

FEMINIST MARCH OF 8M AND COVID-19:

the role of the Spanish mainstream
press in the criminalization of protest



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ABSTRACT – The research examines the methods in which social protest is criminalized through the media, as symbolic systems for the construction of reality that favor the control and reproduction of the social order. Based on the case study of the feminist demonstration on March 8, 2020, in Spain, the framing made by the newspapers El País, El Mundo, La Vanguardia, ABC and La Razón in their informative productions are analyzed. The observation period is between March 7 and June 21, 2020, when the first alarm state declared by the Spanish Government to fight the Covid-19 pandemic ended. The results show that beyond the editorial and ideological lines of these media, the feminist protest was mainly demonized by the framing identified in the texts, through the construction of a general idea of responsibility in the spread of the virus.

Key words: Feminism. Social protest. Criminalization. Mass media. Covid-19.

MARCHA FEMINISTA DE 8M E COVID-19: o papel da grande imprensa espanhola na criminalização do protesto

RESUMO – A pesquisa examina os métodos de criminalização do protesto social que se exercem por meio da mídia, como sistemas simbólicos de construção da realidade que favorecem o controle e a reprodução da ordem social. A partir do estudo de caso da marcha feminista de 8 de março de 2020 na Espanha são analisados os enquadramentos feitos pelos jornais El País, El Mundo, La Vanguardia, ABC e La Razón em suas produções informativas. O período de observação vai de 7 de março a 21 de junho de 2020, quando terminou o primeiro estado de alarme declarado pelo governo espanhol para o combate à pandemia de Covid-19. Os resultados mostram que para além das linhas editoriais e ideológicas desses meios de comunicação, o protesto feminista foi demonizado principalmente pelo enquadramento identificado nos textos, por meio da construção de uma ideia geral de responsabilidade na disseminação do vírus.

Palavras-chave: Feminismo. Protesto social. Criminalização. Meios de comunicação de massa. Covid-19.

MARCHA FEMINISTA DEL 8M Y COVID-19: el papel de la prensa española en la criminalización de la protesta

RESUMEN – La investigación examina los métodos de criminalización de la protesta social que se ejercen a través de los medios de comunicación, como sistemas simbólicos de construcción de la realidad que favorecen el control y reproducción del orden social. A partir del caso de estudio de la marcha feminista del 8 de marzo de 2020 en España, se analiza el encuadre realizado por los diarios El País, El Mundo, La Vanguardia, ABC y La Razón en sus producciones informativas. El período de observación es entre el 7 de marzo y el 21 de junio de 2020, cuando finalizó el primer estado de alarma declarado por el Gobierno español para combatir la pandemia de Covid-19. Los resultados muestran que más allá de las líneas editoriales e ideológicas de estos medios, la protesta feminista fue principalmente demonizada por el encuadre identificado en los textos, a través de la construcción de una idea general de responsabilidad en la propagación del virus.

Palabras clave: Feminismo. Protesta social. Criminalización. Medios de comunicación en masa. Covid-19

1 Introduction

In democratic societies, collective mobilization has emerged as one of the classic forms of protest of social movements against the logic of power and domination imposed within the framework of nation-states (Castells, 2009). It is a mechanism of political resistance that, expressed in multiple modalities – demonstrations, parades, rallies, marches, among other ways of occupying public space – has favored citizen participation in decision-making processes at the global level, as well as the formulation of inclusive agendas that guarantee human rights (Wouters & Walgrave, 2017; Mazumder, 2018; Rebón, 2019; Jaramillo et al., 2020).

Among the most massive mobilizations that have taken place in Spain in recent decades are those that took place around the 15M, a

citizens' movement of protest against "the high costs of the economic crisis for the Spanish population, the governmental adjustment policies and the dismantling of the welfare state" (Maqueda, 2015, p. 21); those carried out by movements such as the "Mareas" – White and Green Tides – against cuts in the public sectors of health and education; the days of protests carried out by the youth for climate movement "Fridays For Future" in several cities of the country; as well as the massive demonstrations organized by the feminist movement within the framework of its fourth wave (Galarza, 2019).

Although in Spain the right to assembly and rally is recognized in article 21 of the Constitution, its materialization in social protest has often been questioned and delegitimized by the power elites, even presenting the mobilizations of specific collectives as a "threat to the stability of the country" (Medina, 2018, p. 228) and, consequently, as an adverse phenomenon for citizen security.

Thus, within the framework of this protectionist logic of the State, essentially articulated by the political powers with the complicity of the media (Juárez et al., 2021), the phenomenon of criminalization of social protest and, above all, of its participants, is naturalized under the pretext of protecting both national security and other fundamental rights that could be violated during nonviolent resistance actions. Such criminalization is manifested through police, judicial, and media strategies (Alvarado, 2020). According to Maqueda (2015, p. 19) "exemplarily punishing each one of the ruptures of order [is] necessary to create sources of consensus towards institutions and prevent any manifestation of political dissent".

This research focuses its object of study on the modes of criminalization of feminist social protest exercised through the mass media, as symbolic systems of construction of reality that favor specific forms of control and reproduction of the social order (Sosa, 2020), called by Bourdieu (2001) as symbolic power.

Based on the case study of the feminist demonstration of March 8 (8M) 2020 in Spain, on account of International Women's Day, it is intended to demonstrate the existence of a political and media interest in criminalizing the women's protest, blaming it for the expansion of Covid-19 in the country, even when in the days close to this date there were concentrations of people at concerts, political events, fairs, and sporting events, among other activities that gathered hundreds of people (Mouzo & Sevillano, 2020).

For this purpose, the study characterizes the frames offered by the Spanish reference press –El País, El Mundo, La Vanguardia, ABC,

and La Razón –, by analyzing their news production in the period between March 7, 2020, when the Ministry of Health advises against suspending mass events due to the coronavirus (Recarte, 2020), until June 21, when the first state of alarm is declared by the Spanish Government in the national territory ends (Government of Spain, 2020), which involved the preventive confinement of the entire population.

El País, El Mundo, ABC, and La Razón are newspapers published in Madrid, and La Vanguardia is published in Barcelona. These newspapers are considered a reference for three reasons: the scope of the general audiences, the highest sales, and, especially, their proximity with opinion leaders in the political and cultural field, the most influential actors in Spanish society (Reig, 1998).

2 Approaches to framing theory

Framing theory has its origins in cognitive psychology and interpretive sociology, specifically, in symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, and ethnomethodology (Sadaba-Garraza, 2001; Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015; Bateson, 1972; Goffman, 1974, 2006). Tuchman (1983) was responsible for the incorporation of informational construction analysis.

From this initial point, diverse studies were developed regarding media framing that, nowadays, continue in a process of development and consolidation (Reese, 2007; Piñeiro-Naval & Mangana, 2019). Framing implies “the process of selecting a few elements of a perceived reality [that] increase the emphasis or apparent importance of certain ideas, activating schemes that induce audiences to think, feel and decide in a particular way” (Entman, 2007, p. 164). The theoretical and methodological development of framing theory as a parallel – and not dependent – approach to that of agenda-setting has been going on for almost two decades. As Aruguete (2017) points out, the relationship between both perspectives is still an inconclusive debate. Despite this, “both approaches differ in that it is crucial for framing theory it is to understand both the emphasis placed on the way the topic or event is described and the interpretative schemes that are intended to stimulate in audiences” (Quintana-Pujalte et al., 2020, p. 1159).

Although some research negatively specifies the heterogeneity of the approaches that have the framing theory as their main focus (Weaver, 2007; Van Gorp, 2007; McCombs, 2006), for D’Angelo (2002) the multiplicity does not necessarily mean a weakness of framing theory, since only an “integral and multi-methodological” approach

(D'Angelo, 2012, p. 354) would be able to know the power that these texts have in the establishment of referential frames of interpretation.

Frames are found both in news production and its reception and signify a link between both extremes, as they are a repertoire of interpretative frames shared by both (Quintana-Pujalte, 2020). They are organizing principles that “structure the social world in a meaningful way” (Reese, 2001, p. 11). The scientific literature differentiates the analysis of frame construction – frame building – the analysis of the structure of the meaning of informative texts – media frames –, and the audience frames, that refer to the individual frames of interpretation (Scheufele, 1999). The study presented here aims to contribute to framing studies by proposing the analysis of informative text production based on the identification of media frames from the building and media frames approach. The analysis will be synchronic, since, as Matthes (2012) indicates, shared patterns of interpretation are settled based on negotiations and disputes, the outcome of which causes them to undergo modifications over time.

Media frames can be observed inductively (De Vreese, 2005, p. 53) or deductively (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; De Vreese, 2005). In the second case, the frames are predetermined and are considered general or generic. Neuman et al. (1992) were pioneers in establishing the first four general frames: (a) the conflict frame, (b) the human interest frame, (c) the economic consequences frame, and (d) the moral judgment frame. Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), in their now classic work on European politics, added a fifth frame, called (e) attribution of responsibility.

The analysis seeks to detect the strength or weakness of each of the generic frames. As a contribution to the deductive perspective of identifying the generic media frames, a sixth frame will be proposed in this research, the (f) criminalization frame, whose indicators are created ad hoc (table 1) concerning another research (Smith et al., 2001; Boykoff, 2006; Leung, 2009).

3 Criminalization of social protest in the media discourse

The criminalization of social movements, as strategies of intimidation and delegitimization carried out by state and non-state actors, has a prolific approach in the scientific literature (Della Porta et al., 2006; Blay, 2013; Fernández & Ojeda, 2015; Poulos & Haddad, 2016).

This phenomenon is essentially characterized by “the use of legal and judicial institutions to prosecute and bring charges against members

of organizations and social movements for their participation and actions in the context of conflicts and social struggles” (Alvarado, 2020, p. 29).

Nevertheless, criminalization is not only articulated from the legal and political dimensions of the institutional framework, with actions such as the delegitimization of social actors in protest, the physical repression of security forces on protesters, the establishment of regulatory frameworks that allow the deliberate prosecution of particular collective actions, the counterposition of rights in the exercise of social protest or the criminal prosecution of its participants (Alvarado, 2020). The fact is that the intervention of media systems is also often required for the symbolic construction of specific frames of interpretation on the discourses of resistance and its manifestations in the public space, as recognized by the research of Nacos and Torres-Reyna (2003), Artese (2009), Ferrell et al. (2015), Menjivar (2016) and Kaufman (2019). Generally, the phenomenon of criminalization of social protest through the media has two fundamental characteristics. Firstly, the media omission, i.e., “movements simply do not enter the media agenda” (Candón, 2012, p. 682); and, secondly, the negative connotation of actions, demands, and proposals for social change.

International organizations such as the United Nations claim that, in the case of the feminist movement, symbolic criminalization through media discourse has been particularly intense in the context of the mobilizations for International Women’s Day (Human Rights Council, 2010). The latest report of the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council complains that, among other issues, feminists and women defenders protests are victims of “judicial harassment and criminalization” through discourses that incite hatred and violence (Human Rights Council, 2019, p. 12).

Among the ways of criminalizing the collective actions of this movement are social discredit, stigmatization, and attacks on honor and reputation (Human Rights Council, 2019). This is how feminists are described, for example, as “bad mothers, difficult, shameless, loud, unpleasant or witches. They are branded as infidels, atheists, [...] traitors, anti-nationalists or terrorists” (p. 9). In addition to these social discrediting tactics, there are also comments and insinuations about the sexuality of the protesters: “They are falsely accused of being promiscuous or of engaging in prostitution. They are contemptuously referred as divorcees or lesbians” (p. 9).

However, previous studies have shown that these forms of criminalization associated with a derogatory lexicon towards feminists

do not usually appear explicitly in the media discourse, especially because of the ethical and legal repercussions they may entail (García-García & Calvo, 2019; Kilgo & Harlow, 2019). We agree with Rovira-Sancho (2013) when she assures that the media criminalization of social protest tends to be presented, rather, through specific information production strategies, depending on the ideologies that each media represents, the ways of construction of the media agenda, and the presence of certain actors in the communication product, allow to frame social movements and their protest actions from the narrative of “the dangerous classes” (Maqueda, 2015, p. 7) or the discourse of resistance.

4 Materials and methods

The approach proposed will search for those generic frames in news texts that deal with the central theme of the feminist demonstrations of March 8, 2020, in Spain. The news search was carried out through the MyNews tool, from March 7 to June 21, 2020. In the advanced search section, the following keywords were inserted: Women’s Day; 8-M; 8M; 8M mass marches; 8M report; feminist demonstrations. Then, the five media that correspond to the universe of analysis in its national coverage were selected, and after reading each news item that met these requirements, the informative pieces that finally made up the corpus were selected. To record the data, a content analysis template was established with three categories, in which the indicators observed in the informative texts are expressed. These categories are:

1. The media agenda: whose indicators are the informative presence, represented by the number of texts that address the topic (number of articles per media outlet); the informative hierarchy, where the location of the information in certain relevant spaces and its integration in some type of dossier or special content is observed; and the thematic classification, i.e., to which section the news is attributed.

2. Definition of the informative actor: the indicators are divided into (a) demonstrators, (b) judges, (c) politicians related to the current government, (d) opposition politicians, (e) NGOs, (f) experts/scientists, (g) security forces, and (h) others identified as relevant in the corpus. Each of these eight actors corresponds to different stakeholders that collaborate in building the media frame. That is why they will be identified in the corpus as individual actors in each news on the content analysis.

3. Framing functions: the reference indicators are those displayed in the Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) scale, which were reduced to three for each latent variable. The indicators that correspond to each framing are those shown in table 1, from where the presence (1) / absence (0) was identified to obtain an average incidence of the indicator for each framing, and then calculate its strength in the discourse of the medium. As mentioned, based on the aforementioned research, the identification of a generic frame called criminalization is proposed, whose indicators can also be observed in the following table.

Table 1

Function of frames and indicators

Framing Function	Indicators	1 (P)	0 (A)	Average	Total
Attribution of responsibility	Does the information suggest that any institution is responsible for the issue or problem addressed?				
	Does the information suggest that any institution could solve or alleviate the problem?				
	Does the information suggest that an individual (or a social group) is responsible for the issue or problem addressed?				
Conflict	Does the information allude to some disagreement between political parties, individuals, groups, institutions, or countries?				
	Is a political party, individual, group, institution or country reported to be reproaching another political party, individual, group, institution, or country?				
Economic consequences	Does the information allude to two or more different positions on the issue or problem addressed?				
	Does the information mention financial gains or losses that may occur in the present or the future (mention of financial issues)?				
	Are there costs associated with the issue or problem addressed?				
	Is reference made to the economic consequences of following or not following a certain action?				

Human interest	Does the information provide a case or the "human side" of the issue?
	Does the information use adjectives or personal anecdotes that generate feelings of outrage, empathy, tenderness, sympathy, or compassion?
	Does the information report the private or personal lives of the actors?
Moral	Does the information contain a moral message?
	Does the information refer to morals, God and other religious principles?
	Does the information propose social prescriptions about how to behave?
Criminalization	Does the information allude to legal or judicial mechanisms as a form of control of social protest?
	Does the information highlight any legal violations on the part of the intervening actors?
	Does the information represent its protagonists linked to violence, crime, or felony?

The table shows how the information is addressed in the analysis, answering the questions that guide the process. Over the theory item, we discuss that media framing collaborates in creating a hegemonic view about reality. Media discourse is an inseparable institutionalized speech from the media's role in public opinion. Therefore, each news is analyzed as an information unit to recognize the strategies of the media frame and reflect on its influence capacity on the public sphere where it develops. The unit represents media discourse and their interests in the issue we are analyzing.

The register was based on three indicators for each latent variable (framing function). To determine the strength of each of these framings, the following scale was established: weak, when the values are expressed between 0-0.32; moderate, when the average expression of the indicators has a value that oscillates between 0.33-0.65; and strong framing if the indicators have an expression between 0.66-1.

The headlines of the informative pieces were observed, as a determining reference for the interpretation of events (Fernández,

2016; Van Dijk, 1990), as well as the complete text of the news. The observation of the lexical and semantic elements complemented the approach to determine if the frame provides a positive, negative or neutral orientation regarding the mobilizations for 8M in Spain during the pandemic.

5 Unique approaches to media discourse

The informative presence of the issue in each analyzed media presents significant differential characteristics. The representativeness is distributed as follows: 47 informative texts were analyzed in *El Mundo*, 58 in *El País*, 60 in *La Vanguardia*, 73 in *ABC* and 109 in *La Razón* (n=345).

For the newspaper *El Mundo*, the topic was part of the section that reflects national news, which includes informative issues related to politics and society in a unified manner. Of the total of 47 news items referring to the 8M demonstration, 53% were published in the section called Spain and 26% in a special section of the newspaper called *Primer Plano*. The opinion genre that dealt with the topic accounted for 19% of the publications and the remaining 2% was reflected in the section *Otra Crónica*.

La Vanguardia structured the subject matter initially in the Society section; however, as the subject matter became more relevant, the information found space in Politics. This section accounted for 67% of the informative texts published by this newspaper. In the second instance –although with a very low expression compared to the first – the media addressed the topic from the Opinion section, in 15% of the information detected. As a significant difference with the informative construction made by *El Mundo*, for *La Vanguardia* it was not relevant to publish information on 8M in a supplement or special section, since only 5% of the informative texts are treated in that context.

As for the newspaper *El País*, as in *El Mundo*, most of the news items related to 8M and Covid-19 were found in the national news section, a total of 34 pieces that represent 58.62%; while the other news texts were distributed to a lesser extent in Society (27.58%), or Opinion with 4 news pieces representing 6.89%. *El País*, as well as *La Vanguardia*, did not require to add this information in a special supplement.

In ABC characteristics similar to El País and El Mundo are observed, since 32.87% of its news articles correspond to the National section. This section, along with Opinion, in which there were 22 of the pieces studied (30.13%), are the ones in which the topic is most represented. Another section that most covers this topic is Society, with 19.17% of the pieces. Following that, other sections in which isolated informative texts were found were Style, Economy and Culture.

La Razón is the only newspaper where there are more articles related to 8M, in a special section called Primera Plana, which contains 32 pieces that represent 29.35% of the total. This section is followed by National, with 25.68%, Opinion with 23.85%, and other sections such as Society, International or Economy with a much lower presence of texts. Thus, La Razón, together with ABC, are the newspapers with the highest number of opinion pieces.

The structure and the space are given to a topic are essential to understand how the media assembles the emphasis it proposes to its readers, which is especially related to the construction of the media frame. In El Mundo 72% of the informative texts offered by this newspaper on 8M occupied between three and four columns, quite a relevant space in the construction of the news.

The topic was also widely covered in La Vanguardia, as 27% of the news items were covered in five-column news items, 25% in three-column news items and 23% in two-column news items.

In El País, most of the news items occupied four and five columns, accounting for 25.86% and 43.10%, respectively. As for ABC, the news items occupied less space: 27.39% of one column, 24.65% of two, 23.28% of four and 10.95% of five columns.

In La Razón, it is observed that most of the articles are designed in two columns (28.44%), due, above all, to the large number of pieces that are opinion pieces. With one column we find 17.43%, with three 18.34% and with four 16.50%. Of the remaining, 10.09% are in five columns.

These results indicate that in terms of space granted to the construction of the topic, El País gave it a preferential treatment, which in most cases took five columns in the design from the news page. This data is relevant because the space that media provide to a topic is another element for building a unique approach to news. If it is observed that the media is providing more space to a subject, it can be figured out that for the newspaper this theme has a preference among others.

Regarding the informative actor of the analyzed texts, we found in El Mundo that the more frequent news actor is the official

political sector, while La Vanguardia establishes a balance between opposition and official politicians. Another frequent informative actor for this media is the security forces and judges. For La Vanguardia the law and order representatives have the greatest space in its news about the 8M conflict, framing the issue from a conservative point of view.

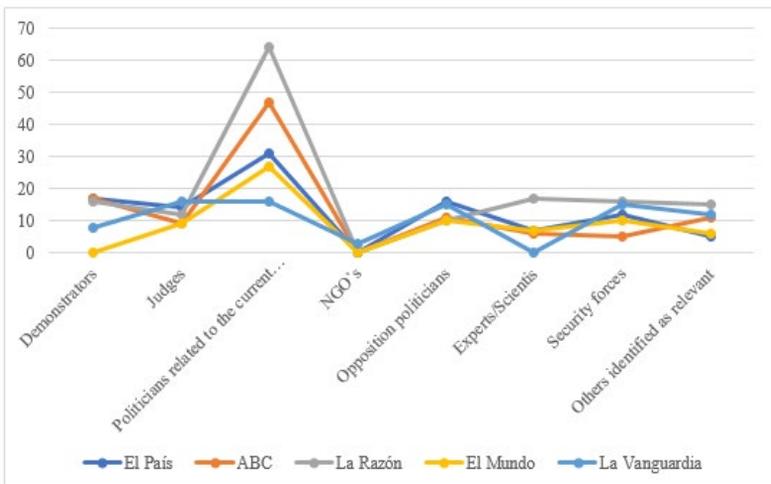
In El País, ABC and La Razón, as in El Mundo, pro-government politicians are the main protagonists. In these three newspapers, the demonstrators are also relevant, especially in the news pieces of the day before and the same day of 8M, where the demonstrations were reported. The demonstrators were part of the reality constructed by this media in a positive approach. They had a voice and identity in the news. Although after the march, and when the Covid-19 rates were up in Spain, judges and security forces appear assiduously, due to the investigations and resignations, and opposition politicians, owing to their criticisms of the government.

The voice of experts is presented in a similar frequency in four out of five newspapers. The only difference is on La Razón, where the point of view of the experts is quite relevant for this media.

Chart 1 shows the considerable difference between newspapers ABC and La Razón, with a great prominence of pro-government politicians, while the other news actors show similarities between the newspapers analyzed, with minimal differences in the presence of demonstrators and experts.

Chart 1

Informative actors present in the texts



Knowing about the space given for each piece of news published by these newspapers, which informative actor was relevant for them, and what section they decided to put the information, is an approach to their editorial decision. The analysis shown above lets us identify relevant elements for the media observed, which allows the audience to understand a topic according to the media interests.

6 Analysis of the functions of media framing

Several parts of media discourse must be analyzed as parts of a unit, to approach the building of the media frame. Throughout this study, after identifying the parts of each news item on the subject according to the method, we evaluated the strength of the constructed framework and the hegemonic gaze it presented. It could be possible to recognize how the media constructed the informative texts about the feminist march of 8M due to the analysis of the presence of the indicator corresponding to the frames. Knowing the strength of each frame also made it possible to observe the interpretation tendencies that each newspaper offered throughout the coverage of the event in question.

In the case of *El Mundo*, its informative texts highlighted the topic from the responsibility frame, since the presence of the indicators showed that this approach was the strongest in the media discourse (the presence is 0.68 in the range from 0 to 1). It is followed by the conflict and criminalization frames with a moderate presence in the corpus (0.57 and 0.42, respectively).

The analysis was conducted considering both the headlines and the complete informative text. The following excerpts seek to illustrate how the framing of responsibility was developed. Headlines such as 8-M contributed “for sure” to “spread the coronavirus” (Martialay, 2020, p. 9), or opinion columns such as the one shown in figure 1, which ratify the idea that it was not only the social protest that was responsible for the increase in contagions but also the presidential administration (Jiménez, 2020). It is noticed that, although this idea appears developed in different journalistic genres, which denote different degrees of responsibility of the media for the information, the framing remains the same.

Figure 1

Responsibility framing in *El Mundo*

Irene Montero parapeta el 8-M tras los expertos

Salvador Illa asegura que él no podía anular la manifestación por no tener competencias

MARISA CRUZ MARRAS
«El 8 de marzo, al anochecer, recibí un mensaje y una llamada, de la consejera del País Vasco y del consejero de Madrid. Y los dos me dijeron: 'Ha habido un incremento sustancial de casos y lo vamos a notificar mañana oficialmente. Queremos adoptar más medidas'. Ellos eran los competentes para tomarlas. Hasta el 14 de marzo (con la declaración del estado de alarma), yo no puedo tomar como ministro de Sanidad ninguna medida de salud pública. No puedo suspender un partido de fútbol, no puedo suspender una manifestación, no puedo ordenar ninguna medida restrictiva».

Con estas palabras, justificó ayer el ministro de Sanidad, Salvador Illa, no haber hecho nada para intentar impedir las manifestaciones masivas del 8-M pese a que el Gobierno disponía ya de datos sobre la virulencia del Covid-19. El argumento que no estaba entre sus competencias la suspensión de acto alguno, que esta era una facultad

de muy diferente al de su homóloga, la ministra de Igualdad, Irene Montero que, ya recuperada del contagio por coronavirus, concedió una entrevista a *La Sexta* en la que lejos de lamentar la no suspensión de las marchas del 8-M, acusó a la derecha de estar utilizando la crisis con «añillos», «rabias» y «odios» para «atacar a las mujeres y al feminismo».

Montero insistió en el grado «de agresividad con el que la extrema derecha está intentando señalar a las mujeres en relación a la manifestación del 8M y la crisis del coronavirus». Una actitud que, en su opinión, «no responde a un dato científico sino a su interés partidista». Matarro que el Gobierno actuó «de acuerdo con el criterio de los expertos», recordó que, además de las manifestaciones, se celebraron muchos otros grandes eventos sobre «los que no se pone el foco» e hizo hincapié en que las marchas masivas de aquel domingo «no fueron el problema».

Su actitud contrastó con la Illa quien ante los diputados admitió «Si hubiéramos sabido lo que iba a pasar, claro que hubiéramos adop-



COMENTARIOS
LIBERALES

F. JIMÉNEZ
LOSANTOS

Hay plan B: fuera Sánchez

COMO decía ayer el editorial de EL MUNDO, el chantaje de Sánchez a Casado anunciando que «no hay plan B» al estado de alarma y al caos del desconfinamiento, porque seguimos bajo arresto domiciliario con un par de horas para bajar al patio y volver al paro, es democráticamente intolerable. Si no hay plan B es por una razón: tampoco ha habido nunca plan A. Sólo hay un plan en el vacío magín del presidente del Gobierno: seguir siéndolo. No previó nada ante el coronavirus, mundialmente anunciado en enero por la OMS, porque estorbaba al montaje del 8-M, por cuyo liderazgo pugaban las tres hembras alfa del socialcomunismo: Carmen Calvo, Irene Montero y la propia señora de Sánchez, la Reina de África del Instituto de Empresa.

Source: *El Mundo* (2020).

At the same time, this responsibility framing is also evident in news items where legal debates are raised on whether it was a crime for the president of the government and the technical team that carried out the management of the pandemic in Spain to have allowed the March 8 demonstrations to take place. One example was the chronicle entitled “Fernando Simón kept quiet about the EU warnings” (Lamet, 2020, p. 4) where it is denounced that the director of the Center for Control of Alerts and Health Emergencies already knew on March 2 about the magnitude of the health problem and did not inform the Autonomous Communities. In informative texts that are not based on opinion, the supposed ideological link between this management and the values defended by feminist demonstrations is related, also focusing on responsibility and conflict (Cruz, 2020).

The criminalization framing indicators were found with greater frequency in the headlines, where the emphasis was set down on the link between the demonstrations of 8M, the increase of infections, and the potential crime of having allowed it and of having participated. Meanwhile, in the body of the text, the other multitudinous events that took place that same weekend are

clarified: a soccer league match or a political rally of the political party Vox. Cases like this are observed in headlines such as “Simón advises the agency that asked to avoid 8-M” (Lamet, 2020, p. 8), “Justice investigates if it was a crime to allow 8-M” (Marraco, 2020, p. 4), or “Interior tries to stop the inquiries about 8-M” (Lázaro & Durán, 2020, p. 4).

In the texts of *La Vanguardia*, the conflict (0.57 in the range from 0 to 1) and criminalization (0.36 in the range from 0 to 1) frames were evidenced as moderate. Responsibility was weak with a presence of 0.32 indicators. The indicators of the general framing of conflict can be seen in headlines such as: “Witnesses of the judicial report of 8M reveal changes and errors in the text” (*La Vanguardia*, 2020, p. 17); and in news items that highlight in depth the existing dispute between political actors, such as the chronicle “PP takes aim at Sánchez and demands that he dismiss Minister Marlaska” (Del Riego, 2020b, p. 12), or “Ayuso calls for the resignation of the government delegate” (Martarena, 2020, p.17), as shown in figure 2, as one of many examples that have been found of how the march of 8M was used to confront political parties.

Figure 2

Conflict framing in La Vanguardia

Ayuso pide la dimisión del delegado del Gobierno

Isabel Díaz Ayuso ha pedido la dimisión del delegado del Gobierno en Madrid, José Manuel Franco, al estimar que “no actúa como debería” según su cargo, “sino que lo hace como secretario general del PSOE-M”. La presidenta de la Comunidad ha elevado el tono de un conflicto

enquistado desde marzo pero que se ha recrudecido esta semana con la apertura de una investigación oficial de la Delegación por el multitudinario acto del cierre de Ifema organizado por el Ejecutivo regional. Ayuso estima que Franco “no ha estado a la altura” y “ha mentido” a lo largo de la crisis de la Covid-19 tras decidir mantener la marcha del 8-M pese a que la Consejería de Sanidad le advirtiera la víspera –por correo electrónico– de la “emergencia sanitaria” que ya estaba larvándose en Madrid. / **Asier Martarena**

Source: *La Vanguardia* (2020).

In the texts analyzed, there were identified indicators that put other nonpolitical actors, such as the security forces, in conflict.

This is the case of Vallín's chronicle (2020, p. 10), entitled "Civil Guard report on 8M sparks a crisis in the Interior Ministry".

As mentioned, the criminalization framing was also expressed with moderate strength in *La Vanguardia*. Although the conflict is latent, the emphasis is placed on aspects related to the judiciary and the legality – or not – of the acts and decisions related to the protest. An example of this is the chronicle "Casado blames the peak of contagion to the acts of 8M" (Del Riego, 2020a, p. 13); a piece of news in which it is alleged "Civil Guard claims that Simon knew about the danger of the virus in February" (Mayor, 2020b, p. 18), or the chronicle exemplified in figure 3, in which the potential of a crime for the authorization of the demonstration in Madrid is made explicit (Mayor, 2020a).

Figure 3

Criminalization framing in La Vanguardia

La crisis de Interior causa una tercera baja en la Guardia Civil

PP, Cs y Vox cargan contra Marlaska por "injerencias" que él rechaza

LEONOR MAYOR ORTEGA
Madrid

La crisis abierta por el cese de Diego Pérez de los Cobos dejó anoche una nueva baja en la Guardia Civil. El número tres de la Benemérita, Fernando Santafé, jefe del mando de operaciones del instituto armado, cambiará de destino. Su marcha se suma a la del director adjunto de operaciones, Laurentino Ceña, quien dejó el martes el cargo en señal de solidaridad con el jefe de la Comandancia de la Guardia Civil en Madrid, cesado por el ministro del Interior, Fernando Grande-Marlaska, el lunes.

Santafé era el relevo natural de Ceña, pero el ministro situó como número dos del cuerpo a Félix Blázquez, de menos graduación que Santafé, lo que precipitó el "cese pactado" de este último, según fuentes de Interior.

Esta baja añade más presión sobre el ministro, quien se convirtió ayer durante la sesión de control en el Congreso en objetivo de una oposición inflexible, que

exige su dimisión, y que también ha acumulado críticas de las asociaciones de jueces y fiscales.

Hasta tres veces negó Grande-Marlaska conocer el informe para el juzgado de instrucción 51 de Madrid sobre el coronavirus que provocó la destitución Pérez de los Cobos y la última e intensa tormenta política de la temporada.

El titular de Interior afirma que siempre exige "neutralidad" a los funcionarios públicos

El ministro del Interior se convirtió en protagonista de la sesión de control al ser atacado por tierra, mar y aire por diputados del PP, Vox y Ciudadanos. El relato de los parlamentarios de la oposición es el siguiente: Marlaska supo que la Guardia Civil elaboraba un informe para la juez

sobre la expansión del coronavirus en el que se apuntaba a la presunta responsabilidad del director de emergencias sanitarias, Fernando Simón, y del delegado del Gobierno en Madrid, José Manuel Franco, por permitir la manifestación del 8-M.

Según ese relato, el ministro habría insistido a dos altos mandos de la Guardia Civil para que telefonaran el domingo a Pérez de los Cobos exigiéndole que desvelase el contenido de ese informe, pese a que la ley y la juez instaban a guardar el secreto sobre el documento. Pérez de los Cobos se habría negado a dar detalles sobre las investigaciones de sus agentes y recibió una última llamada, la de la directora general de la Guardia Civil, María Gámez, para comunicarle que estaba destituido.

El martes, el Consejo de Ministros aprobó el tercer tramo de la subida de sueldo para los guardias civiles en aras de su equiparación salarial con otros cuerpos policiales. Eso ha supuesto para la oposición el colofón de una historia turbia en la que ven un "soborno" para "acallar las críticas al ministro". Esa es la versión que viene dando desde el Gobierno en

Source: *La Vanguardia* (2020).

In *El País* the most prominent frame is conflict, although it has a moderate presence (0.42). This can be demonstrated in the information related to the reproaches of the opposition parties and the disagreement in the management of the 8M demonstrations. For example, in the news that the 8M case is archived (Gálvez, 2020)

or in the texts (figure 4) that echo the reproaches of the opposition parties to the government for allowing the feminist marches of 2020 (Junquera, 2020). Although it has been identified both conflict frames in *El Mundo* and *El País*, some crucial differences should be highlighted when approaching the interpretation of that dispute. In *El Mundo*, it can be seen that the conflict shown by the media puts the government representatives as creators of the crisis. On the other hand, in *El País* the news guides the audience to interpret the conflict as a ground of dispute where the government representatives are the victims.

Figure 4

Conflict frame in El País

El caso del 8-M acaba archivado tras desatar una tormenta política

La juez concluye que “no hay indicios suficientes” de delito contra el delegado del Gobierno

J. J. GÁLVEZ, Madrid
La juez Carmen Rodríguez-Medel, instructora del caso 8-M, que ha sacudido la política española en plena crisis sanitaria, dictó ayer el archivo de la causa y puso fin así a una investi-

gación que se ha prolongado tres meses y que la oposición ha usado para cargar de lleno contra el Ejecutivo. La juez concluye que “no hay indicios suficientes” de que el delegado del Gobierno en Madrid y único imputado,

José Manuel Franco, previcarse al no impedir manifestaciones en plena expansión del coronavirus. Lanza, no obstante, duros reproches a su pasividad y la del resto de autoridades ante las aglomeraciones de aquellos días.

El PP critica que el Ejecutivo alentara las manifestaciones del 8-M

N. J. Madrid

“¿Es lógico decir el domingo todos a la calle y el lunes todos a casa?”, preguntó ayer la portavoz del PP en el Congreso, Cayetana Álvarez de Toledo, criticando que el Gobierno alentara la participación en la manifestación del Día de la Mujer y que ayer, la Cámara

baja decidiera suspender la actividad parlamentaria. Para la portavoz de los populares se trata de una medida “inaceptable”. “La democracia no se pone nunca en cuarentena y el Parlamento no se cierra ni en una guerra”, dijo.

Source: *El País* (2020).

The second most repeated frame is the responsibility frame, although it has a low force in the news of *El País* (0.1). The general tone in *El País* is trying to report that the demonstrations did not spread the virus (Romero, 2020), therefore, it does not attribute responsibility for the contagion to them (Linde, 2020).

Figure 5

Responsibility frame in El País

Un informe de la Guardia Civil plagado de errores culpa al Gobierno por el 8-M

"No se debería haber celebrado ninguna manifestación en Madrid", según el documento

JOSÉ MANUEL ROVERO, Madrid
El informe de la Guardia Civil que ha desatado el debate de la dimisión del coronel Diego Pérez de los Cobos, desde se acusa al Gobierno de autorizar la manifestación del 8-M en Ma-

drid a subestimar el riesgo que conllevaba, omitir informaciones relevantes, incluir otros sucesos irrelevantes, confundir hechos, en relación a decisiones clave, ofrecer datos equivocados de contingencias y se hace eco de

numerosos errores factuales. La decisión de desistir definitivamente a Pérez de los Cobos constituye ese informe en un artefacto político y provocó que dieras críticas de la oposición al ministro Fernando Grande Marlaska.

Los especialistas señalan que las manifestaciones tuvieron un impacto marginal en la evolución del virus

Los expertos coinciden: el 8-M no tuvo la culpa

mía. Cada vez más eran las que avisaban de que se estaban escapando casos, algo que quedó de manifiesto cuando se localizó el virus en algún fallecido sin diagnosticar y en enfermos de neumonía grave. Con estos precedentes, hay dos preguntas clave: ¿Se actuó con negligencia (o incluso prevaricando) al permitir las manifestaciones? ¿Las concentraciones fueron un detonante fundamental en la expansión del virus por España o por Madrid? Los expertos consultados tienen clara la respuesta a esta última: no fue

clave y su efecto, si lo tuvo, resultó marginal. Coinciden en esa opinión más de media docena de consultados, algunos de los cuales han preferido no ser citados.

"Técnicamente el asunto tiene poco recorrido. No se puede saber qué porcentaje de transmisión hubo, pero sí que fue extremadamente bajo comparado con todas las demás actividades que se venían realizando, especialmente el transporte público", dice Ildefonso Hernández, catedrático de Salud Pública. En la misma línea se manifiesta Antoni Tri-

Source: El País (2020).

In ABC it is found that conflict is the most recurrent frame (0.41), with a moderate strength as in El País. The conflict is also due to the opposition's criticism of the central and Madrid governments, specifically due to the dismissal of Diego Pérez de los Cobos, head of the Civil Guard Command in Madrid, as a result of the complaint about allowing feminist demonstrations, as can be seen in the texts in figure 6.

Figure 6

Conflict frame in ABC

PP, VOX Y CS PIDEN SU COMPARECENCIA EN EL CONGRESO

La oposición y Ayuso arremeten contra el ministro

unión del Comité Permanente de los liberales. Bal demandó al Gobierno los «motivos reales» del cese.

Comunicado de Ayuso

A las críticas al ministro del Interior también se sumó la presidenta de la Comunidad de Madrid, Isabel Díaz Ayuso, quien mostró en un comunicado su «estupor, como la inmensa mayoría de los españoles», tras la destitución «por motivos políticos» del coronel Pérez de los Cobos, «un servidor del Estado con una intachable hoja de servicios».

«El coronel Diego Pérez de los Cobos es un héroe de la democracia española al que le debemos, entre otras

Fernando Grande-Marlaska



muchas cosas, la defensa del orden constitucional el 1-O de 2017», esgrimió Díaz Ayuso. La presidenta madrileña recuerda que este coronel era un asesor del exministro Rubalcaba. «Ha sido cesado por colaborar con la Justicia investigando presuntos delitos del Gobierno durante la crisis del coronavirus. Se trata de una maniobra impropia de un sistema democrático que definitivamente hace saltar todas las alarmas. El Gobierno cruza una nueva línea roja y lanza un aviso a navegantes: Sánchez e Iglesias no quieren profesionales independientes, buscan la sumisión», concluye el comunicado.

El Gobierno prevé semanas difíciles y hará «lo que haga falta, donde haga falta»

► El PP pide al jefe del Ejecutivo que dé la cara en el Parlamento para explicar su plan contra la crisis del coronavirus y debatir las medidas

Justificación por el 8-M

El Gobierno defiende que se produjo «un cambio significativo» en la evolución de la epidemia en la Comunidad de Madrid en la noche del domingo al lunes. Pero que esta situación no se dio antes del fin de semana. «No vale valorar actos pasados con datos de hoy», justificó

Source: ABC (2020).

The second strongest frame in this media is that of responsibility (0.25), followed by criminalization (0.18) and human (0.13). The news items analyzed show the government as responsible for the spread of the pandemic by allowing the 8-M, and make special mention of the Minister of Equality, with four and five-column pieces exclusively on this issue, linking the spread to the demonstrations (figure 7). The ABC newspaper's pieces of information analyzed show us that the frame of conflict is similar to El Mundo's, though the particularities of its media frame combined with the strength of the responsibility frame, guide the audience to understand the dispute as a consolidated situation, that has no turning back, and the fault is on the government.

Figure 7

Responsibility frame in ABC

La ministra Irene Montero, el 9-M

«La bajada de cifras el 8-M fue debido al coronavirus, pero no lo voy a decir...»

► Admite que las «medidas drásticas» de otros países tenían un efecto «limitado» contra el Covid



Captura del vídeo al que ha tenido acceso ABC

ABC

La ministra de Igualdad Irene Montero, reconoció el pasado 9 de marzo que la bajada sustancial de partos durante la manifestación del 8-M este año se debió «al coronavirus» dado el «enfriamiento generalizado de público que ya hay». Además, la ministra Montero agregó que no le iba a reconocer en público.

Estas palabras las dirigió a una periodista de ETTI en la previa de una entrevista para el programa de actualidad política «En Jaka». La literalidad

que ABC ha podido visionar. La mínima de otros países europeos. «Que-

Pérez de los Cobos, que la delegación del Gobierno en Madrid «tenía conciencia del peligro que suponía la celebración de reuniones y manifestaciones en fechas previas a la declaración del Estado de Alarma» y aun así, las autorizó.

El informe obra en el sumario de actuaciones de la causa que se sigue contra el delegado del Gobierno, José Manuel Franco, en el Juzgado de Instrucción número 31 de Madrid y podría ser la razón de la «perdida de confianza» para caer de forma fulminante al coronel jefe de la Comandancia de Madrid.

Hay que recordar que el brote de la actual enfermedad por coronavirus fue notificado a la OMS por primera vez en Wuhan (China) el 31 de diciembre de 2019.

La semana anterior al 8-M, el ministerio de Sanidad hacía públicos el número de contagiados y fallecidos

UN MES DEL ERROR IRRESPONSABLE DEL 8-M

HOY, 8 de abril, se cumple un mes de la celebración de las multitudinarias manifestaciones para conmemorar el Día de la Mujer. Y hoy puede constatarse que la apropiación ideológica que hicieron el Gobierno y la izquierda de ese día, por encima de cualquier alerta sanitaria, se convirtió en un foco esencial para la difusión de la pandemia en España. Nunca antes de esa fecha el Ejecutivo había dado la más mínima relevancia a las advertencias de expertos extranjeros y de la OMS sobre la letalidad del Covid-19. Y no fue hasta justo después de su celebración, convertida en un icónico propagandístico del Gobierno y del secretario de concepto de la igualdad de la izquierda, cuando torció Sánchez conciencia de su error. A las veinticuatro horas se anunciaba la supresión de las clases en Madrid. Todo su Gobierno actuó de forma displicente o irresponsable frente a una amenaza. Incluso, empujaron a expertos y técnicos a soslayar la evidencia y a soste-

ner que el virus en España tendría un «alcance muy limitado». A día de hoy, con casi 14.000 personas muertas, con cerca de 150.000 infectados (habrá muchos miles más no contabilizados) y con 20.000 profesionales sanitarios contagiados, Sánchez no solo no ha asumido su negligencia; ni siquiera ha pedido disculpas. El 8-M había constancia oficial de la gravedad del virus, pero se permitió «se jaleó» la salida masiva de ciudadanos a las calles porque en la izquierda era prioritario exhibir su capacidad de propaganda. Naturalmente, y como coartada, se permitieron otros actos multitudinarios en la fecha. Se desinformó y manipuló a los ciudadanos, se les mantuvo a ciegas y se pudo evitar que la tragedia fuese tan invasiva. El 8-M es el pecado original de una gestión temeraria. Asumir responsabilidades y reconocer los errores es esencial para transmitir que se está en disposición de arreglar el problema. Pero Sánchez no está por la labor.

Source: ABC (2020).

Lastly, in the newspaper La Razón, the conflict frame is the strongest (0.29), as in the previous one, based on the criticisms and the different opinions between the opposition parties and the government (figure 8), both in terms of allowing the demonstration and the management of the crisis.

Figure 8

Conflict frame in La Razón

Vox ampliará la querrela contra Illa y exige su dimisión

C. S. Macías-Madrid

El vicepresidente de acción política de Vox, Jorge Huacac, tildó de «escandaloso» que el ministro de Sanidad, Salvador Illa tuviera conocimiento de la peligrosidad extrema del coronavirus el 13 de enero, once días después de tomar posesión, como desveló LA RAZÓN. Asimismo, criticó que, teniendo el ministro un amplio informe de la capacidad de propagación, «no se hiciera nada». «Tuvo un completo informe que le advertía de la pandemia y de las medidas que tenía que tomar y no hizo nada porque tenía que morir a los colectivos del 8 de marzo», dijo.



En cuando a las medidas iban a llevar a cabo, Buscadoró que «Vox ha puesto querrelas correspondientes tra el ministro de Sanidad que incorporarían también estas informaciones por «la negligencia criminal» por «conocer estos hechos y no tomar las medidas».

El diputado de Vox, Víctor González Coello de Portugal ha registrado por ello una batería de preguntas dirigidas al titular de Sanidad para que confirme si habla de los riesgos reales del Covid-19 desde el 24

Nadie advirtió al delegado del riesgo de contagio La magistrada descarta la prevaricación, aunque considera que la concentración supuso «un riesgo para la salud pública»

La jueza archiva la causa del 8-M con dudas y reproches

Señalada por la Abogacía del Estado por emprender una «causa general» contra el Gobierno por la gestión de la crisis sanitaria – una acusación que vuelve a reiterar –, la magistrada, que rechazó por dos veces investigar a Ferrnando Simón, si deja caer que si se conocieron del riesgo de contagio «lo tenían o no otras autoridades o instancias no es objeto de este procedimiento».

El auto, de hecho, abunda en dudas y reproches a la Delegación del Gobierno en su gestión de las concentraciones masivas antes del estado de alarma, que según suscribió el aumento del riesgo de contagio, aunque no se pueda atribuir ninguno de ellos directamente –previos– a la asistencia a una manifestación (trájan por la

Source: La Razón (2020).

The next most repeated frame is that of responsibility (0.21), due to the informative pieces that directly allude to the government as responsible for the spread of the Covid-19 and to the 8-M demonstration as guilty of the dissemination of the contagions. Among them, a piece of double-page, eight-column news (figure 9) entitled “Chronology of an announced alert” (Coarasa, 2020, p.14), headed with an image reading 8-M which occupies half of the page; or the piece “8-M. The verdict of the specialists: the agglomerations multiplied the contagions”, signed by Alonso and Tobalina (2020, p.12). This framing is also presented in numerous opinion columns with headlines such as “8-M Guilty” (Vidal, 2020, p.41), or “Many lies do not tell the truth” (La Razón, 2020, p. 3).

Figure 9

Responsibility frame in La Razón



Source: La Razón (2020).

The interpretation tendencies offered by each newspaper were distinguished through the strength of the frames. In four of the five media analyzed – La Vanguardia, El País, La Razón and ABC – the conflict frame was identified as the strongest. Only in El Mundo the responsibility frame was detected as the strongest and in a second degree the conflict frame. On the other hand, it is noteworthy to recognize that three of the five media analyzed showed a moderate strength of the criminalization frame – ABC, El Mundo and La Vanguardia – with a strength of 0.18, 0.42 and 0.36, respectively. In La Razón this framing appears, although weaker, with a low strength of 0.16. The only media where the construction of the criminalization frame was not detected was in El País.

7 Discussion and conclusions

The impact of collective mobilization on the transformation processes of democratic societies has been one of the central points of discussion in sociology and political science, especially since the 20th century. Its legality and effectiveness in the formulation of public policies around the world in favor of the needs, demands, and proposals for change demonstrate their importance.

However, the legitimacy of some social movements' actions has often been criminalized by the State's acts when, directly or indirectly, it allows the use of its institutional system – legal, political, military, media – as a mechanism to control social protest. Thus, criminalization becomes a multidimensional process (Alvarado, 2020) that most intensely affects massively represented collectives, given their capacity to subvert the prevailing order of things.

This is the case of the feminist movement, which with more than three centuries of history, has led to massive citizen demonstrations worldwide, motivated by the search for effective equality between men and women, as well as by the establishment of a political and media agenda favorable to the construction of interpretative frameworks that evade the patriarchal system (Galarza, 2020).

The present research is inscribed in these spheres – political and media –, to know the role of the communication media, as members of the political elites, in the construction of journalistic messages that constitute keys of interpretation on feminist manifestations 8M 2020 in Spain. These keys, consolidated in socially shared meanings, made it possible to detect the construction of the preferential framing offered by the Spanish reference press for its audiences, in a scenario marked by the irruption of Covid-19, with the respective health, economic and psychosocial consequences it has had for the world population. The findings are relevant because the Spanish media system is characterized by the use of the media by several actors “as tools to intervene in the political world” (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 117).

Regarding the number of texts in the journalistic coverage, two extremes are evident: La Razón (109) and El Mundo (47). It is remarkable since both media, together with ABC, represent a conservative ideological and editorial line (Humanes, 2016). However, such coverage differed when it came to giving space to the issue, among other aspects, with informative pieces of three to

five columns, and with special sections – in *El Mundo* and *La Razón* – which linked issues connecting the mobilization of women with the expansion of Covid-19.

Regarding the symbolic construction, it was detected that these three media had in common an informative production supported by the opinion genre in a significant way. The framing from this genre about the 8M demonstrations in center-left newspapers such as *El País* (Humanes, 2016) or *La Vanguardia* had a low recurrence. The approach from the opinion genre becomes relevant in the construction of the media framing because its argumentative and persuasive constitution makes clear the positioning – individual or institutional – of the person who signs the article or column. Citizens are not only interested in being informed, but also seek “specific data articulated to opinions, biases and positions of certain media or authors” (García-Gutiérrez, 2014, p. 378).

Although the media analysis shows similarities in the presence of news actors, the recurrence of pro-government political actors is significant, especially in the news pieces of ABC and *La Razón*. This happens to the detriment of other actors directly involved in the event, such as the demonstrators. In the few allusions to the protesters, the media discourse represented them with negative connotations regarding the responsibility for the distribution of the virus, under the argument that they prioritized feminist protest over public health. In one news of *La Razón*, for example, the title says that “large gatherings made the infections go up” next to a big 8M heading.

Only when the article is read, the reader finds out that, besides the feminist demonstrations, other events gathered thousands of people on those days, such as sportive events and political parties reunions. ABC gives a relevant role to politicians who criticize the government and link the rise of infections only with the 8M demonstrations. One example is on the news entitled “PP asks the Prosecutor’s Office to cite the minister as a witness” (ABC, 2020, p. 19) where the media cites one of the opposition politicians, Ana Pastor, and quote: “We knew that the government had arrived late and badly, but now we know that they knew it and did not put sanitary measures for political reasons”. This point of view of the opposition parties was hegemonic in ABC.

The analysis shows that these media acted as fundamental actors in the public space when they made invisible through their frames the bases of political action of the feminist movement, its mobilizing

capacity, the reasons for the demonstration and its demands.

The strength of the generic frames (Neuman et al., 1992; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000) was detected in most of the media, with a predominance of the conflict frame. It is also evidenced that the criminalization frame presented exemplary characteristics in the scope of the media systems, with a moderate role in at least three of the five media analyzed. In the case of *El Mundo* it was observed in a significant way through headlines that denounced the link between 8M and the increase in contagions; in *La Vanguardia* through the questioning of the legality of the acts of protest and the government's position in this regard, giving a strong presence to the judicial discourse. In *ABC*, the demonstrations were linked to a propaganda banner of the parties in government, and the criminalization emphasized the pro-government politicians who 'allowed and encouraged' the protest.

The predominant framing of the 8M protest served the conservative media to erode the progressive government, thus dragging technical officials, judges, prosecutors and security forces. It is demonstrated that the criminalization frame was not a property of only the conservative ideological segment, since it was observed that *La Vanguardia* also constructed the issue by emphasizing aspects that constituted the criminalization of the protest. On the other hand, the same dichotomy is observed in *El País*, considered center-left, and in *La Razón*, right-wing and conservative, since in these media the criminalization frame was not detected in the former, was weak in the latter, and in both the conflict frame prevailed.

Beyond their editorial and ideological lines, the social protest that vindicates the 8M and the feminist demonstration was demonized mostly by the frames identified in the texts and they built a general idea of irresponsibility in management, in the case of the newspaper *El Mundo*, and high levels of conflict, in *La Vanguardia*, *El País*, *ABC* and *La Razón*. Although it is a topic that is still in the process of development – since some demonstrations on 8M in 2021 were banned for public health reasons – it is relevant to highlight that, regarding the construction of the media discourse on the feminist movement, few differences were found among newspapers at the time of constructing hegemonic manners of interpretation of this event during the coronavirus pandemic in Spain, in the year 2020.

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