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## Portraits of Muslim women in the Spanish press: the *burkini* and *burqa* ban affair

**Abstract**

According to diverse reports and studies, islamophobia has become a social threat in the European context. Also, several investigations indicate that Muslim women are the main victims of this type of hostility (gender islamophobia), and stress that the media shows a stereotyped image of Muslim women. This paper aims to the study, from the theory of framing, the media image of Muslim women in the Spanish press. The study focuses on the news related to the controversy arising in 2016 by the prohibition of the *burkini* in some regions in Europe, and the subsequent reopening of the debate on the prohibition of the integral veil in Germany. For this purpose, a quantitative content analysis has been applied to 152 news items published regarding this issue by the five newspapers with the largest circulation in Spain (*El País*, *El Mundo*, *La Vanguardia*, *El Periódico* and *ABC*). The analysis consists on an exploratory study to identify the news frames following the scale of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). In addition, an original methodological design has been applied to study the specific frames regarding Muslim women. The results indicate that, in most cases, the media representation of Muslim women focuses on the “victim” and “threat” frames, even though the “victim” frame appears to a greater extent.

**Keywords**

**Framing, Journalism, stereotypes, islamophobia, News.**

### 1. Introduction

‘Islamophobia’ has always been a controverted concept, and even though its origins date back to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century (Eléxpuru, 2017) to date there is still a lack of a unique and commonly accepted definition. In this paper ‘islamophobia’ is defined according to Bravo-López (2015), as a specific kind of hostility towards Islam and everything related to the Islamic culture. Therefore, ‘islamophobia’ implies a perception of the Islam as a threat (Desrues & Yruela, 2008), following an attitude that could be present in people with different ideology and religion (Bravo-López, 2010).

Nowadays, islamophobia has become a real risk that affects the grounds of democratic societies and the values of the European Union (Bayrakli & Hafez, 2017). According to the Citizen Platform against Islamophobia (Plataforma Ciudadana contra la Islamofobia), the number of Islamophobic incidents grew more than 500% in Spain over 2015, and this situation did not get better in 2016 (year studied in this paper), when the attacks against Muslim women (gendered islamophobia) were one of the most usual (Azeez & Aguilera-Carnerero, 2017).

According to Mescoli (2016), Muslim women not only suffer the same inequalities as other women, as additional factors, such as religion or ethnic perception, must be considered as they deepen into those inequalities. In addition, Muslim women are more prone than men to suffer crimes and hate discourses. ‘Muslim woman’ has become a hermetic cultural category that refers to a victim of a religious oppression (Valdés-Peña, 2013), but forgetting that ‘Islam’ is a social and human construction (Tohidi, 2008).

The media plays a fundamental role when promoting the islamophobia (Bayraklı & Hafez, 2017) as they tend to show a stereotypic image of Muslim women, specially of those who wear veil (Mescoli, 2016). According to the Citizen Platform against Islamophobia (Plataforma Ciudadana contra la Islamofobia, 2016), media discourses develop an essential role in the public opinion, considering that most of them convey two apparently contradictory messages: demonizing and victimizing them.

Therefore, it is pertinent to study the portraits of Muslim women in media discourses to analyse whether this stereotypic and culturalist image is a common place. This paper aims to a quantitative description, based on the theory of framing, of the media portraits of Muslim women in Spanish newspapers. Specifically, it focuses on the women clothing as the main issue, as the bodies of Muslim women incarnate the tensions of the representation of modernity and anti-modernity (Lambraet, 2014). The period of analysis has been selected considering an event when Muslim women were breaking news. Under this criterion, this study focuses on the controversy of the prohibition of the *burkini* in some regions of Europe, and the subsequent reopening of the debate about the prohibition of the burka in Germany, as happened in the summer of 2016.

To observe the media representation of Muslim women, the print edition of the most edited newspapers in Spain were analysed: *El País*, *El Mundo*, *La Vanguardia*, *El Periódico* and *ABC*. As it will be described below, a frame analysis was performed to study generic frames (according to Semetko & Valkenburg scale (2000), and also specific frames regarding the representation of Muslim women as a victim and/or as a threat, by an original methodological design. Thus, in a wide sense, this paper aims not only to identify the frames developed by the news coverage of the *burkini* controversy in 2016, but also to test a methodological design specifically developed for that purpose. The following hypotheses are given.

H1 Muslim women are represented as a homogeneous victimized collective in the Spanish newspapers.

H2 Two news frames regarding Muslim women are dominant: as a victim and as a propitiatory of the Islamization of Europe.

H3 Differences in the news coverage of this collective are noted regarding the editorial line of the media.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1. News Framing Theory**

The media has an effect on the public opinion and the interpretation of current events that have been frequently analysed since the early sixties (Mhamdi, 2017) and for decades, news framing theory has constituted a solid research perspective in media studies and journalism studies (Saperas & Carrasco-Campos, 2015; Valera-Ordaz, 2016).

News frames can be defined as structures that draw the limits and establish categories to define which ideas remains inside or outside them, generally by incorporating ideas actively related (Reese, 2007). Thus, news framing can be conceived as a research paradigm focused on the study of the processes involved in the negotiation and construction of the public discourse regarding the issues of general interests (Valera-Ordaz, 2016).

The field on which media discourse operates is composed by shared beliefs about society that are commonly known and accepted by the majority in terms of common sense or popular knowledge (Pan & Kosicki, 1993). That is, news frames are guiding principles socially shared and persistent in time that work symbolically to provide a significant structure of social reality (Reese, 2007).

Nevertheless, to address the study of news framing it is necessary to attend to aspects related to power distribution, and to conceive the creation of news frames as a dynamic, intentional and competitive process (Valera-Ordaz, 2016). The selection of certain words or their organization when making news are not a banal issue, as they have a great influence to set the context of public debate (Pan & Kosicki, 1993). The news not only select certain aspects of the reality, but also emphasise one another, so the study of news frames analyses how certain attributes end up associated to certain events (Reese, 2007). Thus, media discourse can be conceived as a set of interpretative packages that gives meaning to the events that are structured into a guiding idea, that is, about a certain frame that sets which events are relevant (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989).

The impact of news frames is related to the implementation of mental shortcuts and processes of attitudinal modelling, so that the implicit attitude in the news is automatically assimilated, without a reflection by the individuals (Igartua, 2013). News frames produce superficial alterations in the presentation of judgements and problems that influences the audiences in decision-making (Iyengar, 1994). Thus, they have an impact in the cognitive responses of the audience and guide them when forming an opinion on a topic or issue (Valkenburg, Semetko & De Vreese, 1999). In the same vein, Igartua (2013) points out that when the event happens outside the close context of an individual, that is, when having a low implication with it, it is usual to evidence a higher level of agreement with stereotypic beliefs. In addition, Powell (2011) concludes that news frames interpreted from the dominant cultural perspective generate a biased and distorted image of the “other.” Therefore, regarding the news about ethnic minorities, the informative coverage has a stronger effect at the abstract level, that is, at this part of the reality that has not been experienced personally (Alvídrez, Igartua & Martínez-Rosón, 2015).

## 2.2. Media Portraits of Veiled Muslim Women

We are currently facing a context in which Islam is perceived as ‘backward’ and threatening, so that veiled Muslim women become someone who needs to be liberated from the oppression and the authoritative figures of their religious communities (Rahmath, Chambers & Wakewich, 2016). According to Navarro (2012), the news discourses on Muslim women made by the Western media highlight the predominance of a culturalist interpretation focused on the symbolic and religious issues such as the veil or Islam. By considering Muslim women as victims of their religion, and by representing them from the frame of ‘oppressed woman’, the rejection of ‘the Muslim’ and the condemnation of a stereotyped representation is transmitted (García *et al.*, 2011).

Although Muslim women wear the veil for a wide variety of reasons, both cultural and political, the representation made by the Western media remains static (Perry, 2013). Even though the feminine practice of the veil is prior to the Islamic context, this symbol has penetrated the Western collective imaginary as the prototypic marker of the Muslim, and also as a synonym for Islamic fundamentalism (Zine, 2006). This situation would happen in the representations and media portraits of veiled Muslim women, to the point of playing a central role in the construction of the Western imagery. These portraits support the dichotomy of freedom and oppression (Bilge, 2010), and gender and subjectivity modes through which the imagery borders of the Orient are maintained. Western representations of veiled women tend to homogenize in such a way that they not only reduce Muslim women, but also try to normalize and circumscribe what is defined as Oriental (Al-Saji, 2010). This situation has been

especially accentuated after the September 11 attacks (Byng, 2010; Ibrahim, 2010; Saleem, 2007):

In the post 9/11 era, Muslim women navigate between both racialized and gendered politics that variously script the ways their bodies and identities are narrated, defined and regulated. Located within this dialectical dynamic, the rhetoric of Muslim women's liberation is all too often caught up in the vast undercurrents of ideological extremism on the one hand, and racism and Islamophobia on the other (Zine, 2006).

Therefore, the colonial and homogenizing frame of 'Muslim woman on the *hiyab*' have been created, through which all the Arab and Muslim realities are represented by means of the construction or invention of the so called frame of 'Muslim woman', as it is set as the stereotypic model of 'the other woman' (Adlbi-Sibai, 2016). Following Al-Saji (2010), the Western media representations of Muslim women wearing the veil are not mere portraits of Muslim women, as they develop the function of a negative mirror on which Western constructions of identity and gender can be positively reflected.

Previous research has concluded that the dominant news discourses represent the veil in a monolithic perspective, as a symbol of the exclusion of women, that does not embrace its multidimensional character (Navarro, 2012). Hence, the 'veiled Muslim woman' would be represented as a victim and, in addition, as a carrier of backward and even extremist customs (Lamrabet, 2014; Valdés-Peña, 2013), that makes the veil a mark of the Islamization of society, in Muslim and, also, in Western countries.

### 2.3. *The Burkini Controversy in France and the Debate on the Veil in Germany.* *Contextual Elements for the Case Study*

The *burkini* refers to a specific swimming suit that covers the woman's body, exposing the feet, the hands and the face. It was created in 2003 by the Australian designer Aheda Zanetti as a proposal for sportswear suitable for Muslim Women (Zanetti, 2016).

**Figure 1:** Model of *Burkini*.



Source: <http://www.burqini.com/>.

The controversy on which this paper is focused started in August 2016, when the French NGO *Smile 13* announced by Facebook a private event, dedicated exclusively to women, in a water park close to Marseilles. The association warned that the workers of the park included men and women and, so, gave the recommendation to Muslim women to be covered from chest to toes with a *burkini*, or wearing a body wrap. Although the use of *burkini* is not prohibited in France, the creation of this event caused such a media stir that it was the park itself that ended up cancelling the act. During the same month, various Council commands of up to 30 French cities banned the *burkini* on their beaches, by appealing to security and public order reasons in response to the terrorist attacks suffered during that year (Valero, 2016). These authorities also argued that this swimming suit did not conform neither to health and safety standards, nor to the Constitutional principle of secularism (Velasco, 2016). These prohibitions were supported by the French Prime Minister, Manuel Valls, who considered that this pledge was not compatible with the values of the French Republic (Valls, 2016), as well as with the opposition of various associations (including the League of Human Rights and the Collective against Islamophobia in France).

In August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016, a proposal for a partial prohibition of the integral veil in public spaces was presented in Germany, as a security measure (Müller, 2016), and so the public debate on the veil was reopened. This proposal would prohibit the use of integral veil under any circumstance for which it is necessary to show the face for the identification in situations such as the school, the university or while driving (Smale, 2016).

Also in 2016, on August 26<sup>th</sup>, the Home Office Ministers of the Christian Democratic Union and of the Bavarian Christina Social Union presented in Berlin a statement that increased the security measures related to terrorism, including the prohibition of the *burka* or the *niqab* (Europa Press, 2016). In fact, on those dates Europa Press (2016) published a survey carried out by the German broadcasting channel ARD that pointed out that the majority of Germans were in favour of a total or partial prohibition of the *burka* or the *niqab* in public spaces.

### 3. Methodology

A quantitative content analysis has been applied to yield replicable and well-grounded text inferences in the usage context (Krippendorff, 2004). The first step was to delimit the main frames regarding Muslim women.

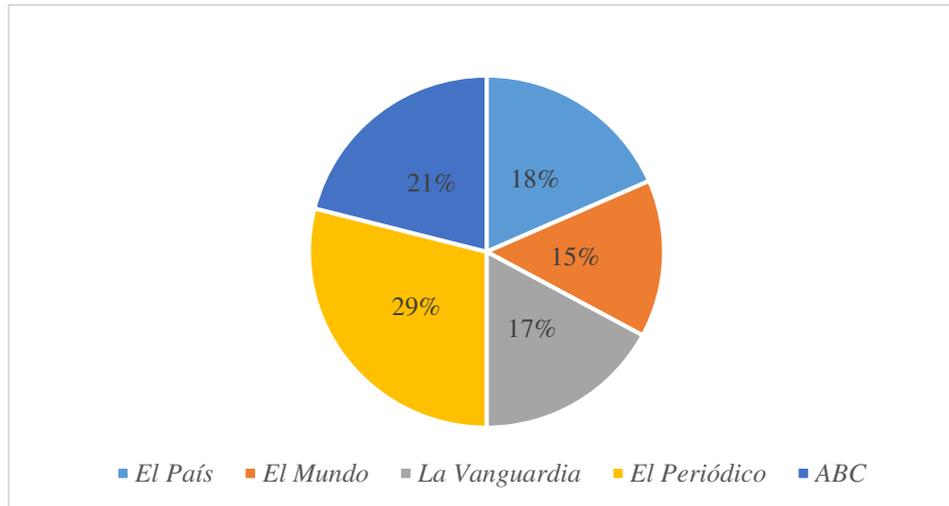
In order to test the hypothesis about the portraits of Muslim women in the Spanish press during 2016, the five newspapers with the largest circulation in Spain according to the Office of Justification of the Diffusion (OJD), were analysed. This information was confirmed by the General Media Study carried out in 2016 by the Association for Media Research (AIMC by its acronym in Spanish). The selected newspapers were *El País* (1.217 readers per day), *El Mundo* (762 readers per day), *La Vanguardia* (586 readers per day), *El Periódico* (462 readers per day) and *ABC* (453 readers per day).

A convenient sample was selected on the basis of media audience, since it is considered that newspapers with a greater number of readers will be able to reach and, therefore, influence a greater part of the population. These criteria were also adopted to ensure the ideological diversity, given that the analysed newspapers cover different editorial lines. The study focused on the news related to the controversy that arose in 2016 with the prohibition of the *burkini* in some regions in Europe, and the subsequent reopening of the debate about the prohibition of the integral veil in Germany.

To select the piece of news that conforms to the corpus analysed, the following criteria were considered: only pieces of news that were published between August 8<sup>th</sup> and September 9<sup>th</sup> were included, and that contained the terms '*burkini*' or '*burka*.' The articles were picked up by using the online newspaper archive of *ABC* and *La Vanguardia*, and through the repository of the Public Library of Castilla y León (Spain) for accessing to *El País*, *El Mundo* and *El Periódico*. Each of the selected pieces of news were analysed regardless of the type. A

total of 152 units were analysed: 28 published by *El País*, 22 by *El Mundo*, 26 by *La Vanguardia*, 44 by *El Periódico*, and 32 by *ABC*.

**Figure 2:** Pieces of news analysed by newspaper (%).



Source: Own elaboration.

### 3.1. Codebook and Coding Procedure

To perform the content analysis of news framing, a deductive approach was taken to establish certain frames and to verify the extent to which they occur in the news (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). In this deductive approach “the theoretical frames are defined as analytic variables and their presence in the pieces of news is subsequently verified”<sup>1</sup> (Cheng et al., 2009: 41). Following the heuristic principle that sequences of manifest variables can represent a latent construct, preconceived frames were used for the analysis (van Gorp, 2005).

A codebook was elaborated to determine which variables would be analysed per each unit of analysis. To simplify the identification and classification, the first step was to encode the general information of each unit. The Semetko & Valkenburg (2000) scale was used to identify the news frames considering five framing items. In addition, an own-elaboration index based on the theoretical background was designed to identify the news frames that referred to Muslim women. The sections of the codebook were as follows:

- a) *Descriptive information*: publication date, newspaper (1=*El País*, 2= *El Mundo*, 3= *La Vanguardia*, 4=*El Periódico*, 5=*ABC*), section (1=Editorial, 2=National, 3=International, 4=Opinion), journalistic typology (1=news, 2= author genre, 3=specialized journalism), headline typology (1=expressive, 2=appellation, 3=thematic, 4=informative).

The Sánchez & López-Pan (1998) classification was used to categorise the journalistic typology, according to their social uses and their textual role (Fernández-Parratt, 2012). The ‘news’ group referred to plain journalistic texts about facts (articles, reports, features, interviews or profiles). The ‘author genre’ referred to those pieces focused on a personal or institutional point of view (editorials, columns or collaborations). The ‘specialized journalism’ category included pieces that contained a cultural advice (reviews, specialized chronicles or collaborations) (Sánchez & López-Pan, 1998).

The classification made by Nuñez-Ladeveze (1995) was used to categorize the headlines, as follows: expressive headline (to recall an event supposed to be known), appellative

<sup>1</sup> Own translation of the Spanish original: “los encuadres teóricos son definidos como variables analíticas y su presencia en las unidades de noticia se verifica posteriormente”.

headline (when language is used to draw attention to an event), thematic headline (to enunciate the topic, but without allowing the identification of the event) and informative headline (those that explain the facts) (Costa-Sánchez, 2011).

- b) *Generic news frames*: the Semetko and Valkenburg typology (2000) was used to elaborate the news frames classification. Following a factor solution, this scale clustered into five frames through a series of yes-no questions. The frames were measured as follows: attribution of responsibility (the story suggests that some level of government has the ability to solve a certain issue or problem, or is responsible for causing it); human interest (puts a human face or an emotional point of view on the issue to present a problem that may generate strong feelings); conflict (the story reflects disagreement between groups or refers to two or more sides of an issue); morality (the story refers to morality or religious tenets); and economic consequences (shows the issue in terms of the economic consequences that there will be on individuals, institutions, groups or the society) (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).
- c) *Veiled Muslim women news frames*: to develop this category, a series of variables have been proposed to determine the validity of the two main news frames identified by the literature review on the subject: Muslim woman presented as a victim, or as a threat. As mentioned in the literature review, several studies established two visions of Muslim women in the press: victimizing or demonizing them (Plataforma Ciudadana contra la Islamofobia, 2016). A series of yes-no questions based on theoretical framework was designed to measure the extent to which those frames appeared in the stories about Muslim women. Therefore, these questions were based on the report made by the commission on British Muslims of the laboratory of ideas “The Runnymede Trust” (Conway, 1997), and on the studies of Lamrabet (2014), Valdés-Peña (2013) and Zine (2016), so a deductive method was used to establish the media coverage of Muslim women.

### 3.2. Elaboration of Scales to Measure News Frames

A series of 16 yes-no questions were developed to analyse the media coverage of Muslim women. Each question aimed to measure one out of the two news frames: as a victim or as a threat. A minimum of three questions per each frame was expected. However, because of the exploratory approach to measuring the news frames, there was a chance that some of the question items might not be appropriate for the study (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).

A component analysis with varimax rotation was conducted on the framing questions that explained the 65.55% of the variance. This analysis yielded a factor solution in which the framing questions clustered into two frames that explained the 49.34% of the variance. The factor solution is presented in Table 1.

Bartlett’s test of sphericity was significant ( $p < 0.001$ ), demonstrating the relevance of the analysis. The KMO statistic was applied to determine the quality of the factorial analysis, showing a value of 0.84 that guarantees the quality of the analysis. The factor solution demonstrated the existence of two news frames that appear in the articles that mention Muslim women: the victim frame ( $\alpha = 0.92$ ) and threat frame ( $\alpha = 0.79$ ). Only the items with factor loadings higher than 0.5 were included in the scales (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).

As Table 1 shows, eight yes-no categories were included to develop the frame that presented Muslim women as victims. Only four yes-no categories were included to establish the frame that presented Muslim women as a threat. Cronbach’s alphas were used to measure the internal consistencies for the two scales values. Alpha values were 0.92 for the victim frame (8 items) and 0.8 of reliability for the threat frame (4 items), which confirmed the internal consistency of both factors.

**Table 1:** Factor solution for the 16 framing items\*.

<i>Questions</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
<b>Factor 1: Muslim woman depicted as victim</b>				
<i>Are Muslim women depicted as victims of their religion?</i>	<b>0,784</b>	0,014	0,101	0,19
<i>Is Islam depicted as regressive and/or sexist?</i>	<b>0,88</b>	0,139	0,148	0,001
<i>Is Islam seen as monolithic and static instead of diverse and progressive?</i>	<b>0,851</b>	0,131	0,163	0,054
<i>Is Islam seen as the main reason of gender inequality among Muslim women?</i>	<b>0,775</b>	-0,088	-0,092	0,053
<i>Are hijab, burka or burkini showed as a symbol of backwardness and oppression?</i>	<b>0,747</b>	0,215	0,209	0,178
<i>Are hijab, burka or burkini depicted as opposed to the principles of equality?</i>	<b>0,846</b>	0,062	0,025	0,093
<i>Are hijab, burka or burkini depicted as opposed to the human rights or the idea of democracy?</i>	<b>0,633</b>	0,509	0,02	0,028
<i>Veiled Muslim women and Islam clash with the western democratic principles?</i>	<b>0,6</b>	0,437	-0,016	0,054
<b>Factor 2: Muslim woman depicted as a threat</b>				
<i>It is shown that veiled Muslim women can spread regressive or even extremist practices?</i>	0,309	<b>0,703</b>	-0,117	0,112
<i>Are hijab, burka or burkini depicted as a symbol of extremism or Islamic fundamentalism?</i>	0,035	<b>0,848</b>	0,035	0,114
<i>Is Islam seen as violent or threatening?</i>	0,11	<b>0,733</b>	0,31	-
<i>Are veiled Muslim women criminalized for their attire?</i>	-0,001	<b>0,72</b>	-0,285	0,128
<b>Discarded questions in the creation of factors</b>				
<i>Are hijab, burka or burkini depicted as a sign of the Islamization of the</i>	0,054	-0,102	<b>0,687</b>	0,202
<i>Is Islam seen as a political ideology used for political or military advantage?</i>	0,072	0,548	<b>0,554</b>	0,036
<i>It is believed that we are living an Islamization of the western?</i>	0,147	-0,017	<b>0,667</b>	-
<i>Are Muslim women showed from a western point of view?</i>	0,277	0,123	0,124	<b>0,732</b>
<i>Muslim women attire is the focus of the news?</i>	0,072	0,042	-0,102	<b>0,829</b>

\* The data shown in this table correspond to the results obtained when performing the factor analysis of principal components in SPSS.

Source: Own elaboration.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Analysis of the Overall Results

As previously mentioned, 152 pieces of news were analysed –*El País* (n= 28), *El Mundo* (n=22), *La Vanguardia* (n= 26), *El Periódico* (n=44), and *ABC* (n=36). Regarding the section where they were located, Table 2 shows that 36% of the informative pieces appeared in the international section, 26% in the opinion section, and 20% in the society section, being the most frequent sections. Informative pieces were found to a lesser extent in other sections (9.2%), in the editorial (7.2%) and in the national section (0.7%). The *burkini* or *burka* issues have been considered by the main Spanish newspapers as a problem of an international nature, but relevant enough to write editorials about it. Thus, although 53% of the analysed pieces corresponded to the news genre, 44.4% corresponded to the author genre (where ‘opinion’ is included), while only 0.7% corresponded to specialized journalism.

**Table 2:** Percentage of informative pieces according to section and newspaper.

Section	<i>El País</i>	<i>El Mundo</i>	<i>La Vanguardia</i>	<i>El Periódico</i>	<i>ABC</i>	Total
Editorial	3,60%	9,10%	11,50%	6,80%	6,30%	7,20%
National	3,60%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,70%
International	57,10%	13,60%	57,70%	34,10%	18,80%	36,20%
Opinion	28,60%	18,20%	19,20%	25,00%	37,50%	26,30%
Society	0,00%	54,50%	0,00%	31,80%	15,60%	20,40%
Others	7,10%	4,50%	11,50%	2,30%	21,90%	9,20%

Source: Own elaboration.

#### 4.2. Analysis of the Generic News Frameworks

To carry out the analysis of the general frames, the first step was to study the differences in the approach to the issue given by the analysed newspapers. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to investigate whether the use of frames varied depending on the newspaper. The types of generic news frames (attribution of responsibility, human interest, conflict, morality and economic) were used as independent variables, and the variable of the newspaper as a fixed factor.

The MANOVA yielded a significant difference between the generic news frames used by the analysed newspapers when dealing with Muslim women [ $F(60, 31528.1)=1.61, p<0.01$ ]. These results suggest that some news frames were more frequently used in one of the newspapers than others. As Table 3 shows, the human interest frame appeared to a greater extent in *El Mundo* ( $M=0.34, SD=0.34$ ), the attribution of responsibility frame was used more frequently by *ABC* ( $M=0.66, SD=0.28$ ), the frame of conflict was used to a greater extent by *La Vanguardia* ( $M=0.78, SD=0.28$ ), the frame of morality appeared mostly in *ABC* ( $M=0.6, SD=0.38$ ), while the economic frame was also used more in the *ABC* than in the others ( $M=0.05, SD=0.15$ ), although it was used to a lesser extent. Also to a lesser extent, *El País* used the frame of conflict ( $M=0.58, SD=0.43$ ) and the frame of morality ( $M=0.5, SD=0.4$ ), while *El Periódico* used mostly the frame of attribution of responsibility ( $M=0.46, SD=0.31$ ) and, also, the frame of conflict ( $M=0.49, SD=0.36$ ).

Thus, the frame most used by the analysed newspapers was the conflict frame ( $M=0.60, SD=0.36$ ), followed by the frame of attribution of responsibility ( $M=0.55, SD=0.33$ ). The moral frame ( $M=0.41, SD=0.41$ ) and the human-interest frame ( $M=0.26, SD=0.32$ ) showed less presence, and the economic frame ( $M=0.04, SD=0.13$ ) hardly appeared.

**Table 3:** Generic news framing in each newspaper.

Journal	Human interest	Attribution of responsibility	Conflict	Morality	Economic	N
<i>El País</i>	0.15 (0.23)	0.47 (0.36)	0.58 (0.43)	0.5 (0.4)	0.04 (0.10)	28
<i>El Mundo</i>	0.34 (0.34)	0.56 (0.31)	0.65 (0.36)	0.55 (0.43)	0.03 (0.14)	22
<i>La Vanguardia</i>	0.31 (0.36)	0.63 (0.36)	0.78 (0.28)	0.41 (0.45)	0.03 (0.13)	26
<i>El Periódico</i>	0.29 (0.40)	0.46 (0.31)	0.49 (0.35)	0.17 (0.28)	0.05 (0.14)	44
<i>ABC</i>	0.23 (0.24)	0.65 (0.27)	0.60 (0.32)	0.58 (0.37)	0.05 (0.15)	34
<b>TOTAL</b>	0.26 (0.32)	0.55 (0.33)	0.60 (0.36)	0.41 (0.41)	0.04 (0.13)	152

Source: Own elaboration.

#### 4.3. Analysis of the Veiled Muslim Women News Frames

The first step to study the extent to which these frames occur in the news related to veiled Muslim women was to analyse the differences between the newspapers when dealing with the topic.

As in the previous section for the generic news frames, to study the frames regarding the Muslim woman with veil the analysis focused on finding differences between the different newspapers when dealing with the subject from one frame or another. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted using the two veiled Muslim women frames –victim frame and threat frame– as independent variables, and the newspaper was the fixed factor.

The MANOVA yielded significant difference between the frames used by the analysed newspapers when dealing with Muslim women [ $F(12, 938|12.2)=2.97, p<0.001$ ]. As Table 4 shows, the victim frame ( $M=0.24, SD=0.34$ ) was more frequently used than the threat frame ( $M=0.22, SD=0.33$ ), although it was a small difference. The victim frame was more recurrent in *ABC* ( $M=0.45, SD=0.40$ ), *El Mundo* ( $M=0.27, SD=0.39$ ) and *La Vanguardia* ( $M=0.23, SD=0.32$ ). Similar results were obtained for the threat frame, as it was more recurrent in *El Mundo* ( $M=0.35, SD=0.43$ ), *La Vanguardia* ( $M=0.31, SD=0.35$ ) and *ABC* ( $M=0.28, SD=0.32$ ). *El País* and *El Periódico* also used these frames, but in lower levels than the most conservative newspapers. Therefore, it was verified that the newspapers with a progressive editorial line had a lower inclination to use these frames, which promote stereotypes about Muslim women, although they also used them.

*Post-hoc* pairwise tests with Bonferroni adjustment revealed that the victim frame only differed significantly when *ABC* was compared to *El País* ( $p<0.05$ ) and *El Periódico* ( $p<0.001$ ). However, according to Bonferroni adjustment, the threat frame differed significantly when *El Periódico* was compared to *El Mundo* ( $p<0.01$ ), *La Vanguardia* ( $p<0.05$ ) and *ABC* ( $p\leq 0.05$ ). Data showed that *El Periódico*, which was considered the most progressive newspaper of the analysed, presented the lower tendency to use these frames, and differed significantly from the more conservative newspapers.

**Table 4:** Frames of Muslim women with veils for each newspaper.

<i>Journal</i>	Victim	Threat	N
<i>El País</i>	0.2 (0.28)	0.21 (0.30)	28
<i>El Mundo</i>	0.27 (0.39)	0.35 (0.43)	22
<i>La Vanguardia</i>	0.23 (0.32)	0.31 (0.35)	26
<i>El Periódico</i>	0.11 (0.24)	0.07 (0.21)	44
<i>ABC</i>	0.45 (0.39)	0.28 (0.32)	32
<i>Total</i>	0.24 (0.34)	0.22 (0.33)	152

Source: Own elaboration.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusions

The present study was designed to analyse the representation of Muslim women in the press. Returning to the hypothesis given at the beginning of this study, it is possible to state that the victim frame was more frequently used in all the newspapers analysed than the threat frame ( $H_1$ ). The findings reveal that both frames appeared in all the analysed newspapers ( $H_2$ ), which confirm that veiled Muslim women are often portrayed in two frames that promote stereotypes. The findings also suggest that the conservative newspapers (*El Mundo*, *La Vanguardia* and *ABC*) tended to use more of these frames than those considered more progressive (*El País* and *El Periódico*), which verifies that there were differences in the news coverage of Muslim women regarding the editorial line of the media ( $H_3$ ). Hence, the following conclusions can be drawn from the present study.

First, the results of this study indicate that the stories about the *burkini* or the burka appeared to a greater extent in the international section of the analysed Spanish newspapers. These findings suggest that this issue did not have a straight relation to the Spanish readers,

which concur with the idea that the news coverage of those events that are not directly experienced by the audience has a greater effect at an abstract level (Alvídrez, Igartua & Martínez-Rosón, 2015). In this way it is considered that an accurate treatment of this topic is crucial, since it has a great influence on the public opinion (Valkenburg, Semetko & De Vreese, 1999).

Secondly, the results also show that the two generic news frames that appeared to a greater extent were the attribution of responsibility frame and the conflict frame. The predominance of the attribution of responsibility frame suggests that the government institutions are expected to provide answers to social problems (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000) such as the *burka* and *burkini* controversy. However, this topic has been considered a foreign issue, partly because the *burka* and *burkini* controversy has had a lesser impact in Spain than in other parts of Europe, and partly because the historical relationship with Islam is different from that of other countries in the European Union (Said, 2015). The occurrence of the conflict frame also suggests that the media emphasizes the conflict between individuals, social groups or institutions in order to capture the interest of the audience (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).

The current study also found that the analysed newspapers portrayed the veiled Muslim women from a stereotypical point of view (Mescoli, 2016). The stories were presented through two predominant frames: as a victim or as a threat. The most common frame was the victim frame, which connects with the idea that the oppression of these women is used to portray Islam as inherently misogynistic and abusive (Ho, 2007). The media representations of Muslim women place them in such aforementioned positions, where the veil converts them into voiceless victims (Al-Saji, 2010).

This research cannot be considered closed since it is the starting point for a long-term project that aims to investigate the addressed matter to a greater extent. The current study is limited by the small sample size and by the very restricted case of study (the *burkini* affair). However, despite its exploratory nature, it offers some insight into the press coverage of the veiled Muslim women.

The purpose of the current study was to make a first approximation to the study of the use of news frames by the Spanish newspapers when covering the controversies related to Muslim women's clothing, as this issue is considered the centre of the debate between the representations of modernity and anti-modernity (Lamrabet, 2014). For this aim, the current study took a step towards the creation of a quantitative methodology to assess empirically the most usual news frames. This study lays the groundwork for future research into the study of Muslim women news frames, thus further research needs to be done to cover a greater number and diversity of media, including headlines from other countries in the European environment, or to extend the results to other periods of time. This extension would help to refine the methodological proposal presented here. In addition, the next steps on this research project will also aim to analyse the discursive roots of the news frames from a qualitative approach, and also to study their impact on the public opinion.

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