Article

Emergence and Development of a News Hate Cycle About Immigrants: The Case of Immigrants Transferred from the Canary Islands to the Spanish Mainland

Pilar Rodriguez Martínez [1,*], Antonia Sánchez Villanueva [2], Pilar Rios Campos [3], Lucía Martinez Joya [1], Antonio Jesús Segura Sánchez [4], Joaquín Jaime Sánchez Espinosa [4], Francisco Villegas Lirola [5] and Maria Carmen López Berlanga [5]

[1] Departamento de Geografía, Historia y Humanidades, Universidad de Almería, La Cañada, 04120 Almería, Spain; lmj281@ual.es
[2] Departamento de Filología, Universidad de Almería, La Cañada, 04120 Almería, Spain; sva933@ual.es
[3] Departamento de Psicología, University of Jaén, 23071 Jaén, Spain; prios@ujaen.es
[4] Departamento de Psicología, Universidad de Almería, La Cañada, 04120 Almería, Spain; ass402@ual.es (A.J.S.S.); joganth@ual.es (J.J.S.E.)
[5] Departamento de Educación, Universidad de Almería, La Cañada, 04120 Almería, Spain; fvillega@ual.es (F.V.L.); berlanga@ual.es (M.C.L.B.)
* Correspondence: pilarr@ual.es

Abstract: In this article, we present the findings of research focused on the emergence and development of an immigration-related news hate cycle in Spain. During the period from 24 to 29 October 2023, there was an unusual increase in social media posts about the Spanish government's transfer of immigrants from the Canary Islands to the Spanish mainland. Based on the monitoring of 918 posts collected through AI media-monitoring software (Determ d.o.o), our study identify how hate speech against immigrants was generated and spread. In particular, we aim to identify the main actors and influencers involved in its creation, dissemination, and transformation, and how these actors manipulate interpretative frameworks by introducing arguments about a supposed comparative grievance between the Spanish people and immigrants in order to foment hatred and strengthen attitudes of rejection towards immigrants, presenting them as invaders, criminals, and terrorists. In this news cycle, hate speech reaches its peak when the press of trustworthy information echoes the disinformation. The analysis of the actors involved and the temporal sequence on social media and websites reveals how they achieve this. It also allows us to develop tools to counter the spread of hate speech.

Keywords: news hate cycle; social media; monitoring software; immigrant; Spain

1. Introduction

In October 2023, the socialist Pedro Sánchez was negotiating with several political parties to secure a new mandate, which he accomplished on 16 November. This followed the failed attempt of his rival, Alberto Núñez Feijóo of the Partido Popular (PP). In this complex political context, the Canary Islands—a Spanish territory—continued to experience a significant increase in the number of immigrants (around 29,000 in 2023). In order to reduce the migratory pressure on the Islands, the government decided to relocate some of these migrants to the mainland. During the period from 24 to 29 October 2023, we detected a significant increase in hate speech directed against immigrants in Spain using a paid version of Determ, AI media-monitoring software that provides real-time insights into

media presence across online channels. This research tries to elucidate who the protagonists of this hate cycle were, how this social phenomenon developed, and what we can learn from the episode. We will start by pointing out what we mean by hate speech.

Hate speech can be defined as "any type of expression that seeks to incite, promote, spread or justify violence, hatred or discrimination against a person or group of persons, or that denigrates them, by reason of their personal characteristics or status such as "race", colour, language, religion, nationality, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity and sexual orientation" (Council of Europe, 2022). These discourses come from hierarchical and exclusionary ideologies that establish clear lines of superiority and inferiority based on the categories mentioned above (Miller-Idriss, 2020). Considered as a communication phenomenon in post-truth times, these discourses help to promote an "information disorder"—disinformation—that aims to cause harm (Lilleker & Pérez-Escolar, 2023; Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017). We can say that the material basis for hate speech is disinformation (Di Fátima, 2024, p. 12).

Kaufman (2015) proposes four criteria for speech to be considered hateful: (a) vulnerability criterion: it must be directed at a typified group in a situation of vulnerability; (b) humiliation criterion: the humiliation of that group is sought; (c) malignancy criterion: there is an implicit or explicit invitation to exclude the members of that group; and (d) intentionality criterion: causing all these effects is deliberately sought after. Hate speech about one group does not exclude others but is likely to intersect; that is to say, it can develop against several groups at the same time. As we have highlighted before, it is inserted within hierarchical and exclusionary ideologies (Burnap & Williams, 2016).

In the glocaline political arena, news and information circulate around multiple platforms, including X and Facebook, as well as traditional news websites. It is a "space where the global, local, and online levels converge in which multilocal political actions manifest through interaction and deliberation among users of Online Interaction Platforms, the content of which is oriented towards addressing political issues" (Hernández Vega, 2020, p. 163). Participation in this space should be an effective tool for political and social engagement; however, there are political actors—haters—who use disinformation and hate speech as a tool to help spread ideas that discredit widely accepted democratic values (Sousa, 2022).

Hate speech inhibits democratic participation and exacerbates polarization (Di Fátima, 2024; Vasist et al., 2024; Napoli, 2024; Au et al., 2021). This is carried out because hate speech is embedded in the distortion and manipulation of information (Bustos Martínez et al., 2019) or disinformation—false and misleading information—to create, recreate, and disseminate rejection towards certain groups (Hameleers et al., 2021).

Furthermore, hate speech spreads in filter bubbles or echo chambers, where users are exposed to disinformation that reinforces their previous beliefs (Goel et al., 2023; Kuehn & Salter, 2020; College of St. George, 2018; Sunstein, 2017). Research indicates that, due to the vast amount of information available in the glocaline political arena, people tend to adapt and personalize their information sources and information environments. This process is facilitated by digital tools that employ algorithms to show users new or similar content to their previous preferences, often resulting in exposure to redundant information and related viewpoints. As a result of this personalization by both users and algorithms, an individual's digital news environment is likely to be saturated with content that only supports a specific point of view, thus creating a kind of digital "echo chamber" (Auxier & Vitak, 2019; Sundar et al., 2024). Combine this with the fact that disinformation sources generate more outrage than credible sources; that outrage facilitates the sharing of disinformation at least as much as the sharing of credible news; and that users are more likely to share disinformation that

generates outrage without reading it first (McLoughlin et al., 2024), and we can understand its rapid growth.

In the glocaline political arena, "those who control public discourse control the public mindset because they can dominate public opinion towards social signs, especially those related to minorities" (Khir-Allah, 2021). This process materializes in the creation of interpretative framings that shape one's perception of reality. In this way, information is manipulated to construct specific narratives through strategies such as highlighting certain aspects so as to direct attention towards them, making generalizations and simplifications, and creating an identifiable enemy (Sunstein, 2017) on which to channel the pre-existing resentment and frustration present in certain social groups that generally suffer from work and economic problems (Montijano Cañellas, 2021; Sousa, 2022).

In this article, we analyze one of these filter bubbles or echo chambers, within which various political agents try to influence public opinion to create social polarization. After detecting these messages, captured by the Determ software, we will trace the contours of that ecosystem. The originality of our research rests in showing a concrete case of filter bubbles or echo chamber construction, tracing the path of a "news" item from its creation and distortion on social media in order to generate a harmful story against immigrants. We intend to answer the following questions: Who are the main political agents mobilized to generate hate speech against immigrants in Spain and how are they associated with one another? How is information manipulated to be taken out of context, creating disinformation and generating hate speech against this collective? How does hate speech generate political destabilization? Our general hypothesis follows McLoughlin's approach (2024), as we seek to corroborate that the hate bubble we are analyzing is motivated by factors not related to the veracity of information, but to group loyalty and the dissemination of moral positions. In addition, we want to analyze what factors contribute to the spread of hate speech, so we will try to examine what happens in a news hate cycle by using a specific case. We believe that this kind of analysis is important because it can help us design tools to counter hate speech.

1.1. The Ecosystem of Hatred Aimed at Immigrants in Spain

In Spain, as in the rest of the countries in the Global North, hate speech against immigrants contributes to feelings of rejection being generated towards them, fostering a sense of insecurity among citizens and exacerbating these attitudes (Ekman, 2019; Lilleker & Pérez-Escolar, 2023), especially towards those who come from cultures that are distant from Western ones. These discourses are intersectional, and they highlight central themes of recent public debates, such as the fear of violence against women perpetrated by (non-white) immigrant men, the possibly worse educational outcomes of immigrant women and their lower participation in the labor market, and social conflicts around gender relations (Wojnicka & Nowicka, 2022). In the work carried out by Arcila-Calderón et al. (2020) on the verbal rejection of foreigners, which is based on two content analyses of Spanish tweets, the authors highlight the negative aspects that are most frequently used to justify the rejection of immigrants or refugees as being the threat to security, the economic burden, and the threat of invasion. The visual framing that most represents immigrants and refugees is that of the victim (Amores et al., 2019).

Studies indicate that in Spain during the 1990s, the Spanish population exhibited a fairly low level of xenophobia and/or racism towards immigrants compared to other European countries (Díez Nicolás & Ramirez Latifa, 2001). The electoral emergence of VOX in the 2018–2019 elections changed this situation (Mariscal de Gante & Rinken, 2022). Indeed, in the 2022 Andalusian election campaign, the official Socialist Party account still omitted

the issue of immigration in its election campaign. VOX, on the other hand, published 40 items that could be classified as hate speech in that campaign (Olmos Alcaraz, 2022).

According to the results of research by Olmos Alcaraz (2022) into the Andalusian election campaign, VOX's proposal contained an extreme and radical problematization of the migration phenomenon, using disinformation for this purpose and a denial of the problem of racism. The predominant topics and representations were those of threat (economic or social), the diminution of rights, the "pull effect"—associated with "invasion"—and the denial of racism. VOX defines itself around rejecting the fundamental principle of equality, which means mixing xenophobia, racism, ethnocentrism, and exclusionism, thus rejecting cultural diversity. In their discourse, immigration becomes a central political issue, which allows them to link it to problems that concern citizens, such as unemployment, delinquency, and crime. VOX's hate speech appeals to the economically marginalized, to those who are losers in the processes of modernization and globalization, which leads it to argue against the welfare state and its upkeep.

Social media allows far-right political actors to connect with new voter niches in the context of establishment fatigue and the rise in authoritarian orientations, together with feelings of resentment in the face of eroding beliefs and values (Norris & Inglehart, 2019). This hate speech expands the resentment of the "losers" and activates fear and anxiety (Salmela & von Scheve, 2017), as well as feelings of anger, hatred, contempt, worry, resentment, bitterness, and disgust (Mariscal Ríos, 2022; Rivera-Otero et al., 2021). These discourses reinforce and/or merge with Islamophobic discourses directed against a specific group of immigrants, specifically those from Muslim countries. They also merge with anti-feminist discourses, for example, considering Muslim women who wear the hijab as being submissive, unable to decide for themselves, housewives, or ignorant (Durán, 2023; Khir-Allah, 2021), and more associated with religion than the men (Amores et al., 2020).

1.2. The Creation of a News Hate Cycle

A news hate cycle towards immigrants in the glocaline political arena is a social phenomenon that is "created" together with the distorted information about them. To do so, it is necessary to filter thoughts, erase the context that would allow immigrants to be understood as people, mentally construct the "other" by reactivating dormant mental framings, and fomenting emotions related to rejection and hatred. Wardle (2017) offers an interesting classification of the main disinformation types, which refers to certain characteristics according to their content: 1. Humorous content: satires, parodies, or memes that, when perceived as genuine, can contaminate and cause information noise. 2. Content that is misleading because of its framing, since it emphasizes or silences aspects of the news reality that lead to an incomplete and biased view of it. 3. Decontextualized content, even if it is based on genuine information resources (statements, images, graphics, videos, etc.), whose context has been supplanted (authorship, time frame etc.). 4. Manipulated or invented content, which is partially or completely false, and which has been conceived and created to deceive and inflict harm.

Therefore, to understand how hate speech can be created, the framing perspective is important. This understanding is based on analyzing how problems in the public sphere are discursively constructed from an established news item or message (Gamson, 1989, 1992) to become what we could call "disinformation", which is "false and misleading information" (McLoughlin et al., 2024). This is because the "news" that circulates in the glocaline political arena is not a finished product of journalistic endeavor, but a fluid product, which is updated or corrected within a news cycle (Saltzis, 2012). A good study along these lines is the one carried out by Chouliaraki and Zaborowski (2017) based on 1200 newspaper articles on the 2015 refugee "crisis" in eight European countries. According to the authors,

three linguistic practices (silencing, collectivization, and decontextualization) allow us to skirt around the voices of refugees, keeping them definitively outside "our" communities of belonging.

Framing determines how we might feel about immigrants, whether we consider immigrants to have "valid lives" regardless of place and time, whether we believe those lives should be preserved, or whether they are worthy of pain or love (Butler, 2009). Hence, the media do not passively describe what is happening, but actively reconstruct it (Van Dijk, 1997). In the news cycle, framing consists of presenting a topic in different ways to alter people's preferences or choices, taking into account which diverse groups will be more or less persuaded by different messages (Feinberg & Willer, 2013).

As George Lakoff (2014) points out, simply repeating a news item with a specific focus, even if it is negative or refutes the fact, is not enough to counteract it because it contributes to its dissemination. The negation of a framing involves its invocation and activation in the viewer's mind. Thus, Lakoff argues that the one who sets the initial framing in a public debate has the advantage. When an actor adopts the concepts and language of his political opponent, he is carving out his own failure in the public sphere.

Distorted information can grow and spread exponentially, or remain undeveloped in small nuclei of digital engagement, relatively harmful but without greater reach. The difficulty is to understand how to identify the point of no return (viralization), after which the dissemination of this hate speech content is potentially very damaging. Once there, returning to the initial information would involve a great deal of effort, or directly denying the information (Margolin, 2020). In these two ways, hate speech from an established news story would be prevented from becoming a problem that assaults the public sphere, avoiding the "viralization" of hatred as defined by Lakoff. Indeed, if hate speech reaches a wide audience, is widely disseminated, or receives many interactions, it can be established that there is a certain level of danger beyond which it is difficult to avoid mass dissemination. In the same way, if disinformation does not transcend small digital communities, it does not represent a threat and such hate speech can decline on its own; therefore, giving it media visibility would mean giving it unnecessary visibility and feeding the disinformation's reach.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Research Objectives and Hypotheses

Our objective is to understand how a news hate cycle is constructed, taking into account that in this construction there are certain protagonists (X users, biased news agencies, and digital media), certain content that changes as it is disseminated, and intentionality. Our hypotheses are the following:

Hypothesis 1. *Far-right political agents are at the forefront of the ecosystem of hatred against immigrants in the Spanish glocaline political arena.*

Hypothesis 2. *Hate speech is mostly found on X but is supported by digital "news" media.*

Hypothesis 3. *Hate speech about immigrants intersects with other hate speech.*

Hypothesis 4. *The arguments that most justify hate speech against immigrants are the economic burden, the threat to security, and the threat of invasion (Arcila-Calderón et al., 2020).*

Hypothesis 5. *However, since hate speech against immigrants is instrumental, it will not only involve the rejection of the "other", but also the management of "us". In this sense, it will try to generate political destabilization, which it will achieve if it manages to enter the agenda of reliable media.*

2.2. Method

2.2.1. Sample

For the data collection, a compilation was made using the paid version of Determ (https://www.determ.com/, accessed on 30 October 2023), AI media-monitoring software that provides real-time insights into media presence across online channels and allows for the monitoring of over 100 million online sources, including news portals, websites, social media (Facebook, Instagram, X, and YouTube), Reddit, TripAdvisor, forums, comments, and blogs. The paid version of this software has the advantage of offering detailed results not only for X, but also for websites, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and other social media. Observing this variety of sources at the same time has some advantages. Given that a good part of the bibliography has been generated based on only one form of social media, whether it be Twitter (Amores et al., 2019; Arcila-Calderón et al., 2020; Mariscal Ríos, 2022; Olmos Alcaraz, 2022; Galindo-Domínguez et al., 2023), Facebook (Ekman, 2019), or the press (Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017; Durán, 2023), simultaneously capturing hate speech on X, Facebook, and on websites allows us to explore the conditions imposed by the existence of different communicative resources, or polymedia (Medianou & Miller, 2012). In our case, it allows us to determine how social media and news websites contribute to "framing" and the dissemination of hate speech.

Since we wanted not only to detect cyberhate against "immigrants", but also its intersectionality with other characteristics of the people who might be attacked, we introduced search terms that considered various groups. As Burnap and Williams (2016) point out, "the combined model improves classification performance for cases of cyberhate in an intertextual context". In our case, we included the search terms "immigrant* AND (put* OR feminac* OR gord* OR peste OR maricón OR amariconad*OR bollera OR "cabezas cuadradas" OR "cabecita negra" OR catalufo OR charneg* OR chel* OR conguit* OR culandr* OR diminuid* OR Almer* OR adolescent* OR #feminac)". The terms chosen to carry out the search sought to combine hate speech about different vulnerable groups, such as women and the LGTBI+ community, as well as disabled- and age-based discrimination (Observatorio Español del Racismo y la Xenofobia, 2021, p. 63). We added some terms, such as Almeria and adolescents, to focus our analysis on hate speech related to Almeria.

It should be made clear that this strategy differs from that carried out by other authors, who have used bases of offensive terms in general (Plaza-del-Arco et al., 2021) or more descriptive terms, such as "refugee", "refugees", "migrant", "migrants", "immigrant", and "immigrants" (Arcila-Calderón et al., 2020). We consider, firstly, that although hate speech about immigrants intersects with other characteristics that people have, not all the offensive terms refer to other categories of people who suffer from hate speech. Secondly, by taking only the term "immigrant" into account, we run the risk of not including all of the discourses about refugees or even migrants; however, the strategy does have an impact, as the authors point out, on the terms that point to the population we are trying to consider, such as "immigrant" and "immigrants" (Arcila-Calderón et al., 2020).

Our first search was carried out on 23 November 2023, yielding the data presented in Figure 1.

When analyzing the data from this first search, we observed that there had been an unusual increase in hate speech against immigrants during the period from 24 to 29 October 2023, so we decided to use only the items produced over those days for this analysis. As a consequence, this study analyses the progress of an event that is, in itself, newsworthy—the Government's transfer to the Spanish mainland of African immigrants who had arrived in the Canary Islands—from the moment it appeared as news in digital media to its subsequent dissemination by political agents using specific interpretative cues that reinforced and increased the bias, until its ultimate propagation as hate speech. In

total, this cycle lasted 5 days, with the second day being the peak for the greatest number of mentions recorded, as reflected in the graph. This first finding is important because it suggests that cycles of hate are created and are instrumental, not just a reflection of the hateful attitudes of some individuals that persist over time. Since they do not persist over time but occur in bubbles, studying one of these bubbles can help us understand how to counter them.
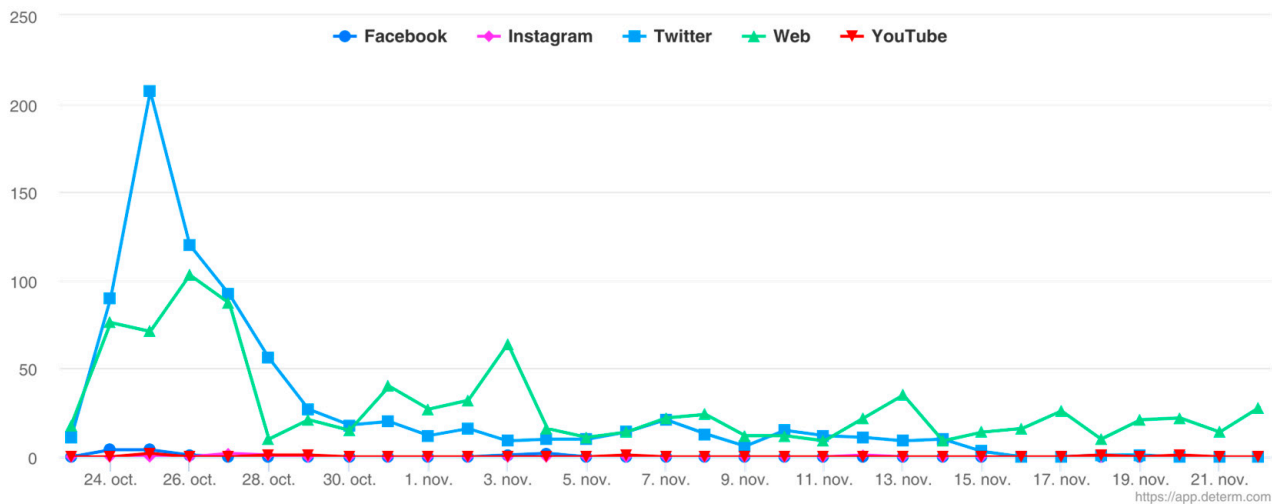
Figure 1. Mentions by source of hate speech against immigrants in Spain (23rd October to 23rd November). Own design based on mentions captured by Determ.

2.2.2. Procedure

The captured messages were cascade-classified by three encoders. First, it was decided whether or not the messages were relevant to the object under study (which led to some items being excluded). The inclusion/exclusion criteria for establishing the information/hate speech category were the use of expressions of rejection or that emphasize aspects that seek rejection. In this way, a distinction was made between items that could be considered hate speech and those that could be considered misinformation (even though they were decontextualized).

Following a second reading of the dataset, four categories were considered for hate speech, depending on the arguments sustained in the discourses: (1) socioeconomic grievance, (2) terrorism–crime–invasion, (3) political destabilization, and (4) sexism/others.

The "socioeconomic grievance" category refers to messages in which immigrants are presented as an economic burden on Spanish nationals. Such messages propose that immigrants are treated in an advantageous or privileged way. In the "terrorism–crime–invasion" category, messages are included in which immigration is associated with a potential increase in civil insecurity, as well as the threat of invasion. The "political destabilization" category includes expressions of institutional discontent and the disqualification of institutions, or the people who represent them, for having carried out or facilitated the transfer of immigrants. The "sexism/others" category refers to messages that emphasize rejection, related to sexist arguments or others, such as fatphobia. Subsequently, a second review was carried out focusing on messages considered hate speech, bearing in mind the possibility that the same message could be included in more than one category. Each message was coded with 1 to be included or 0 to not be included. In other words, sixteen categories of hate speech were established, plus another referring to "information" (Figure 2).
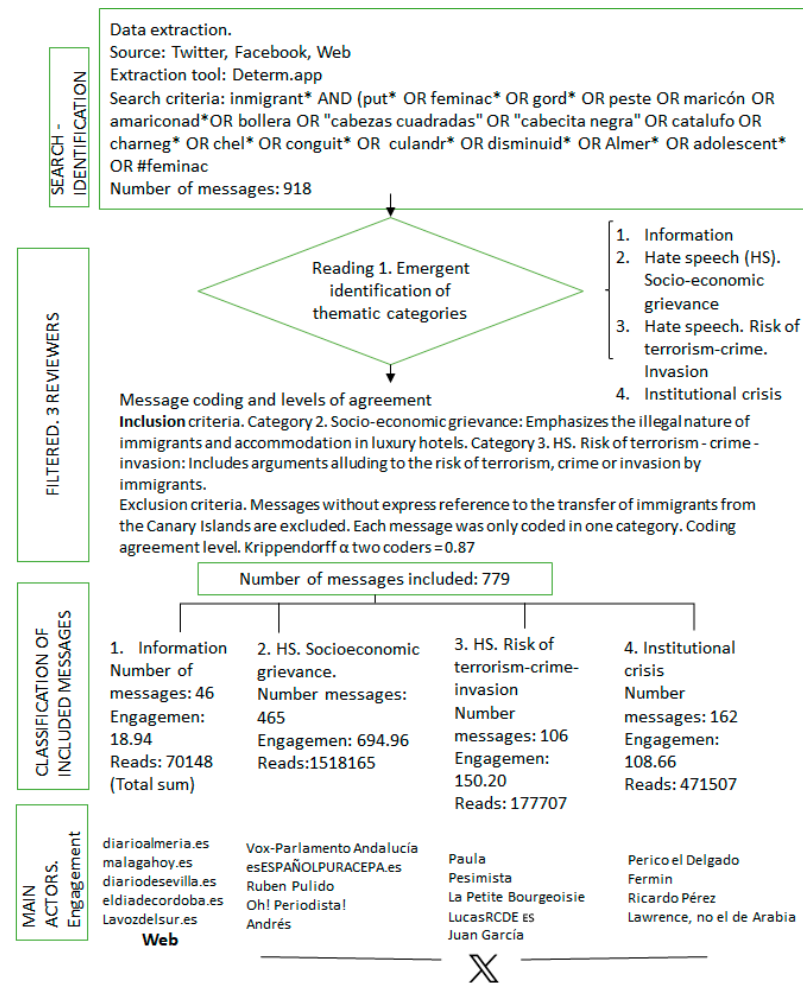
Figure 2. Procedure and results.

2.2.3. Measures

The reach, engagement rate, virality, and influence score were used as measures. Each of these quantitative indicators are defined below, according to those responsible for Determ:

Reach: the number of people who saw the message.

Engagement rate: the percentage of people who saw the message and interacted with it.

Virality: a measure for websites, comparing the success of a message to the average for messages on the same website.

Influence score: indicating on a scale from 1 to 10 the degree of influence of a source or author. The higher the influence score, the greater the prominence of the message's author.

3. Results

The empirical dataset collected by Determ initially consisted of 918 entries that included 9 social media entries on Facebook, 3 on Instagram, 4 on YouTube, 589 on X, and 313 on news websites. Among the latter, one finds digital editions of traditional daily newspapers whose editorial lines originally have a news attention scope that is local, regional, or national, although their digital editions go beyond the scope of the paper versions to the global level. We also find websites of other conventional media (radio or TV) and digital-only newspapers (with a global reach), several of these with a marked editorial line that is close to or coinciding with far-right positions. Table 1 shows the distribution of each of the entries registered in our dataset by days and by the networks or digital channels that published them.

Table 1. Distribution of publications by days and channels.

	Day 24	*Day 25*	*Day 26*	*Day 27*	*Day 28*	*Day 29*	*Total*
Web	62	64	84	84	9	10	313
X	89	207	118	92	56	27	589
Facebook	4	4	1	-	-	-	9
Instagram	-	-	-	2	1	-	3
YouTube	-	2	-	-	1	1	4
Total	155	277	203	178	67	38	918

Source: own design.

We confirm Hypothesis 2, as hate speech was mostly found on X, but was supported by digital "news". Table 1 shows that the peak of X items occurred on the second day, after which the number of items decreased steadily; however, the peak of items on the websites occurred on the third and fourth days. This suggests that the combination of opinion (X) and misinformation/disinformation (websites) is not the same during the hate cycle. Items on X predominated in the first part of the cycle.

However, we cannot be completely sure that X was the dominant social media, as there are very few items on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, suggesting that our software is not capturing what happens on these social media well.

3.1. The Protagonists During the Hate Cycle

The production of messages and news rises during the hate cycle, reaching a maximum on the second day. From there on, it begins to drop. At the beginning of the cycle, X messages predominate over website publications and many of those posted on websites do not have a wide reach; however, during the second day, news websites with a high impact are incorporated.

If we highlight messages or information that had a reach greater than 20,000 views, together with their virality (in the case of web pages), their engagement rate (in the case of X and YouTube), and the influence of each of them, we obtain the data that are shown in Table 2. During the first day, there are five X posts that, if we order them according to engagement, would be those of Rubén Pulido, Javier Negre, La Gaceta de la Iberosfera, okdiario.com, and Informativos Telecinco. They are joined by the publication on the elmundo.es website.

On the second day, 11 mentions are registered that each exceed a reach of 20,000 views. Among these, the items that predominate are those of Rubén Pulido (again), SoloQuedaVox, Convivencia Cívica Catalana, Eduardo G., okdiario.com (also repeated), and Cuatro. Among the web pages, there is still okdiario.com along with elmundo.es, but now elpais.com is added, which is the most viral website. The "news" is now at its peak and has reached reliable media platforms.

On the third day, there are only five messages that exceed a reach of 20,000 views—those of the X users Colmenero.es, Hercles, and Rocío de Meer, along with the elmundo.es and okdiario.com web publications. The fourth day is dominated by Rubén Pulido's post, and two mentions by elpais.com. During the last day, Rubén Pulido (again) stands out, along with elpaís.com and the Arabic publication BenchRIF.tv.

Table 2. Protagonists in the news hate cycle (24–28 October 2023).

Date	From	Source Type	Reach	Virality	Engagement Rate	Influence Score
24	La Gaceta de la Iberosfera	X	23,650		2.16	7
24	Rubén Pulido	X	87,306		4.68	6
24	Javier Negre	X	55,273		3.78	7
24	okdiario.com	X	21,817		0.385	7
24	Informativos Telecinco	X	43,298		0.034	8
24	elmundo.es	Web	23,847	0.17	0.08	10
25	Cuatro	X	60,074		0.001	9
25	okdiario.com	X	38,539		2.19	7
25	Rubén Pulido	X	78,930		6.72	6
25	#SoloQuedaVOX	X	63,478			2
25	Convivencia Civica Catalana	X	20,886		4.39	6
25	Eduardo G.	X	82,099		0.84	5
25	okdiario.com	X	22,350		0.49	7
25	okdiario.com	Web	31,599	4.84	2.16	9
25	elpais.com	Web	37,896	0.94	0.09	10
25	elmundo.es	Web	23,406	0.44	0.04	10
25	elpais.com	Web	44,673	28.82	0.6	10
26	Colmenero	X	84,790		0.25	7
26	HERQLES	X	22,464		4.98	6
26	Rocío De Meer ن	X	28,112		4.74	6
26	elmundo.es	Web	34,926	92	1.31	10
26	okdiario.com	Web	21,096	3.44	1.9	9
27	Rubén Pulido	X	104,756		4.4	6
27	elpais.com	Web	41,433	5.16	0.47	10
27	elpais.com	Web	36,654	0.03	0.005	10
28	Rubén Pulido	X	33,247		4.23	6
28	elpais.com	Web	42,693	2.81	0.43	10
28	BenchRIF tv بنشريف	Youtube	22,583		3.13	1

Source: own design.

Thus, far-right political agents predominate (Rubén Pulido, Javer Negre, Eduardo G., Colmenero.es, Hercles, and Rocío de Meer), especially on X, together with their neighboring organizations (la Gaceta de la Iberosfera, SoloQuedaVox, Convivencia Cívica Catalana, and okdiario.com). Nevertheless, the centrist or right-wing media (elmundo.es, informativos Telecinco, and Cuatro) and even the left-wing media (elpais.com) also play a leading role. To these actors, BenchRIFtv must also be added, which predominated in the YouTube space during the last day. This latter publication discusses marriages of convenience in regard to the parents of a Moroccan girl in Almeria being denounced. It is interesting to note that this is the only immigrant voice captured by Determ over these days. This leads us to suspect that immigrants do not feel challenged by the hate speech directed against them, either because they do not participate in the glocaline political arena or because even if they do, they do not respond to this hate speech with more hate speech. It may be, as we argue in Hypothesis 5, that these hate speeches are intended to politically polarize and destabilize the country, and that immigrants are just the argument.

To continue, we will present a more qualitative and detailed analysis of this hate cycle's formation to delve more deeply into the arguments of the different actors. To do this, we have to return to the beginning of the cycle.

3.2. The Creation of Framing

To locate the sequential origin that gives rise to the spread of hate speech, which is the object of this work, it is necessary to go back to the hours prior to the period analyzed in our dataset, about which the first publications refer. On 23 October 2023, in a radio broadcast and on the website of the local radio station belonging to the esRadio chain, it

was announced that 352 immigrants were going to be transferred over the coming hours from the Canary Islands to hotels in the El Toyo tourist complex (Almeria) (Figure 3).

Figure 3. First publication that gives rise to the cycle of hate [A contingent of 352 illegal immigrants who arrived in the Canary Islands will be housed by the Spanish Government in a hotel in El Toyo starting tomorrow].

The publication's headline already included the adjective "illegal" to categorize the immigrants, thus setting a first cue for interpreting the content. Both the subtitle and the text of the news item raise two main arguments: (a) that the transfer had been concealed by the Government and (b) that immigrants would enjoy free healthcare, further collapsing the health system to the detriment of the Spanish people. So, from the beginning, a decontextualized news item was offered, with misleading content due to its framing, since it emphasized or silenced aspects of the news reality, leading to an incomplete and biased view of it. It implied that the Government "hides" information. In addition, it stated that 352 people were going to collapse the Spanish health system, with the Spanish people excluded, who would have no one to care for them as the system was overrun with immigrants.

Containing these biases, this piece of disinformation was shared at the end of the same day, the 23rd (precisely at 11:06 p.m.), via the official X account of the VOX Group in the Parliament of Andalusia (@AndaluciaVox), which has almost 38,000 followers. No link was included in the text that introduced the original publication's screenshot. VOX took the conceptual framing initially proposed by Victor Hernandez Bru at esRadio and intensified it by establishing not only an adjectivation but also a substantivation to interpret the event: "migratory invasion". In this way, the term "invasion", at the core of the noun phrase, modified the framing towards an even more negative view of migrants. Furthermore, it added more disinformation, pointing out that the Popular Party had not duly denounced the situation, from which it followed that the political institutions were not taking charge of the situation (an institutional crisis).

Until that moment, the esRadio news had registered just under 1500 views; VOX's publication on social media reached 12,700 views, 181 reposts, and 12 quotes. But once the framing has been created, the discursive artifact must be launched to "make" the "news". For this, it is necessary that the discursive artifact be introduced via digital press websites of trustworthy information. Indeed, at 8:39 a.m. on 24th October, the Ideal newspaper echoed the news of the immigrant transfer to Almeria without using connoted terms in the headline, subtitle, or text. The ideas presented by the newspaper in its local digital edition were (a) the fact that the transfer had taken place and (b) that the Government had involved NGOs to look after the immigrants.

It is from that moment on that the digital editions of other local, regional, and national news media published their own versions of the disinformation, with several cases being

identical because they are different editions of the same news group. In the case of ABC Sevilla, this newspaper introduced the phrase "*de improviso*" (unexpected) into the headline, suggesting, by inference, a decision taken with a certain degree of concealment, and then reproduced it across all its other Andalusian editions.

At the same time, throughout the morning of the 24th, a total of 22 X accounts and 4 Facebook accounts shared the Vox Andalucía publication, which in turn shared the esRadio news, or that of one of the non-ideological digital newspapers that reported on the matter. In the comments accompanying the posts on these social media accounts, the "invasion" line of argument predominated, along with that of an unsustainable situation due to migratory pressure, leading to the saturation of public resources, depriving access to "the Spanish people" (a comparative grievance), and the disastrous Government policy (an institutional crisis) (Figure 4).

VOX Parlamento de Andalucía ✓
@AndaluciaVox

‼️ El Gobierno de Sánchez trasladará a cientos de inmigrantes ilegales a Almería, una de las provincias más castigadas por la invasión migratoria. ¿Y qué hace Juanma Moreno? Callar.

En @AndaluciaVOX lo tenemos claro. En vez de ser traídos a Andalucía, deben ser expulsados de manera inmediata a sus países de origen.

Figure 4. Publication by the VOX party about the news of the transfer [The Sánchez Government is going to transfer hundreds of illegal immigrants to Almería, one of the provinces most affected by the immigrant invasion. And what does Juanma Moreno do? He remains silent].

At 1:45 p.m., La Gaceta de la Iberosfera website, a media outlet linked to VOX (La Gaceta de la Iberosfera belongs to the Disenso Foundation, the think-tank of VOX), for the first time associated the news of the transfer with the idea and imagery of luxury, which intensified the idea of comparative grievances. To do this, in the headline (the most visible part of the news item) it applied the noun complement "four-star" as a description of the hotel in which the immigrants were going to stay. It is a hotel category indicator that in the collective imagination activates references to quality and an above-average price. It manipulates the information, given that these hotel facilities were in the off-season, which is why the government had been able to secure them at a low price (Figure 5).

DESPLAZADOS DESDE CANARIAS

El Gobierno envía a más de 300 inmigrantes ilegales a un hotel de cuatro estrellas en Almería
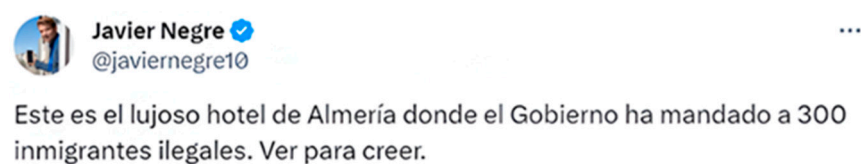
Figure 5. Publication on La Gaceta website about the conditions of the transfer [Government sends over 300 illegal immigrants to four-star Almería hotel].

The intentionality is reinforced with a photograph of the hotel that creates an interpretive framing of luxury vacations. By adding an image of the hotel from the pool, the publication creates a framing that evokes the idea of luxury and vacations—the aim being to mentally infer that the transferred immigrants are being given privileged treatment. It is written by Rubén Pulido (a VOX influencer). The X accounts of the media outlet itself, @gaceta_es (which has 248,800 followers), and the author, @rbnpulido (with 91,000 followers), both publish this—with no additional comments—within an interval of half an hour (2:00 p.m. and 2:29 p.m.). At 2:46 p.m., the X account @AndaluciaVox (with 37,900 followers) retweeted the above news item (Figure 6).

VOX Parlamento de Andalucía ✔
@AndaluciaVox

Hoteles de lujo para los inmigrantes ilegales. Inseguridad y delincuencia para los españoles.

Progreso lo llaman.

> 🌎 **La Gaceta de la Iberosfera** ✔ @gaceta_es · 24 oct. 2023
> El Gobierno envía a más de 300 inmigrantes ilegales a un hotel de cuatro estrellas en Almería
>
> Por Rubén Pulido (@rubnpulido)
> …

Figure 6. Publication by the VOX party about the comparative grievance [Luxury hotels for illegal immigrants. Insecurity and crime for the Spanish. That's what they call progress].

The wording of the post clearly points to a specific interpretation by establishing a Manichean relationship between two statements: that immigrants are treated in a privileged way, while the Spanish people are condemned to suffer "without" luxury holidays. In addition, it amplifies the idea of invasion, connecting it with crime and insecurity. This post had an engagement rate of 3.7. At 3:55 p.m., journalist Javier Negre, from the Estado de Alarma (EDA) publishing group, posted on his X account (@javiernegre10, with 273,300 followers) an attractive photograph of the hotel with the following comment (Figure 7).

Javier Negre ✔
@javiernegre10

Este es el lujoso hotel de Almería donde el Gobierno ha mandado a 300 inmigrantes ilegales. Ver para creer.

Figure 7. Publication by a journalist about the comparative grievance [This is the luxury hotel in Almería where the government sent 300 illegal immigrants. Seeing is believing].

Up until the end of the 24th, numerous reactions were recorded on X that, having accepted the veracity of the framing of immigrants receiving privileged treatment, expressed feelings of repudiation and anger. Among these, at 6:23 p.m., one appears that uses clearly hateful terms:

@usuario: "*Let's see if they stop giving so many subsidies and send them to fuck their asses. So many fucking immigrants who, on top of that, take advantage of the Spanish people's money. RT @wallstwolverine: The Government announces a subsidy of 50 million euros to the Canary Islands "to look after migrants*". https://t.co/wItYNc0arG, accessed on 30 October 2023.

The video to which this tweet refers relates to a subsidy from the Central Government to the Canary Islands Government, so that it could care for the people arriving.

Thus, in order to set in motion the hate bubble that developed during the 24th, the discursive sequence began with several X messages. It continued with press reports that omitted the qualifier "illegal" to describe the immigrants, nor any mention of luxury accommodation; however, it carries on with intentionally biased journalistic communications that, through websites, were disseminated by some news media outlets. These "news" items are followed by an avalanche of messages across social media (mainly X) containing hate speech. A sample of the messages in this sequence is found in Figure 8.

1	**Jijijujujojojeje. 00:33;** Fill Spain with thousands of immigrants, go to Decathlon, buy them jackets, sneakers and pants, all with the effort of the Spanish people who get up at 6 in the morning. RRSS Twitter
2	**Digital newspapers. Ideal.es. 08:39:** The Government sends **300** immigrants who arrived in the Canary Islands to a hotel in Almería
3	**PacoCordero. 09:17:** Thank you Government!
4	**ABC Sevilla. 09:20:** The government **suddenly** transferred 300 immigrants who arrived in the Canary Islands to a hotel in Almería. The group had left the islands by plane to stay in a hotel.
5	**DLP Organización. 10:18:** A contingent of 352 **illegal** immigrants from the Canary Islands arrived at a hotel in Almería. The group would have left the islands by plane to stay in a hotel in the capital, Almería.
6	**Eldebate.com. 10:37:** Air travel and hotel accommodation: the way to reduce migratory pressure on the Canary Islands
7	**Northaun. 12:56;** The Government sends more than 300 **illegal** immigrants from the Canary Islands to a hotel in Almería, while tens of thousands of Spaniards, abandoned by the corrupt mafia of the PSOE and the extreme left, are left on the streets because of poverty, victims of natural disasters, …
8	**F.Javier Mora. 13:12;** No wonder we are at 80% hotel occupancy. It will feel like we are in Zimbabwe.
9	**El Rey Católico. 13:29;** If they don't arrive by sea, they will be brought to us by air. The game is between Mohamed and Sánchez. And those from La Palma are still in the barracks. Today, 352 illegal immigrants from the Canary Islands are arriving in Almería and are being housed in hotels in El Toyo (next to the Cabo de Gata Natural Park), one of the best areas in the province.

10	**Gaceta.es. 13:45;** El Gobierno envía a más de 300 inmigrantes **ilegales** a un hotel de **cuatro estrellas** en Almería
11	**Rubén Pulido. 14:29;** The Government sends more than 300 illegal immigrants to a **luxurious four-star hotel** in the city of Almeria
12	**fERRU. 14:32;** AirEuropa has enabled two Boeing 787-9 Dreamlines, with registrations EC-NBX and EC-NVY, with capacity for 600 passengers, to transport **illegal immigrants** to the Peninsula
13	**Vox Parlamento Andalucía. 14:46;** Luxury Hotels for Illegal **Immigrants.** Insecurity and crime for the Spanish
14	**Otro de los Soprano. 14:48;** I would like to be African and illegal
15	**David Hierro. 14:52;** Many Spaniards cannot afford to spend even a single night in this hotel
16	**Presa-canario. 14:54;** All expenses paid, at the expense of the Spanish worker. Come all to Spain where we have paid vacations with everything included.
17	**José A. Villores. 14:55;** 351 **immigrants** in a **four star** hotel in Almería, an **all inclusive** for these people, for a father of a family with 3 or more children and unemployed, shit, fuck him, this is what the country is like with these **miserable social communist scum.**
18	**Francisco_SV. 17:37;** Spanish paradise… bracelet, **everything is free**, cell phone in hand, of course.
19	**Juan Martinez_SV. 17:40.** But if you are a Spaniard, and a volcano destroys your house, or a flood takes it away, they will put you in a sports center, or in a construction dumpster.
20	**ESPAÑA. miUtopia. 18:07.** Those affected by the La Palma volcano are sent to barracks. Immigrants sent to hotels

21	**Daniel Carayol. 18:23.** So many fucking immigrants who also take **advantage of the money of all Spaniards.** The Government announces a subsidy of 50 million for the Canary Islands to take care of migrants.
22	**Dedalo. 18:24.** This is the best call effect that any government has ever made. Hundreds of illegal immigrants arriving in the Canary Islands are accommodated in luxury hotels in Almeria and Malaga.
23	**diariodealmeria. 19:19.** The Hotel of the Africans
24	**Pa_comerES. 20:12.** These fucking immigrants have 4-star hotels. I haven't had a fucking vacation in 3 years.

2023/10/24

Inclusion criteria:
Reports the news.
Emphasizes the luxurious nature of the accommodation
Emphasizes the fact that immigrants are illegal
Expresses a situation of socio-economic deprivation

▢ (green)	News reports
▢ (purple)	Slanted News
▢ (red)	Hate speech

Figure 8. Combination of opinions and decontextualized and/or biased information during the first day under study.

3.3. The Hate Speech Arguments

As we mentioned earlier, the news cycle is superimposed with a significant increase in hate speech, covering a total period of 5 days, from 2 to 29 October 2023. During this time, the most relevant platforms are the social media website X and news websites.

As can be seen in Table 3, only 50 mentions out of the 918 total were excluded, while 89 were considered misinformation. In the "decontextualized information" box we have classified those mentions that do not contain an assessment but highlight an event during this hate cycle against immigrants without offering the context in which it occurs, nor explaining why it is news.

During the first day of the cycle alone, there were 28 mentions on digital press websites. During the second day, there were 15. The third day was when the information accumulated, with a total of 38 mentions. The following day (27th October), the information dropped to five mentions, on the 28th there was only one mention, and on the 29th there were two. During the first day, the headlines for these mentions were of the following type:

"The Government sends 300 immigrants who arrived in the Canary Islands to a hotel in Almeria" (ideal.es, 8:39 a.m. on 24th October; influence score: 6).

"The Government transfers 321 migrants rescued in the Canary Islands to Almeria" (12.30 p.m., appearing simultaneously in malagahoy.es, eldiadecordoba.es, diariodealmeria.es, huelvainformacion.es, diariodecadiz.es, diariodejerez.es, europasur.es, and diariodesevilla.es; influence scores from 3 to 6).

Table 3. Categorization of the hate cycle arguments covering 918 items on the transfer of migrants to Almeria (the items can be categorized into more than one category).

Categories	Number of Items
Categorized as political destabilization	272
Categorized as socioeconomic grievance	130
Categorized as terrorism/crime/invasion	55
Categorized as socioeconomic grievance and political destabilization	80
Categorized as terrorism/crime/invasion and political destabilization	45
Categorized as political destabilization and sexism	39
Only as sexism	27
Socioeconomic grievance, political destabilization, and sexism	26
Socioeconomic grievance and sexism	24
Socioeconomic grievance and terrorism/crime/invasion	23
Terrorism/crime/invasion, political destabilization, and sexism	18
Terrorism/crime/invasion and sexism	17
Categorized as socioeconomic grievance, terrorism/crime/invasion, and political destabilization	16
Categorized as socioeconomic grievance, terrorism/crime/invasion, and sexism	4
Categorized as socioeconomic grievance, terrorism/crime/invasion, political destabilization, and sexism	3
Misinformation where there is no grievance; no terrorism; no destabilization; and no sexism	89
Excluded from analysis	50
Total mentions	918

Source: own design.

Note that the first and second news stories offer different numbers of migrants. It is also worth noting that several websites published the same news at exactly the same time. This happens because all these media are from the same editorial group and publish simultaneously, since their websites have an important content component that is managed from the central newsroom for all of the titles.

During the second day, the mentions highlight that the Government also houses immigrants in Valladolid (Cuatro), that "it will create two emergency camps on military land in Madrid to welcome migrants arriving from the Canary Islands" (eldiario.es), that it "will enable Defence land in Madrid to host migrant camps" (eldebate.com), and that "it distributes the thousands of migrants in a hundred locations across Spain" (elconfidencial.com). The europapress.es website highlights the reaction of the President of the Junta de Andalucía:

"Moreno: The Government must address the transfer of migrants "by informing in advance"" (4.19 p.m. on 25th October; influence score of 7).

Mentions with clearly biased information culminated during the day of 26th October, as we pointed out before. At 6.59 a.m., the website cadenaser.com published a headline signed by the EFE agency in the form of a question: "What happens to immigrants who arrive in the Canary Islands and are transferred to the Spanish mainland?" This publication achieves an influence score of 7. The "news" headline was repeated a few hours later by vivirediciones.es, huffingtonpost.es, elperiodicodecanarias.es, heraldo.es, andaluciainformacion.es, eldiario.es, cronicabalear.es, telemadrid.es, and lavanguardia.com. In some cases, such as telemadrid.es, they included a video explaining that the government has created 11,000 "improvised" places: 4000 in barracks, 4000 in hotels, and 3000 in other centers. It added that the transfers will be made to nine autonomous communities. The presenter cut to a reporter who talked about one of these places and a subtitle appeared stating "immigrants in a spa". The reporter pointed out that, in Medina del Campo, there is a division of opinions regarding the presence of immigrants in their town. According to the reporter, "everyone" agrees that the Government should have contacted the authorities

earlier to better prepare for the migrants' reception because, according to the Mayor, "the doctors, nurses and police were not prepared"; however, in the same video, it is explained that the migrants were referred from the Canary Islands after being interviewed by the competent authorities, so it can be assumed that they had asked about and resolved their medical problems already. The video also included statements by the Minister of Migration, in which he pointed out the following:

"An attempt is being made from certain extremes to make xenophobic, political, and opportunistic use of this issue. We are seeing this because VOX is pushing the Popular Party from some places or Mrs. Ayuso is pushing her colleagues" (Minister of Migration, in telemadrid.es, 26th October, 10:11 a.m., updated at 4:39 p.m.).

The complaint by the Minister of Migration, José Luis Esribá, was entirely pertinent if we observe the data that we collected through Determ. As indicated in Table 3, 779 of the mentions collected are dominated by those maintaining arguments specifically aimed at generating political destabilization (272), socioeconomic grievances (130), invoking the fear of terrorism/crime/invasion (55), or are sexist in nature (27). In the other mentions, the arguments were mixed. Only three messages sustained all of the arguments of this hate cycle. We highlight one of them, which did not have a wide reach (142) but did have a very high engagement rate (7.60), the author of which, LucasRCDE, describes himself in his profile as "The *guaguas melendista*. Captain of the fourth Eurocopa boat":

"Okay. Did you vote for the left? All troublesome illegal immigrants and rapist ex-convicts "reinserted" into your building. You pay 50% taxes, you pay for all the aid, the ministries, the LGTBI beach bars, the whores and blow of the PSOE..."

Socioeconomic grievances were an argument defended exclusively in 130 mentions. These mentions often used photographs of where the immigrants stayed to highlight that they are luxury hotels. If we look at the mentions that had the highest influence score (between 7 and 9), we obtain a total of 16 mentions: 9 websites, 6 mentions on X, and 1 Facebook mention. During the first day, we have the mentions from La Gaceta de la Iberosfera and from Javier Negre, along with the Facebook post by ABC de Sevilla. On the second day, we have a tweet from Jorge Buxadé and two mentions from okdiario (one on X and another on their website). On the 26th, we have a tweet from Colmenero.es, two mentions on the okdiario.es website, and one on forocoches.com. The one on forocoches.com highlighted the following:

"Spa that has been closed for a year and was being renovated now has new residents... How nice, they must come with a full wallet because they are accommodated in the best places" (forocoches.com, 6.30 p.m., 26th October).

On the 27th, we see mentions on three websites (okdiario.com, europapress.es, and forocoches.com). On the 28th, there was only one tweet from La Gaceta de la Iberosfera by Rubén Pulido. During the 29th, there were only two forocoches.com posts. In general, all these mentions highlighted the grievances felt by the Spanish people that immigrants stay in hotels paid for by the Government. For example, in forocoches.com, an image of La Palma is shown, which states the following: "Two years of the La Palma volcano: containments that leaks and a solution that doesn't arrive". Two other photographs were provided, pointing out "Hotel Alegría, the new home for more than 300 immigrants transferred from the Canary Islands to Almeria" and "Another in Torrox".

The argument exclusively associating immigrants with terrorism, crime, or invasion was supported by 55 mentions. If we look at those that had a higher influence score (from 7 to 9) during this hate cycle, we find a total of 14, of which 10 came from websites and 2 from X. The most mentions appeared on the first day (6). There were three on 25th October, four on the 26th, and one on the 28th. The websites that had the highest influence scores during those days were libertaddigital.com, okdiario.com, and forocoches.com; also notable were

abc.es, eldia.es, and the mentions on cazadordeideas.es and okdiario.com. Here are some of the headlines:

"The collapse in the Canary Islands prevents prosecutors and police from investigating immigrants in the midst of an anti-terrorist alert" (libertaddigital.com, 6.35 a.m. on 24th October; influence score of 8).

"Why are illegals given carte blanche without knowing if they are criminals, etc?" (forocoches.com, 4:04 p.m. On 26th October; influence score of 7).

The main intentionality of the actors in this hate cycle was to achieve political destabilization and, although such intentionality was mixed with the other hate arguments, we found 272 mentions that supported this argument exclusively. To find out who the most effective and influential voices were, we selected the publications that had influence scores of 9 and 10. We found 31 publications, all from digital newspaper websites. Of the 31 publications, 17 were published by okdiario.com, which posted 4 headlines on the 24th, 5 on the 25th, 6 on the 26th, and 2 on the 27th. Among these, the one that had the greatest virality was published at 6.45 a.m. on the 25th with the following title:

"*hunting the Government that accommodates 320 immigrants in a 4-star hotel in Almeria*". (okdiario, 6.45 a.m. On 25th October; 4.84 virality, influence score of 9)

Okdiario.com is, without doubt, the one that tried most clearly and emphatically to promote political destabilization, resorting to the publication of several "news" items with the same argument on the same day. Elmundo.com made three mentions with an influence score of 9 or 10 over the same period, the first of which appeared on the first day of this cycle, at 2:27 p.m., highlighting the "Unrest in the *Junta* due to the "unilateral" decision of the Government to transfer 300 immigrants from the Canary Islands to Almeria".

Elpais.com also had three publications highlighting the political destabilization argument, which it attributed to the Popular Party. The first news item was published on the 25th at 2:36 p.m., noting that "The PP uses the reception of migrants arriving in the Canary Islands to accuse the Government of taking part in human trafficking". The second, on the 27th, stated that "Feijóo accuses the Government of "leaving immigrants at bus stops" after taking them from the Canary Islands", and the last, on the 28th, stated that "Residents of Torrox respond to the PP councillor who fears that migrants will bring "typhus": "People must be given a chance"". The vanguardia.com site published two high-impact headlines, the first on the 25th, where it highlighted that "Madrid demands "loyalty" from the Government regarding the arrival of migrants after saying that it treats them as "burdens"", and another on the 27th with the following headline: "Vox: "We are suffering an unprecedented migratory invasion"".

4. Discussion

As we have pointed out before, extreme political positions that seek to generate a populist social narrative politicize through disinformation to create a context where information, grievances, and ideology are clearly linked (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2018; Au et al., 2021; Di Fátima, 2024; Vasist et al., 2024; Napoli, 2024). They create an intentional narrative through a biased "news" story, strategically repeating the same content to control the public discourse. In this way they force their political rivals or conventional media to decide between ignoring or refuting it, both of which are beneficial strategies for those disseminating disinformation.

As we have highlighted, the presence of hate speech on social media is not always the same, but bubbles are created in which the haters manage to obtain more engagement with and influence for their messages (Goel et al., 2023; Kuehn & Salter, 2020; College of St. George, 2018; Sunstein, 2017). The viralization of such hate speech is triggered when it reaches reliable sites of trustworthy information with high influence scores.

Compared to existing research on hate speech, our perspective highlights the importance of the context in which hate speech is produced, disseminated, and spread. This allows us to understand not only who the most influential haters in spreading hate speech are, but also the role of news/disinformation media in generating hate bubbles and, more importantly, how social media and information/disinformation websites work together.

In the case under analysis, the promoters of the hate cycle belong to far-right circles. They construct the discourse on X and rely on the clearly biased digital press websites to pick up on it; however, other digital media are needed to collaborate in this process. In fact, disinformation reaches its peak when digital press websites of trustworthy information echo the disinformation.

As we have highlighted in our analysis, the disinformation launched by far-right political agents contained "humorous" content, misleading in its framing, which contributes to contaminating and provoking information noise, being decontextualized and/or manipulated (Wardle, 2017). The silencing, collectivization, and decontextualization of immigrants (Saltzis, 2012; Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017) is carried out through a framing that is not concerned with understanding the migratory drama experienced in the Canary Islands at that time, but rather that the government was housing migrants on the Spanish mainland in four-star hotels. It forgot to explain that these hotels were closed because it was the off-season, and that they were rented to try to find a way out of the collapse that was taking place on the Islands due to the marked increase in immigrant arrivals.

The strategy behind building this hate bubble was to establish the initial framing of the debate—disinformation—and regurgitate the same "news" repeatedly (Lakoff, 2014). At first, the far-right online community manifested an impressive capacity to receive and interact with hate speech, demonstrated, for example, in the high engagement rate of the X messages of its influencers. The difficulty of spreading the disinformation (Margolin, 2020) was overcome, in this case, by making use of websites close to the far-right that present themselves as "information providers". In this way, they provide a veneer of objectivity to the pieces of disinformation, clearly decontextualized and manipulated, that link information, grievances, and ideology. The hate bubble peaks when the high-virality media, not in any way suspected of belonging to the far-right, echo the disinformation, thus contributing to its definitive spread.

The arguments presented in these discourses, as we have seen, are basically twofold: comparative grievances and the invasion/increase in crime caused by immigration. In fact, in creating the framing, the comparative grievance argument between immigrants and the Spanish people was highlighted, reinforced by the construction of immigrants as dehumanized and dangerous beings. These discourses have a double effect: on the one hand, they express and promote the rejection of immigrants, while on the other, they try to generate political destabilization, insisting that the "government" aligns itself with the "others", providing immigrants with resources that the Spanish people are denied. This intention of political destabilization also reflects the political positions of the far-right. In fact, in the case we are analyzing, this was achieved on the second day of the cycle, when the peak was reached. It would take three more days for the hate bubble to gradually lose intensity, but by then it would have achieved its goal: to destabilize the Government's immigration policy.

The hate bubble example that we have dissected here allows us to reflect on how to stop or avoid such phenomena in the glocaline political arena. The question is as follows: how can one combat these bubbles? One could react by denying the existence of the situation described in the hate speech by describing it as a hoax, and one could also reposition the framing, that is, reporting on the same topic from another point of view. But, above all, as Donovan and Boyd (2021) suggest, it is necessary to reflect on the media's

contribution to the strategic amplification of this type of discourse every time they "repeat" the disinformation. Our example shows that, when hate speech is echoed in the media, the cycle of hate spreads. As a result, we can conclude that any information that handles problematic content, and which involves confusion and/or mobilization, should require prior reflection on how it is used and managed, given the strategic amplification that might result (Donovan & Boyd, 2021; Hameleers et al., 2021); however, today's media still need to have a thorough discussion about the extent to which they are willing to limit political tolerance to moral grounds. If they did so, it would be possible to counter hate speech (Armstrong & Wronski, 2019).

5. Limitations

We analyzed the relationship between the fact that the Spanish Government moved migrants from the Canary Islands to the Spanish mainland and a significant increase in hate speech on the main social networks over the following six days. Despite the important findings of this study, there are some limitations that need to be taken into account. Firstly, this study cannot draw conclusions that can be generalized to other contexts, such as Italy or Poland, or even, in the case of Spain, to other periods when a similar process of relocation and resettlement of migrants took place in the same or different cities.

Secondly, we would like to emphasize that the length of the hate cycle may be related to the specific Spanish political context. In this sense, it would be of great interest to carry out longitudinal studies in order to identify the temporal extension of hate cycles. In this case, it is in line with what would be a short news story (five days), but they could be of a medium duration (weeks) or a long duration (months or even years). The context, the actors involved, and the actions taken to counter the hate could help to compare different hate cycles.

Furthermore, we cannot say that the search terms we used were the most accurate. It may be that we would have found more or fewer items with different search terms.

Fourth, it should be noted that the software we used was not very sensitive to messages from Instagram, TikTok, or even WhatsApp. This means that we cannot be sure of the total amount of hate speech posted during these days and the role of the social media platform X. Our results coincide to some extent with those of the annual report on the monitoring of hate speech on social media in Spain, which identifies X as the social media network where hate speech predominates (Observatorio Español del Racismo y la Xenofobia, 2023). However, as the authors point out (p. 21), the disparity in the amount of content reported is mainly due to the different degrees of difficulty in identifying it on each social media platform.

In any case, the importance of our study lies in it describing the dynamics of the spread of disinformation and hate speech in the glocaline political arena. We need more studies—quantitative and qualitative—to help us understand these dynamic, as a way to counter disinformation and hate speech.

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