A critical discourse study of the portrayal of immigrants as non-citizens in a sample from the Spanish press

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This study intends to contribute to critical discourse analysis (CDA) by observing how the discourse of the press represents immigrants. The objective of this paper is to observe the main linguistic characteristics used by the press to portray sub-Saharan immigrants as non-citizens, in a sample from the Spanish press. The corpus consists of the news items published in the digital editions of the newspapers *El País* and *ABC* from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2019. The main discursive characteristics analysed to observe the representation of immigrants as non-citizens are lexis, the use of figures and the passive voice. The methodology combines qualitative and quantitative data.

The analysis will show that the discourse of the press tends to represent immigrants in a negative way, to reproduce the dichotomy 'we-they' and to represent immigrants as 'the other'. The findings indicate that the recurrent use of certain words to refer to immigrants, the use of figures that evoke a sense of invasion and the representation of them as passive individuals do not favour integration but rather the exclusion of immigrants from Spanish society, which thus promotes non-citizenship.

Keywords: Sub-Saharan immigrants, critical discourse analysis, Spanish press, citizenship, journalistic language.

Un estudio crítico del discurso sobre la representación de los inmigrantes como no ciudadanos en una muestra de la prensa española. Este estudio pretende contribuir al análisis crítico del discurso (ACD) al observar cómo el discurso de la prensa representa a los inmigrantes. El objetivo de este trabajo es observar las principales características lingüísticas utilizadas por la prensa para retratar a los inmigrantes subsaharianos como no ciudadanos en una muestra de la prensa española. El corpus está formado por las noticias publicadas en las ediciones digitales de los periódicos *El País* y *ABC* desde el 1 de enero de 2015

hasta el 31 de diciembre de 2019. Las principales características discursivas analizadas para observar la representación de los inmigrantes como no ciudadanos son el léxico, el uso de figuras y la voz pasiva. La metodología combina datos cualitativos y cuantitativos. El análisis mostrará que el discurso de la prensa tiende a representar a los inmigrantes de manera negativa, a reproducir la dicotomía 'nosotros-ellos' y a representar a los inmigrantes como 'el otro'. Los hallazgos indican que el uso recurrente de determinadas palabras para referirse a los inmigrantes, el uso de figuras que evocan una sensación de invasión y la representación de los mismos como sujetos pasivos no favorecen la integración sino la exclusión de los inmigrantes de la sociedad española, lo que favorece la no ciudadanía.

Palabras clave: Inmigrantes subsaharianos, análisis crítico del discurso, prensa española, ciudadanía, lenguaje periodístico.

1. Introduction

Mainstream media discourse is the dominant discourse in society because it influences people's mental models by the representation of social reality it offers (Bednarek & Caple 2017). There are many issues that audiences know based only on the way social construction is transmitted by the media. In fact, the media have an effect on the creation of public opinion because they give credibility to what they transmit (Milner 2012). This is significant if news items deal with immigration because, depending on the way the media in general and the press in particular represent immigrants, the audience will perceive these immigrants in different ways. Mass media can shape public opinion on immigration if the image they make of immigrants is credible.

Media discourse is full of stereotypes and clichés that simplify reality and make the message convincing (Khalid, Baig & Muhammad 2016). Consequently, analysing media discourse is important in order to deconstruct the linguistic and visual structures used to represent social issues, including immigration. This article will concentrate on a sample of news items on immigration published by two of the main Spanish newspapers, *ABC* and *El País*. The analysis will concentrate on the language used by journalists to talk about the arrival of immigrants in Spain. The different choices will show that the language is not chosen at random but with specific connotative meanings that clearly influence the audience.

The different linguistic and visual choices selected to create a news item are connected with context. These choices establish power rela-

tionships and reproduce ideologies (Fairclough 2002), in this case between Spanish society and immigrants. In fact, the discourse of the press tends to reproduce the 'we-they' dichotomy as a way to establish clear differences between the Spanish population and sub-Saharans and to highlight power relations.

The hyphothesis in this study is that the language used by the Spanish press represents immigrants as the other, excluded from the main group, and perpetuates the 'we-they' dichotomy (Krzyżanowski 2018; Martínez Lirola 2017a). The word immigrant will be used in the same sense that it is generally used by the press, to refer to a group of people who are not citizens of their host country. The main objective of this paper is to observe the main linguistic characteristics used by the press to portray sub-Saharan immigrants as non-citizens in a sample from the Spanish press. The main research questions that I will attempt to answer are the following: 1. What are the main discursive characteristics used to represent immigrants in a negative way, as non-citizens, in a sample from the Spanish press? 2. To what extent does the lexis contribute to depriving immigrants of citizenship? The answers to these questions will allow us to observe if immigrants are represented as 'the other', if they are portrayed as deprived of citizenship and different from the main group.

I have chosen a sample of media discourse because it is a social discourse that contributes to creating public opinion and social imaginary; it has power to create and transmit the image of others, including minorities in general and immigrants in particular. There is an elite that controls the semiotic devices used to express meanings in discourse, and journalists belong to this elite (Bednarek & Caple 2017). The discourse of the press is crucial in the social construction of reality because there are many social realities that people know by the way in which the press transmits them. In this sense, people who do not have direct contact with the other (immigrants) will take the image that the press offers as true and real.

The language used by the press to represent immigrants has an effect on the way the audience perceives them. Language is never neutral, and it has ideological effects on the newspaper audience. Therefore, the principles of critical discourse analysis (CDA) will be used to deepen our understanding of the relationship between discourse and society (van Dijk 2008) in order to deconstruct the main ways used by the press to represent sub-Saharan immigrants as non-citizens (see section 5).

The article is organized into the following sections: section 2 consists of the literature review, followed by the theoretical framework. Section 4 presents the data and methodology; the fifth offers the analysis followed by the discussion. Finally, the article offers some conclusions based on the study.

2. Literature review

The immigration of sub-Saharan immigrants to Spain became significant starting in 1997 (Arango 2002; Rodríguez Breijo 2010) due to socio-economic problems and to the difficult conditions of life in sub-Saharan countries. The main countries these immigrants arrived from are (Arango 2002): Angola, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone.

The large number of immigrants leaving their countries in the last years is known since 2015 as the 'immigrant crisis' or 'refugee crisis' (Barlai, Fähnrish, Griessler & Rhomberg 2017; Berry, Garcia-Blanco & Moore 2016). This crisis is associated with different types of discourse (sympathetic towards immigrants or hostile) that coincide with portraying immigrants as outsiders (Goodman, Sirriyeh & McMahon 2017; Holohan 2019; Nelson, & Davis-Wiley 2018).

In the last decades there have been many national and international studies on the representation of immigrants in the press, following the principles of CDA (Bañón 2019; Bañón & Romero 2013; Martínez Lirola 2017b; Sindoni 2018; van Dijk 2018, among others). The general tendency of the Spanish press is to represent immigrants in a negative way, which does not favour their integration. Studies on the linguistic and visual portrayal of immigrants in the Spanish press show that immigrants are represented as different from the main group of the population, the majority group, by race, origin, appearance, culture and language (Aguilar-Idáñez & Buraschi 2017; Bañón 2007; Martínez Lirola 2016; van Dijk 2005).

The media in general and the press in particular have the general tendency to problematize immigrants. That immigrants are perceived through the image created of them, which is that transmitted through the media in many cases, does not favor their integration. Generally, immigrants are represented as non-citizens, following Anderson (2013: 94):

> Citizenship designates a legal relation between an individual and a state: a person must be granted entry to the territory of the state of which he is a citizen and he cannot be deported from that state. Citizenship also indicates a political relation: a citizen is a stakeholder, or has a membership in the political community delineated by the (nation) state. In this way citizenship fuses the legal and the political.

In fact, the problematic representation contributes to highlighting that they are non-citizens, rather than citizens, which evokes the idea of

strangeness. In a sense, the press discourse highlights the intense other-ing of immigrants and their representation as marginalized non-citizens, characterized by Estévez (2012: 106) in the following way:

> Ethnic minorities become so because they are socially marginalized, that is, they are denied citizenship or the enjoyment of rights since they are members of former colonies or ultimately because they are the victims of a more generalised rejection of cultural diversity. The social marginalization of immigrants can be seen when they are con-centrated in marginalized residential areas, perform work with a low social status, and find their access to services and rights is limited due to their being a foreigner or noncitizen.

Citizenship is associated with the social and cultural integration into the host country because citizens can participate in democracy. A citizen lives in a nation-state and has rights and privileges. Koopmans, Statham, Giugni and Passy (2005: 7) define citizenship as "the set of rights, duties, and identities linking citizens to the nation-state". Immigrants experience discrimination and exclusion. Consequently, they are non-citizens (citizenship is commonly ascribed at birth), and therefore they are portrayed as not belonging to the host nation. Following Bakkær Simonsen (2017: 1), "Citizenship is the officially sanctioned mark of one's membership of a political community, of a state. With it come rights and duties and a pass-port which tells the world where you 'come from'".

Representing immigrants as non-citizens and as a threat to the main group contributes to excluding them from the main cultural framework and from participating in the host community. It is the main group who determines what it means to be part of the community. Moreover, it is the status of citizenship that allows people to participate in civic and political rights, following Borjas (2015: 966):

> Citizenship is a *legal status and expresses a relationship between an individual and a state that entails specific legal rights and duties.* As for the rights attached to citizenship, the most important right asso-ciated with citizenship is the protection by the state and unrestrict-ed access to the territory.

The normative literature on citizenship and immigration concentrates on different conceptions about the boundaries of the national communi-ty and the demands that different countries have so that immigrants can become citizens (Bakkær Simonsen 2017; Dronkers & Vink 2012; Rheindorf & Wodak 2020). There are also studies that concentrate on the link between citizenship and national identity (Goodman 2014; Jensen

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2014) or on immigrant integration and issues of belonging (Goodman & Wright 2015; Hainmueller, Hangartner & Pietrantuono 2015).

Some studies analyse different ways of understanding citizenship (Gebhardt 2015; Joppke 2010; Koser Akcapar & Simsek 2018). These studies make clear that citizenship is a legal status that denotes membership in a country, nationality; citizenship as identity concentrates on practices shared by the community. For example, Koser Akcapar & Simsek (2018: 178) state that "Citizenship and integration are indeed interrelated concepts and their intricate relationship is not only influenced by government policies, but also has an impact on many political, economic and socio-cultural aspects of a society".

Generally, studies agree that citizenship entails a tension between inclusion and exclusion, because immigrants are presented as excluded from membership from the main group of the population (Aptekar 2015; Bloemraad, Korteweg, & Yurdakul 2008; Delanty, Wodak & Jones 2011; Holohan 2019). Therefore, there is no sense of belonging to a community or having obligations and rights there (Bloemraad, Korteweg & Yurdakul 2008).

Analysing the rights that citizens have is also an area of study, such as the right to vote or to take up certain positions in the public sector (Howard 2009). Some studies show that immigrants can make societies more diverse and provide cultural exchanges (Moran 2011) or they highlight the importance of making immigrants political citizens to promote integration in the host society and to avoid tension between social groups (Bassel, Monforte & Khan 2018).

There are also studies that associate immigration, citizenship and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) because they contribute to promoting inclusion and integration (Hagen-Zanker, Mosler Vidal & Sturge 2017; Nicolai, Wales & Aiazzi 2017). One example is SDG number 16: "promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels".

There are very few studies that concentrate on the relationship between citizenship and the representation of immigrants in the press (Caitlin & Gonzales 2015; Gilbert 2013). These studies show that immigrants are the 'others', incapable of complete inclusion. This study will contribute to this area of study.

3. Theoretical framework

Critical Discourse Analysis studies the relationship between language and society in order to observe patterns of subordination, power and

oppression through discourse. It points out how discourse can legitimate and manipulate which groups are empowered by society and which groups are excluded (van Dijk 2009; Wodak & Meyer 2009). Exploring the language used by the press allows us to connect the discourse used with the social context that frames it, i.e., discourse is understood as a form of social action and of social interaction (van Dijk 2018).

CDA will unveil how discourse can reproduce racism by unpacking patterns of discrimination that appear in the news items under analysis; it will also highlight the importance of changing the world into a place where justice and equal rights are promoted. The fact that the research presented in this paper has a social purpose and is problem-oriented justifies CDA as the general framework. The principles of CDA are useful in deconstructing the main discursive strategies used by the press to represent immigrants.

The model of CDA proposed by van Leeuwen (2008) will be used in order to explore how immigrants are represented as social actors in a sample of the Spanish press. This model offers clear categories to refer to the representation of people as social actors in discourse, which allows a fuller understanding of the characteristics of the people represented. The main categories proposed by van Leeuwen (2008) are: 1) role allocation (agent or patient), 2) generalisation and 3) specification (generic or specific reference, i.e., representation as classes or as individuals); 4) assimilation (representation of people in groups); 5) association (groups of social actors) and 6) dissociation (unformed associations); 7) undetermination (unspecified representation of social actors) and 8) differentiation (specification of the different social actors); 9) nomination (reference to the unique identity of social actors) and 10) categorisation (identities and functions shared with others); 11) functionalization and 12) identification (reference to social actors by something they do or what they are); 13) personalization and 14) impersonalisation (representation of social actors as human beings or not); and, finally, 15) overdetermination (representation of social actors as participating in more than one social practice).

4. Data and methodology

The data were collected compiling all the news items on sub-Saharan immigrants that were published in the digital version of the main Spanish newspapers from Monday to Friday: *ABC* and *El País* from 2015 to 2019. These two newspapers have different ideologies: traditionally, *ABC* is regarded as right-wing and *El País* as left-wing although they have a similar linguistic framing of immigrants (Martínez

Lirola 2016). The conservative ideology of *ABC* justifies having more news items on the arrival of immigrants during the years under analysis in this newspaper (see Table 1).

These years coincide with an 'immigrant crisis', in which the pejorative representation of immigrants has risen in comparison. During the said years, the main Spanish migration policies have concentrated on the importance of the arrival of immigrants as part of transnational movements of people in the context of globalization. However, the migration policies have emphasized that immigrants should arrive with legal documents so that their integration and the possibility of their having opportunities to be part of the labor market are possible (Consejo Económico y Social 2019).

The total number of words in the corpus is 148.112. The selection and analysis of the texts was carried out manually. All in all, 383 news reports were obtained from the online archives of the newspapers under analysis by selecting the news item on sub-Saharan immigration: 114 from *El País* and 269 from *ABC*. The number of texts obtained is appropriate to carry out a detailed study and to obtain some clear conclusions. Table 1 shows the division of the texts per year. The selection of the corpus is motivated by the desire to approach the main linguistic strategies that contribute to portraying immigrants as non-citizens and as different from the main group.

Year	Total news items	*El País*	*ABC*
2015	79	16	63
2016	38	11	27
2017	81	24	57
2018	141	47	94
2019	44	16	28
Total	383	114	269

Table 1. *Division of news items per year*

Once the texts were collected, I used the perspective of CDA to analyse them, due to its convenience to obtain a deeper understanding of discourse and exclusion and discourse and power. In fact, there are discursive habits in journalistic writing that influence the representation of news events, as the analysis of the lexis, the passive voice, and the figures of section 5 will show. For this reason, I chose CDA proposed by van Leeuwen (2008) in order to deconstruct immigrants as social actors. After that, the main characteristics of the language used in the news items, the headings and the captions were analysed. The analysis of the language of the headings and captions is important because many times readers just read them and, consequently, the

message transmitted there has ideological consequences for the audience. First, I analysed the main ways used by journalists to refer to immigrants and to the process of leaving their counties or the moment of arrival. Second, I concentrated on the use of the passive voice and figures because they are the most common characteristics used by the press. Thus, I observed an internal coherence in the corpus by analyzing the linguistic characteristics mentioned and by systematizing the total number of examples (see section 5). The methodology combines qualitative and quantitative data.

5. Analysis. Systematization of the linguistic strategies that contribute to representing immigrants as non-citizens

Every linguistic choice that journalists select to refer to immigrants has a social meaning. This section is divided in two sub-sections. The first one systematizes the ways immigrants are referred to as social actors and to the lexical characteristics of the corpus. The second one concentrates on the use of the passive voice and of figures to portray immigrants as people in need of being rescued and to highlight the high number of irregular arrivals and suggest a symbolic invasion. These linguistic characteristics are the most common ones found in the corpus.

5.1. An overview of the written language used to refer to sub-Saharan immigrants as non-citizens

One of the main characteristics of the texts analysed is that immigrants are represented as a group, i.e., they are collectivized and assimilated (van Leuween 2008: 38) and their identity as individuals is neglected. Table 2 shows the main characteristics of immigrants following the categories proposed by van Leeuwen (2008: 38ff) in the sample of news items analysed:

Main categories used to refer to social actors	Examples of the categories in the news items
1) role allocation (agent or patient)	Immigrants are patient with the actions done by the main group, mainly being rescued or receiving help.
2) generalization	The references to immigrants are general.
3) specification (generic or specific reference, i.e., representation as classes or as individuals)	There is a generic reference to immigrants.
4) assimilation and 5) association (representation of people in groups)	Immigrants are represented in groups.
6) undetermination	There is unspecified representation of immigrants as social actors.
7) differentiation (specification of the different social actors)	Immigrants are clearly distinguished from people of the main group, mainly politicians and members of NGOs, in the news items.
8) nomination (reference to the unique identity of social actors)	The names of immigrants do not appear.
6) identification (reference to social actors by something they do or what they are)	Immigrants are identified as how threatening they are for Spanish society or for the help they need.

Table 2. *Descriptions of the categories that refer to immigrants as social actors*

The lexis humanizes or dehumanizes others (Nelson & Davis-Wiley 2018). Immigrants are mainly referred to as immigrants, people or sub-Saharan immigrants, sub-Saharan or just immigrants. Moreover, the recurrent referent to them as rescued, e.g. *inmigrantes rescatados* (rescued immigrants) (*El País*, 18–07–2018; *ABC*, 23–3–2017; *El País*, 14–12–2017, *El País*, 4–11–2017; *ABC*, 16–08–2017) or *más de 370 inmigrantes rescatados* (more than 370 rescued immigrants) (*ABC*, 15–10–2017) makes clear that they are in need of help and reinforces the 'we-they' dichotomy; we are the ones that rescue and they are rescued by us (see Table 3).

There are other words or collocations that exclude immigrants from the main group because their status as non-citizens is highlighted by referring to them as *irregulares* (irregulars) (*ABC*, 26–06–2018) or *inmigración irregular* (irregular immigration) (*El País*, 12–02–2018; *ABC*, 4–7–2018); *casi 60 inmigrantes ilegales* (almost 60 illegal immigrants) (*ABC*, 9–8–2016); *indocumentados* (undocumented people) (*El País*, 28–10–2017; *ABC*, 31–7–2017); *todos los interceptados* (all the intercepted people) (*El País*, 10–8–2015); *los cuatro interceptados* (the four intercepted people) (*ABC*, 06–09–2016). All these labels influence the worldview of the audience and contribute to the development of racist attitudes (Caicedo, 2016).

The previous examples contribute to dehumanizing others. Nelson and Davis-Wiley (2018: 8) state that "Using the adjective *illegal* to

describe a person instead of an action automatically may label him/her a *criminal*". Consequently, the negative references to immigrants evokes the association of immigration with criminality. Language, then, contributes to discriminating against undocumented immigrants. Moreover, following van Leeuwen (2008: 45), these are examples of appraisement because immigrants are evaluated by the lexis that is used to refer to them, as Table 3 shows. The data were obtained by keyword search in this table and in Table 4.

Ways to refer to immigrants	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Inmigrantes (immigrants)	388	154	306	645	195
Personas (people)	124	59	239	468	169
Subsaharianos (subsaharan)	93	27	65	51	20
Rescatados (rescued)	60	34	108	201	51
Inmigrantes subsaharianos (Subsaharan immigrants)	38	10	23	15	2
Irregular (irregular)	5	8	12	28	15
Ilegal (ilegal)	5	6	10	24	7
Interceptados (intercepted)	9	3	7	25	5
Indocumentados (undocumented)	2	0	5	6	4

Table 3. *Main ways to refer to immigrants*

Citizenship entails a tension between inclusion and exclusion. For this reason, apart from the references to immigrants, analysing the way the press refers to their arrival can contribute to excluding or to including these people. Table 4 shows that there are very few examples of words or collocations that represent immigrants as invaders, and consequently, as a threat to Spanish society: *entrada masiva* (massive entry) (*El País*, 20–02–2017, *ABC*, 17–02–2017), *llegadas masivas* (massive arrivals) (*El País*, 26–07–2018); *oleada de pateras* […] (wave of boats) (*ABC*, 16–07–2018; 25–06–2018; *El País*, 26–12–2019); *oleadas de inmigrantes* […] *avalanchas* (waves of immigrants […] avalanches) (*ABC*, 01–11–2016); *avalancha de pateras* (avalanche of small boats) (*ABC*, 09–01–2015), *oleada migratoria* (migratory wave) (*ABC*, 23–11–2017), *asalto masivo* (massive assault) (*ABC*, 01–08–2017).

Ways to refer to immigrants' arrivals	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Inmigración (immigration)	15	5	18	55	18
Crisis (crisis)	2	0	4	23	7
Presión migratoria (migratory pressure)	10	1	2	8	3
Entrada masiva (massive entrance)	2	1	5	2	2
Llegada masiva (massive arrival)	0	0	0	7	0
Oleada de pateras (waves of small boats)	0	0	6	9	1
Oleada(s) de inmigrantes (wave(s) of immigrants)	0	1	0	2	0
Avalancha (avalanche)	3	2	4	8	0
Oleada migratoria (migratory surge)	0	0	1	0	0
Asalto masivo (massive assault)	1	1	8	3	0
Intrusión irregular (irregular intrusion)	0	0	0	2	0

Table 4. *Ways to refer to immigrants' arrivals*

The constant use of the words and colocations listed in Table 4 creates an imaginary invasion that evokes feelings of fear and rejection in the main group, especially with examples that do not specify the number of boats arriving: *embarcaciones cargadas de inmigrantes* (boats loaded with immigrants) (*ABC*, 25–6–2019). In fact, the explicit reference to illegality makes clear that immigrants are non-citizens, and therefore they are excluded from the status that the main group of society has. Moreover, the connection between immigration and crisis adds negativity to the arrival of immigrants, e.g. *afrontar una crisis migratoria que no da tregua* (facing an immigration crisis that will not cease) (*ABC*, 27–07–2018).

There are very few cases of immigrants portrayed as violent individuals due to their violent behaviors in the process of arriving in Spain. The use of expressions such as *avalancha muy violenta* (very violent avalanche) (*El País*, 07–08–2017) or *asalto violento masivo* (violent massive assault) (*ABC*, 26–07–2018) makes clear that immigrants arrive in Spain without permission, which is associated with non-citizenship. For example, the incidents that took place on July 26–27, 2018 portray immigrants as violent and wild people. The discursive representation of immigrants' violent attacks reinforces the dangerous things that they used in crossing the fence and the number of people from the main group who were injured:

> (1) La Cruz Roja atiende a 132 inmigrantes y a 11 agentes heridos tras una de las entradas más violentas y masivas de los últimos tiempos (The Red Cross treats 132 immigrants and 11 wounded agents after one of the most violent and massive entries in recent times) (*El País*, 26–07–2018).

Moreover, when there is reference to people from the main group being injured, immigrants' violent behaviours are further highlighted. For example:

> (2) Tres guardias civiles y agentes marroquíes resultan heridos al contener la llegada de un millar de subsaharianos (Three civil guards and Moroccan agents are injured as they contain the arrival of a thousand sub-Saharans) (*ABC*, 08–08–2017).

Immigrants' violence is sometimes suggested by the things they use against the social security forces in their attempt to climb the fence. The fact that they use acid or excrement portrays immigrants as 'the dangerous other', as we can see in the following example:

> (3) Cal viva, excrementos y ácido: así han sido los últimos asaltos a la frontera entre España y Marruecos (Quicklime, excrement and acid: these have been the latest assaults on the border between Spain and Morocco) (*ABC*, 22–08–2018).

5.2. The use of the passive voice and figures

The fact that agency, generalization and undetermination (van Leeuwen 2008: 39) are the most common characteristics of immigrants as social actors justifies the content of this section. The examples of the passive voice highlight the references to Spain or to its population joined to humanisation and assistance because many examples of the passive voice refer to immigrants being rescued and to the assistance they receive when they arrive in need.

The 'we-they' dichotomy is also highlighted because it is people from the main group who rescue immigrants and who take care of them: it is 'we' who have power to help 'them' who are in need. Following van Leeuwen (2008: 32), representing immigrants as patient implies that they are "[…] people to whom the action is done, and therefore it is understood that people from the main group are the "agents (actors)", as the following example makes clear:

> (4) Efectivos de Salvamento Marítimo y de la Marina marroquí han rescatado esta mañana a 25 inmigrantes de origen subsa-

hariano, entre ellos diez mujeres y tres bebés, cuando intentaban alcanzar las costas españolas en tres pateras en aguas del Estrecho de Gibraltar. (This morning, rescuers from *Salvamento Marítimo* and the Moroccan Navy rescued 25 immigrants of sub-Saharan origin, including ten women and three babies, as they tried to reach the Spanish coasts in three boats in waters of the Strait of Gibraltar). (*ABC*, EFE, Cádiz, 20–07–2015).

The vulnerability of immigrants is highlighted by the use of the passive voice because immigrants need to be taken care of. Consequently, it is we who rescue and offer help, which suggests dependency on the main group:

(5)   Efectivos sanitarios de Cruz Roja y de la Guardia Civil han rescatado y atendido a seis personas que han llegado este martes en una embarcación a las costas de Altea (Alicante) (Health personnel from the Red Cross and the Civil Guard have rescued and treated six people who have arrived this Tuesday in a boat at the coasts of Altea) (*ABC*, 30–10–2019).

(6)   Además, Salvamento Marítimo también ha rescatado a otras 16 personas, entre ellas 13 hombres, dos mujeres y una niña, todas ellas de origen subsahariano y en aparente buen estado de salud, que se encontraban a bordo de una patera que ha sido interceptada a unas diez millas al sureste de la isla de Alborán. (In addition, *Salvamento Marítimo* has also rescued another 16 people, including 13 men, two women and a girl, all of sub-Saharan origin and in good health, who were on board a boat that has been intercepted ten miles southeast of the island of Alborán) (*ABC*, 19–05–2016).

'They' is reinforced in these examples because it is immigrants who use the resources of the main group, especially when they first arrive, when their health needs to be checked. They are passive individuals, associated with poverty. The fact that they do not produce and that they are in need contributes to their economic and social exclusion and to their deprivation of citizenship.

(7)   Los inmigrantes, todos ellos varones, mayores de edad y en buen estado de salud, fueron trasladados al Puerto de Cartagena, donde recibieron asistencia sanitaria por Cruz Roja. (Immigrants, all males, of legal age and in good health,

were transferred to the Port of Cartagena, where they received health care from the Red Cross) (*ABC*, 26–04–2017).

The use of figures suggests a symbolic invasion, especially when there are more than a thousand or several hundred who arrive. This has an impact on people's political-social ideology by associating immigrants with being a threat to Spanish society. Using figures is a very explicit resource to suggest that immigrants are desperate to leave their countries of origin and to arrive in Spain in order to have a better life; this justifies considering a tragic fact. Figures also contribute to homogenizing immigrants and presenting them as a collective group of anonymous individuals, as the following examples make clear:

(8)   Se trata del suceso más trágico de los últimos días, en los que se han registrado hasta 800 llegadas de inmigrantes en toda España desde el fin de semana (This is the most tragic event in recent days, in which the arrival of up to 800 immigrants has been registered throughout Spain since the weekend) (*El País*, 31–10–2019).

(9)   Desde el pasado viernes han sido rescatados más de mil inmigrantes en numerosas pateras que intentaban llegar a las costas andaluzas por el mar de Alborán y el Estrecho de Gibraltar. (Since last Friday, more than a thousand immigrants have been rescued in numerous boats that were trying to reach the Andalusian coast by the Alborán Sea and the Strait of Gibraltar.) (*ABC*, 23–07–2018).

The use of figures and explicit references to the fact that immigrants injure the police and that they need medical help once they jump over the fence potray them as violent individuals that are dangerous to the main group:

(10)   300 subsaharianos han intentado cruzar la frontera, pero solo lo han conseguido un centenar. Hay 7 policías heridos, uno de ellos sigue hospitalizado, y otros 5 inmigrantes han necesitado ayuda médica por cortes en las manos y los pies. (300 sub-Saharans have attempted to cross the border, but only a hundred have succeeded. There are 7 police officers injured, one of them is still hospitalized, and 5 other immigrants have needed medical help for cuts on their hands and feet. (*ABC*, 22–08–2018).

Examples like the previous one portray immigrants as non-citizens for doing things that are forbidden, such as jumping the fence. Consequently, the barrier between 'we' and 'they', between citizens and non-citizens, is highlighted and contributes to immigrants' exclusion. The combination of the passive voice and figures emphasizes that there are regions that are overrun with the massive arrival of immigrants:

(11)   Colapso sin precedentes en Cádiz, desde el pasado viernes más de 1500 personas han sido rescatadas en sus aguas. (Unprecedented collapse in Cádiz, since last Friday more than 1500 people have been rescued in its waters). (*ABC*, 25–07–2018).

The use of figures reinforces the idea of a problem which is out of control and that affects Spanish society. The language used to refer to immigrants problematizes them and establishes a clear difference between the reality of immigrants and that of the Spanish population.

6. Discussion

The press coverage of immigration creates and shapes public discourse on immigrants' non-citizenship. The discourse chosen by the contemporary Spanish press reinforces the 'we-they' dichotomy because journalists dominate discourse, and therefore their choices are not neutral. The language used by the press shows that the general tendency is to exclude immigrants from the main group. Journalists, as part of the group having power in society, portray immigrants as 'the others', deprived of citizenship (see section 5).

The discursive strategies referred to in section 4 exclude immigrants from the main group and to reinforce their status as non-citizens because they recreate the idea of invasion and the illegal situation of immigrants. For example, collocations such as *presión migratoria* (migratory pressure), *entrada masiva* (massive entrance), *oleada de pateras* (waves of small boats) or *avalancha* (avalanche) reinforce the notion of non-citizenship: it is suggested that the arrival of immigrants is associated with an imaginary where immigrants are a burden and a threat to the host society. Following Krzyżanowski (2020: 506) "[…] imaginaries are strongly ideological constructs and visions/conceptions of society enacted in line with pre-defined political goals aiming to reproduce and sustain power". Being aware of the language used by the press to create imaginaries like the one mentioned increases the critical consciousness of the audience and makes them aware of the main tools used by the press to be a discourse of power.

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The discursive representation of immigrants as non-citizens prevents them from integrating and belonging. The main linguistic characteristics described in section 4 make clear that immigrants do not belong to the main group of the population, the one with power. Thus, the language analysed excludes immigrants from the host society and evokes racial attitudes (Pries 2018; Wodak 2020). The negative representation of sub-Saharans contributes to perpetuating racial and discriminatory attitudes because immigrants are portrayed as a threat to the main group. Moreover, it suggests that immigrants are unwanted and burdensome; they are not identified with the main group and are excluded from national belonging. The way immigrants are represented influences the opinions and attitudes of the audience. The press has an important role in the social debate on immigration because it is an elite in society (Bednarek & Caple 2017).

The linguistic choices used to refer to immigrants have negative connotations that portray immigrants as threatening individuals. In fact, depersonalization and the loss of human qualities highlight 'othering' and represent immigrants as dangerous individuals to the host country. Consequently, anti-immigration attitudes are perpetuated instead of those that promote integration in the host society. Representing immigrants linguistically as 'the others' excludes them from the category of citizenship that other nationals belong to. The belongingness value of immigrants being citizens is not present in the texts analysed. On the contrary, immigrants are excluded from discourse by the use of different linguistic strategies (section 5). The fact that immigrants are portrayed as non-citizens marks a symbolic boundary between 'we' and 'they' that does not favour integration. In fact, citizenship is established as a mark of belonging to the main group, Spanish society.

This analysis shows that immigrants are represented as different from the main group. In this sense, discourse contributes to establishing unequal social relations between the Spanish population and the sub-Saharan people. Therefore, the analysis unveils social inequality and power abuse (van Dijk 2009). The fact that there are no news items that refer to the contribution of immigrants to Spanish society and to their integration help perpetuate the idea of othering. Following Kiwan (2009: 3), immigrants "[…] are often portrayed as dangerously 'Other', and thus their exclusion through racial or cultural discrimination in many areas […]".

The negative lexis contributes to social exclusion because the connotative meanings simplify immigrants' reality and contribute to the hegemonic struggle between 'we' and 'they', where otherness has a central role. Another linguistic strategy consists of the despersonalization of immigrants (Cruz Moya 2020; Nelson, & Davis-Wiley 2018): this hap-

pens because no information is offered about the reasons that immigrants leave their countries of origin. Otherness is reinforced, associating immigrants with violent behaviors or suggesting abuse of the social security system (Marcos Ramos & González de Garay 2019).

In fact, otherness highlights the symbolic borders in which the world is organised. This marks clear differences between 'we' and 'they' and defines the characteristics, identity and limits of groups, in this case, the Spanish population and immigrants (Aguilar-Idáñez & Buraschi 2017; Lamont & Molnár 2002). Moreover, these symbolic borders delimit the groups that are kept outside the margins and those who are kept inside, supporting integration or exclusion.

The lack of references in the press to the economic and social integration of immigrants does not promote citizenship, which remains indispensable for integrating immigrants. The main discourse strategies used to represent immigrants do not support social integration. On the contrary, social exclusion is present in the host society as a way to protect their members from the arrival of people from other countries, which promotes negative attitudes and discrimination against immigrants.

The idea of race is clearly evoked in the texts analysed, which points out differences between immigrants and the Spanish population, between non-citizens and citizens. In this way, the socio-political 'we-they' dichotomy is emphasized not only for being immigrants but also for being black. In fact, immigrants are represented as the others, as those who are different from the main group and who do not have power. 'We-they' excludes immigrants and reinforces national identity by highlighting that immigrants do not belong and do not have the same rights than nationals, which reinforces bounded citizenship.

There is no doubt that the immigrants represented are excluded from Spanish society linguistically, as van Leeuwen (2008: 28) makes clear: "Representations include or exclude social actors to suit their interests and purposes in relation to the readers for whom they are intended". The discursive strategies that associate immigrants with non-citizenship confirm the breach between immigrants and readers, between *us* and *them*, between Spaniards and foreigners.

The relationship between the discourse of the press and society is crucial because the audience's knowledge of the world is mediated through the press, and this mediation affects the way the reality of immigrants is represented in our study. Therefore, the press can be said to contribute to a process of social legitimization and acceptance of a particular view of immigrants, which is not always fair because immigration is only partially represented. In fact, the press has the power to shape public opinion concerning immigration and to make a specific

image of immigrants credible, given the influence that newspapers have on public opinion.

7. Conclusions

This research has shed light on the discourse of otherness, and specifically on the discourse associated with the portrayal of immigrants as non-citizens, because they are the ones who invade, who are in need of help, and it is the main group who have to stop their arrival and to help them. The general tendency is to represent immigrants as generalized undetermined individuals, i.e., they are also assimilated by appearing in groups.

The analysis presented in this article shows that the way immigrants are portrayed in discourse does not contribute to the creation of a discourse of justice because the actions and behaviors associated with immigrants contribute to exclusion. In this sense, it is necessary to vindicate the moral and ethical commitment of society to highlight the importance of human rights, with independence of the origin of individuals. We need a new socio-economic model in which social transformation involves the construction of a new society where the status of citizenship has a central role and applies to migrants too.

The findings provide evidence that the discourse of the press makes a clear distinction between citizens (Spaniards) and outsiders (immigrants). In fact, in the majority of the texts analysed, a considerable number of lexical elements do not contribute to a representation of immigrants as citizens and tend to provoke, whether consciously or not, discriminatory attitudes towards them. Consequently, the negative representation of immigrants makes the host population feel that they are the group having power. Generally, immigrants are represented in discourse as people who do not belong to the main group; they are not portrayed as members of the community, and therefore they cannot participate in the host society or take decisions.

Unmasking the main discursive strategies that appear in the press as a sample of dominant discourse shows that the 'we-they' dichotomy is perpetuated. In fact, immigrants are represented as the others and are marginalized and discriminated against, represented as dependent and as victims or as invaders. The deconstruction of power and ideology behind each linguistic choice makes clear that immigrants are represented partially and negatively, which does not contribute to their integration. The fact that there are no positive news items does not contribute to overcoming fear and stereotypes of people from other cultures.

It is necessary to develop proposals for making citizenship more inclusive in discourse in order to shorten the differences between 'we'

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and 'they'. The citizenship and social integration of immigrants should be present in the policies related to immigration. In this way, the press would also give importance to the relationship between citizenship and the integration of immigrants into Spanish society.

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