The presence of women in the information of Spanish, Italian, British, Portuguese and French digital European media

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Abstract
Introduction. The aim of this research is to analyse the presence of women in five European digital newspapers. **Methodology**. It is conducted a quantitative content analysis of 1,688 news over 24 categories. **Results**. The results indicate that an apparent greater visibilization of women would mean a greater presence of traditional stereotypes. **Discussion**. Three main ways to keep women relegated to a certain role in the media are detected in European media: a) she is not usually the author of the news; b) she is usually a secondary source and c) in the news production and the discourse of information, women in unfavourable situations are given priority by promoting traditional female roles and stereotypes. **Conclusions**. In this way, an apparent greater visibilization of women would mean a greater presence of traditional stereotypes.

Keywords
Journalism; gender; stereotypes; digital media; European media.

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1. Introduction

In the past years, gender studies have experienced many changes of approaches at international level, thus constituting a diverse and varied study universe, both in topics as well as perspectives. After its resolute entrance in the academy in the early 70s of the 20th century, under the determinant influence of second wave feminism (Buonanno, 2014), the study of the image of women on media consolidates in the nineties, in the last century. General studies are conducted that reflect about the general conception of women in society (Crenshaw, 1996) and sectoral studies that analyse women in sports (Salwen & Wood, 1994), the image of TV hostesses (Engstrom & Ferri, 1998) or the ethnical or racial origin of women and the skin colour as one of the differentiating elements on the news about the female gender (Fears, 1998), among others.

Media began to be observed as a way of building identities both of gender as well as of class in sports events (Senyard, 1999) or with the coverage of merely "feminine" topics like breast cancer (Hoffman-Goetz & MacDonald, 1999).

In addition to the discourse, there is the study of the influence of gender in the production of information with differences in media human resources based on race, ethnic group, but also gender (Becker, Lauf & Lowrey, 1999). It could be even confirmed the fact that there existed an evident difference in the news published when they were selected by men or women, thus appearing the gender element as differential feature, even in the mediatic function of "gatekeeper", as well as in their consumption (Zoch & VanSlyke Turk, 1998).

In the 2000s the problematization of gender on media is reinforced (Beasley, 2001; Al-Obaidi, 2000; Larson, 2001) and there is delving in the origin of stereotypes (Bernt, 2002) that composed a specific mediatic image of women in studies, politics or advertising (Golombisky, 2002; Devitt, 2002; Lynn, Walsdorf; Hardin & Hardin, 2002).

Little by Little, relevant researches about the matter included "peripheral" countries like Kenya, in studies were gender identities changes were identified on media (Worthington, 2003). Massive sports events like Olympic Games were aimed by researches, being approached from the perspective of how genders were presented on the media covering said events (Greenleaf, Weiller & Higgs, 2003). Even women national football teams from countries like USA were already an element of analysis because of how athlete women were represented mediatically (Shugart, 2003). The idea, latent for many years, about the different performance of professionals on media depending on the individual's gender, appeared in a recurrent manner in studies, already focused over time in the use of technology or in stress (Ogan & Chung, 2003).

The differences of gender by age in the mediatic expressions of identity, both on digital media (Stern, 2004), as well as traditional media from the perspective of cultural influences (McCann, Kellermann, Giles, Gallois, Viladot, 2004), integrate to the different studies performed in the middle of the 2000s. Thus, while new topics occupy the interest of scholars, others like the influence of the reporter's gender in the selection of the sources of news (Armstrong, 2004) end up being recurrent, with slight variations regarding the study context or the country. Even diet advise differentiated by race and gender in television become a subject of interest (Brown & Pardun, 2004).

In such a way, with the vast topic variety dealt with in the different studies, it is evident that there existed an enormous number of topics linked to the gender perspective on media to be studied, mainly because that field of knowledge has been invisibilized per years. Therefore, matters apparently as superficial as gender differences in work satisfaction on co-responsible staff of news for television (Price &Wulff, 2005), the way women executions were covered in the USA (Friedman, 2005), the influence of women as sources when building genders of stories (Armstrong, 2006) or the way women created news in modern British journalism (Friedman, 2006), ended up being a fundamental part of a *theoretical corpus*, both heterogeneous and relevant. Thus, subsequently the interdisciplinary nature of these studies is made evident and characterizes them, either with the analysis of the virtuality of women's bodies in the laws influenced by the mediatic culture (Chatterjee, 2008), gender differences present in the coverage of sports events of international relevance (Pratt, Grappendorf, Grundvig, LeBlanc, 2008), the influence of the role of gender disseminated through media in the perception of the "appropriate sports" for men and women (Hardin & Greer,2009) or even the way television generates diverse spaces attending gender (Sharp, 2009).

Due to the aforesaid, there was a time when, it was no longer a problem, to ask oneself, from the academic perspective, what happened with the news when women achieved to manage the editorial department (Beam & Di Cicco, 2010) or simply when they let their presence be known on media through their daily work (Correa, 2011). And the fact is that, in the end of the 2000s, the marginalization of women on media was already obvious, both in discourses of power (Li & Lei, 2010), as well as their representation. Furthermore, when there are analysed topics like the image of women belonging to stigmatized religions on Western media, just to mention studies about the link between sexism and Islamophobia (Navarro, 2010), or the skin whitening due to the emergence of a whole new "culture" of feminine beauty on black women (Lindsey, 2011).

This way, in the early 2010s, in a time where women also conquered political positions, the study of their image on media turned into part of the analysis by country, outstanding for instance the situation in Romania (Culic, 2012). Likewise, youth activism against gender violence towards women caught the attention of specific researchers (Damodar, 2012), mainly due to the fact that certain social dynamics of this kind were understood as the connection between public and private spheres (Botezat, 2013), the journalistic story is perceived as a platform to disseminate ideas that allow to emphasize the differences of race, class or gender in the teenage public (Durham, 2014). Even making the gender stereotypes visible on media (Râpeanu, 2014; Crites, Dickson & Lorenz, 2015).

The feminine identity, conditioned by certain television series, was studied since it was deformed by the filters of media-disseminated consumerism (Guocong, 2014). Thus, while the patterns of matriculation by gender in journalism studies were modified (Becker, Vlad, Tudor & Holly, 2014), the management of sexual violence on media of countries like India became a perfect research topic to understand the social dynamics of violation of women's fundamental rights (Drache & Velagic, 2014). The fact is that, as mentioned earlier, the academic studies made clear, that there is a bond between media and social behaviour, even in matters so apparently unrelated such as sexual behaviour or human reproduction in certain countries (Jah, Connolly, Barker & Ryerson, 2014). In fact, at the same time feminist interventions in the most diverse communication and entertainment media was made common (Miller, 2014) and essential to understand the evolution in the revindication of people's rights, there continued studies about gender differences, in this case conditioned by the digital environment and the different way online media are used (Ularu, 2014). In this environment, women are considered as the

main "victims" of the technology linked to communication, even including the case of university students of Communication Sciences in countries quite unidentified with technology like Nigeria (Alabi, 2014).

Currently, in the middle of a decade that outstands by a great diversity of themes that are managed considering the gender perspective, paradoxically, specific facts such as the violence against women and its mediatic coverage are still object of study due to the controversy they cause both in situations of "peace" (Baluta, 2015) as well as of conflict (Burnet, 2015). Curiously, these years of evolution in gender studies end up leading us to already familiar issues, where there only vary certain aspects like the medium of study, the country or the age range of individuals analysed. Thus, there outstands the influence of specific media in the identity of ethnic minority girls (Harris, Irving & Kruger, 2015), the representation of women in the family context of television fiction (Lacalle, 2016), how the musical culture of certain genres like Hip-Hop promotes the development of gender policies and lifestyles in big cities (Jabbaar-Gyambrah, 2015) or the recent study that analyses the gender representations in advertising in Hong Kong, Japan and South Korea (Prieler, Ivanov, & Hagiwara, 2015). From Internet there was the study, among others, about the way digital games of young children has a whole critical reading from the gender studies and ethnography (Huh, 2015), the representation of women through videogames (Kondrat, 2015) or the activity of users on YouTube regarding Spanish fiction series (Sánchez-Olmos, C. & Hidalgo-Marí, 2016). It is precisely in this field, in the Information on the Internet, the framework of this study.

2. Method
2.1. Methodology

A quantitative content analysis of 440,241 texts was conducted to identify the presence of women and, subsequently, a thorough analysis of a selection of 1,688 news using 24 categories

2.2. Objectives, population, sample and analysis

The main objective of this research is the analysis of the presence of women on digital newspapers linked to traditional journalistic companies in Europe. The following newspapers were selected: *El País*, from Spain; *The Times*, from Great Britain; *Le Monde*, from France; *Jornal de Noticias*, from Portugal and *Corriere della Sera*, from Italy, a sample validated on previous studies (García-Orosa, Gallur-Santorum, López-García, 2013; García-Orosa, Gallur-Santorum, 2013). All the sections in the medium were analysed, the unit of analysis is the news and, the data collection method is the content analysis performed in two stages. A first one is of quantitative nature, where there are included all the news with the presence of women appearing in the digital database of selected media. At this stage, 440,241 texts were reviewed, distributed as follows: 50,426 news in *El País* (236 analysed) ; 228,472 in *Le Monde* (305 analysed), 103,444 in *The Times* (214 analysed), 24,837 in *Corriere della Sera* (577 analysed) ; 33,062 in *El Jornal de Noticias* (353 analysed). In a second stage, a more intense content analysis of all information with feminine presence is done (1,688 news) published between 1 May 2013 and 1 May 2014 on the indicated newspapers.

2.3. Data collection tools

A total of 24 categories are used to analyse not only the discourse, but also the production of information from the informational fact, authors, actors, sources, etc., even editing and language: 1) Number of news about women in the complete newspaper; 2) Women play a leading role on news: 3) The author of the news is a woman; 4) The author of the news is a man; 5) Women are the main sources of news since they are protagonists of facts; 6) Women are the first sources of news; 7) Women are complementary sources of the news; 8) Women are interviewed as primary sources; 9) Women appear as sources because they are victims of facts; 10) Women are used as specialized sources in the matter; 11) Women appear as official or authorized sources; 12) Number of women used as sources in every news; 13) The content of the news present exclusively women in high positions and with favourable socioeconomic conditions as sources; 14) Women appear cited but exclusively as affected parties or victims; 15) The news talks about women using a clearly sexist language; 16) The news uses direct or indirect sexist stereotypes to refer to women; 17) The content of the news doesn't use women as sources; 18) The content of the news doesn't present women in low positions and with unfavourable social conditions, as sources; 19) The content of the news presents exclusively women in high positions and with favourable socioeconomic conditions as sources; 20) The news is focused on a feminine problem; 21) The news deals with a feminine problem from a *macho* perspective; 22) The news clearly uses offensive words towards women, or that might mean contempt towards them, either due to textual citation or by journalist editing; 23) The content of the news only uses men as sources; 24) Type of news (fact, event or incidence).

The main hypothesis indicates that the presence of women on digital media increased considerably in the past years but, at the same time, there increased the presence of a stereotyped profile of the feminine figure. This way, it is considered the woman would play a role more often as sources, as origin and as actant of information but mostly linked to traditionally feminine roles. Thus, an apparently greater visibilization of women would mean, ultimately, a greater presence and transfer of traditional stereotypes.

Two researchers, independently, collected 60% of data and the coincidence in the registry was 98%.

3. Results

The analysis of the complete digital files from the five media, allows to visualize a significant increase of the presence of women in the news as well as in the covers in the past years (graphic 1). However, as we will read as follows, the datum, apparently positive, also entails the increase and traffic of traditional stereotypes produced with different tools.

From the five media analysed in this research, *Le Monde* (154), *El País* (97) and *The Times* (212) are the ones that have more news authored by women, while *Jornal de Noticias* (46) and *Corriere della Sera* (21) register the lowest indexes. Paradoxically, the media with the highest number of men as authors of the news are also *The Times* (111), *Le Monde* (80) and *El País* (64), being also *Jornal de Noticias* (32) and *Corriere della Sera* (9) the media with the lowest number of men as authors. This situation is due to the fact that in a great amount of news there is no identification of the authoring man or woman, hence attributing the authorship to the editorial department of the newspaper. As a direct

consequence of the aforesaid, the diverse number of news analysed in each media is irrelevant when it comes to stablish a categorization based on the identification of their authors' gender.

**Graphic 1. Presence of women in the news and cover**
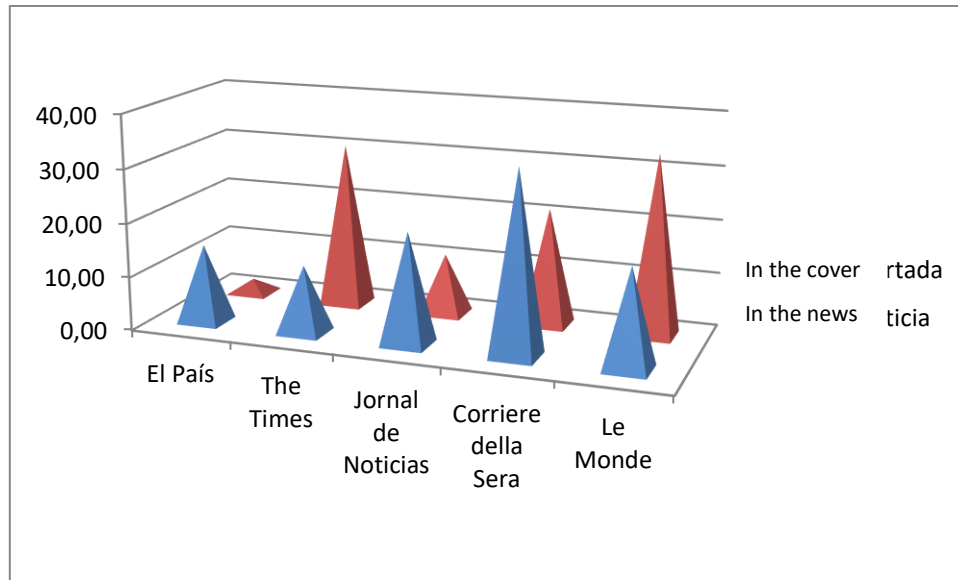
Source: authors' own creation

Women are the main sources of the news because they are the protagonists of facts especially in *Le Monde* (74), *El País* (73) and *Corriere della Sera* (72), while there is a minority in *The Times* (51) and *Jornal de Noticias* (30) (graphic 2). This trend continues if we analyse the news which primary sources are women, because *El País* (72), *Corriere della Sera* (72) and *Le Monde* (68) are again the media with the highest number and *The Times* (54) and *Jornal de Noticias* (35) the lowest. The situation changes dramatically when complementary sources are observed as category of analysis, because *Le Monde* (47) shows the highest number, far above *Jornal de Noticias* (6), *Corriere della Sera* (4), *The Times* (3) and *El País* (0). The previous trend occurs again when referring to the media with the greatest number of news where women are interviewed as primary sources, because once more there outstand *El País* (84), *Le Monde* (74) and *Corriere della Sera* (71), and *The Times* (46) and *Jornal de Noticias* (34) have less relevance.

When observing women as sources due to being victims of facts, there outstand *Le Monde* (37) and *The Times* (30) with the highest number, while *El País* (3), *Jornal de Noticias* (2) and *Corriere della Sera* (0) show the lowest indexes. In contrast with the aforesaid, and in one of the cases with the lowest news indexes of the complete analysis, *The Times* (14) positions as the newspaper with the greatest number of news where women appear as official sources or authorized sources, while in *Le Monde* (1), *El País* (0), *Jornal de Noticias* (0) and *Corriere della Sera* (0), they simply lack of said dynamic. In a similar trend, *Le Monde* (53) is the newspaper with the greatest number of news where women are used as sources specialized in the matter, while *The Times* (6), *Corriere della Sera* (1), *El País* (0) and *Jornal de Noticias* (0) show really low or even null indexes.

Graphic 2. Profile of the feminine sources on media
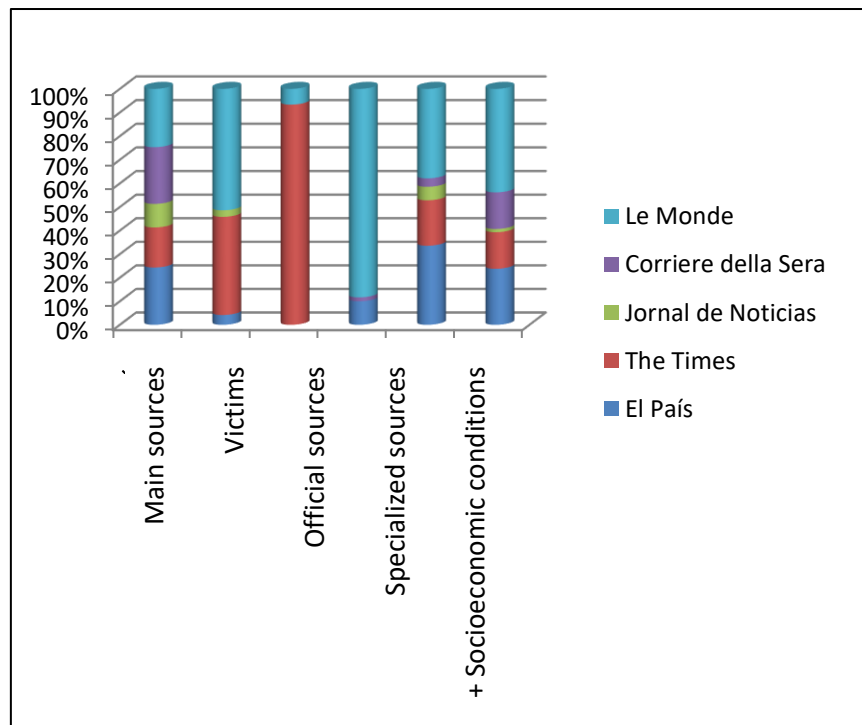
Source: authors' own creation

Focusing in the social category of women used as sources, it is noteworthy that *Le Monde* (53), *El País* (47) and *The Times* (27) are the three media with the greatest number of news that show exclusively women in high positions and under favourable socioeconomic conditions as sources, in contrast with *Jornal de Noticias* (8) and *Corriere della Sera* (5) which values are really low. It is rather outstanding that the two media mentioned earlier, *Corriere della Sera* (497), *Jornal de Noticias* (324) are, together with *Le Monde* (238) those where there is a greater number of news where women appear mentioned but exclusively either as affected parties or victims, at the same time that *El País* (139) and *The Times* (67) show very low values in this category.

Continuing with the analysis of women as sources, women in low positions and under unfavourable socioeconomic conditions represent a relevant number in *Le Monde* (127), *The Times* (69) and *El País* (45). The media with the lowest values were *Corriere della Sera* (45) and *Jornal de Noticias* (4). Curiously, *Le Monde* (35), *The Times* (14) are again the media with the greatest number of news showing exclusively women on high positions and under favourable socioeconomic conditions as sources, together with *Corriere della Sera* (12). The media with the lowest values were *El País* (6) and *Jornal de Noticias* (2).

In the analysis of discrimination against women, it is identified that the media with the greatest number of news talking about women using a clearly sexist language are *The Times* (4) and *Le Monde* (1) and the lowest number, *Jornal de Noticias* (0), *El País* (0) and *Corriere della Sera* (0). Paradoxically, if

the category of analysis varies slightly, we have that *Corriere della Sera* (408), *Jornal de Noticias* (284) and *El País* (108) are the media with the greatest number of news characterized by referring to women using direct or indirect sexist stereotypes, being *The Times* and *Le Monde* the lowest. Meanwhile, *Corriere della Sera* (475) is the one with the greatest number of news which content doesn't use women as sources.

Moving to an even more specific category than the previous one, we have that *The Times* (2) is the newspaper with the highest number of news using clearly offensive words towards women, or that might depict contempt towards them, either due to textual citation or by the journalist's writing. The other four media, *Corriere della Sera* (0), *Jornal de Noticias* (0), *Le Monde* (0) and *El País* (0), lack of news with direct offences towards the female gender. In accordance with the aforesaid, *Corriere della Sera* (503), *Jornal de Noticias* (345), *Le Monde* (282) and *El País* (219) are the media ones showing more news focused on a feminine problem, logically being *The Times* (58), the lowest, due to what was just said earlier. There is sense, in full compliance with the aforesaid, in the fact that *The Times* (9) was the newspaper with the greatest number of news managing the feminine problem from a *macho* perspective. *Corriere della Sera* (1), *Jornal de Noticias* (0), *Le Monde* (0) and *El País* (0) show null percentages.

Lastly, it is noteworthy that *Corriere della Sera* (463), *Jornal de Noticias* (332) and *El País* (131) are the media with the greatest number of news which content only uses men as sources, and the lowest number were *The Times* (98) and *Le Monde* (21).

4.Discussion and conclusions

Almost 20 years ago, it was described how women were denied the possibility to narrate themselves (Kivikuru et al, 1999), today in the analysed media the situation is still similar. The presence and visibilization of women on media continue the increasing trend indicated in previous studies (Marín, Armentia, Caminos, 2011; Aladro, Padilla, Requeijo, Semova, García, García, Viñarás, 2014; Gómez and Patiño, 2011; Gallego, 2013) but it is still lower than men and have scarce exposure on the cover because back in 2010 partial studies indicated a feminine presence that never exceeded 25%.

The fact there is no correspondence between the number of news with women in the contents of the news and those with the same word on headlines, might be due to the women visibilization or invisibilization dynamics on media. Referring to a person's gender to talk about a situation where the individual has a leading role, either being positive or negative, can be a way of protecting a person's identity by respecting the deontological codes of the profession but, at the same time, it can become a way of reducing relevance, invisibilize or even offering a stereotyped view, as if all people of said gender could experience that situation. Namely, if a man wins the presidential elections in a country, the names and surnames of the individual appear in the headline as protagonist of the facts. However, if a woman wins the presidential elections in said country, it is more likely that the headline focuses on the gender of the person instead of her complete name. In that case and in many others, the management of the news and headline will depend on the idiosyncrasy of the country, but it is worth recalling that even though most of prisoners in jails are men, every time a woman commits a crime and she is judged and condemned, the gender becomes the protagonist of the headline instead of the

person, a situation that is often different when said crime is committed by a man despite the recurrence of the felony by this gender.

In the case of sources, there are previous studies like those of David J. Cann and Philip B. Mohr. (2001) who, after studying the Australian television for a week, they indicated how men were generally over-represented as expert sources or Armstrong (2004) in the analysis of newspapers and trends in online newspapers towards the inclusion of more feminine sources (Carpenter, 2008). The trend indicated in previous studies is confirmed since women are only main sources between 30% (*El País*) and 0.84% in *Jornal de Noticias*. In addition to the over-representation of men, women-sources continue to appear mainly as victims as scarcely as specialized sources in the matter, reaching in both cases the highest value in *The Times* (1% and 2.54%, respectively). In *Le Monde,* there are the highest percentages of women in high positions and under favourable socioeconomic conditions (17%) and the lowest ones with unfavourable conditions (41.63%).

Despite the fact that in the 90s there appeared some studies that revealed certain transformations in the gender stereotypes and pointed towards a slight decrease in the representation of women as ornamental element and a diversification of their occupations (García, Martínez, 2009), the most recent researches about digital media continue to indicate a really negative trend (Franquet, Luzón, Ramajo, 2007). Through the results obtained in our study, we can slightly nuance tendencies. In the 1,688 news on European digital media analysed, there are only 6 (four in *The Times* and one in *Le Monde*) with a clearly sexist language. Even though it is true that the percentages conveying sexist stereotypes are higher 70.71%, in *Corriere della Sera*, 80.45% in *Jornal de Noticias*, 45.76 in *El País*.

The research indicates a trend of European media towards the presence of women in the news and the exclusion of explicitly sexist or discriminatory language registered on previous studies. However, a thorough analysis allows to profile the "identikit" of the woman who participates mostly in the production and the discourse of informational pieces. With exceptions, it is a woman that in few occasions assumes the responsibility of the elaboration of discourse (neither as author nor as main source), but who instead takes part as a complementary source or as passive protagonist of a controversial or troublesome situation.

The participation and presence of women on media is also directly linked with her situation on real life: sources and protagonists that are victims of the narrated fact and/ or undergo unfavourable socioeconomic situations are prioritized. Therefore, despite the explicit reduction of negative gender marks (essentially through language) we identified in European media three main ways of keeping the figure of women relegated to a specific role on media: a) they are not usually authors of the news; b) they are usually secondary sources; c) in the production and discourse of information women undergoing unfavourable situations are prioritized, thus potentiating traditionally feminine roles and stereotypes.

5.Limitations and future research lines

The limitations of the study presented earlier are linked to the methodological approach. This is due to the fact that the original sample is excessively wide, both in number of news where the universe of study is selected, as well as the geographic, cultural and linguistic diversity of selected media. Thus, this methodological situation conditions, to some extent, a very interesting research but quite complex, at the same time.

In relation to the aforesaid, no conclusive evidences were identified that allowed to differentiate the strategy followed by each media or their inclusion in a specific territory. This causes the need to identify this research line as a wide field due to its scarce investigation in the past years, but simultaneously, because of a great richness of possibilities due to that same dynamic.

6.Acknowledgements

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