Framing Immigration News in Spanish Regional Press

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, an exploratory content analysis has been developed for a case study on the topic of immigration reported in the regional newspapers of the largest Spanish autonomous community, Castilla and Leon. This study based its research conceptualization on the framing theory in mass communication. In addition to usual issue frames and issue images, two framing devices were established for analytic variables – the index of importance and the index of affective attribute. They formed a frame package capable of making latent frames evident by their linkage to manifest frames. Comparing to the general assumption of relevant-bad-news production, results obtained in this study proved that, on occasion, negative news stories could be reported as less relevant than the positive ones. The outcomes also show how concept mapping of frames was applicable to immigration issues and immigrants' visual aspects of immigrant communities that were systematically articulated and disseminated by the press in this regional society of Spain.

INTRODUCTION

The barometers on citizens' opinion publicized by the Centre of Sociological Investigations in Spain (CIS)[1] reported that immigration was rated to be one of the three most serious problems in Spain (31.2%, CIS, September 2005),[2] along with unemployment and terrorism, in a list of 28 given issues. When asked spontaneously with open questions in another survey, the polled population again identified immigration to be one of the three major problems in Spain (59.2%, CIS, September 2006).[3] However, this number reduced to 16.3% in CIS report of May 2009.[4] Over 84 per cent of the participants in another survey agreed that only immigrants with job contracts should be allowed to come and stay in the country. Parallel to the above data, the number of registered immigrants has rapidly grown in Spain in a very short period. It has increased from 1.3 per cent of the total Spanish population in 1995 to 8.7 per cent in 2006 (INE).[5] According to the latest report of the National Institute of Statistics (INE, 2009),[6] this number has reached 12 per cent in 2008. Other social studies revealed that

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the rise in foreign population frequently comes with an increasing perception of immigration as a problem in the host country (Cea, 2004). In 1995, 51 per cent of the polled Spanish citizens regarded themselves as tolerant of immigration. But, this number shrank to only 29 per cent by 2004 (Cea, 2007).

Factors that explain rejecting attitudes towards immigrants are various, including social-demographic factors, political ideologies, and perception of an imminent social or cultural threat, and the degree of personal contact with immigrants (Cea D'Ancona, 2004; Pettigrew and Meertens, 1995; Ramos et al., 2005). In van Dijk's report (2006), the author attributes responsibility to the mass media for promoting negative images of the minorities. The media are criticised for associating a main actor's distinctive circumstance (i.e., being immigrant) with negative behaviours or attributes (crimes, vandalism, riots, street fights, etc.) and this, in turn, leads the public to reinforcing stereotypical views and xenophobic attitudes toward ethnic minorities or immigrants.

Van Dijk (2006) further argues that one of the most usual discursive strategies to manipulate dominant models of news stories on ethnics is to highlight a variety of social, economic, or cultural problems caused by them. On the other side, Hallin and Mancini (2004) point out that, to a certain extent, political elites are still exploiting the media in Spain. And this is thought to be the reason when the Spanish media present information on immigration, they must also analyse and report how their political partisans view this issue. Generally speaking, people in Spain tend to expect the two major political parties, the central-right People's Party (PP) and the Socialist Party (PSOE), to hold different positions in respect of social issues, and immigration policies are no exception. Thus, there are, at least, two discursive tendencies assumed to exist in the Spanish media coverage, that is, threat to law and order *versus* economic contribution (Cea D'Ancona, 2004; 2007; Igartua et al., 2005b). Other investigators working on minorities and mass media studies using content analysis as research method have come to similar arguments (Entman, 1992, 1994; Greenberg et al., 2002; Romer et al., 1998).

Immigrant Population in Castilla and Leon Region

Geographically speaking, Castilla and Leon is an extensive area located in the centre-west of Spain. Politically, it is the largest autonomous community of the 17 Spanish regions, composed of nine provinces: Ávila, Burgos, León, Palencia, Salamanca, Segovia, Soria, Zamora, and Valladolid, with a total population of 2,560,031. Among which, 6.5 per cent are registered as foreign residents according to the data given by the National Institute of Statistics (INI)[7] in January, 2009. Compared to the national average of 12 per cent out of the total 46,661,950 inhabitants across the Spanish territory, the immigrant population in this region is currently at the 13th position of the 17 autonomous communities in terms of density, with 166,032 individuals registered officially.

Study Objective

The general objective of this study was to examine immigration news treatment performed by the regional press in the Spanish autonomous community, Castilla and Leon, in order to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What news frames were used in the regional newspapers to report immigration issue and immigrants to their readers?
RQ2: How did these regional newspapers frame immigration news?

a) How relevant was immigration information to Spanish Castilla and Leon regional newspapers?

b) Did visual aspects in immigration news stories strengthen positive or negative image of immigrants depicted in these newspapers?

Theoretical Framework

Concepts stemmed from framing have made up a prominent theoretical corpus that has led to extensive research studies on communication science in the latest thirty years (see, e.g., Gans, 1979; Gitlin, 1980; Entman, 1991; 1992; 1993; 1994; Scheufele, 1999; De Vrees et al., 2001; Van Gorp, 2005). By conducting experimental studies, some researchers have tested how news frames can elicit cognitive effects on the audience. They have observed from laboratory evidence that certain frames used by newsmakers to produce information newsworthiness exert significant impacts congruent with the subjects' responses (Igartua and Cheng, 2009). This suggests that media have the ability to tell the public how to think about issues in their news reports (de Vreese and Boomgaarden, 2003; Tewksbury et al., 2000; McLeod and Detenber, 1999; Valkenburg et al., 1999). Consequently, the media produce a considerable number of effects in terms of thought networking with which people think about social issues (Iyengar, 1991; McCombs and Estrada, 1997; Milburn and McGrail, 1992). However, to most researchers, there is little sense in investigating the complex processes of news reception and effects of frames they regard as infrequent, insufficiently described or not a consistent component of the news environment (Cappella and Jamieson, 1997). For this reason, the communication research community widely accepts the proposal of initiating the study on framing processes with content analysis, which is an important prerequisite for further study on effects of news framing.

On framing

Bateson (1972, in Van Gorp, 2007) finds the origins of the framing concept in the research fields of cognitive psychology by Bartlett (1932, in Van Gorp, 2007) and anthropology. Later, scholars in other disciplines such as sociology, economics, linguistics, ecological and environmental movement research have adopted ideas stemming from this frame concept (Snow and Benford, 1992; Hansen, 1993; Eder, 1996). Sound studies based on framing have also had their application in the fields of health communication (e.g., Igartua et al., 2003), policy research (Schön and Rein, 1994), communication science (Tuchman, 1978), political communication (Giltlin, 1980) and public relations research (Hallahan, 1999) as research theories and used as design devices in empirical or experimental studies.

In a later theoretical revision, McCombs and Reynolds (2002) postulate that the second level of agenda setting refers to the process of selecting some social objects and emphasizing their attributes. This idea intends to link to how attributing salience makes public definition of issues/events or public personages possible. In fact, in the past few years, studies on framing analysis have separated from agenda setting and developed into an independent research field of communications (Entman, 1993; Kosicki, 1993; Scheufele, 1999; 2000; Maher, 2001; Kim et al., 2002).

In this study, the concept of framing was applied to refer to the typical manner in which journalists shape news stories relying on a few familiar frames of reference or stereotypes. Hence, news framing is set in accordance with some latent structure of meaning through which the audience is induced to viewing the world in a similar way as the journalists do

(McQuail, 2005; Tuchman, 1978). To communications researchers, a principal part of a frame analysis is the reconstruction of these frame packages. The definition of a frame package can be broken into three parts: the manifest framing devices (agenda), the manifest or latent reasoning devices (attributions) and an implicit cultural background (Van Gorp, 2007).

Frame building and frame setting

On reviewing previous works, some researchers reorganize the extensive literature on framing into two models: one focuses on the frame building process and the other centres on the frame setting process (Scheufele, 1999; de Vreese, 2005; Zhou and Moy, 2007).

The first model, frame building, studies the factors that influence the structural qualities of news frames. These factors are internal to journalism; they determine the way in which journalists and news organizations frame certain issues. This process takes place between journalists, opinion elites (Gans, 1979; Tuchman, 1978) and social movements (Snow and Benford, 1992). The outcomes of the frame building process are regarded as the manifest frames in the text. The second model, termed as frame setting, refers to the interaction between media frames and the individual's prior knowledge and predispositions. From this approach, frames in the news are assumed to affect the audience's learning, interpretation, and evaluation of issues and events.

This perspective conceives framing as a process, in which frames can be viewed either as independent or dependent variables (Scheufele, 1999; de Vreese, 2005; Igartua and Cheng, 2009). When studied as independent variables (IV), frames are considered antecedents of the audience's interpretations of information. As dependent variables (DV), frames refer to outcomes of the production process such as organizational pressures, journalistic routines and elite discourse. In this work, our principal research interest was to explore the outcomes of news production, using immigration news coverage in the Spanish regional newspapers as object for a case study.

Antecedent news framing studies on immigration in Spain

In a previous content analysis study on news framing in Spanish nationwide press, the researchers found that frames in the 819 sampled news articles related to immigration were seldom clean cut ideas. They contained certain latent traits in the messages (Igartua et al., 2005a; Igartua et al., 2005b). Therefore, in the antecedent project (Igartua et al., 2005a) an inductive preliminary study was conducted with the attempt to explore and draw frame dimensions that covered immigration news issues in the Spanish media (see Mattes and Kohring, 2008). The result of the preliminary analysis was presented with a scale, constructed with 213 items ad hoc that were later grouped into 17 dimensions of principal component. Later, the internal consistency of these dimensions was checked. In the previous studies, they were tested to identify frames of immigration news issue in the Spanish press more neatly.

METHODS

For this study, the above-mentioned 17 frame dimensions resulted in the previous studies were adopted after they went through an adapting process for measuring refinement. During the process, three items with the most significant results in terms of factor weight in

each identified dimension were chosen to define the frame. Thus, each frame could be assessed through the presence or absence of these three items that emphasized different yet closely related aspects in the news. After the process, the 17 dimensions were finally refined and reduced to 10 frame dimensions, or news frames, as subsequently appeared in this study.

Sampling

Five most representative regional daily newspapers in terms of circulation number in Castilla and Leon were sampled for content analysis in present study: *El Norte de Castilla* (22%), *El Diario de León* (16.6%), *La Gaceta Regional de Salamanca* (12.6%), *Diario de Burgos* (33.1%), and *El Adelantado de Segovia* (15.7%). News coverage of immigration information reported in these five newspapers, from January to June in 2007, was revised. A news article was considered an immigration-related analysis unit if it met the following conditions: carrying a title, an introductory heading, a subtitle, or a lead-in indicating clearly that it dealt with immigration as main topic or immigrants as main roles in the news information.

Once reviewed, these news stories were randomly selected to make up a sample of news articles in one constructed week of each month between January and June. In this sample, the starting weekday was also taken at random. As a result, 586 news articles on immigration and immigrants were collected from 210 daily newspaper issues (5 newspapers × 7 random weekdays × 6 months).

Coding

In order to standardize the coding process, a codebook was created to guide coders with a clear and unmistakable definition of categories in the variables. For the present analysis, the following variables were considered:

1) *Newspaper identification.* It was coded: 1 = Diario de Burgos, 2 = Diario de León, 3 = Gaceta de Salamanca, 4 = Norte de Castilla, 5 = Adelantado de Segovia.
2) *Newspaper section* where a news article appeared: 1 = National, 2 = International, 3 = Regional (or autonomous), 4 = Provincial and/ or local, 5 = Economy, employment, 6 = Culture, 7 = Society and/ or events, 8 = Others.
3) *Immigration news issue frames.* The ten news frames were coded with dichotomous values (0 = No; 1 = Yes) by responding the following research inquiries: a) "Irregular/ Illegal entry of immigrants by sea": Does the news mention any sea transportation used by immigrants such as life rafts, boats or other vessels? Does it inform about the number of immigrants reached to Spanish territory? Does it report on immigrants rescued or arrested by coast guards or national security agents? b) "Decisions taken on juvenile immigrants": Does the analysed article express the need of solving the situation that juvenile immigrants face? Does it mention measures from the administrations, departments of social services or staff in refuge centres to deal with juvenile immigrants? Does it indicate that juvenile immigrants are taken care of and accommodated in temporary refuge centres? c) "The economic contribution of immigrants defined as workers": Does the news information suggest the job condition of the immigrants holding job contracts or integrated in social or labour life in Spain? Does it refer to immigrants as taxpayers that contribute to the national social insurance and health care system as well as the economy of Spain? Dose it emphasize the

immigrant characters as Spanish residents? d) "Document regularization procedure of the immigrants": Does the news unit mention any immigrant document on regularization process such visa, residence, or job permit? Does it inform deadlines for regularization? Does it comment about immigrant records checking? e) "Immigrants as delinquents associated with mafias or criminal organization": Does the news story speak about any immigrant or immigrants having committed crimes (robbery or theft) and/ or taken part in any criminal organization or armed gang? Dose it refer to arrests or trials of immigrants for criminal charge? Does it report on immigrants as terrorists or as supporters to terrorist network? f) "Immigrants as victims of aggressions, abuses or xenophobic behaviours": Does the news article tackle about immigrants suffering from aggressions, abuses, and/or criminal attack? Does it deal with xenophobic behaviour, violence, or threat against immigrants? Does it point at the behaviour of any particular personas that have attacked the immigrants? g) "Joint measures for European Union (EU) border management": Does the news explain the decisions made by the EU member governments in reference with joint border management policy? Does it mention control of immigrant documents such as passport or visa in the European Union countries? Does it suggest measures to favour legal immigration in Spain as well as the EU? h) "Expulsion or sending back immigrants to countries of their origin": Does the news mention any measure taken by the Spanish Immigration Office? Does it suggest immigrants' expelling or sending off to their original countries? Does it mention agreements signed in relation with immigration issue with other non-member countries? i) "Political debate on immigration issue in Spain": Does the news information include parliamentary debate or hearing of government members on immigration policies? Does it report political performance of any political party or its leaders? Does it inform about immigration law of Spain? j) "Description of migratory experience as life planning": Does the news account for the migratory experience of the immigrants? Does it describe immigration experience as search for a better life or starting a new life? Does it refer to the immigrants' lifestyle in their original countries?

4) *Information importance in the newspapers.* There were four items: a) The news story appeared in the cover page (coded as 0 = No, 1 = Yes). b) It was the opening news in a section (coded as 0 = No, 1 = Yes). c) News size (coded as 1 = less than ¼ page, 2 = between ¼ and ½ page, 3 = more than ½ and ¾ page, 4 = more than ¾ but less than one complete page, 5 = one page and over). d) Number of graphical elements such as diagrams, info graphics, photos, etc. appeared in the news article.

5) *Visual aspects* that characterised immigrants. They were identified as "female", "injured or dead", "information witness", "children or young persons", "arrested or handcuffed", "workers at regular work", "at leisure activities" and "representatives" of immigrant organizations or unions. Information of these categories were coded using dichotomous values (coded as 0 = No, 1 = Yes).

6) *Immigrants' origins.* They were categorised as "country unknown or mentioned as immigrants in general", "European Union", "other European countries", "Africans", "Asians", "Latin Americans" and "other continents or several parts of the world were mentioned. Each of these items was coded as 0 = No, 1 = Yes.

7) *Affective attribute to immigration news.* It assessed the general context of the news information. Each news event or story was coded with "1 = negative" when the circumstance turned out to be undesirable for the immigrants with dangerous or discriminating consequences involved. A unit was coded with "2 = ambivalent" when none or both positive and negative consequences for the immigrants were mentioned. A news story was coded with "3 = positive" if the event was regarded as positive with

desirable consequences for the immigrants or actions were taken to improve their social integration, job opportunity, social security, health care, economic contributions or residence regularization.

Coding Process and Intercoder Reliability

The 586 articles were distributed randomly to three trained reviewers (research students in doctorate programme at Salamanca University) who gathered the data according to the criteria established in the codebook. In order to assess intercoder reliability, after the initial data coding was concluded, 88 units (15% of the total article) were randomly drawn and redistributed to the coders for cross-check coding. In this process, every coder only reviewed units that had previously been coded by other colleagues.

The intercoding agreement in each of the considered variables was cross-examined and calculated, obtaining results that yielded an average agreement at .94 in Holsti's coefficient and .64 in Scott's pi. All calculations in this exploratory study were executed using *SPSS* version 17 for Windows.

Building Analysis Indices

Before statistical testing, these considered variables were computed and recoded as indices:

- **Issue frame indices**

Internal reliability in each of the ten issue frames was later tested, and resulted as: a) *Illegal entry by life rafts*, α = .90. b) *Policies for child protection*, α = .80. c) *Economic contributions*, α = .64. d) *Immigrants' document regulatory procedure*, α = .83. e) *Immigrants as delinquencies or their relations with mafia organizations*, α = .78. f) *Immigrants as victims of aggression, abuse or xenophobic violence*, α = .78. g) *Management or control of EU borders*, α = .66. h) *Expulsion, deportation, sending immigrants back to their country of origin*, α = .50. i) *Debate about immigration policies in Spain*, α = .64. j) *Description of migratory experiences as life planning*, α = .81.

The simple sum of the values of the three items in each frame variables was taken as an indicator to measure the degree of visibility of each issue frame in news coverage such as: 1 = presence, 2 = salience, and 3 = strong emphasis.

- **Variable of visual aspects**

This variable coded with dichotomous value was used to identify the characteristics of immigrants depicted in the analysed news units. The definitions of those characteristics in this variable were conceptualized qualitatively. Therefore, they were not mutually exclusive.

- **Index of affective attribute**

The scale of this index was established with three scores: 1 = negative, 2 = ambivalent, 3 = positive.

- **Index of information importance**

A scale for information importance was established with the sum of the value in the four variables: a) appearance in the cover page; b) as section opening news article; c) size and, d) presence of graphical elements. The internal reliability resulted: α = .62).

RESULTS

Characteristics of the Sampled News Articles

In terms of allocated sections, most news articles were placed in the national section (37.7%), the provincial/ local news section (22.9%) and the society pages (17.4%). Fewer articles appeared in the sections of international news (2.9%), regional news (6.7%), news on economy & employment (2.2%) and others (10.2%). The distribution of news sections showed, in general, immigration in Spain was perceived more as a home issue, internal to government political decision-making, rather than international affairs.

We tested the information importance of immigration news in the five regional newspapers and obtained results that showed no significant difference between the five media ($M = 0.70$, $SD = 0.91$), with a level of $F(4, 581) = 1.02$, $p = .395$, $\eta^2 = .007$.

Nevertheless, outcomes obtained in an ANOVA study developed with the index of "information importance" showed that the immigrant group identified as "from various parts of the world" (9.8%, $M = 1.18$, $SD = 0.97$) was reported with a more relevant news coverage. For the rest of immigrant groups, the results presented as: "Latinos" (16.6%, $M = 0.81$, $SD = 0.99$), immigrants "with no specified origins" (31.1%, $M = 0.76$, $SD = 0.99$), those from "EU member countries" (13.5%, $M = 0.63$, $SD = 0.85$), "Africans" (17.3%, $M = 0.51$, $SD = 0.76$), from "other European countries" (6.7%, $M = 0.36$, $SD = 0.58$) and "Asians" (5.5%, $M = 0.31$, $SD = 0.54$).

Considering concrete country names given and news importance conferred in the report, information related to Latin American countries seemed to be treated by the regional press in Castilla and Leon as the most important origins of immigration ($M = 0.81$, $SD = 0.99$). This result was consistent with those obtained in previous studies. Differences in "information importance" in the immigration news coverage were found statistically significance, with $F(6,579) = 5.90$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .058$, when distinctive immigrant origins were reported.

Issue frames of immigration news

In another ANOVA study, we observed that the five regional newspapers used a similar issue framework to cover immigration and immigrant news. In the analysis of ten issue frames, no difference was found statistically significant, except frames of "victims of xenophobic aggressions" ($M = 0.25$, $SD = 0.61$), with $F(4,581) = 4.01$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .027$, and "joint management and control of EU borders" ($M = 0.13$, $SD = 0.50$), with $F(4,581) = 2.95$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .02$. Results in this analysis showed that the "crime" frame was dominantly used by the five newspapers ($M = 0.71$, $SD = 1.01$) (Table 1).

Visual aspects of immigrants

In the descriptive analysis of immigrants' "visual aspects", the result showed how immigrants' images were depicted in the five newspapers (Figure 1):

Most images captured in the analysed news units were women (9.2%), next followed those under arrest, handcuffed individuals (4.9%), children or young teens (4.4%), immigrants practicing leisure activities (2.7%). Other pictures portrayed the injured or dead (2.4%) and immigrants at regular work (1.7%). A few of them showed images of representatives of immigrant associations or unions (1.5%) or information witnesses (1.2%).

In order to examine how the regional press has configured a typical image of immigrants, we used linear multiple regression analysis to test the predicting associations between the visual

TABLE 1

ANOVA OF IMMIGRATION ISSUE FRAME DIMENSIONS IN SPANISH REGIONAL NEWSPAPERS

	M	SD	F (4, 581)	η^2
Illegal entry by risky sailing on boat, life-raft or other vessels	0.31	0.84	2.30	.016
Measures for children and teens protection	0.07	0.34	0.41	.003
Economic contributions	0.31	0.78	1.27	.009
Document regulatory procedure	0.05	0.26	2.03	.014
Delinquency, crimes in relation with organised crime organizations	0.71	1.01	1.77	.012
Victims of xenophobic aggressiveness	0.25	0.61	4.01**	.027
EU border control management	0.13	0.50	2.95*	.020
Expulsion, sending immigrants back to their country of origin	0.09	0.33	0.54	.004
Debate on immigration policies in Spain	0.14	0.42	0.63	.004
Migratory experiences and life planning	0.15	0.54	1.11	.008

N = 586; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$

FIGURE 1

IMMIGRANTS VISUAL ASPECTS DEPICTED IN SPANISH CASTILLA & LEON REGIONAL NEWSPAPERS

Immigrant visual frames: Who they are and what they do
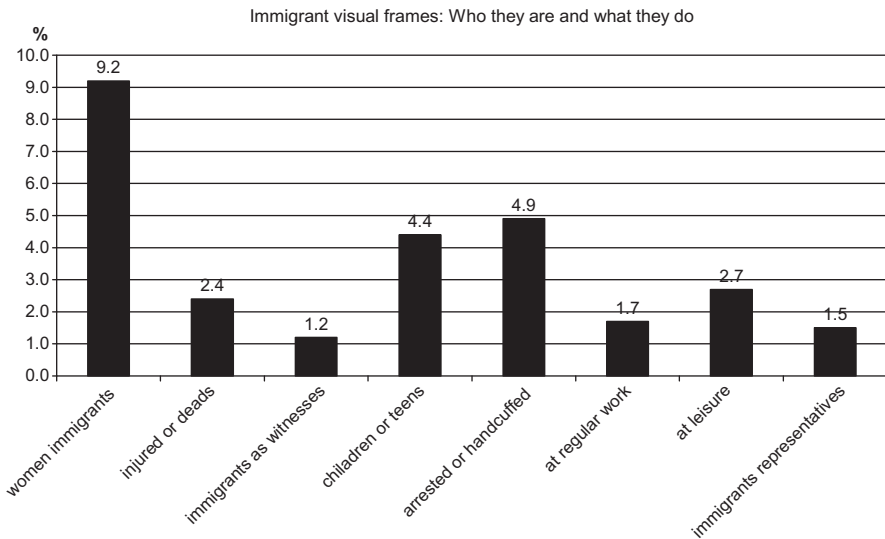
aspects of immigrant and the issue frames. In this analysis, the immigrant visual images came in as predicting variables (IV) whereas the issue frames were operated as criterion variables (DV). The results indicated that "illegal entry" frame was predictably characterised with the images of the "injured and dead" ($\beta = .30$, $p < .001$) or the "arrested and/ or handcuffed" individuals ($\beta = .10$, $p < .05$) and "children and teens" ($\beta = .09$, $p < .05$). On the other side, the image of "children and teens" was predictably associated to frames of "child protection policies" ($\beta = .17$, $p < .01$), "joint European Union management of border control"

(β = .11, p < .05) and "political debate on immigration" (β = .08, p < .10). As for the images of "the injured and dead" (β = .22, p < .001) and "individuals under arrest" (β = .18, p < .001), they were associated with "expulsion or deportation of foreigners" frame. Images of "immigrant at work" (β = .19, p < .001) and "female immigrant" (β = .15, p < .001) seemed to characterise the "economic contribution" issue frame; at the same time, these two types of characteristic, "female" (β = .30, p < .001) and "at leisure" (β = .26, p < .001) respectively, were also associated with "migration experience as fulfilment of life planning" frame. Lastly, the outcomes showed certain relevant association between "immigrant representatives" and the frames of "joint EU management of border control" (β = .13, p < .01) and "document regulatory process" (β = .09, p < .05) (Table 2).

Affective Attribute to Immigration News Frames

In an overall view, it was observed that 63.4% (n = 360) of the analysed (N = 586) was given a negative affective attribute, while 25.1% (n = 147) was positively reported and, 13.5% (n = 79) was considered ambivalent. This attribution presents a statistical significance level, with χ^2 (2) = 220.06, p < .001, that apparently supported the *bad news* production theory. Nevertheless, it was observed that each issue frame was judged by certain traditional values (*i.e.* family, children) or how it was viewed by the standard of social desirability (i.e., job, income), moral norms (*i.e.* idleness vs. hardworking) or, human interest (i.e., leisure, long-term life planning). This judgment later reveals it association with the indices of "information importance" and "issue affective attribute.

Index of Information Importance of Immigration News

In an ANOVA study, we analysed "information importance" given to the news stories with different affective attribute: negative, ambivalent, or positive (M = 0.70, SD = 0.91). Results obtained in this analysis contradicted the theoretical assumption of *relevant-bad-news production*, showing that the least "information importance" was given to negative news stories (M = 0.55, SD = 0.84), compared to the ambivalent (M = 0.87, SD = 0.99) or the positive ones (M = 0.97, SD = 0.97). Differences in "information importance" between the news messages assessed with different "affective attribute" categories were tested to be significant at a statistical level, with F(2, 583) = 13.04, p < .001, η^2 = .04.

Framing of Immigration Issues and Immigrants

Table 3 shows results of the correlation between the indices "information importance" and "affective attribute" assessing immigration issue frames and immigrants' visual aspects in the examined news units.

The resulted correlations allow the establishment of two-dimensional graphic expressions in which the axis **x** –represents the index of "information importance" and the axis **y** –the index of "affective attribute". In doing so, the immigration, the way as the regional news media in Spanish autonomous community Castilla and Leon, conceived it, can be observed through concept mapping in a four-grid diagram as shown in Figure 2.

It displayed the place where each immigration issue frame and immigrant visual frame was positioned.

Interpretation of Figure-2 follows a counter clockwise direction: 1) the up-left quadrant represents the *positive yet less important* news value zone. It appeared that no news about immigration issue was seen as "positive but unimportant" by the regional news media. 2)

TABLE 2

LINEAR MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS WITH IMMIGRANT VISUAL FRAMES AS PREDICTING VARIABLES FOR IMMIGRATION ISSUE DIMENSIONS

	Illegal entry	Children protection	Economic contribution	Document procedure	Delinquency	Victims of aggression	EU Border control	Expulsion	Politic debates	Life planning
	β	β	β	β	β	β	β	β	β	β
Women	-.05	-.01	.15***	.02	-.14***	.03	-.01	-.02	-.04	.30***
Injured or dead	.30***	.06	-.08	.03	-.02	-.07	.07	.22***	.05	-.05
Witness	-.05	-.002	.05	-.02	.004	-.01	-.03	-.05	.01	.03
Child & teen	.09*	.17***	.01	-.06	-.06	-.07	.11*	.06	.08+	-.02
Arrested	.10*	.01	-.10*	-.03	.09*	-.01	-.02	.18***	.04	-.06
At work	-.04	-.04	.19***	.04	-.06	-.03	.004	-.03	-.04	-.02
At leisure	-.04	-.07	.01	.03	-.07	.05	-.08	-.05	.03	.26***
Representatives	-.03	-.02	.01	.09*	-.06	.02	.13**	-.02	.04	-.04
$F_{(8,577)}$	9.15***	2.54**	7.07***	1.16	4.62***	0.85	2.55**	7.18***	1.27	16.94***
R^2 adj.	.10	.02	.08	.002	.05	-.002	.02	.08	.004	.18

N = 586, ***$p < .001$, **$p < .01$, *$p < .05$.

TABLE 3

ASSOCIATIONS OF IMMIGRATION ISSUE AND VISUAL FRAMES WITH INFORMATION IMPORTANCE AND EVALUATION

|	Information importance	Evaluation tone
	r	r
Immigration issue frames		
1. Irregular entry by sea on boat	−.04	−.19***
2. Child protection	−.01	−.07*
3. Economic contributions	.17***	.47***
4. Regularization procedure	.02	.17***
5. Delinquency	−.19***	−.47***
6. Victims of xenophobe	−.04	−.26***
7. EU border control management	.05	.13***
8. Expulsion, sending immigrants back	.02	−.17***
9. Debate on immigration policies	.16***	.14***
10. Migratory experience and life planning	.24***	.20***
Immigrant visual frames		
1. Women immigrants	.32***	.19***
2. Injured or dead immigrants	.15***	−.09*
3. Immigrants as information witness	.11**	.05
4. Immigrants children and teenagers	.22***	.04
5. Immigrants under arrest or handcuffed	.14***	−.14***
6. Immigrants at regular work	.09*	.16***
7. Immigrants practicing leisure activities	.23***	.12***
8. Representatives of immigrants associations	.14***	.04

N = 586, ***$p < .001$, **$p < .01$, *$p < .05$.

The down-left quadrant represents the *less important and negative* news value zone where news articles on immigration issues like "irregular/illegal entry by boats or life-rafts", "victims of xenophobic aggressions or discrimination", "delinquencies or criminal organizations" were positioned, though no human image has fallen into this quadrant. 3) The down-right quadrant represents the *more important negative* news value zone where information related to images such as "the injured or dead" and "individuals under arrest or handcuffed" or "expulsion of undocumented foreigners" was located. 4) The up-right quadrant represents the *more important positive* news value zone. Immigration issues related to "economic contributions", "life-planning", "document regulatory procedure", "political debate on immigration" and "EU border control management". In this quadrant also appeared some immigrant characteristics such as "women", "children and teenagers", "information witness" and "representatives of immigrant associations". Activities like, "at regular work" or "practicing leisure activities" were located in this zone, where the regional press tended to frame immigrant issues with human images. In other words, news coverage appeared in this quadrant seemed to indicate a higher degree of social desirability and moral acceptance for the immigrant receiving society, therefore, better chance for an optimal social integration of the new comers.

Finally, the issue frame "child welfare and protection measures" was found in an ambivalent zone, indicating that the regional media probably considered children forced to migrate as a negative aspect. However, once the children were rescued, it was positive that the government would provide them with good health care, welfare services and education. Therefore, these children could hope for a better-life chance.

FIGURE 2

FRAME MAPPING OF IMMIGRATION ISSUE DIMENSIONS AND IMMIGRANT VISUAL ASPECTS
DEPICTED IN NEWS COVERAGE BY THE SPANISH REGIONAL NEWSPAPERS
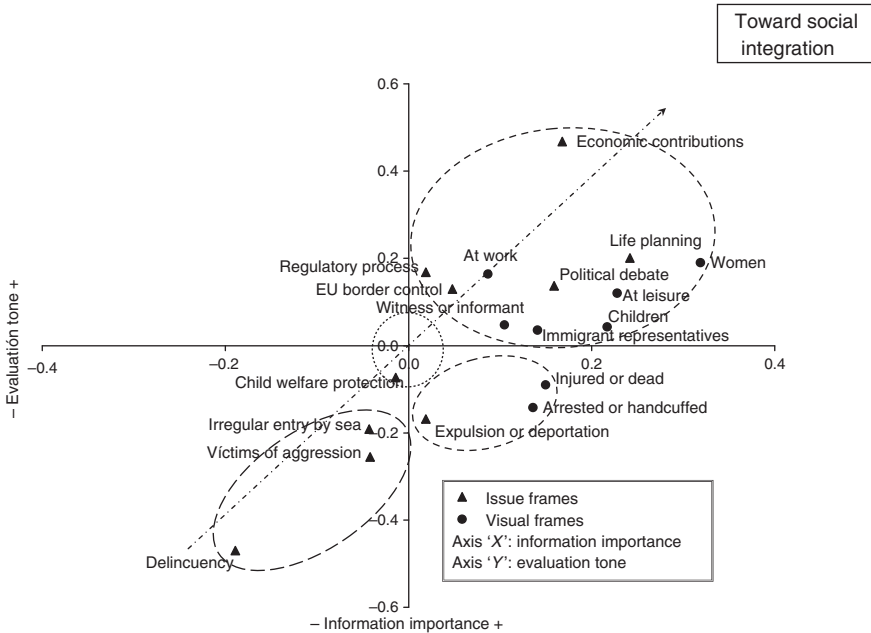
DISCUSSION

In reference to our *RQ*1, outcomes in present study showed that typical dominant frames for immigration news, such as "crime", "economic contributions", "victims of xenophobic aggressions", "irregular/ illegal entry" and "political debate", appeared in the analysed regional newspapers, though their meanings were given contextually. We may ask, are frames found in news coverage on immigration universal, or, are they culturally specific? At individual level, culture refers to an organized set of beliefs, codes, myths, stereotypes, values, norms and news frames present the semantic definition of the constructs embedded and shared in the collective memory of a group or a society. Frames are part of culture, their meaning lies in social interaction, so their application is subject to negotiation. Still, frames themselves are contested by media workers and their audience; new ones are selected and others may disappear, but the framing practice will not be altered.

We also found, definition of immigration issue given by the frames in the Spanish regional press varied. Since frames often lack the quality to define themselves, they need other culture devices, such as moral judgment (positive and negative), importance conferring (the more the better/ the less the worse or vice versa, etc.) to do it. The "economic" positive frame was set when the term "immigrants" carried the concept of foreign parents with young children searching for a new life, whereas the negative frame of "illegal" and "undocumented" intruder was used when the news stories were concerned about the role of foreign criminal organization members who entered Spanish territory pretending immi-

grants. In this sense, it seems that reporters in the analysed regional newspapers tried to make it clear to their audience the distinction between ''immigrants'' and ''members of foreign criminal organizations''.

In most agenda-setting and frame-setting studies, the public's evaluation of issue importance operates as dependent variable, influenced by issue salience in the news and affective attribute used in the coverage. Sheafer (2007) suggests two sound explanations for the influence of affective attributes on the perceived issue importance, specifically those negative affective attributes. The first sustains that information about negative development of an issue captures audience's attention far more than positive one. Various research fields have intensively discussed and supported this hypothesis (Cacioppo and Berntson, 1994; Kahaneman et al., 1982; Lau, 1985; Marcus et al., 2000; Mutz, 1998; Schul and Schiff, 1993). Therefore, a negative attribute to a social object is assumed to increase its importance and accessibility to the public agenda. The second explanation states that a positive attribute is not expected to have such an effect. Schoenbach and Semetko (1992) found that an issue covered by the news media with positive tone or positive attributes could reduce its salience in the public agenda. Being supported by empirical studies, all these arguments are considered in present study because both models include an affective component combining the ''weight'' and ''direction'' of a message.

As for response to *RQ*2-a, although results in the descriptive analysis showed that the regional newspapers in Spain attributed a larger proportion of news units as negative (61.4%) like most media, it is refreshing to observe that the local newspapers did not over represent the negativity by adding up more tragic visual elements in the information to appeal news importance. ANOVA results in this study showed that negative news stories reported in the regional press were not associated with more importance. These findings may be interpreted that local newspapers tend to be more community service oriented in contrast with ''bad is good'' news making practice of the tabloids to provoke hyperbole sensation in the audience.

We answer *RQ*2-b by pointing out that, through their lens, reporters in the regional newspapers seemed to capture images of immigrants at work or family members having fun as equivalent of ''happiness'' and ''dreams-come-true''. In the midst of hardship, visual images in the analysed news articles conveyed a certain social relief after the Welfare Department took charge and social workers helped look after the rescued children. This observation might clarify an ambivalent affective attribute given in this respect in the analysed news stories.

On the other side, post hoc explanations for the outcomes might be found in the ownership of the regional press in Spanish Castilla and Leon autonomous community. In fact, one of the authors of present study was an experienced journalist working for one of these daily newspapers, who offered to comment on journalistic routines in these newspapers. According to this testimony, there was certain ''self-discipline'' in the reporters working atmosphere at these media companies whose financial partners belong to some real state and construction business. Entrepreneurs in this economic sector are generally known for their interest in hiring non-conflictive foreign workforce at lower salary. As far as it is observed, the editorial ideological orientation of all these five analysed newspapers of Spanish Castilla and Leon region is tinged with certain conservationism. Likewise is the local citizen's voting orientation. Nevertheless, there is a counter argument maintaining that, the conservative rightist group has tried to link immigration to crime increase in Spain by promoting an image of immigrants as delinquents and fostering the perception of threat. The self-proclaimed as more progressive leftist party, on the contrary, tends to associate immigration with economic contribution and development, showing more open and positive attitudes towards immigration (Cea D'Ancona, 2004; 2007).

In general, research concerning news framing focuses its study attention on two levels: social consequences and individual consequences. Studies on social level consequences pay attention on how frames contribute to shaping political socialization, decision-making and collective actions of a society. Findings in this exploratory study show congruence with Spanish citizens' attitudes reported in recent social surveys, where participants showed sympathetic with the poorest immigrants, nevertheless, they also agreed on limitation, regulation, and control of immigration (46%) (Cea D'Ancona, 2007; 2008). Most polled population favoured a certain degree of control that allows only immigrants with a work contract (Cea, 2008). The latest public opinion barometer shows that immigration still appears as the third major problem (16.3%), after unemployment (77.3%) and economy (48.8%), perceived by the citizens in Spain, though it is rated as much less serious compared with data in the previous polls (CIS, 2009).

Interest given to the visual aspects in the present study was stimulated by the findings in previous studies whose authors posit that images appeared with the textual information carry significant elements that can be analysed and associated with how news coverage is treated (Messaris and Abraham, 2001; Scheufele, 2004; Muñiz et al., 2005). Image analysis can also help researchers understand how different immigration news frames are established by visual means. Images work in a similar fashion as news texts do – by selecting certain elements and, therefore, excluding others (Entman, 1991; 1993; Tankard, 2001). Images and visual elements in news stories play an important role on providing additional traits that strengthen certain information on the issue being covered by the news media. They can exert influence on the public's beliefs and attitudes to it. Since frames not only deal with topics or issues but they also refer to immigrant image that attributes importance to the economic contribution, and this, in turn, highlights control and regulation of related aspects of migration flow. Such image is the mostly mentioned in the polls (Cea D'Ancona, 2008). However, due to the present global economic situation (i.e., increasing business shutting down and soaring unemployment rate), some sociologists predict that these images might probably be modified in the mass media. Consequently, this swift might as well lead the public to higher restrictive attitudes toward immigration.

This article focused mainly on exploratory news framing analyses of immigration information covered by the regional newspapers in Castilla and Leon autonomous community in Spain. The obtained results partly give responses to the proposed research questions, which, obviously, cannot establish a direct relationship between the media framing of immigration issue and the public perception and attitude toward it. Further studies with experimental design based on the information obtained in exploratory content analyses are essential. Because experimental studies based on framing theories will be able to test and explain how exposure to certain frames may alter attitude toward an issue as consequence at individual level. In future, it would be also interesting to cross-investigate immigration news production along with the perceived degree of freedom in the media professionals' journalistic routines in relation with their employers' ideological orientation in this region.

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NOTES

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1. http://www.cis.es/cis/opencms/EN/index.html
   Homepage of Centro de Investigaciones Sociales, CIS,
2. http://www.cis.es/cis/export/sites/default/-Archivos/Marginales/2600_2619/ES2618.pdf
   Data CIS September 2005, last check, June 17, 2009.
3. http://www.cis.es/cis/opencms/-Archivos/Marginales/2660_2679/2666/e266600.html
   Data CIS December 2006, last check, June 17, 2009.
4. http://www.cis.es/cis/opencms/-Archivos/Marginales/2780_2799/2798/e279800.html
   Data CIS May 2009, last check, June 17, 2009.
5. http://www.ine.es/
   Home page of Instituto Nacional de Estadística, INE
6. http://www.ine.es/prensa/np551.pdf
   Data INE January 2009, last check, June 17, 2009
7. http://www.ine.es/prensa/np457.pdf
   Data INE, last check, June 17, 2009

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