

Received: 01/03/2022 - Accepted: 18/03/2022 - Published: 28/03/2022

HOW ARE THE IMMIGRANT CHARACTERS IN THE SPANISH SERIES BROADCASTED ON STREAMING PLATFORMS?

CÓMO SON LOS PERSONAJES INMIGRANTES EN LAS SERIES ESPAÑOLAS EMITIDAS EN PLATAFORMAS DE STREAMING

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How to cite the article:

Martín-García, T., Marcos-Ramos, M., & González-de-Garay, B. (2022). How are the immigrant characters in Spanish series broadcasted on streaming platforms? *Revista de Comunicación de la SEECI*, 55, 37-56. <http://doi.org/10.15198/seeci.2022.e776>

ABSTRACT

Introduction. The number of fiction series has increased considerably with the development of streaming platforms. At the same time, in recent years Spanish society has been transformed towards multiculturalism, as a result of new migratory processes. However, this new audiovisual scenario has hardly been the subject of research studies, since the representation on platforms constitutes an area scarcely explored in the Spanish academic context. Therefore, the main objective of this research is to analyze the current representation of immigration in television series broadcast on the main streaming platforms. **Methodology:** For this purpose, a content analysis was carried out on 38 Spanish-created series, broadcast between 2017 and 2020, and on a total of 1509 characters (n=1509). **Results:** Among the main results of this work, it was found that immigrant characters are underrepresented and, when present, they hardly occupy leading roles. Together with the scarce presence of these types of characters, stereotypical features and characteristics in their forms of representation are appreciated. **Discussion:** Despite the presence of foreign/immigrant characters in Spanish production series, they are still a minority and their representation is biased and often stereotypical, as reflected, for example, by the significant relationship between the nationality of the character and the socioeconomic level with which he/she is represented. For all these reasons, the new sphere of Spanish fiction series does not seem to reflect the Spanish socio-cultural reality through its plots and characters.

Keywords: streaming, platforms, series, characters, stereotypes, immigration, racism, Spain, fiction.

RESUMEN

Introducción: La oferta de series de ficción ha aumentado de forma considerable con la entrada en escena de las plataformas de *streaming*. Al mismo tiempo, en los últimos años la sociedad española ha vivido una importante transformación hacia la multiculturalidad, fruto de nuevos procesos migratorios. Sin embargo, este nuevo escenario audiovisual apenas ha sido objeto de estudios de investigación, pues la representación en plataformas constituye un área escasamente explorada en el contexto académico español. Por eso, esta investigación tiene como principal objetivo analizar la representación actual de la inmigración en las series de televisión emitidas en las principales plataformas de *streaming*. **Metodología:** Para ello, se ha efectuado un análisis de contenido a 38 series de creación española, emitidas entre los años 2017 y 2020, y a un total de 1509 personajes (n=1509). **Resultados:** Entre los principales resultados de este trabajo se ha comprobado que los personajes inmigrantes están infrarrepresentados y, cuando están presentes, apenas ocupan papeles protagonistas. Junto con la escasa presencia de este tipo de personajes se aprecian rasgos y características estereotípicas en sus formas de representación. **Discusión:** La presencia de personajes extranjeros/inmigrantes en las series de producción española sigue siendo minoritaria y su representación está sesgada y es, a menudo, estereotípica, como refleja, por ejemplo, la relación significativa entre la nacionalidad del personaje y el nivel socioeconómico con el que se representa. Por todo ello, la nueva esfera de series de ficción españolas no parece reflejar la realidad sociocultural española a través de sus tramas y personajes.

Palabras clave: plataformas, *streaming*, series, personajes, estereotipos, inmigración, racismo, España, ficción.

COMO SÃO OS PERSONAGENS IMIGRANTES NAS SÉRIES ESPANHOLAS TRANSMITIDAS NAS PLATAFORMAS DE STREAMING

RESUMO

Introdução: A oferta de séries de ficção aumentou consideravelmente com a entrada em cena das plataformas de streaming. Ao mesmo tempo, nos últimos anos, a sociedade espanhola passou por uma importante transformação em direção ao multiculturalismo, fruto de novos processos migratórios. No entanto, esse novo cenário audiovisual dificilmente tem sido objeto de estudos de pesquisa, pois a representação em plataformas é uma área pouco explorada no contexto acadêmico espanhol. Portanto, esta pesquisa tem como objetivo principal analisar a representação atual da imigração em séries televisivas veiculadas nas principais plataformas de streaming. **Metodologia:** Para isso, foi realizada uma análise de conteúdo em 38 séries de criação espanhola, transmitidas entre 2017 e 2020, e um total de 1509 personagens (n=1509). **Resultados:** Entre os principais resultados

deste trabalho, verificou-se que os personagens imigrantes estão sub-representados e, quando presentes, dificilmente ocupam papéis de liderança. Junto com a escassa presença desse tipo de personagens, traços e características estereotipadas podem ser vistos em suas formas de representação. Discussão: A presença de personagens estrangeiros/imigrantes em séries de produção espanhola continua a ser minoritária e sua representação é tendenciosa e muitas vezes estereotipada, como refletido, por exemplo, pela relação significativa entre a nacionalidade do personagem e o nível socioeconômico com o aquele que está representado. Por todas essas razões, a nova esfera da série de ficção espanhola não parece refletir a realidade sociocultural espanhola por meio de seus enredos e personagens.

Palavras-chave: plataformas, streaming, séries, personagens, estereótipos, imigração, racismo, Espanha, ficção.

Translation by **Paula González** (Universidad Católica Andrés Bello, Venezuela)

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the Spanish population has been evolving towards great multiculturalism as a result of the strong immigration flows in the 2000s, especially between 2004 and 2008, when Spain received 3.7 million people from different places of the world (INE, 2020). The economic crisis of 2008 meant a break in the arrival of immigrants to our country. In recent years, the figures have not increased as much as in previous years, but the migratory balance continues to be positive, with 748,759 arrivals in 2019 and 230,026 in 2020, a significantly lower figure as a result of the pandemic. It is evident that our society has evolved demographically and this change coincides with the transformation process that the world of audiovisual creation is undergoing due to the emergence and establishment of new streaming platforms. The arrival on the scene of these new spaces for audiovisual consumption and the high demand for new fiction by viewers has brought with it a significant increase in the supply of fiction series. For many years, by demonstrating the enormous power of the media and, especially, television to create social models, the study of audiovisual fiction has been encouraged from different perspectives (economic, historical, thematic...). However, there are still few studies that analyze the platforms as a broadcasting and content-generator medium, and even more scarce are the research works focused on the representation of immigrant characters. There have been many research works that have been developed in recent years focusing on general television fiction (Marcos, Igartua, 2014; Marcos, Igartua, Frutos, Barrios, Ortega, 2014; Igartua, Marcos, Alvidrez, Piñeiro, 2013; Marcos, González de Garay, Portillo, 2019; Igartua, Ortega, Barrios, Camarero, Ramos, Piñeiro, and Alvidrez 2011; Galán, 2006; Romero, de Casas, Maraver, Pérez, 2018; Malavé, 2014; Biscarrat, Meléndez, 2014; Abad, Fernandez, 2018; Marcos, 2014). The analysis of the representation of immigrant characters in Spanish-produced series for streaming platforms has hardly been developed in our country. In this sense, the study that serves as the basis for the work presented here is the one carried out by Marcos, González de Garay, and Portillo (2019), on the representation of immigrant characters in prime-time fiction series.

According to Van Dijk (2010), the discursive practices of racism are not necessarily intentional but are based on the daily life of society, where certain stereotypes are often normalized, and where immigrants and ethnic minorities have less access to television or other media. In this sense, Hartley (2012) affirms that minority groups have difficulties in accessing the media and that, therefore, they are unable to establish their point of view in public opinion and, even when they do, they are often disappointed by the coverage they receive. This systematic discrimination is not only caused by the owners of those media outlets but is directly related to the structure of press routines that, according to various research works, promote a biased and prejudiced image of immigrants (Martínez, 2017; Matarín, 2018; Gómez, Aguerri, Gimeno, 2021). Currently, the media have obtained very significant importance since they create social memories and meaning hand in hand with other traditional institutions such as the family, the school, etc. María Martínez Lirola (2013) affirms that the media are the main institution of ideological reproduction in industrialized societies. In fact, most of our knowledge and beliefs do not come from our experiences but from all that information that we read or hear through the media.

Skin color is still a problem in the cinematographic field, especially in one of the most important industries in the world, and the one that has most influenced world cinema, Hollywood. In June 2021, the musical *In the Heights* (Chu, 2021) premiered and on the same day of the presentation, the journalist Felice León (of Afro-Cuban origin) published an article in *The Root* magazine denouncing that the main Latin characters were light-skinned and could pass for white and the only black Latinos who appeared did so playing secondary roles and with very few lines of dialogue (Gómez, 2021). It is important to note that this type of discrimination is also present in non-white communities. In this line, De Sousa (2021) affirms that skin color has acquired decisive importance when determining the systematic differences in treatment within groups that share the same "racialized identity" to designate this differential treatment.

The stereotypes towards immigrants in Spanish society are a reality, also reflected in television fiction, as can be confirmed in the words of the actress of Asian origin Songa Park: "in Spanish series, yellow or black skinned people are not shown no matter how Spanish we are. And if we are shown, it is as illegals or gangsters. For that, it is better not to be shown" (Ruiz, 2018). This statement is consistent with the studies carried out by Galán (2006), Igartua et al. (2011), Marcos et al. (2014), and Marcos, González de Garay, and Portillo (2019), among others, in which this behavior has been observed in Spanish fiction regarding immigrant or foreign characters since a stereotyped image is promoted, where the underrepresentation, the performance of unstable professions, and where these characters are almost systematically linked to criminal activities prevails.

In this sense, it is also important to remember that audiovisual creation can contribute enormously to confronting stereotypes and racial discrimination, as shown by some recent research on fiction series. This is the case of the study developed by the organization Define American (2020), together with the research and evaluation center Norman Lear Center, of the University of Southern California, which concludes, among other interesting results, that fictional series with immigrant

characters can help change viewers' attitudes towards immigration, fostering a more inclusive attitude and avoiding certain stereotypical relationships such as crime and immigration.

This type of analysis can offer very revealing data that really contribute to improving the image of immigrants but, so far, not much research has been carried out on streaming platforms in Spain, due, among other things, to their recent appearance, although they have already meant a great revolution in the audiovisual industry and a break with traditional television consumption. Digital streaming platforms have more and more weight in society since one in three Spanish households uses them to watch series and movies online, being Netflix (with 2.2 million households) and Movistar+ (with 2 million) the dominant ones (Ruiz, 2019). For all these reasons, it is of great importance to carry out research that focuses its object of study on the series that are produced and/or broadcast on these platforms to be able to reveal important data regarding immigration.

The analysis presented below aims to delve into the representation of immigration in Spanish-produced series that are currently broadcast on streaming platforms. To do this, among other aspects, the type of roles played by the immigrant character, the attributes used for their description, and the actions and behaviors they perform throughout the plot have been studied.

2. OBJECTIVES

The study presented below aims to delve into the representation of immigration in Spanish-produced series that are currently broadcast on streaming platforms. To do this, among other aspects, the type of roles played by the immigrant character, the attributes used for their description, and the actions and behaviors they perform throughout the plot have been studied. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: It is expected to find an under-representation of immigrant/foreign characters in the Spanish original series of paid platforms.

H2: The immigrant/foreign characters will occupy a greater proportion of secondary or background roles than the native characters.

H3: The immigrant characters will have a lower socioeconomic level than the national characters, they will have a lower level of education, and they will perform less qualified professions than the national characters.

H4: The immigrant/foreign characters will have violent behavior in greater proportion than the national characters.

3. METHODOLOGY

Together with the initial theoretical review, to determine the status of the representation of immigration in the Spanish series, a quantitative methodology has been used through content analysis. In this way, the characters have been analyzed

as a basic unit, taking into consideration both the episode as a whole and the characters, since they are "the segment of content that will be necessary to consider as a base with a view to categorization and frequency count" (Bardin, 1986, p. 79). Content analysis has been carried out using human coding. For this, 5 coders collected the data through a coding form and a codebook of twenty pages with more than 80 different variables used and validated in other research (Marcos, 2014; Marcos et al., 2019; De-Caso-Bausela, et al., 2020).

3.1. Sample of Spanish series broadcast on streaming platforms

The total sample analyzed is made up of 38 Spanish-produced series broadcast between 2017-2020 on the main streaming platforms (Netflix, Amazon Prime, Movistar, HBO Spain, and AtresPlayer), from which a total of 1509 characters were extracted (n=1509) to determine if there is a relationship between the type of characters and nationality or if there is also a relationship between aspects such as nationality and educational level and socioeconomic level, etc. The choice of the analyzed chapters was made randomly, limiting itself to two chapters per series if there were more than 2 seasons.

Table 1.

Description of the analyzed sample

ID	Series	Platform	Episode		Characters
1	High Seas	(Netflix, 2019)	S01E05	"The Storm"	23
2	High Seas	(Netflix, 2019)	S02E01	"Casandra"	27
3	Arde Madrid	(Movistar, 2018)	S01E07	"Dios es Dios y yo soy yo"	16
4	Capítulo 0	(Movistar, 2018)	S02E04	"Criminal Friends"	19
5	Conquistadores: Adventvm	(Movistar, 2017)	S01E01	"Las llaves del mar"	21
6	Criminal	(Netflix, 2019)	S01E02	"Carmen"	7
7	Three Days of Christmas	(Netflix, 2019)	S01E01	"Capitulo 1"	13
8	El día de Mañana	(Movistar, 2018)	S01E01	Episode 1	28
9	El embarcadero	(Movistar, 2019)	S01E04	Episode 4	12
10	The Ministry of Time	(Netflix, 2018)	S03E03	"Time of witchcraft"	21
11	El Nudo	(Atres Player, Premium, 2019)	S01E01	"Veritas Solve"	20
12	The Neighbor	(Netflix, 2020)	S01E07	Episode 7	12
13	Elite	(Netflix, 2018)	S01E04	"El amor es una droga"	29
14	Elite	(Netflix, 2019)	S02E06	"66 horas desaparecido"	26
15	En el corredor de la Muerte	(Movistar, 2019)	S01E04	"2008-2019"	19
16	Félix	(Movistar, 2018)	S01E02	Episode 2	14
17	Foodie Love	(HBO, 2019)	S01E01	"Esto es Francia"	10
18	Gigantes	(Movistar, 2018)	S02E05	"Mar eterno"	27
19	Hache	(Netflix, 2019)	S01E06	"Marsella"	24
20	Hierro	(Movistar, 2019)	S01E01	Episodio 1	26
21	Instinto	(Movistar, 2019)	S01E04	Episodio 4	22
22	Justo Antes de Cristo	(Movistar, 2019)	S01E06	"Cornelio Pison"	20
23	Money Heist	(Netflix, 2019)	S03E06	"Nada tenía"	29

				importancia"	
24	The Plague	(Movistar, 2018)	S02E04	"El esclavo"	26
25	La Zona	(Movistar, 2017)	S01E08	"El último lobo"	25
26	Cable Girls	(Netflix, 2017)	S01E08	"Love"	18
27	Cable Girls	(Netflix, 2019)	S04E07	"Happiness"	24
28	Matar al padre	(Movistar, 2018)	S01E02	"2004"	21
29	Merli	(Movistar, 2019)	S01E05	"Bizitza (la vida)"	16
30	Mira lo que has hecho	(Movistar, 2018)	S02E02	"El hijo de Beto"	29
31	Paquita Salas	(Netflix, 2019)	S03E04	"Viral"	11
32	Paquita Salas	(Netflix, 2018)	S02E03	"El Secreto"	18
33	Pequeñas Coincidencias	(AmazonPrime, 2018)	S01E04	"Noche de San Juan"	16
34	Skam España	(Movistar, 2018)	S02E11	"Fin"	11
35	Velvet Colección	(Movistar, 2017)	S02E03	"La emperatriz"	22
37	Vergüenza	(Movistar, 2017)	S02E05	"Distintos tipos de Personas"	19
38	Perfect Life	(Movistar, 2019)	S01E07	"Cuando todo se derrumba"	17
39	Money Heist	(Netflix, 2020)	S04E03	"Cuando todo se derrumba"	22

Source: Own elaboration

3.2. The codebook

For the analysis of the selected sample, a coding sheet and a codebook made up of more than 80 variables were prepared. Each character was first coded based on general data such as age, gender, nationality, geographic origin, etc. To quantify questions related to the narrative level of each character (main, secondary, or background) another group of variables was used based on the typology of Mastro and Greenberg (2000). Their personality traits were also measured, among other variables, based on the study by Igartua et al. (1998) with which an attempt is made to verify, on a three-point scale, the relevance of a series of traits in each of the analyzed characters. Other variables that were analyzed are the characterization, if they carry out or are victims of violent behavior, besides analyzing their type, if they have conversations and what types they are, etc.

3.3. Reliability of the analysis model

Once the coding phase was completed and to determine the reliability of the content analysis, it was verified that all the analysts had internalized each of the variables, that they understood the same thing, and that they perfectly understood the process, for which an intercoder reliability evaluation was carried out. As Krippendorff (1990, p. 104) indicates, "observers, encoders, and judges must be familiar with the nature of the material they have to record but they must also be able to reliably handle the categories and terms that make up the language of data. It is not easy to meet this double requirement". The process was carried out with more than 15% of the sample (Igartua, 2006). Intercoder reliability was calculated using Krippendorff's alpha and observed percent agreement, combining both measures due to the controversy involving alpha, pi, and kappa coefficients when data distributions are skewed (Lovejoy, Watson, Lacy, Riffe, 2016).

In this sense, 32 of the variables taken into account yielded intercoder reliability results above the critical value of 0.60. Likewise, another 20 variables were measured with the percentage of agreement observed. To analyze reliability, both measures of agreement were combined, due to the controversy involving alpha, pi, and kappa coefficients when data distributions are skewed (Lovejoy, Watson, Lacy, and Riffe 2016; Zhao, Feng, Liu, and Deng, 2018). After verifying the reliability, the data analysis continued.

Table 2.*Reliability data*

n	Variable	Reliability	n	Variable	Reliability
1	Type	ak 0,91	27	Violent Behavior: Property Damage	ak 0,74
2	Gender	ak 0,94	28	Carrying out or executing acts of intimidation	ak 0,75
3	Sexual orientation	PAo 1,00	29	Making "hostile comments"	ak 0,72
4	Age group	ak 0,53	30	Suffers or is the victim of major physical attacks	ak 0,65
5	Educational level	ak0,8	31	Suffers or is the victim of minor physical attacks	ak 0,84
6	Nationality	ak0,87	32	Suffers or is the victim of acts that cause damage to property	ak 0,56
7	Geographical origin	ak 0,56	33	Suffers or is the victim of acts of intimidation	ak 0,69
8	Ethnicity	ak0,77	34	Suffers or is the victim of hostile comments	ak 0,31
9	Socioeconomic level	ak 0,83	35	Personality trait: friendly	ak 0,58
10	Religious practice	ak 0,41	36	Personality trait: open extrovert	ak 0,6
11	Occupation	ak 0,91	37	Personality trait: good (good heart)	ak 0,68
12	Civil status	ak 0,89	38	Personality trait: disloyal or treacherous	ak 0,7
13	Personal objectives	ak 0,87	39	Personality trait: unfair	ak 0,65
14	Workplace objectives	ak 0,9	40	Personality trait: aggressive	ak 0,72
15	Actively pursue their goals	ak 0,67	41	Personality trait: smart	ak 0,5
16	Passively pursue their goals	ak 0,64	42	Personality trait: hardworking	ak 0,39
17	Pursue their goals through sex	ak 0,9	43	Personality trait: grateful	ak 0,65
18	Pursue their goals through violence	ak 0,68	44	Personality trait: conflicted	ak 0,78
19	Pursue their goals through ethics	ak 0,34	45	Personality trait: racist	ak 0,35
20	The character is hypersexualized	ak 0,66	46	Personality trait: intolerant	ak 0,76
21	Interaction with other characters	ak 0,83	47	Personality trait: seductive	ak 0,8
22	Talks to other characters of the same gender	PAo 1,00	48	Personality trait: irresponsible	ak 0,72
23	If the character identifies as a woman, she talks to other women about something other than a man	PAo 1,00	49	Personality trait: maternal/paternal	ak 0,59

24	If the character identifies as a man, he talks to other men about a woman	PAo 1,00	50	Personality trait: weak	ak 0,54
25	Violent behavior: major physical attacks	ak 0,75	51	Personality trait: wicked	ak 0,68
26	Violent behavior: minor physical attacks	ak 0,84	52	Personality trait: courageous	ak 0,47

Source: Own elaboration

4. RESULTS

Next, the main results are shown concerning the theoretical review carried out and according to the hypotheses raised about the immigrant/foreign and national/native characters that appear in the analyzed fiction regarding different aspects such as their nationality and geographical origin, type of character, qualification, and professional status, etc.

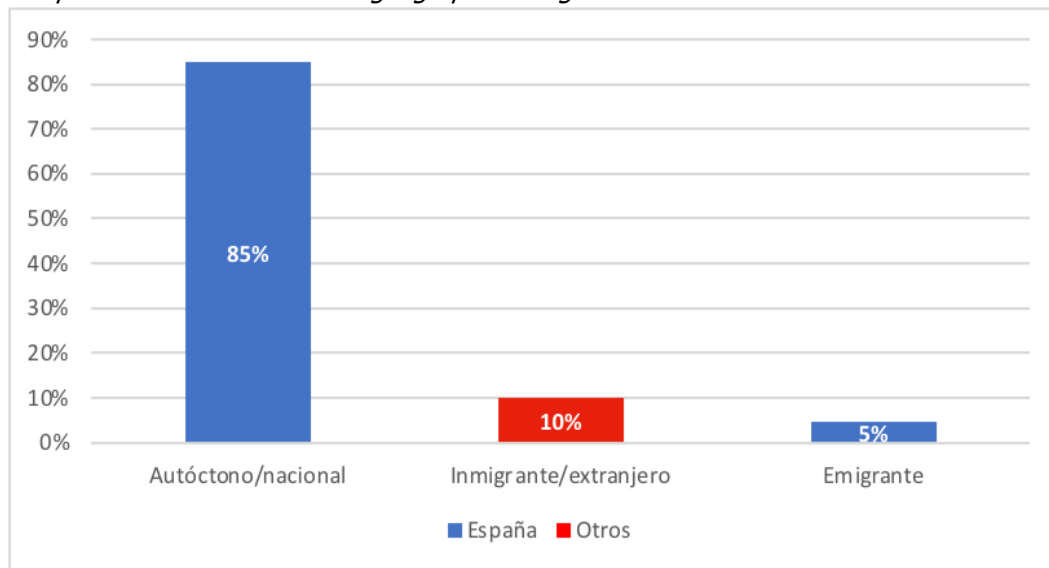
4.1. Hypothesis 1. It is expected to find an under-representation of immigrant/foreign characters in the Spanish original series of paid platforms

The first hypothesis tried to verify if there was an underrepresentation of foreign characters in the Spanish series broadcast on the main paid platforms. To do this, it was analyzed whether there was the same percentage of immigrant/foreign population in national fiction as that which appears in the data from the latest official records in Spanish society (INE, 2021).

According to the data offered by the INE in January 2021, the population of Spain was 47,394,223. Of this figure, 5,375,917 corresponds to the foreign population, which represents 11.34% of the total Spanish population.

After analyzing the nationality of the characters, it was identified that 85% of the 1,284 characters analyzed were nationals (characters born in the same country as the plot of the series), and 10% corresponded to immigrant characters.

Figure 1.
Relationship between characters and geographical origin



Source: Own elaboration

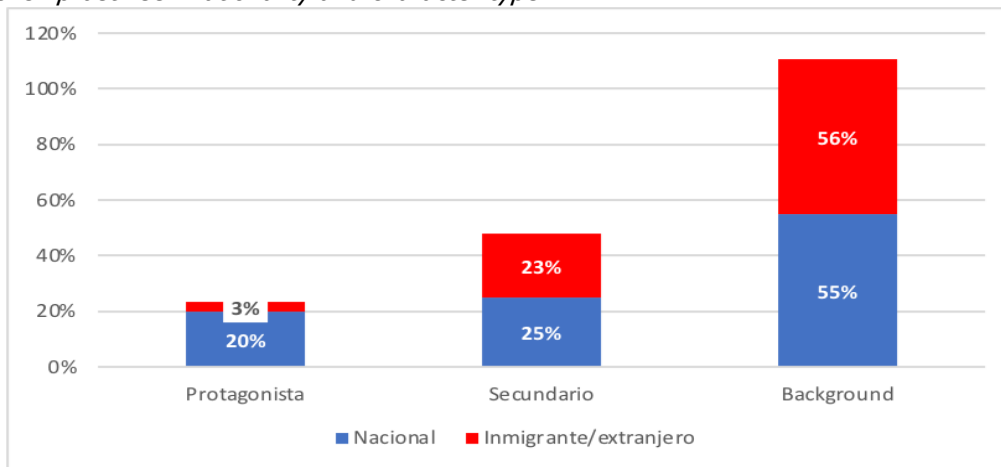
Therefore, the foreign characters are below the real demographic data of Spain. In this way, the hypothesis is confirmed, given that there would be an underrepresentation of immigrants/foreigners compared to the total of this population group in the Spanish population data.

4.2. Hypothesis 2. Immigrant/foreign characters will occupy a greater proportion of secondary or background roles than native/national characters

In the second hypothesis, it was proposed that there could be a relationship between the type of character (main, secondary, or background) and their nationality. Following this approach, the immigrant/foreign characters would have fewer leading roles compared to the native or national characters.

In the analyzed sample (n=1291), 55% of the national characters turned out to be of the background type, 25% of the characters were coded as secondary, and 20% as protagonists, following the logic of the importance of the characters in a narrative in which there are fewer main characters than secondary ones. Among the immigrant/foreign characters, 56% were coded as background characters, 23% secondary characters, and 3% turned out to be main characters. In terms, it can be seen that there are fewer immigrant protagonists than national protagonists.

Figure 2.
Relationship between nationality and character type



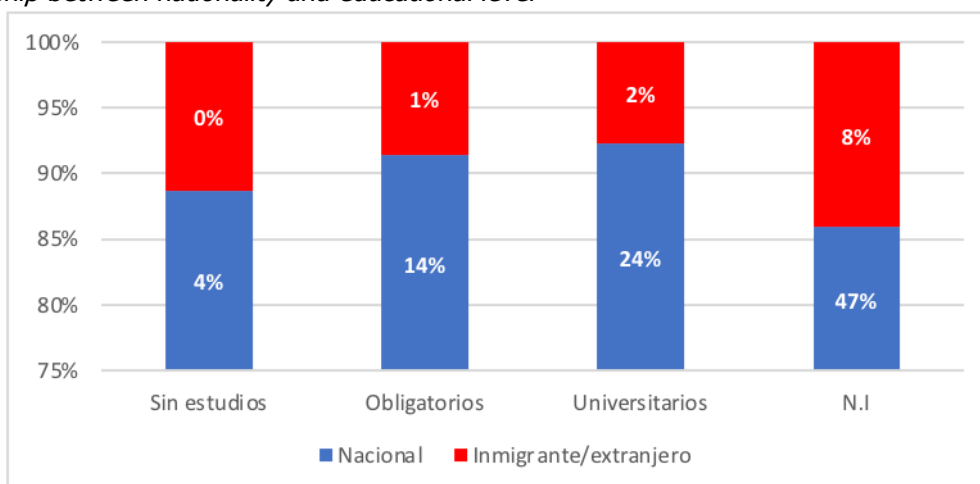
Fuente: elaboración propia

To verify the relationship between variables, Pearson's χ^2 contrast statistic was used and it was observed that the relationship between both variables (nationality and character type) was not significant ($\chi^2 [2, N = 1459] = 4.594, p < 0.101$), that is, being an immigrant character did not influence the type of characters to be developed. Therefore, the hypothesis is refuted.

4.3. Hypothesis 3. The foreign/immigrant characters will have a lower socioeconomic level than the native/national characters, besides a lower level of education, and will perform less qualified professions than the national characters

Regarding this hypothesis, the socioeconomic level, qualification, and professional status were analyzed taking as a starting point the level of education, considering that the immigrant/foreign characters would have a lower level of education than the autochthonous/national characters, therefore, will exercise less qualified professions and will, therefore, have a lower socio-economic level...

Figure 3.
Relationship between nationality and educational level



Source: Own elaboration

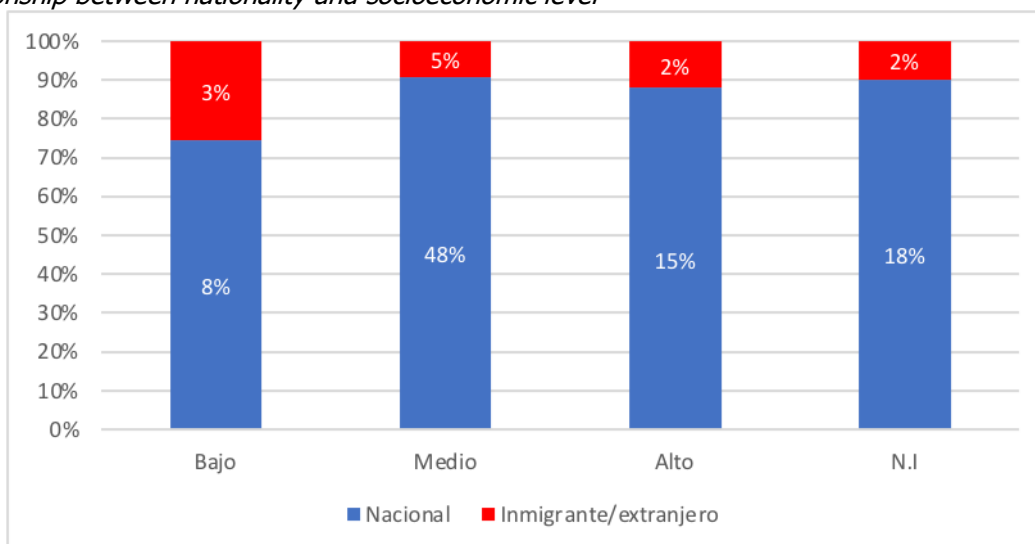
Regarding the level of studies, the national characters coded with a university level of education represent 24% (n=348), followed by the characters with compulsory studies, which account for 14% (n=202). On the other hand, the characters identified without studies are 4% (n=55). In the case of immigrant characters, only 2% (n=29) have been represented with university studies. In this case, immigrant characters with compulsory studies account for 1% (n=19) and only 7 characters (0%) appear represented without studies.

Taking these data into account, the level of university studies is considerably higher in the case of autochthonous/national characters compared to immigrant/foreign characters, as proposed in this hypothesis. However, no statistically significant relationship was found between nationality and educational level ($\chi^2 [2, N = 1455] = 12.455, p < 0.006$).

On the other hand, when relating nationality and socioeconomic level, immigrant/foreign characters appear more frequently represented with a medium (5%, n=71) and low (3%, n=38) socioeconomic level. Furthermore, the immigrant characters represented with a high socioeconomic level only account for 2% (n=30). For their part, national figures are mainly represented at a medium (48%, n=697) and high (15%, n=219) socioeconomic level. In this case, a significant relationship was found between nationality and socioeconomic level ($\chi^2 [2, N = 1460] = 33.924, p < 0.000$), that is, nationality did determine the socioeconomic level of the characters as also shown by the percentage data shown above.

Figure 4.

Relationship between nationality and socioeconomic level



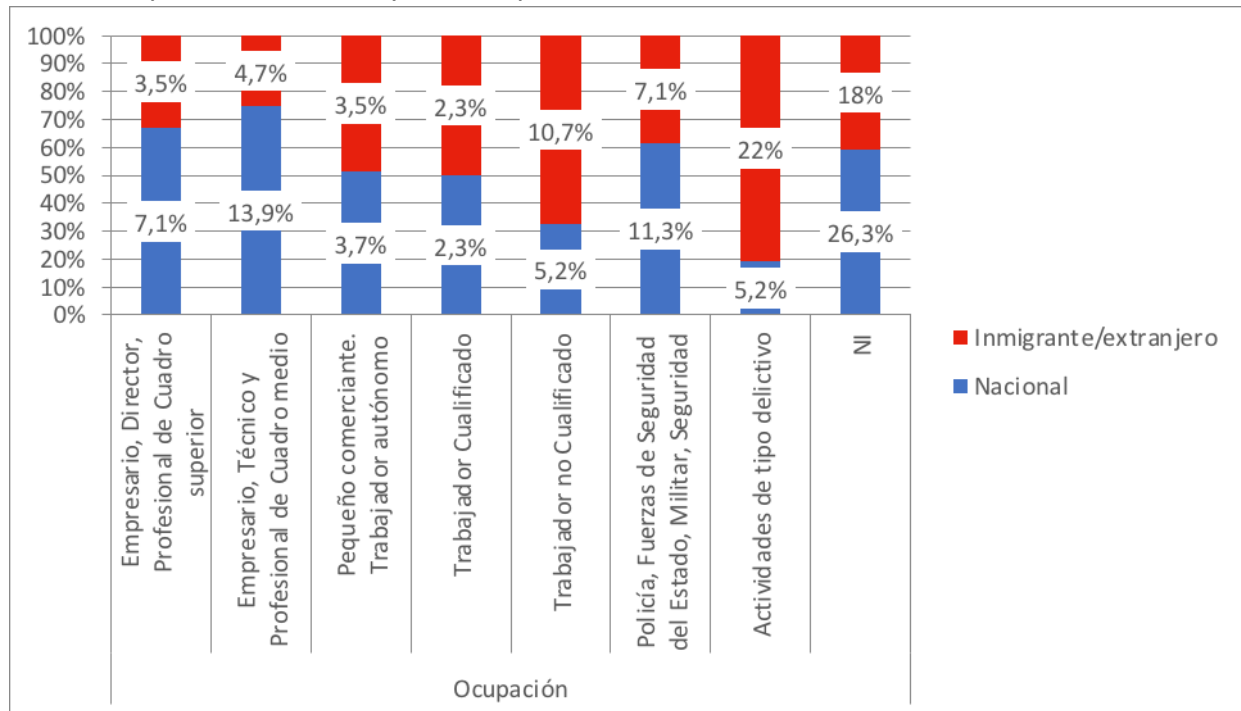
Source: Own elaboration

When relating nationality and occupation, it has been verified that there is a higher percentage of autochthonous/national characters who are entrepreneurs/higher-level professionals, as well as mid-level professionals and qualified workers. The percentage of autochthonous/national characters is also higher in categories such as unpaid domestic work, and no retired immigrant/foreign character has been found. On the other hand, it has been verified that the occupation in which there is a

greater representation of immigrant/foreign characters is in criminal activities (22%, $n=37$), however, in this case, the number of autochthonous/national characters that fall into this category is higher and accounts for 39.88% ($n=67$). When establishing this relationship, a statistically significant association was found based on job occupation and nationality, using Pearson's χ^2 contrast test ($\chi^2 [2, N = 1460] = 96.973$ $p < 0'000$).

Figure 5.

Relationship between nationality and occupation



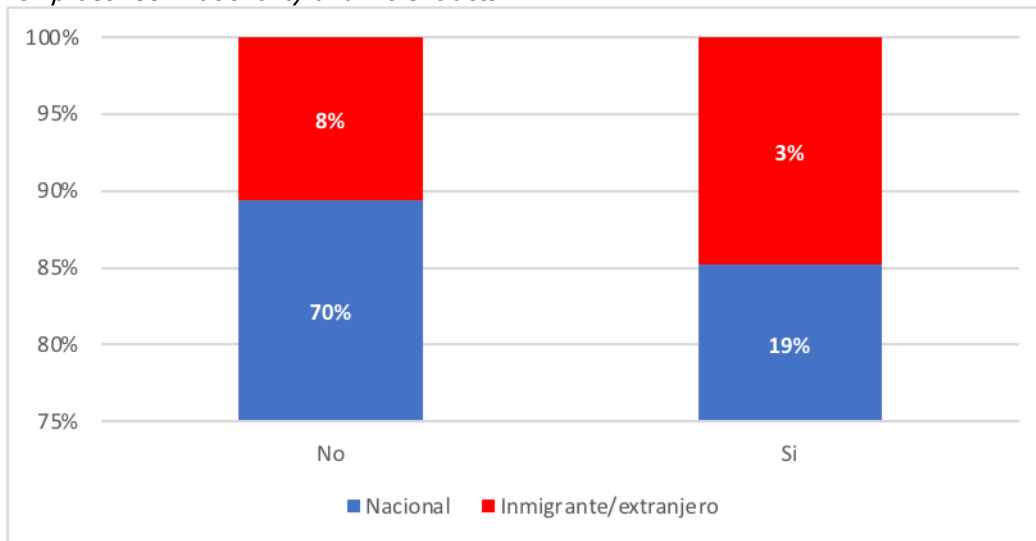
Source: Own elaboration

4.4. Hypothesis 4. Immigrant/foreign characters will have violent behavior in greater proportion than national characters

Finally, in the fourth hypothesis, the relationship between nationality and violent acts of the characters was analyzed since it sought to verify to what extent nationality could influence the criminal behavior of the characters. In this sense, a higher percentage of national characters, compared to immigrants, was found involved in violent acts. Specifically, 19% ($n=270$) of characters have been represented carrying out some type of violent act, compared to 3% ($n=47$) of immigrant characters. When establishing this relationship, a significant relationship was found between violent acts and nationality ($\chi^2 [2, N = 1459] = 4.360$ $p < 0.037$).

Therefore, in this case, the proposed hypothesis is rejected.

Figure 6.
Relationship between nationality and violent acts



Source: Own elaboration

5. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

Traditionally, the Spanish media have represented characters belonging to certain ethnic and racial minorities less frequently than national or autochthonous ones. According to recent figures from the National Institute of Statistics, the number of foreigners increased by 149,011 people during 2020, up to a total of 5,375,917 as of January 1st, 2021 (INE, 2021). In this way, in recent years the Spanish population has also been evolving towards greater multiculturalism, motivated by growing numbers of immigrants and by the new generations of Spaniards, children of immigrants. For this reason, analyzing what type of representation is being carried out in the most recent Spanish series is especially necessary to know if there has been any type of evolution and what elements immigration is related to when it is represented in Spanish audiovisual fiction of these characteristics.

One of the first aspects analyzed was the possible under-representation of immigrant characters compared to the real figures for the Spanish population and to check whether the trend that had been observed in the studies dedicated to quantifying the representation of these characters in generalist fiction was maintained and that showed that there was an underrepresentation of this group (Marcos, González de Garay, and Portillo, 2019). In this sense, the data analyzed has determined that, effectively, the representation of immigrant characters is below the real figures, specifically 1.34% of immigrant/foreign characters compared to 11.34% of the foreign population in Spain. Therefore, according to these figures, the representation of immigration in the Spanish series that are broadcast on streaming platforms does not reflect the reality of the Spanish population.

Regarding the level of education, the national characters are represented, mainly, with university and compulsory studies but it is striking that the immigrant characters are more frequently represented with compulsory and university studies than without studies. In this sense, a relationship can be seen regarding previous studies (Marcos

et al., 2014) in which the immigrant/foreign characters used to be mainly associated with a low level of education.

When relating nationality and socioeconomic level, immigrant/foreign characters appear more frequently represented with a medium and low socioeconomic level and are usually located in professions related to a less professional qualification, such as unskilled worker. Also, on this occasion, although it is not very significant, representation of immigrant characters has been found in the category of entrepreneur/manager and entrepreneur/professional mid-level technician. In terms of employment, the activities that concentrate a large number of immigrant/foreign characters are criminal. In this sense, the figures resemble frequent stereotypes linked to the representation of immigration in the media.

These data contrast with the real crime figures in Spain by nationality. According to the latest data offered by the National Institute of Statistics, of the total crimes committed in 2020 in Spain (311,271), 74.6% (232,479) were carried out by Spaniards, and the remaining 25.4% is distributed as follows: 6.5% (20,332) by people from other European countries (except Spain); 7.7% (24,009) by people who came from Africa; 8.1% (25,316) by people from the Americas; less than 1%, 0.7% (2,477) by people from Asia; and, finally, only 17 crimes were committed by people from Oceania.

Finally, the relationship between immigrant/foreign characters and violent acts was verified. In this case, a higher percentage of national characters who are involved in violent acts has been found compared to immigrant characters, in this sense an important change can be seen compared to previous studies carried out in this line (Marcos et al., 2014). However, this data seems to be explained by the scant representation of immigrant characters.

In recent decades, immigration has become an important object of media attention, often treated negatively, by highlighting the differentiating characteristics between natives and foreigners, promoting the partisan vision of "us" and "them". The portrait offered by the media on immigration has not changed much in recent years and, frequently, reductionist and topical formulas are used to present realities linked to the protagonists of the migratory processes in a biased way. This negative representation seems to be one of the reasons that promote prejudice and can help promote racist attitudes. In Spain, racism is still very present and according to data, such as that reflected by the study on *Perception of discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin* (Council for the Elimination of Racial or Ethnic Discrimination, CEDRE, 2020), it is hardly reported since 81.8% of people who suffer from racism in Spain do not report it (CEDRE, 2020).

The data from this study confirm that in Spanish series there is a certain presence of foreign and immigrant characters. However, its mere existence does not seem to be enough to offer a real vision, away from stereotypical conceptions; it is not enough to include the immigrant character or make them the protagonist of the story, it is necessary to go further, paying more attention to the attributes that accompany the character and offering an individualized and plural image, without stopping only to

highlight their status as immigrants or foreigners.

This study reflects that the construction of immigrant characters in the Spanish-produced series that are currently broadcast on the main streaming platforms is biased and does not reflect the reality of immigrants. In general terms, the analyzed data do not present major changes in terms of the representation of immigrant/foreign characters in the production series and coincide with previous studies (Marcos, 2014; Igartua, Ortega, Barrios, Camarero, Alvidrez, Marcos, Piñeiro, 2011).

Bias in the representation of ethnic minorities is present in the content of all platforms. Foreign and immigrant characters are a minority, they are underrepresented, and when they are present, the racial or ethnic issue often becomes the essential element for the construction and development of the character. In this sense, national fiction does not seem to be in line with the Spanish reality and with the true roles of immigrants in society and forgets that there is a significant percentage of the audience that seeks to be represented. The lack of visibility and stereotypical construction, besides not reflecting Spanish social diversity, can have very negative consequences on the audience, such as the creation or reinforcement of certain prejudices towards certain social sectors. Likewise, this lack of inclusion does not favor social integration and the normalization of the current composition of Spanish society, thus perpetuating the same problems that can lead to xenophobic attitudes for reasons such as physical appearance, religion, culture, or customs. The unstoppable growth of the catalog of the different streaming platforms invites us to think of a new audiovisual reality that offers all kinds of realities and promotes social inclusion and raises many questions, for example, can a series contribute to reducing racial discrimination?

Therefore, it will be decisive to continue with the study of Spanish fiction series to learn about their evolution and study in-depth the role of the new media in the creation or elimination of stereotypical portraits of the immigrant population.

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