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Spaniards' Perspective of Immigration. The Role of the Media

Españoles ante la inmigración: el papel de los medios de comunicación

ABSTRACT

With the transformation of Spain into an immigration country, society has become a major change by setting up a social space characterized, increasingly, by cultural, ethnic and religious diversity. In this new frame is interesting to investigate the overall value of diversity into the Spanish society. The two aims for of this paper are, on one hand, to process feedback on Spanish opinion on immigration between 1996 and 2007, and, on the other hand, to find out the role of the media in the construction of that opinion. For the first aim, an index of anti-foreigner sentiments was constructed using data provided by the national survey on opinions and attitudes on immigration, published annually by ASEP. For the second, an analysis, using the Agenda-Setting Theory, of articles published on immigration that appeared in the newspapers, «El País» and «El Mundo». The results show that a negative sentiment towards the outgroup has increased over time. The main variables explaining these trends are a sense of threat, to the population and to identity, and competition for resources and political decisions in integration – legalisation. The media analysis has six dimensions, the main ones refer to the illegality of the phenomenon, linking immigration to crime, and the social integration policies, highlighting the role of the media in creating public opinion.

RESUMEN

Con la transformación de Spain desde hace unas décadas en país de inmigración, la sociedad ha experimentado un importante cambio configurando un espacio social caracterizado, cada vez más, por la diversidad cultural, étnica y religiosa. En este escenario novedoso es de gran interés indagar sobre la valoración que de dicha diversidad tiene la sociedad española. El objetivo de este artículo es doble, por un lado, conocer la opinión que tienen los españoles sobre la inmigración entre 1996 y 2007. Por otro, comprobar el papel que juegan los medios de comunicación en la configuración de ese sentir. Para el primer objetivo se ha construido el índice de sentimiento anti-inmigrante, a partir de los datos ofrecidos por la encuesta nacional sobre opiniones y actitudes ante la inmigración, administrada, anualmente, por ASEP. Para el segundo, se analizan, utilizando la teoría de la «Agenda Setting», las noticias publicadas por los periódicos «El País» y «El Mundo» sobre inmigración. Los resultados muestran que el sentimiento negativo hacia el exogrupo se va incrementado con el paso del tiempo. Las principales variables que explican esa tendencia son: el sentimiento de amenaza –poblacional e identitaria–, competencia por los recursos y decisiones políticas en el proceso de integración –regularización–. Del análisis de los medios resultan seis encuadres, los principales hacen referencia a la irregularidad del fenómeno, a la vinculación inmigración y delincuencia y a las políticas de integración social. Por tanto, se pone de manifiesto el papel que juegan los medios de comunicación a la hora de crear opinión.

KEYWORDS / PALABRAS CLAVE

Immigrants, xenophobia, communications media, threat, competition, insecurity, media framing.
Inmigrantes, xenofobia, medios de comunicación, amenaza, competencia, inseguridad, encuadre mediático.

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1. Introduction

In just a few decades Spain has seen a substantial increase in its immigrant population. According to the National Institute of Statistics (INE), there were only 542,314 foreigners in Spain in the mid-nineties. This figure rose to 1,370,657 at the beginning of the millennium and, according to the latest data published in January 2011, currently stands at 5,730,667. This is the sharpest rise in the number of foreign residents in any member state of the European Union.

The arrival of immigrants from all over the world, forming the largest cultural melting pot in the country's history, has not gone unnoticed by native Spaniards. The Centre for Sociological Research (CIS), in its monthly surveys, shows that Spanish attitudes towards immigrants have changed significantly in recent years. In 1996, a majority was in favour of immigration, judging it as necessary and not excessive in terms of the number of arrivals, whereas today there is more xenophobia directed at or rejection of the immigrant (Cea D'Ancona, 2009; Díez Nicolás, 2005; Pérez & Desrues, 2005), although this is not the result of a linear process. More specifically, in 2000 immigration was considered to be the fourth most pressing issue after ETA terrorism, unemployment and the economy. In 2006, 38.3% of Spaniards stated that immigration was the most important problem faced by the country, rising to second place after unemployment. According to the latest 2010 survey, immigration has dropped back to fourth place behind unemployment, the economy and the state of the mainstream political parties.

The transformation of a social phenomenon such as immigration into a social problem is a process in which many different agents play a part, the most prominent being the communications media. Cachón (2009) points to the media as responsible for turning immigration into a contentious public issue, since an event reported in a particular way can foment discrimination and social exclusion (Van Dijk, 2003). In the wake of the Agenda-Setting Theory, it has been shown that perception of social issues is largely conditioned by media reporting (Dearing and Rogers, 1996; Scheufele, 2000). This framing is related to two basic operations, selecting and emphasizing expressions and images to attribute a viewpoint, a perspective or a certain angle according to the given information. As understood by Valkenburg, Semetko and de Vreese (1999: 550), «A media frame is a particular way in which journalists compose a news story to optimize audience accessibility».

Studies developed from this theoretical perspective demonstrate that the greater the media emphasis on a certain subject or social issue, the greater the public concern it generates, such as in the case of migration (Brader, Valentino & Suhay, 2004; Igartua & Muñiz, 2005; Igartua & al., 2007). Igartua & al. (2004) found a significant positive correlation between the number of news items published in the newspapers and the percentage of interviewees who indicated that immigration was a problem for the country. This association demonstrates that news coverage can convert the migratory phenomenon into a perceived social problem and, thereby, into a source of prejudice and stereotyping that can lead to racism.

The dual purpose of this article is to present the evolution and variables that define public opinion regarding the outgroup using an anti-immigration sentiment index, and to find out how Spain's communications media cover this phenomenon, since we believe they represent the first step in cementing such feelings.

We have chosen two different time periods for this longitudinal analysis: 1997/1998, during which Spain was in economic recession but the immigrant population was small; and 2006/07, when the immigration rate was high and economic expansion was peaking but also showing signs of imminent stagnation and recession.

2. Method and data

For the first objective, we collected data from a national survey by the polling company «Análisis Sociológicos, Económicos y Políticos» (ASEP). Between 1995 and 2007, it carried out several statistically significant surveys, with the same items throughout, on the attitudes of the Spanish adult population towards foreigners. The sample was proportionally stratified by the number of immigrants settled in the various autonomous regions. The data were collected at random. For the two-year period 1996/1997, the aggregated sample comprised 2,413 people. In 2006/07, 2,405 people were surveyed. The matrix was completed with official statistics on the foreign population and unemployment rate.

The Anti-Immigrant Sentiment Index (Semyonov & al., 2006) was used to measure the attitude of Spaniards towards immigration. This model is based on the following four items, «Immigration will cause Spain to lose its identity» (Agree=1), «Influence of immigration on unemployment» (Increase=1), «Influence of immigration on Spanish salaries» (Decrease=1); and «Influence of immigration on delinquency» (Increase=1). The index varies from 0 to 4, where 4 represents the strongest anti-immigrant attitude.

However, as Cea d'Ancona (2009) points out, the

measurement of xenophobia through surveys has limitations that exceed the technique itself, basically due to the social desirability bias defined by the stigma of admitting to racist sentiment. Any declaration or behaviour deemed to contravene the constitutional principles of equality and non-discrimination is liable to censure and even prosecution.

In order to find the variables that best predict this sentiment we carried out a regression analysis, taking into account the following dimensions: threat, insecurity and social rights (Cea d'Ancona, 2009). Threat is measured, on the one hand, by the real size of the foreign population, i.e., the rate of foreigners, and the perceived size (Quillan, 1995; 1996; Schenider, 2008; Schlueter & Scheepers, 2010; Semyonov & al., 2008), with a score of (1) for agreeing with the statement that there are too many immigrants in Spain, and on the other hand by identity threat, which is visible in the perception of conflict in questions of identity, measured by the extolling of either ethnic or civic virtues. To do this, we used the variable effects that immigration has on Spanish culture (bad or very bad=1), typical of an ethnic identity.

Insecurity, derived from threat, is expressed via two elements: one material, quantified by the attitude of only admitting immigrants when there are no Spaniards to carry out the activity (Agree=1), and the unemployment rate. And, political insecurity, referred to in two questions related to migratory policy and the granting of citizenship (Díez Nicolás, 2005). The first element is: «The economic situation is complicated enough for Spaniards let alone allotting money to help immigrants» (Agree=1) and the second: «The best attitude towards illegal immigrants» (legalize them=1).

Social distance, understood as the lack of interaction with immigrants, is constructed by three dimensions used in intergroup contact (Allport, 1954; Escandell & Ceobanu, 2009), that is, intense if they have a close affective relationship (No=1), occasional if they have ever had a long conversation (No=1), and at the workplace, when there is a labour relationship with foreign workers (No=1).

Finally, the variables on individual character are also extremely important in predicting anti-immigrant

sentiment (Coenders & Scheepers, 2008): Sex (male= 1), age (in years), education (university=1), income (lowest quartile =1), political orientation (right=1), activity (unemployed=1) and marital status (married =1).

Two national newspapers were chosen to gauge news treatment of immigration, «El País» and «El Mundo». All news items referring to immigration in the standard two-year reporting phases, 1997/98 and 2006/07, were taken as recommended by Lorite (2007), excluding new items from vacation periods. Also exempt from analysis were news stories about migration in which immigrants were not the protagonists. In all, the study used 217 news items from both newspapers.

> Therefore, efforts must be made in increasingly multiethnic societies to strengthen a pluralistic view, and the communications media must modify their strategies, for example, by inserting other news frames that counterbalance the view of immigration as a perceived threat (identity or population), to reduce the rising trend of anti-immigrant sentiment that advances almost regardless of the real economic situation.

News frames were established by news type and factor analysis (Igartua & al., 2005; Muñiz & al., 2008). News items where the description of the event or its consequences could be judged undesirable for immigrants, for example crime, were coded negative. Information was coded neutral or ambiguous when no negative or positive slant towards immigrants was observed, and positive if the event or its consequences were desirable, such as legalisation.

3. Results

We first analysed the intensity and evolution of anti-immigrant sentiment and the variables that define it. Later, we examined the communications media's frame and treatment of news about immigration.
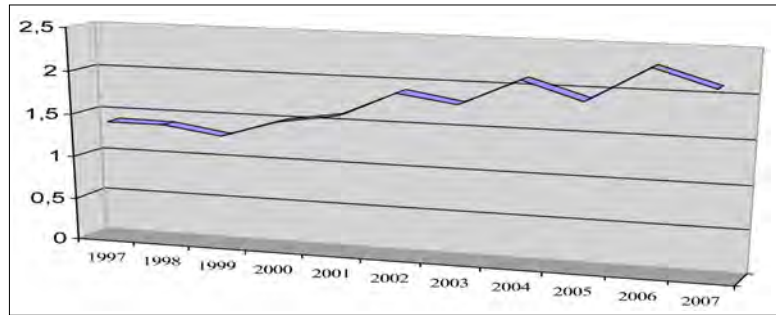
The initial result of the longitudinal study is the gradual increase in anti-immigrant sentiment in Spain. Whereas in 1997 the mean was 1.4, in 2007 it had risen to 2.1 (see Graph 1). In other words, the foreig-

ner is identified more and more as a generator of unemployment, delinquency, lower salaries and an enemy of cultural identity. This evolution occurs during three distinct time periods within the 10 years analysed. Sentiment in 1997-99 remains almost constant at around 1.4. With the beginning of the new millennium, rejection jumps to 2.1, and from 2004 to 2007 it again increases, to 2.4. As Blalock (1967) suggests, there is no linear growth in Spanish attitudes towards the outgroup.

Graph 1. Evolution of anti-immigrant sentiment in Spain (1997-2007).
Source: ASEP Data: Authors.

In the second stage of the analysis, two regression models were estimated based on the individual and contextual variables (table 1). In Model 1, we examined the role of threat and insecurity, and intergroup contact variables in the construction of anti-immigrant sentiment. In Model 2, we added the individual variables.

In the first model, in 1997/98 both the threat and insecurity variables are seen as the best explanation for the sentiment, in this order of importance: perceived threat, money allotted to integration policies, negative effects on the host culture and allowing immigrants to enter when there are no Spaniards to perform the activity, all positively signalled, explaining 39.3% of the variance of anti-immigrant sentiment. In other words, the stronger the sensation of invasion and money allotted to integration policies, and the more they think that immigration has negative effects on the culture, and that immigrants should only be allowed to enter when no Spaniards can be found to occupy the job, the stronger the negative sentiment is. The size of the real population appears to have less weight, and negatively, legalizing immigrants. In the contact variables, only occasional contact appears statistically significant, so the more often they have a long conversation with a foreigner, the less negative the perception of the outgroup is.

In 2006/07, the variables increased their weight in explaining the sentiment. Rejection of allotting money to immigrant integration policies was important, followed by population and cultural threat, and admitting immigrants when there are no Spaniards to do the job. Legalisation again appeared in negative and, with fewer incidences than in the previous period, the unemployment rate. Concerning intergroup contact, statistically significant intense relationships appeared for the first time, such that the more intense contact is,

the less xenophobia is aroused.

Therefore, the perceived threat created by various agents and institutions, and economic and political competition is more important in creating sentiment towards foreigners than the real population size or the unemployment rate, even when the immigration rates are relatively low, as occurred in 1997/98.

In the second model, the data corresponding to threat, insecurity and intergroup contact remained almost constant with the individual variables. In 1997/98, negative sentiment towards the outgroup was predicted by, in this order: age, political orientation, education, negatively, marital status, sex and unemployment. In other words, being older with a conservative ideology and low-level of education, married, male and unemployed revealed itself in anti-immigrant sentiment.

In 2006/07, unemployed and male are the most important socio-demographic variables, even though unemployment was at its lowest during the period analysed. Also, education and income lost predictive ability during this period.

How, then, is this sentiment constructed? The elements that contribute to constructing the view of otherness are multiple and of different depths. In our interest to discover the role of the communications media in configuring this process, as shown in table 2, we found that there was a considerable increase in the number of news items from the first to the second two-year period. There are two main reasons for this: the huge increase in the number of immigrants at that time, and immigrant demands and related political action. For example, in 2006, the fallout from legalisation passed the year before could still be felt, especially because of the so-called «call effect» it may have generated. In the space of 10 years, the migratory phenomenon went from being a matter of secondary importance to being a top priority on political and social agendas.

Delving deeper into the analysis, news items published in both periods were found to have had a distinctly negative character. In 1996/97, 65% of the news items had a negative profile and only 18% highlighted the positive aspects of immigration, and in 2006/07, negative news items rose to 69% and the positive to 21%. We find headlines citing undetailed affirmations by political and religious leaders, etc., such as: «An Islamic centre endangers coexistence in the Babel of Extremadura» (El Mundo, 17/8/2006); «Muslims ask for the «Moros y Cristianos» fiestas to be eliminated as unfitting for Spanish democracy» (El Mundo, 5/10/2006); «Islamic fundamentalism and immigration threaten Europe» (El País, 10/10/2006); «Living here is to die over a slow fire» (El País, 28/10/2006).

The increase in positive news also responds to migrations over time that aroused less suspicion in journalists, especially during times of economic expansion, such as the period from 1997 to 2007.

Six news frames resulted from the factor analysis: 1) illegal flows of immigrants (entering the country in makeshift boats, hidden inside lorries, etc.); 2) immigration and social opportunities (job market, housing, social services, etc.); 3) processing documents and legalisation of immigrants; 4) immigration and delinquency (crime, mafias, etc.); 5) racist and xenophobic acts, and discrimination; 6) social integration policies (central, regional and local governments). We might add that, with exceptions, each news item only fits into one frame.

The top frame in 2006/07 is illegal flows of immigrants, followed by document processing and legalisation, while immigration and crime appear most frequently in 1997/98; the third frame in both periods refers to social integration policies. The, smallest number of frames are for racist acts, xenophobia and legalisation on the one hand, and immigration and social opportunities on the other. The news frames say little about the positive effects of immigration on the host country, such as the economic contribution of immigrants to the State or its importance in a nation's development. Neither do they touch on the immigrants' experiences of discrimination or racism that they are subjected to almost daily, as reported by «SOS Racismo». However, the social opportunities frame increased considerably in 2006/07, coinciding with the economic boom.

4. Discussion and conclusions

This article analyses the image of foreign immigrants in Spain, since the opinions and attitudes towards immigrants represent new forms of racism and xenophobia. For this we took two different time periods, one that coincided with economic recession and low immigration rates, and the other at the high point of economic expansion and migratory consolidation.

The data show that hostility towards immigrants increased over a 10-year period. Whereas in 1997/98 the index showed a mean of 1.4, in 2006/07 it had risen to 2.4. However, this trend is not just explained by the increase in the real population over a short time. This is only the trigger at the beginning of immigrant

Variables		1997-98			2006-07		
		Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Threat	Real population	0.030**	0.022**	0.019**	0.038**	0.034**	0.036**
	Perceived population	0.190*	0.186*	0.166*	0.320*	0.312*	0.288*
	Effects on culture	0.170*	0.162*	0.159*	0.218*	0.220*	0.215*
Insecurity	Immigrants when there are no Spaniards	0.168*	0.162*	0.157*	0.100*	0.098*	0.106*
	Unemployment rate	0.001***	0.002***	0.001***	-0.030**	-0.032**	-0.031**
	Allot money to immigrants (no)	0.179*	0.177*	0.172*	0.377*	0.378*	0.374*
	Legalize	-0.082	-0.073*	-0.083*	-0.103*	-0.098*	-0.100*
Intergroup Contact	Intense (no)	0.004***	0.008***	0.012***	0.104*	0.107*	0.109*
	Occasional (no)	0.031**	0.026**	0.029**	0.018**	0.026**	0.039**
	Workplace (no)	-0.020***	-0.021***	-0.021***	-0.026***	-0.026***	-0.033***
Individual	Sex (male)		0.031**	0.035**		0.044**	0.043**
	Mean age		0.097*	0.104*		0.023*	0.030*
	Education (university)		-0.045**	-0.041**		-0.017***	-0.020***
	Income (low)		0.028***	0.033***		-0.027***	-0.027***
	Activity(unemployed)		0.019**	0.021**		0.040**	0.038**
	Political orientation (right)		0.061**	0.058**		0.024**	0.047**
	Marital status (married)		0.038**	0.032**		-0.005***	0.004***
Coefficient R^2		.393	.418	.422	.384	.392	.416

Table 1. Effects of the independent variables on anti-immigrant sentiment.
*P < 0.00; **P < 0.05; *** P <0.200

	1997/98	2006/07
Illegal flows of immigrants	28	53
Immigration and social opportunities	6	19
Document processing and legalisation	9	31
Immigration and delinquency	16	20
Racist and xenophobic acts and discrimination	3	6
Social integration policies	12	24
Total	74	153

Table 2. Number of news items per frame (1997-2007).

entry flows, as the variables predicting the sentiment in 1997/98 are not far from those 10 years later. Therefore, the sentiment responds to daily and/or institutionalised discursive practices dictated mainly by the communications media.

The construction of immigration is not per se through numbers or immigration inflows but responds to a symbolic construction, the product of speeches from a variety of actors and social scenes, in which the communications media are preeminent. Suffice it to recall that the top news frame in both periods referred to illegal entry flows. Thus when referring to figures on immigration, metaphors are used to quantify the flows as: a wave, avalanche, invasion, etc., descriptions that promote the idea that there are too many immigrants and which provoke hostility and fear. «El País» expressed it like this in an article (08/08/1998): «Immigration: the tide grows». As a result, the immigrant is transformed by the host's fear of hyper-foreignization. In other words, immigration is seen as a problem rather than a phenomenon typical of international society presented with a new challenge.

But the threat transcends the numerical to become consolidated in identity (Schiefer & al., 2010; Schwart, 2008). As we are reminded by Worchel (1998), any type of group identity serves as a basis for conflict, especially when ethnic content is assigned to it based on stereotypes;, so, certain groups come to be conceptualized as culturally incompatible. They are distinguished by the exaggeration of cultural differences through subtle prejudice. Culture is perceived as a hereditary trait that nobody can shed, or that, «there is a genealogical, and therefore, racial conception of the culture and its transmission» (Todd, 1996: 343). Immigrants are faced with open rejection or subordinate «integration» since the beliefs of the others are almost always seen as containing elements of fundamentalism, the equivalent of a focus of conflict, especially if this involves Muslims, who are the archetype. Therefore, the best response to this situation, according to native Spaniards, is cultural assimilation but denial of full citizenship rights, which is acceptable even to those locals who do not consider themselves racists.

Consequently, Spaniards believe that the continual arrival of foreigners has a negative effect on the national culture, and money should not be allotted to their integration, nor should they be legalized. Moreover, in the speeches of some politicians that appear in the communications media, semantic structures prevail that stress the difference in appearance, culture and behaviour, or deviation from norms and values, and which take the form of slogans such as, «defend your identity», «defend your rights». This is boosted by a nationalist awareness, one in particular that has an ethnic basis. They demand of others what the native Spaniard would not ask of himself. Spanish identity has been configured in opposition to the other and defined on the basis of dimensions of an abstract and symbolic nature rather than on quality.

The feeling of threat is complemented by competition for limited resources such as jobs, housing, healthcare, etc., which also leads to a magnification of the immigrant presence. This is a response to news frames, or in other words, to immigration and social opportunities, and not to positive aspects such as the contribution to economic development, rather to the negative, and the excess demand for resources. Thus most Spaniards think that foreigners should only be accepted in situations where there are no Spaniards to the job required. Following on from this, economic insecurity is accentuated in times of recession as, supposedly, it reduces labour market opportunities and lowers the quality of the jobs available. Nevertheless, our study shows this to be secondary in the case of a negative sentiment towards the outgroup, since in 1997 Spain was in the midst of an economic crisis that raised unemployment to record levels and the number of foreigners in the country was the lowest among the then 15-member European Union; however, xenophobia was lower than in the two later periods, especially in 2006/07 when the country experienced its highest ever economic growth and lowest unemployment rates but, by contrast, the immigration rate stood at over 10% of the population. This is also confirmed first by the fact that unemployment in the first period was statistically insignificant in predicting variability in anti-immigration sentiment, while it was statistically significant in the other two periods; secondly because being unemployed carried greater predictive weight during economic expansion and when the immigration rate is at its highest.

This is due to the fact that the labour market occupied by immigrants (mainly agriculture and construction) complemented that dominated by native

Spaniards. In fact, labour discrimination against the immigrants gave locals access to jobs for which they were initially unqualified. However, immigrants then started to move into other labour sectors (services, for example) in which they competed directly for jobs with the national population, especially with those nationals who were at a disadvantage in terms of social and human capital. At the same time, immigration featured more prominently as a newsworthy topic, and in the 10-year period analysed the number of news items on immigration doubled, especially those with a negative slant. Moreover, the national population also perceived competition for welfare state benefits (housing, education and healthcare). They would, therefore, be prepared to accept the award of a minor payment towards the integration of immigrants, or they would legalize them. This is what Zapata (2009) calls the governance hypothesis, such that if the government confronted immigrant integration inclusively, offering them civic instead of credentialist citizenship, or stopped reassuring the population about its efforts to control flows, the negative sentiment towards the outgroup would be even greater. That is why the media emphasize government actions to control borders.

According to Van Dijk (2003), these are the definitive stereotypes held by the majority of those who feel threatened by the presence of ethnic groups that concur with semantic structures that reflect racist discourse, and which Echevarría and Villareal (1995) summarise as: 1) different appearance, culture and behaviour; 2) deviation from norms and values; 3) competition for scarce resources; 4) perceived threat.

As we can see, the perception of immigration is also closely related to social position; young people show a more moderate anti-immigration sentiment, as do people with a higher level of education or income. They do not see immigrants as a threat or in competition for resources, and they also understand that some news stories and speeches by politicians on immigration respond to specific agendas and are far from objective. Relational experience (direct or indirect) with immigrants also affects perception, since attitudes towards the outgroup are rooted in prejudice and ste-

reotypes which are constructed and consolidated due to lack of intergroup contact. In Spain, the results show that although contact has increased, relations between natives and immigrants hardly exist, be they affective or occasional in nature. This is not due so much to the lack of common spaces as to the instrumentalization of the immigrant as a degrading agent. There is no shortage of news referring to problems of neighbourhood coexistence among groups or the deterioration of environments where immigrants reside. Social cognitions are acquired and deployed, and transform within situations and social interactions, and social structure contexts (Van Dijk, 2003).

To judge by the results, there is a definitive and clear correlation between the variables that define anti-immigrant sentiment and the news frames of the

> The educational system not only provides a space for intergroup interaction, as an important element in casting judgment on the outgroup, it must also impart values of equality and the acknowledgment of difference to counteract negative images disseminated by other institutions. To do nothing and allow the current situation to prevail is to tolerate a process that will lead to xenophobic acts against groups and individuals.

communications media. As in other national studies already mentioned, and international studies on the subject, (Dursun, 2005; d'Haenens & de Lange, 2001; Ter Wal, & al., 2005), the results show that the migratory phenomenon is viewed in negative terms. Furthermore, media representation through news frames, such as those linking immigrants to violence and/ or delinquency, or illegal entry in «pateras» (makeshift boats), contributes to the development of prejudice through the legitimization of certain xenophobic and racist discourses. The error stems from the selection of the event within the paradigm and standardized parameters of what is deemed newsworthy, and impacts little or not at all on what is revealed. Such a journalistic strategy replaces balanced news reporting, and the progressive monopolization of this sector leads to content homogenization by prioritising commercial interests over journalists' vocational sense of social responsibility.

Therefore, efforts must be made in increasingly multiethnic societies to strengthen a pluralistic view, and the communications media must modify their strategies, for example, by inserting other news frames that counterbalance the view of immigration as a perceived threat (identity or population), to reduce the rising trend of anti-immigrant sentiment that advances almost regardless of the real economic situation. Likewise, the educational system not only provides a space for intergroup interaction, as an important element in casting judgment on the outgroup, it must also impart values of equality and the acknowledgment of difference to counteract negative images disseminated by other institutions. To do nothing and allow the current situation to prevail is to tolerate a process that will lead to xenophobic acts against groups and individuals.

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