RESEARCH ARTICLE

The audiovisual representation of immigration from the perspective of digital community media in Spain: El Salto TV (2017–2024)

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to describe the audiovisual representation of immigration as portrayed by the digital community media outlet *El Salto TV*, and to assess whether it offers a distinctive perspective aligned with its journalistic principles, in contrast to the coverage typically provided by traditional and digital audiovisual media. A mixed-methods longitudinal research design was employed, combining a content analysis of the entire corpus of news pieces on the subject (n=103) published between 2017 and 2024 on both the outlet's website and its social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, and X), with a semi-structured interview conducted with the head of the audiovisual section. The analysis focused on variables such as sources, audiovisual narrative, scope of coverage, thematic and visual framing, informational treatment, and language. The findings indicate that *El Salto TV* constructs a counter-narrative on immigration, characterized by granting immigrant communities a central and active role in the news discourse. Moreover, the outlet delivers coverage that reflects its community-based ethos, distinctly different from that of other audiovisual media, thereby contributing to the development of new narrative frameworks and fostering best practices in journalism.

KEYWORDS: Audiovisual narrative, community media, immigration, journalism, news treatment

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1. Introduction

During the Francoist period, Spain's monopolistic public television was marked by strict governmental control and manipulation of news (Molinero and Ysàs 1999). The subsequent introduction of private television in 1989 precipitated deregulation in the sector, driven by competition for audiences and the scramble for advertising as the principal revenue stream, with attendant distortions in the quality of news and programming. Since then, the Spanish media system has fostered a highly concentrated media and cultural industry governed almost exclusively by commercial criteria (García 2016). Configured as an oligopoly in which two private operators—Grupo Antena 3 and Mediaset España—coexist with the public broadcaster Televisión Española, third-sector communicative practices have persisted within this ecosystem, oscillating between governmental repression and a form of conditional political tolerance (Guimerà 2007).

Although pioneering experiences of community radio in Spain date back to 1976—and those of community television to 1982—the absence of legal recognition for their activity, coupled with the difficulty of accessing frequencies that could be tuned under the same conditions as public and private broadcasters (Chaparro 2002), meant that a large share of community media operated outside the legal framework and remained in that status for years.

Subsequently, the 2008 economic and financial crisis exacerbated precariousness across the media system which—combined with expanded access to digital technologies—created an opening for the launch of numerous emerging journalistic projects, an opportunity that community media were quick to seize. The context in which these initiatives took shape was equally decisive: information increasingly conceived as a commodity, the primacy of infotainment, a lack of pluralism, the spread of disinformation, and waning media credibility all formed the breeding ground for journalistic proposals aimed at counterbalancing the prevailing trends in the informational sphere. According to Barranquero and Meda (2015, p. 140):

> Since the late 2000s, and largely under the influence of new digital platforms and network-based strategies of information and organization, a collaborative culture among citizen media has grown stronger, to the point of consolidating a distinct media network of its own—one that openly competes with the traditional dichotomy of public and private commercial media.

The communication and collaboration networks forged by community media have been essential in enabling them—despite being a hostile environment to adapt and develop new discursive strategies, embodying practices of resilience in response to dominant media frameworks. In this regard, community media (as in the Spanish case) provide a framework for understanding communicative resilience as a discursive, adaptive, and relational process through which meaning is reconfigured and social bonds are reconstructed to resist, adapt, and transform in times of crisis (Buzzanell 2017; Amankwah et al. 2022). As Goldstein (2011) points out, this capacity should not be understood merely as recovery, but rather as the communicative system's creative ability to generate new forms of organization in the face of the unexpected.

Building on the context described, and based on the premise that *El Salto TV* seeks to offer an alternative perspective to the dominant message and to practice journalism that challenges hegemonic narratives and discourses through its choice of topics and approaches (K. Castro, personal communication, April 10, 2025), the present study sets out to describe and analyze how a representative Spanish digital community media outlet reports on a socially sensitive issue such as immigration.

The phenomenon of immigration was chosen as the object of study because, traditionally, mainstream Spanish media—both public and private, including the press, radio, television, and digital outlets—have associated it with negative evaluations and events that reinforce deeply rooted social stereotypes. These representations often manifest through alarmist, polarizing, and homogenizing discourses that encourage confrontation among citizens rather than promoting coexistence and intercultural exchange (Tirado-Espín, Cuesta, Martínez-Martínez and Almeida-Galárraga 2020; Codinach 2015).

Likewise, the relevance of this study lies in the fact that previous research on audiovisual media has been largely confined to analyses of public-service television newscasts (TVE) (Igartua, Muñiz, Otero and De la Fuente 2013) and/or privately managed broadcasters (Bertran 2003; Igartua, Muñiz, Otero and De la Fuente 2007; Monedero and Mercado 2024). Therefore, this work seeks to fill an existing gap in the study of audiovisual journalistic discourse on immigration within Spanish digital community media.

1.1 The journalistic treatment of immigration in the media

Although migratory processes have a long historical trajectory in Spain, in recent times they have become a phenomenon of significant social impact, now characterized by increasing complexity—particularly due to the diversity and degree of differentiation among the cultural traditions that come into contact (Consejo del Audiovisual de Cataluña [CAC] 2002). According to the March 2025 Barometer of the Spanish Centre for Sociological Research (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas [CIS] 2025), immigration ranked fourth among the issues Spaniards identified as the country's main problems.

Although migration has been an inherent aspect of human existence throughout history, its current visibility and perceived importance are largely linked to the coverage it receives from the media (Red Acoge 2023), which often contributes to the production of stereotypes and alarmist narratives.

It is undeniable that the public debate surrounding this phenomenon is heavily influenced by the way it is represented by the media, which bears the responsibility of constructing a public image of immigration—one that has direct consequences for how social order is established and collective behavior is structured (Couldry 2021).

Despite empirical evidence showing that immigrants in Spain do not pose a threat to employment, wages, public services, or security—and that such fears are exaggerated or unfounded (Carrasco 2024)—both public and private Spanish media outlets generally construct and disseminate a negative discourse and narrative around this phenomenon.

In the audiovisual sphere, studies focusing on television coverage and the visual representation of three cases of political and social tension related to immigration across five television networks in Catalonia (Spain) demonstrated the existence of a discourse that overlooks social initiatives promoting multicultural coexistence and instead constructs a homogenizing, negative, and stereotypical portrayal of the immigrant population (Giró-Martí and Muixi 2011).

Similarly, television —unlike the press—, stands out for its greater use of dramatic and negative imagery related to immigration. Both media, however, strategically employ visual frames such as images of detained, deceased, or injured migrants (Igartua, Muñiz and Cheng 2005) or the arrival of boats by sea (San Felipe 2017), in contrast with more positive depictions featuring representatives of migrant associations or collectives, migrants at work, engaged in leisure or recreational activities, or providing eyewitness testimony.

Other studies suggest that the dominant narrative "de-citizenizes" immigrants across the various discourses analyzed, portraying them as passive actors—either as victims of criminal networks or as objects of charitable assistance from different organizations (Fajardo and Soriano 2016).

With respect to information sources, the latest report by Red Acoge (2024) indicates that over the past decade, official sources—both institutional and political—have been the most frequently used in immigration coverage within Spain's mainstream media. Meanwhile, other sources, such as social organizations, migrants themselves, specialists, or expert voices, remain secondary. "In this respect, it is particularly noteworthy that more than 80% of news items do not include migrants among their sources" (Red Acoge 2024, p. 13).

In this regard, it is worth noting that although "NGOs and immigrant citizens are increasingly present as information sources, they are not always treated appropriately from an audiovisual standpoint" (Bailén, Gutiérrez, Bertran, Lorite, Losa and Mateu 2006, p. 33), their visibility is not necessarily synonymous with good journalistic practice. This is exemplified by the frequent omission of their identification as information sources or by the preference for emotionally charged statements as a selection criterion—an approach that often serves to sensationalize their portrayal.

In sum, the dominant informational discourses in Spanish audiovisual media—both public (nonprofit, funded through public resources, telecommunications operator contributions, and levies on private broadcasters and digital platforms) and private-commercial (profit-oriented)—tend to approach the phenomenon of immigration in a simplified manner, often without contextualizing or explaining its causes and consequences (De Frutos and Vicente 2019). They frequently associate immigration with negative information (Valbuena, Caro and Fernández 2018), with crime and criminality (Goldberger 2004; Igartua et al. 2013; Armentia-Vizuete, Marín-Murillo and Caminos-Marcet 2015), with racism and xenophobia (Ferré and Simelio 2016), and frame it through perspectives of problem, conflict, and threat (Tirado-Espín et al. 2020). Such portrayals often adopt a sensationalist, dramatic, or spectacularizing tone (Monedero and Mercado 2024) and employ expressive forms that fail to respect the dignity of migrants and their communities (Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas para los Refugiados [ACNUR] 2019).

In contrast to these informational approaches—which do not contribute to fostering a climate of social dialogue or coexistence, community media advocate for the construction of subaltern narrative frameworks aimed at challenging hegemonic forms of knowledge and representation. According to Grossman (2014, p. 321):

> Counter-narratives emerge in relation to an opposing force and, through cognitive and affective strategies, seek to interrupt, dismantle, resist, reframe, subvert, disable, or actively respond to other narrative trajectories that dominate discourse within a field of social power (…)

This study therefore aims to analyze how *El Salto TV* represents the phenomenon of immigration through its community-based nature.

1.2 Community media in Spain

Community media—also referred to as alternative, citizen, or participatory media (Barranquero, Candón-Mena and García-Caballero 2024)—are fundamentally defined by their roots in organized civil society (Pérez-Martínez 2017) and their orientation toward the needs and interests of specific communities, whether geographical (Lema-Blanco 2018), identity-based, or functional (Barranquero and Sánchez 2018; Barbas and

Postill 2017). These media are open to public participation in both content creation and in the administration and decision-making processes (Villanueva, Barranquero and Ramos 2016).

According to theorists such as Nick Couldry (2010), the concept of the Third Communication Sector refers to communicative experiences rooted in the recovery and expression of the "voice" of social groups. These processes enable citizens to self-represent, reflect collectively, and organize social change initiatives.

Since its inception, the Spanish media system has been characterized by a highly concentrated cultural and media industry governed by commercial interests and dominated by large economic conglomerates. The establishment of a dual public-private media system triggered the emergence of citizen and alternative media as a counterbalance to the dominant communication regime. In this context, community media serve as essential pillars for democratizing communication, providing a form of counter-power and critique against the informational monopoly.

The World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC 2008) outlines the core principles distinguishing community media from traditional outlets in its *Principles for a Democratic Regulatory Framework for Community Radio and TV*:

a) They are managed by non-profit private organizations that operate in the public or private interest without pursuing commercial gain.

b) A defining feature is the active participation of their reference communities in all phases of the communication process (ownership, programming, management, operation, financing, and evaluation).

c) They are accountable to the communities they serve, and their objectives must be directly linked to the needs and identities of these communities. In this regard, as Gumucio (2003) notes, community television has a responsibility to preserve local music, festivals and traditions, cultural and artistic production, oral history, children's games, and other forms of popular expression.

Historically, Spanish community media have been closely tied to various social movements, including the free radio movement that emerged during the democratic transition (Pérez-Martínez 2021), the 15M movement (Barbas and Treré 2022; Candón-Mena and Treré 2022), the housing rights movement (Arévalo-Salinas, Cabrera-Altieri and García-López 2021; Haro-Barba and Calvo 2018), and the free culture movement (Calvo, Barbas and Haro-Barba 2022).

Although civil society attempted to create its own media projects prior to the democratic transition, it was not until 1976 that the first pioneering experiences in community radio emerged in Spain—such as *Radio La Voz del Pobre* in Madrid (1976) and *Ona Lliure* (1979) (García 2015). Community broadcasting continued into the 1980s with the emergence of "local televisions," though in smaller numbers. During the 1990s, new projects emerged in major cities, such as *Tele-K* and *Radio Almenara* in Madrid, *Radio Contrabanda* in Barcelona, *Tas-Tas Irratia* in Bilbao, *Radio Topo* in Zaragoza, and *Cuac FM* in La Coruña. Meanwhile, earlier initiatives either evolved or consolidated (García 2015). Most of these Third Sector projects continue to operate without formal legal recognition, often existing in a legal grey area due to governmental neglect.

El Salto

In the context of the economic and financial crisis of 2008—which deepened precarity within the media system and fostered the emergence of numerous journalistic projects—where information is treated as a commodity, infotainment dominates, pluralism is lacking, disinformation is widespread, and media credibility is in decline, the rise of digital technologies and a shifting journalistic landscape spurred the creation of alternative media

initiatives. It was in this scenario, at the end of 2016, that *El Salto* was born: a Spanish digital community media outlet led by the newspaper *Diagonal*, conceived as an alternative communication project to the dominant media system.

This initiative emerged from a network of collaboration and co-production rooted in cooperative work among more than twenty online community journalism projects—including *Píkara Magazine*, *Salmón Contracorriente*, *Visual 404*, *La Guerrilla Comunicacional*, *Wiriko*, *Galiza Ano Cero*, and *Revista Soberanía Alimentaria*. These outlets had previously operated independently but shared similar goals and a collective desire to establish a media platform with greater impact.

El Salto is structured as a Spanish media outlet funded by the people—based on a model of collective ownership—that aims to transform conventional modes of information production. It operates under principles that depart from those of traditional media. As such, it defines itself as "a decentralized media platform, with autonomous territorial branches that make their own decisions, provided they adhere to the three core principles of the project: ethical financing, internal democracy, and journalistic quality" (*El Salto* 2018).

These premises are underpinned by four fundamental and non-negotiable principles:

- Journalistic independence (Arévalo-Salinas, Al Najjar and Vilar 2020), understood both economically—in opposition to media conglomerates whose interests shape the dissemination of content—and ideologically: "Almost 80% of *El Salto*'s funding comes from subscribers. Companies that violate human, social, environmental, or labor rights are not permitted to advertise" (*El Salto* 2018).

- Internal democracy: collective ownership, decentralized and horizontal operation, and assembly-based decision-making (Martínez-Polo and Martínez-Sánchez 2017). "There are no bosses or directors. All 25 employees receive the same salary. All positions are subject to election and recall" (*El Salto* 2018).

- A philosophy grounded in cooperation, not competition (*Diagonal* 2016). One of the contributions of third-sector communication networks in Spain is co-production (Ramos, Morais and Barranquero 2018), which materializes in seemingly disconnected yet interrelated informational actions through delocalized networks (Milioni 2009), including the production, realization, and distribution of informational content. This fosters the creation of a "community of communities" (Ali and Conrad 2015), generating benefits not only in content creation but also in the strengthening of personal, group, and identity-based ties.

- Journalistic quality and rigor, understood as the use of information as a tool for social transformation and as an innovator in the choice of themes and perspectives: "to do radically different journalism" (Mancina-Chávez and Alés-Álvarez 2023, p. 68). The aim is to create a media outlet that contributes to social transformation and offers alternative narratives of reality through quality journalism, analysis, investigation, and humor (K. Castro, personal communication, April 10, 2025).

El Salto was conceived as a media outlet to introduce a new agenda through alternative themes and reporting approaches, to reshape traditional models of information production and distribution. Consistent with this vision, the platform advocates journalism aligned with social movements, amplifying voices of collectives and organizations typically underrepresented in mainstream media, offering alternatives to hegemonic discourses that have long monopolized public information.

From its inception, in addition to its digital newspaper and monthly print publication, the outlet incorporated an audiovisual production platform into its project—*El Salto TV*—a section that offers a range of on-demand video content through an online streaming format.

2. Methodology

This research is based on the premise that *El Salto TV* seeks to offer an alternative perspective to the dominant media discourse and to practice journalism that challenges hegemonic narratives—both through the topics it addresses and the approaches it adopts. Building on prior research by Igartua et al. (2005), which found that immigration coverage varies significantly depending on the editorial line and ideological orientation (conservative or progressive) of a media outlet, this study focuses on the audiovisual content of *El Salto TV*, highlighting its specific nature as a community-based media platform.

Accordingly, this research employs a case study approach centered on a leading digital community media outlet in Spain, with an exploratory aim. The study pursues the following objectives:

O1. To describe how *El Salto* represents immigration through audiovisual content.

O2. To examine whether this representation offers a distinct perspective compared to the coverage provided by traditional and digital audiovisual media.

O3. To assess whether its audiovisual approach aligns with its declared journalistic principles.

Given the exploratory nature of the study, no specific hypotheses were formulated.

2.1 Methodological justification

To achieve the research objectives, a mixed-methods longitudinal study was conducted, which included a content analysis of the entire corpus of audiovisual pieces with an informational focus on immigration (n = 103) published by *El Salto TV* between 2017 and November 2024—both on its official website and across its social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, and X). The 2017–2024 period was selected because it covers the full development of *El Salto TV's* audiovisual output, enabling a longitudinal analysis of its approach to immigration during a period of sustained public and media relevance. This was complemented by a semi-structured interview with the head of the audiovisual section at *El Salto TV*.

A data collection instrument was developed based on a prior identification of relevant theories and authors that provided the conceptual and theoretical framework for the variables analyzed. This allowed for their operationalization and quantification, reducing potential bias in the research. The variables examined in the study were: scope of coverage, news treatment, information sources, news contextualization, thematic and visual frames of immigration, evaluative tone of the main news event, audiovisual narrative, and analysis of images and language.

In line with the criteria necessary for evaluating news centrality and thematic salience (Vicente-Mariño and Prado 2007), two key features were measured: the duration of each piece (total runtime) and the scope of coverage (local, national, or international).

The variable "information sources" was constructed based on the Journalistic Added Value Project of the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (Valor Agregado Periodístico 2001), and expanded with the categories proposed by Igartua and Muñiz (2004). This framework emphasizes the importance of sensitive

framing contexts—such as the phenomenon of migration—where diversity, verifiability, and hierarchy of sources are essential. The source categories included: official public sources, official private sources, testimonial, documentary, unidentified, and other media sources.

Contextualization and framing of news stories were assessed, as they affect the reception of information. Given that the analyzed materials had both informational intent and communicative purpose, the study aimed to determine whether there was a sensationalist or criminalizing portrayal of immigration, following the methodological guidelines recommended by Red Acoge (2018).

The theoretical model applied to the thematic and visual framing variable was framing theory, as it enables the analysis of the symbolic construction of the migratory phenomenon. "The effect of framing does not lie in the topics or issues covered by the media, but in the specific way those topics are presented" (Price, Tewksbury and Powers 1997, p. 482). Consequently, public opinion will largely depend on the "action of the media" (Rubio 2009) and on how these actors choose to inform. In this regard, methodological guidelines from Romero and Alonso (2021) and Jiménez (2017) were used to reflect on the application of this theory in identifying the dominant narrative frames in the representation of immigrants.

The variable "news treatment" was broken down into primary and secondary treatments to identify the diversity of themes addressed in the selected audiovisual pieces. Primary treatment refers to the main news focus, while secondary treatment involves the accompanying or supporting focus. Framing also allowed for the identification and assessment of the sources used in terms of diversity and alignment. There was a strong correlation between the news framing and the primary and secondary treatments identified.

The evaluative character of the news was measured following the guidelines of Codinach (2015), assessing the main event as a potential indicator of the tone of the piece (positive, negative, or neutral).

The variable "audiovisual narrative"—which included voice-over, the use of subtitles in place of narration, background music, original imagery, and the appearance of journalists on camera—was analyzed using the systematic approach proposed by Colle (2011). This approach enabled the deconstruction of the aesthetic and narrative structure of *El Salto TV*'s content. Complementarily, for the image analysis, the variables *"dramatic load"* and *"post-production effects"* from the model proposed by Berrocal, Redondo, Martín and Campos (2014) were applied, as these correspond to resources that contribute to the spectacularization of information.

Bill Nichols's (1997) modes of representation of reality were also applied, as this framework allowed for the identification of how immigration was presented in terms of mise-en-scène and production style. Its flexibility also made it suitable for analyzing the narrative diversity featured in *El Salto TV*. Based on this model, and after an initial viewing of the pieces under study, only those categories that proved analytically useful and consistent with the hybrid nature of the audiovisual texts were considered: the expository, observational, participatory, performative, and reflexive modes.

Following the guidelines of Red Acoge (2018) on indicative journalism and the recommendations of the *Servimedia Style Guide* (Servimedia 2007) regarding language analysis, the study assessed whether the news pieces sought to avoid stigmatizing terms, alarmist metaphors, and discriminatory generalizations, prioritizing instead a people-centered approach. Content analysis was chosen as the methodological tool to understand how language reproduces identities, ideologies, and power relations (Gee 2014), with the aim of qualitatively interpreting the meaning of language in the audiovisual pieces and complementing the findings derived from the content analysis.

In this regard, content analysis was employed to identify thematic patterns and latent meanings within the textual and visual data (Drisko and Maschi 2016). The process was conducted through six stages: (1) formulation of research questions; (2) determination of units of analysis; (3) definition of conceptual

categories; (4) creation of a codebook and coding template; (5) pilot testing of the coding process; and (6) assessment of intercoder reliability. The units of analysis were coded, and a pilot test was conducted using a random sample coded by multiple researchers to verify reliability across the 103 analyzed units. Data were compared and discrepancies resolved by consensus, following the protocol established by Monclús and Vicente-Mariño (2008) in their methodological work on television news.

Finally, a semi-structured interview was conducted with the audiovisual coordinator of *El Salto TV* (K. Castro, personal communication, April 10, 2025). The interview addressed editorial standards, audiovisual narrative strategies, journalistic principles, ethical approaches to immigration coverage, and the use of sources. The qualitative data obtained from the interview were essential for triangulating and enriching the findings of the quantitative analysis.

3. Results

3.1 Audiovisual narrative

Duration, post-production effects and dramatic music in news reports

The duration of the audiovisual pieces ranges from 00:31 to 02:30 minutes, aligning with the general trend of social media content, where videos typically last under three minutes. However, it is important to note that this brevity does not negatively affect the contextualization of the news stories, as will be seen in subsequent sections.

A total of 75.73% of the audiovisual pieces analyzed include sound effects or post-production elements aimed at enhancing the narrative atmosphere and emphasizing key moments of the story. These effects are not limited to music; they also include ambient sounds (e.g., protests, footsteps, crowd murmurs), impactful noises (e.g., sirens, slamming doors), and sound elements added during editing to build tension or depth.

For example, in *"Ten years since the murder of Carlos Palomino"*, protest sounds intensify the emotional weight of the content, while in *"Winter in the New Moria"*, wind and ambient noise reinforce the sense of abandonment and precariousness in the refugee camp. These sound resources contribute to a more immersive and emotionally powerful narrative.

A total of 71.84% of the pieces include dramatic or emotive music. This resource is typically employed to accompany specific images of migrants during moments of struggle or conflict, or when violent actions by the police are depicted. The music serves to enhance the emotional impact of the message, intensify the symbolic weight of the images, and foster empathy with the protagonists. In videos such as *"Immigration detention centers: the business of deprivation of liberty…"* or *"Slave trafficking in Libya"*, dramatic music underscores testimonies and scenes of repression, while in *"Anti-racist demonstration in Madrid"* it reinforces collective emotion and the protest's defiant tone.

Emotional intensity and visual framing in news reports

The findings indicate that 65.05% of the audiovisual pieces display a neutral emotional tone. This type of visual presentation includes informative or illustrative images without any overt emotional appeal. It typically

involves wide shots, archival footage, or objective captures. The main function of these images is to document, not to provoke.

Representative examples include footage of demonstrations with no emphasis on facial expressions or emotions, coverage of press conferences, public statements, or institutional archive material. Migrants are portrayed as part of the scene without dramatization.

In contrast, 32.04% of the audiovisual pieces exhibit a negative emotional tone, where images emphasize suffering, repression, violence, or exclusion. The intent is to impact the viewer and make visible the injustices or vulnerabilities experienced. Examples include close-ups of sad, injured, or exhausted faces, police chasing or detaining migrants, precarious conditions in detention centers or refugee camps, and scenes that evoke pain or indignation. However, it is important to note that this type of visual intensity does not aim to sensationalize but rather to generate critical empathy toward the conditions denounced.

Positive emotional framing appears in only 2.91% of the pieces. This visual tone highlights images that convey hope, empowerment, or solidarity. It is used to showcase success stories, acts of resilience, or community initiatives. Examples include *"Football against racism: combating hate through sport"* (featuring migrant youth playing football together, smiling, and celebrating diversity) and *"Asian skater boys"*, which portrays young Asians sharing their urban culture in Madrid through an aesthetic and affirmative lens.

Among the visual framings used in the news stories, the most prominent are images of migrants giving testimony or providing information (42%), followed by images of detained migrants (28%) and representatives of associations or organizations speaking on behalf of migrants (16%).

Table 1 - Visual framing in news reports

Visual frame	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Migrants giving testimony or providing information	43	42
Detained migrants	29	28
Representatives of migrant associations or organizations	16	16
Migrant women	5	5
Migrant children or youth	4	4
Migrants in leisure or recreational contexts	3	3
Injured or deceased migrants	2	2
Total	103	100

Source: Own elaboration

Production style and journalist on-camera presence

According to the data, 81.55% of the immigration-related pieces on *El Salto TV* adopt an expository style, reflecting a clear editorial preference for informing, explaining, and arguing from a direct and discursive standpoint through a coherent narrative thread. The expository style is characterized by the use of voice-over or interviews that guide the viewer, with the aim not only to show but also to explain, denounce, and contextualize events. It is visually supported through archival footage, graphics, or documents that reinforce the message (e.g., protest footage, border scenes, or testimonies).

Expository pieces often include interviews with activists, experts, and migrants, structured around a guided narrative. They provide political and social context by referencing official reports and data. Representative

examples of this style include *"Immigration detention centres: The business of deprivation of liberty…"* and *"The Aquarius sets course for Valencia…"*, both of which analyze European migration policies through interviews, statistical evidence, and analytical narration. *"Trump's migration policy cages children…"* employs documentary footage, institutional statements, and journalistic commentary to structure the narrative.

The observational style accounts for 10.68% of the audiovisual content. These productions aim to give the viewer the impression of "non-intervention" by the journalist, avoiding direct commentary or manipulation of the reality represented. This style is characterized by long takes, absence of voice-over, and the use of ambient sound, suggesting an "apparent objectivity" in the storytelling. This is often used to depict protests, marches, or everyday spaces inhabited by migrants without overt narrative mediation.

The reflexive mode (6.80%)—based on defamiliarization, self-reflection, and introspection—and the performative mode (0.97%)—where the filmmaker becomes both character and narrator—are minimally represented. The participatory mode, which relies on interaction between the filmmaker and social actors, is entirely absent in the sample analyzed.

The presence of the journalist on camera—as an intermediary in the news narration—is occasional (27.18%). In contrast, 72.82% of the audiovisual pieces use voice-over as the primary narrative thread.

Use of original footage

In *El Salto TV*, original footage is used in 64.08% of news stories, providing the outlet with greater autonomy to construct a visual narrative on immigration that aligns with its editorial stance. This strategy allows for more direct, engaged, and coherent coverage in line with its critical and social perspective. The remaining 35.92% of the pieces rely on archival or third-party footage, typically in contexts where direct access is not possible (e.g., militarized borders or international events). While this does not hinder the narrative's direction, it does constrain it to external materials.

3.2 Coverage scope

Figure 1 - Scope of Coverage [own elaboration]
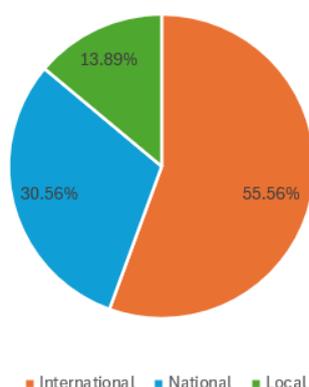
More than half of the audiovisual pieces on immigration (55%) focus on international issues, demonstrating that *El Salto TV* does not limit itself to the Spanish or local context but actively engages with immigration on a global scale, particularly in European and non-EU contexts. This international focus reveals a critical and global outlook, positioning immigration as a structural and worldwide phenomenon rather than a "local problem" or a series of "isolated incidents".

El Salto TV seeks to contextualize immigration as a systemic issue, addressing situations in other countries, global policies, and human rights frameworks. Some of the video titles analyzed include:

- "*The foreigners Franco did not count on*" (which links Francoist history to twentieth-century European migration);
- *"Slave trafficking in Libya"* (exposing the exploitation of migrants in North African slave markets);
- *"The Aquarius sets course for Valencia"* (addressing the European response to humanitarian crises in the Mediterranean Sea).

3.3 Information sources

The distribution of the sources used in the news reveals that more than half of the audiovisual pieces (51.46%) give voice to immigrants who, as primary sources, share their testimonies that reinforce their condition as victims of racism, aggression, and mistreatment. These testimonies provide direct experiences and critical perspectives on their reality in Spain: *"They treat us like criminals just for trying to make a living," "We are not illegal, we are people looking for a future," "They didn't help me when I fell to the ground, they just looked at me like I was a problem," "I'm here because there are no options in my country. But we're not wanted here either,"* or *"We just want to work, not live in fear every day."*

Table 2 - Types of Information Sources

| Source Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Immigrant source	53	51.46
Documentary source	27	26.21
Government source	14	13.59
Source from another media	9	8.74
Total	103	100

Source: Own elaboration

It is worth noting that documentary sources (26.21%) provide statistical data, technical reports, or references from organizations. Some examples include: *"According to CEAR's annual report, 42% of detainees were never deported," "Amnesty International denounced the excessive use of force in CIEs," "A Save the Children study reveals that migrant minors live in degrading conditions,"* or *"Figures from the Ministry of the Interior confirm a 35% increase in express deportations".*

Government sources (13.59%) consist of statements from authorities, agencies, or law enforcement bodies. These sources represent an institutional point of view: *"Police action complies with local regulations," "This is not racism, but public order control," "Spain is a country of solidarity, but with rules,"* or *"The identification procedure was carried out in accordance with the law".*

In the "Source from another media outlet" category (8.74%), excerpts from other media reports are cited, critiqued, or reproduced: *"Barcelona out of control"* (a headline cited to illustrate alarmism), *"Street vendors have taken over the city"* (quoted from another outlet to question the framing), *"Immigration overwhelms Spain"* (used to highlight xenophobic discourse), *"This looks like Africa"* (a comment reported by another media outlet and reproduced for critical purposes), or *"The government has lost control in Lavapiés"* (used as an example of sensationalism).

3.4 Contextualization

Figure 2 - Contextualization in news reports [own elaboration]

Yes ■ No
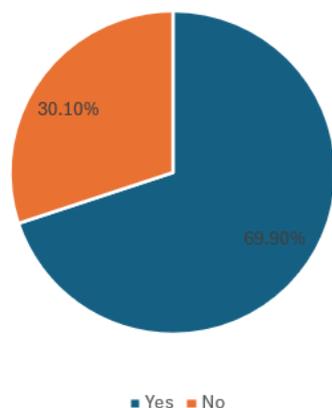
The findings show that 69.90% of the audiovisual pieces included contextualization of the events. This type of reporting does not merely present isolated situations but explains, situates, and expands upon them using historical, structural, or political elements.

Notable examples of contextualized reporting include: *"Ten years since the murder of Carlos Palomino"*, which links a specific case to the evolution of racist and xenophobic discourse in Spain, framing it within the rise of the far right; and *"Activist Helena Maleno summoned to testify in Morocco"*, which recounts an individual case but connects it with broader themes such as migration control policies, the criminalization of humanitarian aid, and international agreements.

3.5 Thematic framing

The descriptive-informative frame stands out in more than half of the pieces analyzed (51.46%), followed by the human-interest frame (28.16%) and the attribution of responsibility frame (15.53%), which highlights institutional and societal shortcomings related to immigration. It is worth noting that the conflict frame (4.85%) is the least used among the news pieces.

Table 3 - Types of framing in news reports

Type of frame	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Descriptive / Informative	53	51.46
Human Interest	29	28.16
Attribution of Responsibility	16	15.53
Conflict	5	4.85
Total	103	100

Source: Own elaboration

The human-interest frame emphasizes the personal stories, emotions, and lived experiences of migrants. Rather than focusing solely on institutions or abstract facts, it centers on affected individuals, appealing to the viewer's empathy. Representative examples include *"Khaled crossing from Turkey to Greece"*, which narrates Khaled's migration journey, incorporating details of his fear, travel conditions, and expectations, with the story centered on his experience as an individual; and *"Trump's Migration Policy cages children…"*, which uses imagery and personal accounts of families separated by the U.S. immigration system, highlighting emotional suffering and childhood trauma.

3.6 Secondary thematic framing in news reports

In approximately 30% of the news stories analyzed, the secondary thematic frame portrays migrants as victims of violence, mistreatment, or xenophobic acts. There is also evident interest in discussing Spanish immigration policy, as well as the European Union's common border management strategies.

It is worth noting that only a small percentage of the pieces (2.91%) focus on the irregular entry of migrants by boat, and even fewer (3.88%) frame them as criminals linked to mafias or organized crime groups.

Association of the topic of immigration with other themes

Among the news stories that associate immigration with other topics (51.46%), the data reveal a clear tendency to link it with:

- Human rights and institutional repression. Reports such as *"Slave trafficking in Libya"* address immigration from the perspective of rights violations, highlighting issues such as arbitrary detention, immigration detention centres, and trafficking networks.
- Activism and social resistance. In examples such as *"Demonstration in the Lavapiés Neighbourhood"* and *"Mmame Mbaye dies in Lavapiés…"*, immigration is framed in relation to social protests, anti-racist mobilizations, and police violence.
- History, memory, and justice. For instance, *"The foreigners Franco did not count on"* connects migration with historical revisionism, emphasizing the invisibility of migrants within the official narrative of the Franco regime.

Other common associations identified in the audiovisual pieces include poverty and economic inequality, public safety (framed critically rather than alarmistically), and culture and sports (in more positive or integrative narratives).

Table 4 - Secondary Thematic Framing in the News

Secondary Framing Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Immigrants as victims of aggression, mistreatment, or xenophobic acts	30	29.13
Debate surrounding Spanish immigration policy	18	17.48
Common border-management policy measures within the European Union	15	14.56
Expulsion and return of immigrants to their countries of origin	12	11.65
Description of the migratory experience as a life project	9	8.74
Processing of documents and regularization procedures for immigrants	8	7.77
Economic contribution of immigrants framed as workers	4	3.88
Immigrants portrayed as criminals or linked to mafias or criminal organizations	4	3.88
Irregular entry of immigrants in small boats ("pateras")	3	2.91
Total	103	100

Source: Own elaboration

3.7 Evaluative character of the main event

More than half of the audiovisual pieces analyzed conveyed a negative evaluative tone (59.22%). This refers to content that emphasizes adverse consequences, rights violations, institutional violence, or the suffering of migrants. The tone is generally critical, denouncing injustices or expressing concern. This is the most frequent type and reflects *El Salto TV's* critical stance, aimed at exposing injustices and highlighting the adverse conditions faced by migrants.

Representative examples include *"Ten Years Since the Murder of Carlos Palomino"*, which denounces institutional racism and the rise of neo-Nazi groups, making racial hatred and its impact on young migrants visible. In *"Immigration Detention Centres: The Business of Deprivation of Liberty…"*, the inhumane conditions in immigration detention centres (CIEs) and the lack of legal safeguards are exposed through a clearly denunciatory tone. *"Europe: Zero Solidarity"* offers a direct critique of the European Union's passivity in the face of migration crises, employing language that conveys frustration toward official institutions.

It is important to note that in all these cases, the negative tone does not criminalize migrants themselves. Rather, it criticizes structures of power, exclusion, and violence. This approach contrasts with the typical negative discourse found in other media, which often associate migrants with insecurity. Here, the "negative" aspect refers to the conditions migrants endure—not to their presence.

By contrast, neutral evaluative pieces (33.98%) provide information without adopting an explicit stance; they simply present facts and testimonies without overt value judgments.

Finally, in positively evaluative pieces (6.80%), the focus is on achievements, resilience, solidarity, or progress in rights. These stories tend to convey hope or highlight good practices.

3.8 Language analysis

The results show that *El Salto TV* uses language aligned with the human rights of migrants. In 94.17% of the news pieces, the term "illegal" is not used; 91.26% do not include militaristic language; and 99.03% avoid terminology that exaggerates or distorts the facts. Furthermore, a high percentage of the analyzed pieces (80.58%) do not include value judgments or moral evaluations.

Likewise, no evident sensationalist intent is observed in the use of language or in the discursive construction of the news. *El Salto TV* maintains a respectful, human-centered approach in its linguistic choices, distancing itself from the dramatization and alarmism found in other media outlets.

Table 5 - Language analysis

Language analysis	Yes	No
Use of the term "illegal"	5.83 %	94.17 %
Use of militaristic language	8.74 %	91.26 %
Use of terms that exaggerate circumstances	0.97 %	99.03 %
Includes value judgments or moral evaluation	19.42 %	80.58 %

Source: Own elaboration

3.9 Interview results

El Salto TV prioritizes the use of original footage, collaborations with freelance journalists, and social movements as primary sources of information.

Regarding content production, the outlet is engaged in an ongoing internal debate about the necessity of maintaining a presence on social media, which pressures them to produce shorter, faster, and more informal content. Despite this, they continue to prioritize topics and formats aligned with their editorial interests. Their objective is to avoid any form of sensationalism or dramatization in the production of audiovisual pieces.

In terms of editorial guidelines, in addition to having a stylebook that helps maintain journalistic standards, *El Salto TV* follows a strict protocol that prohibits the use of explicit violent images and encourages alternative reporting approaches to sensitive topics. This includes relying on the voices of those directly involved in the events—through statements, sources, and interviews—as the basis for storytelling. (K. Castro, personal communication, April 10, 2025)

These editorial principles are reflected in their coverage of immigration: commitment to human rights, contextualized storytelling, and the ethical selection of sources and images.

El Salto TV fights stereotypes in its content creation. For this purpose, it strives to include at least one source from a migrant background or family, as well as expert voices. As a rule, it also avoids using ethnicity, religion, culture, skin color, or country of origin in its information, unless strictly necessary.

To avoid sensationalism, it does not link certain ethnic groups with poverty or security and prioritizes context to highlight the different reasons for migration, also emphasizing the effects of immigration laws.

In addition, it highlights resistance networks (domestic workers, sex workers, anti-racist blocs, regularization) and shows their strategies, political participation, and alliances. It shows migrants outside their migrant status as testimonies: students, people affected by healthcare, climate change, or as expert sources. Also, the opinions and perspectives of migrants on cross-cutting issues are also prioritized. (K. Castro, personal communication, April 10, 2025)

4. Discussion and conclusions

In line with the thesis proposed by Igartua et al. (2005)—that the coverage of immigration is largely shaped by the editorial stance and model of the media outlet—this study confirms that the intrinsic characteristics of *El Salto TV*, as a community-based media outlet, make it inclined to portray immigration through a perspective aligned with social movements and vulnerable minorities. The outlet adopts a social justice approach that emphasizes the visibility of the suffering caused by migration policies, in contrast with the framing commonly found in traditional and digital audiovisual media.

Its audiovisual narrative, moreover, is marked by representations of migrants as victims of abuse, mistreatment, or xenophobic acts. The pieces tend to focus on the defense of migrants' rights, on injustices they experience, and on the repression they face, especially during social mobilizations. This empathetic portrayal contrasts with other media approaches that frame migrants as social problems, passive actors, or as being associated with crime, violence, terrorism, conflict, or threat—an observation consistent with prior research (Van Gorp 2005; Goldberger 2004; Igartua et al. 2013; Tirado-Espín et al. 2020, among others).

In the same vein, *El Salto TV* links immigration to topics rarely addressed in mainstream media, such as human rights and institutional repression, activism and social resistance, and historical memory and justice.

Moreover, the dominant visual framing of the news aligns with the type of sources analyzed. In both cases, the outlet proposes a counter-narrative that centers the voice of migrants and their communities, recognizing them both as subjects—with the right to freedom of expression—and as primary sources of information. Through both discourse and image, *El Salto TV* offers an alternative view that challenges the invisibility or instrumentalization of migrants often seen in other outlets.

It can also be concluded that *El Salto TV*'s audiovisual representation of immigration is consistent with its journalistic principles. The outlet seeks to contextualize the events it covers and to distinguish itself from dominant narratives, offering more detailed information on root causes such as wars, political instability, migration policy, and Spain's failure to meet its refugee reception commitments. This is particularly evident in its use of documentary sources, which include statistical data, technical reports, and references from civil society organizations.

It is also worth noting that *El Salto TV*, when citing other media outlets, tends to use them as counterexamples, highlighting stereotyped headlines and framings that oppose its own audiovisual perspective. Likewise, the relatively low percentage of government sources included in its coverage—due to its cooperative model—allows the outlet to maintain distance from official discourses. The use of original imagery also empowers the outlet to represent immigration in accordance with its editorial values.

Based on these findings, it may be inferred that although the impact of this media outlet's journalism is limited in reach, *El Salto TV* offers a paradigm shift in contrast to the practices of traditional and digital audiovisual media. It opens the door to new narrative frameworks that contribute to best practices in journalism. This outlet should continue offering alternative and ethically grounded representations of social issues.

Likewise, it is concluded that *El Salto TV* constitutes an expression of communicative resilience, insofar as it consistently sustains narrative and ethical practices oriented toward the visibility, participation, and centrality of migrant voices. In doing so, it challenges dominant hegemonic frameworks and contributes to the strengthening of the social fabric.

Furthermore, in order to reinforce the findings of this study, it would be pertinent to complement the analysis with other journalistic formats produced by the outlet, as well as to deepen comparative case studies that would allow for a broader understanding of communicative resilience in community media.

As an exploratory study, future research could evaluate the effectiveness of *El Salto TV*'s communication strategies and educational initiatives aimed at raising awareness among the general public and future journalists about the importance of media coverage of social issues. Additionally, this study raises new questions about whether other community audiovisual media—such as *TV Cardedeu*, the only community television station in Spain—share *El Salto TV*'s journalistic principles and approaches to representing immigration, despite being structured as a more traditional broadcast model. Finally, this research underscores the importance of approaching immigration coverage from a human rights and quality journalism perspective, to foster public opinion more in tune with social change—an essential responsibility for today's media.

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