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## The psychosocial portrayals of immigrants in Spanish prime time television fiction (2016-2017)

**Abstract**

The present research shows the results of an analysis of Spanish entertainment television aired in prime time between 2016 and the first semester of 2017 by the leading Spanish TV networks. The aim is to draw a comparison between immigrants and the natives in violent and health behaviours, personality traits, and also the number of conversation topics used by immigrants compared to the natives. Content research was used for this analysis, where a sample of 723 characters (n723) was taken. The final result shows there are different tendency patterns in the index of victims of violent behaviour being the native the ones with the highest score. No significant statistical differences in other indexes were observed. However, other variables are statistically related to immigrants/ foreigners, such as drug abuse, topics regarding health or politics, and furthermore, immigrants are also prone to have personality traits such as 'unfair', 'seductive' or 'perverse'.

**Keywords**

**Television, immigration, health, violence, Spain, portrayal.**

### 1. Introduction

Journalist Walter Lippmann (1922) said that much of what we know of the world is due to the mass media. Thus, we may not have travelled to the moon, but we can get a pretty rough idea of what it would be thanks to the reports of the mass media. The same accounts for immigrants' portrayals as we may not have met an immigrant in real life, but we have built ourselves an image according to what we have seen on television.

According to Lippmann (1992), it is, therefore essential to analyse the real image that is shown in the media (Van Dijk, 1997, 2003) and stay focussed on the difficulty that this entails as "migrations are multifaceted and diverse, conceptually complex and difficult to measure" (Arango, 1985).

According to the surveys conducted by the Centre for Sociological Research (CIS, 2005-2018) and the different indicators, immigration is one of the main concerns of the Spaniards. In addition, when interviewees are asked about immigration, 23.3% associate it with "need to come to work" and 15.7% relate it to "poverty and inequality." However, 1.8% of the people associate immigration to "crime and insecurity," 1.4% to a "mixture of negative feelings towards immigration" and 1% relates it to "problems of integration and coexistence" (CIS, 2018)<sup>1</sup>. What image does the media show of immigrants to make immigration in general one of the main concerns of the Spaniards?

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<sup>1</sup> Compared with the data on the perception of immigration in other European countries –for instance, 60% of the French believe that France receives too many immigrants. In Sweden, the positive appraisal towards migration has

What image is portrayed in the media? It is, therefore, necessary to analyse the media behaviour in immigrants' representation, as it may help us to know what kind of image is being transmitted to society. Besides, we seek to comprehend the upsurge of some prejudiced or even racist attitudes as Wieviorka (2009, p. 145) indicates, "One cannot genuinely analyse contemporary racism without questioning the influence of the media on the progress, dissemination and also the regression of the phenomenon."

Nowadays TV series is one of the most appreciated audiovisual products (Bermejo & Núñez, 2008; Moreno & Rodríguez, 2016) so it is interesting to analyse how, among other variables, immigration is visualized. Television series can contribute to public perception and it can shape opinions of a whole new generation, (Montero, 2005). Research shows that a large part of the youngsters forges the immigrants' perception of watching television and mainly by TV series (Prats, De Régil, Lobarte, Higuera & Santamaría, 2005). A recent review by/of Eberl, Meltzer, Heidenreich, Herrero, Theorin, Lind, Berganza, Schemer and Strömbäck (2018) points out that:

The audience is more likely to be exposed to entertainment shows, series or movies, than to news media and in spite of the fact that a large part of the European public uses the media daily still, we neglect the social impact that the media and its social discourse has on immigration and immigrants (p. 128).

This is why, in addition to those mentioned above, this research focuses on the study of television fiction, since it stimulates the viewers' way of thinking (Oliver & Raney, 2011). In particular, the series produced in Spain and broadcasted in prime time can have a more significant impact on spectators as it gets people acquainted with certain attitudes and preserves them, in particular when it comes to immigration, being thus subject of this study.

## **2. Theoretical framework and literature review**

The media is quite familiar with news on immigration, but depending on how the discourse has framed the message that is sent can be very different. Thus, if the immigrants' image is focused on aspects such as conflict, violence, crime, lack of adaptation or the abuse of the social security system, natives –even those who have never been in contact with immigrants or who have had a satisfactory and friendly relationships– will tend to identify immigration with the stereotypes reflected in the media.

Several theories support the idea that TV characters can reduce the negative impact of their image in real life, due to the so-called mediated contact through media (Müller, 2009; Park, 2012). If the spectators see friendly relations between natives and immigrants on the screen, the prejudice is undermined in two ways: reduction of anxiety in intergroup contact and fostering empathy by putting things into perspective (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008).

It is a researchers' duty to make this world a better place to live in and therefore, it is necessary to analyse the media's role in shaping judgments and opinions (Van Dijk, 1997; Cea D'Ancona, 2004; Igartua & Muñiz, 2007; Martínez Lirola, 2016, 2017), as they may become diffusers of prejudiced and racist attitudes that may have consequences for immigrants' adaptation in society, encouraging rejection or exclusion (Van Dijk, 1989, 2007; Scheufele, 2000; Igartua, Muñiz & Cheng, 2004, 2005; Muñiz, Igartua, Otero & Sánchez, 2008; Igartua, Marcos, Alvidrez & Piñeiro, 2013; Igartua & Frutos, 2016).

When it comes to immigrants' portrayals in the media, two patterns are observed: On the one hand some nationalities are linked to issues with a negative touch, such as crime, violence, etc. (Cea D'Ancona & Valles, 2011) suggesting what Igartua, Otero, Muñiz, Cheng and Gómez (2007, p. 198–199) have called an illusory correlation relating crime with nationality and the

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decreased from 37% in 2011 to 25% in 2016 (Gazette, 2017)– in Spain, the data are quite low. As stated by Arango (2010, p. 71–72) "international media has observed with admiration the quiet and calm attitude of Spanish society towards the dramatic growth of the immigrant population in the last decade".

use of stereotypical portraits, without delving into the reality of this phenomenon. And on the other hand to inform or, also, to create immigrant characters for fiction shows (Marcos, Igartua, Frutos, Barrios, Ortega & Piñeiro, 2014). This has been confirmed by studies that have analysed the presence of immigrants in the media (Van Dijk, 1989; Entman, 1992; Romer, Jamieson & De Coteau, 1998; Dixon & Linz, 2000; Igartua, Muñiz & Cheng, 2005; Igartua, Muñiz, Otero & de la Fuente, 2007; Martínez Lirola, 2016, 2017). The conclusion is that there exists a stereotyped and prejudiced vision<sup>2</sup>. Martínez Lirola (2016) carried out a research on sub-Saharan immigrant portrayals<sup>2</sup> in newspapers *El País* and *ABC* from January 2012 to 2015 and concluded that immigrants are represented as wild individuals who want to enter Spain by any means and, that this behaviour justifies the use of violence.

Immigrants are portrayed as intruders and as being hard to control (Martínez Lirola, 2016, p. 13). The news examined emphasizes the intrusive approach, stating that immigrants are "controversial persons" and that their presence is a burden on society. The reinforcement of the image as being "the others," excluded from the main group, and thus lacking of human rights by keeping them separated from the group (Martínez Lirola, 2016, p. 13).

Martínez Lirola adds that the negative representation of immigrants does not encourage society to support its human rights, which favours discrimination and focuses on the non-existence of human rights by pointing out that their stay is illegal (2016, p.) 14.

Many studies have examined the representation of immigration in the media, however, in recent years, studies analysing this group in television shows have increased, especially in fiction series as these are: "not only entertainment, they present identification models that are taken as an example and that tend to encourage and root even more the stereotyped representations" (Galán, 2006). Santana Mejía, Martínez de Morentín and Medrano Samaniego (2018, p. 219–220) conducted a study based on a questionnaire response from 70 students to study the existence of prejudice in cultural diversity in television series. Results revealed that the students of communication perceived the immigrant character more as a secondary character.

According to university students, when it comes to dramas, there is a major feeling of prejudice than in comedies. Students revealed that in international series the immigrants' role is far more important than in national series where the character is perceived more as a victim of violent acts. Regarding the topics of conversation, the researchers pointed out that the immigrant characters in the local series talked about social differences and money, while in international series the most usual topics were sports and friendship.

We must bear in mind that audio-visual fiction is an essential creator of the collective imagination. In this sense, for example, the presence of an immigrant will serve the audience not only to be aware of the existence of such minority but will also, and above all, create a mental picture, even for the reproduction of their conducts and attitudes. Müller (2009) points out that the contact between individuals from different cultures can be fostered through television shows.

Few studies have been carried out on immigrants' representation in fiction series, nevertheless, useful conclusions can be drawn to confirm the underrepresentation of immigrants used as characters and in plots, and when used, they are stereotyped. (Mastro & Greenberg, 2000; Harwood & Anderson, 2002; Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005; Igartua, Barrios & Ortega, 2012; Marcos *et al.*, 2014).

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<sup>2</sup> When we speak of stereotype we have to bear in mind two key concepts such as prejudice and racism this being understood as "antipathy based on an erroneous and inflexible generalization" (Allport, 1954, p. 9) that consequently leads to a negative attitude towards an individual for belonging to a social and/or ethnic group. However, it is difficult to find people who openly declare themselves racist so at present the expression "scientific racism" is hardly used and there has been more talk about "modern racism" (McConahay, Hardee & Batts, 1981), "aversive racism" (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986) or "subtle prejudice" (Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995). These new types of racism are more difficult to detect both in people as in media contents.

Fewer studies were carried out in Spain (Galán, 2006; Ruiz-Collantes, Ferrés, Obradors, Pujadas & Pérez, 2006; Lacalle, 2008; Igartua, Barrios & Ortega, 2012; Marcos *et al.*, 2014), than in the Anglo-Saxon world, but nevertheless, after the study of the Spanish fiction series both in quality and quantity all agree on the following conclusions: “the discriminatory or biased representation of the immigrants” (Galán, 2006), under-represented (Lacalle, 2008; Marcos *et al.*, 2014), in addition to a representation related to violence, with low qualifications and focused on their irregular situation (Van Dijk, 2007; Lacalle, 2008; Marcos *et al.*, 2014), having secondary roles in the series (Ruiz-Collantes, Ferrés, Obradors, Pujadas & Pérez, 2006; Marcos *et al.*, 2014).

The most important study to date that has taken into account a very large sample—114 programs and 2,623 characters— (Marcos *et al.*, 2014) led to the conclusion that the immigrant /foreign characters were underrepresented in fiction shows aired during the prime time since they mostly had secondary roles. When immigrants appeared they were mainly illiterate persons, performing unskilled labour and having unstable employment, and having a lower socioeconomic level than the native characters. Furthermore, they played the role of villains involving them in plots with a large amount of violent acts. Also particular negative features were added to the immigrants’ personality: overall they were more aggressive, high-conflict people, disloyal or treacherous and more intolerant than the native characters.

In this study, the research findings presented are based on a socio-demographic analysis of 723 characters from Spanish television series aired in prime time on the main channels (La 1, La 2, Antena 3, Cuatro, Telecinco and La Sexta) throughout 2016 and the first semester of 2017. The research is focused on national fiction shows, which allows a more in-depth and more detailed analysis of what is being produced, broadcasted and seen in Spain here and now. It is of sum utility to be able to draw conclusions and extrapolate them to contemporary Spanish society.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Hypothesis**

Based on the theoretical review carried out and using previous studies that have also analysed the representation of immigration in national television fiction series (Galán, 2006; Ruiz-Collantes, Ferrés, Obradors, Pujadas & Pérez, 2006; Lacalle, 2008; Igartua, Barrios & Ortega, 2012; Marcos *et al.*, 2014) the following hypotheses were presented:

H1: Statistically significant differences are expected to be found between natives and foreign/immigrant characters in the violence indexes. Foreign/immigrant characters are expected to have higher scores as they are related to violent exposure scenes in events with a violent charge, either as an attacker or as a victim.

H2: Natives are expected to drink less alcohol, take fewer drugs or smoke less than foreigners/immigrants.

H3: Statistically significant differences are expected to be found between natives and foreign/immigrant characters in discussion topics rates. Natives have a greater variety in dialogue, in other words, the native characters will talk about a greater number of topics than immigrants do.

H4: Native characters are expected to score higher on positive personality traits (such as friendly, hardworking, kind, intelligent, etc.) than foreign/immigrant characters who will score higher on the negative features (such as controversial, aggressive, racist, etc.).

#### **3.2. Content analysis**

Content analysis is the research technique used in this study, which “includes special procedures for the processing of scientific data” (Krippendorff, 1990, p.28) and allows to quantify data and provide objective conclusions, supported by numbers that represent real phenomena, as said by Juan José Igartua (2006, p. 180),

content analysis is present in those works that need a scientific approach of analytical messages (whatever their nature is), understand their origins or creating process, obtain accurate descriptions of its structure and components, analyse their flow patterns of exchange, trace its evolution and infer its impact.

Using content analysis as a research technique is very useful and necessary in Social Sciences since it allows “to express, based on certain data, reproducible and valid inferences that can be applied to their context” (Krippendorff, 1990, p. 28). It also includes data not as a physical event but as symbolic phenomena. Therefore, content analysis has become one of the most used techniques in this field.

### 3.3. *Units of Analysis*

The units of analysis were the characters of the television series examined for the sample, being as such human beings –disregarding animals, aliens, fantasy or science fiction characters and cartoons– that appear throughout the show and may have some conversation with other talking individuals (Koeman, Peeters & D’Haenens, 2007).

### 3.4. *Codebook and coding sheet*

A codebook of 18 pages was created, with 50 variables to measure the psycho-social portrayal of the characters using the studies by Neuendorf, Gore, Dalessandro, Janstova and Snyder-Suhy (2010), Marcos *et al.* (2014) and Álvarez-Hernández, González de Garay and Frutos (2015). The codebook collected primary identification data, such as: type of character, socio-demographic aspects of the character, narrative skills of the character, social sphere of the character, violent behaviour of the character, victim of violent behaviours, health problems of the character, topics of conversation used by the character and personality traits, both positive and negative.

In this study, the following variables have been taken into account:

*Nationality.* 1 = Citizen of the country where the main narrative action takes place. (native, if living in his or her country of origin); 2 = foreigner, a person born or coming from a country other than the one he or she resides temporarily (for studies, holidays or business); 3 = immigrant, a person who comes to live permanently in a foreign country with a concrete work project; a character could also be coded as “immigrant” (second generation) if at least one of the parents had not been born in the country where the main action takes place and had settled for work reasons. For codification, both the foreigner and immigrant sub-variables were united to perform a better analysis of the data<sup>3</sup>. The reliability of this variable was .82.

*Violent behaviour of the character.* With a dichotomous scale (0 = no, 1 = yes), and based on the Potter and Warren scale (1998) the presence of different grades of violence were coded: a) mayor physical attack ( $\alpha$ .71); b) minor physical attack ( $\alpha$ .89); c) carrying out or executing acts that cause property damage (PAo.85); d) acts of intimidation (PAo.79); and, e) making hostile remarks (PAo.81).

*Violent behaviour towards the character.* With a dichotomous scale (0 = no, 1 = yes), and based on the Potter and Warren scale (1998) aggressive behaviour towards the character or if

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<sup>3</sup> The INE (Spanish Statistical Office) does not distinguish between immigrants and foreigners, as was done in the study when they were coded. Therefore, a new variable was created for data analysis in which these two variables were put together to make the analysis would be more complete and reliable as in some cases it is difficult to codify if a character is a foreigner –somebody who is not in his native country temporarily– or an immigrant –somebody who is not in his native country but has no intention of going back– in an audiovisual narrative, as it may not be shown clearly. Even in real life a person can go to a country with the intention to stay temporarily (it would be a foreigner) but eventually stays permanently, (which would make it in immigrant). It could even be the case that the intention is to settle permanently (it would be an immigrant) but ends up returning to the country of origin, thus becoming a foreigner. If we study it as a whole, we emphasize on “them” and “us” (Van Dijk, 2003), that is, “them *versus* us” according to Wodak (2012), one of the most convincing arguments of the discriminating arguments

the character was victim of the following types of violence a) mayor physical attack ( $\alpha k.82$ ); b) minor physical attack ( $\alpha k .77$ ); c) acts that cause property damage (PAo.85); d) acts of intimidation (PAo.79); and, e) hostile remarks (PAo.81).

*Health problems of the character.* Codification (1 = yes, 0 = no), if the character analysed: a) drank alcohol (PAo.95); b) smoked tobacco ( $\alpha k_1$ ); c) took drugs ( $\alpha k_1$ ); d) took illegal drugs (PAo.97); e) presented an eating disorder ( $\alpha k_1$ ).

*Conversation topics of the character.* With a dichotomous scale (0 = no, 1 = yes), if the character talked with others, on some occasion throughout the show, about the following topics: Love (PAo .93), Violence (PAo .85), Friendship (PAo .92), Ssex (PAo .87), Money (PAo .84), Machismo (PAo .92), Work (PAo .70), Environment (PAo 1), Health (PAo .71), Education (PAo .92), Family (PAo .80), Politics (PAo .85), Sports (PAo .89), Racism (PAo .92), Immigration (PAo .91) and Empowerment (PAo .95).

*Personality traits of the character.* Taking into account the study by Igartua, del Río, Álvarez, García, García, Garrachón and Yáñez (1998), a three-point scale was used to analyse the study (1 = not characteristic of the character; 2 = Defines the characters' personality partially or moderately; character; 3 = perfectly defines the characters' personality; 99 = cannot be codified), the following features of the characters' personality were analysed: friendly ( $\alpha k.53$ ), open (extrovert) ( $\alpha k.62$ ), kind ( $\alpha k.61$ ), disloyal or treacherous ( $\alpha k.79$ ), unfair ( $\alpha k.60$ ), aggressive ( $\alpha k.33$ ), intelligent ( $\alpha k.78$ ), hard worker ( $\alpha k.38$ ), grateful ( $\alpha k.58$ ), conflictive ( $\alpha k.52$ ), racist ( $\alpha k.55$ ), intolerant ( $\alpha k.00$ ), seductive ( $\alpha k.68$ ), irresponsible ( $\alpha k.42$ ), maternal / paternal ( $\alpha k.68$ ), weak ( $\alpha k.54$ ), perverse ( $\alpha k.69$ ) and brave ( $\alpha k.31$ ).

### 3.5. Sample

The sample analysed was composed of 723 characters that were obtained from the analysis of the national fiction shows, excluding co-productions, aired in prime time between 2016 and the first semester of 2017 on the main national channels: La 1, La 2, Antena 3, Cuatro, Telecinco and La Sexta. The sample was selected from the episodes with the highest audience from each season of the abovementioned period according to Kantar Media data. The sample entails the following chapters (Table 1):

**Table 1:** Analysis Sample.

N°	Series	Chapter	Audience	Number of characters	Accumulated characters
1	<i>Bajo sospecha</i> (Under Suspicion)	El oso (The Bear)	3 162 000 (18,0%)	25	1-25
2	<i>Buscando el norte</i> (Looking for the north)	Berlín para principiantes (Berlin for Beginners)	3 765 000 (20,7%)	26	26-51
3	<i>El Caso: Crónica de sucesos</i> (The case: Chronicle of events)	El crimen del abrevadero (The crime of the trough)	2 531 000 (13,2%)	37	52-88
4	<i>Chiringuito de Pepe</i> (Pepe's Beach Bar)	Tradición (Tradition)	2 951 000 (15,6%)	19	89-107
5	<i>La embajada</i> (The embassy)	La mano en el fuego (Hand in the fire)	4 034 000 (22,5%)	30	108-137
6	<i>El hombre de tu vida</i> (The Man of your life)	Recursos (Resources)	2 266 000 (15,6%)	14	138-151
7	<i>Mar de plástico</i> (Plastic Sea)	La última palabra (The Last Word)	3 232 000 (20,6%)	25	152-176

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8	<i>El Ministerio del Tiempo</i> (The Ministry of Time)	Tiempo de leyenda (Legend Time)	2 839 000 (14,6%)	24	177-200
9	<i>Olmos y Robles</i> (Elms and Oaks)	El misterio del bosque tenebroso (The Mystery of the Dark Forest)	2 095 000 (12,2%)	22	201-222
10	<i>El Príncipe</i> (The Prince)	Inghimasi (Inghimasi)	5 213 000 (29,2%)	27	223-249
11	<i>La sonata del silencio</i> (The Sonata of Silence)	Marta (Marta)	1 893 000 (11,4%)	32	250-281
12	<i>Velvet</i> <i>Velvet</i>	El gran día (The Big day)	4 302 000 (26,2%)	34	282-315
13	<i>Vis a vis</i> (vis à vis)	Líquido (Liquid)	2 649 000 (16,4%)	28	316-343
14	<i>Allí abajo</i> (Down there)	Mi gran boda vasca (My Great Basque wedding)	3 939 000 (21,7%)	29	344-372
15	<i>Cuéntame cómo pasó</i> (Tell me how it happened)	Lo que aprendí (What I Learned)	3 657 000 (19,2%)	40	373-412
16	<i>Águila Roja</i> (Red Eagle)	Margarita reaparece en la villa y descubre que Gonzalo es Águila Roja (Margarita reappears in the village and discovers that Gonzalo is Red Eagle)	3 661 000 (21,6%)	19	413-431
17	<i>La que se avecina</i> (The looming)	Una sonámbula, un hombre florero y un ácaro en chándal (A sleepwalker, a man vase and a mite in a tracksuit)	4 996 000 (27,2%)	50	432-481
18	<i>Merlí</i> (Merlin)	Los peripatéticos (The Peripathetic)	1.432.000 (7,6%)	19	482-500
19	<i>Víctor Ros</i> (Victor Ros)	Centauros de Sierra Morena (Sierra Morena centaurs)	1 633 000 (10,1%)	26	501-526
20	<i>Pulsaciones</i> (Pulsations)	La memoria del corazón (The memory of the heart)	3 011 000 (17,1%)	27	527-553
21	<i>Sé quién eres</i> (I know who you are)	Kilómetro cero (Kilometer Zero)	3 176 000 (18,9%)	21	554-574
22	<i>La casa de papel</i> (The Paper House)	Efectuar lo acordado (Come to an agreement)	4 090 000 (25,1%)	28	575-602
23	<i>Cuéntame cómo pasó</i> (Tell me how it happened)	Por ti contaría la arena del mar (For you, I would count the grain of sands in the sea)	3.304.000 (20,1%)	30	603-632

24	<i>El final del camino</i> ( <i>The end of the road</i> )	Bienvenidos a Compostela (Welcome to Compostela)	2 170 000 (13,0%)	40	633-672
25	<i>IFamily</i> ( <i>IFamily</i> )	Y de repente un extraño (And suddenly a stranger)	1 520 000 (8,7%)	21	673-693
26	<i>Allí abajo</i> ( <i>Down there</i> )	Carpe diem (Carpe diem)	3 842 000 (23,7%)	30	694-723

Source: Own elaboration.

The final sample came down to 710 characters as 13 values were lost and excluded from the analysis. 89% of the characters were native-born, that is, characters born in the same country in which the fiction is located. 7.1% of the character were foreigners/immigrants and 3.9% were emigrants.

In order to determine if the immigrant population represented in the series was similar to the actual population, demographic statistics were used. According to the data from the INE (2017), as of January 1, 2017, 46,528,966 inhabitants lived in Spain, of which 9.5% of the population were registered as foreigners (4,424,409 people). Taking these number into account, the sample shows a percentage of foreigners/immigrants of 7.1%. If we reflect this on national fiction shows, it could be said that the foreigners/immigrants are underrepresented, in this case, 2.4 percentage points to the Spanish demographic reality.

### 3.6. Coding and Intercoder reliability

The units of analysis were coded by four coders with experience in the codification of characters in audio-visual stories. These coders read the codebook several times and made coding examples that enabled a better approach to the different variables used in this study.

Furthermore, only variables clearly shown in the fiction could be coded. That is, inferred variables were not marked as valid, only those clearly said or shown, in order to obtain more “valid” data. In case it could not be coded as valid, it was marked as 99 = not known, cannot be identified.

A second coding was carried out for 10.23% of the characters (n = 74) of the sample, by two coders not related to the coding process, to evaluate the reliability of the process in order to determine if the data obtained in the coding process were reliable and could, therefore, be extrapolated to other studies.

The coefficient of Percentage of Observed Agreement (PAo) and Alpha of Krippendorff ( $\alpha_k$ ) (Igartua, 2006) was used to perform the reliability analysis procedure. These two tools are used because the Alpha coefficient of Krippendorff has been shown to yield very low values even when the simple agreement is high in variables whose data are much skewed towards one of the options (Lovejoy, Watson, Lacy, and Riffe, 2016, pp. 4-5). Due to the low indexes of liability, six variables –three of positive charge and three of negative charge – were rejected in the extraction of data: 38 (aggressive), 40 (worker), 41 (grateful), 44 (intolerant), 46 (irresponsible) and 50 (courageous). The average in the observed agreement index (PAo) was .87 (DT: 0.07), while the average obtained in the Krippendorff Kalpha coefficient was  $\alpha_k = .74$  (SD: 0.14). Both are values with a high-reliability facto r(Igartua, 2006, p. 221).

## 4. Results

Hypothesis 1: Statistically significant differences are expected to be found between natives and immigrant/foreigners in the violence indexes, foreigner/immigrants will have a higher score as they are more involved in violently charged events, either as an attacker or as a victim.

The **first hypothesis** analysed the differences between the immigrant/foreign characters, in comparison with the natives, in violent behaviours. It was expected to find that immigrant/foreign characters were involved in more violent acts and were also involved in violent acts being victims themselves.

To test this hypothesis, a Student T analysis was performed between both groups in which the differences between both groups were analysed. The independent variable was the nationality of the native-born versus foreigner/immigrant- and the subordinate variables were the following indexes: violent behaviour and victimization.

**Table 2:** Differences between natives and immigrant/foreign characters in violent behaviour.

Variables (indexes)	Nationality		<i>F</i>	<i>Gl</i>	<i>p</i>
	Native	Immigrant Foreigner			
• Violence [Theoretical range: 0-5]	0.65 (0.14)	0.79 (0.17)	3.41	1, 708	.411
• Victimization [Theoretical range: 0-5]	0.60 (0.13)	0.08 (0.14)	3.86	1, 706	.073
<i>N</i>	<b>632</b>	<b>78</b>			

Note: For each variable, the average and the standard deviation is shown between brackets. Source: Own elaboration.

If the differences between natives and foreigner/immigrants are analysed individually, trend differences were observed in the victim of violent behaviour index ( $t(708) = -1.794, p = .073$ ) as can be seen in Table 2. However, there are no significant differences between both groups with the Student T control statistic in the violence index used. Even so, one can see a higher score for the natives in this index (Table 2). The individual analysis by variables did not give statistically significant results except in “victim of violent behaviours: major physical attacks” in which it was a trend ( $\chi^2 [1, N = 710] = 3.701, p < .054$ ).

**Hypothesis 2:** The natives are expected to drink less alcohol, take fewer drugs, consume fewer drugs or smoke less than immigrants/foreigners.

The second hypotheses analysed the differences between the immigrants/foreigners, compared to the natives, assuming that the former would present major health problems.

**Table 3:** Differences between natives and immigrant/foreigners in health problems.

Variables (indexes)	Nationality		<i>F</i>	<i>Gl</i>	<i>p</i>
	Native	Immigrant/Foreigner			
• Health problems [Theoretical range: 0-5]	0.03 (0.88)	0.41 (0.93)	1.03	1, 708	.563
<i>N</i>	<b>632</b>	<b>78</b>			

Note: For each variable, the average and the standard deviation is shown between brackets. Source: Own elaboration.

Table 3 shows that, despite the fact that immigrant/foreign characters scored higher in the index of health problems, the differences with respect to the natives did not turn out to be statistically significant.

The individual analysis by variables did not give statistically significant results either, except in “illegal drug use” ( $\chi^2 [1, N = 710] = 4.335, p < .037$ ) and in “smokes tobacco,” which offered trend values ( $\chi^2 [1, N = 710] = 3.598, p < .058$ ). As can be seen in Table 6, the foreign/immigrant characters consumed more drugs but smoked less than the natives.

**Hypothesis 3:** Statistically significant differences are expected to be found between natives and immigrant/foreigners in the indexes of topics of conversation, presenting the first a greater variety in conversation, that is, natives talk about a greater number of issues that immigrants/foreigners do.

The third hypotheses analysed the differences between the immigrants/foreigners and the natives in conversational richness, with this being understood as a greater number of topics dealt with. To analyse it, an index of the eloquence of the character was created from the sum of the fifteen variables analysed. If the data collected in Table 4 is analysed, there are practically no differences between both groups with the Student T control statistic in the conversational wealth index, only 0.1 separates the data from both groups.

**Table 4:** Differences between natives and immigrants/foreigners in oral expression.

Variables (indexes)	Nationality		<i>F</i>	<i>Gf</i>	<i>p</i>
	Native	Immigrant Foreigner			
• Eloquence [Theoretical range: 0-15]	0.16 (0.13)	0.17 (0.15)	2.51	1, 699	.344
<i>N</i>	<b>632</b>	<b>78</b>			

Note: For each variable, the average and the standard deviation is shown between brackets. Source: Own elaboration.

The individual analysis by variables shows statistically significant results in the following values: “Topic of conversation: Health.” The relationship between variables was significant ( $\chi^2 [1, N = 710] = 6,103, P < .013$ ) As natives spoke more about health than immigrants/foreigners; “Topic of conversation: Politics” ( $\chi^2 [1, N = 709] = 6,450, p < .011$ ) immigrants/foreigners spoke more of politics; “Topic of conversation: Racism” ( $\chi^2 [1, N = 708] = 46,106, p < .000$ ), as could be expected, the immigrants/foreigners spoke more about racism, as also in “Conversation topic: Immigration” ( $\chi^2 [1, N = 710] = 66,841, p < .000$ ); “Topic of conversation: Sex.” It was observed that it was trendy ( $\chi^2 [1, N = 708] = 3,183, p < .074$ ) and foreigners/immigrants talked more about the subject (19.2% compared to 12.1% of natives); “Topic of conversation: Education” a trend value was observed ( $\chi^2 [1, N = 710] = 3,205, p < .073$ ) being foreigners/immigrants who spoke less of education (3.8% versus 10.1%).

Therefore, the foreign/immigrant characters talked more about sex, politics and immigration, as far as the natives talked more about education and health.

**Hypothesis 4:** native characters are expected to score higher in the indexes of positive personality traits opposite to immigrants/foreigners who will do so in the negative traits. The fourth hypothesis analyzed the differences between immigrants/foreigners and natives in personality traits. Two values were created to simplify the analysis: Positive personality trait and negative personality trait. Although immigrant/foreign characters scored higher in the value of positive personality traits –and thus lower in negative personality traits-- differences with respect to natives did not proved to be statistically significant, as can be seen in table 5.

**Table 5:** Differences between natives and foreigners/ immigrants in personality traits.

Variables (indexes)	Nationality		F	Gl	p
	Native	Immigrant Foreigner			
• Positive personality traits [theoretical range: 1-3]	0.83 (0.58)	0.92 (0.70)	7.07	1, 708	.194
• Negative personality traits [theoretical range: 1-3]	1.57 (0.79)	1.43 (0.66)	.152	1, 544	.259
<b>N</b>	<b>632</b>	<b>78</b>			

Note: For each variable, the average and the standard deviation is shown between brackets. Source: Own elaboration.

The individual analysis concluded that the following variables were statistically dependent: “Personality trait: Unfair” ( $\chi^2 [1, N = 710] = 8,766, p < .033$ ) immigrants/foreigners were shown as statistically more unfair, “personality trait: intelligent” trend value ( $\chi^2 [1, N = 710] = 6,985, p < .072$ ) the natives were less characterized as being intelligent (the trait was not characteristic of the character in the 6.4% of the cases of immigrants/foreigners compared to the 17.6 of the national/autochthonous); “personality trait: high-conflict people” ( $\chi^2 [1, N = 710] = 10,679, p < .014$ ) immigrants/foreigners were described as being more controversial persons ; “Personality trait: racist” ( $\chi^2 [1, N = 710] = 21,571, p < .000$ ) surprisingly nationals/locals were portrayed as being less racist; “Personality trait: Seductive” ( $\chi^2 [1, N = 710] = 10,644, p < .014$ ) immigrants/foreigners were defined as being more seductive “Personality trait: Perverse” ( $\chi^2 [1, N = 710] = 21,314, p < .000$ ) immigrants/foreigners were characterized as being more perverse.

This leads to the conclusion, that immigrants/foreign characters are portrayed as being more unfair, less intelligent, more high-conflict people, more seductive and more perverse than the natives.

## 5. Conclusions

In this research, compared to others, we analysed the national fiction aired in prime-time with a large representative sample (26 chapters and 723 characters), which allows the results to be extrapolated and generalized.

Several values were created for this research which aim was to measure as clear as possible the different variables.

Different trends between both groups were observed in the index measuring the extent to which the character was a victim of violent behaviours, The immigrant/ foreign characters were involved to a greater extent in violent behaviours and to a lesser extent they were victims of these, although the statistical analysis carried out showed that it was a trend and not significant, which can be considered good news if it is compared with the data obtained in previous studies (Van Dijk, 2007; Lacalle, 2008; Marcos *et al.*, 2014).

However, if the data is analysed individually, the immigrant/foreigner is the main character performing more violent attacks than the natives, which, in addition, are victims of mayor physical attacks that can cause them death.

Therefore, the image offered in national fiction shows is that of the immigrant / foreign characters being the perpetrators of the violence and the natives being the victims, although this trend, as this study shows, is being reduced compared to previous studies.

The health index was created as a sum of other indexes as alcohol consumption, smoking tobacco, taking drugs, consuming drugs and having problematic eating behaviours. The immigrant/foreign characters showed higher rates compared to natives. Immigrants also had a higher score in the consumption of illegal drugs.

Both analysed groups scored in a similar way in eloquence and talked about a variety of topics. The main difference that can be pointed out is that natives spoke more about health (this could be related to the fact that they are more victims of violent behaviours), compared to foreigners/ immigrants who spoke more about politics, racism and immigration, perhaps due to their personal circumstances.

Regarding the characterization of positive and negative personality traits, immigrant/foreign characters scored higher on positive and lower on negative traits. If the results were analysed individually, the statistical analysis carried out showed that the depiction of immigrants/ foreigners in traits as unfair, high-conflict persons, racist, seductive and perverse was significant and the natives were inclined to be characterized as intelligent, seductive and high-conflict persons.

## **6. Discussion**

The study presented can be seen as a continuity of the previous studies carried out in Spain (Igartua, Barrios & Ortega, 2012; Marcos *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, the immigrant/foreign character can be analysed in a longitudinal way allowing the overall analysis to be as rewarding as possible. Paying attention to the representation of foreign/immigrant characters in television fiction, especially in national fiction made in Spain, means giving visibility to a group that tends to be hidden.

The results of this study are connecting with others made in this field and with previous studies carried out in the United States and Spain, mainly in relation to the representation of ethnic minorities in television fiction (Mastro & Greenberg, 2000; Mastro & Behm -Morawitz, 2005; Igartua, Barrios & Ortega, 2012; Marcos *et al.*, 2014). These studies showed the underrepresentation of the immigrant/foreign characters, a fact that has also been confirmed in the present study and shows that only 10.7% of the immigrant/foreign characters are present in the sample analysed.

The absence of diversity in television fiction can condition its visibility or social vitality, and in addition make it more difficult to have parasocial contact with the natives for characters with a different background that have a notable presence in Spanish society (Harwood & Anderson, 2002; Ortiz & Harwood, 2007).

It should be taken into account not only for immigrants/foreigners to be represented but also how they are represented, that is, what psycho-social portrayal is given in the media.

As we have seen in this study and in previous ones, the image of immigrants/foreigners given is usually stereotyped (linked to health behaviours such as use of drug and tobacco and violent behaviour) even though they were characterized in greater measured with positive personality traits (even if they were defined mainly with adjectives as unfair, racist and perverse), which can lead to the reinforcement or assimilation of prejudiced attitudes towards immigrants.

The public who in daily life have no contact with immigrants/foreigners and whose only knowledge comes from the national fiction shows analysed in the study may come to think that immigrants/foreigners are violent people who cause harm to the natives. In addition, they may also think that immigrants usually do drugs and are unfair, high-conflict people, racist, seductive and perverse. In this case, the media are offering a biased image of immigrants, due to their media representation, and this may encourage and maintain the prejudice that already exists.

Various investigations have shown that vicarious contact can have a positive impact on the reduction of prejudice and, therefore, favour the establishment of more harmonious relations between people with different ethnic and national backgrounds (Müller, 2009; Igartua, 2010; Park, 2012). Thus, it would be useful to reflect positive interactions or contacts between the natives –social unit– and immigrant/foreign character –the unit excluded–, in fiction shows. A more positive representation of the immigrants/foreigners, to reduce the

negative perception of immigrants/foreigners psycho-social portrayal due to television shows encouraging the improvement of relations between both groups would be a positive contribution to a group that sometimes is considered a threat.

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