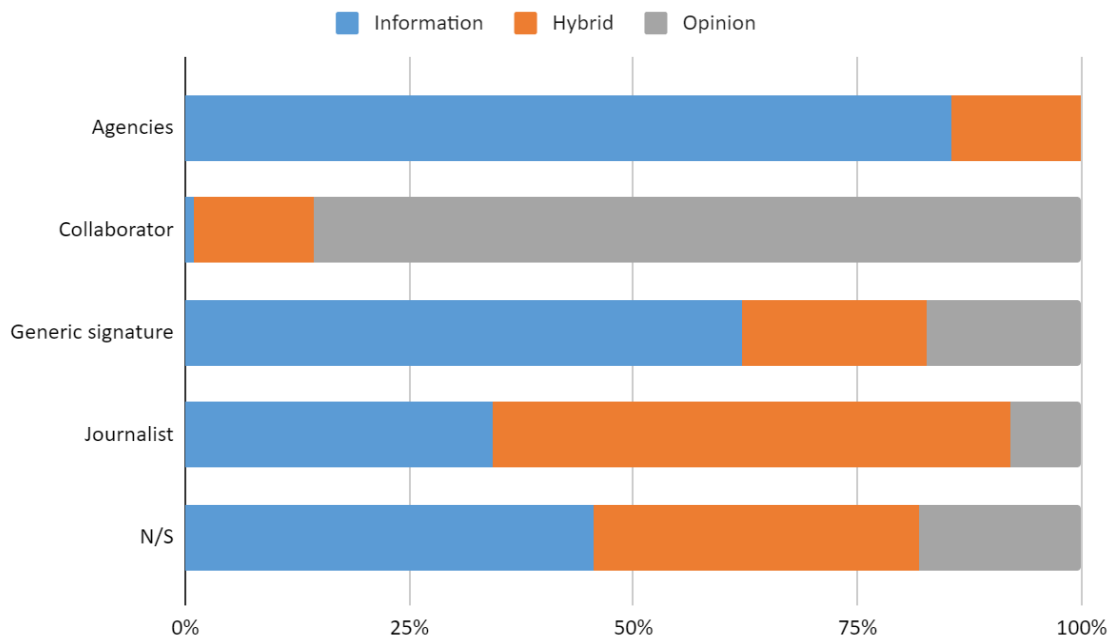


Source: The authors

It is necessary to highlight how authorship conditions the dominance of a

journalistic function in the different texts analysed. In the text coming from agencies, there is a clear dominance of the informative function, 85.5%, as opposed to the interpretative function at 14.5%. In the text signed by non-journalist contributors, the predominant function is opinion (85.6%), with interpretative (13.5%) appearing to a lesser extent. However, in the text signed by journalists, there is a greater variation in the journalistic functions, so that, although the interpretative function prevails in most of the text (57.9%), the journalists themselves are also responsible for writing news (34.2%) and, to a lesser extent, opinion text.

*Figure 5.* Development of the journalistic function according to the authorship

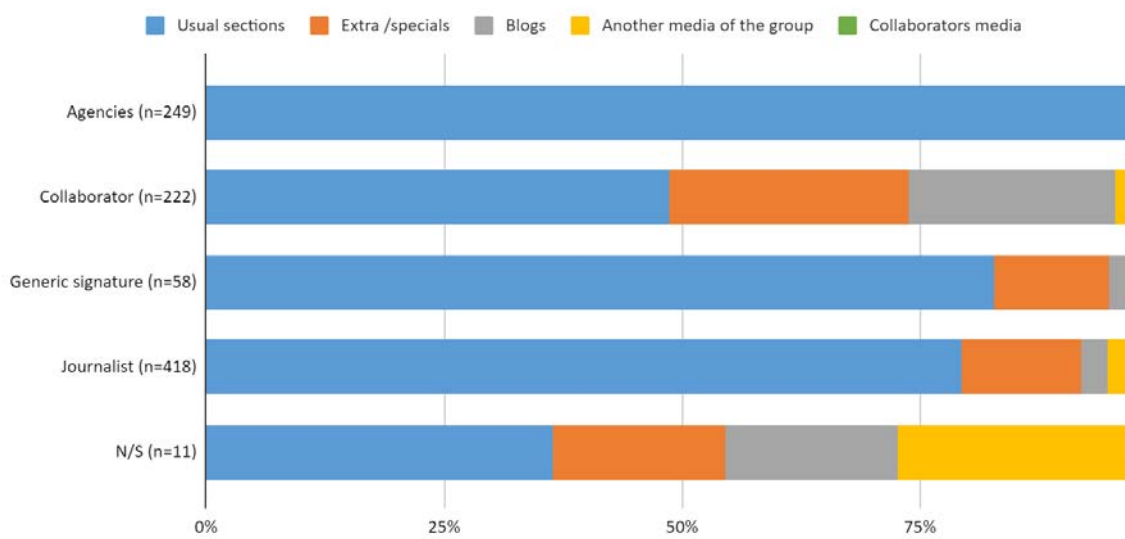


Source: The authors

In turn, authorship also plays a role in the ability to move the topic through the different media spaces of each medium. In this way, information coming from agencies is developed exclusively in the traditional sections. The dominance of the traditional sections as the preferred place is also found in the stories created by journalists of the medium, 79.4%; although it is true that they show a greater capacity to be integrated into other spaces such as supplements or specials, 12.4%, and, to a lesser extent, in blogs, 2.9%, or even to be transferred from

another medium belonging to the same media group, 3.6%. On the other hand, the texts generated by collaborators from outside the medium are the most mobile as although their preferred spaces are the traditional sections of the medium (48.6%), it is common to find them both in supplements (25.2%) and blogs (21.6%).

Figure 6. Location of the journalistic product according to authorship



Source: The authors

## Conclusions & Discussion

The evolution of the salience given to inequality by the media is important at first, although with time begins to decline, without it fully disappearing from the agenda. At the same time, it is necessary to emphasize how media attention varies, and its salience is not homogeneous in the set of analyzed media. Beyond this given salience, it can be seen that the media tend to delegate the creation of these stories to their journalists, sharing the limelight with non-journalist media collaborators and news agencies.

In addition, inequality appears, preferably, in the traditional sections of the media, sometimes having access to special locations such as supplements or

blogs. In turn, when talking about inequality, there is a tendency to offer basic information linked to specific events and written in a news format, as opposed to other products that help to go deeper or seek to persuade about the issues dealt with.

However, it is necessary to bear in mind that the authorship of the stories published conditions both the function and the spaces from which these stories are developed. In this way, the stories coming from agencies are the most watertight, both to the journalistic function and the spaces in which they are developed. On the other hand, the stories developed by the media own journalists and non-journalist collaborators tend to have a greater capacity both to diversify their journalistic function and to move around the different spaces of the cybermedia. This type of text allows for a more heterogeneous reconstruction of inequality in the media, either because of the media own interest, through the stories generated by journalists, or because of the interest of different social actors, who collaborate with the media and who seek to enhance their persuasive capacity when dealing with inequality.

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# **Patterns of Communication and Power Dynamics in the Digital Public Sphere**

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## **Introduction**

This work presents a summary of a previous work (Pérez-Altable and Serrano-Tellería, 2021), focused on analysing the communication patterns of a public issue with a social and political impact under exceptional circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. By applying our proposed approach to the exploration of Twitter around the debate about the Minimum Living Income in Spain, this work focusses on communication patterns in the digital public sphere and the debate about the approval and implementation of the Minimum Living Income in Spain.

To get an understanding of how users interact and how this interaction is articulated within this digital public sphere, we focused on Twitter because the prominent use of some functions of this social media platform (e.g., mention, retweet and quoted tweet) would suggest some trends and tendencies to understand how the conversation in online networks is structured by different types of actors and the relations established by them.

Hence, to understand the interaction on Twitter about a social and political issue this text addressed the following research question: How was the information disseminated and what power relations were established through the different actors on Twitter regarding the debate on the approval of the Minimum Living Income in Spain?

### **State of the art**

The emergence of digital platforms and the changes in the media system have made possible the establishment of a new scenario enabling new forms of communication (Pérez-Altable et al., 2020:4). Thus, digital media play a central role in creating new ways to contribute to society through interaction among users across social media platforms (Marres, 2017:7) when the implications of communication technologies within research fields are understood (Pavan, 2017:62).

This scenario implies a shift from passive spectators of traditional media to active users who not only consume content but also interact with it in different ways (Soler-Adillon, 2017:2), leading to the formation on an active audience. In this sense, the concept of active audience distinguishes the new nature of audiences perceived not only as active in the interpretation of journalistic texts and messages but also in the sense of being producers disseminating content and holding public debates in online environments (Suau, 2015).

Finally, as Irene Costera-Meijer (2021:15) has noted, in this hybrid media system we can find many different actors participating in a struggle to shape public discourse and define the news agenda; in that respect, the central objective of this study is to determine 'how and why these actors behave as they do' and to identify the extent to which new norms are becoming embedded in the routine communicative practices in the digital public sphere.

## Methodology

This work focus on a case study of a conversation on Twitter about the approval of the law of the Minimum Living Income benefit in Spain and its implementation. Data were collected using the Twitter Search API across the period of 1 November 2019 to 14 October 2020. The sample has been built only with tweets published in Spanish language and the final dataset comprises 142.389 tweets. To investigate the evolution of the conversation, we identified the most relevant key dates and events that took place during the time that our study covers. Thus, we divided our sample into five different phases, according to these key dates (Table 1).

*Table 1.* Phases of the research analysis

Phase	Time frame	Description
1	1/12/2019-13/01/2020	Electoral campaign, polling day and formation of the new government
2	14/01/2020-14/03/2020	First cases of coronavirus in Spain, declaration of the State of Alarm and start of the lockdown
3	14/03/2020-29/05/2020	Approbation of the Royal Decree Law introducing the Minimum Living Income
4	30/05/2020-21/06/2020	End of the State of Alarm and lockdown
5	22/06/2020-14/10/2020	Implementation of the Minimum Living Income benefit and second wave of COVID-19 in Spain.

Source: The authors

To provide a longitudinal exploration of the communication patterns, we analysed the communication dynamics and identify (1) the number of tweets and unique users in each phase, (2) the percentage of mentions, retweets and quoted tweets in each phase, (3) the percentages of tweets that contain URLs to external sources in each phase. Furthermore, we identified the most relevant users in the conversation during each phase of this study adapting the coding

scheme from Vicari et al. (2018: 1240).

## Results

On a platform like Twitter, a prominent use of mention and quoted tweets would suggest a greater tendency toward dialogue, while a prominence of retweets would suggest a trend towards retransmitting and disseminate content produced by others (Pavan, 2017:9). In Table 2, we can see that the mentioning practice was the most common practice (45.73%) across the five different phases, followed by retweeting practices, with 36.26%. As the table shows, quoted tweets constitute a residual form of interaction, as they account for, on average, only 7.98% of the total.

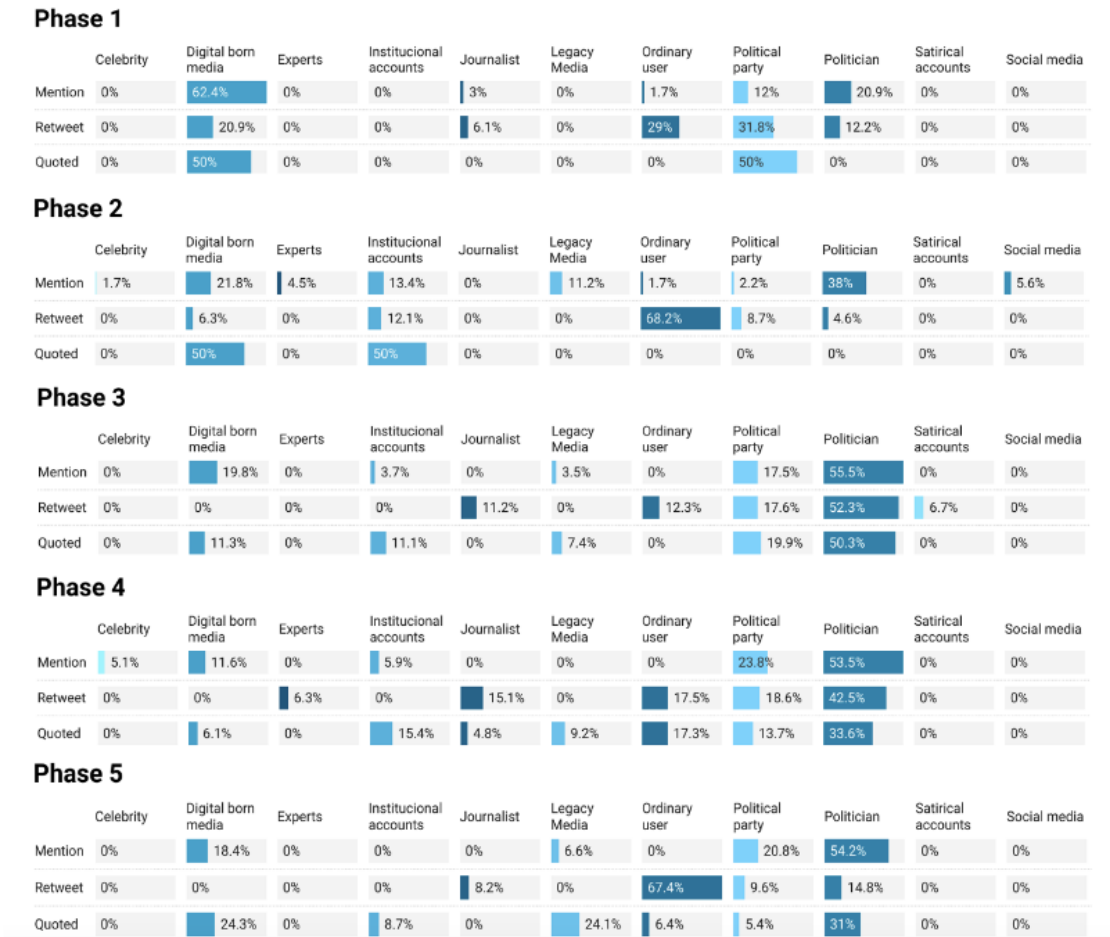
**Table 2. Conversation patterns**

Phase	Tweets	Mentions		Retweets		Quoted tweets	
1	534	279	52.24%	205	38.38%	18	3.37%
2	464	207	44.61%	149	32.11%	19	4.09%
3	57,989	24,799	42.77%	22,150	38.20%	4,878	8.40%
4	48,104	21,319	44.32%	17,007	35.35%	4,152	8.63%
5	35,298	18,516	52.46%	12,122	34.34%	2,301	6.19%
Total	142,389	65,120	45.73%	51,633	36.26%	11,368	7.98%

Source: The authors

Figure 1 shows that there is a slight trend in the retweet practice for all phases. Users disseminate the content produce by other users using the retweet function to a greater extent. In that sense, retweeting practices were primarily used by spread content produced by ordinary users. In fact, the use of retweeted practices opened up opportunities for non-elite –namely, ordinary users- account to disseminate their content more widely and reach a wider audience.

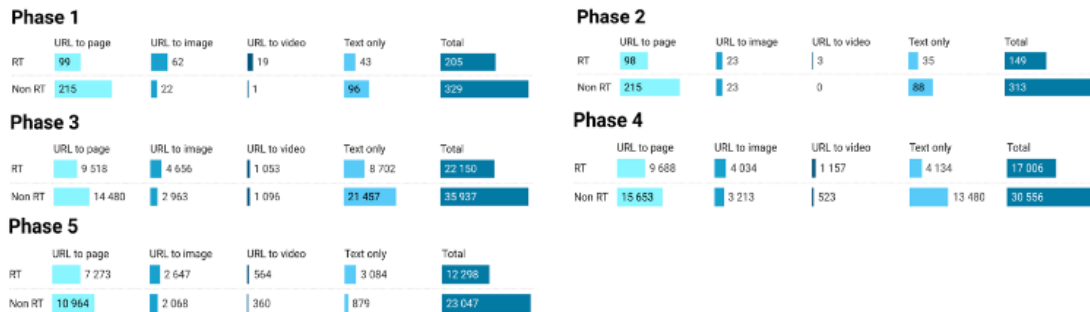
Figure 1. Top mention, retweet and quote practices grouped by type of account



Source: The authors

Finally, the exploration of retweeting practices shows that the tweets with multimedia content (e.g., photos or videos) are more likely to be retweeted than other types of tweets containing URLs to external sources and text only. Looking at Figure 2 it becomes evident that tweets with multimedia content produced more engagement than tweets without multimedia content. Thus, the concept of user-circulated content emerges, changes the focus from the user-generated content and helps us to gain a wider view of the digital culture characteristics, creating meaning within the network.

Figure 2. Retweeting practices in relation to tweet form



Source: The authors

## Conclusions & Discussion

Our study shows that the use of Twitter functions and communication strategies enables the emergence of diverse actors among the different dynamics in the debate. The use of retweet practices suggests a tendency towards disseminating and retransmitting content produced by others. Thus, the results reveal the emergence of dissemination of highly spreadable content by ordinary users using the retweet function.

Attending to the analysis of retweeting practices in relation to the message form, in general, tweets with multimedia content are more spreadable and, thus, more retweeted than tweets with only text. Here, the concept of user-circulated content emerges, changes the focus from user-generated content and helps us to gain a wider view of the digital culture characteristics, creating meaning within the network. In that sense, more research needs to focus on the visual content of tweets to understand the implications of the use of multimedia content. What seems clear is that a message with multimedia content is more likely to be retweeted by other users.



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## **Exploratory Analysis and Comparative Study of Journalistic Production during COVID-19**

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### **Introduction**

The emergence of the World Wide Web, digitalization, media convergence and the implementation of cross/multi/transmedia storytelling strategies have all altered the way in which news is gathered, produced, disseminated, and consumed. In this contribution, we aim to identify and review some of the key issues involved in the transition to hybrid or networked transmedia storytelling in journalism – an approach that takes advantage of the hybrid media environment within which producers and consumers of news operate. Following a brief examination of recent theories of news production and consumption, we explore how transmedia and interconnected storytelling addresses the need to ensure the continued relevance of journalism in a networked world.

Transmedia journalism is an emerging field, a work in progress with enormous potential. At its core, it changes the approach to telling stories, moving from single, news-driven narratives developed for specific media (such as newspapers or broadcast television) within the guidelines of particular genres (such as

breaking news, investigative reporting, or lifestyle sections) towards creating networked storyworld(s), universe(s) that are told across multiple media, providing the public interconnected story components and an opportunity to contribute to the narrative (through various forms of interactivity and co-creation). As such, this shift poses a variety of challenges and opportunities across the entire product cycle of contemporary media industries.

Stories help everyone, including readers, consumers, media professionals, and journalists, to understand life, societies, and ourselves; Information gives us the power to decide and take action, and journalism combines both. Crisis and challenge, as well as opportunity and potential, have always been present at different levels. Earlier creative interventions in journalistic storytelling (such as the New Journalism, a term coined by Tom Wolfe) demonstrated that delving into a story, its characters, and context embodies meaningful audience engagement. Other benchmark moments in storytelling development include the emergence of long-form and narrative journalism, and 'Snowfalling' the news – a term derived from an award-winning 2013 (Pulitzer Prize) multimedia story package by the New York Times (2012).

In this particular context, we would like to identify two main issues to explore: audience engagement and emotion. Regarding the first one, in the scholarly contributions to audience research by Costera-Meijer (2020), she stresses that one of the core aspects of news consumers is related to the emotional experiences offered to them by the media at different levels, or in other words, how the media enhance news consumption. Similarly, the work of Papacharissi (2015) establishes the affective nature of different publics and their engagement with news. Emotion and engagement are at the heart of journalism – not just from the perspective of what Papacharissi calls 'affective publics', but also regarding the motivations and commitment of journalists, as their work can be considered to be a form of affective labor (Beckett and Deuze, 2016).

A focus on emotion and engagement directs our attention to the experience

people have with the news. As Costera-Meijer (2020, p. 2338) summarizes the concept: "We should improve (...) our understanding of the experience of quality by people who consume news (...) when they actually feel informed (...) and how the experience changes in relation to time, place, need, habit, mood, device, medium and platform." In a transmedia context, attention can be paid to this experience by considering all interconnected elements of the different networked media and stories involved (storyworld, universe), and how these contribute to the overall affective engagement of different publics with the news.

In her work, Wahl-Jorgensen (2020) underlines how emotion is directly linked to engagement and storytelling. She suggests that the emotion experienced when consuming news is related to the level of engagement that users may achieve and the level of immersion in the storytelling provided. Thus, if a transmedia logic is applied to the product cycle, both media makers and (pro/co) users can experiment and take the best of every media to provide a fulfilling experience within the overall storyworld.

The creation and evolution of a storyworld (both initially planned as well as evolving, ongoing, and spontaneous) requires a consistency in interface usability patterns (in every component and in the overall interface design). As emotion has been identified as a key element in experiencing, consuming, and participating in (or co-) creating news, navigation needs to be clear. Therefore, starting from the core values of journalism, that is, reporting news of public relevance in an accurate, truthful, ethical, and objective way (Deuze, 2005), and following a transmedia logic, media makers and journalists on one side and affective publics on the other, can co-create and allow a storyworld and universe to evolve. Thus, their expectations and demands are fulfilled in a networked media ecology system.

Therefore, in today's interconnected world, we suggest that transmedia ideals, core values and logics may offer a suitable frame for embracing the current

transition to hybrid, networked systems:

- a) Authenticity, credibility and transparency.
- b) Creativity, innovation and originality.
- c) Credibility, quality and trust.
- d) The importance of belonging to a community or society and feeling like part of the solution (journalism).
- e) Cultivating collaboration among professionals, projects, and users; moving from hyperlocal and local issues, scopes, and perspectives to those that are global.
- f) Enhanced user experience.
- g) 360°, augmented-virtual-mixed reality, internet of things, artificial intelligence, and big data.
- h) Interface design and information architecture-SEO.
- i) Media integration or combination (critical selection) and media literacy.

## **Methodology**

Thus, this research analyzes and describes the use of languages, genres, and formats; strategies, resources and platforms for the creation, collaboration, and distribution (News Lifecycle, Author, Jing & Arroyo, 2019) of journalistic products about COVID-19 and determines whether a transmedia logic is being followed. Likewise, this research proposes a set of good practices that can be applied to other stories-products and media in everyday and planned routines. For this, the field work focuses on the analysis of two aspects: the interface design and the creation and dissemination of content. The pandemic, which we are still experiencing, represents a unique frame of analysis due to the intrinsic work conditions, routines and dynamics as well as its limitations and increased demands for information.

*Figure 1.* Selected projects of legacy media divided into three periods of 2020-21

	<b>Period 1</b>	<b>Period 2</b>	<b>Period 3</b>
<i>El País</i>	0	28	19
<i>El Mundo</i>	0	7	0
<i>ABC</i>	0	10	4
<i>La Vanguardia</i>	0	8	5
<i>El Confidencial</i>	0	5	1
<i>Eldiario.es</i>	0	16	5

Source: The authors

Specifically, we analyzed 20 in-depth stories of the legacy media (Elpais.es, Elmundo.es, Eldiario.es, Lavanguardia.es, Elconfidencial.com, Abc.es) that are part of the national project in which we participate as PI and collaborating researcher. Then, we selected the stories following the search criteria 'COVID19, Coronavirus' and divided them into three periods of 2020-21: from December 9 to March 14, from March 15 to June 21 and from June 22 to August 25. This search provided 396,270 results. Subsequently, we applied a probabilistic selection of a composite week, obtaining 3,339 results and a second search term, 'income inequality', which left 112 results. These periods correspond to the different phases defined as the lockdown, the first wave and the second wave. After applying the second term, 'income inequality', we did not find results for the first period, so we did the search applying just 'COVID19'.

## **Results**

The preliminary results and conclusions show that the media use transmedia narrative (languages, genres and formats) and take advantage of the different resources, strategies and platforms on which they distribute content (from hashtags and mentions to more developed contents, like planning integration of content to create a proper universe).

In this sense, we have identified two types of stories: planned stories and spontaneous ones. The more elaborated stories correspond to a strategic transmedia narrative. These usually refer to closed stories (the plot and the outcome of the story are known) that have had prior planning in their preparation. Considering this type of production, evolving stories appear that acquire the transmedia character with the passing of events. This corroborates the theory that we support in previous research: apart from a production model, it is also appropriate to describe and refer to a transmedia logic.

Regarding the interface design, media also group the items, stories and products following a similar pattern, by planned specific sections as well as by ongoing, spontaneous strategies and resources (hashtags, etc.).

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## **Copyright and Paywalls in Spanish Online Media: Latest Movements**

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### **Introduction**

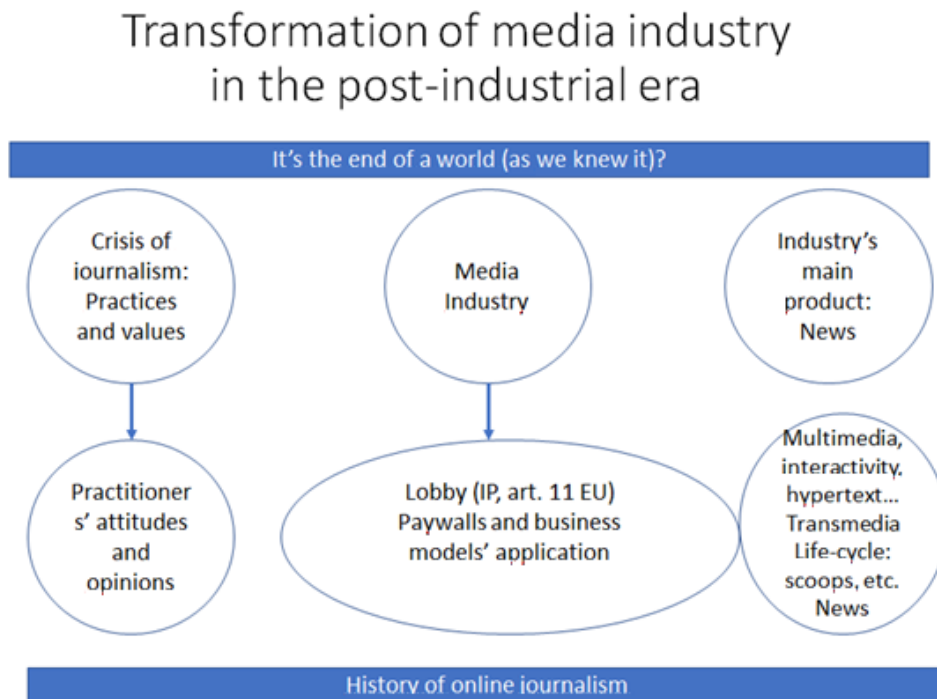
The Spanish government enacted the latest European reforms on intellectual property in November 2021, using a legal instrument which avoids discussion in Parliament: the decree-law. The ultimate goal was to effectively implement the European Union Directive on Copyright in the Digital Single Market 2019/790, approved in March 2019. All 27 state members in the EU are obliged to implement its legal provision within a time. Unlike France, the Netherlands or Germany, Spain and some other European countries were late in doing so, and that is why such a straightforward legal instrument to adapt specially articles 15 and 17 of the Directive to the Spanish Texto Refundido de la Ley de Propiedad Intelectual 1/1996.

In doing so, a previous reform of the Spanish copyright act, that of its article 32.2., passed in 2014 to oblige news aggregators to pay for using the news to the newspapers publishers –which, as a result, led Google to decide not to offer Google News in Spain from January 2015 onwards– reversed and is with no effect. Google News announced immediately, once known that the EU Directive was implemented in Spain, that the service would be back to Spain in January 2022.

It seems that a long struggle is now over. Nevertheless, a closer examination of the effects of the norm during the next months will explain in further detail to which extent media companies, users and journalists improved their situation when negotiating with Google and other technology giants, including Facebook. This paper is a first insight on some aspects of the legal reform to be carefully considered and to be followed for further research in 2022.

This is aligned with one of the hypothesis and the first goal of our ongoing research project, as explained in the kick-off research memory, as showed also in this graphic, in which the legal research appears in the middle of it.

Figure 1. Transformation of media industry in the post-industrial era



Source: The author

Our first hypothesis was (and is) that the emergence and consolidation of new stakeholders in a so-called hybrid media system is causing major changes in the industry of media whilst the adoption of new technologies is substantially

modifying newsmaking (and news itself), and as a result one of our research projects' goal is to explain which is the transformation of media industry in a hybrid media system through the prism of its main product, the news, and how the transition from the industrial society to a post-industrial one is happening.

Linked to this OB1, two interrelated goals were posed:

OB1.1. How media structure is been modified, attending to economical and, most especially legal aspects, in Spain but from a comparative perspective. Which is the role attributed to public institutions and their intervention in the private market, i.e. through subsidies to legacy media.

OB1.2. How most especially legacy media are reacting in front of this structural crisis, and which is their lobbying activity, using as a clear example the pressure upon European institutions to get a so-called press publishers' right recognized in the European Union's Copyright Directive for a Digital Single Market, and its incidence in Spain, concretely.

The latest reform of the Spanish copyright act is directly related to OB1.2, obviously, and will need to be examined during at least the first months of 2022, until the project itself ends in September of that year. This legal movement need to be examined, in our opinion, in relation with the quite general adoption in the period comprised between 2019 and 2021 of paywalls –subscription models and, to a lesser extent, membership models– in the European digital media, especially those online versions of legacy printed newspapers, a powerful lobby in the EU, represented by association like News Media Europe.

### **State of the art**

The implementation of the aforementioned Directive was the result of previous legal movements, described in some other papers related to our project's goal related to the adoption of some reforms on copyright in Spain and Europe, to

unify or, as it is often referred in legal terms, harmonized in Europe. The reform of the Spanish act in 2014 –which set up an ancillary right of compensation for newspaper publishers, quite surprisingly, as an unwaivable one, which caused that some Spanish major media groups, like Prisa, to disagree– was, in economic terms, unsuccessful: if it was designed as a mandatory way to make Google – namely: news aggregators– to pay, it never happened really, so it was only the very small players who were expected to do so. Spanish newspaper publishers calculated an income of some 80 million euros as a result of the application of the news art. 32.2. CEDRO, the collecting society in charge of getting the tax, just managed to collect 10,000 euros in the period from 2015 to the end of 2021.

Nevertheless, it is a major concert for the media industry to make Google, and Facebook, pay in some way for using their news. Some Common Law countries enacted an act to make GAFA pay, the most remarkable one being the News Media Bargaining Code of Australia, March 2021. The central idea of this act is that aggregators are since then obliged to negotiate with newspaper publishers to compensate for reproducing news items, even if displaying just some snippets of them. When an agreement was not reached, then the public administration of Australia is entitled to intervene and oblige Google or Facebook to negotiate with the industry.

All these legal movements are clearly addressed to enhance negotiation with news aggregators, in the way it has been, for instance, in France, a country in which Google has traditionally agreed to compensate newspaper publishers via negotiating. In Belgium Google did so obliged by the courts, a way tried in Spain with CEDRO's legal action in court against Google Discover –in this collecting society's opinion, a cloaking news aggregator–, announced during 2021 before the implementation of the EU Directive in Spain. Obliging Google to negotiate, as first glance, might seem convenient for, at least, major media trusts. A closer insight might be more troublesome, instead.

## **Controversial Issues**

The reform is clearly addressed to support, and enhance, negotiation. It is a private law solution, based on freedom of negotiation of the parties, but protecting, to some extent, the party considered weaker by public administration: the media industry. It is a motive for concern what may happen with the authors of news, journalists, photographers and some other media workers. Let us remember how the Civil Law, authors' rights countries tend to initially or theoretically protect most especially the personal authors of intellectual works –but all these legal movements are clearly addressed to give some shelter to the promoters, never authors in our legal system, of the so-called collective work.

The rights of the authors' themselves are covered by a mention to a right to be compensated by the companies which hired them when those companies are, in their turn, compensated by news aggregators. This is an unwaivable right, though, and it can be easily dismissed by contractual agreements (this is unless otherwise agreed right) or diluted by real contractual terms; journalists may, and many of them are, compensated just by adding a modest quantity to their wages.

Even for companies, and for the Spanish media economic sector, it is unclear to which extent, as a whole, could this movement improve their situation. It is not only that such an ancillary right will not solve for itself the many problems of the printed press crisis which happened for the first time in 2008. Such a freedom of negotiation will lead undoubtedly to confidentiality clauses in each individual agreement signed by Google or Facebook and the companies. Inequality will appear. Even when the sector has hopefully announced that Google will be forced to make clear which the changes in the algorithm ranking the news in its new service, Google Showcase, will be, it is to be seen to which extent this really happens.

The celebratory approach is that, in general terms, it will be beneficial for Internet traffic, and consequently for users and for, at least, small media companies. CLABE, (Club Abierto de Editores of Spain), gathering the smaller players –some of them have chosen membership instead of subscription models– has announce its content for the measure. It will be beneficial too for some great media trusts, those who managed to sign good agreements, or has already done so even, with Google. Many others, like Vocento or Grup Godó, has showed a greater concern, and specially the first one has insisted in preserving the spirit of the legal reform of 2014-2015. The non-celebratory approach insists in the fact that Google will pay only for 30 percent of the clicks, and that just 20 million euros will be collected (5% less than in Germany or France). The so-called Plataforma por la Libertad de Información, an association of journalists of Spain, is worried for the influence such negotiations may have in freedom of speech, since Google may have a word on the contents the media companies it subsidizes produce.

### **As a way of conclusion**

It is unclear at this point to which extent the aforementioned legal reforms will contribute to mend Google's dominant position. In the first place, because we can expect a diversity of media trusts' responses and quite opaque terms of agreement, which will research on the consequences of legal reforms difficult. We need to keep on asking, though, so the first months of 2022 will be vital in clarifying the directions that the negotiation with the American giants will bring to the relation between media industry –specially those companies insisting in adapting their legacy media structures to the digital world– and aggregators. Some questions arise, many of them already mentioned: Is an ancillary right the best way? Is it a good complement for reader revenue models? Will a fair compensation for journalists be negotiated? What will be the situation if unequal agreements (and unfair competition) are the common situation? Last but not least, will be an impact for freedom of speech? Only time will tell.

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## **Content Strategies in the Hybrid Media System: Are Transmedia Social Events Helping Branding and Corporate Responsibility in Public Service Media (PSM)?**

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### **Introduction**

The development of the web as the third major platform after radio and television has placed European public broadcasters in a scenario of constant technological, organisational, productive and business model renovations (public or private funding, licence fees, budgets, mixed, etc.). These reconfigurations have been considered permanent crises that place important issues at the centre of the debate, such as the capacity of these corporations to find effective participatory spaces for the citizenry, in terms of governance, production and, in general, brand engagement.

Based on these changes, there is consensus in admitting that today the fulfilment of the public service mission depends on other variables and actions whose analysis must necessarily go beyond the traditional audience



measurement systems, hence the interest in promoting analyses such as the one contained in this chapter.

The interest of this work is also linked to other issues. This context seems particularly complex for regional or autonomous community broadcasters, since these can only gain a competitive advantage if they engage citizens in innovative and meaningful ways (Túñez-López and Campos-Freire, 2018).

Accordingly, these corporations are making a special effort to develop multichannel strategies that foster content diversity and adjust to audience behaviour, especially that of the younger generation. Consequently, this work seeks to deepen our knowledge of the use of transmedia content, coverage or events in regional or proximate public broadcasting. Transmedia communicative events are useful for expanding the presence of the public audiovisual brand, not only in the media sphere (radio, television, website and apps, and social media), but also in the social one.

By making themselves visible on the street through different physical activities (cultural and sporting events, competitions, concerts, etc.), this type of transmedia strategy reinforces the closeness between the corporation and the society in which it is immersed. In this way, these transmedia projects also represent a very useful corporate image and communication strategy for public broadcasting companies at a time of difficulties and challenges. In fact, the public media have traditionally asserted their interest and identity in audience participation, making their brand a particular social construct, compared to the private media. Thanks to transmedia products, these corporations have an unprecedented opportunity to translate some of the main premises, principles and values of Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) – which has now become Public Service Media (PSM) – into their content strategy.

In the field of European public broadcasting, several corporations have been developing successful transmedia content initiatives for entertainment purposes

for more than a decade. These are usually based on audiovisual content generally aimed at young audiences (SKAM, Go!azen, etc.), or content that is more documentary in style (A History of Scotland, Korrika, Gernika, etc.) relating to certain events of interest and with social impact for the societies these corporations serve (Azurmendi, 2018: 95-96).

## **Methodology**

In view of this background and the current research context, in which studies on the advanced and distinctive communicative possibilities of the current hybrid media system are proliferating, this chapter examines the current state of the use of transmedia content in the field of public broadcasting in Spain and Europe, focusing on the specific case of the Basque Public Broadcasting corporation, Euskal Irrati Telebista (EITB).

This corporation began its digital reconfiguration at the turn of the century, starting with an ambitious project that led to a grouping together of headquarters and editorial offices more than a decade ago, and accordingly, to the adaptation of its operations and content strategies. These movements were distinguished as a significant case of the adaptation of European public broadcasters to the paradigm of media convergence. More recently, new organisational, business and management changes have led the group to unify its operating divisions under the brand named EITB Media, which has generated greater inertia towards even more synergic and integrated content proposals, such as transmedia and the products that are the focus of this paper.

In this sense, it could be stated that EITB represents a proactive and pioneering case in the development of advanced digital and convergent initiatives as a way of moving forward to a new phase, in line with the trends set by the media sector for this third decade.

Using a qualitative approach based on content analysis and in-depth interviews,

this chapter focuses on two representative initiatives that are solidary in nature, encompassed within EITB's "Bizi" strategy ("Live" EITB): the EITB Maratoia (Marathon) and EKIN. The first one is an initiative carried out systematically on an annual basis, coinciding with the Christmas period, while the second is expected to encompass different actions of solidarity, starting with Ekin\_Klima, a specific transmedia coverage on the COP 26, the Climate Summit celebrated in Glasgow in November 2021.

## **Results**

As the analysis shows, these transmedia initiatives offer a solution to the challenge of using precise actions to put into practice the resignification of the public in a complex and competitive hybrid scenario, since they fit well with the interest and usefulness of PSM to contribute to certain social causes and respond to many of the interests of young audiences.

They are also useful as a strategy for promoting the public audiovisual brand, revealing it as a social construction, based on features or perceptions aimed at community service. What is more, based on the proximate nature of EITB and other similar broadcasting companies, the transmedia actions examined also reveal an advance in the idea of community service provided by these types of broadcasters. By paying attention to more global causes, such as the climate, this service is extended to a much broader community.

## **Conclusions & Discussion**

The conclusions thus address the advantages and value of transmedia events in achieving the public service mission of broadcasters in Europe as a strategy for promoting a 'glocalised' Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and brand image, based on strategies similar to social marketing.

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# **Assessing the Impact of Disinformation Narratives in a Polarized Electoral Campaign: the Case of 2021 Catalan Elections**

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## **Introduction**

In this paper, we present the results of an investigation by the Digilab group that aims to assess the impact of disinformation narratives in the Catalan elections of February 14, 2021. A campaign that was characterized by political polarization and the coronavirus health crisis, and under the threat of the fake news infodemic in the face of COVID-19.

A previous investigation by Digilab, which analyzed the consumption of information during confinement, found that 80% of those surveyed received false information about the coronavirus. 27% shared fake content before they knew it was fake or misleading. 64% pointed to social networks, with WhatsApp at the forefront, as the main source of fake news; 17% pointed to television, and 15% to online media.

## **State of the art**

Disinformation is an evolving societal challenge, with high potential to negatively influence democratic processes and public debates. It has become a

major concern for governments and citizens (Eurobarometer, 2018), but also for news media organizations. Polarized audiences see in news media not anymore neutral reporting but just another element of cultural and ideological wars (Norris and Inglehart, 2020), while in some countries disinformation is identified as just another format of political communication (Freelon and Wells, 2020; Newman, 2021) or biased journalism (Masip et al. 2020). Due to the hybrid nature of nowadays media ecosystems, disinformation is something liquid in which news media and journalists play both the role of creators and disseminators, making it hard to determinate its origin and spread patterns (Phillips, 2018). Despite the growing body of literature on disinformation (Kaàntai et al. 2020), especially focusing on electoral campaigns (Zimmerman and Kohring, 2019; Jones-Jang et al. 2020), there is yet little evidence about the impact of disinformation, understood as the degree or amount of citizens that are affected or exposed to such content.

## **Methodology**

We present data from a survey conducted a few days after the last Catalan elections (February 2021). Election of special interest due to the recent push for independence of some Catalan political parties, but also due to the fact that elections took place during COVID-19 pandemic: an ideal scenario for disinformation to flourish. We team up with one of the leading Spanish fact-checkers, Newtral, to have daily information about fact checks. The research team analyzed then the material detected to identify content that was related or that belonged to similar narratives. The goal was to identify the key disinformation narratives that were spreading during the electoral campaign, rather than just isolated content. A survey was then conducted (N=1650) to test the impact of disinformation narratives, spreading patterns, and effectiveness of the messages.

## Results

Within the framework of the Catalan electoral campaign of 2021, there were detected the following informative narratives.

The first piece of false news was that voting by mail was used to manipulate the final result of the Catalan elections on February 14th, known by 21.9% of the participants, spread by social networks, and amplified by television news.

Only 9.7% of the participants were aware of the false news that the Barcelona City Council had withdrawn electoral posters of Junts per Catalunya to harm this candidacy, and those who received it in greater proportion were the citizens of Catalonia. In this case, the main access routes were television news and social networks.

50.4% of the participants acknowledged having received false information that Salvador Illa had tried to hide in the electoral debates in Catalonia that he had already been vaccinated before his age cohort. Television news (with 39.8%) was the main access route to fake news. Far behind were social networks, digital media, other television programs, and radio with very similar percentages. However, despite being the fourth most consumed news, it was the least shared of all the informative narratives analyzed.

The third false news consumed by the largest number of people (52.8% of the participants) was that crimes in Catalonia had increased significantly in recent years due to illegal immigration. Once again, television news was pointed out as the main access route for fake news, and unlike previous narratives, it was not Twitter but Facebook (with 45.6%) the social network through which the news was received regularly.

During the campaign, in debates and interviews on TV, this argument was used repeatedly by the VOX candidate, which explains why its impact was greater in

Catalonia (with 69.1%) than in the rest of Spain. The same happens with the impact of the following narrative.

48.3% of those surveyed received the false news that some Spanish regions were including the compulsory study of Islam in their courses. Here again, after the television news, Facebook and Twitter were the main social networks to spread this narrative, along with the greater role of WhatsApp.

The false news most shared by those surveyed (with 17.4%) was that the cuts in healthcare that occurred after the 2009 crisis had not been resolved, and that Catalonia was the community that spent the least on health per inhabitant. In this case, television news was the main access route, followed by digital media, surpassing social networks.

The fake news that the respondents had heard the most about (74.7%) was that the Spanish government did not help companies during confinement. In social issues such as cuts in Health and government aid, traditional media had an important role in amplifying false news, surpassing social networks.

The second fake news most remembered by 73% of the participants is the only one that is not related to the Catalan elections, according to which the Podemos political party is behind the violent protests following the imprisonment of rapper Pablo Hasél.

## **Conclusions**

Results show a high disparity of impact among disinformation narratives: those more connected to ideological issues are more likely to spread among the population. Likewise, those citizens more ideologically polarized are more likely to receive and trust disinformation content. Television seems to be an amplifier of disinformation narratives, with Twitter and Facebook having scarce importance, while WhatsApp keeps a moderate profile. There was no



homogeneous pattern regarding the citizens that were more exposed to disinformation, nor a certain group that was identified as more likely to be exposed apart from ideological extremes. The results point towards the fact that disinformation narratives during the electoral campaign were part of political discourses and strategies disseminated through traditional media, rather than the work of hyper-partisan media or social media organized disinformation campaigns.

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## **Gender and Age as Influential Factors in the Use of Social Networks by Media Professionals**

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### **Introduction**

It's been over twenty years since the last study about the journalistic profession in the Basque Country from within the media was carried out, in 1998. The results of that research showed that just over half of the professionals surveyed had an e-mail at their workplace (54.2%) and 22.7% had it at home, and that they spoke of a "young, male journalist with a degree in Information Sciences..." (Cantalapiedra et al, 2000: 337).

The main objective of this research is to update and analyze the use of the main communication tools and social networks used in the workspace by different generations of Basque journalists, generation Z and millennials. In addition to digitalization, the incorporation of women in this career has been one of the most relevant facts that has occurred in recent years.

## **Methodology**

In order to carry out this study, a survey was used as a research technique and a questionnaire was drawn up with a representative sample of 500 journalists working in the media, with a balance in terms of gender (50% men and 50% women), historical territories (Araba, Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa) and ensuring that there were people working in as many forms of media as possible (press, radio and television).

## **Results**

In our research, there were no major differences found in the use of these social applications by journalists from two generations such as centennials and millennials. Wu (2019) also reaches similar findings among American journalists. Overall, the results indicate that the use of digital profiles is widespread among media newsrooms in the Basque Country. The use of more current social networks cannot be associated solely to centennial generations, in the same way as pioneer social applications such as Facebook cannot be associated to just millennial generations, as both generations make use of each of these networks. There is no generational bias associated to the use of these social networks. Facebook and Instagram are mostly used by millennial journalists, while Twitter is used by centennial journalists. In both cases, their taste or journalistic interests are prioritized and not their generational interests.

Another objective was to investigate the differences in the criteria and use of these social platforms in consecutive generations of journalists working in

different media. We have seen that both men and women continue to resort mostly to the use of classic tools to carry out their work such as telephone, email and lately, the messaging application Whatsapp. Email is the most used media among both the centennial generation, 96%, and the millennial generation, 98%. There is some difference in the use of Whatsapp, with centennials using it in a greater proportion (95%) in comparison with millennials (90%). However, the messaging network Telegram or LinkedIn are the least used sources by professionals, as these are the least recognized networks.

### **Conclusions & Discussion**

The intention of this study was also to analyze whether there are gender differences in the use of these media by information professionals. These concepts lead us to confirm our second hypothesis as there are clear gender differences in the use of social networks. Twitter, followed by Facebook or Instagram are the ones that predominate in newsrooms and are mostly used by women, both centennials and millenials. Twitter predominates among centennials, Facebook among millennials and Instagram among both centennials and millennials. There are also differences in the use of audiovisual and image banks according to gender, with the use of these resources predominating among media professionals. However, women journalists are more likely to consult blogs as a source of information.

The fact that women are the biggest users of these social systems does not justify their invisibility, the use of non-sexist language, the incorporation of women as a source of information and self-focus, the inclusion of traditionally invisible topics, the detection of sexist images or content, the attention to social problems that exist according to gender and the exclusion of topics that perpetuate gender stereotypes. It will depend on the degree of commitment from female journalists, male journalists and the media themselves to put an end to inequalities.

Women journalists are also the ones whose profession is most threatened by the presence of these social networks. Professionals of both generations see the traditional values of journalism challenged and believe that social networks do not favor the credibility and reputation of the journalistic profession. The gender gap is important in that aspect where female journalists are more exposed in networks and their content more trivialized and questioned as evidenced by the study conducted by the association Closingap in 2019 on the disparity of uses in these social media. Multiple investigations also warn of the harassment and misogyny suffered by women journalists on social networks (Mantilla, 2013; Rego, 2018; Albenga and Biscarrat, 2021).

Journalists resort to social tools specially to gather information rather than as a journalistic source (Varona, Sanchez, 2016), to interview sources or verify information. However, there are social tools that are underused due to lack of recognition such as LinkedIn, Telegram or specific audiovisual platforms.

Social networks have changed the practice of journalism and most of the people working in the Basque Country believe that they have had a positive impact on their informative work. Most users highlight the benefits in connecting with their audiences, promoting their work, and telling stories quicker. Despite this, the study also detects that there are reporters who still see social networks as a threat and are clearly distrustful of them.

It remains to be seen whether and how journalistic interests and those of the professionals themselves adapt to the new narratives of social networks such as Tik Tok (Alonso-López et. al, 2021) or Twitch, where there is a younger audience with other types of concerns. It also remains to be seen how the media fight against the high level of misinformation that exists in this type of new social resources.

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## **Do Fake News Have a Gender Bias?**

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### **Introduction**

The traditional media coexists with new players who are able to produce information and spread it widely, there is growing concern about the increasing prominence of fake news. This paper draws on reception studies: on the dimension of gender differences in news consumption (Toff and Palmer, 2019; Fortunati, Deuze and de Luca, 2014) and on the previously identified gender attitudinal differences with regard to the use of new communication technologies (Cai Z. et al., 2017; Renau et al, 2012; Bond, 2009).

### **State of the art and research questions**

In principle, misleading content is not considered as a gender-specific media product. Audience research stresses the importance of media consumption patterns in everyday life (Bird, 2003; Morley, 1992) as well as the social and relational roles in which this consumption takes place (Boczkowski, 2010). The gender approach is very relevant in these areas of research. Previous research showed significant differences in how women and men find and consume news, as well as the topics that most interest them (Fortunati, Deuze and de Luca,



2014). A “news consumption gender gap” has also been identified (Toff and Palmer, 2019) that plays an important role in shaping how women consume less news through patterns of news avoidance, news-is-for-men perceptions and structural inequalities that shape individuals’ everyday media consumption habits.

As Bond (2009) highlights, the two genders exhibit different motivations for engaging in social media use, a feature that can be explained through behavioural patterns of socialization (Renau et al, 2012). If media consumption and use of technology are so strongly influenced by gender-related issues, it is pertinent to pay attention to the possible gender-based media perception with regard to the criteria of trust in the digital field.

RQ1 - Are there gender differences in the perceptions of the most common topics of fake news that are received?

RQ2 - Are there gender differences in concern about the spread of fake news?

RQ3 - Are there gender differences in the perceived degree of difficulty in detecting fake news?

## **Methodology**

National survey on a sample of N = 1001 Spaniards over 18 years of age. The sampling is stratified by age, sex, autonomous community, based on the actual distribution of the Spanish population. The margin of sampling error is  $\pm 3.2$  with a 95% level of confidence and  $p=q=0.5$ . The fieldwork was carried out from 24-30 April 2019. Table 1 shows the demographics of the participants.

## **Results**

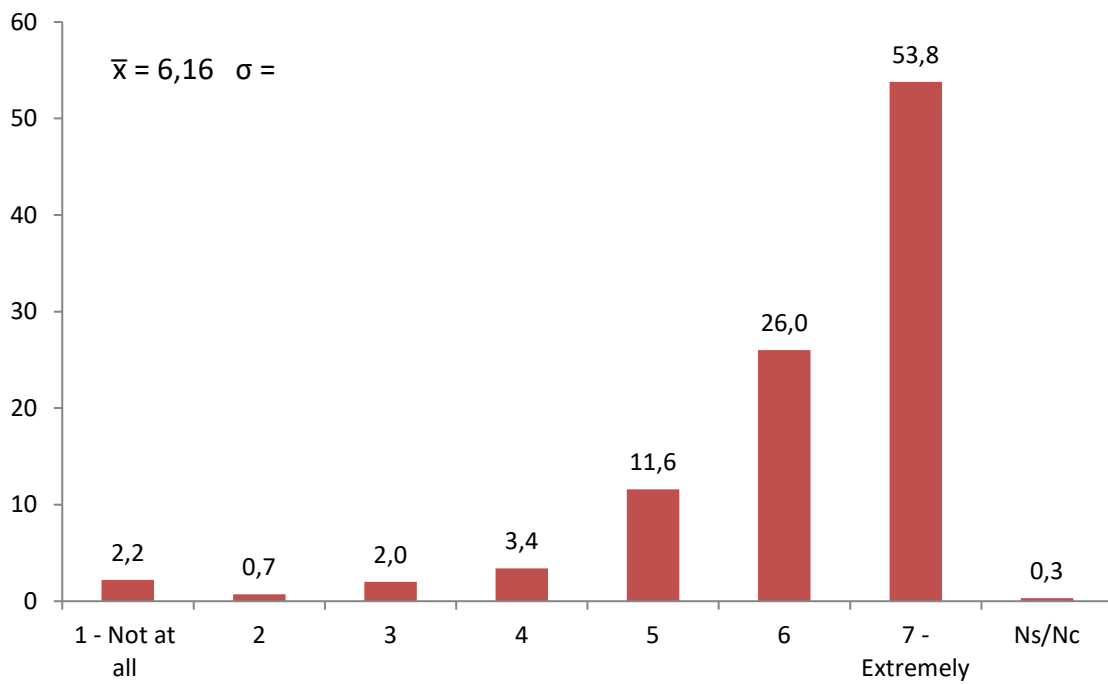
Spanish people are very concerned about the proliferation of fake news. On a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being not at all concerned and 7 being very concerned, the mean obtained is 6.12 ( $\bar{x} = 6.12$   $\sigma = 1.3$ ).

**Table 1. Demographics**

	Response	N(%)
Gender	Male	498 (49.7%)
	Female	503 (50.3%)
	Total	1001 (100%)
Age	16-29	169 (16.9%)
	30-44	310 (30.9%)
	45-59	311 (31.0%)
	>=60	211 (21.1%)
	Total	1001 (100%)

Source: The authors

*Figure 1. Degree of concern on fake news*



Source: The authors

Women ( $\bar{x} = 6.21$   $\sigma = 1.23$ ) are significantly more concerned than men ( $\bar{x} = 6.03$   $\sigma = 1.36$ ) regarding fake news dissemination (see table 2).

**Table 2. Concern about fake news dissemination**

	1- Not at all	2	3	4	5	6	7- Extremely	Mean	Standard deviation
<b>Total</b>	2.50%	0.80%	1.90%	3.70%	11,39%	26,87%	52,55%	6,12	1,3
<b>Male</b>	3,01%	0,80%	2,01%	4,42%	12,65%	27,51%	49,60%	6,03	1,36
<b>Female</b>	1,99%	0,80%	1,79%	2,98%	10,14%	26,24%	55,47%	6,21	1,23

Source: The authors

Differences in gender with regard to concern about fake news dissemination only appear in the 30-59 age range. Despite not being statistically significant it is interesting to see that young men tend to show greater concern than men between 30 and 59. Conversely, among women, concern shows the opposite trend, increasing when participants reach the 30-59 age range.

**Table 3. Concern about fake news dissemination by gender and age**

	19-29		30-59		60-74	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
<b>Mean</b>	6.06	6.10	5.96	6.26	6.18	6,21
<b>Standard deviation</b>	1.36	1.14	1.42	1.15	1.25	1.47
<b>T test</b>	0.816		0.008		0.856	

p = .05

Source: The authors

The intensity of use of social networks is not correlated with concern about fake news. Only the frequent use of Facebook  $\chi^2 (1, N = 791) = 5.25, p <.05$  is associated with a high degree of concern. There is a dependency between gender and use of social networks. Women who worry about fake news use Facebook more frequently ( $\chi^2 (1, N = 630) = 13.75, p <.05$ ) and Instagram ( $\chi^2 (1, N = 424) = 4.37, p <.05$ ) than worried men; the men who express greater concern about disinformation use Twitter more intensively ( $\chi^2 (1, N = 334) = 8.77, p <.05$ ).

Among the respondents who stated that they were not concerned, a correlation was detected between daily use and gender in the case of Facebook  $\chi^2 (1, N = 161) = 4.59, p <.05$ ; but not on Instagram or Twitter.

## **Conclusions**

Contrary to what one may expect (differences on social media use or news consumption), there are few differences between genders with regard to disinformation. The differences are very subtle on disinformation. The main point is that women are more concerned than men regarding the spread of disinformation which is similar to what happens in other aspects of daily life (i.e. Xiao & McCright, 2012).

However, women and men have similar problems in detecting false content, they use similar factors in assessing trustworthiness, and they receive misleading material about the same topics, mainly politics.

RQ2. To determine the degree of concern regarding disinformation in Spaniards and whether there are gender differences.

Fake news has become a concern for the Spanish people, women more so than men (In line with other Eurobarometer, 2018), we can affirm that. The degree of concern does not vary according to gender for young people, which, as a

hypothesis and to be explored in future research, could be linked to a higher educational level than previous generations.

### RQ 3 -Difficulty distinguishing between false and true information

Those who are most concerned about fake news also perceive the greatest difficulty in detecting it, which could suggest that greater awareness of the problem leads to a greater perception of difficulty of detection. Most respondents acknowledge that they have problems distinguishing between false and true content, and there are no significant gender differences in this regard either.

The credibility attached to a particular content is conditioned by multiple factors. Our findings show that these factors apply to both men and women in a very similar way. The only significant gender difference relates to the source (the author of the content), which is more relevant for men.

RQ1 was to determine whether there are gender differences in the most common topics of fake news that are received.

The results show that politics-related fake contents are the most common, and politics is, for both men and women, the main topic of the false news they identify. Politics is clearly the most frequent and the only topic in which significant differences between genders are observed.

Men tend to consume more information than women and are more interested in politics. Nevertheless, this is not reflected in a greater ability of men to identify false news, where men and women have the same difficulties.

As a conclusion, there are no significant gender differences with regard to the ability to detect fake news. Women are more concerned than men, but both have the same problems when facing disinformation content, which has become

a widespread global phenomenon today.

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## **Violent Discourse in the Media: Design and Implementation of Pedagogical Tools towards Interculturality**

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### **Introduction**

This communication addresses the objectives and the theoretical framework of the research "Violent discourse in the media: design and implementation of pedagogical tools towards interculturality", which is in an initial phase. The main objective of this research is to design and implement a participatory method based on educommunication as a tool to promote non-violence and interculturality in the educational environment. This is an investigation that will be developed by a compendium of publications, seeking to publish at least three academic articles in the appropriate scientific journals. The communication for the NEWSNET seminar addressed the first phase of the research, focused on the development of the first article, that is about the theoretical framework and the state of the art.

### **State of the art**

Educommunication (also known as media education) was born in the field of popular movements in Latin America, and its concepts result from the practical experience of popular educators-communicators such as Paulo Freire, Mario Kaplún and Martín-Barberó (Jackiw et al., 2021). It is an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary field of studies that addresses theories and practices on



education and communication (Barbas Coslado, 2012), which is also referred to as the critical reception of the media, communication pedagogy, education for the television, image pedagogy, audiovisual media didactics, communication education, media education, etc. (Aparici, 2010).

Over the last decades, educommunication has been gaining shape, and also has divided into various aspects that share the understanding of education and communication as essentially connected areas. There is the anglo-saxon branch of knowledge, which addresses a more technical perspective of educommunication, focusing on the use and management of the media as vehicles or supports to make possible an effective communication and education. This sub-area, also known as media literacy or media education (Barbas Coslado, 2012), fundamentally addresses digital literacy and the barriers to the appropriate use of digital media and its importance and impact on educational environments. On the other hand, we find the Latin American side, which addresses educommunication from a dialogic perspective, focusing its potential on developing a critical and dialogic stance when consuming and making use of the media in the educational environment. This branch of knowledge is also known as media didactics, educational communication, media literacy or communication pedagogy (Barbas Coslado, 2012), and seeks to understand the potential of the media from the critical consumption of its content and placing dialogue and communication as mediators of the whole educational process.

As the objectives of this research are focused on Latin American proposals, the first article addresses the work of the pedagogue and philosopher Paulo Freire, whose works are based on the importance of education and communication as tools for social transformation. The concepts created by the author throughout his career are raised, starting from the ideas in "Education: the practice of freedom" (1967), "Pedagogy of the oppressed" (1970), "Pedagogia da autonomia"(1996), and "Educar com a mídia: novos diálogos sobre educação" (2013).

In his works, Freire suggests that learning is a process of action-reflection-action (Freire, 1970), which should start from reality to reflect on it and generate knowledge through dialogue, in order to return to reality and propose actions for change. Freire affirms that knowledge does not come only from the educator, but through contact between the educator and learners and affirms that the teaching-learning binomial only happens through communicative processes. For the philosopher, educators are responsible for opening space for questions that arise from the curiosity of the learners; and at the same time educators should invite learners to adopt a critical stance towards the information, knowledge and even the experiences they have (Freire, 1996). Therefore, Freire suggests moving from a banking education (Freire, 1967), based on a unidirectional model where the flow of information or knowledge goes exclusively from the teacher to the student; to a critical and transformative education, where learning and knowledge come from exchange, dialogue and questioning of what is known or pre-established.

In addition, Freire proposes that learning in the classroom takes place from what he calls circles of culture (dialogue circles) (Freire, 1967) and also from the generating words, which are keywords on the subject that wants to be discussed, that turn on a much greater debate, about the whole society. He suggests starting from the local, from tangible reality, to build ideas together and promote a collective construction of reality, leaving the traditional conception of it, based on isolated fragments. The Brazilian pedagogue also defends the position of a revolutionary education (Freire, 1996), where dialogue is the fundamental pillar for learning to happen. And he proposes that education must definitely move from a naive way of understanding (which would be cultivated with the simple transmission of knowledge from educator to learner), to a critical way of learning (Freire, 1996), built when everything that both educator and learner place in the circle of dialogue is questioned.

Finally, this communication presents the hypotheses and objectives for the second phase of the research, which will address the field work to be carried out

inspired by the previous concepts, in order to design and implement pedagogical tools based on educommunication, which encourage a critical consumption of the media in educational environments, towards non-violence and interculturality. In the end, the third phase of the research is presented, which will address the analysis of the results of the proposed dialogic-critical process, and will suggest the implementation of educommunicative tools and practices in compulsory education, to develop transversal competences based on ethics, non-violence and interculturality.

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## **Analysing Polarised Discourse in Sports TV Programs: How to Use Infotainment to Engage Audiences**

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### **Introduction**

Sports communication face new challenges related with the inevitable settlement of platforms like TikTok or Twitch, in charge of rethink the role of communication in times of disruption and journalism based on business models focused on infotainment (Ortells, 2011; Thussu, 2011) and the attention economy (Goldhaber, 1997).

In addition, prioritizing sports content has configured a market niche with an extensive and multiple mass of public captivated by all kinds of formats (Rojas Torrijos, 2012). Thus, sport fits into any television genre, it allows different types of discourses, accepting frames that range from the most imperturbable to the slyest (Gallardo-Camacho et al., 2016; Genovese, 2010). This hybridization has progressively contaminated different journalistic genres with a structure based on a polarised debate, passion (Lacroix, 2005), audience engagement and talk shows.

### **Methodology**

This research is focused on four influential sports programs on television in Spain: Estudio Estadio (Teledeporte – RTVE), El Club de la Mitjanit (Esport3 –

TV3), Deportes Cuatro (Cuatro – Mediaset) and El Chiringuito de Jugones (MEGA – Atresmedia). Main objective (O1) is determining how the different practices associated with infotainment have been adopted in the sports programs under study. Likewise, it has sought (O1.1) to know the existence of a reduction of information with the intention of incorporating entertainment into sports journalistic content. Methodology is based on 125 hours of television content analysis of a sample spread over 70 broadcasts of coverage among the four selected programs.

Being aware of the diversity in terms of the units that content analysis allows to quantify, in this work we focus on several of them, such as thematic units (Krippendorff, 2004: 107-109) or the analysis of technical aspects such as camera zoom movement or other production effects that can lead to a more sensational style (Grabe et al., 2001). In addition to the different features associated with infotainment (Redondo García, 2011), staging has also been taken into consideration, and what happens on the set has an important value for presenting communication (Bruun & Frandsen, 2014).

The analysis period includes from March 1, 2018 to November 30, 2018. The methodological technique of constructed weeks has been used (Hester & Dougall, 2007; Riffe et al., 1993). Semi-structured interviews have also been conducted with the anchors of these programs.

## **Results**

After categorizing topics of each program, it is important to show that there is one of the current trends in the media sports agenda: the so-called "Footballization" content. This means that football gain importance in the media compared to other sports. In this sense, each program spends more than 35% of its time talking about this sport.

Checking if football is really talked about in news of this sports theme, it has been detected that the sum of news that talks about celebrities and sports institutions has a representation of more than 10%. In any case, the predominant category is one in which no frame other than football has been considered. Regarding other forms of infotainment, is important to highlight the use of audio-visual resources such as music, special effects and graphic codes, an inherent characteristic in current television. It is necessary to remember that three of the four analysed programs are focus on the journalism genre discussion. This is something that favours the appearance of features as subjectivity (more than 15% in El Chiringuito de Jugones, El Club de la Mitjanit and Estudio Estadio) and standardization. In addition, the use of humour (between 13% and 20% in El Chiringuito de Jugones, El Club de la Mitjanit and Deportes Cuatro) and personalization generates moments of dispersion where news or the topic of discussion is the least important.

## **Conclusions & Discussion**

The programs analysed here adopt different infotainment practices, determined according to the various features and methodologies applied in previous research (Berrocal et al., 2014; Campos-Dominguez & Redondo García, 2015). The case of Estudio Estadio is reflected in colloquial discourses or using supposedly humorous moments that serve to remove the program from the rigor expected of such a classic format belonging to public television. El Club de la Mitjanit is characterized by the scenography and the differentiation of sections that have a greater or lesser degree of entertainment. Here there is less possibility of confusion, which can result in an audience who is more satisfied with the product they receive; however, the hybridization between information and entertainment is greater. Deportes Cuatro is the representation of the constant modification and the necessary concern for eliminating information in order to incorporate entertainment into sports journalistic content. The program includes an increasing number of sections designed to create a more dynamic and less formal environment, even incorporating spaces for imitating public

figures. In this case, the fictional treatment of the information takes on special relevance due to the insertion of post-production techniques that make the content more of a spectacle. El Chiringuito de Jugones, despite the number of elements or features detected, stands out especially for its theme. In this case, it is no longer just an intentional selection of certain sports news but rather how this news is presented. The presenter, Josep Pedrerol, represents the position of the program while the collaborators jump into the ring to defend their interests and opinions. In this sense, El Chiringuito de Jugones develops a strategy that increasingly imports the meta-discourse of the program itself and its commentators, now also protagonists, rather than sports news. However, the use of opinion and subjectivity is common in all the analysed cases. This also occurs with the footballization of sports content (Tunstall, 1971; Rojas Torrijos, 2016) and the polarization of media discourses (Usher et al., 2018; Barnes, 2018).

Sports programs use different techniques related to infotainment such as colloquial language, humour, drama or a dynamic staging. All this occurs mainly in spaces for debate where journalists and his opinion become the true protagonists. Focusing exclusively on football (Frandsen, 2019) allows programs creating narrative lines based on emotions and replacing information with entertainment.

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## **Gender in Explanatory Articles about COVID-19. Analysis of Articles in *The Conversation***

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### **Introduction**

Gender inequality in the scientific field remains a pending issue, and studies indicate that the gender of male and female scientists has an effect on both the quantity and the impact of their scientific papers. Meanwhile, the pandemic has intensified this trend and influenced women's productivity, an issue raised by a number of academic journals. Caring duties, which are traditionally assigned to women, asymmetries in academic work, and social stereotypes associated with female researchers and scientists are among the factors that could explain this inequality.

This study aims to analyse whether such inequalities are also reproduced in more explanatory activities. There is currently a broad consensus as to the importance for the scientific community to publicise its work and engage with society, interacting, connecting and facilitating the relationship between the scientific world and the world of laypeople (Anzivino, 2021). An increasing number of male and female researchers have therefore espoused this endeavour, by taking an interest in explaining science (Diviu-Miñarro; Cortiñas-Rovira, 2020). The Internet

has facilitated this task, both by eliminating the technical and economic barriers faced by explanatory authors, and also by offering a channel to which the general public increasingly turn in search of scientific information.

Within this context, *The Conversation* is an initiative which arose in Australia in 2011 and now has editions in the United Kingdom, United States, Africa, France, Canada, Indonesia and Spain, this last edition having been founded in 2018. The content published on the website is, according to the platform itself, distributed by a total of 22,000 publications worldwide, providing a global impact of 40 million monthly readers.

Given the need to communicate the scientific advances resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, along with the media attention that the scientific community has attracted during this recent period, the goal of this study is to analyse the presence of women in explanatory activities during the health emergency by analysing the authorship, thematic approach and audience interaction of content published in the Spanish version of *The Conversation*.

## **Methodology**

To analyse the impact of gender on scientific explanations, explanatory publications about the pandemic were selected from the Spanish version of *The Conversation*, by means of content analysis. This research technique has regularly been applied in research into the media and scientific journalism, since it allows a systematic, objective and quantitative analysis of the texts (Wimmer & Dominick, 1996), and enables valid, reproducible inferences to be drawn, which can then be applied to the context (Krippendorff, 1990).

The sample is made up of content published within the specific subsection created by the portal from 1 April 2020 up until 31 March 2021 (n=306), encoded in accordance with the variables of authorship, theme and audience dialogue. In this last case the number of Twitter and Facebook interactions was

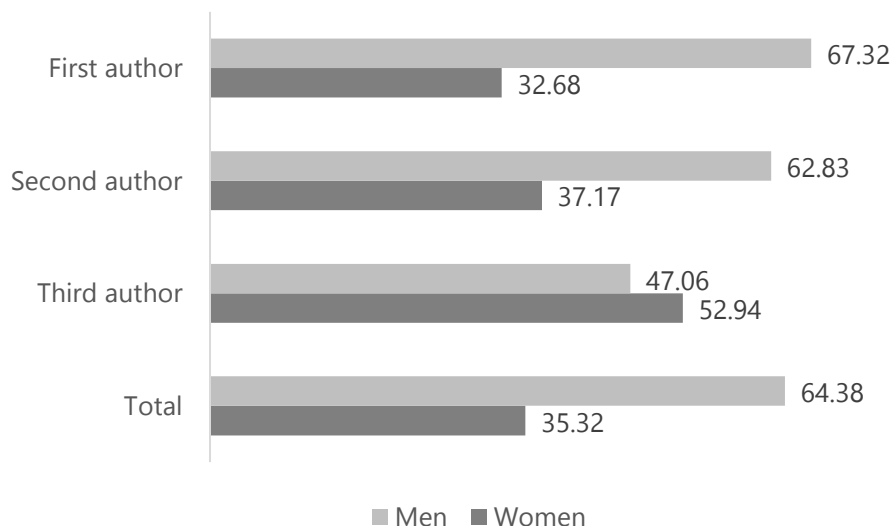
counted, along with the number of comments registered on the platform (n=523) and their textual content.

The data obtained were statistically analysed using the program SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). A qualitative study was likewise performed, applied to the comments generated by the content, in order to discern the predominant sentiments. This was done by using the program QSR NVivo (version 12).

## Results

The analysis of the content published in the section created specifically by *The Conversation* to include topics referring to COVID-19 (n=306) reveals a distribution over time with particularly notable interest at the start of the period analysed. Researchers thus rushed to present the results of their studies to the general public. After this initial surge, the number of publications dropped off noticeably.

Figure 1. Authorship, by gender and order



Source: The authors

It turns out that the distribution over time is marked by the authors' gender. Seven out of ten explanatory texts published during the earliest period of the pandemic and lockdown were written by men, a proportion which has gradually declined. If one considers the entire period analysed as a whole, out of the total of 453 authors analysed, 293 (64.68%) were men, and 160 women (35.32%).

Beyond the overall distribution of male and female authorship, an analysis of their quantity and order serves to identify a qualitatively more subordinate presence in the case of women, since there are fewer texts authored solely by women (25.16%) than in collaboration, while they have a proportionally lower presence among the first-named authors of the text: 32.68% out of all texts.

The research likewise analyses audience interaction in accordance with the gender of the first-named author (Table 1). In terms of number of interactions, Facebook is the social media platform most commonly employed by users of *The Conversation*; COVID-19-related topics amounted to a total of 219,460, 21.06% of which correspond to articles with a woman as the first-named author, and 78.94% content written by men.

The trend observed on Twitter is similar: 11,636 interactions were recorded (an average of 38.02 per publication), of which 28.02% correspond to publications written by female academics.

As for the comments made by audiences on the publications themselves on *The Conversation* site, the articles analysed built up a total of 523 responses, 390 of which correspond to readers, and the remainder to the authors themselves. As may be seen in Table 1, the interaction generated by the articles written by female academics is in overall terms notably lower (22.82%), compared with that elicited by the male-authored content (77.18%). If one considers the average for each article, those with a woman as the first-named author obtain 1.53 comments, as opposed to 1.79 for male authors.

*Table 1. Number of interactions, by gender and platform*

Comments		Twitter		Facebook	
Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
370	153	8.392	3.258	173.236	46.340
523		11.636		219.460	

Source: The authors

Aside from a quantitative analysis of the comments, the study also addressed an examination of comments from the qualitative perspective. The data demonstrate in general a critical attitude on the part of audiences. The percentage of negative comments (23.08%) is substantially higher than positive (3.85%) or mixed comments (7.69%), although most of the audience contributions are neutral in nature (65.38%). It may nonetheless be seen that this critical attitude is more significant in articles where the first-named author is a woman, with a higher percentage of negative messages (28.09%) than for men (21.59%).

### **Conclusions & Discussion**

An analysis of the explanatory content published on *The Conversation* reveals the rapid response offered by the research community. Explanatory efforts thus followed the same pattern as seen in academic publications, which registered an exponential increase during the spring of 2020 (Vasconcelos et al., 2021).

However, the initial response was considerably higher in the case of male academics, and as the urgency, interest and number of publications declined, the presence of men and women balanced out. The fact that caring duties during lockdown fell mainly to women (Myers, 2020), or the fact that men choose high-profile topics with more publishable characteristics (Lerchenmüller et al., 2020:5) could have influenced this.

In general, the analysis of authorship leads to the conclusion that explanatory efforts are shaped by the academics' gender; the overall count of male authors is significantly higher than for women, a disparity which is even greater if one takes into account the first-named author, thereby confirming that the citation biases perceived in scientific articles (Dinu, 2021) are repeated in explanatory work. This presence may be seen not only in overall terms, but also reveals indicators of a lesser proportional presence of women as sole authors, and an increase in their presence as secondary authors in co-authored texts, likewise demonstrating a qualitatively more subordinate presence. This is a circumstance to be taken into account, since involvement by female scientists in explanatory initiatives such as that offered by *The Conversation*, with a global impact of millions of people, could prove a fundamental element in raising their public profile and legitimacy as authorised rather than subordinated sources, as well as to promote their work and obtain sources of funding.

The study of the existing bias in the scientific sphere requires a multi-factorial analysis (Larivière et al., 2013). Nonetheless, this study also proposes that consideration be given to the response received by academics to their explanatory efforts, which is closely tied to the personal brand of the researcher. Women obtain less of a response from the public, while the percentage of negative comments is also higher. A reflection from a cost/benefit perspective thus indicates a more favourable result for men than women in their efforts to explain science.

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## **Analysis of the Parliamentary Discourse in the Basque Country. BasqueParl Bilingual Corpus**

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### **Introduction**

Parliamentary debates have always comprised the ideal of political dialogue, with different opinions being exchanged and pitted against one another in the

decision-making process. The issues addressed on such a forum represent the interests of society, and an analysis of how these issues evolve, alongside the way in which they are discussed, likewise provides an insight into how a community is itself evolving.

This task takes on even greater interest given the progressive disenchantment that has been seen over recent years between the general public and political parties. Citizens not only feel themselves ever more distanced from political activity, but also increasingly see politics and parties themselves as one of society's main problems.

This defines the context for the BasqueParl project, which takes advantage of advances in computational methods to analyse parliamentary rhetoric from a multidisciplinary perspective. The object of the study comprised transcripts of debates in the Basque Parliament over the course of two terms (2012-2020).

The analysis of parliamentary discourse has traditionally aroused considerable interest among researchers. The debates taking place in different chambers and countries have thus been studied in various locations. For example, we may find analyses of the speeches by members of the Dutch Parliament (Grijzenhout et al., 2014) and Britain's House of Commons (Abercrombie and Bastista-Navarro, 2018; Salah, 2014; Rheault et al., 2016), among other relevant cases. In the case of Spain, analyses have been conducted of the Andalusian Parliament (Alcaide, Carranza and Catalina, 2016) and the national Congress of Deputies (Iñigo-Mora, 2007).

Likewise of particular interest are the studies by Salah (2014), Rheault et al. (2016), Abercrombie and Riza (2018), using different big data analysis tools (algorithms, data mining and machine learning) to analyse parliamentary discourse, in particular in terms of sentiment analysis. Bara, Weale and Biquelet had also previously employed automated or semi-automated analytical techniques: "Political writing and dialogue generate a large amount of data, in

fact data so voluminous to a degree that no researcher could hope to understand it alone or without mechanical help of some kind" (Bara, Weale and Bicquelet, 2007).

Communication in politics generally, and specifically in parliament, is thus a field of analysis in which different techniques may be combined, such as Natural Language Processing and discourse analysis. This approach to political discourse analysis, as indicated by John Hyde (2002), requires that we do away with boundaries between different areas of knowledge, such as linguistics, sociolinguistics, etc.

## **Methodology**

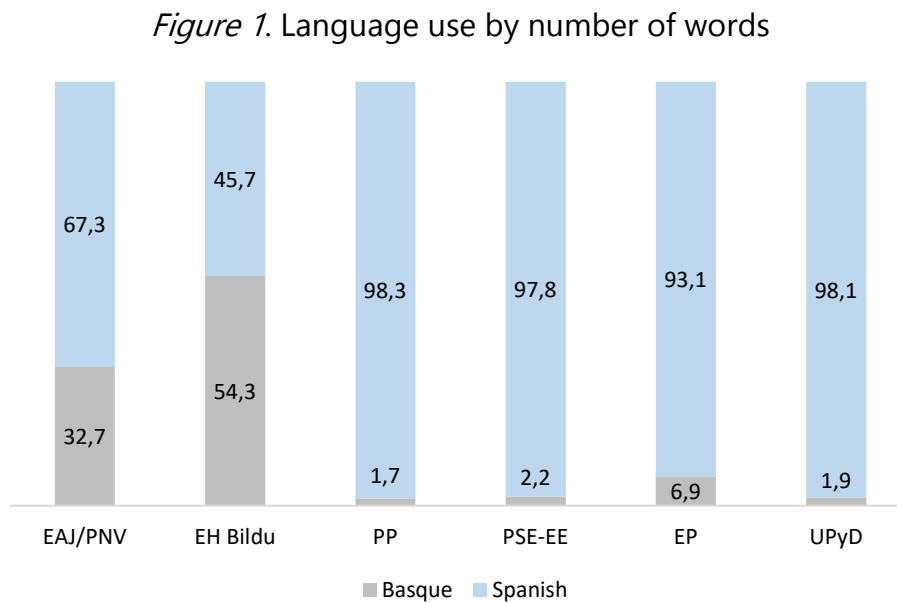
Such a multidisciplinary approach was adopted to analyse the corpus of parliamentary debates over two terms of the Basque Parliament (2012-2016 and 2016-2020). Different discourse attributes were analysed over this period, such as the language used (Basque or Spanish) and the gender of the speakers.

To identify language (RQ1), as the corpus is bilingual, flowing freely between one language and the other, each of the units of discourse was detected using the langdetect language detection library. Meanwhile, identification of the parliamentarians' gender and the volume of their speeches (RQ2) was also performed by means of lemmatisation and Named Entity Recognition (NER). All these data comprise the BasqueParl database.

## **Results**

The results obtained indicate first of all the unequal presence of the use of the two official languages (Basque/Spanish) in the Basque Parliament. Although the use of both languages may be found in most discourses, the number of words of each language used differs significantly, with a gap of up to sixty percentage points between them: 81.56% as opposed to 18.44% (Figure 1).

In these language use data, gender and political party variables reveal certain significant differences. By party, only EH Bildu uses slightly more Basque than Spanish in its parliamentary speeches (54.3%), ahead of EAJ/PNV (32.7%). The other parties do so to a very limited extent. By gender, women (22.9%) use Basque more often than men (15%).



Source: The authors

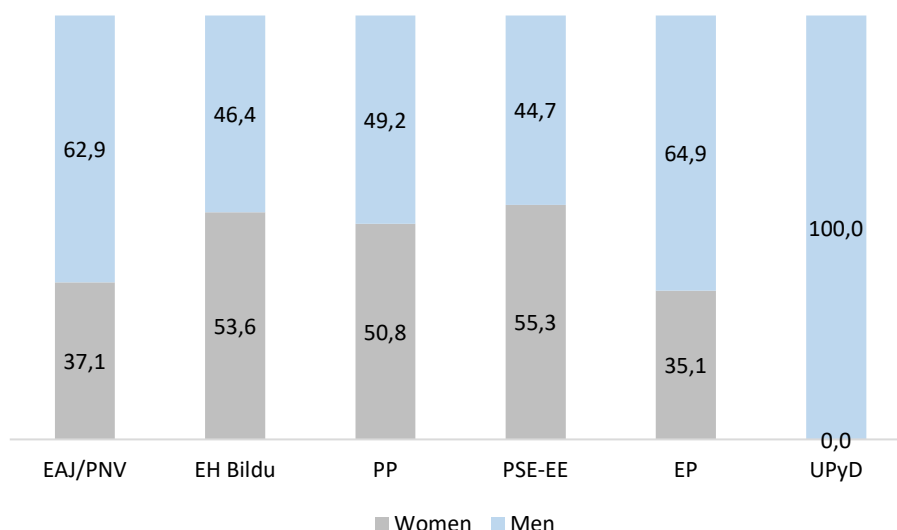
Meanwhile, a major gender difference can also be perceived in parliamentary discourse. Overall, men spoke 61.3% more words in the Basque Parliament, if we exclude utterances by the female Speaker of the House. By political party, EH Bildu, PSE-EE and PP revealed a balanced presence of speeches by men and women, while for Elkarrekin Podemos and EAJ/PNV their speeches amount overall to slightly more than a third of the total UPyD represents an exception, with just one male parliamentarian in both parliamentary terms.

## Conclusions & Discussion

The analysis of speakers in the Basque Parliament by means of natural language processing tools conducted within the BasqueParl project provides a graphical

presentation of the difference in use of the two official languages and the gender perspective in parliamentary speeches.

Figure 2. Gender by number of words



Source: The authors

With regard to the use of the Basque language, it may be seen that with the exception of EH Bildu, and to a lesser extent EAJ/PNV, greater use is clearly made of Spanish in Basque Parliament.

As for gender, although the speeches are somewhat shorter, an increasing trend towards balance between contributions by men and women may be seen. Mass data analysis will in the future allow BasqueParl to offer a longitudinal vision of how Parliamentary discourse evolves in the Basque Country.

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