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## Migration and Sustainable Development Goals in the Spanish press (2014–2021): topics, sources, and frames

**Abstract**

One of the biggest global challenges is the international movement of people. For this reason, the 2030 Agenda recognises the importance of migration for development within its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their respective targets. The objective of our analysis is to investigate the new situation introduced by the 2030 Agenda in relation to migration processes in the media, in this case based on eight leading Spanish newspapers between 2014 and 2021. This study uses the quantitative content analysis methodology and the framing approach. As frames, it uses the five themes proposed by the 2030 Agenda: People, Prosperity, Planet, Peace, and Partnerships. It is interesting to note that seven years after the 2030 Agenda was launched, the SDGs are not often cited by the Spanish press to analyse and discuss the migration phenomenon from a sustainability perspective. Moreover, it is observed that discourses on migration in terms of sustainability present a clear political approach that emphasises the framework of international partnerships and agreements in economic terms, a fact that can contribute to a change in audiences' perception of the migration phenomenon. On the other hand, it should be noted that the frames chosen by newspapers to talk about the migration phenomenon coincide with each other, although slight differences can be observed in the themes and use of sources.

**Keywords**

**2030 Agenda, Sustainable Development Goals, migrations, discourse analysis, frames, press.**

### 1. Introduction

There is no doubt that international migration is one of the most relevant social phenomena of our time, not so much because of the nearly 281 million migrants, who represent only 3.6% of the global population, but due to a series of unpredictable circumstances affecting migratory flows. Because of these factors, in the future it is foreseeable that many more human beings will move around, crossing international borders (McAuliffe & Triandafyllidou, 2021).

In Spain, immigration was not a relevant issue for the public sphere, the media, social agents, and the political arena until the very end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as until then Spain had

been a country of emigrants. Since then, the immigrant population in Spain has been growing: in 1998, it represented 1.6% of the total population (INE n.d.), and by 2022, it had increased to 11.71% (INE, 2022).

Within this international migratory context, in September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is structured around five key areas: People, Prosperity, Planet, Peace, and Partnerships. To make this path towards sustainability possible, it proposed a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 complementary targets. These objectives and targets are a call to action intended to guide and facilitate the implementation of public policy of the signatory States by 2030, and shape the conduct of various actors (businesses, universities, workers, individuals, etc.) in their relationship with the environment, economy, and one another (UN, 2015, p. 3).

From the sustainability perspective, many of the problems that the 2030 Agenda intends to tackle are behind the decisions that force many women and men to leave their homes and countries of origin. And here lies another innovative aspect of the 2030 Agenda: for the first time in an international document of this nature, migration is explicitly incorporated into global development policy, thus ending the trend of rendering the migration phenomenon invisible in international agreements in the field of development. In conclusion, the 2030 Agenda and SDGs are presented as a new initiative to meet the sustainability-related challenges we face in the Anthropocene Epoch (Biermann & Rakhyun, 2017). A widely shared view of sustainability integrates economic, social, and environmental issues. This way of presenting the complex idea of sustainability condenses an attainable image, loaded with cultural and emotional significance, into a concise and hugely effective narrative that is useful for framing the information that is published (Chabay *et al.*, 2019).

In this commitment to sustainability, in which migration has a relevant position, the media plays a fundamental role in including these topics in the public agenda and getting people to talk about them, as this helps shape social reality (Helbling & Tresch, 2011; Lecheler *et al.*, 2019).

However, despite its known influence, the media continues to be an underutilised source of information for exploring and systematically analysing the messages disseminated about a wide variety of social objectives, and the 2030 Agenda, sustainable development, and migration are no exceptions. Moreover, the study of these social objectives by examining these types of sources and data could still be at an early stage (CANVAS, 2021). This is where our research aims to make a contribution.

Our research questions aim to investigate the new situation introduced by the 2030 Agenda, as regards migratory processes in the media, in this case, in the leading Spanish press, as well as the proposal to consider the themes of the 2030 Agenda as analysis frameworks for observing migration. Derived from these approaches, this study intends to answer the following questions:

- RQ1. How relevant is the migration phenomenon in the press in relation to the SDGs?
- RQ2. Are the SDGs most closely linked to migration in the press related to those indicated in the 2030 Agenda?
- RQ3. What are the main topics to which the discourse on migration is linked in the press from the perspective of the SDGs?
- RQ4. Considering the themes of the 2030 Agenda as frames (People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnerships), which one does the press use the most to shape its discourse?
- RQ5. Are any differences observed in the content, sources, and frames used by each publication?

## **2. Theoretical framework**

### **2.1. *The media's role in the dissemination and creation of social representations***

As a result of the messages repeated over time, the media has and continues to play a significant role in the formation and development of public opinion on immigration (Amores *et al.*, 2020; Barranquero, 2021; López-Rabadán & Casero-Ripollés, 2014; Eberl *et al.*, 2018; Wright *et al.*, 2019).

When it comes to determining which topics are more important for social actors, we must bear in mind that a large volume of media attention could increase the public's concern about this matter (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Boswell, 2012; Lee *et al.*, 2008). The agenda-setting focus establishes that if the press gives extensive coverage to certain topics, citizens and public authorities will give priority to these subjects, considering them more important than others (McCombs *et al.*, 2014; Tirapo-Espín *et al.*, 2020).

If certain topics appear in the press systematically and continuously, it ensures that public opinion perceives them to be important and they are borne in mind in debates (Cohen, 1993). Equally important is the way in which a source of communication presents the subject it is reporting on. According to Goffman (1974), we would be unable to understand the world that surrounds us and make sense of our lives without certain schemata of interpretation that he calls "frames," which enable us to identify, classify, label, etc., occurrences in daily life. However, journalists face major challenges in reporting global and transnational news through these categorisations, which have significant limitations in capturing the complexity of the issues being addressed (Archetti, 2019; Hänska, 2018), such as migration and the SDGs.

The framing theory postulates that sources of communication select, highlight, and exclude certain elements of reality in order to broadcast it in an understandable and comprehensible way. In this process, as pointed out by Entman (1993), the frame used to create a news item defines the issue or problem, identifies the actors or forces that have caused the problem or act (diagnosis), evaluates the reasons and causes that led to the problem (moral judgment), and suggests guidelines or courses of action to resolve the problem or issue raised (remedies).

Given that frames perform a dual function, as internal thought structures (Chong & Druckman, 2007) and devices embedded in political discourse (Kinder & Sanders, 1990), we believe that using the SDGs as frames turns them into a cognitive device that enables us to encode, interpret, and recover the information published by the media. In this regard, it is especially relevant that the same driving forces behind the 2030 Agenda structure the SDG framework around five areas: People (SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5), Planet (SDGs 6, 12, 13, 14, 15), Prosperity (SDGs 7, 8, 9, 10, 11), Peace (SDG 16), and Partnerships (SDG 17). When this institutional proposal for tackling the SDGs is contrasted with the frames actually used by the media, it will reveal the extent to which it reflects the official view and to which of the proposed focuses it gives greatest relevance.

As focuses guide the presentation of a theme, it is especially important to consider how themes are built, based on the source chosen to cover the subject. Selecting who has a voice in the information that comprises a news article is fundamental in framing (Benson & Wood, 2015); in this case, the question is whether or not migrants are given a voice. Consequently, in our analysis, we refer to sources of this type, as they are a key element for framing the analysed articles.

### **2.2. *Migration from a sustainability perspective, in accordance with the 2030 Agenda***

In Article 29 of the Declaration of the 2030 Agenda (UN, 2015, p. 8), the United Nations General Assembly acknowledges, as never before, the role of migration in the development of countries of origin, transit, and destination.

Although the 2030 Agenda explicitly mentions the migration phenomenon in the field of development (Piper, 2017), not one SDG centres on migration. The explicit allusions to migration in the UN Declaration (2015) are found in:

SDG 8. Decent work and economic growth. Target 8.8. ‘Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, particularly women migrants, and those in precarious employment’ (UN, 2015, p. 20).

SDG 10. Reduce inequalities. Target 10.7. ‘Facilitate orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.’ Target 10.c. ‘By 2030, reduce to less than 3% the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5%’ (UN, 2015, 21). It is the SDG/target most related to human displacement.

SDG 17. Partnerships for the goals. Target 17.18. ‘By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to significantly increase the availability of high-quality, timely, and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location, and other characteristics relevant in national contexts’ (UN, 2015, 31).

Thus, although migration is not explicitly mentioned in all the SDGs, it is necessary to bear in mind that connections can be established between the SDGs and migration in subjects such as climate change or access to services (MacGregor, 2021). Along these lines, the IOM (2018, p. 21; 2021) points out that some SDGs or their targets make it possible to establish ‘direct links, in which the topics related to migration are explicit’ and ‘cross-sectoral links, in which a certain topic can affect or be affected by migration:’

SDG 1. No poverty. Migration can be an effective tool for reducing poverty between migrants and their families and can significantly contribute to development activities in both the country of origin and destination.

SDG 2. Zero hunger. Food insecurity can be a factor that causes people and families to migrate.

SDG 3. Good health and well-being. Tackling matters related to migrants’ health and well-being is a precondition for social and economic development.

SDG 4. Quality education. Education can facilitate the socioeconomic integration of migrants’ children and improve their livelihoods when they reach adulthood. Target 4.b is established as a direct link.

SDG 5. Gender equality. Migration can be a source of empowerment for women and girls, but it can also make them vulnerable to violence, abuse, and sexual exploitation. Established as a direct link in Target 5.2.

SDG 6. Clean water and sanitation. Water scarcity and related issues can affect standards of living, security, and health, which, in turn, can be a driver of migration.

SDG 7. Affordable and clean energy. Alternative and low-cost solutions can benefit vulnerable or displaced communities with little or no access to electricity.

SDG 8. Decent work and economic growth. Decent work and suitable working conditions for migrants are essential elements to successfully convert them into productive members of society and contribute to economic growth. Established as direct links in Targets 8.5, 8.7, and 8.8.

SDG 9. Industry, innovation, and infrastructure. Migrants can have valuable skills and knowledge for their countries of origin and destination and contribute towards technological development, research, and innovation.

SDG 10. Reduce inequalities. Effective governance of migration is vital to achieve safer, more orderly, and regular migration. Shown with direct links in Targets 10.7 and 10.c.

SDG 11. Sustainable cities and communities. Migrants contribute to the dynamism of cities, turning them into vibrant, dynamic hubs of economic growth and life.

SDG 12. Responsible consumption and production. Promoting models of sustainable consumption and production can help to protect migrant workers from exploitation.

- SDG 13. Climate action. Migration can be a potential climate change adaptation strategy and a way to build resilience.
- SDG 14. Life below water. Combatting the degradation of marine and coastal ecosystems and diversifying the livelihoods of communities that depend on marine resources can help to address forced displacements and migration.
- SDG 15. Life on land. Deforestation and land degradation, desertification, and the loss of biodiversity could have negative effects on communities whose livelihoods depend on natural resources and could be drivers of migration.
- SDG 16. Peace, justice, and strong institutions. Stronger, more transparent and responsible institutions and better access to justice can help protect and promote migrants' rights. Shown with a direct link in Target 16.2.
- SDG 17. Partnerships for the goals. The availability of appropriate, trustworthy, and comparable data on migration can help policymakers to establish empirically based policies and plans to address migration-related aspects of the SDGs. Identified with a direct link in Target 17.8.

### **3. Sources and methodology**

This study was carried out following the quantitative content analysis methodology (Berelson, 1952; Neuman, 2014). To select the units of analysis, the inclusive criteria of the following terms were used: ('2030 Agenda' OR 'SDGs' OR 'Sustainable Development Goals'] AND \*migra\*), using the digital newspaper archives 'MyNews', for the 2014–2021 period. This time interval was chosen because the 2030 Agenda was approved by the United Nations in September 2015, but debates on this initiative, which was to continue the path initiated by the Millennium Development Goals (2000–2015) established by the same organisation, had already begun to have public relevance a few years earlier. Furthermore, to select the newspapers, two criteria were established: firstly, work with both traditional print media and new digital formats, and secondly, choose the newspapers with the largest audience within their respective formats, according to the Asociación para la Investigación de Medios de Comunicación [Media Research Association] (2021). Finally, the following traditional newspapers were selected: *El País* (hereinafter, EP), *El Mundo* (EM), *ABC*, *La Razón* (LR), and *La Vanguardia* (LV). Among digital newspapers, the following were selected: *Elconfidencial.com* (EC), *Eldiario.es* (ED), and *Elespanol.es* (ES). The coding was carried out manually by a single coder, in order to achieve as much consistency as possible.

Based on these selection criteria, 438 units were compiled, distributed as follows: it was observed that ED (26.3%) and EP (25.6%) were the media that most linked the SDGs with the subject of migration. They were followed by EC (13.2%), ES (13.0%), and ABC (11.6%). In turn, the newspapers that paid the least amount of attention to migration were EM (1.4%), LR (3.7%), and LV (5.3%). When print media was compared to digital media, it was observed that 62.5% of the analysed units came from digital media, so it would appear that this type of source pays greater attention to the link between the SDGs and migration, especially considering that fewer digital newspapers (3) were used in this study than print (5).

In some of the indicated variables, the primary and secondary sources were differentiated. A primary source is one clearly seen as a predominant source in the analysed article. This predominance was evaluated by focusing on the following criteria: the most extensive statements relating to the analysed variable within the text of the article, in relation to the others, as well as the presence of the central idea of the variable in the headline, subheading, introductory heading, and/or standfirst of the article. Once the primary source was established within the article, in accordance with the aforementioned criteria, any other mention was considered to be of less importance and, therefore, secondary.

Bearing these points in mind, firstly, the SDGs most cited by the media were analysed, considering whether there were differences between them. Secondly, the main themes in the

corpus were presented, followed by the themes most linked to each SDG. Thirdly, we analysed the sources most used by the media and the specific ones in each newspaper. Finally, the same 17 SDGs were grouped according to the five frameworks set out by the 2030 Agenda, based on their similarity regarding the area of action to which they are oriented, as well as the purpose or objective they pursue: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnerships. Each of these frames of reference will facilitate the analysis of the importance of each one within the set of SDGs, helping to define the terms of the public debate (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Hertog & McLeod, 2008; Kinder & Sanders, 1990) introduced by the media about migration within the framework of the SDGs.

#### **4. Results analysis**

The next section presents the results divided into four sub-sections: 1) Primary and secondary SDGs linked to migration; 2) The subject of migration from the standpoint of the SDGs; 3) Sources used to write news items from the perspective of the SDGs; and 4) Frameworks for analysing migration in the 2030 Agenda.

##### **4.1. Primary and secondary SDGs linked to migration**

Upon analysing the weight of the different primary SDGs referred to in the units of analysis, without considering the ‘Several’ category that includes the units in which different SDGs are mentioned with a similar weight (Table 1), it can be observed that SDG 17 ‘Partnerships’ is the most frequent (31.7%), followed by SDG 10 ‘Reduce inequalities’ (9.8%), SDG 16 ‘Peace and justice’ (8.9%), SDG 11 ‘Sustainable cities and communities’ (6.4%), SDG 4 ‘Quality education’ (4.6%), SDG 8 ‘Decent work and economic growth’ (4.6%), and SDG 5 ‘Gender equality’ (4.1%). However, among the least mentioned are SDG 2 ‘Zero hunger’ and SDG 7 ‘Affordable and clean energy’ (0.7% in each case), and lastly, SDG 9 ‘Industry, innovation and infrastructure’ (0.2%).

Among the secondary SDGs, that is, those with the second-greatest weight in the units of analysis (Table 1), leaving out the option ‘Several SDGs’ (29.3%), once again it can be observed that the most highlighted secondary SDG is 17 ‘Partnerships’ (17.4%), followed by SDG 10 ‘Reduce inequalities’ (13.8%) and SDG 16 ‘Peace and justice’ (8.7%). In the last position are SDG 1 ‘End poverty’ (6.9%) and SDG 13 ‘Climate action’ (4.7%) (see Table 1).

Upon comparing these results with those obtained in another study carried out by CANVAS (2021), (Table 1), which analyses the news on sustainable development that appears in the media’s Twitter accounts, significant differences can be observed. In the CANVAS study, the SDGs related to environmental issues stand out as being the most mentioned in the media: SDG 13 ‘Climate change’ (41.5%); SDG 11 ‘Cities’ (24.4%); SDG 3 ‘Health’ (26.77%); SDG 8 ‘Economic growth’ (22.82%), and SDG 7 ‘Energy’ (22.1%). However, those linked to social issues, and especially migration, are among the SDGs referred to the least: SDG 5 ‘Gender equality’ (11.76%); SDG 4 ‘Quality education’ (11.65%); and SDG ‘Reduce inequalities’ (11.65%).

**Table 1.** Primary and secondary SDGs in the Spanish press and comparison with the study by CANVAS (2021) ([N] and %).

	Primary SDG (438)	Secondary SDG (276)	CANVAS (11,892)
SDG 1 End poverty	3.2	6.9	11.9
SDG 2 End hunger and achieve food security	0.7	0.7	5.26
SDG 3 Health	2.5	1.8	26.8
SDG 4 Education	4.6	2.5	11.6
SDG 5 Gender equality and empowerment of women	4.1	4.3	11.8
SDG 6 Water and sanitation	1.1	0.4	5.29
SDG 7 Affordable and clean energy	0.7	0.4	22
SDG 8 Decent work and economic growth	4.6	3.3	22.8
SDG 9 Industry, innovation, and infrastructure	0.2	1.1	20.1
SDG 10 Reduce inequalities	9.8	13.8	11.7
SDG 11 Cities	6.4	3.3	24.2
SDG 12 Responsible consumption and production	1.6	1.1	13.3
SDG 13 Climate change	3.9	4.7	41.5
SDG 14 Life below water	1.4	0.4	2.25
SDG 15 Life on land	1.8	0	13.4
SDG 16 Peace and justice	8.9	8.7	10.2
SDG 17 Partnerships	31.7	17.4	6.82
Several SDGs at a similar level	12.8	29.3	
Total	100	100	261*

\*According to CANVAS (2021), the total percentage is higher than 100 as each news article can be linked to several SDGs.

Source: Own elaboration and CANVAS (2021).

Upon performing an analysis by newspaper and focusing on the SDGs with a weight of over 4% in the set of newspapers, in all cases, except in ABC, where there is a predominance of the option ‘Several SDGs’ (25.5%), it is observed that SDG 17 ‘Partnerships’ (31.7%) is used the most, particularly by ED (48.7%), followed by LV (39.1%), EC (37.9%), LR (31.3%), and EP (24.1%). SDG 10, ‘Reduce inequalities’ (9.8%), comes second and is mostly mentioned by EM (16.7%) and LV (12.5%); ‘Peace and justice’ (SDG 16) is the next SDG mentioned the most (8.9%), and it predominates in EC (17.2%) and EM (16.7%). It is followed by SDG 11 ‘Sustainable cities and communities’ (6.4%), which is referred to the most by EP (9.8%) and ES (8.8%). SDG 4 ‘Quality education’ (4.6%) is brought up the most by ABC (9.8%) and EP (7.1%), and SDG 8 ‘Decent work and economic growth’ (4.6%) is mainly found in digital newspapers ES (7.0%), EC (6.9%), and ED (6.1%). Lastly, allusions to SDG 5 ‘Gender equality’ (4.1%) are found in EM (16.7%) and ABC (9.8%).

#### 4.2. The subject of migration from the standpoint of the SDGs

In order to learn more about subjects linked to the migration issue when the SDGs are covered, the most relevant topics were then identified. The results show that topics are mostly of a political nature (41.6%). National politics (18.7%) stand out over regional (11.9%) and international politics (11%). They are followed by large blocks of subjects related to economic aspects (9.4%), demographics (8.9%), environment (6.8%), education (4.8%), and health (1.6%). Among the most specific topics, immigration management stands out (6.2%), as well as other matters centred on women (3%).

On the other hand, an analysis of the main subjects associated with each SDG brings to light cross-cutting topics existing between SDGs, as shown in Table 2. By way of example, the Sustainable Development Goals that stand out are those that, according to the IOM (2018), are directly linked to migration, as mentioned above in the theoretical framework. SDG 4 ‘Education’, despite placing migration in the specific area of education (90% in the primary topic), as expected, also shows a wide variety of focuses, including immigration and refugee management. SDG 5 ‘Gender equality’ is clearly centred on women-related issues (61.1% as a primary topic and 42.9% a secondary topic) and also, in a significant manner, on the economy and politics. SDG 8 ‘Decent work and economic growth’ is associated with the economy (80%), but also national and regional politics, women, and immigration management. SDG 10 ‘Reduce inequalities’ is clearly oriented towards immigration management (41.9% as a primary topic and 14.3% as a secondary topic), politics, and demographics. SDG 16 ‘Peace’ orients the migration phenomenon towards politics, especially of a national (33.8%) and regional (20.3%) nature, whereas among secondary topics, immigration management stands out (30%). Lastly, SDG 17 ‘Partnerships’ clearly shows its political tone in both primary topics (77%) and in secondary topics (40.1%).

**Table 2.** Most frequent primary and secondary topics for each SDG (N and %).

SDG	Primary topic	N (438)	%	Secondary topic	N (27 6)	%
1. No poverty	economy (35.7%) demographics (35.7%) regional politics (14.3%)	14	3.2	economy (42.9%) demographics, youth, international and national politics (14.3% each)	19	6.9
2. Zero hunger	events (33%) culture (33%) national politics (33%)	3	0.7		2	0.7
3. Good health and well-being	health (63.7%) demographics (27.3%) women (9.1%)	11	2.5	environment (22.2%), management, demographics, health, children, refugees, national and international politics (11.1% each)	5	1.8
4. Quality education	education (90%) immigration management (5%) national politics (5%)	20	4.6	children (25%) refugees (25%) regional politics (25%)	7	2.5
5. Gender equality	women (61.1%) economy (11.1%) national politics (11.1%)	18	4.1	women (42.9%) economy (14.3%) demographics and regional politics (7.1% each)	12	4.3
6. Clean water and sanitation	environment (60%) demographics (20%) volunteer work (20%)	5	1.1	health (50%) other (50%)	1	0.4
7. Affordable and clean energy	environment (66.7%) demographics (33.3%)	3	0.7	not mentioned	0	0
8. Decent work and economic growth	economy (80%) events (5%) immigration management (5%) demographics (5%)	20	4.6	national politics (23.5%) regional politics (23.5%) women (17.6%)	9	3.3
9. Industry, innovation, and infrastructure	education (100%)	1	0.2	youth (100%)	3	1.1



10. Reduce inequalities	immigration management (41.9%) demographics (25.6%)	43	9.8	regional politics (22.9%) immigration management (14.3%) economy and national politics (11.4% each)	38	13.8
11. Sustainable cities and communities	demographics (28.6%) regional politics (17.9%)	28	6.4	environment (31.3%) demographics and national politics (18.8%)	9	3.3
12. Responsible consumption and production	economy (42.9%) culture (14.3%) national politics (14.3%)	7	1.6	environment and national politics (33.3% each) economy (16.7%)	3	1.1
13. Climate action	environment (64.7%) demographics (17.6%) immigration management (5.9%)	17	3.9	environment (30.8%) demographics (23.1%) international politics and economy (15.4% each)	13	4.7
14. Life below water	environment (66.7%) demographics (16.7%) events (16.7%)	6	1.4	environment (66.7%) economy (33.3%)	1	0.4
15. Life on land	environment (87.5%) demographics (12.5%)	8	1.8	international politics (100%)	0	0
16. Peace, justice, and strong institutions	national politics (33.3%) regional politics (20.5%) international politics (15.4%)	39	8.9	immigration management (30%) events (15%) delinquency and demographics (10% each)	24	8.7
17. Partnerships for the goals	politics (33.8%) regional politics (22.3%) international politics (20.9%)	139	31.7	international politics (25.7%) national politics (25.7%) immigration management (14.9%)	48	17.4
Several	national politics (28.6%) international politics (19.6%) regional politics (16.1%)	56	12.8	national politics (26.1%) events (17.45%) international politics (13%)	81	29.3

Source: Own elaboration.

#### 4.3. Sources used to write news items from the perspective of the SDGs

When the media write articles, they use different kinds of sources that help to highlight the chosen protagonist or frame. In this study, the most frequently used primary source is the journalist or columnist themselves (22.4%), followed by sources from the central government (18%), along with autonomous governments (10%), local councils (1.8%), and provincial governments (0.9%), which represent 30.7%. In third place, is the use of sources from the United Nations (11.2%) and, in fourth place, articles written by experts (10.3%). Lastly are sources from NGOs (6.2%).

A detailed analysis by source and newspaper reveals some specific trends (Table 3). Thus, EP leans towards social sources, including specialised professionals such as journalists (39.3%) and experts (14.3%), but it does not neglect the native source on the SDGs, the UN (11.6%). It would appear that EM prefers to use official sources from the central government (33.3%), although it also uses social sources, such as journalists and experts (16.7% in each case). It is worth noting that EM (16.7%), followed by EP (2.7%), is the newspaper that appears to pay the most attention to political party members as a primary source. In the case of ABC, the use of official sources stands out, particularly those from autonomous governments (23.5%), local councils (11.8%), and provincial governments (7.8%). On the other hand, LR especially uses social sources like journalists and the UN (25% in each case) and also those from the central government (18.8%). However, LV appears to combine the journalists themselves (30.4%) as sources with the regional government (21.7%) as an official source.

Meanwhile, among digital media, EC mainly prefers official sources from the central government (41.4%) together with the UN (25.9%). ED appears to clearly centre on official sources from the central government (26.1%) or the autonomous government (20.9%). Lastly, ES, like EP, seems to focus its attention on social sources, particularly the journalists themselves (35.1%), experts (17.5%), and NGOs (15.8%).

It is worth highlighting that the protagonists of the subject, the migrants themselves, are rarely used as sources. The reason is because the migrants themselves (0.7%) and the associations representing them (0.2%) are given a voice on very few occasions. EP and EC are the most receptive to these sources.

**Table 3.** Primary source by newspapers.

	EP		EM		ABC		LR		LV		EC		ED		ES	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Journalist/ columnist	44	39.3	1	16.7	4	7.8	4	25	7	30.4	4	6.9	14	12.2	20	35.1
Central government	8	7.1	2	33.3	4	7.8	3	18.8	1	4.3	24	41.4	30	26.1	7	12.3
United Nations	13	11.6	0	0.0	2	3.9	4	25	2	8.7	15	25.9	12	10.4	1	1.8
Expert	16	14.3	1	16.7	3	5.9	1	6.3	3	13	3	5.2	8	7	10	17.5
Autonomous government	1	0.9	0	0	12	23.5	0	0	5	21.7	0	0	24	20.9	2	3.5
Other	7	6.3	1	16.7	8	15.7	2	12.5	3	13	4	6.9	14	12.2	2	3.5
NGO	7	6.3	0	0	2	3.9	1	6.3	0	0	3	5.2	5	4.3	9	15.8
Total	112	100	6	100	51	100	16	100	23	100	58	100	115	100	57	100

Source: Own elaboration.

When the primary source is cross-referenced with the primary topic (Table 4), it is observed that journalists (23.5%) and the central government (38%) are the primary source for issues related to national politics. Likewise, these same sources, together with those from the UN, are used to cover international politics. However, nearly half the time, regional politics are addressed with sources from autonomous governments (40.9%). Demographics is mainly covered using UN sources (24.5%) and experts (15.6%). The subject of economy is covered by sources from the central government (20.3%) and the UN (10.2%). Environmental issues are mainly addressed by experts (15.6%), and the sources on immigration management come from the autonomous governments (11.4%) and NGOs (11.4%). It is also worth highlighting that topics related to children (14.8%) and women (7.4%) are mostly covered by sources linked to NGOs.

**Table 4.** Primary source and main topic.

	Primary source					
	Journalists	Central government	UN	Autonomous government	Experts	NGO
Main topic	National politics 23.5%	National politics 38%	Demographics 24.5%	Regional politics 40.9%	Demographics 15.6%	Children 14.8%
	International politics 16.3%	International politics 15.2%	International politics 14.3%	Economy 13.6%	Environment 15.6%	Immigration management 11.1%
	Events 13.3%	Economy 20.3%	Economy 10.2%	Immigration management 11.4%	Education 15.6%	Events 11.1%

Source: Own elaboration.

#### 4.4. Frameworks for analysing migrations in the 2030 Agenda

Following the 2030 Agenda guidelines, we grouped together the primary SDG in the different newspapers into the categories established as frames: ‘People’ (SDG 1, 2, 3, 4, 5), ‘Planet’ (SDG 6, 12, 13, 14, 15), ‘Prosperity’ (SDG 7, 8, 9, 10, 11), ‘Peace’ (SDG 16), and ‘Partnerships’ (SDG 17), as indicated in the methodology section.

The results show that the ‘Partnerships’ primary frame (31.7%) was used the most, followed by the ‘Prosperity’ frame (21.7%), ‘People’ (15.1%), ‘Planet’ (9.8%), and ‘Peace’ (8.9%) (Table 5).

**Table 5.** Frames by newspapers ([N] and %).

	EP (112)	EM (6)	ABC (51)	LR (16)	LV (23)	EC (58)	ED (115)	ES (57)	Total (470)	Total %
People	18.8	16.7	25.5	18.8	13	6.9	10.4	15.8	66	15.1
Prosperity	8.9	16.7	7.8	12.5	4.3	10.3	4.3	24.6	43	9.8
Planet	21.4	16.7	13.7	18.8	21.7	19	22.6	31.6	95	21.7
Peace	3.6	16.7	7.8	12.5	13	17.2	9.6	7	39	8.9
Partnerships	24.1	16.7	19.6	31.3	39.1	37.9	48.7	15.8	139	31.7
Several	23.2	16.7	25.5	6.3	8.7	8.6	4.3	5.3	56	12.8

Source: Own elaboration.

By newspapers, all except *ABC* and *ES* give priority to the ‘Partnerships’ frame, particularly *ED* (48.7%). They are then followed by *LV* (39.1%), *EC* (37.9%), *LR* (31.3%), and *EP* (24.1%). However, the ‘People’ frame is a priority for *ABC* (25.5%), whereas *ES* seems to lean towards the ‘Planet’ frame (31.6%).

## 5. Conclusions

Our analysis to verify the importance of the migration phenomenon within the area of sustainability, for both traditional and digital press, revealed that when the press addresses migration, it is not usually linked to the SDGs. In the 2014–2021 period under study, only 438 units were identified in the total of eight newspapers analysed. Furthermore, it was observed that migration was not given a prominent position in a large part of the total units studied, given that it was the main objective of the news article in only 18% of the total. When comparing traditional and digital press, it was seen that 62.5% of the units analysed came from digital press, so it would appear that such sources pay more attention to the link between the SDGs and migration, especially when bearing in mind that fewer digital newspapers (3) were included in this study than print media (5).

Secondly, it should be pointed out that the SDG most commonly linked to the subject of migration by the newspapers under study is SDG 17 ‘Partnerships’ (31.7%), with the exception of *ABC* and *ES*, with *ED* standing out among them (48.7%). The reason for this predominance could be due to that fact that this is a key SDG for successfully achieving the 2030 Agenda. As explained by the former Secretary General of the UN, Ban Ki-Moon, ‘To successfully implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we must swiftly move from commitments to action. To this end, we need solid, inclusive and comprehensive partnerships at all levels’ (UN, n.d.). In order of importance, this SDG is followed by SDG 10 ‘Reduce inequalities’ (9.8%), SDG 16 ‘Peace’ (8.9%), SDG 11 ‘Cities’ (6.4%), SDG 4 ‘Education’ (4.6%), SDG 8 ‘Decent work and economic growth’ (4.6%), and SDG 5 ‘Gender equality’ (4.1%). These results are interesting, as it can be confirmed that the SDGs most linked to migration according to the IOM (2018), except SDG ODS 11, are those that ‘are directly linked to migration’, which are found the most in the press analysed in this study.

From the perspective of themes, the first noteworthy aspect is their plurality and cross-cutting nature. However, those that attract the media's attention when it covers the SDGs and migration are linked to international, national, and regional politics (a total of 41.6%). This could be due to several reasons. First, the UN itself establishes that the SDGs are “universally applicable” and “each Government will also decide how these aspirational and global targets should be incorporated into national planning processes, policies, and strategies” (UN, 2015, p. 13, paragraph 55). This can also be understood from the repeated and marked use of official sources as both primary and secondary sources. This fact contributes to rendering migrants invisible and silencing their voice (only 0.9% as a primary source and 2.4% as a secondary source). A third explanation could be found in type of source used to represent and convey the migration phenomenon. Generally speaking, the most noteworthy finding in this study is that some themes and sources can be paired. Therefore, when the primary topic is linked to international or national politics, there is a predominance of journalists and the central government as sources. Whereas with demographic topics, the UN is the predominant source, as well as experts; for the subject of the economy, the central and autonomous governments stand out, together with the UN; immigration management is presented using native sources from autonomous governments and NGOs, that is, those that deal with migrant people directly. Furthermore, some nuances can be noted when the choice of sources is analysed by newspaper. For EP, ES, LR, LV and ED, their primary sources include journalists or columnists. However, EM and EC use the central government, and ABC prefers sources from autonomous or local governments. In other words, the former lean towards their own sources, and the latter prefer official sources.

Using the 2030 Agenda's themes as frames, the most original contribution of this study, we find that the media tends to put the subject of migration in the 'Partnerships' frame (31.7%), followed by the 'Planet' (21.7%) and 'People' (15.1%) frames. By contrast, the 'Prosperity' (9.8%) and 'Peace' (8.9%) frames have less relevance. This is a noteworthy result, as it appears to indicate that coverage of migration in the media takes a similar line to the one established by the UN (n.d.b), which states that, 'A successful sustainable development agenda requires partnerships between governments, the private sector and civil society. These inclusive partnerships built upon principles and values, a shared vision, and shared goals that place people and the planet at the centre, are needed at the global, regional, national and local level'. Moreover, in the analysis by newspaper, a preference is detected for the 'Partnerships' frame, with the exception of ABC, which uses the 'People' frame the most, and ES, which leans towards the 'Prosperity' and 'Planet' frames.

To sum up, coverage of migration from the perspective of the SDGs shows a marked political tone centred on the importance of partnerships and international agreements as they affect all countries of origin, transit, and destination. In addition, it is important to stress that the discourse on sustainability used by the media is similar to the narrative presented by the UN, highlighting a greater use of the 'Partnerships', 'People', and 'Planet' frames. The 'Peace' and 'Prosperity' frames are not used as frequently. On the one hand, this would reveal the acceptance of the institutional framework for focusing on the SDGs, proposed by international organisations, and on the other, the contradiction between the economic relevance of the migration phenomenon and the fact that the press struggles to place it in the 'Prosperity' frame: “We are determined to ensure that all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives and that economic, social, and technological progress occurs in harmony with nature” (UN, 2015, p. 2).

Seven years after the 2030 Agenda was launched, it seems that the SDGs are not a resource frequently used by the Spanish press to analyse and present the migration phenomenon from a sustainability perspective; this is undoubtedly due to the plurality and complexity of both the migration phenomenon and the SDGs themselves.

This finding also serves to point out the limitations of this work. To begin with, this is a preliminary, exploratory work, in a field that is still under construction and relatively unstable due to the constant changes in the political climate that affect the implementation of policies concerning both sustainability and migration. Moreover, the complexity of communicating both aspects related to sustainability and those related to migration increases when they are considered together, especially in the general media, which tends to simplify and present the most superficial aspects of these issues, subordinating them to current political debates.

However, the proposed analytical framework opens interesting possibilities to continue analysing the reception and presentation of migration within the framework of sustainability. It uses the SDG scheme itself as an interpretive framework to examine the way in which the media helps to develop the public agenda proposed internationally by the United Nations in 2015 with the intention of moving forward on the path of sustainable development, leaving no one behind.

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